

The Problem of Intellectualism

John 7:11-24

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John 7 begins a PERIOD of widespread abandonment and UNBELIEF.

- We looked at the UNBELIEF of JESUS's own FAMILY MEMBERS.
- Now we need to see the UNBELIEF of the JEWISH intellectuals.

ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS THINGS for YOUR SOUL is INTELLECTUALISM.

INTELLECTUALISM - The PURSUIT of KNOWLEDGE while not submitted to DIVINE REVELATION.

- 2 Timothy 3:7 – [7] *always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.*

It's DANGEROUS because KNOWLEDGE outside of FEARING GOD causes you to become PRIDEFUL.

It's DANGEROUS because KNOWLEDGE is not the SAME things is WISDOM.

- WISDOM begins with the FEAR of the LORD.
 - Proverbs 9:10 – [10] *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.*
 - Proverbs 26:12 – [12] *Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*
 - You EDUCATE yourself to the POINT where you THINK you don't NEED GOD.
 - Proverbs 3:7 – [7] *Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.*

The Path of WISDOM is when REASON is submitted to GOD and HIS WORD.

- And that's why so few INTELLECTUALS become CHRISTIANS.
- 1 Corinthians 1:26 – [26] *For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards...*
- Martyn Lloyd-Jones – “Reason must never determine *what* we believe. The business of reason is to teach us *how* to believe. It is an instrument, and the trouble arises when people allow reason to determine what they believe. In other words, instead of submitting themselves to the Scripture, they turn to science, to philosophy, or to a number of other disciplines, and their position is determined by these things. They allow reason to determine what to believe instead of how they believe and how they think.”

5 Dangers of Intellectualism.

I) The Danger of Intellectual Power

Intellectuals often form hierarchies of power. Where they control the narrative and flow of information.

- INTELLECTUALS *only TRUST* other INTELLECTUALS.
- After the RESURRECTION the JEWS paid off the soldiers at the tomb, “*Tell people, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’* (Matthew 28:14).
- INTELLECTUALISM is about PRESERVATION of POWER More than the PURSUIT of KNOWLEDGE.

John 7:11 – [11] *The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, “Where is he?”*

- The “Jews” were the religious elite. The scribes and Pharisees.

- And they wanted to KILL JESUS. For envy. See 7:1-2.
- They LOVED the POWER of being the INTELLECTUAL ruling class.
- Luke 11:46 – [46] *Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces.*
- (zeteo)... they were seeking HIM.... IOT eliminate HIM.

The PEOPLE (CROWDS) don't know what to make of Jesus. There is a disagreement about Him. John 7:12 – [12] *And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, he is leading the people astray."*

- The people are all those who have come from all over the Roman Empire for the Feast of Tabernacles.

John 7:13 – [13] *Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.*

- The people are afraid to speak of Jesus because of the POWER of the Elite.
- And so they are WILLING to PUNISH those who side with JESUS IOT control the narrative.
 - In John 9:22 – [22] *...for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.*

Jesus subverts this. John 7:14 – [14] *About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching.*

- This is a fulfillment of OT PROPHECY.
 - Malachi 3:1 – [1] *And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.*

2) The Danger of Intellectual Prejudice

One of the great problems with Intellectualism is the prejudice towards EDUCATION. You must hail from the RIGHT INSTITUTION.

- The TRUTH has to come from the person with the right letters after their name.
- In this case the JEWS DEMANDED any TEACHER to come from the school of the RABBIS.

John 7:15 – [15] *The Jews therefore marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?"*

- Look at this... the JEWISH scribes are stunned at JESUS's TEACHING.
 - Literally that he "has LETTERS." "Know letters"
 - WHY: he has never studied under a RABBI.

They MARVELED.

- The VERB is (*Thaumazo*) – ASTONISHED; MARVELED; STUNNED
- This is one of the GREAT THEMES of the NEW TESTAMENT!

When HE taught the WORD of GOD people marveled.

- John 7:46 – [46] *The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!"*
- Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 7:28 – [28] *And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching [29] for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.*
- Luke 2:47 – [47] *And all who heard him were amazed.*
- When he taught in Nazareth - Luke 4:22 – [22] *And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth.*

- When Jesus is asked about paying taxes to Caesar in Matthew 22:22 – [22] *When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.*

When He performed MIRACLES people marveled.

- When Jesus calmed the STORM while in the boat with His disciples. Matthew 8:27 – [27] *And the men marveled, saying, “What sort of man is this? That even the winds and the seas obey Him?”*
- When Jesus heals the demoniac. Mark 5:20 – [20] *And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.*
- Matthew 15:31 – [31] *so that the crowd marveled when they saw the mute speak, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.*
- When JESUS heals the boy possessed by the DEMON. Luke 9:43 – [43] *And all were astonished at the majesty of God. But while they were all marveling...*

When Jesus was before Pilate, Pilate marveled.

- Matthew 27:14 – [14] *But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.*

Jesus responds to the JEWS – ‘I get my teaching directly from God.’ John 7:16 – [16] *So Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.”*

- He says, ‘I’m not an innovator.’
- Rather, I received this teaching directly from GOD.
- It’s not MINE. It’s SUPERNATURAL REVELATION.
 - He says in John 8:28 – [28]... *‘I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.’*
 - Moses prophesied of a final prophet. Deuteronomy 18:18-19 – [18] *I will put my words in the mouth of this prophet, who will speak to them everything that I command.”*

3) The Danger of Intellectual Pollution

The MIND is fallen. The Mind is POLLUTED.

- Jeremiah 17:9 – [9] *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?*
- Ephesians 2:3 – [3] *... among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*
- One of the great problems with INTELLECTUALS – is that they are NOT morally NEUTRAL. But the intellectual, trusts their MIND too MUCH.

The INTELLECTUAL rejection of JESUS is a REJECTION in the HEART. In the DEPRAVITY of the MIND.

- John 3:19, 20 – [19] *And this is the judgment the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works are evil. [20] For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light.*

John 7:17 – [17] *If anyone’s will is to do God’s will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.*

- Hebrews 11:3 – [3] *“Through faith we understand...”*
- Augustine – *“Understanding is the Reward of Faith.”*

- *If your will is to do God's Will, then your MIND validates that Jesus's teaching is God's teaching.*

Next Jesus PUTS His finger on their MORAL POLLUTION. And what makes Him different John 7:18 – [18] *The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.*

- This is the GREAT contrast between the JEWSIH INTELLECTUALS and JESUS.
- They were AFTER their own GLORY.
 - John 12:43 – [43] *for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.*

4) The Danger of Intellectual Pharisaism

Jesus hits back at the Pharisees and their Pharisaism. By Pharisaism – *making arbitrary laws (not God's) and then not keeping them.*

- John 7:19 – [19] *Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?"*
- Jesus says – you Pride yourself on the LAW, but you don't keep the Law.

John 7:20 – [20] *The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?"*

- The CROWD commits Blasphemy against the HOLY SPIRIT.
- Jesus says in Matthew 12:31 that this is the UNFORGIVEABLE SIN.

John 7:21 – [21] *Jesus answered them, "I did one work, and you all marvel at it.*

- He references the healing of the paralyzed man at the POOL of BETHESDA on the Sabbath.

John 7:22 – [22] *Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath.*

- There are TWO LAWS in REFERENCE here.
 - One is CIRCUMCISION. You were supposed to circumcise on the 8th day.
 - The other is SABBATH OBSERVANCE. The Sabbath was to be a day of rest unto God.
 - But what happens when a boy needs to be circumcised on the SABBATH?
 - The JEWS said then it was fine to circumcise on the sabbath.
- So Jesus's ARGUMENT is a LESSER to a GREATER.

John 7:23 – [23] *If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well?*

5) The Danger of Intellectual Perception

John 7:24 – [24] *Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."*

- Here's the PROBLEM, the INTELLECTUAL believes they are RIGHT.
 - With their Intellectual POWER preserved; their INTELLECTUAL PREJUDICE; their INTELLECTUAL POLLUTION; Their INTELLECTUAL PHARISAISM...
- But they JUDGE with FALSE STANDARDS. Not God's STANDARDS.
 - So their PERCEPTION isn't REALITY.
- Remember SAUL of TARSUS. Dead-set on PERSECUTING the CHRUCH.
- Christ confronted him on the DAMASCUS ROAD.
 - He says in I Timothy 1:13 – [13] *though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, [14] and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.*