

Gospel of John Study Session 16

In the last session we saw how Jesus described Himself as the bread of life. After telling those following Him that they needed to eat His flesh and drink His blood to gain eternal life, many of Jesus' followers abandoned Him. What Jesus was referring to was not cannibalism but rather faith. To gain eternal life one needed to fully and wholeheartedly believe that Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God and take these truths into one's innermost being. Superficial faith or head knowledge was not enough to gain the life Jesus spoke of to the masses. Despite a good number of His followers forsaking Him, Jesus' core disciples remained with Him and did so because they understood that He alone possessed the words of eternal life.

Also, at this time in Jesus' ministry, there was a building tension between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders that was quickly coming to a head. As we open our session, we will read that the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths) was beginning and Jesus' own brothers were urging Him to travel with them to Jerusalem and reveal Himself publicly. In the end, we will witness Jesus leave Galilee for the last time during His earthly ministry and He will again square off against the traditions and rituals of the Jewish rulers and religious authorities by using the elements of the Feast to again show who He truly is. The question is who will believe Him and who will not?

1. The Journey to Jerusalem

[John 7: 1-5]

In this chapter of John, the word "Jews" refers to the Jewish religious leaders, authorities, or hierarchy. Only once, in v.2, is the word "Jew" used to denote the race of the Jews and that is John denoting the Feast of Booths as a celebration of the ethnic Jews or religion of the Jews. Remember, John's main audience was those outside of Palestine and later in the first century where this Feast would probably not be well known.

Q: Why was Jesus unwilling to walk in Judea freely any longer? (*v.1 - The Jews were seeking to kill Him.*)

The brothers mentioned in v.2 are Jesus' half brothers. They are sons of Joseph and Mary and grew up with Jesus as their older brother.

Q: Why did Jesus' brothers encourage Him to travel to Judea for the Feast? (*vv.3-5 - They were giving Him advice on how to increase His following. They are aware of Jesus' waning popularity and urge Him to drum up some support by performing some miracles to satisfy the masses so His cause won't die out. After all, if Jesus is truly interested in religious prominence, Jerusalem was the place to be as it had the Temple, which was the center of all Jewish life, and would show Him to be more than just a "country preacher".*)

Q: What was the state of Jesus' brothers' hearts? (*v.5 - They didn't believe in Him at this time. Notice that the wording John uses in v.5 doesn't make the assumption that they will be converted*)

later, though we know at least some are saved.)

[Psalm 69:8]

To fully grasp this chapter and what Jesus is about to do and teach, we need to understand the Feast of Booths. It was the most popular of the three feasts commanded in the Law each year. The Feast was associated with the ingathering harvest, not of grain but of grapes and olives. It was prescribed to take place for a full week starting on the 15th day of the seventh month of the year, which would correspond roughly to the 2nd week of October. It began five days after the Day of Atonement.

[Leviticus 23:27, 34-43]

[Deuteronomy 16:16-17]

That's the Feast from the Law which Moses gave to the people. It was time of thanksgiving and joy for the harvest. The mood of the people was festive and it was the most popular feast of the three prescribed by the Law. Every male in Israel was commanded to come and be a part of this celebration to the Lord. What it signified was that when the Lord lead Israel out of Egypt, He had them live in tents (booths, tabernacles). Then the Lord graciously led them to the Promised Land where they took possession of the land and lived there. It celebrated the transition from the nomadic poverty they experienced while in the wilderness to the stable affluence they experienced while living in their own land.

To do this, on the first day of the Feast the people would arrive around Jerusalem and take local foliage and build themselves tents to live in for the week. It was like a national family camping event. On the first day, no laborious work could be done. It was a day of rest. On the last day, there were special offerings and rituals that took place that were symbolic of God's provision for them. It is important to understand that the length of the Feast was counted as seven days but there is an eighth day that is mentioned. Deuteronomy calls for the Feast to be seven days while Leviticus prescribes both seven and eight days in length. There are several possible reasons for this apparent discrepancy. It may be due to what is "counted" as a day may be different or an extra day was added later. One thought is that in the Hebrew numbering system, the eighth day, is seen as a new beginning and often something new and supernatural that God is starting. (Examples could be that on the seventh day, God rested after creation but on the eighth day the stewardship of the earth was given to man and it began the time of collaboration of working together - man and God. As we'll note later in chapter 7, male circumcision happened on the eighth day and it signified the beginning of the male child being identified with the covenant community of God. The giving of the Torah was 50 days after the Passover which is the eighth day after seven full weeks (49 days). In our current Feast of the Booths, the eighth day signified both a culmination of the past and anticipation of a new beginning from the Lord. As we'll see later, this feast did have a "last days" component to the celebration.

In addition to all the offerings that were presented daily, there were two rites that were performed during the Feast. There was a water-drawing ritual done daily and then a lamp-lighting ritual

done at the end. In chapter 7, we are going to see Jesus use the water-drawing ritual as an illustration of the living water. We'll look at the water-drawing ritual when we get to Jesus' message concerning the living water.

Jesus' brothers wanted Him to act publicly and put on a big display. Yet, those reading John, by this point would know that Jesus would never pander to those with corrupt motives. They are wanting Jesus to show Himself to the world but the paradox is in that desire is that the world cannot receive Jesus without ceasing to be the world. The explanation given for this advice from His brothers was that they were still lost.

[John 7:6-13]

In this Jesus further explains directly why His brothers' analysis and recommendation for action was faulty.

Q: What are the two differences between Jesus' brothers and Himself that Jesus notes in vv.6-7? (*His time is not their time and the world doesn't hate them but it does hate Him.*)

The word "time" used in v.6 refers to a specific point in time or history. It is not concerned with the extent of time lapsed or measurement of time. In this sense, the word "time" here is similar to the use of the word "hour" in John 2:4 when Jesus chides His mother. This is Jesus making another reference to His ultimate purpose in coming to earth, which was to die on the cross. His brothers were projecting upon Jesus what they would have done themselves. We must be forever vigilant not to do that same thing. Jesus never changes and always does the will of His Heavenly Father. We adjust to Him and should never ask or expect Him to adjust to our thoughts or ways. The problem was that what the brothers were doing was completely without significance as far as God was concerned. Jesus was keyed into the Father's timetable for His trip to Jerusalem and would not be swayed by the worldly wisdom of His unbelieving brothers. His departure was not an act of deception but rather an attempt to avoid unwanted publicity.

Jesus does go to the Feast but not at the same time as His brothers. He goes privately as to not attract attention to Himself. He knows that the Jews are seeking to kill Him.

Q: What was the attitude of the crowd at the Feast? (vv.11-13 - *There was confusion over Jesus' identity. The Jews were seeking Him to arrest Him while the masses were quietly discussing who Jesus truly was. Look at the distinction between "the Jews" in v.11 and "the crowd" in v.12.*)

Q: Why is no one speaking of Jesus openly at the Feast? (v.13 - *for fear of the Jews. The wrath of the Jewish religious leaders was something to be feared greatly. They had the authority to cast a person out of the Temple or synagogue which meant that such a person was barred from participating in Jewish life. It meant that a faithful Jew could have no dealings with them and it almost certainly meant financial ruin as they wouldn't be employable or able to maintain a business. Thus, fearing the Jews to avoid this fate, was a very real problem. See John 9 and the attitude of the parents of the man born blind who was healed.*)

At this time there was a lot of confusion and curiosity about Jesus but due to the attitude

of the Jewish leaders and any unofficial order that may have been given, Jesus was talked about in hushed tones only.

2. The debate

[John 7: 14-18]

The word “midst” in v.14 means the midpoint. So about three or four days had already gone by and Jesus had been a no-show. There had been several days of anticipation of Jesus coming to the Feast but He hadn’t revealed Himself until this time. He revealed Himself in the typical Jesus fashion. He went to the Temple, the center of the entire Feast, and began teaching the people.

Q: What was the Jews question concerning Jesus? (*v.15 - How did Jesus get to be this learned?*)

There is a cultural note we need to insert here. The Jews and many in the crowd believed Jesus to be from Galilee, the northern end of Israel. There was a huge divide between those who lived in the south versus those who lived in the north and it’s pretty much inverse of how we see those in the U.S.A. Those in the south, near Jerusalem were sophisticated, educated and urbane. Those from the north were red-necks, hillbillies, uneducated, crude, second-class citizens. Since the Jews believed Jesus to be from the north, this shocks them that He teaches in this manner - with authority and great knowledge. He’s just a country bumpkin preacher who fell off the wagon, how did He get so knowledgeable?

Q: How does Jesus answer the question of the Jews? (*v.16 - His teaching is not His own. He does not claim that what He teaches originates from Him. Rather, His teaching originates from the One who sent Him.*)

Jesus then drops the bomb on them and all of us, too.

Q: What does Jesus say a person must do in order to verify that His teaching is from God? (*v.17 - One must do the will of God*)

This is huge for the Jews and the Jesus’ audience but also for us today. The truth about Jesus cannot be discerned by even the most rigorous debate procedures that were common in the rabbinic schools of their day. There is a moral dimension involved in coming to know spiritual truth. In other words, a dimension where faith, one’s will, and action all come together to gain spiritual knowledge. There must be a definite act of human will in order to do God’s will. It is never done accidentally. A person must make a settled and determined choice to fulfill God’s will. Spiritual knowledge isn’t possessing facts or head knowledge but rather it comes from obedience and submission to the truth being revealed by God to the person’s heart. Now this is so because desires a love relationship with His people and only through obedience to Him can we come to know spiritual truth which reveals God’s heart to us. We come to know God’s heart, His desires and ways, when we surrender to the truths He reveals to us and we act in faith upon them. Then His actions are seen and we are drawn into a deeper love for Him. In short, a seeker

must be fundamentally committed to doing God's will to have the truth revealed to his heart. Back in John 6:44, Jesus plainly said that no one can come to Him unless the Father draws him to Himself. So when the Father draws a person to Himself the response or action of a human is to make a faith-commitment to the teaching so that they can verify that the teaching is from God. Once we commit to doing God's will, the truth becomes self-verifying. This prevents finite human beings from setting themselves up on a supposed high ground outside of the truth of God and gain a vantage point whereby they can judge the validity of the Word of God. God's revelation can only be assessed from the inside - by those who are fully committed to doing the Father's will. This is why the Jews could not understand Jesus' teaching. They were never committed to doing God's will. They never responded to the Father's drawing of their hearts to Himself through submission to His will. In this way, the Jews were similar to the older son in the parable of the prodigal son. All he did was follow the rules faithfully but when his brother returned home, he couldn't celebrate with his father because he didn't share his father's heart. He was acting like a servant and not a son. As Paul said in **I Corinthians 8:1**, "...knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." The end of spiritual knowledge is loving God and others as He does.

Q: According to Jesus in v.18, what does a person who speaks from their own initiative seek? (*Their own glory*)

Again, this is why the Jews cannot judge Jesus rightly. If Jesus were like them and just seeking to persuade people to His viewpoint, He would be free to use whatever methods He thought were most effective. Yet, He utterly rejected such methods in favor of His Father's agenda. His teachings were trustworthy because His motives were pure. He wanted nothing more than His Father's truth to be taught and His Father to be glorified, not Himself. As One who did His Father's will perfectly, He possessed perfect spiritual knowledge.

[John 7:19-24]

Now Jesus turns the point of the debate from the question of His teaching to their motives for wanting to kill Him.

Q: What is Jesus' accusation leveled against the Jews in v.19? (*That none of them keeps the Law given by Moses. Here's the interesting thing about the Law that Jesus is hinting at when He's debating with the Jews. Possession of the Law does not ensure that one can keep it, however, it does guarantee that one will be condemned by it.*)

Before moving on, we need to understand Jesus' last phrase and how it was received in the crowd at that moment. Jesus made a public statement declaring that the Jews were trying to kill Him. This was a huge shock to the crowds but in two different ways. To those from the north (Galilee area) were completely shocked. Why would anyone be seeking to kill Jesus? This made Jesus appear insane or demon possessed. However, for those from the sophisticated south and Jerusalem in particular, they lived with the religious authorities and knew that the Jews were seeking to have Jesus arrested and killed. Yet, to speak of it openly and brazenly in public - to actually say the words He said - were astonishing. To them it was Jesus exposing the huge

elephant in the room publicly. That's why v.19 is the cry of disbelief probably from the elements of the crowd who are from the north of Israel. (Those from the south probably were saying, "Yeah, that's true but I can't believe He used His outside voice on that one.)

The one deed Jesus refers to is when He healed the man at the pool of Bethesda back in John 5:1-17. He healed the man on the Sabbath and the healed man reported Jesus to the Jews and that sparked their first open debate concerning the Sabbath and from that time, the Jews were out to kill Jesus. (John 5:16, 18) Now Jesus is going to turn their supposed reverence for the Law upside down upon the Jews.

Q: Who was the first person to receive the rite of circumcision? (*Abraham - Genesis 17 - It was the sign of the covenant between God and His people.*)

Q: Was circumcision part of the Law of Moses? (*Yes*)

[Leviticus 12:2-3]

Q: According to Leviticus, what day was the baby boy to be circumcised on? (*The eighth day*)

Q: According to the Law, what would happen if the eighth day of a baby boy's life was on the Sabbath? (*He would be circumcised*)

Q: In the event that a child was circumcised on the Sabbath, was it considered breaking the Sabbath? (*No*)

Q: So what does this imply about the law concerning the Sabbath and the law concerning circumcision? (*There was a hierarchy of importance even within the Law. The law concerning circumcision took precedent and priority over the law governing the Sabbath. They had made a way for the circumcision to happen without breaking the Law of the Sabbath. The reason that the circumcision took precedence over the Sabbath is that the circumcision was a rite that came first. It was given to Abraham and merely continued through Moses. Circumcision predated the law.*)

Q: What was Jesus' ultimate point in His argument? (*v.23 - That if it was lawful to circumcise to follow the letter of the Law on the Sabbath, it certainly is within the Law to heal a man completely on the Sabbath, as well, and not be considered a lawbreaker. Showing mercy and compassion also predated the Law so it could take precedence over the Law. As a side note: remember that without circumcision, the baby boy would not be considered Jewish, a person in the covenant with God as circumcision was the sign of the covenant. It was an essential mark to have in order to participate in the Jewish religious services and rituals. In the same way, the lame man Jesus healed was lame for 38 years and unable to be part of the religious life of any Jew as he was not physically whole. Jesus made it possible for him to rejoin the religious life of all Jews by healing him.*)

Q: What did Jesus tell the Jews to cease doing after making His final argument? (*v.24 - to stop*)

judging Him superficially)

By appearance, Jesus appeared to be living cavalier, foot-loose and fancy free with the Law but in reality, He kept the Law but not according to the man-made traditions. He kept it from the heart as God intended man to keep it. The Jews were judging Him purely on whether He kept their traditions concerning the Law or not. This is what they could see and observe yet they completely missed that His actions were in line with God's will - His love, compassion, mercy and justice. The authorities could not judge rightly because they had no faith in God. They only discerned Jesus as a Sabbath-breaker, not a Sabbath-fulfiller.

[Hebrews 4:1-11]

In this passage, the Sabbath is mentioned not as a day of rest but as a way of life for those who believe in Christ. As Christ rested from His labors after His death, resurrection and ascension, we also rest from attempting to complete the various elements of the Law when we come to Christ for salvation. This is revolutionary as Jesus became our Great High Priest after His ascension back into heaven. Under the old covenant, the priests never sat down. They were too busy offering sacrifices and tending to the Temple to do so. Yet, Jesus, actually completed His Father's work set out for Him on the cross and thus it is said that Jesus sat down at the right hand of God - something no other priest had ever done. He rested as the new covenant was complete. He is the Lord of the Sabbath, the Lord of the rest for believers. For us this means that it is not a literal day where we rest but that we are always to rest in Christ and His finished work on our behalf. Thus, when called to do some action in this world which is the will of the Father, we can do it from the attitude of rest and peace given to us through our relationship with Christ. It is the Holy Spirit doing the work through us. We rest in the forgiveness, wholeness, and perfection that are ours in Christ, no longer striving to fulfill legalistic rules and regulations. Jesus fulfilled the Sabbath and now we enjoy that fulness in Him through our faith in Him.

[John 7:25-36]

Now in v.25, we see those from the south/Jerusalem make this statement. Remember, they are in "the know" about the plot against Jesus' life. *"Isn't this the guy the leaders want to kill? There He is; He's teaching publicly without fear of them at all. If our leaders don't know if this guy is the Christ or not, how would we know?"* Jesus' boldness in making a public appearance and declaring that the Jews want Him dead surprised them. It's interesting that the crowd seems to initially want to believe that Jesus is the Messiah only to dismiss that thought quickly.

Q: What is the crowd's basis for dismissing Jesus as the Messiah? (v.27 - *That Jesus was from Galilee*)

Notice that the crowd missed the truth due to believing in hearsay and "street theology" concerning the Messiah and the Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15,18). The Jewish leaders and those well educated in Judaism knew that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Yet the Scriptures don't say where the Prophet would come from. Though the Jews (as a whole) saw

the Prophet and the Messiah as two different people, the masses got the origin of the two mixed and started believing that no one knew where the Messiah would come from and that He'd just pop up somewhere. (As mentioned earlier, the educated knew better but the masses did not.) They confused these two in their minds. Of course, it was the Christians who later put the truth together that the Prophet spoken of by Moses was also the Messiah.

Q: What does Jesus tell the crowd in v.28-29 about where He came from? (*He told them He was from heaven. He came from the Father above.*)

Q: What is Jesus accusation towards the Jews in vv. 28-29? (*That they don't know God.*)

The Jews had the Law but the Law pointed to Jesus as the Messiah. Thus by denying Him, by having no faith in Him, they prove that they truly don't know God who gave them the Law. This goes back to what Jesus was saying in v.17. Without committing to God's will, one cannot know God's truth. These people were only committed to the rigid points of the Law and not it's heart. The Jews worshiped the Law and put their faith in the Law but did not know the God who gave it to them.

When you take vv. 30-31 together these bear witness to the division that takes place whenever the revelation of God confronts humans.

Q: What are the two groups of people mentioned in vv. 30-31? (*Those who wanted to arrest Him and those who believed in Him.*)

[Matthew 10:34-39]

Jesus separates people into two groups: those who place their faith in Him and those who do not. Now in vv. 30-31 faith based on miracles is not encouraged but it is better than no faith at all. We don't know by what mechanism or in what way Jesus escaped their clutches but it was not His hour (similar to v.6). God was not going to allow anything to happen to Jesus until the hour came and that was the cross.

V. 32 - At this point the arrest warrant had been signed. What is interesting is that the Pharisees were the one who Jesus confronted most often. However, the Sadducees were in the majority of the ruling class of Jewish leaders. The Pharisees would have needed to obtain permission to arrest Jesus from the Sadducees. One of the only things those two groups had in common was that they both hated Jesus and wanted Him dead.

Q: Where did Jesus say He was going in v.33? (*He was going to a place to be with Him who sent Him.*)

Q: According to vv. 33-34, where was Jesus going? (*Heaven*)

Q: Where did the Jews think Jesus was going to go after His statements in vv. 33-34? (*To the Dispersion among the Greeks or even to the Gentiles. The dispersion referred to the Jews who*

had been dispersed across the Roman empire and lived outside Palestine. The Greeks means the Gentiles - the heathen who are everywhere and are not Jewish. The Jewish leaders are completely perplexed by this statement of Jesus.)

So this section of the passage ends with Jesus publicly debating with the Jews and leaving them befuddled. Their lack of faith in God is what John was truly pointing out in this section and shows how pitiful the darkness is that comes from failing to believe God's revelation.

3. The climactic appeal

[John 7:37-44]

Before we dive in, we need to know the ritual that occurred during the Feast of Booths that dealt with water-drawing. The rite was done each day of the Feast and it was a special offering to the Lord. At its heart, the Feast was a memorial to the provision of the Lord for His people during their wandering through the wilderness where food and water were both scarce. When the people entered the Promised Land, the people enjoyed regular rain and abundant crops. The rite of water-drawing was done by the priests. On each day during the Feast a procession of priests would leave the Temple and go to the pool of Siloam and they would draw water from there in golden pitchers. Then they would return towards the Temple carrying their golden pitchers full of water. As they approached the water gate on the south side of the inner court, three blasts from the sopar (the trumpet made from a ram's horn always used in joyful occasions). With the priests continuing their march to the Temple, the temple choir and on lookers would be singing the Halell (Psalms 113-118). When the choir reached Psalm 118, every male pilgrim in the group shook their lulab (willow and myrtle twigs tied together with palm) with their right hand while holding high a piece of citrus fruit in their left hands. The citrus fruit was a sign of the ingathered harvest. Then all cried out, "*Give thanks to the Lord!*" three times. The priests reached the Temple with their golden pitchers and poured the water into silver bowls then poured out upon the altar. As they poured the water upon the altar, they would recite **Isaiah 12:3**, "*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*" This ceremony meant two things to the ancient Jews. It symbolized the Lord's provision for the people in the desert but also it symbolized the Lord pouring out His Spirit in the last days. It was a ritual that was tied to the Messianic days when a stream of water (the Spirit) would flow over the whole earth. This last meaning was the one Jesus pointed out to the masses as He cried out to them.

Now with this symbolism in the minds of the people, which they had witnessed for the past week at this point, Jesus shows up and shouts out vv. 37-38.

Q: What is Jesus offering to give the people? (v.37 - a drink)

Q: What does the water truly represent? (v.39 - The Holy Spirit)

[Isaiah 55:1]

[Zechariah 13:1]

Jesus took the symbolism found in this ritual from the Old Testament and applied it to the gift He was going to bestow upon every person who put their faith in Him after His passion was completed. The joy announced by the soper, could be the joy of anyone who came to Jesus and drank of the living water. The idea of the coming of God pouring out His Holy Spirit upon mankind in an abundant and everlasting way was a huge step forward in the relationship between man and God (in fact, it is the heart of the new covenant) but that's why the soper was sounded three times. The Holy Spirit was coming indeed. Jesus invited the people at the Feast to drink the living water which was the Holy Spirit, who was to come. Scripture promised a bountiful provision of living water to all believers and John connects the Spirit with the water used in the Feast ritual. (In Ezekiel 47 the Spirit is likened to a trickle of water that eventually becomes a huge river. That river is what Jesus promises will be in the belly of the believer.) The Spirit becomes a self-replenishing stream of life in the believer. Christ satisfies the spiritual thirst of a soul and allows. Jesus is claiming rightly to be the fulfillment of the ritual that they had been performing. He was the One who would be the source of the Spirit's coming to a person's heart - all those who drink of the living water He alone gives.

[Joel 2:28]

[Acts 2:1-4] - This is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Q: Why was the Spirit not yet available to the people at the Feast? (v.39 - *Jesus had not been glorified. This is the first instance of John using the verb "glorify". It refers to a time when Jesus fulfilled His mission and then was given a resurrection body as the first-fruits of what believers can expect in the next life. Glorification is the final and future tense of salvation. It refers to the time when Jesus returns and we are changed to be like Him. Jesus' death was that which paid for our entrance into glory.*)

The conflict and division among the crowd continued even after Jesus made this announcement of the Spirit being given to those who would come to Him.

Q: What were the masses saying about Jesus? (vv. 40-41 - *Some thought of Him as the Prophet and other as the Messiah. Yet anyone who thought Jesus was the Messiah was pointed out that the Messiah wouldn't be coming from Galilee. Again we see the distinction in the mind of the people that the Prophet and Messiah are not the same person.*)

Of course the crowd doesn't know as much as they think they know in that they wrongly claim that because Jesus grew up in Galilee that He was from Galilee. As we know, He was born in Bethlehem in fulfillment of the prophecy in Micah. Again, we see that Jesus divided the people. While many wanted to seize Jesus, no one laid a hand on Him.

4. The rejection by the Jewish leaders

[John 7:45-52]

Q: Why didn't the Temple officers arrest Jesus? (*v.46 - They were awestruck by His teaching.*)

As a historical note, these guards or Temple Police, were not mercenaries but Levites who were religiously trained and educated. They were torn on the deepest level of their being as they saw the words of Jesus tearing the population at large apart. They felt the power of His words yet lacked the faith to act on them like leaders they served. Their response was not of faith but it was a true statement concerning Jesus' teachings and appeal.

The rebuke of the Pharisees wasn't that these guards should have arrested Jesus on the grounds that they were police and should follow civil orders. Rather the Pharisees appeal was that they were Levites who should follow the religious authority over them.

The Jews saw that the crowds were being deceived by Jesus' teaching. They now feared that their own brother Levites and guards were similarly being deceived by Jesus. It was expected that the uneducated, low IQ masses could be deceived but they were appealing to the guards sense of loyalty to them, their leaders, to get them thinking straight again - not like the crowd. The leaders were too smart to be fooled by Jesus. "*Remember your training - don't follow this crowd to ruin*" - was the thrust of their rebuke to the guards.

The word for "crowd" in v.49 is a very derogatory word. It usually gets translated "people of the land/earth" and it means clod-hopper or unintelligent, back-woods dweeb. The Jews considered anyone who showed sympathy for Jesus to be such a person. This word had originally been used by God against the entire nation of Israel (Ezekiel 22:29) but later was used just against Israel's leaders (Jeremiah 1:18). It always referred to people who were ignorant of the law. It was held that since a person could not keep the law they didn't know, that such a person was characterized by impiety.

Q: Which Jewish leader is called out by name in his passage? (*v.50 - Nicodemus*)

Q: Where did we see Nicodemus before? (*Chapter 3 - He visited Jesus one night*)

Q: What does Nicodemus ask? (*v.51 - Does the Law judge a man without hearing from Him first?*)

While Nicodemus spoke up, his point of order was not to defend Jesus at least openly. He was bringing up a procedural point that if accepted would work in Jesus' favor.

Q: What was the response to Nicodemus's question? (*v.52 - They rebuked Nicodemus, like the guards.*)

Q: Based upon what we have learned in this session, what are the leaders accusing Nicodemus of being when they ask if he is from Galilee, as well? (*Did he come from the same inferior stock at those ignorant county bumpkins from up north?*)

Q: What do they say never came from Galilee? (*v.52 - A prophet*)

Of course, this statement of theirs was incorrect and probably born out of the heat of the moment. Every tribe in Israel produced at least one prophet over the years. Jonah, Hosea and

Nahum were known to be from Galilee. There are some manuscripts that put the definite article “the” in front of the word “prophet” speaking of the Prophet. Yet, this becomes ironic as there is no Scripture speaking of where the Prophet will come from.

Q: Do you have any questions, comments, rebukes or rebuttals?