



## International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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### **John 7:14-24 Commentary New Revised Standard Version**

**Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse [International Bible Study Commentary](#). **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Study Forum](#).

**(John 7:14) About the middle of the festival Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach.**

After the crowds had plenty of time to discuss Jesus and who He was at the Feast of Booths, Jesus went into the temple to teach. John did not record all Jesus taught, but we know Jesus taught in parables (see Matthew, Mark, and Luke), and Jesus also taught in figures of speech (see John). Earlier in His ministry, Jesus had cleansed the temple and driven out the moneychangers. In John 7:7, Jesus had told His brothers that He testified that the world's works are evil, so He might have continued to testify that in the temple. Jesus may have taught from the Hebrew scriptures and encouraged people to repent of their sins, as John the Baptist had preached.

**(John 7:15) The Jews were astonished at it, saying, "How does this man have such learning, when he has never been taught?"**

The Jews (the religious leaders) were concerned about the "academic credentials" of their teachers. For example, the apostle Paul said his "academic credentials" included having Gamaliel as his teacher (Acts 22:3).

As far as they could tell, Jesus had no “academic credentials.” He did not quote as authorities any teachers who had gone before Him. He did not quote from their traditions. They did not know anyone who taught Jesus what He knew. Yet, they admitted and were astonished at Jesus’ knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures and His application and interpretation of them.

**(John 7:16) Then Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine but his who sent me.**

Note carefully: Jesus did not say, “My teaching is mine.” But just as they had teachers, so did Jesus. Jesus said His teaching was the teaching of the Person who sent him. We know the One who sent Jesus was the Father in heaven. The authorities could have understood what Jesus meant, but Jesus was humble and pointed people to the teaching of God, who had taught them the truth in their Scriptures. In John 3:11, Jesus included the Father and himself when He told Nicodemus: “we speak of what we know and testify to what we’ve seen.” Jesus astonished people because His teaching was the authoritative teaching of God and not that of their rabbis.

**(John 7:17) Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own.**

Jesus spoke a universal truth that applies to everyone at all times. To know the truth of God, the truth about God, to know God personally, you must first resolve to do the will of God and be willing to do the will of God. Notice: Jesus did not say resolve to obey the law of God, for these religious leaders had many interpretations of the law of God, and yet, they did not know God. If someone truly wants to do the will of God, the Holy Spirit will find a way to lead them to Jesus and His teaching, for His teaching is from God the Father and not in any way His own apart from God.

**(John 7:18) Those who speak on their own seek their own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and there is nothing false in him.**

I have read and heard people say in so many words, “The Bible says [fill in the blank], but I believe [fill in the blank]” or “The Bible says it is wrong to [fill in the blank], but I think it is okay to [fill in the blank].” Jesus would say these people are seeking their own glory. They are placing themselves above the Bible and judging the Bible to be wrong. Jesus refused to do that. Jesus sought to glorify, honor, proclaim, and tell the truth about His Father (and our Father) who sent Him. The Father is true, and Jesus was true to God the Father and His Word. There is nothing false in the Father or the Son (See Titus 1:2 and Hebrews 6:18). As Christians, we seek the glory of the Father and the Son with the help of the Holy Spirit. They are true and there is nothing false in them or in their words to us in the Bible.

**(John 7:19) “Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you looking for an opportunity to kill me?”**

The religious leaders did not resolve to do the will of God. If they did, they would have recognized that Jesus’ teaching was from God. They took pride in their knowledge of the law and the “academic credentials” that they thought made them authorities on the right interpretation of God’s law. They thought Jesus was wrong, but Jesus pointed out that none of them obeyed the law of God. If they obeyed God’s law, they would love God and their neighbor. They would live as God revealed in Micah 6:8 — “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” Jesus knew they plotted to kill Him; so, He spoke to their conscience, which He knew they had hardened against God the Father and Him.

**(John 7:20) The crowd answered, “You have a demon! Who is trying to kill you?”**

The crowd could not see into the hearts or understand the intentions of their religious leaders. Instead, they thought Jesus was crazy and possessed by the devil, to say such an outlandish thing, for they were listening intently to the discussion between Jesus and their leaders. Even before He left Galilee, Jesus knew the leaders hated Him and wanted to kill Him. Jesus did not defend himself or His teaching or answer their questions. Instead,

Jesus focused on the Scriptures and spoke to their hardened conscience.

**(John 7:21) Jesus answered them, “I performed one work, and all of you are astonished.**

Jesus referred to the work or good deed He performed at the pool of Bethesda when He healed a man who had been ill for 38 years. The healing astonished them, especially the crowd who had probably heard of the man being healed by Jesus and perhaps knew the man. But the religious leaders believed their interpretations of the Scriptures, and they said Jesus had broken the Sabbath law and deserved to die. They did not keep the law of Moses in their hearts, and they would soon kill Jesus (when His hour came).

**(John 7:22) Moses gave you circumcision (it is, of course, not from Moses, but from the patriarchs), and you circumcise a man on the sabbath.**

Jesus displayed part of His great learning when He qualified that actually circumcision went back to the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and not just as far back as the time of Moses. Male Jews were circumcised on the eighth day after they were born, even when that eighth day happened to be on the Sabbath when no work was to be done. Circumcision took precedence over the rule against working on the Sabbath. Gentiles who converted to Judaism as adult males would also be circumcised on the Sabbath as taking precedence over the law of the Sabbath.

**(John 7:23) If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath in order that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because I healed a man’s whole body on the sabbath?**

When these two ceremonial laws conflicted, the Jews decided the law regarding circumcision was more important to obey than keeping the law of the Sabbath. Circumcision was surgery on one small part of the body. If circumcision or surgery was allowed on one part of the body, Jesus said that healing a man’s whole body was even more important; therefore, healing could be done on the Sabbath as taking precedence over the law to

do no work on the Sabbath. He concluded that to be consistent they should not be angry with Him but allow Him to obey the law of God and love His neighbor. They did not know or want to obey the law of love that would heal someone whenever given the opportunity no matter what day of the week.

**(John 7:24) Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”**

The “religious leaders” sought glory for themselves and thought Jesus was seeking glory for himself. They thought Jesus’ healing on the Sabbath was one way He was seeking to draw attention to himself. They judged by appearances. They thought Jesus had no concern about obeying the law of God; therefore, He violated the Sabbath laws. They judged by appearances. If they made just and right judgments, they would have judged that Jesus acted in love to heal a sick man when He had the opportunity no matter what day it was. Obeying the Law of Love (which is the Moral Law) loving God and loving acts toward others takes precedence over obeying a ceremonial law.

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. What is the Law of God?
2. Is there a problem with the Law of God? Explain your answer.
3. What is the Will of God?
4. Is there a problem with the Will of God? Explain your answer.
5. How can someone know if Jesus, or anyone else, was sent from God or not?

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