

John 7:14-36

Teaching Points

John 7 is about opposition to Jesus. The beginning of the chapter highlights opposition from his family. Verses 14-35 are about opposition He faces at the Temple. The context is the Feast of Tabernacles which is a weeklong celebration in September or October when families camped out in temporary shelters to remember God's faithfulness to Israel in the wilderness on the way from Egypt to Canaan under Moses. The people lived in makeshift booths of branches and leaves and so the Hebrews called it the festival of booths (you can read about it in Leviticus 23:33-43).

Though Jesus avoided a grand entrance, when He came to Jerusalem in His Father's timing, He taught boldly. That prompted a shift in the question being asked by the people. When Jesus first shows up to Jerusalem, He hears them asking, "Who is this Jesus?" After Jesus began to teach, they ask, "What is He saying?" Because Jesus didn't study at any of the great rabbinical schools (as Paul studied under Gamaliel, Acts 22:3), the people were perplexed. "Where's He getting this from? How do we know it's true?" The religious leaders object that Jesus isn't educated.

Discussion: How did Jesus respond? Did He point to His credentials? Did He claim to be self-taught?

Thoughts: *Jesus claimed to be God-taught, taught by the One who sent Him, His Father. If His listeners examined His teachings according to the Scriptures, they would have known them to be true doctrine. Jesus sought the glory of God. Jesus is true. Jesus has no unrighteousness in Him. Jesus gave us two measures of a true teacher: (1) Is the teaching according to the revealed Word of God? (2) Does the work give glory to God?*

Look again at Jesus' claim in verse 18. He just stated that He was absolutely sinless and true, always seeking the glory of God in heaven! In contrast to Jesus, the religious leaders do not keep the Law. As proof that they don't keep the Law, Jesus, knowing their hatred for Him, points out their guilt by asking, "Why do you want to kill Me?" And the response from the crowd? They accuse Jesus of having a demon—being crazy and perhaps paranoid. The crowd wasn't aware of what Jesus knew about the rulers. Read John 5:16.

Discussion: How does Jesus argue His case in verses 21-24? Why do you think He compares circumcision with an act of healing? And what does the Sabbath have to do with these actions?

Thoughts: *Jesus brings up the fact that they may "wound a man" on the Sabbath (by removing flesh), so why can't He heal a man on the Sabbath? They were wrong to think*

Jesus was a sinner. He is the just One. They who thought themselves to be righteous were, in fact, the sinners. Beware of judging by appearances.

The boldness of Jesus in the face of opposition is remarkable. Everyone knows the religious authorities (the “Jews”) want to kill Him, yet He speaks openly and boldly. Could He be the Christ? The people knew Jesus was from Nazareth and perhaps some knew He was born in Bethlehem. They know where He’s from. Malachi 3:1 says God’s messenger (the Messiah) “will suddenly come to His temple.” At some point it began to be misinterpreted as “the Messiah will come out of nowhere.” That explains the second thoughts they had about whether Jesus could be the Messiah. “He can’t be because we know where He’s from.”

Jesus sets the record straight and He does so with what might be some sarcasm in verse 28, “You know Me alright...sure you do!” They thought they knew where He was from because they know Him to be from Nazareth, but they were unaware of His heavenly origin.

Discussion: Does Jesus seem at all confused about where He came from? What do verses 28-29 tell you about Jesus’ self-awareness?

Thoughts: *Jesus knew exactly where He came from. His language is simple and unambiguous. F.F. Bruce says, “Jesus asserts afresh His unique relation to the Father, and His hearers cannot miss the implication of His words.” He is from the Father, sent by the Father, to do the will of the Father. He’s the Messiah!*

Discussion: How are the people divided over Jesus (vv.30-31)? Why couldn’t the officers arrest Him? Why did many of the people believe in Him?

Thoughts: *Jesus’ hour had not yet come, so no one laid a hand on Him. Think about that. They didn’t know it wasn’t His hour, but the Father was making sure the Son was free and unscathed until it was time for the cross. Many believed in Him because of His signs. Seeing all of His miracles, they reasoned, “How can this NOT be the Christ?”*

Jesus will not be arrested at this time, but He will be leaving and going to a place where they will not find Him. He will go at the appointed time to the appointed place. Jesus is referring to His death, resurrection, and exaltation to the Father’s right hand. The people misunderstood suggesting He must be taking some sort of trip to the communities outside the Promised Land. Jesus will not be found by the hostile examiner, those intending to arrest, silence, or kill Him. But He was and is found by those who come to Him believing.

Prayer Focus

Praise God for the boldness of His Son. Praise the Lord for perfectly completing His Father’s will. Praise the Lord Jesus for His perfect obedience.

Ask God to give you boldness in your walk with Christ. Ask God to help you to be an imitator of the Lord Jesus. Ask Him to do the same for your brothers and sisters in Christ.