

## Opinions      God's Authority

After partaking of the Passover Feast, Jesus washes the disciples feet and then begins a lengthy dialogue with them to ease their anxiety about the coming events. Jesus warns the disciples that the world would hate them because they represent truth (Jn. 15:18ff). Jesus goes on to say, *“They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall **think** that he offereth service unto God. And these things will they do, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I spoken unto you, that when their hour is come, ye may remember them, how that I told you. And these things I said not unto you from the beginning, because I was with you”* (16:2-4).

John clearly stated what it means to “*know the Father*” in John 10 when he quotes Jesus using the illustration of the shepherd and sheep. Jesus said, *“I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knows me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep”* (Jn. 10:14-15). Such a caring shepherd calls His sheep by name. The sheep respond to the shepherd voice because they are ardently know his voice (cf. Jn. 10:3-3). To know the Father is therefore to hear and obey His commandments. The apostle John would latter say, *“Whosoever abides in him sins not: whosoever sins hath not seen him, neither knows him”* (I Jn. 3:6).

To be put out of the synagogue was to basically be socially estranged. No one desired to be put out of the synagogue (cf. Jn. 9:17-23). Such hatred on the part of the Jews would first be appeased by exiling the believing Jews from the synagogue; however, they would not be satisfied until they saw the truth seeker dead. While pouring forth their hate upon the one who holds to truth, Jesus said they will actually “*think*” that they are doing some grand service in the name of Jehovah God.

“*Think*” (*dokeo*) = “to think, suppose, imagine... to have or form an opinion... to seem good” (LS 207-208). The individual who would put a believing Jew out of the synagogue and even kill him does so because he is of the ‘opinion’ that God would be pleased with such actions and because it ‘seems good’ to do so. Such a one did not find authority to kill the apostles from God’s word and thereby they have dreamed up these actions themselves. They turn to every source of knowledge (included inward opinions) rather than turning to the Word of God for authority and so they “*think*” they are doing the right thing (note that just because I am of the opinion that something should be done a certain way does not make my thoughts right for me or anyone else). One who would say, “I have not violated my conscience” in a certain act does not necessarily make it right. Here were individuals who would kill the apostles and “*think that they are offering service unto God.*” Jesus points out that just because they “*think*” this does not necessarily make it an authorized practice. Here is a great lesson on authority. It is not what I “*think*” that authorizes actions, it is obeying the commandment of God (divine

revelation) (Col. 3:17). To obey divine revelation is to “*know the Father*” but to reject divine revelation is to reject the Father (Jn. 7:16).

Jesus has taught us a simple lesson. My opinions and ‘I think so’s’ do not equate to God’s authority! When I give book, chapter, and verse for all my actions then that is when I am approved of God.

*John C. Robertson*

## **Our Deacons:**

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