

## 27. Jesus Caused the Officers to be Amazed

In our last topic, we saw that we want to show our children that the Holy Spirit is the One who gives us boldness to witness as we yield to Him. We want to help them learn to yield to the Holy Spirit so that rivers of living water can flow from their hearts to help others learn that Jesus is the Christ. In our topic today, we will see that the men who were sent to arrest Jesus were amazed as they heard Him teach.

Jesus knew that it was only a few months until He would be crucified. Many of the people were beginning to believe that Jesus was the Christ. However, there was a divided opinion. John 7:40-44 says, “Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, ‘Truly this is the Prophet.’ Others said, ‘This is the Christ.’ But some said, ‘Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?’ So there was a division among the people because of Him. Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.” The signs and teaching of Jesus were forcing the Jews to form strong opinions about who Jesus was.

Many of the people said that Jesus truly was the Prophet. These people made this statement about Jesus because of the words of Deuteronomy 18:15 which says, “‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.’” Then, Deuteronomy 18:18 adds, “‘I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.’” Here, we see that many of the people were beginning to recognize that Jesus was the promised Prophet.

The people did not understand that the prophecies about the Prophet and the Christ were both talking about the same person. As a result, part of the people said that Jesus was the Christ. That caused other people to respond that the Christ would not come out of Galilee. The people responded with this answer because Micah 5:2 says, “‘But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth *are* from of old, from everlasting.’” Here, we see that each of these three groups knew part of the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled but none of the people fully understood that Jesus was the One who fulfilled all of these prophecies. This lack of complete knowledge and understanding caused a division among the people. This is one of the reasons why Paul said in Acts 20:27, “‘For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.’” Christians need to become familiar with the whole Word of God as that will help them learn to function in unity, instead of have conflicts due to a lack of knowledge.

Meanwhile, the officers that had been sent to arrest Jesus had returned to the religious leaders. John 7:45-49 says, “Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, ‘Why have you not brought Him?’ The officers answered, ‘No man ever spoke like this Man!’ Then the Pharisees answered them, ‘Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.’” The chief priests and Pharisees were upset when the officers did not return with Jesus.

The chief priests and Pharisees immediately questioned, “Why have you not brought Him?” The chief priests were Sadducees and were usually in conflict with the Pharisees. However, we see that they were all in agreement in their opposition to Jesus because they all felt that He was a threat to their power. Jesus described the attitude of the Pharisees in Matthew 23:4-7, where we read, “For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men’s shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’” In these verses, we see that the Pharisees were controlled by pride and they saw Jesus as a direct threat to their control.

The chief priests were no better. They were the men who controlled the buying and the selling of animals for sacrifices in the temple. Luke 19:45-46 says, “Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, ‘It is written, “My house is a house of prayer,” but you have made it a “den of thieves.”’” In these verses, we see why the chief priests did not want to lose their power. They were actually using their position as chief priests to steal from the people. Just a few months after this time in John 7, the high priest said in John 11:49-50, “And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, ‘You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.’” Here, we see that the high priest felt that it was better to murder an innocent person than for the chief priests to lose their power.

The officers who had been sent to arrest Jesus answered, “No man ever spoke like this Man!” These officers had probably served as officers in the temple, their entire adult lives. They had heard many well-known Rabbis teach in the temple. As a result, they recognized that the teaching of Jesus was different than the teaching that they had heard from any of the Rabbis. That difference is described in Matthew 7:28-29, where we read, “And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” An example of that difference is seen in Matthew 5:27-28, where we read, “You have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall not commit adultery” But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” The religious leaders of the Jews placed their focus on the outward appearance and wanted to be seen by men. In contrast, Jesus focused on the condition of the heart.

The Pharisees were upset at the answer of the officers and mocked them for their ignorance. They said, “Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?” Here, we see that the Pharisees were actually making fun of the Levites who served as the temple officers by saying that they were deceived. Then, the Pharisees showed their own pride by saying that none of the rulers or the Pharisees had believed in Jesus. This was just another example of the pride of the Pharisees. They wanted to make the officers feel like they were ignorant in contrast to the Pharisees. This is a common action of those controlled by pride. That is why Proverbs 16:18 warns, “Pride *goes* before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” The Pharisees did not realize that their own sin meant that they were facing eternal destruction.

In addition to mocking the officers, the Pharisees also mocked the rest of the people when they said, “But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.” The word translated “accursed” means *facing divine judgment*. The Pharisees claimed to keep the law and so they said that the people were facing the judgment of God because they did not know and obey the law. In actual fact, the Pharisees were facing the judgment of God. John 3:36 says, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” Most of the Pharisees had chosen to reject Jesus, the One who could give them life.

However, at least a couple of the Pharisees had believed in Jesus. John 7:50-53 says, “Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, ‘Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?’ They answered and said to him, ‘Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.’ And everyone went to his *own* house.” Nicodemus just asked the other Pharisees a question, “Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?” The law said in Deuteronomy 19:15, “One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.” Here, we see that the law, which the Pharisees claimed to follow, required at least two or three witnesses. Nicodemus had talked with Jesus and knew that the words that Jesus spoke were true.

In contrast, most of the other Pharisees just condemned Jesus because of their pride and the fear of losing their power. Instead of answering Nicodemus, the other Pharisees just mocked him as they had mocked the temple officers. They mocked Nicodemus by saying, “Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.” Because the Pharisees were proud of their knowledge of the law, the Pharisees looked down on the people of Galilee and considered the people of Galilee to be ignorant. Now, that pride caused them to turn against one of their own. They accused Nicodemus of being from Galilee. They told him to go and search the Scriptures. They told him that no prophet had come from the land of Galilee. Here, we see that the Pharisees actually showed their own ignorance. Nahum and Jonah were both prophets from Galilee. The Pharisees showed that they had never checked to see where Jesus had been born. After this debate among themselves, the religious leaders all went home.

Here, we see an important principle that we want to teach our physical and spiritual children. Romans 15:7 says, “Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.” The word translated “receive” means *to accept, to take to one’s self or to grant one access to one’s heart*. We want to show our children by our example that we accept others, including those who disagree with us. May the Lord richly bless you as you provide an example for your children to follow.