



# *He Sent Me*

Jesus was sent by the Father so we could know the Father.

## **JOHN 7:14-29**

Most of us remember teachers who positively impacted us. They may not have been our favorite teachers, but what set them apart was something beyond their likability. Their wisdom, experience, or honesty may have set them apart. The people of Jerusalem were evaluating Jesus's teaching, especially His authority. In the process, they were confronted with their own hypocrisy and lack of power.

**What makes a teacher effective and memorable?**

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# UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

## JOHN 7:1-53

Jesus was in Galilee, staying north because of a threat in Jerusalem and Judea: “the Jews were trying to kill him” (John 7:1). John had been introducing occurrences in which people were expressing opposition to what Jesus was saying and doing. In chapters 7 and 8, that conflict rises to a crescendo, as those who opposed Jesus tried to arrest and stone Him (7:32,44; 8:59).

Events in chapter 7 occurred near the time of the Jewish Festival of Shelters (v. 2). This annual celebration, also called the Festival of Booths or Festival of Ingathering, occurred in October, about six months after the events in chapter 6. An important part of the celebration occurred daily when the high priest, along with tens of thousands of other worshipers, walked from the temple mount down to the Pool of Siloam. There, the priest filled a golden pitcher with water. Afterward, everyone returned to the temple where the priest, with much fanfare, poured the water onto the altar. Pouring this water represented both a sacrifice and an act of faith that God would send the early rains. This also formed the backdrop for what Jesus said in John 7:37-38.

As the festival neared its midway point, Jesus entered the city and began to teach in the temple. The crowds argued about His identity. As the festival drew to a close, the religious leaders sent guards to arrest Him. Jesus proclaimed that whoever believed in Him would receive living water. He was speaking about the Holy Spirit who would be given following His resurrection and ascension. Astonished at His authority, the soldiers refused to act against Him. When the religious leaders argued that none of the Sanhedrin believed Jesus, Nicodemus argued that they should hear Jesus before condemning Him. With a sneering reply, the chief priests and Pharisees ended the debate and left the scene. They refused to believe Jesus was sent by God.

**As you read through John 7:14-29, mark instances in which people were debating about Jesus’s identity. Why were people so divided by what Jesus was saying and doing?**

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# EXPLORE THE TEXT

## FROM THE FATHER (JOHN 7:14-19)

<sup>14</sup> When the festival was already half over, Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach. <sup>15</sup> Then the Jews were amazed and said, “How is this man so learned, since he hasn’t been trained?”

<sup>16</sup> Jesus answered them, “My teaching isn’t mine but is from the one who sent me. <sup>17</sup> If anyone wants to do his will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own. <sup>18</sup> The one who speaks on his own seeks his own glory; but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him. <sup>19</sup> Didn’t Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?”

### VERSES 14-19

Jesus showed up in *the temple* about halfway through the festival and *began to teach*. John offered no details about what Jesus taught. He explained, though, that the people were *amazed*. The Jews had never heard anyone who lacked formal rabbinic training teach like this.

First-century rabbis regularly quoted and cited earlier Jewish teachers. In contrast, Jesus explained that His teaching, and by extension, His authority for teaching, had come from the One who *sent* Him, meaning God the Father. What Jesus taught had come directly from God (see Matt. 11:27).

In verse 15, the Jewish leaders challenged Jesus’s qualifications to teach. In verse 17, Jesus challenged their qualifications to receive His teaching. In doing so, He set up a contrast between Himself and the Jewish leaders.

Jesus explained that only those who chose to do God’s will would be able to discern spiritually whether His teaching had come from Himself or from God. Even rigorous rabbinic training could not provide that discernment; only having a faith-based relationship with God that resulted in obedience could produce spiritual understanding and clarity. Jesus was pointing out that He had perfect obedience to the Father, and they did not, which is why they did not recognize that His teaching had come from God.

Jesus further explained what distinguished His teaching. Those who spoke their own messages glorified only themselves. They put themselves in the spotlight. Jesus explained that His intent was to glorify the One who sent Him. He did not say that what He spoke was true but that He is **true**, a self-description repeated in John 14:6.

After evaluating their teaching as being self-promoting, Jesus highlighted their hypocrisy. They claimed to follow **Moses** and **the law**, which clearly prohibited murder (Ex. 20:13). Yet they had been looking for a means and opportunity **to kill** Him since He healed the disabled man at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:18).

**How do we know if a person's teachings are from God?**

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### **KEY DOCTRINE: *Education***

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence.  
(See Job 28:28; 2 Timothy 3:14-17.)

### **WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS (JOHN 7:20-24)**

<sup>20</sup> “You have a demon!” the crowd responded. “Who is trying to kill you?” <sup>21</sup> “I performed one work, and you are all amazed,” Jesus answered. <sup>22</sup> “This is why Moses has given you circumcision — not that it comes from Moses but from the fathers — and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. <sup>23</sup> If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses won’t be broken, are you angry at me because I made a man entirely well on the Sabbath? <sup>24</sup> Stop judging according to outward appearances; rather judge according to righteous judgment.”

### **VERSES 20-24**

Shocked by what Jesus said, **the crowd responded** with rage: “**You have a demon!**” The Jerusalem crowd was made up of pilgrims visiting from Judea, Galilee, and regions east of the Jordan River. These

pilgrims were completely unaware of the Jewish leaders' plot against Jesus, thus they demanded to know: ***“Who is trying to kill you?”***

Some Bible teachers believe the crowd did not mean Jesus had an actual demon. This is supported by the fact that the Pharisees and experts in Jewish law leveled the same charge against John the Baptist simply because he lived a self-denying lifestyle (Luke 7:33). They believe the accusation *you have a demon* was like someone calling Jesus “paranoid” or accusing Him of being “crazy,” as some today casually use the word. Others, though, state the crowd believed Jesus was possessed by an evil spirit, which would have caused His paranoia (see John 10:20). This interpretation parallels other instances in which people said He was possessed. For instance, the scribes at one point accused Him of being possessed by Beelzebul and of working in concert with “the ruler of the demons” (Mark 3:22).

Regardless of what the crowd meant, they were wrong. Jesus certainly was not crazy or paranoid. Further, it would have been impossible for Jesus, God in the flesh, to be possessed by a demon. Jesus ignored the accusation.

The one work that Jesus performed was to heal a man on the Sabbath (John 5:1-10). The Jews were ***amazed*** not because of what the Father had done through Jesus but because the healed man had the audacity to violate the Sabbath by picking up his bedroll before he left.

The religious leaders considered themselves to be disciples of ***Moses***. Thus, Jesus based His statement first on instructions Moses had given concerning circumcision (Ex. 12:43-49). He next stated that circumcision predated Moses and was based on the practice of ***the fathers***, meaning the patriarchs (Gen. 17:9-14).

Jewish teachings instructed parents to circumcise their eight-day-old children, even on the Sabbath. Jesus moved from the lesser to the greater when He compared what God would allow. If God allowed a male child to be circumcised on the Sabbath, certainly He would not object to a grown man to be healed on the Sabbath. If the first was not a violation of the law, then surely the second would not be either.

Jesus made another lesser-to-greater comparison. They were judging based on ***outward appearances*** rather than a ***righteous judgment*** based on God's standards. If they would evaluate Him according to God's righteous judgment, they would see that Jesus was who He claimed to be (see 7:17).

Christians today do not face culture wars over circumcision, but we encounter other issues equally controversial. True spirituality requires application of inner faithfulness by glorifying Christ in the way we treat others as well as through the external ways of worship.

### What makes seeing our own hypocrisy difficult?

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## THEY KNOW EACH OTHER (JOHN 7:25-29)

<sup>25</sup> Some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, “Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill? <sup>26</sup> Yet, look, he’s speaking publicly and they’re saying nothing to him. Can it be true that the authorities know he is the Messiah? <sup>27</sup> But we know where this man is from. When the Messiah comes, nobody will know where he is from.”

<sup>28</sup> As he was teaching in the temple, Jesus cried out, “You know me and you know where I am from. Yet I have not come on my own, but the one who sent me is true. You don’t know him; <sup>29</sup> I know him because I am from him, and he sent me.”

### VERSES 25-27

These verses focus on one question: Was Jesus *the Messiah*, or was He not? Those asking the question were *the people of Jerusalem*. This phrase represents a third group in this chapter. The first had been the religious leaders, whom John called “the Jews” (vv. 11,15). The second was the crowd of pilgrims who traveled to Jerusalem to participate in the festival (v. 20). This third group was made up of people who lived in Jerusalem. These Jerusalemites would have heard about accusations Jewish leaders had made about this itinerant, upstart, trouble-making preacher from Nazareth.

The Jerusalemites put forth both sides of an argument. First, they wondered if maybe Jesus was the Messiah. The authorities had been saying they were going to kill Him. Yet, He had been *speaking publicly* without rebuke or repercussion. The word translated *publicly* can mean “boldly” or “confidently.”

John introduced a fourth group: *the authorities*. These were members of the Sanhedrin, the rulers of the Jews (7:48). The Jewish

leaders had the power to arrest Jesus. With their influence, they also could ask the Romans to take Him into custody. Yet, they were **saying nothing to him**, which suggests they were not part of the crowd who debated with Jesus or accused Him of being demonized. Another interpretation could mean they spoke to Him from the safety of the crowd but did not confront Him with an arrest warrant. The Jerusalemites concluded that the silence and inaction of the authorities meant they must believe Jesus was the Messiah.

Second, the Jerusalemites considered that maybe Jesus wasn't the Messiah. They based this on the fact they knew where Jesus was from, meaning Galilee. He had lived in Nazareth before moving to Capernaum at the beginning of His ministry. Jews in that day believed that although the Messiah would be born of flesh and blood, his identity would remain a mystery until he began his work to set them free from oppression, which at this time meant the Romans. Hence the saying, **nobody will know where he is from**.

Part of the Jerusalemites' earlier sentence was correct; they understood **where this man is from**. What they didn't recognize, though, were the spiritual roots of His presence and purpose. Here, Jesus echoed what John had stated earlier: "No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father's side—he [the Son] has revealed him [the Father]" (1:18).

### **What are the dangers of not knowing the full facts about Jesus?**

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#### **VERSES 28-29**

The phrase **Jesus cried out** indicates He was about to make a solemn pronouncement (see also 1:15; 7:37; 12:44). At this point the discussion was over; Jesus was about to make His declaration.

Jesus was addressing all three groups. First, the Jewish leaders included rabbis, plus others who served as priests or volunteers in the temple, and maybe even some who were part of the Sanhedrin. Second, the pilgrims who traveled to attend the festival were clearly loyal to Judaism. Finally, He was speaking to the Jerusalemites, those who lived in the shadow of the temple with its sacrifices, songs, and incense.

Shockingly, Jesus stated, ***you don't know him; I know him because I am from him.*** He accused them of lacking a genuine relationship with the God they were supposed to be honoring at this very festival. What an indictment!

Jesus was not yet finished. He continued, ***and he sent me.*** Just as His teaching had come from the Father (v. 16), so had Jesus Himself. To reject the Messenger and His message was to also reject the One who sent Him. Although those at the temple were well versed in all things Jewish, there was still much they did not understand about the Father, and especially about His Messenger.

Jesus was not merely another teacher or healer. He was God the Son who came from heaven, took on human flesh, died for our sins, and was raised again. His mission was no less than the salvation of all people who will repent of sin and place their faith in Him.

**What was the significance of Jesus saying God had sent Him? If they believed that were true, how would that validate Jesus and His message in the eyes of the Jews?**

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**BIBLE SKILL:** *Use a concordance and/or Bible dictionary.*

Review an article on “Festivals” to better understand the Feasts of Shelters (also known as the Feast of Tabernacles or Feast of Booths). Compare passages identified in the article. Note why the Jews celebrate this feast. How did the feast serve as a fitting backdrop for Jesus’s teachings in John 7?

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# APPLY THE TEXT

- Believers can trust the teachings of Jesus.
- Believers must examine their lives for hypocrisy.
- Believers confidently proclaim that Jesus was sent by the Father.

**What actions can the group take to more readily help others understand that Jesus was sent by the Father so we could know the Father? Discuss how Jesus being sent by the Father impacts how the Bible study functions and should function in the future.**

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**Knowing that the teaching of Jesus originated with the Father and is founded in righteousness and truth, how much time would you say you spend with the Lord in the Word per week? What changes can you make to improve the amount of time and the quality of time that you spend with God in His Word?**

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## PRAYER NEEDS

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