

27. It is NOT the time yet

March 27, 2011

Now in a couple of months, your children or grandchildren will be out of school. Many families will take their trips for family reunions, – did I hear someone groaning? – or trips to fun places around the country.

With the children in the back, the back of your vehicle is slouching downward because your wife told you to load up everything including the kitchen sink. Finally, she is somewhat satisfied with her make-up and clothing, so off you go before she wants to look at her hair again. You barely get on I-10, your children start to holler from the back with that infamous question, “Are we there yet?”

You know that you are going to hear the same question umpteen times before you get there and feeling numerous kicks on the back of your car seat by your children. Oh, let’s not forget your wife’s “that look” when you are lost again or are pulled over by police for not stopping at the stop sign at the last corner. You cannot wait to go back home to have some rest from the vacation. But it is not the time yet.

This morning we get to hang around with Jesus as He was jeered by His own earthly half-brothers about not showing off His power to the world and not letting them know who He really was. Jesus pretty much told them that because it was not the time yet.

We will learn what kind of time He was talking about and why He was so on schedule, if you will.

A. JESUS, THE ISRAEL’S MOST WANTED MAN

John 7:1 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him.

In our western minds, we think that the things happened at the end of chapter 6 and what is happening in the beginning of chapter 7 were done within a few days. Not so.

We have to remember that the Book of John was not written to list all the things of Jesus in chronological way from the beginning to the end. Rather, John wrote the events in an anthological way which is a collage of the select events and speeches of Jesus to show who He was.

There is a six month gap in those words “after these things”. If you’d like to know what happened during that period, you need to confer with Matthew 15-18 and Mark 7-9. In other words, apostle John skipped all the events that happened during that time to get to the point he wanted to make.

I think that NLT had a better rendering for “walked in Galilee” than NKJV.

John 7:1 After this, Jesus stayed in Galilee, going from village to village. He wanted to stay out of Judea where the Jewish leaders were plotting his death.
NLT

In Judea including Jerusalem, there were plenty of people who had an ax to grind against Jesus. They had Jesus on their crosshair.

B. SHOW YOURSELF, MAKE YOURSELF KNOWN

John 7:2-5 Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. 3 His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. 4 For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." 5 For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

The Feast of Tabernacles looked back to Israel's journey through the wilderness, and looked forward to the promised kingdom of Messiah. During the Feast the Jews lived in booths made of branches to remind them of God's providential care of the nation for nearly forty years.

All Jewish males within a twenty-mile radius of Jerusalem were obligated to participate in this festive event, plus from other further out regions.

Because of the Jewish leaders who wanted to kill Him, Jesus remained in Galilee, so far.

V3 gives three insights about the brothers of Jesus:

1) Jesus had half brothers and sisters.

A Roman Catholic's doctrine insists that Mary remained a perpetual virgin until she died. They even insist that the "brothers of Jesus" were neither the sons of Mary, nor the brothers of Jesus in the proper sense of the word, but they were His cousins or more or less near relatives.

I don't see anywhere in the Bible giving them a biblical ground to come up with that doctrine. It is a false doctrine. Mary bore other children, with Joseph as their natural father according to Matthew 13:55-56. So Jesus would have been their half brother.

Matthew 13:55-56 Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? 56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?

2) His half brothers didn't believe in Him.

How would you like to have a perfect older brother? Can you imagine being little brothers of Jesus? While they were doing all the mischief, He didn't sin even one time. It is like you are sharpening your devilish horns on your head, your perfect brother doing dishes, laundry, ironing shirts, cleaning the house, and cooking for your mom at the same time polishing his angelic halo.

Jesus' own brothers were unbelievers at this time. Do you know what it tells me? Proximity is not a guarantee of spirituality. Look at Judas Iscariot. He was with Jesus day and night for three years, yet he was the betrayer at its worst. Just because you are a son or daughter or a pastor, or a cousin of an elder, or friend of a church deacon, that does not give you a guarantee of your salvation to heaven.

Jesus' brothers' unbelief was already prophesied by king David in one of his Psalms:
Psalm 69:8 I have become a stranger to my brothers, And an alien to my mother's children;

I am sure that Jesus' brothers didn't like Him, nor did they care about His miracles. I don't believe that they were really concerned about His well-being, rather, they probably, in their twisted jealousy, wanted to see Him failing in a big city.

In Mark 3, Jesus' own family came to take Him back because they thought He was out of His mind. But later, after Jesus' resurrection, He appeared to them. From then on, they became firm believers in Him. James became the first pastor of the Jerusalem church according to Acts 15 and he was the author of the Book of James. Another brother of Jesus, Judas who was known as Jude. That is not "Hey, Jude," but just 'Jude.' He authored the Book of Jude which is located right before the Book of Revelation. Both of them are powerful Books.

3) The brothers of Jesus had the world's point of view.

No doubt Jesus' half brothers knew that the multitude of disciples had deserted Him when He taught them about eating His flesh and drinking His blood. In their minds, going up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacle would be His opportunity to recoup His losses. I am sure that you all remember that Satan had offered a similar suggestion to Jesus three years before during his temptation in the wilderness.

Their idea was that Jesus should go to Jerusalem to make Himself known instead of hanging around in the little dinky boondocks, like Galilee. It would be like saying to someone, "Leave Sahuarita and go to Los Angeles or New York."

Jesus had already turned down the crowd's offer to make Him King, and He was not about to yield to His brothers' urge in any way. Celebrities might ride to success on the applause of the crowd, but God's servants should know better. Jesus avoided all publicity and fanfare.

C. MY TIME HAS NOT YET COME

John 7:6-8 Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. 7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. 8 You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come."

I asked you to note the word 'time'. Greek has two words for time: 'chronos' and 'kairos.' The one used in v6 is 'kairos.' It often refers to time not simply in its chronological sequence, but with references to the events that take place in it. It is commonly used to refer to the 'harvest season.' In other words, Jesus was not about to reveal the real reason and purpose of His earthly visit as a man yet. Jesus waited for the harvest season.

Because Jesus was completely submitted to the will of the Father, the timing of God the Father was important. But for Jesus' brothers, who were not submitted to God's will in the same way, any time was fine.

Some people are notorious about being late. They are late for class; they are late for an appointment; they are late for church – some of you are thinking, "Are you talking about me?" Yes. At that rate they probably will be late for their own funerals. But our God is never, never late.

In Jesus' life as well as our own, the Father's timing is just as important as His will. Many stumble because they sense God's will for them, but they run ahead of His timing. This is a sure recipe for frustration.

We don't want to run ahead of the Lord, but only to be yanked back by Him; nor do we want to be dragged behind the Lord because we meander around without paying attention to Him.

Please go back to v7:

John 7:7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.

The people of the world who are controlled by satan whether they realize it or not, spiritually do not hate other unbelievers or carnal Christians. Because they are in the devil's system. Satan does not irritate his followers as long as they think that they are in control of their own fate.

But Jesus' followers were a different story. Satan hated them; he could not stand them; he did everything to harass them and destroy their testimonies of Jesus.

Situations haven't changed much since then. The world which consists of unbelievers and demonic forces, still hates Jesus and His followers for the same reason. Unbelievers don't like to be told that they are wrong. They don't want to be called evil, nor do they want godly people to have an easy life. They want their sins to be accepted by everybody and they want Christians to be tolerant with them even though they are not tolerant with the truth of the Bible.

A good example is the militant homosexuals in America. They don't have shame; they insist that their behaviors should be allowed as they wish; they want all the comments against homosexual life to be removed.

In these three verses Jesus mentioned, "My time" twice. What did He mean? What is His time? All the prophecies of Jesus in the OT that start in Genesis chapter 3 to the birth of Jesus and all the other things in His earthly life point to one thing which was the goal of Jesus on earth – reconciling the sinful humanity to God the Father through His own atoning sacrifice on the cross and resurrection from the grave. None could be done by the chance of casual opportunity but by a divine calendar predetermined by God the Father.

D. DID JESUS LIE?

John 7:9-10 When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee. 10 But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

Some compare these two verses as if they caught Jesus in a lie. Jesus said He would not go publicly as to attract attention as His brothers wanted, but He did not preclude Him from going up privately. Jesus was not lying or being evasive; rather, He was exercising sensible caution.

E. WHICH ONE IS HE, A GOOD MAN OR A DECEIVER?

John 7:11-13 Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, "Where is He?" 12 And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, "He is good"; others said, "No, on the contrary, He deceives the people." 13 However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

As I stated this before, when apostle John says "the Jews", he means the Jewish leaders who lived in Jerusalem and were attached to the temple ministry. This would include the Pharisees and the chief priests – most of whom were Sadducees – as well as the scribes. These men differed theologically and hated each other, but they agreed on one thing: their opposition to Jesus Christ and their determination to get rid of Him. The exceptions would be Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea whom we are going to meet at the end of the Book of John.

Listen, a good man doesn't walk around and claim that he is God. If Jesus was a good man, just a normal man like you and me, but He claimed that He was God, He would be a liar and could not be a good person. So either He is God Almighty Himself or a deceiver.

C.S. Lewis wrote, "You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool; you can spit at Him and kill Him for a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

F. APPLICATIONS

1) Proximity is not a guarantee of spirituality.

We cannot piggyback someone's spiritual status, but our own.

2) We don't want to run ahead of the Lord, but only to be yanked back by Him; nor do we want to be dragged behind the Lord because we meander around without paying attention to Him.

3) God is never, never late. He is ALWAYS ON TIME.