

John 7:14–24

¹⁴ Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught.

¹⁵ And the Jews marveled, saying, “How does this Man know letters, having never studied?”

¹⁶ Jesus answered them and said, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.

¹⁷ If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.

¹⁸ He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.

¹⁹ Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?”

²⁰ The people answered and said, “You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?”

²¹ Jesus answered and said to them, “I did one work, and you all marvel.

²² Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath.

²³ If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?

²⁴ Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”

“The Lord Jesus Began Teaching”

John 7:14-24

Last time, we left our Lord leaving for the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. John opened this chapter by recording three distinct sets of opinions about who Jesus was. (1) We learned that our Lord’s earthly brothers understood Jesus was a popular figure. They may have known a large group of His former disciples left Him in John 6, and they were also anxious for Him to make His official claim to the authorities in Jerusalem. (2) We also learned that the Jewish Authorities recognized He claimed to be equal to God (John 5:18), but instead of comparing His claims with the Scriptures, they condemned Him and sought to kill Him. Finally, we learned about the opinions of the Jewish man in the street. They were divided. Some saw Him as good. A second group thought Him to be a deceiver and one who sought to lead the people astray.

The fact was and is that He is God the Son incarnate in human flesh. However, they did not understand this fact.

With verse 14 the spotlight moved from who He is to what He taught. The Lord Jesus was the greatest teacher who ever lived. This was because He was and is God, and there was no sin in Him to hinder the Holy Spirit's work through Him. We will learn two things in this paragraph.

I. The People were Amazed (v. 14-15)

II. The Source of His Authority (v. 16-18)

I. The People were Amazed (v. 14-15)

***“Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. And the Jews marveled, saying, ‘How does this Man know letters, having never studied?’”
verse 15***

A. The people “marveled” at His teaching. The verb translated “marveled” can be either positive or negative. They were continually astonished at His teaching. Why were they surprised at His teaching? There were two reasons.

1. The first reason they were astonished was because they could not understand how He could be so knowledgeable of the Scriptures having not studied with a recognized rabbi. To understand this surprise, we need to understand a little of the educational situation of this time in Jewish history. The Old Testament Scriptures were not readily available to the average Jewish peasant. They learned their Old Testament from the readings in the Synagogue. If someone were to study, it involved an incredible commitment and usually some wealth to spend time sitting at the feet of a recognized teacher. Remember Paul's statement in ***Acts 22:3*** ***“I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.”*** Paul was recognized as a man “of letters.” Jesus did not have this advantage. He never studied with the recognized rabbis of the day. Yet, as He spoke, He

demonstrated a tremendous understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures. The Jews could not understand this! We should note that this is not the first time our Lord's knowledge of the Scriptures surprised the Jews. **Luke 2:46-47** *"Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers."* It should not surprise us He had this knowledge. After all, He wrote the Old Testament.

2. The second reason they continued to marvel can be understood from **verse 16**. *"Jesus answered them and said, 'My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.'"* They not only marveled at His knowledge; they were astonished at His authority. Although it does not appear in the English text here, in the Greek the sentence begins with the word "therefore." The "therefore" is significant. Jesus' answer followed directly from the Jews marveling. Not only were the Jews astounded by His knowledge of the Scriptures, they were also amazed at His authority in presenting those very Scriptures to them. His authority became the center of discussion for the rest of this discourse.

II. Authority (v. 16-18)

A. Jesus in answering them points out that His authority comes from two things. First, His authority flowed out of the source of His teaching. *"Jesus answered them and said, 'My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.'"* (verse 16)

1. God the Father is the Author of the truth that our Lord taught. Jesus did not play a word game here. Rather, He established He was the foundation of what He proclaimed. Thus, the Lord was greater than the rabbis around Him. The rabbis claimed their teaching was not theirs but the doctrine of the great teachers of the past, of "tradition."

2. As the Rabbis taught, they said things like: "Thus said Rabbi Eliezer." The Old Testament prophets said, "Thus says the LORD." But Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say unto

you.” He could speak in this way because He had authority as the incarnate Son of God. Neither the rabbis nor the prophets could do this.

B. The second reason He had authority was because of His motivation, **(verse 18)**. **“The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory, but the one who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him is true, and in Him there is no falsehood.”**

1. If someone speaks on his own authority alone, he seeks his own glory. While the age in which Jesus lived did not value originality, it did value creativity. Every rabbi desired to stand out as wise and as one who could package the old truth in a marvelous new way. Jesus pointed out that if He spoke these things from this motivation, He would simply be seeking to glorify Himself.

2. He sought the glory of the Father alone! This marked Him as true and righteous. There is a great insight into the character of God in this statement. (1) God the Son, while He was in the world never sought His own glory, only the Father’s glory. (2) The Holy Spirit seeks not to glorify Himself, but to glory the Son **(John 16:13-14)**. **“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”** Each person of the Godhead is not interested in glorifying Himself, but only the other persons of the Godhead!

C. Therefore, Jesus has answered both how it is that He knows so much of the Scriptures and also why He has such authority in His teaching. Nevertheless, not everyone receives His authority. How could these people know if His teaching was true and that He indeed was sent from the Father? The answer is found in the individual commitment of the people hearing the teaching **(verses 16-17)**. **“So Jesus answered them, ‘My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent me. If anyone’s will is to do God’s will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on My own authority.’”**

1. Here is a key to this passage that is often misunderstood. Some skeptics throw their hands up and say this is circular reasoning and thus is invalid. Someone has to believe that Jesus is speaking from God before they can know that the teaching is come from God. But this is not what Jesus said.

2. Jesus insisted that if anyone chooses to do the Father's will, if he is interested in what the Father says, he will know whether Jesus is teaching the Father's truth or not. The commitment is not to the Lord Jesus in the first place, it is to God the Father. Let me to clarify what I mean by reminding you about the Bereans. **Acts 17:10-11 says: "The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so."** The issue to the Bereans was not what tradition said. The issue was what God said in the Scriptures. They were more noble-minded, literally "better born, of higher rank," from God's perspective, because all they cared about was what God said. Because of that they recognized Paul's authority and the truth of what he taught.

3. In short, Jesus said that if you want to obey God, you will know my teaching is God's truth

What does this say to us?

How do we measure up? Do we want to know what God says? Or do our sinful and rebellious hearts keep us from God?

Have we made peace with God by coming to Him through His Son? You can today.

How about those of us who already have made peace with God?

Do we bow to the authority of the Son of God? We know by faith He has made us children of God. But do we follow our Lord as obedient children or are we spiritual juvenile delinquents?

Remember what James taught us in his book about the Word of God. ***“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:22-25).***

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