

John 7:37-8:59 • Simchat Torah

Introduction

In John 7 we see Jesus at what is called the Feast of Booths or Feast of Tabernacles. This particular feast draws upon the imagery of the millennium in Ezekiel 47 and represents the millennial reign of Christ. According to Zechariah 12, when Jesus comes back and the Jews look upon Him whom they've pierced and He sets up His millennial kingdom, they begin celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles in Zechariah 14.

The Hebrews had three Spring feasts: Passover, First Fruits, and Pentecost (or Weeks). Jesus fulfills those in His first coming. But in His Second Coming Jesus fulfills the Autumn feasts, the final one being the Feast of Booths found here in John 7. He only partially fulfills the Autumn feasts in His first coming, He totally fulfills the Spring ones.

³⁷Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

⁴⁰Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, "This certainly is the Prophet."

⁴¹Others were saying, "This is the Christ."

Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? ⁴²Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"

⁴³So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him. ⁴⁴Some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

⁴⁵The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?"

⁴⁶The officers answered, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks."

⁴⁷The Pharisees then answered them, "You have not also been led astray, have you? ⁴⁸No one of the rulers or Pharisees

[Read 7:37-39]

Q: How does this draw upon the imagery of Ezekiel 47?

A: Ezekiel 47 describes the flow of water that alters the very landscape and becomes too deep to measure, a teaching about the nature of the Messiah's Millennial Reign.

Q: What kind of water is Jesus referring to?

A: He's referring to "Living water" as was offered to the Samaritan woman in chapter 4 and is referred to in Isaiah 44:3. In biblical metaphor liquids often typify different aspects of the Holy Spirit.

[Read 7:40-42]

Q: What is the basic problem with the people's understanding of Jesus? Why do they seem to have a difficult time understanding Him?

A: While Jesus is addressing things in a spiritual context, the people are only understanding Him on a "natural" level. He is speaking on a "midrashic" level. "Midrash" is the Jewish use of metaphor applied to scriptural interpretation where the "natural" or literal things are also accompanied by a deeper parallel spiritual meaning.

Q: Now what was their problem in understanding the Scriptures where the Messiah is concerned?

A: To be fair, their understanding was correct in v.42 that the Messiah would be a descendant of David and born in Bethlehem. Their mistake was in failing to recognize Jesus was both. They assumed these things weren't true, most likely because Galileans spoke with an accent that clearly identified He must have come from Galilee. Their real problem was that they desired God's Word to be fulfilled according to their **OWN** expectations and were not open to how God would actually choose to do it.

[Read 7:43-53]

Background: On the last day of the Feast the Levites would go down to the Pool of Siloach and take water in procession up to the temple mount where they would pour this "living water" out on the pavement. It was against this ritual that Jesus basically says, "I will give you the living water". What He is saying is that He's the messianic fulfillment of the greater spiritual meaning of the feast, that He'd be the one to give the Holy Spirit just as He told the woman at the well.

Q: Nicodemus pops up here again. How was Nicodemus' first encounter with Christ similar to the problem that is taking place between Christ and the people at the feast?

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has believed in Him, has he? ⁴⁹But this crowd which does not know the Law is accused.”

⁵⁰Nicodemus (he who came to Him before, being one of them) said to them, ⁵¹“Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?”

⁵²They answered him, “You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee.”

⁵³Everyone went to his home.

A: In John 3, even though Nicodemus was educated in Jewish midrash – the way they interpreted the Scriptures, he didn’t immediately make the connection Jesus was speaking spiritually about new birth. He, too, initially thought in terms of the literal, natural meaning and had to be reminded by Christ that He was speaking of the spiritual meaning of new birth.

Point: *The problem remained that while some recognized the ring of authority to Jesus’ words, they weren’t able to fully reconcile the full spiritual meaning behind them because of their expectations of how God’s Word would be fulfilled.*

Q: We know that in reality Christ was born in Bethlehem and only grew up in Galilee. But is it true that “no prophet arises out of Galilee”?

A: First, there were no scriptural prohibitions against a prophet coming from Galilee. But it would appear that they were really using the word “prophet” to keep from using the term “Messiah”. Second, the prophet Jonah was actually from Galilee. So they seem to have multiple problems with their approach to God’s Word.

Point: *Jesus is speaking spiritually, the people are thinking physically.*

Q: What is the point that “everyone went to his home” and yet Jesus seems to still be around?

A: There were three Pilgrim feasts provided for in the Old Testament, and by Jesus’ time a fourth had been instituted. These were feasts which the Jews made every effort to come celebrate in Jerusalem. In the Spring they came for Passover and Pentecost, in the Autumn they came for the Feast of Booths and what we now call Hanukkah, or identified in John 10 at the “Feast of Dedication”. Particularly for people from Galilee it would be a long walk down for a feast, a long walk back, and then almost seemingly they’d repeat it again because these feasts were so close together. So these were two holiday seasons when they would come down and stay for the duration before returning. (This is most likely the times when Jesus stayed with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.)

¹But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

²Early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them. ³The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court, ⁴they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act. ⁵Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?” ⁶They were saying this, testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him.

But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. ⁷But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” ⁸Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

⁹When they heard it, they began to go

[Read 8:1-11]

Q: According to their interpretation of Old Testament Law, what had to take place in order for charges to be brought against the woman?

A: There had to be two witnesses against the woman in order for her to be stoned under the Law. In fact, there were supposed to be at least two witnesses who were **NOT** guilty of the same sin to verify every fact of the indictment.

Q: How does this directly relate to Jesus’ response in qualifying the witnesses?

A: Jesus stipulates “He who is without sin” – He doesn’t say “He who is not guilty of the same sin of adultery”. It’s a very powerful way of stating the principle that to break any point of the Law, to commit **any** kind of sin, is to break the whole Law, to be guilty of **all** sin.

Point: *This also sets up Jesus’ discourse to follow in explaining who are the proper witnesses of His claims to being the Messiah. Essentially He first shows how they are incapable of properly keeping the Law and then provides the example that He alone can properly fulfill it, the ultimate proof in Jewish theological terms that Jesus of Nazareth is, indeed, the Messiah the Son of God.*

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out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court. ¹⁰Straightening up, Jesus said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?”

¹¹She said, “No one, Lord.”

And Jesus said, “I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.”

¹²Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”

¹³So the Pharisees said to Him, “You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true.”

¹⁴Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. ¹⁶But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me. ¹⁷Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. ¹⁸I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.”

¹⁹So they were saying to Him, “Where is Your Father?”

Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also.”

²⁰These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.

²¹Then He said again to them, “I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come.”

²²So the Jews were saying, “Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’?”

²³And He was saying to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.

²⁴Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”

²⁵So they were saying to Him, “Who are You?”

Q: What is the greater spiritual teaching in Jesus’ refusal to condemn the woman?

A: It’s the practical application of “*I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice*”. (Mat. 12:7)

Point: Whereas earthly practitioners of the Law see its main goal as judgment and condemnation, the true intent is leading back to repentance and obedience. The authorities are thinking physically, Jesus is speaking and acting spiritually.

[Read 8:12-20]

Q: What is the phrase Jesus begins using here that has a particularly powerful Old Testament meaning?

A: It’s the use of “*I am*”.

Observation: Jesus begins using this reference with increasing frequency from here on out to which we should pay special attention. It’s the Jewish way of specifically stating that He is the Messiah and on the same level as God. Jesus is forcing a decision as to whether or not they accept Him as the Messiah the Son of God or not.

Q: What was the powerful statement Jesus made back in John 5 to show they had a serious misunderstanding of the proper meaning and application of God’s Word?

A: “*For if you believed in Moses, you would believe Me*”. (Jn. 5:46)

Point: Over the course of the past few chapters Jesus has established that they not only don’t accept Jesus personally, but they don’t accept either the testimony of John the Baptist nor Moses through the Scriptures. Now they actually challenge the testimony of the Father by inquiring, “*Where is Your Father?*” They are unwilling to accept any testimony or witness where Christ is concerned.

Q: Why do you suppose it’s significant that this exchange took place in the treasury?

A: Again, going back to the fact that people were looking at things naturally while Jesus was speaking spiritually, it would be the ultimate contrast of the true Word of God coming through the Messiah the Son of God versus hypocrites who tried to discredit everything in order to protect the source of their earthly wealth. It was symbolic of the fact that spiritual treasure was more valuable than earthly riches.

[Read 8:21-27]

Q: What does it mean when the New Testament uses the phrase “the Jews”? Is it talking about any and every Jew?

A: The word “Jew” is really a derivative of “Judean”, describing the people of the southern kingdom of Judea who lived in and around Jerusalem. It came to really refer to the religious establishment in and around Jerusalem and those it influenced and controlled. Rather than referring to all Jews, it’s referring to the religious aristocracy and those they controlled.

Q: How does Jesus address the problem that they are ignoring the spiritual meaning of His message and instead listening with “natural” ears?

A: Jesus makes the distinction in v.23, “*You are of this world, I am not of this world*”. He is making His “*I am*” statements even more clearer by making a clear differentiation between the earthly and the heavenly.

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Jesus said to them, “What have I been saying to you from the beginning? ²⁶I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world.” ²⁷They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father.

²⁸So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. ²⁹And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.” ³⁰As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.

³¹So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

³³They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You will become free?’”

³⁴Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. ³⁵The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. ³⁶So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷I know that you are Abraham’s descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. ³⁸I speak the things

Q: But what continues to be the people’s main problem where Jesus is concerned?

A: “They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father.” (v.27) He’s speaking spiritually but they still don’t realize it.

Point: No one ever comes to an understanding of the true person and nature of Christ by natural reasoning or understanding – it takes spiritual acceptance. No one fully understands the meaning of Christ’s teaching or words until they accept Him as the Messiah.

[Read 8:28-30]

Q: How might Jesus be expressing a stark contrast to the people’s unbelief to this point?

A: Their core problem was expecting God’s Word to be fulfilled according to their own presuppositions and desires rather than according to God’s will and ways. The contrast is that whereas the people have pursued things their own way, even the Messiah the very Son of God will “do nothing on My own initiative”. He not only limits His actions to only what God desires, but His very words as “I speak these things as the Father taught Me”.

Q: What capability do people with sincere hearts apparently possess which others do not?

A: They always know real spiritual authority as opposed to the false; they know the difference between a real anointing and hypocrisy.

Application: Ever notice how false prophets/false teachers so often emphasize their self over all others? Ever notice how false teachers emphasize doctrines and teachings that can’t be fully backed up by God’s Word?

[Read 8:31-32]

Q: What is different here in Jesus’ target audience?

A: He’s specifically talking “to those Jews who had believed Him”.

Q: What is the key to discipleship?

A: “If you continue in My word”.

Point: Jesus doesn’t immediately call upon them to fix their love because biblical love must be guided and defined by biblical truth. The first and foremost step someone is to undertake immediately **AFTER** confessing Christ as their Messiah is to put the Bible into practice.

[Read 8:33-46]

Q: What is Jesus stating about the nature of sin?

A: The terms “enslaved” and “the slave of sin” refer to someone “practicing” it, someone returning to habitual sin. The Greek text is present-continuous, speaking of an active, repetitive act.

Point: Truly born-again Christians may sin, but they’re not to fall into and practice it habitually.

Q: We’ve discussed the people’s problem with their inability to understand Jesus spiritually, so how does Jesus begin to address that issue?

A: Jesus speaks to them anthropologically, plainly recognizing the earthly

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which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.”

³⁹They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.”

Jesus said to them, “If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham. ⁴⁰But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. ⁴¹You are doing the deeds of your father.”

They said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God.”

⁴²Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. ⁴³Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. ⁴⁴You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. ⁴⁶Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?

⁴⁷He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.”

⁴⁸The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”

⁴⁹Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. ⁵⁰But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. ⁵¹Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.”

⁵²The Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.’ ⁵³Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?”

⁵⁴Jesus answered, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’; ⁵⁵and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I

issue of being a descendant of Abraham in order to get them to recognize the greater meaning of being a true, **spiritual** descendant of Abraham.

Q: What is the most common difference between the way the world treats false teachers over true ones?

A: False teachers, who lie, put on a show, and twist God’s Word into whatever way pleases them are readily accepted en masse; true teachers are actively and vehemently condemned because they make a stand for the truth.

Q: How does Jesus clearly address the issue of whose Father He is referring to up until this point?

A: He specifically states, “If God were your Father” so as to make it clear who He is referring to. He follows this up by showing that rejection of God the Father means acceptance of the devil as one’s father in His place.

Point: This is the end result of someone who habitually practices sin, that their spiritual father is the devil.

Q: What is the spiritual problem associated with the children of the devil versus the children of God?

A: Because “there is no truth in” the devil, the children of the devil are incapable of accepting the truth.

Point: Paul states in Romans 1:25 that the end result of a life of habitual sin results in someone who has “exchanged the truth of God for a lie”. Although there is obviously often a significant outpouring of emotion when one comes to accept Christ as their personal Savior, the greater overriding need is acceptance and implementation of the truth in order to change one’s behavior going forward.

[Read 8:47-55]

Q: Throughout the history of the church, what has been a repeated reaction by hypocrites and heretics who have been confronted with their heresy and con artistry. What do they most often resort to?

A: They most often accuse their accusers of being demonic. They respond to being called a liar by in turn invoking a lie and calling you demonic.

Q: What does Jesus do to contrast their lie?

A: He goes back to the fact that the only remedy is to put into practice His Word. “If anyone keeps My word he will never see death”. (v.50)

Point: The cure for disobedience is always nothing less than obedience.

Q: What is the example Jesus provides here of how to deal with false teachers?

A: Direct and public confrontation, even in front of the congregation. Jesus never backs down from plainly stating and defending the truth when the issue of truth is on the line.

Q: How do these people actually come to properly define their own spiritual problem?

A: In v.52 they admit that the issue is the authority of Christ’s Word and

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do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.

then go on to state their belief that there are others who are greater than Him, thus refusing to recognize Him as the Messiah based on rejection of His Word.

Point: *The example of Christ which He personally provided for us is the assurance that all of God's Word will be fulfilled on our behalf – including eternal life – if we will only “know Him” by continually keeping “His word”.*

⁵⁶Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”

⁵⁷So the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?”

⁵⁸Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”

⁵⁹Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

⁴²You shall live in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, ⁴³so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.’ ” ⁴⁴So Moses declared to the sons of Israel the appointed times of the LORD.

¹Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Command the sons of Israel that they bring to you clear oil from beaten olives for the light, to make a lamp burn continually. ³Outside the veil of testimony in the tent of meeting, Aaron shall keep it in order from evening to morning before the LORD continually; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations. ⁴He shall keep the lamps in order on the pure gold lampstand before the LORD continually. ⁵Then you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it; two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake. ⁶You shall set them in two rows, six to a row, on the pure gold table before the LORD. ⁷You shall put pure frankincense on each row that it may be a memorial portion for the bread, even an offering by fire to the LORD.

[Read v.56-59]

Q: What did Jesus clearly do here according to the language of the day? What did 1st Century Jews all understand clearly that Jesus was saying?

A: That He was nothing less than the Messiah by identifying Himself as God.

Epilogue

Q: What Jewish celebration takes place on the day immediately following the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles?

A: “Simchat Torah”. It literally mean “the joy of the Torah”. Even to this day Orthodox Jews take the Torah scrolls out and publicly dance with them. People throw rice at them like a wedding as a reminder that each Jew is married to the Torah. They're often called the “chathanim”, or literally, “the bridegrooms”. This is “Simchat Torah”.

Q: What is also significant about this day in terms of Jewish worship?

A: It's the day when the annual reading cycle of the Old Testament goes back to the beginning and starts over again.

Q: What additional celebration is taking place about the same time as Simchat Torah?

A: Hanukah, the Jewish “Feast of Lights” celebrating Israel's freedom through the Maccabean revolt. At this time, the tanks of the 3-story tall menorahs in the temple would be refilled with olive oil to perpetually burn throughout the year.

Point: *As stated before, liquids typify different aspects of the Holy Spirit. It was against the backdrop of these events when Jesus says, “I'll give you the living water”. He was taking what was occurring in the temple and applying it to Himself. These lamps were symbols of the Word of God.*

[Read Leviticus 23:42-24:7]

Point: *John 8 is the fulfillment of Leviticus 23, the Feast of Tabernacles. Then in Leviticus 24 comes the Simchat Torah. Likewise we have the end of the Feast of Booths in John 7 and the Simchat Torah in John 8 when they go back to Genesis 1. So while the Levites are bringing the olive oil from the Mt. of Olives into the temple to fill up the lamps, Jesus the True Light comes down from the Mt. of Olives in John 8:1 to explain the Scriptures. They were really sure about the lamp and how to fill it up physically, but did not understand He was speaking of these things spiritually.*

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Q: How did the architecture of the temple reflect the intended purpose of God's Word?

A: The burning lamps were the light of the Torah which would shine out over Jerusalem. The lamps represented the Word of God. ("Your Word is a lamp unto my feet" – Psalm 119:115) So they had to burn day and night in order for the light to always be coming out of the temple.

Q: What was then placed in the temple next?

A: Twelve cakes, one for each of the tribes. It represented that grain comes first, grain also being a biblical metaphor for God's Word.

Q: With what were the cakes seasoned? What did this represent?

A: "Pure frankincense". We're told in the book of Revelation that this is "the prayer of the saints". (Rev. 5:8)

Point: *The grain must come first and there must be oil in the lamp – the illumination of the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures. Then, and only then, can there be worship. There is no "doxology" without "theology". If there is not right doctrine, there cannot be acceptable worship. This is the greater spiritual meaning of what is taking place during "Simchat Torah".*

[Read Lev. 24:10-15]

¹⁰Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the sons of Israel; and the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel struggled with each other in the camp.

¹¹The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name and cursed. So they brought him to Moses. (Now his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.)
¹²They put him in custody so that the command of the LORD might be made clear to them.

¹³Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁴"Bring the one who has cursed outside the camp, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head; then let all the congregation stone him. ¹⁵You shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If anyone curses his God, then he will bear his sin.

Q: How does this radical shift in the text actually reflect itself in John 8?

A: In Leviticus we now have a story about a blasphemer with a false father. What happens in John 8? We have blasphemers with a false father.

Point: *It's interesting to note that this is the very text that would have been read on that very feast day, but they didn't understand the greater spiritual meaning. They were actually living out an alternative to the biblical texts associated with the feasts.*

Q: In both texts you have a potential stoning. What is the greater spiritual meaning behind stoning?

A: In 1 Corinthians 3 Paul tells us that the Law of Moses was the Law of death engraved on stones. It was an illustration to show how the Law condemns, stoning illustrating condemnation by the Law. The whole purpose of the Law is to show we're fallen and in need of a Savior.

Point: *Jesus is showing them the Simchat Torah – the "joy of the Torah" – by showing that although condemned by the Law like the adulterous woman, through Him the fulfillment of the Law can be realized and salvation achieved. The adulteress put God's Word into practice and realized forgiveness and salvation; the others did not.*

Q: Now what did the Jews expect to happen at Hanukkah where the Messiah was concerned?

A: During the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes IV, he went into the temple and raised an image to himself and sacrificed a pig on the altar. The Jews broke the alter into little pieces and replaced it with another because it was desecrated. However, they didn't know what to do with the pieces of the altar. They stacked the stones in Solomon's Portico in the temple and believed that the Messiah would come at Chanukah time and tell them what to do with the stones.

Q: So what ultimately happened?

A: The Messiah came back at Hanukkah and in the course of rejecting Him, they picked up the pieces of that alter to stone Him. It was the ultimate rejection of God's Word.

Final Application: *It always comes down to what you do with the Truth – God's Word.*