

*It is more profitable to know Jesus than to know about Him.*

**Weekly Edition – February 16, 2018**  
**Gospel According to St. John – Third Year**

## Jesus Goes to the Festival of Tabernacles (Part 12)

<sup>48</sup>The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?"

<sup>49</sup>"I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. <sup>50</sup>I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. <sup>51</sup>Very truly I tell you, whoever obeys my word will never see death."

<sup>52</sup>At this they exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death. <sup>53</sup>Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

<sup>54</sup>Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. <sup>55</sup>Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word. <sup>56</sup>Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."

<sup>57</sup>"You are not yet fifty years old," they said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"

<sup>58</sup>"Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" <sup>59</sup>At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

### Reflection 1: Warped Perceptions

The Pharisees are perfectly comfortable with their self-justification. "Aren't we right in saying..." They call You a Samaritan and claim You are demon-possessed. Those who love their sin more than they love You will always find ways to justify their darkness by making accusations against You. The Samaritan woman we met at the well a couple years ago immediately recognized You as a Jew. But these Jews can find no common association with You. So they falsely accuse You of being a Samaritan. It is like they are saying "You are not one of us." Their perceptions were so warped that they could not see the underlying truth behind their accusation. You are not one of them – because they have chosen to live outside of Your love. They say You are demon-possessed. After all, how could a loving God allow children to starve in Africa, or

allow a loved one to die from cancer, or permit the unspeakable evil that man does to fellow men in Your name? Today the way some see You is best summed up in the lyrics from a 1990's era rock band:

*He flexed his muscles to keep his flock of sheep  
in line;  
He made a virus that would kill off all the swine;  
His perfect kingdom of killing, suffering and  
pain;  
Demands devotion atrocities done in his name.*

These lyrics parrot the accusation of the Pharisees – "Aren't we right in saying You are demon-possessed?" After all, who would want anything to do with that god? Such are the warped perceptions of those who love their sin more than they love You.

**Application:** *What in my life am I blaming God for doing to me or having allowed to happen?*

#### The Gospel of St. John

##### Part I

- Prologue 1:1-14
- First Year 1:15 – 2:22
- Second Year 2:23 – 6:71
- Third Year 7:1 – 12:50

##### Part II

- The Last Discourse 13:1 – 17:26
- The Arrest and Trial 18:1 – 19:16
- Death and Resurrection 19:16 (b) – 21:25

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### Reflection 2: Glory

Your glory, Lord Jesus, comes from the Father. It comes by means of Your unveiled openness before God the Father. And Your face reflects the glory of God. In the same way, the Apostle Paul writes in one of his letters to the early church: "we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image..." The characteristic of the man or woman who enters into abiding restful union with You is this unveiled face that reflects the glory of God. The Holy Spirit removes the veil allowing our lives to become a mirror for others. And what these

others see is the very glory of God – Your character being broadcast out through the life of the person who abides in You. You do not seek glory for Yourself, but seek to glorify the One who sent You. And if I am being transformed into Your image, then I do not seek glory for myself either – but only seek it for the One who sends me – that is, You, my Lord. But I must maintain my posture of beholding You. Otherwise I allow the mirror of my life to become smudged and tarnished again. Then I become like the one who lit a candle and hid it under a bushel where its light could not be seen.

*Application: What stands between me and unveiled openness before God? What am I too ashamed of or too stubborn about to bring before Jesus?*

### Reflection 3: Never See Death

You say that whoever obeys You will not see death. The death spoken of here is physical death, not spiritual death, because the Pharisees speak of Abraham having died and You do not correct them. You don't mean "see" as is in physical eyesight. Instead, You are speaking to the experience of one who looks at a thing with intense personal interest and with a focused purpose. Nothing will command my intense personal interest and focused purpose than to see my own death. But You say that won't happen. You promise us that when a man or woman is being put to sleep in You, Lord Christ, as he is dying, he will not look on death with interest or for a purpose. Instead, that man and

woman will be an indifferent spectator of death because his eyes – her eyes – are fixed on You. And You live! The terrors of that awful thing called death are never experienced by the man and women who put their faith on You. This is why in one of his letters to the early church, the Apostle Paul writes: "O death, where is thy sting?" The confidence I have in You, Lord Jesus, is that although the tent of my body will one day fall limp and the breath of life will go out from my body – yet I will never confront the terror of that death. I will shrug at the terrors of that death because as I pass through the veil of this life I will see You, and You live!

*Application: God's word is written on the pages of my life. Reading my life, what would someone else see? Would they see the glory of God reflected in my being?*

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#### Reflection 4: Never Taste Death

The Pharisees twist Your words. While You say that the one who obeys You will never see death, they repeat it back differently. They say "taste" death. And while they misquote You, yet their words only reinforce the truth of what You say. Taste means to savor something – to perceive the flavor of it; to experience it. Those who believe in You will never see death and they will not taste it. They will not experience it. You are the God of life, who calls me from the depths of Your love into abiding restful union in You. But that does not mean that there is not a death. There is. Holy Scripture speaks plainly of that lake of fire already prepared for those who reject

Your love. In the great and fearful day of the Lord which is to come, those who reject You and Your love will be cast into a great and dreadful fire. The prophet Isaiah warns that "*Behold, the wicked shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.*" It will consume everyone and everything cast into it. It is cleansing fire which destroys both sin and sinner. That is a fearful and dreaded death – but those who are in You will never experience it. Nor will they be bothered by it. Beholding You face to face, we will taste and see the glory of the Lord.

*Application: Fear of death is irrational for the man or woman in Jesus Christ. What is my greatest fear?*

#### Reflection 5: Abraham Saw It and Was Glad

There is an unseen world beyond human knowledge or explanation with which You are well acquainted. From that place beyond what I can know and see, You tell us that Abraham longed to see Your day and that he did see it and was glad. The Pharisees have no paradigm for this. Abraham died more than 3,000 years ago. How could he see what was happening now? Impossible. You are a young man, perhaps thirty-three. And You knew Abraham. Outrageous. You simply reply that before Abraham was, "I AM." You are outside of time. That much I expect of my God! But Abraham lives? This is unexpected. It is surprising. You

tell us that Abraham has seen Your day. He saw it and was glad. He is now in that unseen world outside of time. Abraham believed on You, and though Abraham sleeps, yet Abraham has neither seen nor tasted death. Abraham lives. So he rejoices with the heavenly hosts on the day of Your birth. He celebrates Your victory on the Cross. He glories in Your resurrection. And he beams with brightest joy when someone repents as You taught saying, "there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!" In this joy Abraham has part today!

*Application: Is God challenging me to let go of a paradigm to which I cling so He can draw me into some new understanding?*