

John 7:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

Analysis

Jesus answered them and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. Jesus directly addresses the authorities' implied question about His teaching authority. 'My doctrine' (hē emē didachē) means His teaching content. The paradox 'not mine, but his that sent me' (ouk estin emē alla tou pemsantos me) grounds His authority in divine origin. Jesus doesn't teach His own ideas but the Father's revelation. 'His that sent me' identifies the Father as source and sender. This claim asserts ultimate authority—not rabbinic tradition, not personal opinion, but God's direct revelation. Throughout John, Jesus emphasizes this theme: He speaks the Father's words (8:28, 12:49), does the Father's works (5:19, 10:37), and reveals the Father (14:9). Reformed theology sees here the doctrine of Scripture—God's Word possesses divine authority because God is its ultimate author. Human instruments (prophets, apostles) transmit God's message, but God remains the source.

Historical Context

First-century rabbis derived authority from their teachers—citing interpretive traditions passed down through generations. Jesus bypassed this system entirely, claiming direct authority from God. This was revolutionary and threatening. The phrase 'sent me' (pemsantos me) occurs repeatedly in John (5:23, 5:24, 5:30, 5:37, 6:38, 6:39, 6:44, 7:16, 7:18, 7:28, 7:33, 8:16, 8:18, 8:26, 8:29, 9:4, 12:44, 12:45, 12:49, 13:20, 14:24, 15:21, 16:5), establishing Jesus's identity as the Father's sent one. This echoes Old Testament prophetic claims ('thus saith the

Lord'). Jesus claims prophetic authority superseding all previous revelation as God's final word (Hebrews 1:1-2). The early church grounded apostolic authority similarly—the apostles spoke not their own words but Christ's (1 Thessalonians 2:13, 4:8).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's claim to teach God's words, not His own, establish His authority?
2. What is the relationship between human teachers and divine revelation in Scripture?
3. How should Christian teachers today understand and communicate their authority?

Interlinear Text

ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν Ἡ ἐμὴ διδαχὴ¹
answered them Jesus and said My doctrine
G611 G846 G2424 G2532 G2036 G3588 G1699 G1322

οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὴ ἀλλὰ τοῦ πέμψαντός με.
not is My but his that sent me
G3756 G2076 G1699 G235 G3588 G3992 G3165

Additional Cross-References

John 14:24 (Parallel theme): He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

John 14:10 (Parallel theme): Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

John 17:8 (Parallel theme): For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

John 5:30 (Parallel theme): I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

John 3:11 (Parallel theme): Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

John 17:14 (Parallel theme): I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

John 8:28 (References Jesus): Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

John 6:44 (Parallel theme): No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.