

INTRODUCTION

1. We are looking this morning at John chapter 7, so I would like to invite you to take your Bibles and turn to John 7, as we look at verses 14-18.
2. Read John 7:14-18.
3. In our last study of this chapter, we noted the setting (v.1), the occasion (v.2), the request (vv.3-5) and the response (vv.6-13).
4. We said that *the setting* was found in the phrase “after these things” and noted that it referred to the events in John chapter 6.
5. From verse 71 of chapter 6 to verse 1 of chapter 7 is a 6 month gap.
6. During this 6 month interval, John says “Jesus was walking in Galilee” (v.1), that is, He was traveling and ministering.
7. The other gospel writers note that during those six months, Jesus traveled the length of Galilee, from Tyre and Sidon, northwest of Galilee (Matt. 15:21–28) to Decapolis, in the southeast (Mark 7:31–37). During that time He performed miracles, including healing (Matt. 15:29–31; Mark 8:22–26), casting out demons (Matt. 15:21–28; 17:14–18), and feeding the four thousand (Matt. 15:32–38).

8. But most of the six months, however, was spent discipling the Twelve.
9. We know during this time that the Lord taught them extensively (Matt. 16:13–27; 17:19–23; 18:1–35), including telling them for the first time of His impending rejection, crucifixion, and resurrection (Matt. 16:21; cf. 17:22–23).
10. He also revealed to the inner circle (Peter, James, and John) a glimpse of His divine glory (Matt. 17:1–8).¹
11. John continues in verse 1 by telling us that Jesus “was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.”
12. Feelings of hostility toward the Lord, at least in **Judea**, had already reached the point where the Jewish leaders wanted Him dead (cf. 5:18).
13. Jesus was therefore **unwilling to walk** (that is, to conduct His life and ministry) openly there, because the time was not yet right in God’s plan for the events leading to His death.²

¹John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 279.

²John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 279.

14. **The occasion** that marks this chapter is found in verse 2, it was “the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths.”
15. This was also called “The Feast of Tabernacles” or “Ingathering.”
16. This was one of the three most important festivals of the Jewish year and was celebrated for eight days in Jerusalem.³
17. During the feast, the people built and lived in shelters made of branches (Lev. 23:42), as their ancestors had done after leaving Egypt (v. 43).
18. City dwellers built their booths on the roofs of their houses, and in the streets and squares (Neh. 8:14–17).
19. According to the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, the Feast of Tabernacles was the most popular of the three major Jewish feasts. It was marked by celebrations and parties, and featured water-drawing and lamp-lighting rites (cf. John 7:37–38; 8:12).⁴

³Craig S. Keener and InterVarsity Press, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993). Jn 7:2.

⁴John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 280.

20. This Feast fell at the end of September and the beginning of October. It was one of the obligatory festivals and every adult male Jew who lived within fifteen miles of Jerusalem was legally bound to attend it.⁵
21. In verses 3-5 we hear **the request** from Jesus' brothers that He go to the Feast and manifest His glory.
22. Staying in Galilee, they believed, was a waste of His efforts.
23. He should manifest Himself on the great world-stage in Jerusalem.
24. They're reasoning was by doing this His **disciples** from both Galilee and Judea would **see the works which** He was **doing**—works which demonstrated that He was in fact the Messiah. Further, some of the disciples who had recently abandoned Him (6:66) might be won back.⁶
25. **The response** Jesus gives was His time was not yet here but their time was always opportune.

⁵*The Gospel of John : Volume 1*, ed. William Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 2000, c1975). 231.

⁶John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 280.

26. Leon Morris says, “In this respect the brothers joined with the world. Since the world (and the brothers) have cut themselves off from the divinely appointed ‘time’ all times are alike to them.”⁷
27. They did not recognize God and His purposes. They did not listen to His Word or recognize God’s schedule nor could they perceive that the incarnate Word was before them.
28. Verse 10 says that after His brothers had gone up to the Feast, “then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as if, in secret.”
29. In verses 10-13, John records the various reactions of the crowd to Jesus.
30. Verse 11 says the Jews were “seeking Him at the Feast.”
31. The “Jews” was a reference to the religious leaders.
32. They were not seeking Him in order to become His disciples.
33. They were seeking Him in order to kill Him.

⁷ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, The International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1979). 398.

- 34. John says there was “much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him” (v.12).
- 35. Now as we come to verses 14-18, we pick up where verse 10 leaves off.
- 36. Jesus went up to the feast “secretly” but now He is in the Temple teaching openly.
- 37. And the *claims* He makes concerning Himself points to His true identity.
- 38. He says in verse 18 that “He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”
- 39. This is not the first time He makes such a claim in John’s gospel.
- 40. He said in John 3 that He came down from heaven (3:13) and He was the Savior of the world (3:17).
- 41. In John 4 He claimed to be the source of eternal life (4:14).
- 42. In John 5 He claimed to be the determiner of people’s eternal destinies (5:22, 27, 30) and to have the power to raise people from the dead (5:28-29).
- 43. Later in John’s gospel, He claimed to be able to raise Himself from the dead (10:17-18).

- 44. He claimed to be one with the Father (10:30), and the only way to God (14:6).
- 45. As we come to this section in chapter 7, it is no different.
- 46. He claimed His teaching was from God (v.16), and He was seeking to glorify God (v.18).
- 47. Now we pick up the narrative in verse 14.
- 48. Jesus is now in Jerusalem.
- 49. He had been there secretly for 3 days and now on the 4th day He enters the temple and begins to teach.
- 50. John says He did this “when it was now the midst of the feast” (v.14).
- 51. Since the feast was celebrated for eight days, this was the fourth day.
- 52. So in verse 14 ***Jesus teaches in the temple.***

I. Jesus Teaches in the Temple (v.14)

Verse 14 says, He “began to teach.”

John mentions Jesus in the temple on two other occasions. In John 2 He is seen cleansing the temple and in chapter 5 He finds the impotent man He had healed. Now, for the first time, we find our Lord teaching in the temple.

Here we see Jesus assuming the quiet role of a teaching rabbi.

The word “teach” implies...

A. He was Instructing the People

The word for “teach” (didasko) means “to instruct by word of mouth.”⁸

It is to “provide instruction”⁹ “in a formal or informal setting.”¹⁰

⁸Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary : New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993). G1321.

⁹James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). DBLG 1438.

John does not tell us *what* He taught but it must have carried great weight when you hear of their response to it in verse 15.

On every occasion, Jesus taught the people.

1. **Matthew 4:23 (NASB)** ²³ Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, ***teaching*** in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.
2. **Matthew 5:1-2 (NASB)** ¹ When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. ² He opened His mouth and *began* to ***teach*** them, saying.
3. Later in **John 18:20 (NASB)**, He said, “I have spoken openly to the world; I always ***taught*** in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret.”

John says...

B. He was Instructing the People in the Temple (v.14)

¹⁰Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament : Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996, c1989). 1:412.

“The temple” refers to the outside area of the **temple** (known as the porch where the people were allowed to gather)¹¹ or the temple courts.

Here Jesus found some convenient place, where he sat on the pavement under some porch or balcony, the Twelve and a group of hearers sat cross-legged in a circle about him, and he quietly began his instruction.

Among those present, perhaps standing on the fringe of the seated group, were a few of the ruling class. Here was the man they were seeking. But they found him using only the ordinary privilege of a rabbi, teaching a group of interested hearers.¹²

John records in verse 15...

II. The Astonishment of the Jews (v.15)

John 7:15 (NASB) ¹⁵ The Jews then were astonished, saying, "How has this man become learned, having never been educated?"

The word “astonished” (thaumazo) means “to marvel or wonder.”

¹¹William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Jn 7:14.

¹²R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961). 540.

They marveled not only at His teaching but where it came from.

That is certainly clear from verse 16 when Jesus tells *where* His teaching came from.

“How has this man become learned, having never been educated?” (v.15).

These words undoubtedly refer to our Lord’s great acquaintance with the Scriptures, and the judicious and masterly manner in which He taught the people out of them, with far greater majesty and nobler eloquence than the scribes could attain by a learned education.¹³

This question in Greek (lit. ‘How does this man know letters [*grammata*] ...?’) could mean, ‘How is it that he can read and write?’

But in fact, such basic attainments were commonplace amongst Jews (especially males), and would evoke no amazement.

Rather, they were astonished that someone who had not studied in one of the great rabbinical centres of learning, or

¹³ A.W. Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1945, 1975). 382.

with one of the famous rabbis, could have such a command of Scripture, such telling mastery in his exposition.¹⁴

The word for man is *outos* and it is used in a derogatory way to mean “this fellow.”

They asked, “How has this *fellow* become learned, having never been educated?”

Their question was another means to discredit Him.

Their question is not directed at Him but to the crowds.

R.C.H. Lenski says, “What surprises them, they say, is that a man who has had no proper education should presume to teach in public and palm himself off as one who is versed in Scriptural learning. Their question is a general exclamation addressed not to Jesus but to the multitude. It charges Jesus with incompetency, with utter lack of proper qualifications for being a great religious teacher. The purpose of the rulers is to discredit Jesus before his audience. The force of their question is: “This fellow does not know what he is talking about because he has never studied in any of our Jewish schools.”

We meet the same charge today when any man dares to contradict the “scientific” critics of Christ and the gospel. At once he is branded by them as an ignoramus,

¹⁴D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991). 311.

incompetent to speak on these subjects because he is not one of their guild, who has pre-empted “scientific” learning and does not bear the stamp of their approval. The object is to impress the crowd, and the secret object is to maintain their own authority by crying down the man who challenges it.”¹⁵

Verse 46 tells us that the officers were astonished at Jesus’ teaching. They said, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.”

They were later astonished at the response of Peter in **Acts 4:13 (NASB)** ¹³ Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and *began* to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

Jesus responds to their question in verse 15 by giving...

III. The Source of His Teaching (vv.16-17)

John 7:16-17 (NASB) ¹⁶ So Jesus answered them and said, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. ¹⁷ "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or *whether* I speak from Myself.

Jesus begins by stating...

A. His Teaching Came from God (v.16)

¹⁵R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961). 541.

The qualitative difference of Jesus' teaching was found in its source, i.e., the Father gave it to Him (8:26, 40,46, 47; 12:49, 50).

It originated from God the Father Himself, in contrast to rabbis who received it from man (Gal. 1:12).

While rabbis merely relied on the authority of others (a long chain of human tradition), Jesus' authority centered in Himself (cf. Matt. 7:28, 29; Acts 4:13).¹⁶

John Calvin said, "Christ shows that this circumstance, which was an offense to the Jews, was rather a ladder by which they ought to have risen higher to perceive the glory of God; as if he had said, " When you see a teacher not trained in the school of men, know that I have been taught by God." For the reason why the Heavenly Father determined that his Son should go out of a mechanic's workshop, rather than from the schools of the scribes, was, that the origin of the Gospel might be more manifest, that none might think that it had been fabricated on the earth, or imagine that any human being was the author of it. Thus also Christ chose ignorant and uneducated men to be his apostles, and permitted them to remain three years in gross ignorance, that, having instructed them in a single instant, he might bring them forward as new men, and

¹⁶John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Jn 7:16.

even as angels who had just come down from heaven.”¹⁷

Jesus constantly stated that His teaching was not His but that it came from God.

1. **John 8:28 (NASB)** ²⁸ So 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.**
2. **John 12:49-50 (NASB)** ⁴⁹ "For I did not speak on My own initiative, **but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak.** ⁵⁰ "I know that His commandment is eternal life; **therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.**"
3. **John 14:10 (NASB)** ¹⁰ "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? **The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.**
4. **John 14:24 (NASB)** ²⁴ "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; **and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.**

¹⁷John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: John*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; Calvin's Commentaries (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998). Jn 7:16.

5. **John 17:8 (NASB)** ⁸ for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.
6. **John 17:14 (NASB)** ¹⁴ "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Jesus says, "My teaching." In the AV the word "teaching" is translated "doctrine."

Christ does not say, "My doctrines are not mine," but "My doctrine."

This is one correlated and complete whole...In striking contrast from this, Scripture speaks of 'the doctrines of men' (Col.2:22); 'strange doctrines' (Heb.13:9); and 'doctrines of demons' (1 Tim.4:1).

Here the word is pluralized because there is no unity or harmony about the teachings of men or the teachings of demons. They are diverse and conflicting. But God's truth is indivisible and harmonious.¹⁸

Jesus continues in verse 17 by stating....

- B. If You're Willing to Do God's Will, You Will Know the Teaching (v.17)

¹⁸ A.W. Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1945, 1975). 384.

John 7:17 (NASB) ¹⁷ "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or *whether* I speak from Myself.

If the Jews really wanted to know whether His message was true or not, it would be easy for them to find out.

If **anyone** really **wills to do** God's **will**, then God will reveal to him whether the teachings of Christ are divine or whether the Lord was simply teaching what He Himself wanted to teach.¹⁹

The one with the obedient heart, with a desire to do God's will, is the one who will make a correct judgment about the validity of Jesus' message.

His overall point is that the problem of the Jewish people has never been a lack of God's Word.

It has been the failure to obey that Word due to disobedient and unbelieving hearts. They have the law of **Moses**, but even so **not one of you keeps the law**²⁰ according to verse 19.

¹⁹William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Jn 7:17.

²⁰Beauford H. Bryant and Mark S. Krause, *John*, The College Press NIV commentary (Joplin, Mo.: College Press Pub. Co., 1998). Jn 7:16.

Only the man who does God's will can truly understand His teaching. That is not a theological but a universal truth.²¹

When Philip came to Nathanael in **John 1:45-46** (**NASB**) he said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and *also* the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." ⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Nathanael came and met Jesus and after hearing Him say, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you" (v.48).

Nathanael responds by saying, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel" (v.49).

Nathanael experienced the living Christ and knew He was the "Son of God...the King of Israel."

Andrew and Philip also experienced the teachings of Jesus and knew that it was of God and that He came from God and was the long-awaited Messiah (1:40-44).

Jesus promised the person who honestly seeks the truth revealed by God, the one who is **willing to do** God's

²¹*The Gospel of John : Volume 1*, ed. William Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 2000, c1975). 240.

will, that he will know the truth about Christ's **teaching, whether it is of God or whether** it is not.

The Lord's challenge to the crowd was simple: If they would humble themselves before God's Word (wherein His will is revealed) to know and obey it, they would come to a sure realization that His teaching was true.

That challenge still stands two millennia later. The assurance promised in this verse is available to all genuine believers.

Such confidence comes through the Holy Spirit, who confirms the truth about Christ to the willing heart (1 John 2:20, 27), both internally, through His testimony (1 Cor. 2:10–15; cf. Rom. 8:16), and externally, through manifestations that demonstrate the truth of the gospel (John 3:2; 5:36; 10:38; Acts 2:22).²²

The point is not that a seeker must attain a certain God-approved level of ethical achievement before venturing an assessment as to whether or not Jesus' teaching comes from God, but that a seeker must be fundamentally committed to *doing* God's will. This is a faith commitment.²³

²²John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 290.

²³D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991). 312.

A.W. Pink says, “How this word *rebuked*, again, these worldly-minded Jews; and how it reverses the judgment of many of our moderns! One does not have to enter a seminary or a Bible Institute and take a course in Christian Apologetics in order to obtain assurance that the Bible is inspired, or in order to learn how to interpret it. Spiritual intelligence comes not through the intellect, but via the heart: it is acquired not by force of reasoning, but by the exercise of faith.”²⁴

Jesus continues in verse 18 by giving us...

IV. The Purpose of His Teaching (v.18)

John 7:18 (NASB) ¹⁸ "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Jesus is appealing here to the manner and purpose of His teaching, to show that He was no imposter.

“He who speaks from himself” means he whose message originate with himself, rather than God.

This one “seeks his own glory.”

²⁴ A.W. Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1945, 1975). 386.

That is to say, he attracts attention to himself: he aims at his own honor and aggrandizement.²⁵

On the other hand, Jesus says, “But He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”

The word “true” refers to being “genuine.” The one who seeks God’s glory is no imposter.

The Pharisees sought ‘the praise of men,’ and they have had many successors.

But how different was it with the apostle Paul who wrote, “For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God” (**1 Corinthians 15:9 NASB**).

In **Ephesians 3:8 (NASB)** he said, ⁸ To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ.

A.W. Pink says, “Here is one test by which we may discover whether the preacher has been called of God to the ministry, or whether he ran without being sent. Does he magnify himself or his Lord? Does he seek his own glory, or the glory of God? Does he speak about himself or about Christ? Can he truthfully say with the apostle, “We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord” (2 Cor.4:5)? Is the

²⁵ A.W. Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1945, 1975). 386.

general trend of his ministry, Behold me, or Behold the church, or Behold the Lamb of God?”²⁶

D.A. Carson says, “The maxims of this verse not only confirm that Jesus is *a man of truth*, but they exhibit the real reason why his opponents are unable to assess him rightly. The one who prides himself on being his own man, on speaking *on his own*, has his ego bound up with his witness, and so at least in part he speaks *to gain honour* (*doxa*; cf. notes on 1:14) *for himself*. Jesus is quite unlike that. He is totally committed to working for *the honour* (*doxa*) *of the one who sent him*. As a result he can be trusted. He is neither a religious charlatan nor a respected religious leader with inevitably mixed motives. He is as trustworthy as his motives are unmixed. If Jesus were simply trying to persuade others to his views, he would seek whatever means seemed most effective. In fact he has utterly rejected such pragmatism (vv. 3–8) in favour of his Father’s agenda.”²⁷

²⁶ A.W. Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1945, 1975). 387.

²⁷ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991). 313.

CONCLUSION

1. What do you say about Jesus' claims from this passage?
2. Is He a charlatan?
3. Is He an impostor?
4. Are you one who truly seeks to do God's will?
5. If so, you will know whether what Jesus said is of God or not?
6. Jesus came to glorify God.
7. He is "true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him."
8. Do you believe this?
9. His claims are *undeniable*.
10. You can test them right now by taking Him at His Word and believing He is who He claimed to be.
11. "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks" because He is God.
12. Surrender your heart to Him today.
13. Let's pray.