

24. Jesus Was Believed by His Brothers

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that there are many people who only follow Jesus for the earthly benefits that they hope to receive. Such individuals do not have a true belief. The result is that they focus on present physical benefits rather than forgiveness of sins and eternal life. In our topic today, we will see that even the brothers of Jesus did not have a true belief at first.

Most of the Jews in both Judea and Galilee had turned away from Jesus due to the lack of a true belief from the heart. We see that at this time even His own brothers did not yet believe in Jesus, although they did believe at a later time. John 7:1-5 says, “After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. Now the Jews’ Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. His brothers therefore said to Him, ‘Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.’ For even His brothers did not believe in Him.” For a period of time Jesus stayed in Galilee, because He knew that many Jews in Judea wanted to kill Him.

John 7:2 says, “Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.” As we begin, we see that it was time for the Feast of Tabernacles. As a result, John did not write anything about the things that happened during the more than six months that passed between these two feasts. The Jews in Judea had turned against Jesus and wanted to kill Him because He said that He was equal with the Father. John 5:18 says, “Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” As a result, Jesus had spent those months in Galilee. However, his brothers now encouraged Jesus to go to Judea.

Notice the reason why his brothers told Jesus to go to Judea. They said that then His disciples that lived in the area of Judea could also see the miracles that Jesus was doing. The brothers thought that Jesus wanted to be known openly. The word translated “known openly” means *to speak plainly or to speak boldly*. The word is translated “boldness” in Acts 4:13, where we read, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” Then, Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” The brothers of Jesus were encouraging Him to go to Judea and speak boldly so that the people of Judea would see His miracles and start to pay attention to His teaching.

Judea had Jerusalem as its main city and so it was the center of power, education and influence among the Jews. That was why his brothers told Jesus that if He wanted to be known He should go to Judea and show Himself to the world in an area where there was much power and influence. We also see the reason why the brothers made this suggestion to Jesus. We read that His brothers did not believe Him. Jesus gave them His answer in John 7:6-9, which says, “Then Jesus said to them, ‘My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but

it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come.’ When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.” Here, we see that Jesus was very conscious of the fact that He was to carry out the will of the Father according to the time planned by the Father.

Jesus said, “My time has not yet come.” The word translated “time” means *a definite time or the right time*. Galatians 6:9-10 use this word twice when those verses say, “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” In verse nine, the word is translated “season”; and in verse ten, it is translated “opportunity.” We might say “now is the right time to do good because at a future time we will reap the reward.” Jesus and the Father knew the time at which everything in the life of Jesus, would happen because they had planned that particular time. In contrast, Jesus told His brothers that they could go to Jerusalem at any time because they were not working according to the schedule of God.

Jesus also told His brothers that there was another difference between Him and them. John 16:9 tells us that the Holy Spirit convicts of the one sin that keeps people from having eternal life when that verse says, “Of sin, because they do not believe in Me.” The world could not hate them since they were still a part of the world as they did not yet believe in Him. In contrast, the world did hate Jesus because Jesus told the people of the world that their works were evil. In fact, Jesus told the Pharisees later in John 8:44, “You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.” The evil desires of their hearts caused them to do evil.

Jesus had said similar things to the Jewish religious leaders before and they were already filled with hatred toward Jesus. Luke 6:7 says, “So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him.” Both the religious leaders in Galilee and the religious leaders in Judea saw Jesus as a threat to their desire for power and so they were continually looking for an opportunity to accuse Him. This hatred continued to intensify.

Jesus told His brothers that they could go up to the feast right away. Jesus said that He was not yet ready to go to this feast because His time had not yet fully come. Jesus reminded them again that He had a right time for everything that He did. In fact, Ephesians 5:15-16 says, “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” Here, we see that the Lord also wants all believers to make the best use of our time during the period of time that He has placed us in the world. Christ gave us an example to follow by His example. Since His brothers did not yet believe in Him, Jesus said that time was not a particular concern for them.

Jesus then remained in Galilee for a period of time. John 7:10-13 says, “But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, ‘Where is He?’ And there was much complaining among the

people concerning Him. Some said, ‘He is good’; others said, ‘No, on the contrary, He deceives the people.’ However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.” Jesus waited until His brothers had left to go to Jerusalem for the feast. Then, Jesus also left Galilee and went to the feast, but He and His disciples did not go with a larger group so that the Jews would not know His plans or where He was before and during the early part of His time in Jerusalem on this trip.

Meanwhile, the Jews were all looking for Jesus at the feast. Here, we see that this verse uses the word “Jews” while the next verse uses the word “people”. In John 1:19, we read, “Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’” John 5:10 says, “The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, ‘It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.’” Then, John 5:16-18 say, “For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.’” Therefore, the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” In each of these passages, we see that John used the word “Jews” to speak of the Jewish religious leaders. Here, in John seven, it was the religious leaders that were already seeking an excuse to kill Jesus.

Meanwhile, the rest of the people were all complaining among themselves about Jesus. The word translated “complaining” means *to have a secret debate or to complain quietly*. This form of the word is only used four times in the New Testament. Philippians 2:14 says, “Do all things without complaining and disputing.” 1 Peter 4:9 says, “*Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.*” Then, the word is also used in Acts 6:1, where we read, “Now in those days, when *the number of the disciples was multiplying*, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.” In all four passages, the word talks about “murmuring.”

Here, we see that the people were divided in their opinions about Jesus. Some of the people thought that Jesus was a good person. Others had a very different opinion. They thought that Jesus was deceiving the people. This is a reminder to us that people who are not yet Christians can have very different opinions about Jesus. We saw that His brothers did not yet believe. Here, we see that the people who came to the feast at Jerusalem all had an opinion about Jesus. These opinions varied greatly. However, none of the people were talking openly about Jesus because of their fear of the Jewish religious leaders.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to recognize that those who are not followers of Jesus will have many different opinions about Jesus. Some will be favorable while others will be opposed to Jesus. We want to help our children understand that our responsibility is to share the Word of God with those who are not yet Christians. The Holy Spirit is the One who convicts. The Father is the One who draws. Jesus is the One who came to seek and to save. We want to help our children learn to share the Word of God effectively so that each member of the Trinity can work in the lives of others. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to work with the Trinity.