

The Gospel of John

Lesson #72

The Journey

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The Gospel of John

• John 7:35 The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? (Hellenistic Jews)

• Now their sarcasm grows into mockery – and in their mockery they are telling us something about their own selves.

• They wonder where he will go that they won't find him – well, he need not go anywhere for them to not find him because they would not be looking. ²

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The Gospel of John

• We have this group of religious elites who reveal to anyone who would listen they had no interest in truth.

• They were single-minded in their focus – their focus was on maintaining their power and prestige over the people who supported them with their tithes and offerings.

• Shameful shepherds of the people who looked down on those they were to care for – not much different from our politicians today who despise most of their countrymen. ³

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The Gospel of John

- John 7:36 What does he mean by saying, 'You will seek me and you will not find me,' and, 'Where I am you cannot come'?"
- Now, jump one chapter – John 8:21 So he said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come."
- This is even plainer – Jesus' language is such that it's hard to miss his point. Disconnect from me and be damned.

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The Gospel of John

In Matthew 21 we read "Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. Therefore, I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him." The despised cornerstone, chosen and sent by God, is dangerous if you miss or ignore him, but he is especially dangerous to those who oppose him. Jesus is standing in Israel declaring his deity and forcing all around him to choose.

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The Gospel of John

- John 7:37 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.
- Here we have another reference to the coming of the Holy Spirit upon every believer – in the OT he came upon some for service, in the NT he will dwell in all who believe.

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The Gospel of John

- Jesus waits until the final day of the feast to call the crowds to himself with his **“if anyone thirsts”** pronouncement and we might ask why.
- Could it be because the people have been prepped with 6 days of worship and spiritual celebrations reminding them of how God delivered their ancestors in the desert?
- Similar to sitting through a sermon with the gospel invitation at the end instead of the beginning – the time when the people should be focused on spiritual things.

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The Gospel of John

- **“If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.”** – this is clearly an invitation to believe on Jesus and be saved.
- And here is the mysterious thing – despite the absence of words like **“come and place your faith in me”** the hearer who is ready would have intuitively known as much.
- When Jesus spoke with Nicodemus and the woman at the well, while he didn’t give what we would call a conventional invitation both knew what he was saying – **“come and believe”**.

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The Gospel of John

- **“If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.”** – notice his words of **“if anyone thirsts”** and we should understand the hearer has a **tangible, recognizable, need**.
- **Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.** (The question of the ages is why doesn’t everyone have the same hunger and thirst)
- There are certain needs we have that give off clear and strong signals to our bodies those needs exist – Jesus is telling us the same is true for our spirits.

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The Gospel of John

- When Jesus says, “If anyone thirsts” he is speaking about a desire one has that can only be satisfied by a very specific thing such as when water quenches our physical thirst.
- Those in the crowd who had such a thirst would have known what he was speaking of – when one is awakened to their spiritual need that one needs little explanation.
- Without getting too mystical, think back to when you were saved – did the words you heard, or the words you spoke really matter that much?

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The Gospel of John

When the Holy Spirit has you ready to be saved, the preacher can say, “raise your hand”, “pray this prayer,” or even nothing at all and you will respond. And why would you respond? Because you know in your soul you are thirsty for only that which the Lord can give. This is the power of the gospel, indeed the power of the Word of God. You can open it anywhere, give it out and know that it and the Spirit will do a work in the hearer. We talk regularly about “saying the prayer”, but the “prayer” is nowhere described in scripture because the power of the Gospel is not in our words, but in God’s words. “And he said, ‘The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how.’” Salvation is wholly the work of God!

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The Gospel of John

- “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” John 7:38
- Oh, the consistency of Jesus – look at the words Jesus spoke to the Woman at the well.
- John 4:13 Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

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The Gospel of John

“This water flows to you when you come to Christ, and it comes into your life, it doesn’t stay in you. You’re not a bucket. You’re not a reservoir. It goes through you. You are a fountain that becomes a river (overflowing with the Spirit of God).” Unknown

Oh, God make it true in our lives that we would be a people overflowing with the Spirit of God!

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The Gospel of John

- John 7:40 When they heard these words, some of the people said, “**This really is the Prophet.**”
- Deuteronomy 18:15 “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen.” (Moses)
- And as Moses was a deliverer (a savior) so the prophet promised would be the Savior, the Messiah and he would come from among the people of Israel.

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The Gospel of John

- To believe Jesus was the prophet of Deuteronomy 18 was to believe he was the Messiah – this would mean there are some saved people now in the crowd before Jesus. (OT saints)
- Now another group chimes in with essentially the identical claim about Jesus – he is the promised Messiah, and they are OT saints as well.
- Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee?” and now we see the inconsistent educational levels in the crowd.

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The Gospel of John

- If you recall from way back in verse #27 some in the crowd said, “when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.”
- Now in verse #42- “Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?”
- The crowd is no different than most of the crowds we live among – riddled with legends, misinformed, and ignorant when it comes to the scriptures.

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The Gospel of John

- John 7:43 So there was a division among the people over him. 44 Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.
- There was not one unanimous opinion as to who Jesus was, in fact we have (4) different positions just in this chapter.
- He is the Messianic Prophet, He is Christ, some wanted to arrest him as an imposter, and some were what no one should have been – confused.

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The Gospel of John

- John 7:45 The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why did you not bring him?” 46 The officers answered, “No one ever spoke like this man!”
- So, what did he say that kept the Temple Guard from arresting him?
- It probably wasn’t so much what he said, but more likely it was how he said what he said.

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The Gospel of John

The text tells us this, "No one ever spoke like this man!", but it sure seems like there is a lot that is not said. The Temple Guard were surely accustomed to hearing lots of teachings inside the temple grounds and were probably moved by none. A rabbi here and there probably spouted off on a regular basis looking for new followers. But despite all that experience and exposure to teachings from the Old Testament, on this day when they hear Jesus, they are stopped in their tracks, and are kept from performing their duty. He was no doubt casting new light on old texts in such a way, and with such authority, and with such certainty, that it grabbed the soldier's attention like never before. No way were they going to arrest the Messiah.

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The Gospel of John

- John 7:47 The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived? 48 Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? 49 But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."
- The Temple Guard was not to make such judgments, they were to obey orders.
- They asked the Guard if they've been deceived – the charge of Deceiver was growing in the minds of the Jews. What irony as the label of "deceiver" so clearly belongs to Satan.²⁰

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The Gospel of John

- Now their classism shows up again – we are the "authorities" and judges of what is good teaching and what is not.
- Although they would have to mask it a bit as (3) of the (24) members of the Temple Guard would have been their peers.
- So, the story is going to be the (3) priests were deceived and the (21) Levites were not sophisticated enough to know good teaching even if they heard it.²¹

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The Gospel of John

- You might think that rationale people would pause and ask themselves, "could we be mistaken about Jesus?" – after all we've seen is it time to re-evaluate?
- Think about it, all their lives they've been waiting for Messiah and what fools history would label them if they missed him.
- But at this point the Jews are losing touch with rationale thinking because they are so blinded with jealousy and fear at the thought of losing their position.

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The Gospel of John

- I've never heard what I am about to say, but the "Jews" that are badgering Jesus are behaving very much like a criminal organization.
- Luke 20:46 "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, 47 who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

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The Gospel of John

- Matthew 23:13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in."
- Criminal enterprise? What would we say about an organization that kept people from organ transplants, or life saving drugs unless you paid them a black-market price?
- Well, keeping people from eternal life is far worse than denying them healthcare.

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The Gospel of John

- Matthew 23:14 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.
- This is akin to drug dealers grabbing young kids on the street and making them dealers themselves or prostitutes out of the girls – innocent, isolated kids are easy to mold.
- The “Jews” weren’t dealing drugs – they were dealing in something much worse; lies about Jesus of Nazareth!

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The Gospel of John

- And you’ve got to love this line, “Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him?”
- I wonder if they were able to say that with a straight face – of course none of the “authorities or the Pharisees” believed in him! They had no interest in who he was.
- What a phony argument that was – it would be like asking if Adolph Hitler if he was considering giving money to the local synagogue.

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The Gospel of John

- And then perhaps my favorite - “But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.”
- They were so caught up in their own pedigrees that were tied to money and education that they had no time for the common person.
- Correct me if I am wrong, but I’m pretty sure not knowing the Law is not the unforgiveable sin – ask Adam, Enoch, Noah, or Abraham.

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The Gospel of John

- John 7:50 Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, 51 “Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?”
- Nicodemus reappears – since his encounter with Jesus he has probably been torn up inside with conviction.
- In this instance he raises the question every other member of the Jews should have been asking – does the law of God judge someone without hearing evidence?

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The Gospel of John

- John 7:52 They replied, “Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee.”
- Now they try to embarrass Nicodemus by intimating that he is a Galilean – something lower than the dirt under the dirt.
- And then their statement that reeks of ignorance – “are there any prophets that arise out of Galilee?”. Again, I say, just ask a question or two and you might not be in hell today.

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Questions?

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