

5. Lack of faith of Jesus' Brothers

See Mark 3:21, "He is out of his mind!" (NAB, NET)

8. Not "going up" to this festival

Double meaning of "going up" (*anabainō*)

He will not "go up" [ascend] to the Father

He will "go up" [in pilgrimage] to Jerusalem

Reason: Jesus' "time" is not yet fulfilled. Synonymous with "the hour" (see Cana story)

Brown quotes the 4th century Church Father Epiphanius:

He speaks to his brothers spiritually in a mystery, and they did not understand what he said. For he told them that he would not ascend at that feast, neither into heaven nor on the cross to fulfill the plan of his suffering and the mystery of salvation . . .³

Gospel Chronology

In John we do not hear of Jesus going back to Galilee after this visit to Jerusalem

There is a mention of Transjordan (10:40, exact location unknown)

Ephraim-near-the-desert (11:54, exact location unknown)

The Johannine picture is of Jesus being "around Jerusalem" for the last 6 months of his life!

Not just the last week, i. e., Holy Week

. . . John's picture wherein Jesus remains a long period in the Jerusalem area between Tabernacles and the following Passover may well be more accurate than the crowded Synoptic picture where he seems to arrive in Jerusalem a few days before his death. Much of the material, particularly by way of accusation and trial, that the Synoptics pack into those final days is found in John in the chapters that cover the period from Tabernacles to Passover .[see note on verse 12].⁴

12. Deceiving the Crowd

Luke 23:2 makes this a formal charge against Jesus in his trial before Pilate.⁵

13. Fear of "the Jews"

Of course, every single member of "the crowd" is also a "Jew"!

Clearly this means "the Jewish leaders."

Lecture 36. Discourse: Middle of Tabernacles I, John 7:14-24

Translation of the Greek (*Synopsis* #240) Brown's translation, Anchor Bible

14. Midpoint of the feast

3rd or 4th day of the week-long feast.

Several days pass between verse 13 and verse 14.

15. Question about Jesus' learning

Similar questions are asked in Mark 1:22 (Capernaum), 6:2-3 (Nazareth)

³ Epiphanius, *Against Heresies* 51.25, quoted from Brown, 308.

⁴ Brown, 309.

⁵ Brown, 307.

And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. (Mark 1:22 RSV)

And on the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue; and many who heard him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get all this? What is the wisdom given to him? What mighty works are wrought by his hands! ³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. (Mark 6:2-3 RSV)

Jesus has not undergone formal training from a recognized master.

18. No **wrong** (*adikia*) in him (NAB)

unrighteousness (KJV, NET)

dishonesty (Brown, NJB), **falsehood** (Moloney, RSV, NRSV)

In the LXX *adikia* often renders the Hebrew *sheqer* (dishonesty, falsehood)

19. Given **you** the law.

One might have expected, "given us the law."

This language reflects the church-synagogue dispute at the end of the first century, rather than the 30's.

20. You have a **demon**

This is a claim that Jesus is **insane**. Mental illness was often ascribed to demons in the ancient world.

Recall the words of Jesus' family in Mark 3:21: "He is out of his mind!"

Also the Beelzebul controversy, Mark 3:22.

In the Synoptics, these charges are made in Galilee, rather than in Jerusalem.

Different groups

This group of people seems to know nothing of a plot to kill Jesus.

Brown (317) points out that many pilgrims might not know the "local information"

The Jerusalemites (v. 25, next lecture) are aware of the plot.

23. Justification for working on the sabbath

Not as theological as 5:17 (God works on the Sabbath; as Son Jesus does what his Father does).

This is more "humanitarian" (like the Synoptic argument for pulling an animal out of a pit on Sabbath)

Circumcision is legal (even required) if the "8th day" after birth is a Sabbath

A Jew born on the Sabbath is circumcised on the sabbath

Jesus cured a whole man on the Sabbath (the lame man of chapter 5)

I.e., if one can circumcise (affects just one body part), one can cure an entire person.

Sabbath in Synoptics and John

A key to John's literary technique.

In the Synoptics, there are **many** instances of Sabbath activity by Jesus.

In John there is only **one** instance of Sabbath healing.

. . . we may well suspect that we have here a limitation of the topic for **dramatic purposes**. The evangelist has carefully selected the **few** signs he narrates (20:30-31); and in order to **simplify** the historical picture, he shows these signs as the **direct causes** of what happened to Jesus. Acting like a good **dramatist**, the evangelist never clutters the clean lines of his narrative with too many characters or distracting details. . . . By using **one** miracle as the specific instance on which the argument is based, John is summing up a **much larger** ministry.⁶

⁶ Brown, 315.

Dramatization: Another Example

In the Synoptics, all disciples doubt when the risen Christ appears.

Most people do not know this, unless a biblical scholar tells them.

In John **only** Thomas doubts: John dramatizes **all** doubt in Thomas, making it unforgettable!

Lecture 37. Discourse at Tabernacles II, John 7:25-36

Translation of the Greek (*Synopsis*, # 240) Brown's translation, Anchor Bible

Literary Structure, Moloney (241)

7:25-31, The Jerusalemites wonder

7:32-36, "the Jews" show their inability to understand.

Shift of theme

No more argument about the Sabbath

The focus is the person of Jesus⁷

25. "trying to kill"

In contrast to the "crowd" of v. 20, these "residents of Jerusalem" are aware of the plot vs. Jesus.

27. "We know where this man comes from"

As often in John, when people say they "know" something, they don't!

They think they know where he comes from (Nazareth); But Jesus is "from above"

They are similar to the crowd at the Bread of Life Discourse

They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" (John 6:42 RSV)

28. Jesus comes from "the one who sent him" (God)

Consider Holy Communion, "Bread from heaven" for Catholics

The wheat is grown in Kansas, and baked in various places⁸

Objection: How can you say this is bread from heaven? It comes from Kansas!

We do not deny that the bread comes from Kansas.

Those who see the origin only Kansas are not looking at a deep enough level.

From the faith perspective, it is a gift from God, a gift "from heaven."

The fact that it was grown in Kansas is beside the point.

John's perspective

The fact that Jesus is known as "Jesus of Nazareth" is beside the point.

Jesus is God's gift to the world; he is "from above."

Jesus & Divine Wisdom: The Source of Both is a mystery

Who has found her place? And who has entered her storehouses? (Bar 3:15 RSV)

But where does Wisdom come from? Where is Intelligence to be found? (Job 28:12 NJB)

⁷ Brown, 317

⁸ If the host in your parish does not have a cross impressed on it, it was baked by Catholic nuns. If the host in your parish does have a cross impressed on it, it was baked by a company who has promised the nuns it will drive them out of business.

Divine Wisdom is from Heaven

Send her [Lady Wisdom] forth from the holy heavens, and from the throne of thy glory send her, that she may be with me and toil, and that I may learn what is pleasing to thee. (Wis 9:10 RSV)

Then the Creator of all things gave me [Lady Wisdom] a commandment, and the one who created me assigned a place for my tent. And he said, "Make your dwelling in Jacob, and in Israel receive your inheritance." (Sir 24:8 RSV)

34. "You will look for me and not find me . . ."

Johannine misunderstanding. They think he is going to the Diaspora.

Jesus is referring to his going to the Father ("the one who sent me")

Jesus' words: similar to the Words of Divine Wisdom in Proverbs

Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me.²⁹ Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, (Prov 1:28-29 RSV)

Johannine Irony

Jesus departure to the Father will make his teaching available to the whole world
Ironically, his enemies have stated the truth.

Lecture 38. Last Day of Tabernacles, Part 1, John 7:37-52

Translation of the Greek (*Synopsis*, #240, 241) Brown's translation, Anchor Bible
Omitted from the recorded lecture to shorten it. Please Pause lecture and read these verses.

Overall Structure (Moloney, 236)

The last day of Tabernacles is divided into 3 parts:

- 1 7:35-52, Jesus' self-revelation as living water leads to *schism*. (Today's Lecture)
- 2 8:12-30, Jesus reveals himself as "the light of the world" (next time)
- 3 8:31-59, Jesus and "the Jews" in *conflict* over their respective origins (next time)

37. Last day of the Feast

At the end of all the ceremonial water processions and libations
See "Ceremonies" in Lecture 35.

Source of the rivers of living water: The believer.

If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink.³⁸ He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, "Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water." (RSV)

Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink.³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as scripture says: "Rivers of living water¹ will flow from within him." (NAB)

Source of the rivers of living water: Jesus

If any one thirst, let him come [to me]; and let him drink³⁸ who believes in me. As the scripture has said, "Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water" (Brown AB)

If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me, and³⁸ let the one who believes in me drink. Just as the scripture says, "From within him will flow rivers of living water." (NET)

Is there any parallel in John for the idea of living water flowing from the believer? [Some cite 4:14] However, there is no suggestion in this verse that the believer will be a source for others.⁹

V. 38, What scripture passage?

Not an exact quote of the Hebrew MT or from the LXX

Brown: most likely candidate is the rock Moses struck in the Exodus story (Exod 17:6; Num 20:8)¹⁰

Rabbinic interpretation: the rock **travelled** with the Israelites

The Rabbis did not know about Pentateuchal source criticism.

Moses strikes the rock in Exodus; He strikes the Rock in Numbers

Fuller: they imagined it as a type of “travelling canteen.”

It symbolized the Torah.

Paul converts it to a symbol of Christ

and all drank the same supernatural drink. For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ. (1Cor 10:4 RSV)

Other References to this story

They asked, and he brought quails, and gave them **bread** from heaven in abundance.⁴¹
He opened the rock, and **water** gushed forth; it flowed through the desert like a river. (Ps 105:40-41 RSV)

Brown notes that this John 6-7 follows this sequence: bread (6); water (7)

He cleft rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep.¹⁶ He made streams come out of the rock, and caused **waters to flow** down **like rivers**. (Ps 78:15-16 RSV)

Close verbal parallel to John 7:38

39. There was no Spirit

Some scribes alter this to make it fit orthodox Trinitarian doctrine.

“There was no spirit yet **given**”

But a gospel statement such as this is not concerned with the inner life of God; it is concerned with God’s relation to us. The Spirit was not a reality as far as man was concerned until the glorified Jesus would communicate the Spirit to men (20:22).¹¹

42. Bethlehem. Two interpretations.

1) John (and readers) knows the story of the birth in Bethlehem.

He records this statement to display the ignorance of the opponents of Jesus.

2) John (and readers) do not know the story of the birth in Bethlehem.

They regard the place of physical birth as irrelevant; Jesus is “from above”

45. Return of the Temple police.

They had been sent out in v. 37, **4 days earlier**.

Brown: “Obviously the arrangement is artificial.”

The point seems to be that they have been listening to Jesus, and this has changed their minds.

⁹ Brown, 321.

¹⁰ Brown, 322.

¹¹ Brown, 324

48-50. Have any of the Pharisees believed?

Historical remark by Brown: “ In fact, of course, many of the Pharisees would not have shared this contempt of the ignorant.”

The disdainful question of the Johannine Pharisees is answered in a way they do not expect.

One of “their own number” Nicodemus, speaks up.

He had “come to Jesus” in John 3. He will be part of the burial team in John 19.

This, of course, demonstrates **their** ignorance (of what their own members are doing).

Observation by Moloney

The Tabernacles ritual involved turning from the (pagan) sun toward God.

The ritual is in vain, because they are turning away from the one God sent.

52. Prophet / **The Prophet**

The majority of manuscripts say “no prophet comes”

This is curious, because some prophets (Jonah, Nahum, Hosea) did in fact come from Galilee

This would highlight the ignorance of the Pharisees even more.

Moloney accepts this reading as genuine.

Some mss. read “**the** Prophet does not come” This would be “the Prophet-like-Moses”

Brown accepts this reading as genuine.

Moses was a **teacher** who worked **signs**.

Lecture 39. [The Woman Caught in Adultery, 7:53-8:11]

Translation of the Greek (*Synopsis* #242).

Manuscript Problems

Oldest and best manuscripts do not have this passage.

Some mss. place it after 7:36, 7:44, or after the end of the Gospel.

After 7:52 (in the manuscript of the man who gave the verse numbers to the NT)

After Luke 21:38 (people coming to the temple to hear Jesus teach)

Manuscript Distribution¹²

No Greek Father of the first millennium commented on this passage.

Confined to the scriptures of the Western Church in early centuries.

Old Latin; Vulgate

3rd century *Didascalia Apostolorum* knows of the story

Story known (not necessarily as Scripture) in 2nd century Syria.

Why did the story not become a part of the majority of manuscripts at an early date?

The ease with which Jesus forgave the adulteress was hard to reconcile with the stern penitential discipline of the early Church. It was only when a more liberal penitential practice was firmly established that this story received a wide acceptance.¹³

Importance for Johannine Studies

Tells us nothing about Johannine theology.

¹² Brown, 335.

¹³ Brown, 335.

Anyone who refers to this passage as supporting Johannine theology loses points on their paper.

Historicity

John Meier (5-volume Marginal Jew series on historical Jesus) regards the story as probably historical.

A genuine piece of Jesus tradition from Stage 1.

Not written by any of the Evangelists. (The style is closest to Luke's).

Canonicity (Separate Issue from Historicity)

Since it is in the Vulgate the Roman Catholic Church accepts it as canonical.

Since it was in manuscript used to give verses to the KJV, most Protestants accept it as canonical.

Daniel & Susanna

Both Moloney & Brown call attention to the similarities with the story of Susanna in Daniel 13.

Both readings are read together in the weekday lectionary for Lent.

Daniel saves an **innocent** woman accused of adultery.

Jesus saves a **guilty** woman accused of adultery.