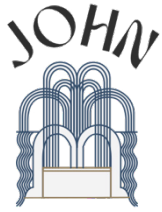


An Exposition of the
GOSPEL OF JOHN



“Seeing through Our Facades”

John 7:14-24

Theme: God sees through our superficial standards and calls for genuine righteousness in our hearts.

Introduction: Each of us faces the same challenging moment: Will we recognize the truth when it confronts us, or will we reject it because it does not align with our assumptions, traditions, or desires? John 7 places that question in the spotlight. Jesus walks into the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles—a crowded, noisy, joyful celebration—and when He begins to teach, everything stops. His words arrest the attention of the masses but also ignite hostility among religious. They cannot deny His wisdom, yet they refuse to bow to it. Why? Although they possessed the Scriptures, they lacked discernment. They evaluated Christ by human standards, cherished their own authority, and judged by appearances rather than by truth.

In this passage, Jesus exposes the bankruptcy of man-made judgment and reveals the path to true spiritual discernment. He declares that His teaching comes directly from the Father (v. 16), that genuine understanding belongs only to those who are willing to do God’s will (v. 17), and that false teachers always seek their own glory while the true teacher seeks the glory of God (v. 18). He then uncovers the hypocrisy of the religious leaders—they boast of possessing the Law, yet they violate it by plotting murder while condemning Him for healing a man on the Sabbath. Jesus presses the issue with unflinching clarity: *“Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment”* (John 7:24).

This text confronts us with a timeless warning: you can be religious, educated, and influential—and still completely blind to the truth. Discernment is not gained by schooling, age, or experience. It is granted by God to those who submit to His will, love His glory above their own, and test everything by His Word. As we study Christ’s words, we are called to examine our hearts. Are we marked by humble obedience that welcomes God’s truth, or by the pride and self-interest that blinds and hardens?

John 7:14–24 calls us to the only safe place—a heart yielded to God, shaped by Scripture, and seeking His glory above all else. ***God sees through our superficial standards and calls for genuine righteousness in our hearts.*** There are three emphases we desire to see this AM:

- I. **The Source of Discernment – 7:14-16**
- II. **The Stipulations for Discernment – 7:17-18**
- III. **The Sample of Discernment – 7:19-24.**

I. The Source of Discernment – 7:14-16

A. The Reaction to the Teaching – vv. 14-15

1. During our last study, we noted how Christ, in His divine wisdom, had delayed his attendance at the Feast because of the plot to arrest Him.

2. He waited until the activities were well underway and most people had all arrived before He made a visible appearance – He was completely safe now because the Jews feared the masses – *“But when it was now the midst of the feast ...”*
3. Consequently, *“Jesus went up into the temple, and began to teach.”*
4. His time was short, and He wanted to address some issues regarding Him and the Feast of Tabernacles, which they were currently observing.
5. The content of His teaching is provided for us in the balance of the chapter.
6. However, the reaction by the religious leaders was hostile – as you might expect – coming from a group that was seeking to kill Him.
7. *“The Jews then were astonished, saying, ‘How has this man become learned, having never been educated’”* – demonstrating their insensitivity to the Word of God.
 - a) *These religious leaders knew that Jesus had never taken advantage of any of their “approved” rabbinical schools and consequently, anything He was teaching was suspect.*
 - b) *Since Jesus had never learned at any approved institution, He was merely sharing His own private, unsanctioned views, and therefore, the people ought not to listen to Him.*
8. They were completely shocked that His message was powerful enough to captivate the crowd, but all He was doing was speaking the truth.
9. Jesus’ teaching was unique because He didn’t just repeat what others said but spoke directly to them as if from God.
10. His heart and burden were to deliver the Word of God to the people — a task he carried out more powerfully and effectively than anyone else, but he was completely rejected by those steeped in self-satisfaction and religious ritual.

B. The Response by the Teacher – v. 16

1. Jesus’ response to this murmured criticism of His teaching was to answer them: *“So Jesus answered them and said, ‘My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me’.”*
2. His critics had completely dismissed His teaching as being an obnoxious assertion from an unqualified source.
3. Jesus confronts their assumption by explaining that He is not taught by man or merely self-taught, but that He has been instructed by God Himself.

An Exposition of the
GOSPEL OF JOHN

4. He was not advancing Himself, but the One who had given Him the message – God Himself.
5. In essence, Jesus declares to these lost leaders that if they reject the teaching that He is giving them, they are rejecting God Himself – cp. *Matthew 10:40*.
6. Jesus was so close to the Father, having spent hours in prayer and study of the Scriptures, that He realized what was true of Him essentially – that He is the exact manifestation and representation of God Himself – cp. *John 1:18*.

II. The Stipulations for Discernment – 7:17-18

A. The Commitment to Obedience – v. 17a

1. Discernment is not something that is acquired from the right school, or with age, or not even from experience.
2. Discernment results first from a person developing a powerful desire to do the will of God – *“If anyone is willing to do His will ...”*
3. The idea: *“is willing”* is not a casual cooperation, but a deep determination that God’s will is worth pursuing.
4. Thus, properly responding to the portion of the will of God that you have come to understand is the prerequisite for gaining further understanding to God’s will
5. Whenever our hearts are right before God, He gives us the capacity to grasp truth – *“... he will know of the teaching ...”*
6. It is said that God will not give light unless there is a genuine desire to eagerly walk in that light.

B. The Consequence of Obedience - v. 17b

1. The second stipulation for discernment is knowledge: *“... he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.”*
2. Essentially, we are given the key: spiritual intelligence comes from the heart, not the intellect.
3. If you are truly committed to God's will, then anything that opposes God's will also conflicts with your desires.
4. Conversely, what aligns with God's will also aligns with your desires, and you are naturally drawn to it.

5. Thus, the religious leaders of Israel knew deep down that they weren't interested in God's will.
6. Their antagonism toward Christ showed that He was indeed consistent with God's will and out of step with them.

C. The Celebrity of the Obedient – v. 18

1. The final criterion for discernment is the focus on the glory of God – “What kind of interests were being advanced – personal or heavenly?”
2. Jesus states: *“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.”*
3. Jesus confronts the Jews here, indicating that when someone tries to draw attention to Himself and gain status through their message, they cannot be trusted to tell the truth.
4. However, he is not an imposter who seeks the glory of God rather than his own – it is not about “behold me!” or “Behold the church!”, but about “Behold the Lamb of God!”

III. The Sample of Discernment – 7:19-24

A. The Criticism of Inconsistency – vv. 19-23

1. Jesus immediately demonstrates what He means by pointing out the obvious inconsistency in the lives of the religious leaders who were planning to kill Him.
2. He says: *“Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law?”*
3. Jesus totally reverses the situation – having been criticized for teaching without “letters of certification,” He criticizes those who pride themselves in having the “letter of the law” but fail to keep it.
4. He then appeals to the Law of Moses – confronting the religious leadership with the hatred and murder in their hearts – *“Why do you seek to kill Me?”*
5. In reality, the heart that is not inclined toward the truth is inclined against the truth.
6. Demonstrating that the plot to kill Him was contained to the religious leadership, *“the crowd answered, ‘You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You?’”*
7. *“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘I did one deed, and you all marvel’.”* – a reference to the healing of the paralytic on the Sabbath in John 5 – the

An Exposition of the
GOSPEL OF JOHN

event that set off the desire to kill Him by the Jewish authorities – cp. *John 5:18*.

8. Jesus exposes how unreasonable their hatred is toward Him – “*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.*” – that is, you yourselves do certain deeds on the Sabbath that are deemed necessary.
9. Circumcising on the eighth day was considered appropriate to fulfill the law – cp. *Leviticus 12:3* – “*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?*”
10. You approve of sanctifying one part of the body on the Sabbath but condemn the healing of the entire body? How unreasonable are their judgmental hearts and minds?

B. The Call for Insight – v. 24

1. Jesus clearly demonstrated that the judgment of these religious leaders was hasty, biased, and lacking a deep understanding of the Law.
2. Because of their hatred for Christ, they were simply searching for something to condemn, and so their antipathy had settled on this issue.
3. Jesus calls upon them: “*Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.*”
4. Once again, to “*judge with righteous judgment,*” one must have a righteous heart – one that embraces God's grace and submits to His Word – *1 Sam. 16:7*.
5. The Jews whose hearts were so calloused and hardened toward Christ would never be able to exercise true discernment and judge properly – *Luke 16:15*.
6. They would always stay superficially focused and impose a man-made, practical religious system; they would miss the core of Christ's teaching.

So What?

1. **How does my daily obedience – or lack thereof – either open my eyes to God's truth or keep me blind to it?**
2. **Which parts of God's Word am I treating as optional, negotiable, or subject to my approval instead of recognizing as the voice of God Himself?**
3. **Where in my life do I feel a pull toward self-promotion, personal reputation, or validation – and how might that distort the way I judge truth and ministry?**

4. In what ways am I tempted to judge situations, doctrines, or people based on appearance rather than the standards of Scripture and God's character?

Theme: God sees through our superficial standards and calls for genuine righteousness in our hearts.