

1.14.18 ~ John 7:1-13, "Jesus: Good Man or Liar?"

Read John 7:1-5... "After this," or "After these things," is speaking of all that happened in chapter 6, which was around the time of the Feast of Passover (cf. 6:4). It is worth noting that as John opens chapter 7 he says that the Feast of Tabernacles (literally, *Feast of Booths or Ingathering*) was near.

Passover is celebrated in April and the Feast of Booths is celebrated in October, so it would seem that about six months have passed since the events of chapter 6. We don't know exactly what happened during the six months, but we do know that Jesus was preaching, teaching and healing in the area of Galilee, during that time.

The other gospel writers tell us where Jesus went in Galilee, during that time: Matthew 15:21-28 and Mark 8:22-26 tell us He traveled from Sidon, northwest of Galilee, to Decapolis, in the southeast.

Matthew 15:29-38; 17:14-18 record that Jesus was healing people, He fed a crowd of four thousand, and He was casting out demons. It would seem that during the six months in Galilee Jesus was discipling the Twelve. Several times in the gospel accounts we find Jesus with large crowds surrounding Him, as He taught, healed and cared for them; after which, Jesus would go away to have intimate time with the Father and then time with His disciples.

God's Son did not come to entertain crowds, neither did He commission His Church to do so; but instead, (Matthew 28:19) to go and make disciples; usually one to one, e.g., in John's gospel we have Christ's example: (3, Nicodemus; 4, Samaritan Woman; 5, Invalid; 8, Adulteress; 9, Blind Man; 11, Martha).

Hebrews 10:24-25, *"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching."*

Discipleship happens when we influence and encourage others to know, believe and obey God's Word, while we are influenced and encouraged to do the same.

Discipleship is growing in our personal walk with Christ - believing, following and honoring Him, and there is not anything more important or of higher priority for us than discipleship - discipling others while being also being disciplined ourselves.

Notice in **verse 1**, Jesus is staying away from Judea because the Jews there wanted to kill Him (cf. **John 5:18**), "For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill Him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God." In other words, Jesus was not publicly ministering in Judea because of the increasing hostility toward Him.

Read John 7:2-5... The Feast of Booths, according to first-century Jewish historian Josephus, was the most popular of the three "pilgrimage feasts" (including Passover and Feast of Weeks), which all Israelite males are required to attend.

Jesus' brothers didn't understand His mission or God's purpose (**see verse 4**). Jesus isn't interested in being a public figure or gaining popularity among the people. His brothers have no clue about the threat to Him, for they encourage Him to go to Judea and perform miracles, so the people will see them.

Verse 5 says, "His own brothers did not believe in Him." And you know, the biblical record shows us that they would continue in unbelief until after His death and resurrection (**see Acts 1:8-14**).

Read John 7:6-9... Jesus basically tells His brothers that it is not yet time for the Son of Man to be revealed. Jesus will not be coerced by anyone, as He is in total submission to the will of the Father, and the Father is working things out according to His own sovereign plan.

Jesus' brothers were unbelievers at this time, and they gave no concern to God's will or God's itinerary, but did whatever pleased them; in fact they fit right in with unbelieving "worldly" religious system of Judaism, for it was at enmity with God's plan, purpose and provision of His own Son, as the payment for our sins.

Jesus tells His brothers (**verse 8**) to go up to the Feast, because He (**verse 9**) is staying in Galilee, for a time.

Jesus will not enter Jerusalem and publicly declare Himself to be the Messiah for six more months (from the events in John 7); He will arrive during Passover, riding on a donkey's colt (cf John 12; 11:55-57).

Read John 7:10-13... Jesus' brothers and other family members would probably go up to Jerusalem together. Jesus did not want to draw attention to Himself so, He waited until after His family departed, we don't know how long afterward, but we do know Jesus arrived in the middle of the Feast of Booths (cf **verse 14**), and that the Jews (religious leaders) were looking for Him (**verse 11**). John tells us (**verse 12**) people expressed opinions about Jesus: some saying He was a good man, while others said He was a liar, deceiving the people.

Note: Some say He was just a good teacher, but good teachers don't claim to be God. Some say He was just a good example, but good examples don't mingle with prostitutes and sinners. Some say He was a madman, but madmen don't speak the way He spoke. Some say He was a fanatic, but fanatics don't draw children to themselves or reach out to touch lepers and heal them. Some say He was a religious phony, but phonies don't rise from the dead. Some say He was just a phantom, but phantoms can't bleed or die. Some say He was just a myth, but

myths don't set the date for our calendar: BC, before Christ; AD [Anno Domini] "in the year of our Lord".

If Jesus was merely a good man, or perhaps a liar who purposely deceived people, why would so much attention be given to Him by the three major religions of the world (Christianity, Judaism, Islam), and the two major Cults (Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons).

Notice (**verse 13**), the people weren't openly [*publicly*] speaking for or against Jesus; the reason being, their fear of the Jews [the religious leaders].

To publicly speak against the religious leaders of Israel could lead to excommunication from the synagogue which would basically cut one off from all Jewish life; for Israel was a Theocracy, of which the Chief Priests, Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes held positions of prominence and authority over the people.

Many of the religious leaders spoke against Jesus, but the Sanhedrin (the ruling court of Israel over public, civil, cultural and religious issues, much like our Supreme Court), had not yet made a public statement concerning Jesus of Nazareth; therefore the people were guarded in what they said publicly, so as not to contradict the religious leaders or oppose any ruling of the Sanhedrin.

But you know, Jesus was not in submission to the religious leaders of Israel or subservient to the rulings of the Sanhedrin, for He had come to do the will of His Father in heaven, which was completed at the cross when Jesus said, "It is finished!" and validated at the tomb, when Jesus rose from the grave and then appeared to many over a period of 40 days, before ascending back into heaven, to sit at the right hand of the Father.

Look at **John 7:12-18**... Jesus is not only a good man, not only a man of truth; He is the Truth and there is nothing false in Him, for He does not seek His own glory, but the glory of His Father in heaven, the One who sent Him to earth to save us (**John 20:31**), "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."

Pastor Mike

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