



Today's Sermons

Morning: What Is The Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Evening: Song Service

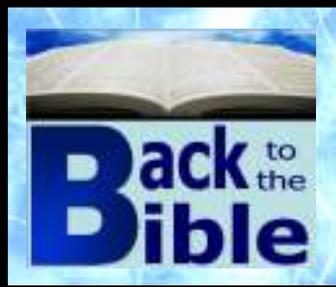
Visit Us At:
www.wjchurchofchrist.org
For Audio Lessons,
Past Bulletins,
Bible Studies
& More

FOR THE RECORD	
Sunday Bible Study	35
Sunday AM Worship	53
Sunday PM Worship	35
Wed. Bible Study	n/a
Offering	\$1514

The Approach of Nicodemus: The man that came to Jesus by night (John 3), and later helped Joseph of Arimathaea bury Jesus (John 19), asked the Jewish leaders that upbraided the officers for failing to take Jesus into custody, "*Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?*" (7:51). Nicodemus was simply appealing for the Pharisees and chief priests to deal fairly with Jesus, to give Him a chance to speak and defend Himself in the face of any charges against Him, and not to run to a decision or conclusion before considering all the pertinent facts.

The Law of Moses required that the Israelites carry out just or righteous judgment (Deuteronomy 16:18; 1:16). That was what Nicodemus' approach called for. The principle of Proverbs 18:13 would certainly apply in such matters: "*He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.*" Yes, we must put the spirits or teachers to a test (1 John 4:1), but, good people, let us be fair in our dealings with others, treating them as we would want to be treated (Matthew 7:12). Let us be people that think no evil of others where there is no evidence to support any claims of wrongdoing on their part (1 Corinthians 13:5). And, should clear proof be provided that one is living in sin or teaching false doctrine, let us not rejoice in such information. Rather, let us be filled with sorrow and a genuine desire for him to be turned from his path of destruction to the righteousness of God (Romans 9:2; 10:1-3).

The record of John 7:45-52 shows that when the officers returned empty-handed to the Pharisees and chief priests, a revealing discussion took place. As we have seen in this study, that discussion revealed the Confession of the officers, the Response of the Jewish Leaders, and the Approach of Nicodemus. Let us be prepared to use the lessons that we have learned. May we always appeal to the Bible to serve as the standard for all that we believe, teach, and practice. May we ever have a heart that is ready to accept all that God's holy word says on any subject.



A Weekly Publication of the
West Jefferson Church of Christ
130 Robert Street
West Jefferson NC 28694
Phone: (336) 846-5615 | Email: info@wjchurchofchrist.org
Volume VIII September 27, 2015 Number 39

Minister:

Tim Canup

tim@wjchurchofchrist.org

Times of Services:

Sunday

Bible Study:... 10:00am

AM Worship...11:00am

PM Worship:...6:00pm

Wednesday

Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program

Sunday:.....7:30am

"Back to the Bible"

AM 580 WSKS

93.5 FM

**We Extend A
Warm &
Cordial
Welcome
To All Our
Visitors!**

WHEN THE OFFICERS RETURNED EMPTY-HANDED

Roger Campbell

The occasion was the Jewish feast of tabernacles (John 7:2). Jesus was in Jerusalem, teaching in the temple (7:14). The people marveled at the Master's teaching (7:15), causing Him to proclaim, "*My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me*" (7:16). There was a division among the people over Jesus and His teaching (7:43). Many believed on Him (7:31), many proclaimed Him as "the Prophet" (7:40), and some said, "*This is the Christ*" (7:41). However, some looked on Jesus as a deceiver (7:12). Still others could not conceive of Him being the promised Messiah since, according to their reasoning, He was from Galilee and not Bethlehem (7:41,42).

The Jewish leaders were quite upset by the influence that Jesus was having on the common people. Thus, we read, "*The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him*" (7:32). Yet, when the officers returned to the Jewish leaders that sent them, they were empty-handed (7:44,45). This, of course, disturbed the Pharisees and chief priests to no end. It led to an interesting discussion, recorded in John 7:45-52. From that conversation, for the purposes of this study, we want to highlight the words of the officers, the Jewish leaders, and a man by the name of Nicodemus.?

Continued Inside

The Confession of the Officers: When the chief priests and Pharisees asked them, "*Why have ye not brought him*" (7:45), their honest admission was, "*Never man spake like this man*" (7:46). How true! Jesus was the Master teacher, being unparalleled by any in His day or any other generation in the history of mankind. The people marveled because He taught as one having authority (Matthew 7:28,29). He taught with compassion (Matthew 9:36). He taught daily (Mark 14:49). He taught with boldness (John 7:26). He taught impartially, without respect of persons (Matthew 22:16). He taught only as people were prepared to receive His message (John 16:12). He taught with genuine love for those whom He taught (Mark 10:21). He taught what people needed to hear (John 3:3-7). He taught only what the Father wanted Him to speak (John 12:49,50). These truths and many more cause us to say, "Amen" when we read the officers' honest confession, "*Never man spake like this man*" (7:46).

The Response of the Jewish Leaders: The chief priests and Pharisees were upset by the fact that their orders had not been carried out by their officers. Those officers had been ordered to nab Jesus, but they had not done so. The Jewish leaders' response shows four approaches that they used to try to turn people's minds against Jesus.

First, they asked the officers, "*Are ye also deceived?*" (7:47). There are, indeed, many deceivers in the religious world (2 John 7; Matthew 7:15). Jesus, however, was not one of them! One tactic that the devil has used with great success is to get people to label anyone that disagrees with them as a deceiver. Someone is not wrong just because he does not meet the approval of self-appointed religious leaders of the day. A doctrine is not false simply because well-respected people do not endorse it. We must always appeal to and accept God's truth (John 17:17). God's word will settle the matters of truth and error, right and wrong, or faithful teachers and deceivers.

The second question that the chief priests and Pharisees asked the officers was, "*Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?*" (7:48). This was an appeal to what "the big guns" or "the big boys" of the day were doing or believing. The words of the Jewish leaders were spoken in an attempt to cause others to fall in line with their policy. Friends, our faith – what we believe, teach, and practice, should not be based on what other people do or do not accept. Our appeal, first, last, and always, must be to what the Bible says, not to what a well-known brother, popular school, or influential group of brethren have to say. The philosophy of the chief priests and Pharisees was, "If the most religious people you know don't believe something, then it must be wrong." Be not deceived: men, well-respected men, even godly men, do not have the right to try and establish policy in God's stead. What God says about every matter is 100% right, whether men choose to accept it or not.

Third, the Jewish leaders proclaimed, "*But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed*" (7:49). The appeal of these words seems to be, "Take a look at the people that are accepting Jesus as the Messiah. They are a bunch of ignorant nuts." When you cannot prove that what a person is teaching is wrong, then attack someone's character, either the teacher's, or else the character or knowledge of those that accept what he is saying. Sadly, that

approach is still prevalent in our day. Many have been turned away from the truth because they listened when someone said, "Look at the kind of people that accept such teaching. They don't know anything." Those that believe the Bible instead of evolution are often depicted as uneducated, impudent people. Those that accept the Bible's truth about immorality (including the works of the flesh, Galatians 5:19-21), are often portrayed as being "out of touch." We must take our stand on God's word and not let the insults or negative comments of others deter us from our commitment to be faithful to the Book.

The fourth and final statement of the Pharisees and chief priests was their question to Nicodemus, "*Are thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet*" (7:52). This tactic of Satan can be labeled as "spreading false information." The truth is, Jesus was a prophet (Acts 3:22,23), and He was known as Jesus of Nazareth, which was located in Galilee. But there had been at least one other Hebrew prophet that came from Galilee. Jonah was from Gath-hepher (2 Kings 14:25), a town located not far from Nazareth. That made Jonah a prophet out of the region known in the New Testament as Galilee.

The Jewish leaders tried to influence people not to follow Jesus by spreading this falsehood: Jesus is from Galilee, but no true prophet comes/has come from Galilee. That was false, but if you cannot answer a man's teaching, if you just do not like him as a person, or if you are envious of his success or influence, then put out some lies about him or his past. That is sure to cause some not to respect him or accept what he is saying, even though he is a godly man that is teaching God's truth. Satan, of course, loves this approach. This tactic has caused many wonderful people to have a falling out with one another. Brethren, God hates a lying tongue and the lies of a false witness (Proverbs 6:16-19). Spreading falsehoods, even when we are convinced that what we are saying is true, is sinful. Purposely telling a falsehood about others – telling something that is false when we know good and well that it is false, reveals an evil heart (Luke 6:45). We must not stoop to the level and tactics of the chief priests and Pharisees in dealing with other people, even when dealing with those with whom we disagree.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Oct 3 – Ladies' Day
- Oct 4 – Men's Business Meeting & Ladies' Class
- Oct 11 – Preach & Eat – 1:30 pm worship service
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell
- Wireless Internet Password: 94615548