

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 133 – May 13th – John 7:32-52

Works frequently referenced in these notes on John

Barrett, CK	<i>The Gospel According to John</i> , London, SPCK, 1967
Beasley-Murray, GR	<i>John</i> , <i>Word Bible Commentary</i> , vol 36, Word Books, 1987
Carson, DA	<i>The Gospel According to John</i> , Leicester, IVP (Apollos), 1991

Verse 32

Ἦκουσαν οἱ Φαρισαῖοι τοῦ ὄχλου
γογγύζοντος περὶ αὐτοῦ ταῦτα, καὶ ἀπέστειλαν
οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ὑπηρέτας ἵνα
πιάσωσιν αὐτόν.

γογγύζω grumble, complain, murmur

Cf. v.12.

ἀποστελλω send, send out
ἀρχιερεὺς, εὼς m high priest, member of
high priestly family

Most of the chief priests (members of the leading priestly families) were Sadducees (Acts 5:17). In their growing opposition to Jesus and in plotting his death these opposing parties were united.

ὑπηρέτης, ου m attendant, servant

Here, the temple guards, a kind of police force.

πιάσωσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl πιᾶζω
seize, arrest

Verse 33

εἶπεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ἔτι χρόνον μικρὸν μεθ'
ὑμῶν εἰμι καὶ ὑπάγω πρὸς τὸν πέμψαντά με.

ἐτι still, yet

χρονος, ου m time, period of time

"Jesus is unperturbed by the plot to arrest him because he knows that before his hour comes there must intervene a 'little while' (cf. 12:35; also 13:33; 14:19; 16:16-19, where μικρὸν is used without χρόνον), in which he must accomplish the remainder of his ministry (9:4; 11:9f.). His lot is determined not by the Jewish authorities but by himself, in obedience to the will of God." Barrett.

ὑπάγω go, go one's way, depart
πέμψαντά Verb, aor act ptc, m acc s πεμπω
send

"The language of v 33 constantly reappears in the Upper Room discourses (for ὑπάγω of the departure of Jesus from this world to the Father see 13:3, 33-36; 14:4, 28; 16:5, 10, 17; for the 'little while,' see the exposition of it in 16:16-22, and for the return to the Father, chap. 17)." Beasley-Murray.

Verse 34

ζητήσατέ με καὶ οὐχ εὐρήσατε, καὶ ὅπου εἰμι
ἐγὼ ὑμεῖς οὐ δύνασθε εἰθεῖν.

ζητεω seek, search for, look for
εὐρήσατέ Verb, fut act indic, 2 pl εὐρίσκω
find

The second με in the sentence is omitted by P⁶⁶ & D L W etc, but included in P⁷⁵ B N T etc The meaning is the same on either reading.

ὅπου adv. where

εἰθεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐρχομαι

Verse 35

εἶπον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι πρὸς ἑαυτούς· Ποῦ
οὗτος μέλλει πορεύεσθαι ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὐχ
εὐρήσομεν αὐτόν; μὴ εἰς τὴν διασπορὰν τῶν
Ἑλλήνων μέλλει πορεύεσθαι καὶ διδάσκειν
τοὺς Ἑλληνας;

εἶπον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl λεγω
ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself
ποῦ interrogative adverb where, at what
place, to what place
μελλω (before an infin) be going, intend
πορευομαι go, travel
εὐρήσομεν Verb, fut act indic, 1 pl εὐρίσκω
διασπορα, ας f dispersion (of the Jews or
Christians scattered throughout the Graeco-
Roman world)

Ἑλλην, ηνος m a Greek, non-Jew

The meaning here is equivalent to 'Gentile.'

διδασκω teach

"With characteristic irony, he makes the Jews utter incredulously and uncomprehendingly what is in fact the truth. Jesus, through the Church, will go into the Dispersion, and will teach Gentiles, both heathen and proselytes." Barrett. For similar irony cf. the words of Caiaphas in 11:49-50.

Carson comments, "Indeed, there is even more irony if, as has been suggested in this commentary ... the Fourth Gospel was in the first instance penned as an evangelistic treatise aimed at the diaspora Jews and Greek speaking proselytes."

Verse 36

τίς ἐστιν ὁ λόγος οὗτος ὃν εἶπε· Ζητήσετε με καὶ οὐχ εὑρήσετε, καὶ ὅπου εἰμι ἐγὼ ὑμεῖς οὐ δύνασθε ἐλθεῖν;

Verses 37-44

The feast of Tabernacles would focus thoughts on Israel's wilderness journey from Egypt to the Promised Land and remind them of how God had provided them with water in the desert. The festival included water being drawn from the pool of Siloam which was then poured out at the Temple as a libation.

Beasley-Murray adds, "Furthermore the rite was also linked with the anticipation of the abundant gift of living water flowing from Jerusalem when the kingdom of God comes (with Isa 12:3, cf. esp. Ezek 47:1–12 and Zech 14:8, both passages being read during the festival). The associations of the ceremony with the salvation of God, past, present, and future were accordingly evident to the people at the festival." Against this background, Jesus proclaims himself to be the source of living water to all who will come to him.

For the theme of water, cf. 4:10-14; 6:35 and 19:34. See also similar language in Rev. 22:17. There is probably also an allusion here to Is. 55:1.

Verse 37

Ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ μεγάλῃ τῆς ἑορτῆς εἰστήκει ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ ἔκραζεν λέγων· Ἐάν τις διψᾷ ἐρχέσθω πρὸς με καὶ πινέτω.

ἐσχατος, η, ον adj last, final
μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great
ἑορτη, ης f festival, feast

Cf. notes on verse 2. Carson comments, "Perhaps once word of the arrest warrant became known (vv. 32-34), Jesus kept quiet and out of sight until the time came for this dramatic pronouncement, and then its audacious authority prevented the temple guards from carrying out their assignment (vv. 45-46)."

Beasley-Murray comments, "The 'last day, the greatest day of the festival,' is an ambiguous designation. Whereas the festival proper is spoken of as seven days in Deut 16:13, 15; Ezek 45:25; *Jub.* 16:20–31; an eighth day, a sabbath, is reckoned in Lev 23:34–36 (cf. Num 29:12–39; 2 Macc 10:6). For the rabbis 'the last day' of the festival was the eighth day, but they never spoke of it as the *greatest* day.

Since the water-drawing rite and the dancing in the light of the great menoras were omitted on the eighth day, the description of 'the greatest day' is thought by many to denote the seventh day, when the priests processed around the altar with the water drawn from Siloam not once but *seven* times. Certainly if Jesus 'stood and cried out' at the moment when the priest at the altar had lifted up his hand to signify the completion of the rite, the effect of the cry on the multitude would have been as a thunderclap from heaven. Everybody would have known whose cry it was, and its significance, namely that everything embodied in that rite of past experience of salvation, present prayer, and future hope was available and offered through Jesus. The Evangelist's description of the effect of the cry upon the crowd and upon the temple police (vv 40–43, 46) would have been entirely comprehensible. Nevertheless one must acknowledge that it is not stated that such was the moment when Jesus made his great declaration, though it is not to be ruled out as fanciful. It is also to be recognized that the invitation would have been equally relevant on the eighth day, which was celebrated as a sabbath with appropriate ceremonies and was attended by a great congregation. The water-drawing ceremony was not enacted on that day; if the cry of vv 37–38 was uttered when the sign of past and hoped-for salvation was noticeably absent, the declaration of its presence in and through Jesus, with invitation to receive it from him, will have been a striking and powerful announcement."

εἰστήκει Verb, pluperf act indic, 3 s ἰστημι
stand

Suggests a public proclamation rather than conventional teaching.

κραζω cry out, call out

ἐαν if

διψαω be thirsty, thirst for

πρὸς με is included by the great majority of MSS, but omitted by a few – through an oversight?

πινω drink

Verse 37b-38a Punctuation

Punctuation is not original and can alter the sense:

- i) We may place a stop after *πινετω*, and a comma after *εις εμε*. In this case the rivers of living water flow from the believer (so Barrett, Carson, NIV).
- ii) We may place a comma after, *προς με* and a stop after *εις εμε* – 'If any man thirst let him come to me, he that believes in me let him drink.' With this construction the rivers of living water *may* be understood to flow from Jesus (so Beasley-Murray).

Verse 38

ὁ πιστεῶν εἰς ἐμέ, καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή,
ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ ῥέουσιν
ὕδατος ζῶντος.

πιστεω believe (in), have faith (in)
γραφη, ης f writing, Scripture

The Scripture reference is not clear. Some would argue that the reference to the Scriptures belongs only to the invitation to come to Christ, and would punctuate accordingly. However, the reference could be to Zech 14:8 and/or Ezek 47:1-12. These Scriptures picture life-giving water flowing from the Temple in ever increasing measure. If this is the reference then it pictures Jesus, the true Temple, as the source of this life-giving stream. But this stream flows not only *to* his people but *through* them or *from* them: they too are the Temple of the living God, bringing refreshment and life to a thirsty world.

Other passages suggested are Isa 58:11; Isa 12:3; 44:3; 49:10; Ezek 36:25-27; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:11-15; Zech 13:1. Nehemiah 8:5-18 and 9:15, 19-20 also provide interesting insight into the link between Tabernacles and God's provision of water to the Israelites in the desert, linking the theme of water with the gift of the Spirit. Carson favours the connection with Nehemiah and comments, "Jesus in John 7:37-39, prompted perhaps by the Feast of Tabernacles, thinks of that Feast in Nehemiah 9, and that chapter's use of the accounts of the provision of water from the rock, and the connection Nehemiah draws between water/manna and law/Spirit. But he takes one further step, the same Christological step he has taken when talking of worship with the woman at the well, or when talking of manna with the crowds in John 6: he insists he alone can provide the real drink, the satisfying Spirit. 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink' (v. 37). The Scripture has itself promised this bountiful provision of living water welling up in believers: all the Old Testament portrayals of this rich bounty are understood to be at bottom anticipations that point to the richest provision of all."

ποταμος, ου m river, stream

κοιλια, ας f stomach

ῥέουσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl *ῥεω* flow

ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

ζαω live, be alive

Verse 39

τοῦτο δὲ εἶπεν περὶ τοῦ πνεύματος οὗ ἔμελλον
λαμβάνειν οἱ πιστεύσαντες εἰς αὐτόν· οὐπω
γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐδέπω ἔδοξάσθη.

μελλω see v.35

λαμβάνω receive

Many MSS read οἱ πιστεύοντες, some Coptic MSS οἱ πιστεύσοντες, to relate the saying to the time of the Church.

οὐπω not yet

οὐπω γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα, 'the Spirit was not yet,' caused trouble for copyists. Many added the familiar ἅγιον, "holy"; others extended either *πνεῦμα* or *πνεῦμα ἅγιον* with *δεδομένον* ('given'), to avoid the idea that the Holy Spirit did not yet exist; D achieved the same end with *τὸ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπ' αὐτοῖς* ('the Holy Spirit was not yet upon them'), while Ethiopic has the term 'came' (upon them). The shorter version of the text is original.

Barrett comments, "Various attempts were made to exclude the possible though unintelligent inference that the Holy Spirit did not exist before the glorification of Jesus."

οὐδέπω adv not yet

ἐδοξάσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s δοξάζω
glorify, exalt

John means that the gift of the Holy Spirit, poured out upon believers, required the glorification of Christ – his death, resurrection and return to the Father. The Spirit applies Christ's finished work. See also 20:22 and 19:34, also 14:16,26; 15:26.

Verse 40

Ἐκ τοῦ ὄχλου οὖν ἀκούσαντες τῶν λόγων τούτων ἔλεγον· Οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ προφήτης·

ἀληθῶς adv truly, in truth
προφητης, ου m prophet

Cf. 1:21,25; 6:14. Could be a reference to Deut 18:15,18. Carson comments, "When Jesus fed the crowds in the wilderness, some immediately thought he must be the Prophet like Moses predicted in Deuteronomy 18:15-18 (cf. notes on 6:14), doubtless owing to the fact that the closest Old Testament equivalent to this miracle was the provision of manna under Moses' ministry. Perhaps Jesus' most recent pronouncement (vv. 37-39) prompted some to think of Moses again, this time in connection with the miraculous provision of water from the rock (Ex. 17:6; Nu 20:11). That is why some reflected on Deuteronomy 18 once again, and concluded, *Surely this man is the Prophet.*"

Alternatively, picking up the conflicting views expressed in the following verse, some may have thought him to be a prophet who would be forerunner of the Messiah – maybe Elijah.

Verse 41

ἄλλοι ἔλεγον· Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστός· οἱ δὲ ἔλεγον· Μὴ γὰρ ἐκ τῆς Γαλιλαίας ὁ χριστός ἔρχεται;

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

Cf. Jn 1:25. Carson comments, "It is possible (though not certain) that Christians were the first to identify the Davidic Messiah with the prophet like Moses, precisely because they recognised in Jesus the one who perfectly fulfilled both prophecies – just as it is doubtful that anyone systematically linked the suffering servant prophecies with the royal messianic prophecies until Jesus himself came on the scene."

Verse 42

οὐχ ἡ γραφή εἶπεν ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος Δαυίδ, καὶ ἀπὸ Βηθλέεμ τῆς κώμης ὅπου ἦν Δαυίδ, ἔρχεται ὁ χριστός;

γραφη, ης f writing, Scripture
σπερμα, τος n seed, offspring

κωμη, ης f village, small town

Cf. Mic 5:2. The crowd view him merely as a Galilean. They do not know that he was born in Bethlehem. Another example of Johannine irony.

ὅπου adv. where

Verse 43

σχίσμα οὖν ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ δι' αὐτόν.

σχίσμα, τος n division, split

"The word σχίσμα occurs in several important places in the gospel (7:43; 9:16; 10:19), and summarises the result of the mission of Jesus, since the inevitable effect of his word was to create a division among his hearers: the shining of the light distinguished between those who loved and those who hated it (3:19-21). Cf. Mark 4:11f.; this division among men is, in the New Testament, an inseparable part of the mission of Jesus." Barrett.

Beasley-Murray comments, "People confronted with the revelation of God in Christ are not allowed to remain neutral; they divide before him as before the judgment seat of God (cf. 3:19-21; 12:31-32, 46-49, and for further instances of such division see vv 12-13, 30-31; 9:16; 10:19)."

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γινομαι

Verse 44

τινὲς δὲ ἤθελον ἐξ αὐτῶν πιάσαι αὐτόν, ἀλλ' οὐδεὶς ἐπέβαλεν ἐπ' αὐτόν τὰς χεῖρας.

θέλω wish, will

πιάσαι Verb, aor act infin πιάζω cf. v.30

"Some who leaned toward quick political answers *wanted to seize him*, but as in v. 30, *no-one laid a hand on him*: his hour had not yet come." Carson. Cf. 13:1; 17:1.

Verse 45

Ἦλθον οὖν οἱ ὑπηρέται πρὸς τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ Φαρισαίους, καὶ εἶπον αὐτοῖς ἐκεῖνοι· Διὰ τί οὐκ ἠγάγετε αὐτόν;

ἦλθον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3 pl ἔρχομαι

"If οὖν has its ... common inferential force, the idea is that because the crowds were so divided that 'no-one laid a hand on him' (v. 44), *therefore* the temple guards became disoriented and abandoned their assignment and *went back to the chief priests and Pharisees* (i.e. to the Sanhedrin; cf. notes on v. 32)." Carson.

ὑπηρετης, ου m see v.32

εἶπον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl λεγω

ἠγάγετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl ἀγω

Verse 46

ἀπεκρίθησαν οἱ ὑπηρέται· Οὐδέποτε ἐλάλησεν οὕτως ἄνθρωπος.

ἀποκρῖνομαι answer, reply, say

οὐδέποτε never

λαλεῶ speak, talk

οὕτως and οὕτω adv. thus, in this way

The pithy statement of the temple police (text as in P^{66c} P⁷⁵ B L T W etc) is filled out variously in the MSS traditions to express the thought 'as this man speaks.'

Cf. Mark 1:22; Matt 7:28-29; Mark 12:17b, 32-34, 37b; John 8:7-9; 18:3-6.

Carson comments, "The witness of the guards was not borne of genuine faith, but John intends his readers to perceive that the guards spoke better than they knew. Literally rendered, their words mean, 'No man (ἄνθρωπος, 'human being') ever spoke as he does' – for John's readers know, as the guards did not, that Jesus is not merely a human being, but the incarnate Word (1:14), the one whose every word and deed is the revelation of the Father (5:19-30; 8:28-29)."

Verse 47

ἀπεκρίθησαν οὖν αὐτοῖς οἱ Φαρισαῖοι· Μὴ καὶ ὑμεῖς πεπλάνησθε;

πεπλάνησθε Verb, perf pass indic, 2 pl

πλαναῶ lead astray, mislead, deceive

Verse 48

μή τις ἐκ τῶν ἀρχόντων ἐπίστευσεν εἰς αὐτὸν ἢ ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων;

ἀρχων, οντος m ruler, official

πιστεῦω believe (in), have faith (in)

ἢ or

Beasley-Murray comments, "They tell the officers that none of the rulers or Pharisees have believed on him (the question of v 48 expects the answer, 'No'). This is a further instance of the Evangelist's irony, for he has earlier recounted the meeting with Jesus of a 'ruler of the Jews,' whom Jesus described as 'the teacher of Israel,' and who confessed that Jesus was 'a teacher sent from God' (3:1-10), and the Evangelist is about to tell of the same man's intervention on behalf of Jesus in the council (cf. also the Evangelist's summation of the public ministry of Jesus to the Jews in 12:37-43: 'Many of the rulers believed on Jesus')."

And Carson comments, "The irony cuts another way. It is a commonplace of the Christian gospel that not many wise and noble are chosen: God makes it a practice to go after the weak, the foolish, the ignorant, the despised (e.g. Mt 11:25; Lk 10:21; 1 Cor 1:26-31). The religious authorities boast that they have not been duped; their very boasting is precisely what has duped them."

Verse 49

ἀλλὰ ὁ ὄχλος οὗτος ὁ μὴ γινώσκων τὸν νόμον ἐπάρατοί εἰσιν.

ὄχλος, ου m crowd, multitude

νομος, ου m law

ἐπαρatos, ου under God's curse

Those spoken of here correspond to the 'people of the land' of rabbinic literature. It implies a contrast between the common people and the scholars.

Verse 50

λέγει Νικόδημος πρὸς αὐτούς, ὁ ἐλθὼν πρὸς αὐτὸν πρότερον, εἷς ὢν ἐξ αὐτῶν·

ἐλθων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ἐρχομαι

πρότερον and το π. adv before, previously

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

Verse 51

Μὴ ὁ νόμος ἡμῶν κρίνει τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐὰν μὴ ἀκούσῃ πρῶτον παρ' αὐτοῦ καὶ γινῶ τί ποιεῖ;

κρίνει Verb, pres/fut act indic, 3 s κρινω

judge, condemn

ἐὰν μὴ unless, except

πρῶτον adv. first, first of all

γινῶ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s γινωσκω

Cf. Ex 23:1; Deut 1:16; 17:4.

Beasley-Murray comments, "It is attested variously in rabbinic writings, e.g., ExodRab 21:3: 'Men pass judgment on a man if they hear his words; if they do not hear his words they cannot establish judgment on him.' On this basis the protest of Nicodemus carries the implication that, in refusing to listen to one who challenged their mode of interpreting the Law, the members of the Sanhedrin are setting themselves against the Law and consequently are law-breakers – like the people of the land!"

Verse 52

ἀπεκρίθησαν καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῶ· Μὴ καὶ σὺ ἐκ
τῆς Γαλιλαίας εἶ; ἐραύνησον καὶ ἴδε ὅτι ἐκ τῆς
Γαλιλαίας προφήτης οὐκ ἐγείρεται.

"The Sanhedrin responds to this intervention with a biting attack on Nicodemus, on the assumption that only a Galilean would listen to *this* Galilean! For Galilee was despised as an area that did not keep the Law with the scrupulousness of Judea." Beasley-Murray.

ἐραύνησον Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s

ἐραυναω search, examine

ἴδε see, behold, look, beware

προφήτης, ου m prophet

For προφήτης P^{66*} and apparently P⁷⁵ read ὁ προφήτης, namely the prophet like Moses (Deut 18:15), which many moderns consider to be the original reading. These scholars would not have been ignorant of the fact that Jonah the son of Amittai did come from Galilee (see 2 Kings 14:25).

ἐγείρω raise