

The Unbelief of Jesus' Brothers and People of Jerusalem John 7:1-36

by David Servant

The sermon explores the unbelief of Jesus' brothers and the people of Jerusalem, emphasizing the necessity of recognizing Jesus as the Son of God for salvation.

Scripture: Mark 3:21, John 7:5-6, John 7:30, John 7:33, John 20:31

Topics: "Divine Sonship", "Unbelief Consequences"

Description

David Servant delves into the significance of believing in Jesus beyond acknowledging historical facts or miracles, emphasizing the crucial belief in Jesus as the divine Son of God for salvation. Despite Jesus' own brothers' initial disbelief due to embarrassment and misunderstanding, Jesus remained obedient to His Father's timing, knowing His ultimate fate in Jerusalem. Jesus openly declared His divine origin and mission, causing debates among people who struggled to accept Him as the Messiah because of their limited understanding of Scriptures. The phrase 'His time had not yet come' in John's Gospel refers to Jesus' predestined crucifixion during the Passover Feast, highlighting God's sovereign control over events. Jesus' statement to the Pharisees about not being able to go where He was going signifies the consequence of unbelief in Him, leading to exclusion from heaven.

Transcript

According to what John wrote, before Jesus' death and resurrection, His own brothers didn't believe in Him. This teaches us that believing in Jesus means believing more than the fact that He was just a person in history. And it means believing more than the fact that Jesus did miracles. Jesus' brothers certainly believed He was a real person, and they also knew He did miracles. But they didn't believe that He was the divine Son of God, as indicated by how they spoke to Him, scoffing at Him. In order to be saved, we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

Being members of the same family, Jesus' brothers were perhaps embarrassed by His claims that seemed so outrageous and His growing unpopularity. We are told in Mark's Gospel that on at least one occasion, Jesus' family tried to drag Him back home with them, saying to other people that He was out of His mind (see Mark 3:21). On this occasion that John recorded, Jesus' brothers chided Him for what they perceived as His inconsistency. If He wanted to succeed in His mission, why would He hesitate to go to a well-attended Jewish feast in Jerusalem?

Jesus replied that it wasn't time for Him to go, indicating His obedience to His Father. He knew that, because many people in Jerusalem didn't like His convicting message, there was a growing opposition there that would eventually result in His crucifixion. It was important that He not be crucified prematurely, before the Passover Feast. So, in order not to cause too much of a stir, Jesus went to Jerusalem secretly, separately from His brothers.

Even though at first very few people knew He was there, Jesus was the main topic of conversation at the feast, and the Jewish leaders were on the lookout for Him. People debated about Him. Some thought He was a wonderful man while others considered Him to be a deceiver or even demon-possessed. Some believed He was the Messiah because of all His miracles. Others thought He couldn't be the promised One because they didn't know enough of the Scriptures and assumed the Messiah would simply appear, having no known origin. They knew, however, that Jesus was the son of Mary and (they thought) Joseph, and was from the town of Nazareth. So how could He be the Messiah?

Jesus, as always, answered His critics truthfully. He told them that He wasn't trying to pretend that He had just appeared or that He had no earthly origin. (Such credentials were not required of the Messiah.) And He clearly claimed to have come from God, having been sent as God's representative to bring God's teaching, that He was seeking to honor God, and that He would soon be going back to God. He was claiming to be much more than just a wonderful person or a prophet. He was claiming to be the Messiah, the Son of God!

Q. We read today that the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem tried to arrest Jesus, but no one laid a hand on Him because, "His time had not yet come" (John 7:30). What do you think that means?

A. We find that phrase, "His time had not yet come" and variations of it a number of times in the Gospel of John. As we read in later chapters, it becomes clear that Jesus was referring to the time of His crucifixion, the event for which He had been born. Jesus was predestined to die at the Passover Feast in Jerusalem, thus, when men made plans to arrest Him before then, God somehow prevented it from happening. Jesus would die when it was God's preordained time.

Q. Jesus told the Pharisees that they would not be able to come where He would be going. What did He mean?

A. He meant that they would not be able to enter heaven, joining Him there, because they did not believe in Him.

Application: People today have the same opinions about Jesus as they did back when Jesus walked the earth. The reason John recorded so much of their debate is because the most important thing anyone can do is to decide who Jesus is. Those who believe that He is who He claimed to be are given eternal life, just as John wrote near the end of his Gospel, "[I have written] so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life" (John 20:31).

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