

The Arrival and Departure of The Christ – Part II
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John 7:25-36
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We are continuing our exposition of the Gospel of John and continuing our second message in a two-part message that began last week on Verses 25-36 of this important seventh chapter. Remember the question that John's Gospel centers around is: "Who is Jesus?" which is without a doubt the most important question that every human being can consider. "Who is Jesus Christ?" and not in theory but in the most personal way. Who is He and how does that impact you? What is your relationship to Him? The gospel in general, the purpose statement of John's Gospel which he gives near the end in John 20:31, he says, "Many other signs did Jesus in the presence of His disciples that they were all written down. The world wouldn't be able to hold the books that would be written about what Jesus did, but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and that believing you may have life in His name." That's the purpose of John's Gospel. He is recording the life and ministry of Jesus under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He is selectively picking out just certain events out of this multitude of glory. He's picked out certain events and he has presented them before us to help us come to the conclusion that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Living God, that He is the Christ, He is the long-awaited Messiah.

Now the text that we're looking at takes place at the Jewish Feast of Booths, or the Feast of Tabernacles. I like the term 'tabernacles' better. It just communicates better to me what it's all about. It's called 'booths' because they would all make a booth, or a tent, a homemade tent, the Jews would, to celebrate this. They were celebrating the time when this feast, celebrated the time when God made Himself known to the people of Israel in a visible way. In all of their vast history, from the time of Abraham to the time of Christ, there was only roughly a 40-year period in which the Lord visibly manifested His presence. He visibly manifested His presence in a pillar of fire. If you read Exodus and Numbers you see this unfolding. The Lord comes down and takes up residence among His people. Now wait, remember the Lord is always everywhere. The whole Earth is filled with the presence of God, but He made His presence manifestly known for this brief period of time, and as pillar of fire or a pillar of clouds. It was actually one pillar. Just think about it, in the daytime if you're looking at a fiery pillar, what you see is the smoke, and it's almost a pillar of cloud at daytime. But at nighttime, when it's dark, what do you see? You don't see the smoke you see the fire. So what God did was He manifested His glorious presence in this consuming fire that burned every

day, a pillar that would go on before the people and would rest over the tabernacle. They saw in a very visible way, the Shekinah glory of God. For 40 years they pitched their tents around God's tent, the tabernacle. So this feast that Jesus is at in John 7, John is careful to note that this is the Feast of Tabernacles. He wants that background in our minds as he sets before us some of the glory of Who Jesus is.

We saw last time, as we look at this particular section, John 7:25-36, that in the dialogue that is happening, Jesus has come to the temple, He is teaching, and the people respond. Two questions kind of percolate to the surface, or bubble up in the dialog: Where has He come from and where is He going? 'The Arrival and the Departure of The Christ'. That's the title of the message this morning. Last week 'The Arrival and the Departure of The Christ—Part I'. 'The Arrival and the Departure of The Christ—Part II' today. Last time we focused on the arrival. Today we're going to focus on the departure.

Last time we saw that it was a stunning arrival. Everything that they had anticipated or thought it should be, it really was, they just didn't see it. But this time what we're going to see is a sudden departure. The focus is on the suddenness of the departure and the idea of it being too late. So that the theme of the message, what we're going to see unfold as we look at the second part of this passage is that the Jews that were surrounding Jesus, this multitude, this crowd that is hearing Him teach on that day, celebrating the time when God's glory was visibly manifest in a pillar. That crowd that hears Him teach is in reality seeing the fulfillment of the whole feast. They've seen the glory of God in a much more wonderful way now, the glory is in one Man and He has pitched His tent, John 1:14. John is building this picture as you walk through the passage. Remember John 1:14?

John 1:14 ~ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us,...

He literally pitched His tent among us, and we beheld His glory. John says, "Listen, what happened back then is not the ultimate glory days. Those were glory days, but we were there for the real glory days, when God pitched His tent and in His tent was an earthly body, and we saw His glory. The glory of the only begotten, full of grace and truth." So they're surrounding Him, the glory is shining there, and He's teaching, and yet so many, though they're around the things of God, are going to find that they're going to realize too late their need of Him. So the application is particularly for those of us who find ourselves in the church of God, under the preaching of the Word, that there is a time where it becomes too late to receive Christ. Now let's look at the text, John 7:25:

John 7:25-36:

25 So some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, “Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill? 26 Look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they? 27 However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from.” 28 Then Jesus cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, “You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. 29 I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me.” 30 So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. 31 But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, “When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?”

32 The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him. 33 Therefore Jesus said, “For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. 34 You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.” 35 The Jews then said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He? 36 What is this statement that He said, ‘You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come?’”

Let’s pray together.

Father, as we bow before Your Word, we come Lord as spiritually needy people, dependent upon Your grace. We know that we are without help in and of ourselves and we need Your Spirit to minister. So speak to us through Your Word, and use Your Word to search our hearts and to bring us to clarity of where we are, and to help us see the glory of Christ. We pray this in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Now let’s continue to get the picture and set it in historical context. I’ve given you a little overview but I want to think about it a little more carefully because I mentioned last time, this passage, like so much of John’s Gospel, drips with irony. John is writing to, remember his intended audience is Jewish people out from Israel in what’s called ‘The Dispersion’ which is actually mentioned in the text, the diaspora. Many Jews live all around the Roman world since the exiles, since they

were driven out of the northern kingdom in 722 B.C., since the southern kingdom of Judah was exiled to Babylon in 586. Many Jews stayed in Babylon. Jews have moved other places, migrated to other places. The land of Israel had been under great tumult for several centuries and so there are Jews everywhere. Large Jewish centers in Alexandria, Egypt, Rome, Antioch, Syria and other places, in all kinds of places. We see when Paul goes on his mission journeys he finds Jewish synagogues in Corinth and Ephesus, in all of these places. So there are Jews that are spread out throughout the world. So one of the things that is going on is this idea that John is writing his gospel to those people primarily. Secondly for Gentiles, but primarily for Jewish people and also Gentiles who converted to Judaism. We follow that so these are people who are adhering to the Jewish faith though they're far removed from Israel. He's writing to them to convince them that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. These are people who have a lot of background understanding. You see, they're not like just a Gentile off the street that knows nothing of the Old Testament. No, they understand the Old Testament. They have a lot of knowledge of the feasts, and so when John includes details like he does about the Feast of Tabernacles, they understand something of that. They have a paradigm which they can interpret that. The irony is that people have rejected Jesus. These Jews in the diaspora have heard the Gospel by this time. John is writing about 85 A.D., about 55 years after Jesus ascended into Heaven. They've been exposed to the things of Christ but they have rejected it, and largely because the Jewish people rejected Jesus. In Israel the Jewish people rejected Jesus and so "He can't have been the Messiah," they're thinking. So John is showing them, "Don't let that confuse you now because it's just like it's always been." The majority of Jewish people have always rejected Yahweh. That's the irony.

Now let's look at this and see how it unfolds a little bit here. I mentioned that this feast celebrates that one time in Israel's history where for 40 years the presence of God was manifestly revealed—the pillar of fire, His glory shining. "Our God is a consuming fire," the author of Hebrews says. So they saw it there, this fire that burns, and burns, and burns, and is not consumed. This fire that leads them on, this fire that they surround in their own tents as they spend these 40 years in the wilderness. Think about what they saw. They saw the manifest glory of God and they saw God do incredible signs and wonders. Remember when we read from Psalm 95 earlier, and we saw that when the Psalmist says, "If you hear God's voice, do not harden your hearts as they did at Meribah when they saw my signs that I did among them, yet they did not believe in Me." They saw the signs but they did not believe. Think about that. What was it like to see the manifest glory of God? What was it like to see the signs? I mean, think about the signs that they saw.

They were slaves in Egypt. Moses came down and said, “I’m going to deliver you from Egyptian bondage.” What did Moses do? He did 10 miraculous signs. In fact, if you look at the whole of biblical history, you scan the pages from Genesis to Revelation, there are miracles throughout, sprinkled throughout the Bible, but there are three particular clusters of miracles in the flow of redemptive history. You have a huge cluster of miracles around the life and the ministry of Moses. The next cluster of miracles really, I mean when you go through David, and Solomon, and all those guys, not really many miracles happening. A few little things here and there. Where do you get the miracles? Elijah and Elisha in 1 and 2 Kings. Then when is the third cluster of miracles? It’s around Jesus’ ministry, and a little bit tapering off with the apostles after Him, but with Jesus the signs and wonders come. So God is attesting in a dramatic way, key movements in redemptive history. This first cluster is at Exodus which they’re celebrating in the feast. They’re celebrating right now. I mean think about the miracles, Moses turned the Nile River into blood. The Nile River was Egypt’s source of strength. It was the way they irrigated their fields, it’s what made them rich in that day. Rich land, the Nile River Valley. They had gods they worshiped. The gods of the flies, the Lord of the Flies. They had a deity that was in the shape of a frog, and the Lord mocked them through the signs. Remember, basically, it was like the Lord saying, “You like frogs? Okay, I’ll give you frogs.” Then the land is covered with frogs, a plague of frogs comes. Then a plague of flies comes, a plague of gnats, a plague of hail. Hail comes out of the sky so big it destroys things, kills a lot of the livestock. A plague of boils on the bodies of the Egyptians, and all the time Israel, often the land of Goshen is protected from this. Look at God reigning down His judgment, His power, and His might upon the greatest nation on the Earth at that time, Egypt. Here’s little Israel, no weaponry, no military force, and look at God standing in for them in what He’s doing.

Now at this point they don’t have the manifest glory yet. They just have these miracles happening. Right? They’re still in Egypt. They have the plague of darkness. They worshiped the sun. God said, “You worship the sun, how about this? It’s going to be dark. No light.” Who is God? Who is the God but the Lord, Yahweh? Even in that He’s preaching to the Egyptians, inviting them to be saved. In fact, some of them are. Some of them leave with the Nation of Israel when they go out. There are some proselytes, some converts that God graciously saves, but the point is, look at what the Israelites saw. And finally the plague of the Firstborn, where they put the blood over their doors, but the firstborn of all of Egypt dies in a single night. There’s wailing and moaning throughout Egypt. Can you imagine what that must have been like? God gave them nine chances before that to let His people go, but they didn’t. So finally He gives the plague of the firstborn. They

leave Egypt, they plunder Egypt. The people come out and say, "Please leave. Take my jewelry. Here, take my money. Here, go. Go, go, please go." What a mighty victory. Now think about if you were there and I ask you, I'm one of those guys from Edom. I walk over as you guys are walking through the wilderness and I say, "Hey, who do you guys worship?" "We worship the Lord, Yahweh." "Why do you think He's the true God? Do you believe He's really the true God?" You would say, "Yes! Absolutely! We've seen His wonders! We've seen his power!" And at this point, you'd also say, "And there's His glory! Look at that pillar of fire," because not only did He deliver them from Egypt, He destroyed the whole Egyptian army in the Red Sea and made the Red Sea part. They walked through. They were hungry. He fed them with bread from Heaven for 40 years. They didn't have to till the ground, there weren't any grocery stores. They didn't go to the grocery store, they just went outside, picked up the bread one day at a time, and on Friday they had bread for two days. So the Sabbath they didn't have to pick up bread, manna. Remember they got tired of the manna? They said, "We want meat. We're so sick of this manna." The word 'manna' means 'What is this?' in Hebrew. "What is this stuff?" That's what they called it. "We're so sick of this bread. We want some meat." The Lord says, "You want meat?" and He sends a flock of quail in, millions and millions of quail so that they want meat so bad they are just stuffing themselves with meat and overflowing. The Lord just keeps doing miracles like this. They see all of those signs, they have the manifest glory of God in their presence, and the staggering thing is when it comes time to enter the promise land what happens? They don't believe. They're lost. They had a type of faith that wasn't saving faith. If you had asked them, "Do you believe there is any God like Yahweh?" "No, we don't, but we don't think He's strong enough to help us deal with those giants." What? And the irony is they lived in that cluster of miracles, they saw the glory cloud manifest presence of God, and now in Jesus' own day, history is repeating itself only in a more profound, astonishing way. God Himself has taken up residence among them, veiled in flesh, the Godhead see. Hail incarnate deity. Emmanuel has come, and you see the glory even in the passage, Verse 15. Look back at John 7:15.

John 7:14-15 ~ ...and began to teach. 15 The Jews then were astonished, saying, "How has this man become learned, having never been educated?"

"How can He teach like that?" Look at Verse 45. Our text shows where the Pharisees tell the officers to go arrest Jesus. In Verse 45, the officers come to the chief priest and Pharisees, and the Pharisees and chief priests say to them, "Why did you not bring Him?" Why haven't you arrested Him? Look what they say:

John 7:45-46 ~ The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, “Why did you not bring Him?” 46 The officers answered, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.”

Glory. They're seeing a measure of His glory. The glory cloud is there and look at all the signs He's performed. Look with me at one of the highlights in this in that some of the crowd, many of the crowd it says, believed in Him. Verse 31:

John 7:31 ~ But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, “When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?”

Think about all the miracles that Jesus Christ has performed. When you read in Matthew's Gospel that He began to preach in Chapter 4, John the Baptist's message had been, “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” Jesus begins to preach, “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,” and He goes out preaching and all throughout the Galilean countryside. It said they were bringing people to Him and He was healing all their diseases. He was healing the lame. He was casting out evil spirits.

I remember hearing a preacher preach one time talking about that and when you look at the language and what is described there, it seems that for a period of a couple of years it was as if Jesus banished all illness from Galilee. Think about that. All the cancer, all of the lameness, all of the blindness, all of the deafness, all of the leprosy, all of the illnesses banished by the presence of His glory. He comes down to Jerusalem and what does He do? Every time that He comes to Jerusalem He's doing signs and miracles. Chapter 2 is first Passover after He starts His ministry. It says He did many signs there and the Jews, many believed in Him because of the signs He was doing, but they didn't really totally believe. We saw that when we studied that chapter back some months ago. They didn't believe because Jesus says, in Chapter 3, John shows us, what is it that makes the difference between a surface faith and saving faith? The message of this book is you must be born again. God must do a work in your heart. You must look to Christ until Christ changes you. It's not enough to have an intellectual ascent, there has to be a commitment of one's life.

So we see that that's what's happening here before us as this crowd is asking first, “Where did He come from?” and Jesus' answer is, “I came from my Father. I came from God,” which sets Him apart as the one Person Who can save us. No One else

has come down from Heaven. Jesus said that in John 3. No One has descended from Heaven except the Son of man. He's the only One. He's the only Savior because of where He came from, but it's also important to know where He's going, and what He's going to teach in this passage is He's going back to the Father. The idea is that time is short.

Now we've kind of got a picture of the scene here. Let's now look back at the passage and start considering the question again and the focus now of the departure. A stunning arrival was last time, a sudden departure. We see it, turn to that in Verse 33. Now what's interesting is that when we look at Verses 30-32, what you have going on here is basically the crowd will be talking among themselves, okay? They'll be talking among themselves. John lets us listen in on what they're saying. But the picture is Jesus isn't there listening to what they're saying, He's over there. I mean, they're saying things like, "Who is this guy?" This is the kind of stuff you don't say. I don't say, "Peter, what do you think about Bill? I'm not sure about him," because he's right there. We shouldn't do that anyway, right? That's gossip. That was at no extra charge. But if you were going to gossip you wouldn't do it right in front of somebody, and so they're over to the side and they're saying, "Who is He? What's He doing?" Jesus doesn't hear them with His ears, but He's God and so He answers their question. "Wait a minute. He must be the Christ because the rulers haven't arrested Him." They know they want to kill Him, some of the people of Jerusalem in Verse 25 say, "He must be the Christ." "Have the rulers decided? No, they can't have, because He can't be the Christ because we know where He's from." It's where He's from that is the whole problem. "That's why, we know He's from Galilee. He can't be the Christ." Jesus doesn't hear that but He answers it in Verse 28.

John 7:28 ~ Then Jesus cried out in the temple,...

In fact this word 'cried out', I didn't mention this last week, but this word 'cried out' is a word John only uses four times. It's used twice in this passage, four times in the gospel. Verse 37: ***...Jesus stood and cried out,...*** It's a very strong word. It's an onomatopoeic word. The idea is it's kind of like our English word 'cry'. You see the word sounds like what it describes? 'Cried out' is the idea, so it's a great translation because actually our word does the same thing. He cried out, but most of the time you see Jesus teaching. He answered, He speaks, but here He cries out. In His sovereign omniscience, He knows what they're talking about, He knows the issue. "They don't know where I've come from," and He cries out. The idea, it's not only the loudness, but its earnestness, and there's a sense of anguish in it. The heart of the Savior saying, "Do you know understand? I want you to

understand!” In His humanity, His heart breaking for the people. The heart of God breaking for the people. He cries out but He answers their question, but He hasn’t heard them with His ear. They’re over talking like that. Well the same thing happens here in Verses 30-32. Now He may have sensed by their eyes they were getting ready to seize Him, Verse 30. After He teaches about where He came from, and what He basically says is, “I came from God and the problem is you don’t know Him. The One Who sent me, you do not know.” Now this was the most offensive thing you could say to a Jew because the Jews believed they were the one people who knew God. “After all, He came and took up residence among us.” But He says, “No, in reality, you do not know Him.”

How did they respond? Verses 30-32 gives us a varied response. There are three responses basically recorded here. Each verse gives us one. First of all, they were seeking to seize Him. That is the people of Jerusalem who had been talking about this issue. When they hear Him say that, they want to seize Him. They’re filled with a murderous rage. They want to rush on Him and put Him to death, just like we see so many times in the other gospels. Remember when He preached in His home town in Nazareth? He starts preaching, from Isaiah, and He says, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” People are saying, “Isn’t that Joseph and Mary’s Son? The carpenter’s Son? How does He teach like that with power?” He goes on to start teaching them, He says basically, “I’m going to save the Gentiles too,” and they are filled with a rage and they grab Him, they seize Him, and run Him out. Can you imagine a crowd grabbing Him, running Him out of the door, taking Him to the cliff nearest there so they can throw Him off? That’s their response. Somehow Jesus eludes their grasp. The text says He got away from them. He somehow, supernaturally, got away from them. The same thing is happening here. **...they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.** They want to kill Him. What they’re doing is bringing up the whole issue of His departure. They want Him to depart right now. They want to rid the world of Him.

There’s a great comfort in the second half of that verse, but **...no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.** Don’t ever be discouraged by the reality of when Jesus does die, and He’s seized by the temple guards. Then He’s handed over to the Romans and you see them beat Him, mistreat Him, and nail Him to a cross. Realize they were only able to do that because His hour *had* come. When we see this, though it’s a sudden departure, it’s not a precipitous departure. That is, His departure is not too early, it’s right on time. There’s a lot of comfort in that. I mean, think about what that implies for you and me. This teaches that the Lord has numbered our days and there’s nothing anyone can do to end

your life until the Lord's time. Nothing. It doesn't matter if they want to. I mean they had the power. There was a crowd of people. He wasn't sitting there guarded by an army. His disciples aren't even on the scene throughout this chapter, we've noted. We don't even know where they are. It's not like they're sitting around guarding Him. No, they had the power. Here's a Man, but they could not do it? Why? Because God is not willing.

But the issue is they are trying to rid the world of Him, and what you see is this continued response to Jesus, this rage that comes up in the hearts of people when He just reveals Himself. How do we explain that? What's happening whenever Christ reveals Himself is that people are encountering the fact that they cannot continue to live for themselves in the presence of One so glorious. They must bow before Him and surrender themselves to Him. That is what is so utterly offensive to man in sin. We do not want to yield ourselves, our lives we want to live for our purpose. We want to live for our pleasure. We want to live for what we want. Jesus makes a claim that says, "You must not live for yourself. You were created for Me. I created you, I formed you, and you owe Me everything that you are. Worship Me. Give yourself to Me." When people hear that, they get any sense of that, that's what brings up that murderous rage, and you see it in so many different ways.

That's one of the reasons you see such rage associated with even things that are more political like abortion rights, or homosexual rights. Why is it they get so enraged that you would say, and I would say, "Homosexuality is sin because the Bible says it is."? The fact that you have a disposition to that doesn't justify it. We all have dispositions to evil things. The message is: Honor God with your body. Give your heart to Christ. He will change you, He will help you, and His Word will purify you. Saying that in certain settings could get you killed. The good news is that it won't get you killed until the Lord is ready for it to happen. But why is it that they hate that? Think about the logic of that. Why do they care what we think? I mean, the culture is always telling us that conservative Christians are just a bunch of buffoons, but why do they care so much? Why can't they dismiss us? Because they hear in our voice the echo of the voice of the One Who made them. They hear His claim upon them and they hate Him, therefore they hate us. If we were really wrong and we were just a bunch of nuts, they wouldn't care, but that's a testimony. Even the opposition, and John's showing, even the opposition of the people is confirming again that it's God's glory. Remember the last time you saw God's manifest glory, what'd they do? They wouldn't obey, they wouldn't believe. So when God manifests His glory here in Jesus, it's the same story. Even those closest did not believe.

So we see in the sudden departure, He's answering their question. They're saying, "We want you to go," and He says, "Well, I'll tell you when I'm going to go." Verse 32, here again is one of those things that happened to the side. The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things. Some of the crowd believes in Him. Praise the Lord, the Gospel will have its effect. When it goes forth it will arouse opposition, but it will also, by God's power and His sovereign grace, arouse faith. But Verse 32, this is the third part of the response:

John 7:32 ~ The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him.

A second time, they want to seize Him. They want to put an end to Him. You see, the issue is, "When are you going to leave?" and so Jesus deftly answers that question. Verse 33:

John 7:33 ~ Therefore Jesus said, "For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me.

He couldn't hear what the Pharisees said with His earthly ear but He knows what's going on. He says, in Verse 33, ...***"For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me.*** "You want me to depart right now, but I'm not going to depart right now. I'm here for a little while longer, and then I go."

It's interesting, I mentioned that it's the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles is September/October in the Jewish calendar, related to our calendar, September/October. In fact, 2012, the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles began last Monday, October 1. It'll be going on right now.

So Jesus is ministering around this time of year, and He knows that His time of departure is at Passover. That's March/April of the next year. Basically, He's about six months from the finish line. So He says, ...***"For a little while longer I am with you,...*** Even in that there is the sense of His own sovereignty and deity reigning. "You want to kill Me, but you cannot kill Me until the time." And Jesus says, "No man takes My life from me. I lay it down and I can take it up again." Remember that? That's what we're seeing here. They want to kill Him but they cannot. If He were not willing they could have never killed Him. Of course, He could have destroyed the world with a word. So He says, ***"For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me.*** Then He says in Verse 34:

John 7:34 ~ You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come."

This is of particular importance because it's repeated. You see, He says in Verse 34, we have on the lips of Jesus, ***You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.*** Look down at Verse 36, when the Jews are puzzled by this and baffled by what He's talking about, really in a sense sneering in unbelief in Verse 35. This ends up though with them asking that question. What is this statement that He said and you have it repeated verbatim, word-for-word. Verse 36:

John 7:36 ~ What is this statement that He said, 'You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come'?"

Remember when something is repeated like that it is very important. Jesus is saying, "I go to my Father and you're going to seek Me and you will not find Me. For where I am, you cannot come." In fact the language is emphatic in the Greek. It really could be translated like this: "You will seek me and will not find me, and where I Myself am, you yourself cannot come." The Greek language contains pronouns within the verbs. You know some languages are that way. The form of the verb actually has the pronoun in it. You don't have to add 'he' or 'you' because it's already in the verb. So when you add the pronoun into it as well, you're emphasizing that. Well you have the pronouns here, "Where I myself am, you yourself cannot come." It's implying separation. "You're seeking Me now to kill Me, but you're going to seek Me soon in another way, and you will not find Me because where I Myself am, you yourself cannot come." There's separation.

What's He talking about? I think in one sense what He's talking about is the Jews themselves will be seeking Him later when they fall under judgment in 68 A.D. when the Romans begin a siege of Jerusalem. For more than two years they besieged Jerusalem and destroyed it, raised it to the ground, destroyed the temple, murdered millions of Jews. They murdered them, massacred them. In that time there was this hope that God would send a Deliverer, He would send His Christ. So they were looking for Him then. "We need You! We need You!" "But you will not find Me then. It'll be too late." I think even more than that though, He's saying that "You have rejected Me now, but there will be a time when you realized you should not have rejected Me and then it'll be too late. Especially after we die. After death comes judgment and then it's too late." In fact, Jesus prophesies in Luke 19:44. He says, let's just look at that actually. We'll start with Verse 41. Hear the heart of our Messiah, He says:

Luke 19:41 ~ When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it,...

You see the heart of Christ? That's what is behind His crying out. "Believe in Me. Come to Me and be saved." That's what He's saying, He's beckoning, "Come for salvation."

Luke 19:41-44 ~ When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, 44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

"You did not see it." What tragic words. "You did not see when God visited you. When the Lord came down, made Himself known to you, you missed it. And because of that, you're rejected." Think about it, it's a horrible thing for people to dishonor God in the first place, at any time in history, but when they have seen His glory most clearly, in the most manifest way, demonstrating His kindness, His compassion. Think about how they had seen it, even through John's Gospel.

John 6, remember what Jesus was doing there? He fed the 5,000. They said, "Hey, Moses gave us bread from Heaven." Do you see how this is connecting together with what John is remembering? He's bringing these things up. "Moses gave us bread from Heaven. He gave us some manna. Why don't you give us bread from Heaven?" Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. You've seen all of these miracles. You've seen My glory. You've heard Me teach. You've seen My power. You've been around these things and yet you have not repented, you have not submitted, you have not believed, and therefore," as He says throughout the gospels, "Woe to you Bethsaida, Chorazin. I tell you it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for you in the day of redemption." Why will it be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for Bethsaida and Chorazin? Sodom and Gomorrah were wicked evil places, but they didn't have God visit them. Bethsaida and Chorazin saw Christ walk their streets. They heard His sweet voice. They saw His power, and because of that they will be judged more severely. This is what is happening. Jesus says, "You have been visited, and I'm leaving. You have me just for a little while longer. Such a short time, don't neglect the day of your visitation."

How does that apply to us? I mean aren't we prone to think, "I wish I'd been alive in the day of Abraham when God spoke to him directly, or Moses when the glory

cloud was there? And you saw the power and miracles that you could touch, bread every day out of Heaven. I wish I'd been there when Jesus walked on the face of the Earth and you could see Him, and hear His voice, and see His glory firsthand. I wish I'd been one of the disciples." The Bible says that we have access that is even more amazing than they. Romans 10:6 says this:

Romans 10:6 ~ But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down),

What he's talking about is, "Look, you who want to find God, don't try to find it ascending into Heaven. Don't try to find Him by looking." Where do you find God is the question? Where can we find God? Paul is writing to the Romans in the 50's A.D., less than 30 years after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and he says, "Where do you find God." This is what he says, Verse 8:

Romans 10:8 ~ But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,

What he's saying is that the preaching of the Word of God, the presence and glory of God are manifest in it, and the Lord will judge us based on the fact that the Lord has manifested Himself in the Word of God, in our midst, in our hearing. If we don't repent and believe we stand under judgment, greater judgment because God has made Himself gloriously manifest to us. It's not the same way, but it's even more wondrous because the Spirit has been put upon on all people now. The Spirit works on individual hearts in a way that was not true in previous times. So if we resist the working of the Spirit, and the hearing of the Word, we stand condemned. So this passage says, "Time is short. Do not presume on the grace of God."

None of us knows when our life is going to end, that's obvious. We don't think about it as much as we ought, but it's true. We know that, don't we? Young people have trouble getting that in their minds, but it is a reality and what a tragedy when you see a young person taken in a car accident or a sudden illness. But it's true for all of us, but more than that what this passage is also saying is that when God makes your eyes open to see His glory, and you see something of His glory. Be careful that you don't despise the day of that visitation because there will come a time where your eyes then will be hardened and blinded by it, and you will find yourself farther from God, headed for hell. That's what he's saying. There are warnings like this in the Scripture.

Hebrews 12 talks about Esau. Think about Esau, he saw some wonderful things from God. His dad was able to tell him about all the experiences he had had with the Lord speaking to him directly, miracles that happened in his life. Jacob loved God, Esau hated God, but Hebrew 12, I forget which verse it is, tells us that Esau later, when he'd lost his birthright, he'd lost his blessing, and he wanted them so badly that he sought after them with tears, but he did not find them because there was no place left for repentance. I think what was going on there is he still had a heart that wasn't seeking God rightly. What happens is the unbeliever doesn't love God, doesn't want God to be Lord, yet he doesn't want to be damned. He doesn't want to go to hell. Nobody wants to go to hell, but the unbeliever is someone who still doesn't take God as He is.

John Calvin, in his commentary, he mentions Esau. He is speaking of those who are around the things of God but do not respond to the things of God.

We have a very striking example in Esau, who on account of having lost his birthright, not only is oppressed with grief, but groans and gnashes his teeth, and breaks out into furious indignation, but yet so far is he from the right way of seeking the blessing that at the very time when he is seeking it, he renders himself more unworthy of it. For he is oppressed by a conviction of his misery, reduced to extremities, he complains, and cries, and howls, but without reaping any advantage, for always being like himself, he nourishes within his own heart the same cruelty which he formerly displayed.

And this is the essence: He does not go to God but rather he wishes that God was changed. He would have God change rather than humble himself and fall on his face before God. He doesn't want to be lost, but he doesn't want to fall and worship God as God deserves to be worshiped. That's the problem, and that's what's going on with the people of Israel. They're around the things of God, they have the glory of God, and right in their midst, and yet they do not come to Him as God requires. What does God require? God requires everything. We cannot hold onto anything. We come to God in our misery, in our sin. It doesn't matter how black your sins are. He says, "Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." There is no limit to His saving power, but you must come saying, from the depth of your heart, "Lord, save me." "Lord," means, "I surrender. Everything that I am, I surrender. Jesus, You are worthy. You have created me, you have offered redemption to me, and I surrender to You. No conditions, unconditional surrender." That's the turning point, and this passage warns us against being around the things of God and not coming to that point. If we find ourselves having heard the Gospel again, and again, and again, and finding ourselves pass that point

on the other side, when we die and enter into torment, we will gnash our teeth, we will wail, and we will despise the fact that we loved our sin more than we loved our own souls.

Today is the day. Do not presume upon God. Do not let another moment pass. Go to God with everything that you are, “Lord, I want to surrender everything I am. Help me.” He does not turn away that kind of approach. His message is always, “Come, but come empty-handed.” “Nothing in my hand I bring, only to the cross I cling.” You will find in Him a glorious friend and a glorious Savior, and He will be your treasure. That is what Jesus wants for every one of us. May God help us to examine ourselves. Let’s pray together.

Our Father, we bow right now. We pray, Father, that You would work in the hearts of everyone here. How good it is to know that You know everything about us. There are no secrets from You. Your eye sees every hidden motive. Your eye sees every secret thought. Lord, we learn so many ways from the time we’re young to cloak things, to hide things, and we think we can fool You. How foolish. And Lord, how freeing it is to realize we can’t. You see all, You know all. You see the blackness, You see the ugliness, You see the incredible selfishness, You see the rebellion, the resistance. There is nothing that we can do to hide it or change it, and yet Lord, we stand amazed that You would save, that You would love us, that You would love that which is unlovely, and love that which ought to receive Your wrath. Father, we pray in gratitude for the gift of Jesus Christ. That He’s the One Who’s made it possible. That He is born the wrath for everyone who would believe. He has taken it out of the way and if we just come to Him empty-handed, we will find a loving reception. We don’t find a judge, we find our dearest friend. We don’t find Someone to fear, we find Someone Who loves us. God, what would keep anyone from that kind of salvation? We pray that You would be glorified in our hearts. That You would be magnified in our lives, and that this reality of what You’ve done for us would exude from us in wonder, in worship, obedience, and witness. We pray this in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

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