Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Keeping the Divine Timetable
Scripture: John 7:1-13
Code: 43-40

Well, we finished the sixth chapter of John. Hate to see it go. It passes on now into history, and I hope we'll find a permanent place in your memory, and the Lord will use it to serve you well in the future. But we now arrive at chapter 7 of the Gospel of John, and we really step into a new section of John's Gospel. We move at this point from Galilee where our Lord has been ministering for over a year into Judea, again, where he started his ministry originally.

We're back in Judea, and the picture is not good. What we're going to see in chapter 7 and then in chapter 8 is escalating hatred. Escalating hatred. In fact, you could almost call chapter 7 and 8 high intensity hatred of the Lord Jesus. Now remember, Jesus has been in Galilee for a year ministering, preaching, teaching concerning the kingdom, healing people, casting out demons, doing miracles. He's been away from Judea, away from Jerusalem as far as His ministry is concerned, but the hatred has been smoldering and seething there, and it isn't diminished. It's perhaps even worse because reports have been coming back from spies in Galilee to the leaders of Judea about the impact of His ministry there.

So as we come into chapter 7, the desire to have him murdered is maybe stronger than ever. We know they wanted to kill him earlier when he was in Judea because we saw that in chapter 5. "They were seeking to kill Him," verse 18. That's why He went to Galilee. And while He's been in Galilee, the fury has continued, fed by reports coming down from Galilee in the north.

So in chapter 7 and 8, He returns finally to Judea. But he does so secretly, as we'll see, and He stays out of Jerusalem for a number of months until finally, with the intense hatred still escalating, He makes a grand entrance into Jerusalem, triumphantly declared to the by the messiah. By the end of the week, He's crucified and risen. So now you know where we are in the big picture. As we begin this section, let me read the opening 13 verses.

"After these things, Jesus was walking in Galilee, for he was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill him. Now the fast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths or tabernacles was near. Therefore, his brothers said to him, 'Leave here and go to Judea so that your disciples also may see your works which you are doing, for no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.' But not even his brothers were believing in him. So Jesus said to him, 'My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil. Go up to the

feast yourselves. I do not go up to this feast because my time has not yet fully come.' Having said these things to them, he stayed in Galilee."

"But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He himself also went up not publicly, but as if in secret. So the Jews were seeking Him at the feast and were saying, 'Where is He?' There was much murmuring among the crowds concerning Him. Some were saying, 'He's a good man.' Others were saying, 'No, on the contrary. He leads the people astray.' Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews." So what was the popular opinion What was the discussion? Some said He's a good man. Some said He's leading people stray, He's a deceiver.

Well we know who said He's a deceiver because in Matthew 27:63, the Jewish leaders say of Jesus, "That deceiver." And a little later, even in chapter 7 when the chief priest in the Pharisees sent some people to Jesus and they came back with a report, they said, "Has He deceived you also?" So they were pressing hard that Jesus was a deceiver. There was some pushback from people who had been affected positively by his compassionate healing ministry who said, "He's a good man. He's a good man."

To say, "He's a good man," is not enough. That's infinitely below the truth. To say He's a deceiver is not true. That's hellish. Neither of these is a right assessment of Jesus, and every soul is required to make that assessment. Right? If that soul is to enter into eternal heaven. You have to decide who he is. Everyone does. Both of these are wrong. As CS Lewis said, "Good men don't say they're God. Liars and crazy people do." Is He then a deceiver? Deceivers don't demonstrate the power of God, don't raise people from the dead, and don't speak the way Jesus spoke.

The right assessment of Jesus is the most important assessment any human being will ever make. Now we start to see the final decisions being made by the people under the influence of the leaders. The leaders have already made their decision. He's a deceiver. He's leading people astray. And the people will eventually buy into that and cry for His death. So we start on that road now in chapter 7 verse 1, high intensity hatred in Judea.

In the coming chapters, we're going to really get into the antagonism between Jesus and the leaders of Israel, the leaders of apostate legalistic Judaism, and we're going to see how much power they had over the people. I want to just remind you of the distinguishing mark that we noted in the sixth chapter. There were in the sixth chapter, remember, many people following Jesus. Then there was a clear division at the end of the chapter, right, starting in verse 60 to 71. There were some His disciples who left and didn't walk with Him anymore. We called those the false disciples.

And then there were the true disciples who stayed. Jesus said, "Are you going to go away," and they said, "No." And we mark the difference. The different is those who left didn't like the words of Jesus. Those who stayed embraced the words of Jesus. The distinguishing identification of Jesus is not his

works. The false disciples embraced his works, they followed the crowd, they loved the supernatural, they wanted to cash in on it. They were attracted to the miraculous. They even made demands on Jesus' miracle power.

But when He began to speak, He immediately offended them, and they were alienated. So I just remind you that it's always going to be the words of Jesus. There's a lot of sort of patronizing of Jesus as if he were some kind of good man, some kind of man better than other men, some kind of noble, religious leader, some kind of heroic, righteous moralist, some kind of merciful, compassionate person. None of that matters. That's all irrelevant. To say that Jesus is a good man and to throw those kinds of accolades at Him falls infinitely short of the truth. You can make that assessment based upon what you want to see in his life in ministry, but sooner or later, the decision is going to have to be rendered on His words. It's always about His words, and we're going to see that that plays out as this part of John's Gospel continues.

In fact, you're going to see in verse 7 where he says, "The world hates me because I testify of it that its deeds are evil." Again, it's his words that are unacceptable. You see that in the popular world today in which you live. People like the idea of a benevolent, kind, merciful, compassionate Jesus, but they want to gag him. And as soon as you start hearing from His words, it becomes offensive, but it's always going to be the words. Down in verse 14, when He did arrive at this Feast of Tabernacles, He began immediately to teach. Immediately, He began to teach, and that generated the offense.

Down in Verse 19, it refers to the fact that they desired to kill Him. Verse 20 indicates that they were saying He's demonic. They didn't say that because of His works. They didn't say that because of His compassion. It was His words that generated that kind of response. And we're going to see that as we go through chapters 7 and 8. Verse 43, for example, of chapter 8. "Why do you not understand what I'm saying? It is because you cannot hear my word. Why can't you? Because you're of your father, the devil, and you want the desires of your father. He's a murderer from the beginning, doesn't stand in the truth because there's no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature for he's a liar and the father of lies, but because I speak the truth, you do not believe me."

It comes back to words, verse 47. "He who is of God hears the words of God. For this reason, you do not hear them because you are not of God." You follow that down to verse 51. Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." And then in verse 59, it says, "They picked up stones to throw at Him. Jesus hid himself. Went out of the temple. Why did they want to stone Him? Not because of what He did, but because of what He said." This follows him all the way into chapter 12, which is the chapter before the final week of his life.

In chapter 12, as Jesus is getting ready in chapter 13 to have the final supper with his disciples, he says this in verse 47. "If anyone hears my sayings, my words, and doesn't keep them, I do not judge him, for I didn't come to judge the world but save the world. He who rejects me and doesn't receive

my sayings or my words has one that judges him. The word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day, for I didn't speak on my own initiative. But the father himself who sent me has given me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that his commandment is eternal life. Therefore, the things I speak I speak just as the father has told me. You reject the words of Jesus, you reject God."

It's always about the words. It'll continue to be about the words, and that's how it is in your life and mine. It isn't enough to patronize Jesus. I said at the end of the early service that I did some reading this week on some famous sort of enlightenment era atheists, people like Diderot and Renon and a little later, John Stewart Mill, others. And I wanted to read what these atheists who were so much a part of the enlightenment who were coming out of the religious era, some of them teaching theology in various places, what did they say about Jesus. And it's amazing how they extol Jesus.

The flower of humanity. The greatest man that ever lived. The youth with God in His heart, they said. And they just go on and on with all this flowery language about Jesus. I'm talking about classic atheists, philosophical atheists. People have said, "He's a good man," who completely reject the Bible and reject God. That's not enough. What they will not accept – they will accept the Jesus of their own imagination, the sort of tolerable Jesus. What they will not accept is what the Bible records that he said, but that's what has to be accepted because that's dividing point. If you're going to go into the kingdom of God, you have to believe what he said to be true.

So we're going to see that continue to play out, what we learned in chapter 6, about the dividing point being the words of Jesus will continue to be the case. Now in the section that we just looked at, verses 1 to 13, and we will go through it because it's a very simple narrative text, there's one thing that I want you to see that stands out. There's so many aspects. This is what's so frustrating about this for me. I could follow so many trails here, and I have to make a decision, and it's a challenging one to make because I'm always leaving something out.

The bad news is I know what I'm leaving out. The good news is you don't, so you're not going to miss it like I miss it. But then again, I know it, so that's okay. What I want you to see is how Jesus was operating on a divine timetable. Because one of the things that you have to understand about Jesus is that He is the son of God. He is God incarnate. He is the bread who came down from heaven. Right? He is the eternal second member of the trinity come into human form in the world.

That's part of what you have to believe. This is not just a man kind of working his thing out, trying to get where he wants to go, trying to accomplish what he wants to accomplish. This is the son of God on a divine mission, and it plays out in this passage in a really wonderful way because you see the sovereignty of God operating in every aspect of His life from a time standpoint. We know that He leaned back hard on the sovereignty of God when people didn't believe and said, "But no man can come to me unless the Father draws him." Right? He said that.

He said, “You can’t come unless it’s the Father’s will.” So He leaned hard on the sovereignty of God in terms of the responses He was getting, but He also completely leaned on the sovereignty of God in terms of the timing of everything He did. Everything in His life was on schedule. Everything. In Galatians 4:4, it says, “In the fullness of time, God sent forth his son made of a woman.” Perfect timing. First Timothy 6:14 and 15 says, “At the exact proper time, He will return all fixed in the purposes of God. Both the incarnation virgin birth and his second coming in glory fixed.” In the middle while He’s living His life, everything is on schedule.

Many times, He says, “My time has not come. My time has not come. My time has not come.” He operated on this sovereign schedule. That comes out so powerfully here. Paul in Romans 5 says, “He dies and makes his life a ransom at the proper time, at the precise time.” First Timothy 2:6, essentially exactly the same thing. Now as we come to chapter 7, Jesus is walking in Galilee. He’s walking in Galilee. This is seven months later from six. This is about seven months later. How do we know that? Because in chapter 6 in verse 4, there was a Passover.

The Passover was the event that triggered everything in six, which only took place in a few days. In chapter 7, verse 2, you have another feast, which is the Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Booths, and that’s about seven months later. Passover is a spring event, and Feast of Tabernacles is an October event. So about seven months have gone by. For seven months then, Jesus has been walking in Galilee. As we pick the story up, those seven months have now passed.

John doesn’t tell us about those seven months, but the other writers do. The other gospel writers tell us about those seven months, and I’ll comment on that in a few minutes. During the seven months that He has been in Galilee, He’s not been in Judea. But the attitude of the people in Judea that wanted to kill Him has continued to seethe and smolder and escalate because it says at the second part of verse 1, “He was unwilling to walk, meaning to go there and to conduct His life in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him, even though He had been gone a year. His Galilean ministry extended beyond a year, but He’d been gone over a year, something over a year. In His absence, the fury continued to escalate. The hospitality continued to grow, so much so that He wouldn’t go back because He had to wait until it was the right time in God’s perfect plan.”

So as we look at these verses, we’ll first of all look at the opening nine verses, and we’ll see something about the wrong time, and then we’ll come to verse 10 and see something about the right time. The events, which occurred during this period of time from Passover in April to the Feast of Tabernacles in October. About a half a year, a little more. Seven months has gone by. The trigger is after these things. That’s a time interval . You saw it at the beginning of 6 and the beginning of 5 the same phrase, meaning time has passed. So what did he do during those seven months? Very interesting. His public ministry kind of faded away. Really one of the massive event of chapter 6 was sort of the pinnacle of his public ministry.

During those seven months, we get information from the other gospel writers about those seven months, all three of them. We learn that He for the most part disappeared from the public areas. Instead of remaining in Capernaum, and He never went to Tiberius. Instead of remaining in the populace centers, during that period of time, He goes off to Tyre and Sidon, which is north and west over Phoenician area over towards the Mediterranean. Then He goes to the east side of the Sea of Galilee, south down into the area of Decapolis, which was ten cities – were essentially gentile cities. Mark 7 tells us about that.

Matthew 15 tells us about Him going into the area on the Phoenician border. He also went into the extreme north, so He's on the perimeter now. He's pulled back. Many things happen during that time. There are records of miracles. Yes, He did do miracles in those places. Yes. Primarily he's teaching and instructing.

There's another great event that occurred during that seven months, and that's the transfiguration where He revealed His glory, and also during those same months, He told His disciples for the very first time that He was going to die. Be rejected, die, rise from the dead, Matthew 16. This is important because while the public ministry diminished during those seven months, primarily His focus was on the 12. So this would have been the most intense period of training the 12. The false disciples are gone. They left in chapter 6 verse 66, walked with him no more. The true stayed. Where are we going to go? You have the words of eternal life, and we're sure that you're the holy one of God. We're sticking with you.

And so they declare themselves. He now has His 12, minus Judas as we noted at the end of chapter 6, and perhaps a collection of others who were true believers, and now He takes those true believers, and for seven months, He teaches them the truths concerning the kingdom of God, preparing them for what is to come and for even what is after what is to come, which is the fulfillment of the great commission. He begins to talk now about His death, about His resurrection. He gets detailed.

He says He'll be arrested, He'll be scourged, He'll be spit on. He's telling them all these things that are to come. And then He gives them a glimpse, a necessary glimpse, I think, of His glory. Peter, James, and John, who then report all that. So they've got word about His death, which is hard for them to understand and might create some doubt, so to balance that off, He shows them his glory. These are special times for them. Now those seven months are pretty much up by now because it's Feast of Tabernacles. Now it's time to go to the next feast. Now there were three main feasts among the Jews that all men had to attend, and He had done that all his life. So they're going to gather and go. And He's still connected, apparently, to his family, and so his brothers start to put pressure on them to go with Him, and that's what begins this seventh chapter.

Just a reminder, in chapter 6, He gave a couple of days to the crowd. And in between 6 and 7, He gave seven months to the disciples. Do I need to make the obvious connection that the priority for Jesus was discipleship? This is what God does. God gathers a crowd for the proclamation of the gospel, for the proclamation of the truth to declare who He is and why He has come. Then God sorts out the true disciples and the false disciples, and then the real work begins of training the true disciples.

That's why the great commission says, "Go unto all the world and make disciples." That means teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. This is a very extensive call. Easy to get a crowd. That's the easy part. Lots of ways to get a crowd. Very difficult to make a disciple. Hard work. Success of any spiritual enterprise is not the crowd. That's not the measure of the success. You all the time hear particularly younger pastors say, "Well, we have 5,000 people." "We have 10,000 people. How many thousand people do you have?" That's not the measure of anything. You know, my answer is you don't have as many as the Super Bowl. Who are you kidding? You think you can get a crowd?

There's a lot of ways to get a crowd. Yours may appear more noble on the surface, but that's never a measure of a ministry. It's not how many people show up. It's what kind of people they are and where they are in the process of spiritual development and growth. Bible doesn't say, "Get a crowd. See if you can keep them whether they believe or not." Bible says, "Get a crowd, hit them with the words of Jesus, and find out who stays, and whoever stays, make disciples out of them."

That's what ministry is. Ministry to the mass doesn't prove anything. You may be – you may have the same kind of crowd Jesus did, and I think He probably was a pretty good communicator. Like the best ever by far. And He collected people who were superficial, and He made it so clear by His words what they needed to believe that He drove them away. Then He poured Himself into those who believed.

See, this is what discipleship is. It's like 1 Thessalonians 1:6 where Paul says to the church of Thessa – "This is the measure of a church. You became imitators of us. You became imitators of us. Now you've got a church. But not a crowd. It's imitators. Be followers of me as I am of Christ. We need depth. My, my, do we need depth." Easy to get a crowd. Awfully difficult to make a disciple. Well none of that is in verse 1, but you needed to hear it. So sorry. He stays in Galilee. That's what he does, and then it's time, verse 2, for the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles because it comes near.

So I find this so interesting. His brothers come to Him. This would be His actual brothers who are named, by the way, in scripture, they're not just some nebulous unknown sort of mysterious group of people. They are clearly identified on the pages of scripture by name. His brothers come to Him, and they say, "Leave here, and go into Judea so that your disciples also may see your works which you're doing. For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If you do

these things, show yourself to the world."

For not even His brothers were believing in Him. Okay it's time for the Feast of Tabernacles. What was it? Well, you can go to Leviticus 23. Read the whole thing. God instituted a feast which biannually they would remember their time in the wilderness, when they lived in tents, booths, shelters, and for a period of time, a weeklong, used to be celebrated between the 15th and 22nd of Tishri, which puts it in October, they had a weeklong celebration commemorating the provision of God. Josephus says it was the most celebratory of all Jewish feasts and festivals. It was the happiest occasion. It was a couple of weeks after the day of atonement.

Now that had been settled, and this was a great, joyous event. They would erect booths all over the place, in the little villages in the streets. Some of them put booths on the roofs of their houses when they were in crowded city quarters, but it was all to remind them of living in temporary shelters in the wilderness, and how God protected them, brought them through, brought them finally – the ones that he allowed into the land to constitute the nation, and this was a joyous time.

By the way, Zachariah, chapter 14 around verse 16 or so, tells us that the feast will be celebrated again in the millennial kingdom as they look back and are reminded again of God's deliverance. So they're in the midst of this celebration. There are some elements of it we'll see later in chapter 7. Pouring out of water because God provided water in the wilderness and all of that. It was a very joyous occasion. So His brothers come to him, and they think it's time to go down to Jerusalem as it always was, and all men were required to go.

His brothers are named, by the way, I just thought I should give you that. It's Matthew 13:55. His brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. So at least four brothers that He has. And they say, "Look, this is required. We've got to go. We want you to go with us." Now there's all kinds of speculation about why did they want Him to go. Some people have said, "Well, they wanted Him to get arrested. They were tired of Him getting all the accolades. They didn't believe in Him. They wanted to see Him fall into the hands of the enemy."

There's no scripture to support that at all. It does say they didn't believe in Him. It doesn't say they willed that He be executed. Others have made the crazy suggestion that they wanted to take Him down there to force His hand so He could become the messiah that the crowd back in chapter 6 wanted Him to be. Remember when they wanted to take Him by force and make Him a king because He could create food? His brothers, they could eat that food just like anybody else, so they were trying to force His hand.

There's no justification for either of those. You say, "Well why did they want Him to go?" I think He irritated them. You'd be irritated if you grew up your entire life with a person in your family who was perfect who was a rebuke to you every waking moment, who gave every right answer to every

question and had every right attitude on every occasion. They didn't believe in Him, but perhaps they were aware, of course, of His miracles. They were very aware of that. They were in Galilee the whole time. They were close to Him because here they are. On one occasion, do you remember when they went to find Him with Mary? "What are you doing? Where are you? Your mother and your brothers seek for you."

They once explained that He was insane. Maybe He could be the political messiah. Maybe the power was there. Maybe He could provide food. Maybe He could overthrow Rome. Maybe He might be the guy. But their conclusion was it's never going to happen in Galilee. Not going to happen here. Seven months of hiding on the fringes of Galilee is not going to do it.

So they get a little proverbial on Him. That's what verse 4 is, a proverb or an axiom, which is a self-evident statement. No one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. That's obvious. Right? Everybody would understand that. So they throw that axiomatic statement at Him, and then they say, "If you do these things, show yourself to the world. I mean come on, if you are who you say you are, then go down to Jerusalem. That's the theological world. That's where the verdict will be rendered. That's the decision will be made. Jerusalem is the acid test. You can't be up here on the fringe if you want to be realized and recognized. You've got to go to Jerusalem." And there, they say, "Your disciples," which means they knew He had gained followers in Judea from the early months when He was there at the beginning of his ministry. "So go to Jerusalem. Let them settle it."

I think in the back of their minds, they were open to the fact that maybe if He went, they'd get a final verdict. And they rationalized it by saying it's only obvious. If you want to be known publicly, you can't be in secret. Look at this statement. If you do these things, show yourself to the world. If you are who you say you are. That's what that is. If you are for real, if the works that you do are really the evidence of your divinity, if, if, if. Familiar to you? Who said that to Jesus three times early in His ministry? Who? Satan.

If you're the son of God, do this. If you're the son of God, do that. If you're the son of God, do this. That was said to Him at the end of His ministry all the way into Matthew 27. He's hanging on the cross, and they say, "If you are the son of God," what? "Come down." If you are – and what they're doing is shoving his claims into His face and telling Him to prove it. So we kind of know whose side they're on. He who is not for me is against me.

So they want to press the issue. See what happens. But verse 5, "Not for any noble reason, for not even His brothers were believing in Him." They didn't believe. That's really great testimony to the obstinatesy of unbelief. Isn't it? They've seen Him since they were born in the house. Wouldn't believe. Wouldn't believe. Wouldn't believe. I simply remind you what Jesus said in chapter 6. "You can't believe unless the Father draws you."

At this point, the Father had not drawn them. They did not believe. So they say, “Go down. Prove yourself.” Verse 8. Skip down to Verse 8 for a minute. “Go up to the feast yourselves,” He says. “I do not go up to this feast because my time has not yet fully come.” Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee a little longer. “You go. I’m not coming.” So He stayed in Galilee. No one forces Jesus’ hand. He’s not going with them.

If He had gone with them, He would have been a part of a huge caravan, the caravan that would go down from Galilee with His relatives and friends and family and extended family was huge. How do I know that? Because in Luke 2:44, when they had come down for the Passover when He was 12 years old, the whole caravan was one day’s journey all the way back toward Galilee before they realized He wasn’t there. Remember that?

So this is a large, large caravan. He’s not going to be part of that. Everybody knows who is coming. They know the groups. He doesn’t want that exposure. He’s not going. He’s not going because it’s not His time to go. It’s not His time to die. It’s not His time for that public exposure. My time has not yet fully come.

Then He explains that if you back up to Verse 6. Jesus said to them, “My time is not yet here. My time is not yet here.” When was His time? Six months later at the next Passover. That would be His time to become the Passover lamb. His hour was coming. We’ll see more about that in chapter 12. He will go down eventually. Go back to verse 6. “My time is not yet here.” Then He says this. “Your time is always opportune.” What a statement. Every day matters in my life. Every hour is determined by God. For you, doesn’t matter. If you’re unbelievers, you have one appointment with God. Death. The rest, you’re on your own.

It isn’t that God doesn’t order the provinces of your behavior and your life. It’s just that it’s irrelevant. It doesn’t matter. It’s purposeless, pointless. You go, you stay. You’re not operating in the kingdom on kingdom time. What a statement. You just have one appointment to keep with God: Death. That’s not the case with me. And also, verse 7, “The world cannot hate you. You’re part of it.” So you’re safe. I mean you fit into this world, but it hates me. And why does it hate me? Not because of my works, but because I testify of it that its deeds are evil.

You know, I read 1 Timothy 1 this morning, and that was pretty stark stuff. Wasn’t it? Godless sinners, immoral, homosexuals, perjurers. That’s as straight as it gets, and that’s the gospel truth. That’s what the law reveals, but those words – those words could get somebody killed. But Jesus is on a divine timetable. He can’t go. Time is not right. What they do doesn’t matter. The world absorbs them. They’re part of it. But not so Him. They hate Him because He tells them their deeds are evil.

Again, do I have to spell it out? Have you noticed how popular the benign Jesus of acceptance is and how unpopular his words are? Gagging Jesus is a constant reality. So He's not going with them. In verse 9, it says He stayed in Galilee. He stayed there. Didn't stay long. It was the wrong time. We're talking probably days. Then all of a sudden, in verse 10, it was the right time. When His brothers had gone up to the feast, up because everything goes up to Jerusalem because it's so high, when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up.

Not publicly, but as if in secret. By the way, He did something very unusual. He did what they didn't do. He went through Samaria according to Luke 9. When they would go, they would not go. They would go around Samaria because they were hostile towards Samaritans. So they would migrate and do their little pilgrimage around Samaria. Jesus went right through it, Luke 9:51 to 56 or 57. Tell us about that little journey through Samaria.

That would give Him more secrecy because He wouldn't be going in the crowds that were flowing to Jerusalem. So He did come down, but they couldn't find Him. The Jews were seeking Him at the feast. Why? What made them think He'd be there? All men had to be there. They knew He would be there. And they knew that wherever He was, there were huge crowds. They knew Galileans. They knew their accent. Couldn't find Him. Couldn't find Him.

They were saying, "Where is He? Where is He?" And He wasn't there where they could see Him, but there was much mumbling, murmuring among the crowds concerning Him. He was the topic of whispers. "Where is He? Where's Jesus?" They all knew He was a miracle worker. The people in Judea knew it. The people in Galilee knew it. They had all converged into the place. He was the topic of discussion. They couldn't find Him. People were talking about Him, and some were saying, "He's a good man." And others were saying, "No, on the contrary, He's a deceiver." Verse 13, no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews. That's how much power those Jewish leaders had in that legalistic apostasy Judaistic system. People were afraid to give an opinion.

And they all knew that they wanted Jesus dead. They all knew that. They wanted Him dead. They wanted Him killed. So they were afraid to say anything. This is the power of this horrible legalistic system. So He comes down, privately, secretly, kind of sneaking His way through Samaria. And He's in Judea now between the Feast of Tabernacles and the feast – the Passover where He will present himself and be crucified. In those intervening months, He ministers in Judea, and it's all recorded in Luke 9 to 19. That whole section of Luke.

If you have a copy of One Perfect Life, you can see how that kind of goes in the chronology. So He's ministering there, and Luke records all of that wonderful, wonderful section of Luke's Gospel. But He refused to go to Jerusalem. He stayed in the villages and the towns and the small places. He refused to go to Jerusalem and declare Himself messiah until the next Passover. And that would be His last Passover lead to his murder.

Just to say this, He is operating on a divine schedule. Nothing in His life is random. Nothing in His life is unplanned. Nothing goes wrong. Everything is according exactly to God's eternal purpose. This is one of the great evidences of His deity. One of the great confidences that assure us that He was who He claimed to be.

Mark it. This again proves Him to be the son of God. They didn't like His words. They didn't like that He said He was from heaven. They didn't like that He said He was the only bread. They didn't like that He said He could give eternal life, and He was the only one who could give eternal life. He didn't buy those words. They didn't buy that He was going to give His flesh for the life of the world. They weren't willing to eat His flesh and drink His blood, accept His death.

And I'll tell you right now, they really didn't like that He testified to them that their deeds were what? Were evil. If you had an opportunity to stand before the leaders of any place that you might work or any school or the faculty of a university or some group of important people, would you launch on the fact that their deeds are evil and start spelling them out? What would you assume would be the reaction? Yeah, of course. You'd be thrown out. With the fear of man and the fall and need to be accepted and loved by people, we tend to shy away from the boldness that Christ had.

But He confronted them and told them their deeds are evil. From the very beginning, He talked like that. You see that in chapter 2 when He goes to the temple and just exposes the corruption of the whole thing and attacks it. Again, I go back to the fact that it's both what Jesus said about Himself positively and what He said about people negatively. It was those words that turned them so much against Him.

How evil are they? Well, their father is whom? The devil. Still true, by the way. Your father is the devil if you're not saved, and your father is God, your father is the devil. John 15:18, "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you are of the world, the world would love its own. But because you're not of the world but I chose you out of the world because of this, the world hates you."

And then he goes on to say, "A slave is not greater than his master. If they hated me, they'll hate you." So it's again the words of Jesus that are the issue. So here we begin entering into this amazing time of confrontation that leads to the cross. I'm going to close with some good news. Turn to Acts 1:14. Well let's actually back up to 12. Acts 1:12. This is the apostles who were there at the ascension of Jesus into heaven.

They returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away, meaning a very short distance. "They entered the city. They went to the upper room where they were staying. That is Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas,

Bartholomew and Matthew, James, the son of Alpheus, and Simon, the zealot, Judas, the son of James." That's 11 because Judas Iscariot is gone. "These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer along with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and by the way, with his –" what? His brothers.

With his brothers. They were there with 120 in the upper room on the day of Pentecost because after the resurrection, they had come to believe in Jesus Christ. It was the resurrection, no doubt, that convinced them that He was who He claimed to be, that obviously greatest sign of all signs, that He came out of the grave having conquered death. They made the right decision finally. Didn't they? That's what I proposed before you. You will be held accountable for whatever it is you do with Christ.

Good men, not enough. Bad men, terrible error. Deceiver, that's a devilish notion. You will be held responsible for the right answer. And what is the right answer? Peter gave it in chapter 6 verse 69. "We believe that you are the holy one of God. The holy one of God. The holy one of God." My prayer for you is that you would come to that conviction, that you would put your trust in Christ in the same way that those true disciples did. Not be a false disciple and walk away and not be hostile to the truth. Let's pray.

Lord, we have scratched the surface of all that's here. Just pray that somehow, you can give us enough of this not to disappoint heaven with our understanding and help us to meditate on it, think about it, go back, read it again, search it out. So rich, so wonderful, and so shocking that one so perfect could be called a deceiver after having rendered all evidences. How profound is human sin and unbelief? But we know that. We understand that.

They do not believe. They cannot believe. Their hearts are hardened. Their eyes are made blind. Their ears cannot hear. They cannot understand, says Isaiah, when it comes to Christ. But Lord, still we cry out, and we plead with men to believe. We know it's a work that you have to do. We ask that you would grant faith to all who hear this message. May no one escape the responsibility, the accountability, the understanding of the urgency of believing in the holy one of God. We thank you again that every journey that we take in the gospels is an experience with Christ that transcends any other kind of experience, that the word is alive, powerful, penetrating, captivating, transforming. What a privilege. Do your work, Lord, in every heart we pray.

Lord, we ask now that you will bless the truth to us how rich we are, how grateful we are, and may these things find their way to a level beyond which I can go, may they be taken by the Holy Spirit himself and buried deep in our understanding, and may we find them accessible for our own joy and for our own witness to the glory of Christ, and we'll thank you in His name. Amen.

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