

## **“The Claims of Jesus”**

*April 19, 2026*

John 7:14-36

### **I. Introduction**

God’s Law required all Jewish males to attend the Feast of Tabernacles. For that reason Jews and interested Gentiles from around the world would gather in Jerusalem and, especially, at the Temple. This celebration, which included living in tents or booths like their ancestors had, lasted for 7 days. This was a time set aside to remember and thank God for His deliverance and protection of the Jews as they wandered in the Wilderness for 40 years. **Deut. 29:5** says, **“Yet the LORD says, “During the forty years that I led you through the wilderness, your clothes did not wear out, nor did the sandals on your feet.”** God had delivered and cared for them in the Wilderness. Over time, the Feast of Tabernacles also became a time set aside to thank God for the harvest of grapes and olives.

People came for a variety of reasons to this joyous festival. Because of its popularity, I suspect that some people came to meet people and make friends with those from far-away places. Some of the younger attendees couldn’t wait to sleep in tents or tabernacles for the week. Some would come to worship in the famous Temple of Jerusalem; others came to listen to the various rabbis of renown as they taught in and around the Temple. Perhaps some even came hoping to see the new Rabbi from Galilee—the one who some claimed was able to heal people or miraculously feed thousands at a time with a mere pittance of food. They came to have a good time as well as a religious experience.

Jesus may have been in the area from the beginning, but He didn’t make His presence known until part-way through the Festival. It was then, **“halfway through the Feast,”** that Jesus entered the temple courts for the first time to teach publically. As He taught, there were 3 different groups of people that gathered around Him.

### **II. Three groups of people**

**A. The Jews** First, there were **“the Jews,”** i.e., the Jewish leaders. This would include the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the chief priests, and the teachers of the law—called scribes in some translations. As we’ve seen

before, they didn't agree with each other on many issues but there was one thing about which they were all in agreement—opposition to Jesus and the need to get rid of Him ASAP. [John 7:1](#) says, “Jesus went around Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life.”

**B The crowd** The second group was “the crowd”—these are those that had come to Jerusalem from around the world to celebrate the Festival of Tabernacles. They came from abroad. Many of them wouldn't know about all the undercurrents and rumors that had been going around the religious circles in Jerusalem concerning this man called Jesus of Nazareth. They were the ones who asked, “Who is trying to kill you?”

**C. The People of Jerusalem** Finally, there were “the people of Jerusalem,” i.e., Jews who lived in Jerusalem itself. They knew the gossip. They knew the uproar Jesus had been causing and most likely most sided with the religious leaders against this Jesus of Nazareth.

### III. Three Scenes--Three Questions

Once Jesus “went public” members from these 3 different groups asked questions which gave Jesus the opportunity to explain His identity and His mission. In today's Scripture, John described the claims of Jesus as he recorded 3 different scenes, each represented by a question. The first question was:

**A. “Where did this man get His education?”** The Jewish leaders were amazed at what and how Jesus taught because He didn't have any credentials from their approved rabbinical schools. His mastery of Scripture amazed them. But this wasn't something new. [Turn to Luke 2:41-47](#). Even the average person recognized a difference, [Matthew 7:28-29](#) says, “When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowd was amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers or the law.” Since the Jewish leadership couldn't disprove what Jesus taught, they implied that since He lacked the “proper accreditation or credentials,” His teachings were nothing but private opinions and not worth much.

In response, Jesus explained that His teachings—His doctrine—wasn't His own. “It comes from him who sent me;” i.e., it came from God the Father. Jesus had already made it clear that He and the Father were one in the works that He performed. In [John 6:38](#) He said, “For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.” Now He claimed that His teachings also came from the Father.

This isn't the only time He made this claim, in [John 8:28](#) He said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me." Later, during Passion Week He repeated Himself, [turn to John 12:49-50](#).

Back in [John 7:17](#) Jesus said that the person who honestly sought the truth revealed by God (i.e., the one who "chooses to do God's will") that person will know the truth about Christ's teachings—whether they are of God or not. Jesus' challenge to the people then and now is this: *If they would humble themselves before God's Word to know and obey it, they would recognize that His teachings were true.* David's advice to Solomon in [1 Chronicles 28:9](#) is appropriate for everyone, "And you, my son, Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever."

Replying to the Jewish leadership, Jesus then gave two characteristics of a false teacher: "He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself." A false teacher 1) he speaks of himself and 2) he seeks his own glory. [Turn to Matthew 23:5-7](#). The scribes and the Pharisees sought honor for themselves in everything they did. When they fasted, they put on dismal looking make-up and wore rags. When they did a good deed, they made sure everyone saw it or heard about it. When they walked the streets, they wore clothes that brought attention and glory to themselves. By comparison, as a true teacher, Jesus came seeking the glory of the One who sent Him. As Jesus said in [Matthew 20:28](#), "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

The Jewish leaders did not try to understand Jesus' teachings; as [John 5:40](#) said, they had stubborn wills and would not submit to Him. They had even twisted the purpose of the Laws of Moses. [Turn to Romans 3:19-20](#). But instead of being used to reveal sin, the Pharisees had made the Laws of Moses into the way for salvation. They took pride in being disciples of Moses and obeying his Laws. But Jesus said that although they claimed to understand God's truth and obey it, "Yet not one of you keeps the law." They certainly weren't following the Mosaic Laws as they attempted to kill Him. Basically, they were hypocrites.

The crowd, i.e., the visitors to the city, didn't know that the leaders were out to kill Jesus, so they challenged Jesus' statement, "Why are you trying to kill me?" Their challenge also contained a serious accusation—that Jesus had a demon as they said, *You must be crazy to think that anybody wants to kill You.*"

Jesus ignored the crowd's insults and said that the leaders wanted to kill Him because He had violated the Sabbath when He healed the paralytic man at the pool of Bethesda a year earlier. Jesus went on to say that if they did not object to the ceremonial cleansing of one part of the body on the Sabbath when they had their sons circumcised, how could they object to His healing an entire body on the Sabbath? They needed to judge His actions and His claims with righteous judgment not with a superficial judgment based on appearance only. Jesus said, "Stop judging by mere appearance, and make a right judgment."

**B.** Then the scene changed and focused on the question, "Where is this man from?" In [verse 25](#) the residents of Jerusalem entered the conversation. They knew that the rulers wanted to kill Jesus, and they were amazed that Jesus was teaching openly and getting away with it! "Here he is speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Christ?" Perhaps the rulers had been convinced that indeed He was the Messiah, sent from God. So that led to the question, "Where is this man from?"

According to tradition, nobody knew where the Christ would come from, but everyone knew where Jesus of Nazareth came from. Therefore, the leaders, as well as the people, knew that Jesus couldn't be the Messiah. From the crowd's viewpoint, there had to be another reason for Jesus' freedom to teach. In [John 8:19](#) Jesus said, "You do not know me or my Father," so here in [John 7 28](#) when Jesus said, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from" He was speaking ironically—perhaps sarcastically. "Yes, you think you know Me and where I came from! But really you don't have a clue." He then explained why they didn't know Him—"You do not know him" i.e., God the Father! This was a serious accusation to make against any orthodox Jew—they prided themselves in knowing the one true God.

But Jesus went even further—He said that not only did He know the Father, but that He was sent by the Father. Jesus was sent by God. He wasn't simply born into this world like any other human; He was sent to earth by the Father. This meant that He existed before He was born on the earth. Those standing there understood that Jesus was claiming to be God. This was blasphemy, so **“they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come.”**

C. The final scene and question **“Where is this man going?”** was brought about by the various responses of those surrounding Jesus: some wanted to kill Him for what He said but others **“put their faith in Him.”** The Pharisees and chief priests resented the fact that the people were trusting in Jesus; they were losing their influence and power. To make matters worse, these new disciples weren't afraid to tell others what they had done. They said, **“When the Christ comes, will he do more miraculous signs than this man?”** So, to put a stop to what might become an epidemic, the rulers sent members of the temple guard to arrest Jesus.

Instead of being intimidated, Jesus warned them, as well as the people, that they had only a short time to hear the truth, to believe and to be saved. **“I am with you for only a short time, and then I go to the one who sent me.”** It wasn't Jesus who was in danger, but those who wanted to have him arrested! Those who rejected Jesus would never come to where He was going when He ascended and now sits at His Father's right hand in heaven.

As in the earlier messages, the people misunderstood what Jesus was saying as they said, **“Where does this man intend to go?”** But He wasn't going to minister to the Gentiles, Jesus knew that within 6 months He would go back to His Father in heaven, and the unsaved Jews would not be able to follow Him. Had these men been willing to do God's will and search the Scriptures, they would have known the truth. Jesus warned that soon it would be too late.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Today people are faced with the same question: *“Who is Jesus?”* Most here would say that He is God; that He is your Lord and Savior. So, the follow-up question is: *“Have really you humbled yourself*

*before God's Word?"* That is, do you really know what is in God's Word? Do you obey it? On the flip side, if you don't know what's here how can you obey it? For example, what does God say about those in leadership? **1 Tim. 2:1-2** says that **"requests, prayers, & thanksgiving are to be made for kings and those in authority."** Do you prayer for those in leadership? What does God's Word saying about coming together in a service like this? **Heb. 10:25** says, **"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."** Everyone—not just the pastor—needs to study God's Word then you won't be misled by the culture or those around you or some dynamic, charismatic speaker.

**Turn to Revelation 3:14-22.** This letter is addressed to those who called themselves Christians. Sadly, it describes a lot of people today who claim to be Christians, as well. Everyone can have a relationship with Jesus Christ, but to do so each person needs to open the door to his heart and let Jesus in. One lets Jesus in by studying His Word and doing it. **James 1:22** says, **"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."** In **Jeremiah 29:13** God says, **"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."** Do you want a life filled with **"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control?"** (**Galatians 5:22-23**). Know and obey God's Word. David put it this way in **Psalm 34:8**: **"Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him."** Later, in **Psalm 119:105**, he wrote, **"Your word is a lamp to my feet and light for my path."** Solomon summarized it all this way in **Proverbs 3:5-6**, **"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight."** Is Jesus really the Lord of your life? Are you walking in His will or your own will?