

Jesus' Teaching Is From The Father

Have you ever been at a party or major event with lots of people, and you tried to find someone? You unsuccessfully searched for a special person! Maybe you were slightly frustrated that you could not locate the person? Can you remember what that felt like? Our study is about Jesus, some religious leaders and a major Jewish feast with lots of people. We will discover that the religious leaders are searching for Jesus at a feast called the Feast of Booths. We will discover that they were not successful in their search. It was Jesus who found them. Now we need to back up for a minute and note that Jesus has been experiencing significant rejection after another rejection recently. The religious leaders had already rejected Him. In John 6:60-66 many of His disciples had left Him. In John 7:4-5 it becomes clear that His own brothers rejected Him. In our last study, a number of Samaritans rejected Him too! I imagine that it was difficult to have experienced these rejections. We are going to discover that the rejection is even more wide spread than just these few examples.

ARRIVAL IN JERUSALEM. Our study begins with Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem for the Feast of Booths. His brothers had already left Capernaum for Jerusalem (John 7:8-10) about 3-4 days later. John 7:14 tells us that Jesus arrived in the midst of the feast. Verse 11 states that the religious leaders, the Pharisees, were seeking Him.

So the Jews were seeking Him at the feast and were saying, "Where is He?"
John 7:11 (NASB)

Now we expected that didn't we? John 5:18 tells us that the religious leaders wanted to murder Jesus because He claimed to be God. John 7:1 tells us that almost nine months later they still wanted to murder Him. These Jewish religious leaders are not seeking Him to gain some wisdom or knowledge or to get healed. They want to murder Him. Jesus arrival in Jerusalem is gutsy and dangerous. Verse 11 reveals that they were asking the people, "Where is He?" The Greek

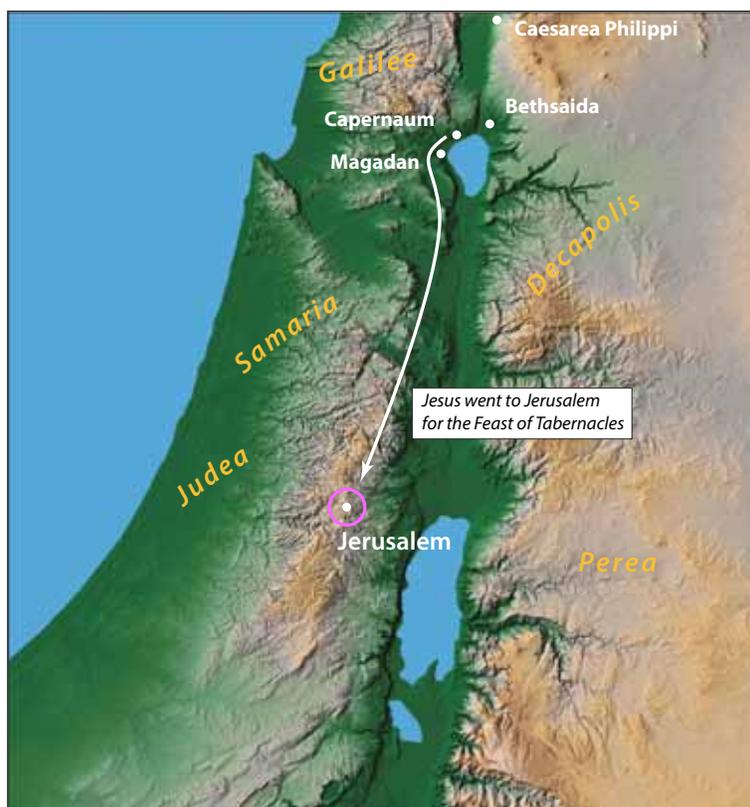
tenses of the words "seeking" and "saying" are in the imperfect. This reveals that they were repeatedly asking the people that question. Most likely they were moving from one group of people to another group and asking, "Where is He?"

Verses 12-13 reveal that as a result the people were talking about Jesus.

There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, "He is a good man"; others were saying, "No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray." Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.
John 7:12-13 (NASB)

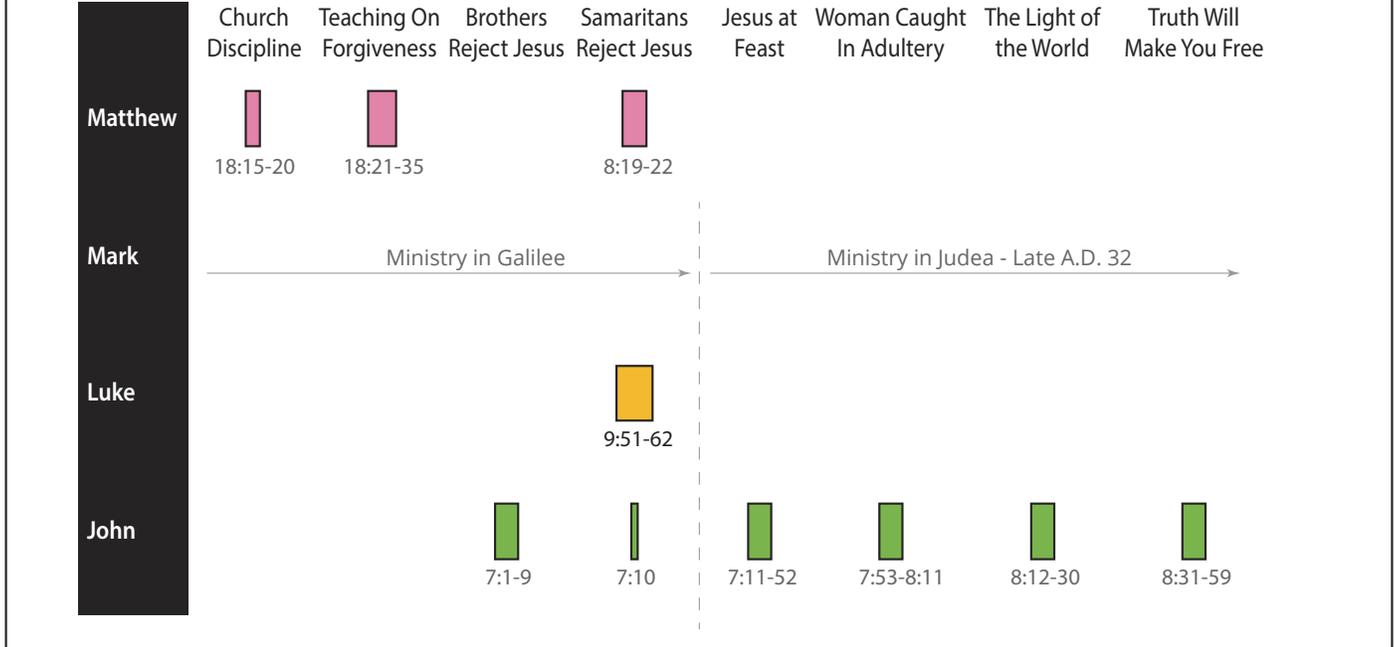
No, they were doing more than talking. They were grumbling or murmuring about Him. The Greek word for "grumbling"

is an onomatopoeic word. That is, a word that sounds like what they were doing. The Greek word is *goggusmos*. The murmuring was both positive and negative. Some of the people were just like people today. They listened to the



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leaders and agreed that they were right. Jesus was leading everyone astray. Others had the correct view and disagreed with the leaders and believed that Jesus was a good man. The Greek word for “good” is *agathos* and has the idea that they believed Jesus was a morally good man. The verb tenses in these two verses imply that the crowds were abuzz with conversation about Jesus.

JESUS APPEARS. Jesus’ arrival in Jerusalem must have been a dramatic event since the religious leaders were seeking to murder Jesus, and the crowds knew it (John 7:25-26). John 7 reveals that the crowds were talking among themselves about the religious leaders’ desire to murder Jesus. Then Jesus appeared.

But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and began to teach. John 7:14 (NASB)

Wow! When He arrived in Jerusalem He went to the temple and started teaching. When we are told that Jesus “began to teach,” the word “teach” is in the imperfect tense implying

that Jesus was doing a lot of teaching, and the next verse reveals that the religious leaders were doing a lot of listening. Because we are told that they were repeatedly “astonished” (in the imperfect tense).

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

This is a very dynamic picture. Jesus is teaching and the religious leaders are watching and listening. Now the religious leaders are not astonished because Jesus’ teaching was necessarily convicting. They were not saying to themselves or one another that He had great application. Instead, they were wondering how was it that Jesus knew the scriptures?

Notice that the religious leaders wondered how did Jesus become “learned”? The Greek phrase that is translated as the one word, “learned” literally means “know the writings” or “know the scriptures.” They could not understand how Jesus knew the scriptures since He had never gone to a rabbinic school. In Acts 4:13 we are told that the religious lead-

ers later also wondered how Peter and John could preach so powerfully since they were “uneducated and untrained.” Some modern critics have stated that this verse reveals the apostles could not have written the New Testament since they could not read or write. But that reveals the critics’ lack of education or their willful desire to persuade others that the Bible could not have been written by the apostles. The correct answer is that the religious leaders could not understand how Jesus and the apostles knew the scriptures and teach as they did since they had not been formally trained in an official rabbinic school.¹ For example, in Acts 22:3 the apostle Paul tells us that He was educated by a very famous rabbi named Gamaliel. But Jesus and the apostles did not have any such “rabbi-approved-seminary” credentials. Actually, they had better credentials, Jesus was God Who had written the very scriptures they were studying. Mark 1:22 captures Jesus’ command of the scriptures with these terrific words,

They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Mark 1:22 (NASB)

Some of the great recent preachers our time, such as Moody, Spurgeon and Bill Sunday, never had formal theological training at a seminary. All that a man or woman needs is the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and faithfulness in digging into God’s Word to uncover its meaning. The Holy Spirit will give power to the words and apply the message to the hearts of the hearers. That is all that is really required.

ACCURATELY TEACHING THE BIBLE. Jesus’ reply is amazing. He does not defend His lack of “rabbi-approved-seminary” training. Instead, He speaks to the real issue with which the religious leaders are struggling. Was He teaching truth?

So Jesus answered them and said, “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. John 7:16 (NASB)

The religious leaders were struggling with the content of

Jesus’ teaching. We can imagine that they were amazed at the conclusions that Jesus reached from the scriptures. In the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, we discover that Jesus applied the scriptures in unique ways. Here are some examples,

You have heard that it was said, “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY”; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Matt. 5:27-28 (NASB)

You have heard that it was said, “AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.” But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. Matt. 5:38-39 (NASB)

You have heard that it was said, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you . . . Matt. 5:43-45 (NASB)

In John 8:26, 38 and 40 Jesus repeatedly revealed that He taught what He had heard from the Father. He taught the Father’s message and not His own. The religious leaders did not recognize that Jesus spoke truth because they were not filled with the Holy Spirit nor were they faithful, diligent teachers of scriptures.

Some teachers and preachers twist scripture to make it say what they want it to say. Some have a theological system that they cling to and then bend scripture to make it support their theological belief system. This happens in the secular world all the time. Let me give you an example. Some years ago I published an article about the Bible’s view on homosexuality and a woman complained that homosexuality was not a sin and God encourages us to love everyone. She rebuked me, accusing me of twisting the Bible. I responded by asking her to read Romans 1:24-27 and 1 Cor. 16:9-10 and then tell me if those two passages reveal that God views homosexuality as a sin. She never wrote back. Why? Because the passage explicitly says,

1. Robertson, A. T. Word Pictures in the New Testament. Broadman Press. John 7:15.

... men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. Romans. 1:27 (NASB)

I would not be surprised to learn that the woman was taught by some pastor or teacher who claimed that homosexuality is not a sin. If so, they changed the clear meaning of the Word of God. The clear meaning of the passages is that homosexuality is a sin. One who teaches the Word of God should be like a waitress who carries the food from the kitchen of the restaurant to the table of the customer without changing it. The waitress does not add pepper, salt, mustard, oregano or ketchup to the food. The waitress does not remove something from the plate. The waitress should deliver the plate of food to you just as the chef prepared it. God is the "chef," and the preacher or teacher is responsible to just deliver it just as God prepared it - without changing the meaning. That is what Jesus did. Unlike the religious leaders, Jesus taught what He heard from the Father. This is

an important lesson for those who teach the scriptures. Their job is to be a waiter or waitress who delivers the Word of God unadulterated to the listeners.

The religious leaders did not accept Jesus' teaching because His teachings were different from their teachings. After all their hours of study in the scriptures they did not understand the truth that the Father had tried to communicate. They were poor scholars of the scriptures, handling the Word of God in a sloppy manner. They depended upon the opinions of other rabbis in order to understand the meaning of scripture. They would even debate what other rabbis said in order to determine the truth rather than examine scripture itself.

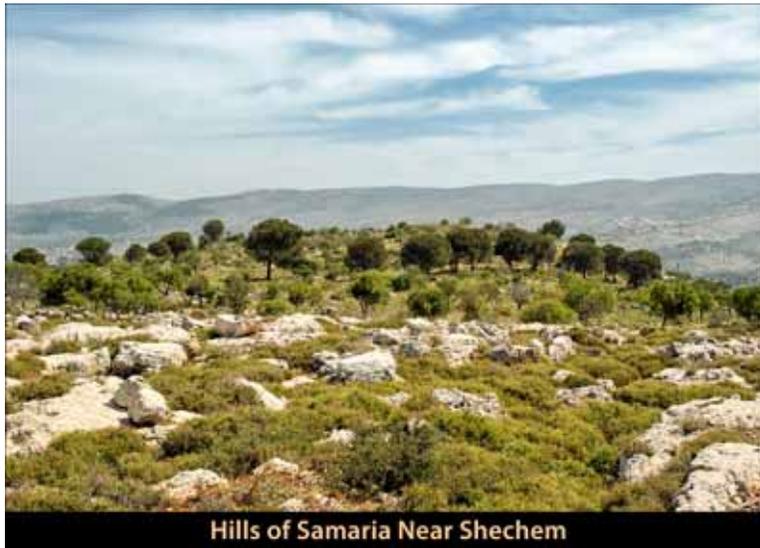
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KNOWING THE TRUTH. Then Jesus made a key statement.

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. John 7:17 (NASB)

He says that those who want to obey the Father will be able to sense the true teaching from the Father when they hear it. He is not saying that a non-Christian who has an interest in the things of God will recognize divine truth. Instead, Jesus is saying that a Christian who sincerely wants to obey God will understand the truth when they hear it. For example, later on Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will convict us of

righteousness, judgment and sin (John 16:7-11). In 1 Cor. 2:12-13 we are told that the Holy Spirit will guide Christians into truth. That is also the message of 1 John 2:20, 27. But this is only true for those Christians who sincerely desire to obey and are actively obeying God the Father. Otherwise, they will be led astray by every char-



Hills of Samaria Near Shechem

ismatic teacher.

If you are a Christian, have you ever listened to some teacher and while you were listening had a sense that something was wrong with the teaching? Then later you studied the scriptures and discovered that the teacher taught error? That has happened to me on more than one occasion. The teacher was a gifted speaker and due to the power of preaching, he was almost convincing. But I sensed that something was wrong with his teaching. It wasn't until later after I examined his teaching that the Holy Spirit helped me discover that he was wrong. I have put Deut. 4:29 and 2 Tim. 2:15 into practice,

Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. Acts 17:11 (NASB)

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. 2 Tim. 2:15 (NASB)

I desired to be obedient. I wanted to know what the Father was trying to teach. I wanted to know the truth and so I searched the scriptures. Now this does not mean that we check out some other gifted teacher for their opinion. The examples given to us by scripture is that we study *His* Word faithfully. This requires much effort and not just a flippant, quick, hurried thought.

Jesus said that those who desire to do the Father's will know the truth. The fact that they did not understand that Jesus spoke the truth, proved they did not want to do the will of the Father.

GLORY SEEKING TEACHERS. Then Jesus added this,

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. John 7:18 (NASB)

Unfortunately, some teachers of scripture are more interested in "wowing" the audience or appearing to be anointed by the Holy Spirit. On one occasion a preacher told the audience that the Holy Spirit was giving him new spiritual truth. It was a dramatic moment. He paused as if listening to the Holy Spirit and then declared that God was not a trinity and then said, "There are nine of them. The Father has a body, soul and spirit. Jesus has a body, soul and spirit. The Holy Spirit has a body, soul and spirit. There are nine of them." Later he admitted that he taught *error* when others challenged him. The truth is - he *sinned and was a false teacher*. But his "performance" on the stage was dramatic. He was seeking his own glory from the audience.

That is a dramatic example. But the same situation exists in other church pulpits around the world every Sunday

morning as preachers try to impress their congregation but in a less arrogant way. Some pastors are more of a showman than a teacher of truth. Some impose an application upon a passage of scripture that is not taught by the passage. The application might be biblically true but it is not what the passage is all about.

Some times teachers just make up an application that might not even be true because they want to "wow" the audience. Imagine this obviously ridiculous application, where someone is teaching Genesis 1 and then concludes that every Christian can create their own universe, create another planet earth and even another Adam and Eve, if they just had enough faith. Then he explains that Jesus said if we had enough faith we could move mountains. Obviously, such a teaching is not the message of Genesis 1. The purpose of Genesis 1 is to reveal that God created the universe and or planet. He is the Creator. But I am sure that someone in the church would think the teaching was Holy Spirit inspired. They would be impressed with the teaching, especially if the teacher was powerful and dynamic. Some teachers seek their own glory but not God's glory. Teachers who seek their own glory are not as interested in truth and the correct application as they should be.

Then Jesus added that the one who accurately teaches what the Father wants communicated seeks glory for God the Father and is not committing sin. How many teachers and preachers are concerned about glorifying the Father and not committing the sin of inaccurate teaching? I have consistently tried to be an accurate teacher of scripture, but the thought that I might be committing *sin* by in advertently teaching incorrectly is a new thought. James 3:1 alludes to this truth when he writes that every teacher of the Bible will be judged harder.

Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. James 3:1 (NASB)

Not only will the teacher sin by wrongly teaching and applying the truth that God the Father does want taught, but such a teacher will be disciplined eventually and severely.

SELECTIVE OBEDIENCE. The religious leaders did not

know the truth because they did not really want to obey the Father. Also, they did not teach the truth because they were more interested in being held in honor by the people. Consequently, they are more like an actor seeking to impress the audience. So we should not be surprised that they did not obey scripture either. They were not serious about pleasing God. Their religion was about themselves. That is the message of Jesus' next statement.

Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law? Why do you seek to kill Me?" John 7:19 (NASB)

Jesus spins their confrontation around with these words. He reminds them that Moses gave them the Law, which they so highly valued. That is where they got their teachings. Exodus 20:13 states, "You shall not murder" but they did not obey it. They understood the author of that law and they understood the meaning of the words. They did not challenge Moses' teaching as they did Jesus' teaching. Yet, they rejected both the teaching of Jesus and that of Moses because they wanted to murder Jesus. The crowd thought Jesus was crazy. The majority of the people did not understand that the religious leaders wanted to murder Him.

The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You?" John 7:20 (NASB)

We will discover later that some of the people understood that Jesus spoke the truth.

Then Jesus makes another comparison between Himself and Moses.

Jesus answered them, "I did one deed, and you all marvel. For this reason Moses has given you circumcision (not because it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and on the Sabbath you circumcise a man. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the Law of Moses will not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath? Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." John 7:21-24 (NASB)

Jesus reminds them that they practice circumcision. It did

not originate with Moses but with the fathers. In fact, it started with Abraham (Gen. 17:11), whom they greatly respected. God had told Abraham that circumcision was a sign, and Moses required that circumcision be performed on the eighth day after a male was born (Lev. 12:3-8). Normally the Jews would not perform any work on a Sabbath day because that was God's command (Ex. 20:10; 31:14-17; Deut. 5:13-15). The Jews were so careful to obey this command that they went to excess. For example, the Shabbat in the Jewish book called the Mishnah² lists hundreds of rules supposedly to protect a Jew from working on the Sabbath. Yet, they ignored God's commands in order to perform circumcision (a work) on a male child anyway, so that the Law of Moses would not be broken. Circumcision was a sign of being a Jew.

Yet, they objected to Jesus healing a man on the Sabbath. John 5:5-17 describes the healing. The man had been paralyzed in his legs for thirty-eight years. One would think that the religious leaders, who should have been an example of compassion, would have rejoiced for the man. Instead, they objected that one of their man made rules was violated. God had only said do not work on the Sabbath. Was healing a work? According to their long list of rules, it was a work.

The religious leaders were angry. Jesus reveals that their anger was sin. They were self-centered. They did not judge righteously. Their judgment was warped.

CONCLUSION. Jesus revealed that because the religious leaders were not serious about obeying God they could not understand scripture. Later in John 14:21 Jesus will tell us that He will not reveal Himself to anyone who is not seeking to obey the commandments. Jesus taught this principle many times.

When Jesus taught the Word of God, His teachings sounded strange to them because they were new. Consequently, they were offended that Jesus did not agree with them. Have you ever encountered someone who was offended because you disagreed with them? As Jesus taught He revealed their error. The religious leaders were not trying to be good waiters who delivered God's food from the

2. Jacob Neusner. Shabbat. The Mishnah. Yale University Press. 1988. pp. 179-208.

kitchen to the tables unadulterated. They played with the food. They added and removed things.

Every godly, God honoring teacher must want to obey God, work hard to teach accurately what God the Father was trying to communicate in each passage of scripture, and then faithfully apply it. Every godly, God honoring Christian must want to obey, want to know the truth, and then they can grow in their knowledge about God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. That is the ultimate joy in life - to know one's Creator!