

Main Idea: In John 7:25-36 we see two types of confusion about Jesus that were present in the minds of people then, as is often the case now. There was confusion over His identity (particularly in verses 25-31) and His work (particularly in verses 33-36). We'll see these as we walk through five scenes in the narrative.

- I. Scene one: The people responded wrongly to Jesus (25-27).
 - A. The leaders want to kill Him (25-26).
 - B. The people say He doesn't meet their expectations (27).
 - II. Scene two: Jesus responded with more truth (28-29).
 - A. He told them what they claimed to know (28a).
 - B. He told them what they didn't know (28b-29).
 1. You don't really know Jesus unless you grasp God's eternal plan.
 2. You don't really know Jesus unless you grasp what His Father means to Him.
 3. You don't really know Jesus unless you grasp that what He enjoys with His Father is what He wants for you.
 - III. Scene three: The people again responded wrongly to Jesus (30-32).
 - A. Some tried to seize Him (30).
 - B. Some believed in Him, sort of (31).
 - C. The authorities sent guards to arrest Him (32).
 - IV. Scene four: Jesus responded with more truth (33-34).
 - A. He gave two predictions about Himself.
 - B. He gave three predictions about them.
 - V. Scene five: The people responded with questions about Jesus (35-36).
- Implications: What do we learn from this?
1. We learn the proper response to Jesus.
 2. We learn how to help others respond properly to Jesus.
 3. We learn how much Jesus loves His Father and us.

This past week I went to Google and punched in the question, “Who is Jesus?” As you might guess, a whole list of websites appeared, so I clicked on the first and began to read. Here's what it said:

Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world and the Son of God. He is our Redeemer. The Holy Bible teaches us that Jesus Christ's mother was Mary, His father on earth was Joseph, that He was born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth, and labored with Joseph as a carpenter. When he turned 30, He began a three-year ministry of teaching, blessing, and healing the people of the Holy Land. He also organized His Church and gave His apostles "power and authority" ([Luke 9:1](#)) to assist in His work.

But what do we mean when we say He is the Savior of the world? The Redeemer? Each of these titles point to the truth that Jesus Christ is the only way by which we can return to live with our Heavenly Father. Jesus suffered and was crucified for the sins of the world, giving each of God's children the gift of repentance and forgiveness. Only by His mercy and grace can anyone be saved. His subsequent resurrection prepared the way for every person to overcome physical death as well. These events are called the Atonement. In short, Jesus Christ saves us from sin and death. For that, he is very literally our Savior and Redeemer. In the future Jesus Christ will return to reign on earth in peace for a thousand years. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and He will be our Lord forever.

What do you think of the answer so far? Sound okay to you? Is that who Jesus is? Let me keep reading what else I found on the first website...

God is our Heavenly Father, and like any parent He wants us, His children, to be happy. In the scriptures, He teaches “*my work and my glory [is] to bring to pass the*

** Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

immortality and eternal life of man" ([Moses 1:39](#)). Eternal life means to live in heaven, in His presence, with our families, forever. God has given us commandments, which teach us what is right and wrong and chart a way through life that will offer the greatest happiness. Jesus Christ taught, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" ([John 14:15](#)). But the scriptures also teach that "no unclean thing can dwell with God" ([1 Nephi 10:21](#)). As hard as we try to live good lives, we all sin, so how can we live in God's perfect kingdom if we are imperfect?

God sent Jesus Christ to earth to give us a way to overcome our sins and imperfections. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." ([John 3:16](#)).

Now what do you think of the answer? Any problems? Well, you say, "I'm not so sure about a couple of those Scripture references, but the content seems pretty accurate, doesn't it? Keep listening. Here's the next section..."

Even before God created the world, He prepared a plan that allows us to learn and grow during this life. Jesus Christ is the center of this plan. Christ's mission was not only to teach us about God the Father and how we should live, but also to make a way for us to be forgiven after we sin. Sin is more than just making a mistake. When we sin we disobey God's commandments or fail to act correctly despite our knowledge of the truth ([James 4:17](#)).

Before He was crucified, Jesus prayed to God in the Garden of Gethsemane on our behalf. Christ's suffering for our sins in Gethsemane and on the cross at Calvary is called the Atonement. He suffered for us so that we can be made clean and return to live with our Heavenly Father. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the "good news" of Christ's sacrifice for us, giving us a path back to the Father. "Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah" ([2 Nephi 2:8](#)).

Still sound okay? Another strange Scripture reference, but still has an evangelical ring to it, doesn't it? That's the Jesus we believe in, isn't it? Eventually, I went to the FAQ tab and read the following...

When Jesus Christ lived on the earth, He organized His Church so that all people could receive His gospel and return one day to live with God, our Heavenly Father. After Jesus Christ died, was resurrected and ascended to heaven, His Apostles continued to receive revelation from Him through the Holy Ghost on how to direct the work of His Church. However, after they were killed, members changed the teachings of the Church that He had established. While many good people and some truth remained, this Apostasy, or general falling away from the truth, brought about the withdrawal of the Church from the earth ([2 Thessalonians 2:1-3](#); [Acts 20:29-30](#)). The Apostle Peter prophesied that Jesus would restore His Church before His Second Coming ([Acts 3:19-21](#)).

Jesus Christ began to restore His Church in its fulness to the earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1820. It has grown to become a worldwide Church with over 13 million members. It has the same teachings and basic organization as the Church established by Jesus in New Testament times.¹

My friends, there is a lot of confusion in the world these days about Jesus. Not everyone who talks about "Jesus" is talking about the Jesus of the Bible. It's not what they say up front. It's what they leave out, or add.

¹ Taken from www.mormon.org

If I had time I could show you that the Jesus that the Mormon church promotes (and that's over 13 million people) is a man who evolved to become a god. The Book of Mormon teaches that God evolved from mortal man (see Mormon 9:9-10; Moroni 8:18) and that God Himself is a finite man who has progressed. In fact, the reason Joseph Smith taught polygamy was he claimed we need to mass-produce human bodies for the spirit-babies in heaven. He claimed that every person on earth was the sexual offspring of God and his wives in heaven. Jesus is merely a man who evolved to become a god. He is one god in a pantheon of gods. Jesus was our Elder brother who pointed the way, but isn't the way.

Yes, there's a lot of confusion in the world about who Jesus is, and it's nothing new. As we open God's Word today to John 7:25-36, we're going to see two types of confusion about Jesus that filled the minds of people then, as is often the case now. There was confusion over His identity (particularly in verses 25-31) and His work (particularly in verses 33-36). We'll see these as we walk through five scenes in the narrative.

In John 7 Jesus is in Jerusalem for the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. As we saw last time He started teaching the crowd in verse 14 and did three things. He explained some things about Himself (16-20), then exposed some wrong thinking (21-23), then exhorted them to change (24). Here's what happened...

I. Scene one: The people responded wrongly to Jesus (25-27).

Listen to verses 25-27, "At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, 'Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Christ? But we know where this man is from; when the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from.'"

There's some confusion, isn't there? To sort out precisely who's confused, we need to keep in mind that John refers to at least three different groups of Jews in this chapter. First, there's the group he calls "the Jews" (as in verses 1 & 11), which refers to leaders of the Jewish nation. They, of course, hated Jesus and wanted to eliminate Him. Then there is "the crowd" mentioned in verses 20 and 31, which speaks of the mass of Jewish pilgrims that lived all over Israel and beyond that had traveled to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. These pilgrims probably didn't even know about the plot to kill Jesus, as evidenced by their question in verse 20. And thirdly, John mentions "the people of Jerusalem" (in verse 25), referring not to the leaders, and not to the pilgrims, but to the locals, the Jews who lived in Jerusalem. They're not instigating the plot to kill Jesus, but they've heard about it.

Here in scene one, we see two different and equally inappropriate responses to Jesus.

A. The leaders want to kill Him (25-26). That's what the people of Jerusalem were saying. "Isn't this the man *they* [referring to the leaders] are trying to kill? So the locals are surprised that nobody is stepping forward to stop Jesus. They know what the leaders had said, that Jesus was a fraud (verse 12), and what the same leaders had determined, that He needed to be eliminated (verses 1 & 13). So they couldn't figure out why nobody was putting a stop to Jesus, especially after the convicting things He'd just said. Like, "Not one of you keeps the law," in verse 19, and, "Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment," in verse 24.

And He's saying it *publicly*, too. That's the word the crowd uses in verse 26. The Greek term *parresia* can mean "boldly," as a similar word does in Hebrews 4:16, "Let us come *boldly* to the throne of grace." When Jesus taught, He didn't mince words, nor

stutter, not hold back when the subject might produce a negative reaction. He looked His hearers right in the eye and spoke with courageous boldness.

“Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Christ?” the commoners ask. That’s an interesting deduction. They look at the data and conclude that the leaders’ non-action means an endorsement of Jesus. But, of course, that’s not what it means at all, as will soon be apparent.

You know what an “arm-chair quarterback” is, don’t you? There are thousands of them sitting in their living rooms in the fall, second-guessing the actions of the professionals who don’t know what they’re doing. Well, here we see some “arm-chair theologians.” Listen to them as they put their opinion on the table about Jesus. *We don’t know what our leaders are thinking about this Jesus*—that’s verse 26. *But we know this*—verse 27, “*We know where this man is from; when the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from.*”

In other words, the people (not all of them, but “some”) are saying there’s no way Jesus can be the Christ. And their reason?

B. The people say He doesn’t meet their expectations (27). There were actually two schools of thought in the first century regarding the origin of the Messiah. One said that no one will know where He’s from, based on a misinterpretation of texts like Malachi 3:1, “Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple.” The other, which shows up in verse 42, said that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, based on the prophecy of Micah 5:2, “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel.”

Obviously, the ones speaking in verse 27 are from the first camp. They expect the Messiah to be an unknown. *We know where this Jesus is from, up in Nazareth. So there’s no way He’s the Christ.* Sad, isn’t it? They wrote off Jesus because they had imposed an unbiblical requirement on Him. As Wiersbe puts it, “The people could not see the truth because they were blinded by what they thought were dependable facts.”

So ends the first scene. The people responded wrongly to Jesus.

II. Scene two: Jesus responded with more truth (28-29).

Verse 28 begins, “Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out.” He began teaching back in verse 14 and He is still teaching. No miracles, just more truth. That’s what these people need if they’re ever going to stop thinking wrongly about Him, truth. But not just vanilla truth. Jesus added some spice in verse 28. The text says that Jesus *cried out*.

Why did He do that? For starters, He cried out because it’s noisy in the temple courts, He had no sound system to amplify His voice, and what He had to say was so important that extra volume was needed so no one would miss it. But there’s more. In my estimation, He’s crying out because He’s grieved by the stubborn unbelief He continues to face, in spite of His consistent and loving efforts to help people He cares about deeply.

And when He cried out, He told them two things.

A. He told them what they claimed to know (28a). Two things. One, “Yes, you know me.” And two, “You know where I am from.” I think Jesus is saying that either as a question (as in the ESV, ‘You know me, and you know where I am from?’), or He’s saying it tongue in cheek because in reality, they didn’t know Him, did they? Nor did they know where He was from, not in the ultimate sense. They just *claimed* this knowledge. Then...

B. He told them what they didn't know (28b-29). Five things. One, "I am not here on my own." Two, "but he who sent me is true." Three, "You do not know him." Four, "but I know him." And five, "because I am from him and he sent me."

Friends, based on what Jesus just said, you don't really know Him as He is unless you grasp three things.

1. *You don't really know Jesus unless you grasp God's eternal plan.* By that, I mean this. If you see Jesus only as a great man who lived from 4 BC to 30 AD, then you don't know the real Jesus. The people in this crowd saw Jesus merely as a man from Nazareth, but they needed to go back further. The One who was born in Bethlehem around 4 BC and later moved to Nazareth was *sent* into the world in 4 BC.

Let that sink in, for Jesus' claim here is astounding. He says He wasn't just born in this world like everybody else. He says He was *sent* here, indicating He existed before His birth.² And specifically, though He doesn't use the word, the implication is clear, He was sent here *by God*. Thus, He is making another claim to His deity.

Now keep going back, for the One who was sent into the world in 4 BC was actually preparing the world for His own arrival when He chose Abraham in 2,000 BC and gave him a promise. In John 8:56 Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing *my day*; he saw it and was glad." And so, for twenty centuries the Son of God prepared the world for His own coming by blessing Abraham with a chosen son, turning that chosen son into a chosen family, and then into a chosen nation, called Israel.

But we must go back further, in fact, all the way to the beginning. The One that God sent into the world is none other than the One whom He authorized to create the universe itself, which He did in conjunction with His Father and the Holy Spirit (John 1:1-2; Col. 1:16).

Yet if we want to know the truth about Jesus, we must go back even further. The One that the Father sent into the world in 4 BC received something from His Father BT, in other words *before time*. He received an assignment. In eternity past, before He ever created the heavens and the earth and even the angels, when there was only the Triune God, the Father designed a plan in order to put His amazing grace on display. The Father determined that His Son would create human beings, knowing that they would rebel against Him and place themselves under His wrath. But instead of destroying them, He purposed to rescue some of those rebels, so that forever and ever they would praise Him for His glorious grace.

"You will die in their place," said the Father to His Son, and in so doing you will put our glorious grace on display." That's what 2 Timothy 1:9 says, "This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time."

Yet if really want to know the truth about Jesus, we must go back even further. What happened prior (if I can use the term "prior" to describe that which is pre-time) to this Trinitarian decision to put grace on display? Know this. Throughout every phase of what we call "eternity past," the Son of God enjoyed a perfect, loving relationship with His Father. Jesus talked about this in His prayer in John 17:24, "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world."

The point is this. If you don't know that, then you don't know the real Jesus. That's why the Mormon religion can't take you to heaven. Neither can the religion of the Jehovah's Witnesses, nor Islam for that matter, even though they both say they believe in

² Observation by Wiersbe, p. 317.

Jesus. Why not? They don't believe in this Jesus, and this Jesus is the One who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me (John 14:6)."

But let me take it a step further. Based on what Jesus said in John 7...

2. *You don't really know Jesus unless you grasp what His Father means to Him.* One of the things that jumps off the page again and again in John's Gospel is the special relationship that Jesus claimed to have with His Father. We see it right here. *I know Him. I am from Him. He sent me.* We saw it in verse 17, *My teaching comes from Him.* And in verse 18 when He made it clear that He works *for the honor of Him who sent him.*

Friends, why did Jesus die on the cross? You say, "Because He loved us." And that's true. But that's a secondary reason. The ultimate reason the Son of God left heaven, subjected Himself to life as a human being, and then died on the cross, is because *He loves His Father.*

Just scan John's Gospel and you'll see it all over the place. He talks about His Father all the time because He loves Him so much. Now, let me go even further, for...

3. *You don't really know Jesus unless you grasp that what He enjoys with His Father is what He wants for you.* This is mind-boggling, yet bedrock truth. Listen to what Jesus prayed in John 17:25-26, "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

Of all we could learn from those words, don't miss this. If you know Christ, He wants you to enjoy what He enjoys with His Father. And by the way, that truth can enable you to endure hard things in this life, just as it did Jesus. Let's be honest. If we believe in Jesus only because of the *stuff* He gives us (like family, food, health, etc), but we don't really cherish Him and His Father (whom He invites us to call *our* Father), then when our Father chooses to take the stuff of life away, we'll become bitter and depressed. But if we cherish our beloved Father who gave His Son for us, then we can rejoice even when the losses come (and they will come) because He means more to us than the things He gives us.

Friends, that's how Jesus could endure more loss than we can ever imagine, because He had a Father that loved Him and whose smile He knew He would see again in heaven. That's our hope, too, if He's our Father. And He is, if we've come to know His Son.

So how did Jesus' teaching affect the crowd?

III. Scene three: The people again responded wrongly to Jesus (30-32).

First...

A. Some tried to seize Him (30). "At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come." "They" refers to the crowd. This isn't an organized attempt to arrest Jesus, as we'll see in verse 32. Here it's the irrational reaction of an offended mass of people who don't like what they're hearing and feel it's time to take the law into their own hands.

"Somebody needs to stop this nonsense!" And so they went after Him. But their efforts failed. John says they couldn't touch Him, though he doesn't explain what prevented them. He just says, *his time had not yet come.*

We see once again the Lord's sovereignty over the timing of His death, something John emphasizes again and again throughout this gospel (as in 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1). I like William Hendriksen's remark, "Though surrounded by danger—the anger of these Jerusalemites, the hostile desire and power of the leaders—, Jesus was in reality free from all danger, because it was not the will of God that he should die at this time."

There's an application here for us, beloved, as Calvin suggests, "For though we live unto the day, the hour of every man's death has nonetheless been fixed by God... we are safe from all dangers until God wishes to call us away."³

I heard on Thursday that a friend slipped into eternity after a battle with cancer. This is such an encouraging truth. My friend did not leave this world one day sooner than the Lord intended.

But not everyone attacked Jesus. John tells us that...

B. Some believed in Him, sort of (31). "Still, many in the crowd put their faith in him. They said, 'When the Christ comes, will he do more miraculous signs than this man?'"

So some believed...*sort of*. I say *sort of* because I don't think this is necessary saving faith. To be saved from one's sins, a person acknowledge the truth about who Jesus is and what Jesus did to rescue you. Here are some people who got the first part right. They acknowledge the truth about who Jesus is, that He's the Christ, which is something the others refused to confess. But do they believe Christ is the solution for their sin problem? I don't think so. They've got His identity right because of the persuasion of His miracles, but they still don't get why He's come, as time will show.

Some believe in a false Jesus. We've talked about that. But some believe in the true Jesus, yet for deficient reasons. They're not saved because they haven't trusted in Jesus for their salvation, but for some other reason.

That brings us to a third deficient response...

C. The authorities sent guards to arrest Him (32). "The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him."

That's interesting. The Pharisees heard the whispering, but the chief priests *and* the Pharisees sent the guards. That's because the Pharisees were the men of the Book, the theologians, the clergy of the day. The chief priests were the men who held the clout, which means they possessed the power to do what the Pharisees want done. Ironically, these two groups were often at intense odds with each other, but their mutual hatred of Jesus brought them together.

Now scene four. Wrong response. Truth. More wrong response. And...

IV. Scene four: Jesus responded with more truth (33-34).

In verses 33-34, "Jesus said, 'I am with you for only a short time, and then I go to the one who sent me. You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come.'" That's interesting. The truth Jesus delivered in this response came in the form of five predictions, two about Himself and then three about the ones who've rejected Him.

A. He gave two predictions about Himself. The first? *I am with you for only a short time*. Jesus knows His time is short. It's October now, the Feast of Tabernacles. In six months, in April of AD 30, Passover will arrive.⁴ What's going to happen then?

His second prediction. *Then I go to the one who sent me*. There He is again, talking about His Father and talking about the mission His Father sent Him to accomplish. I'm on assignment right now, but my time is short. Then I'm going home to see the One who sent me.

³ Calvin, in Leon Morris, p. 414.

⁴ The date suggested by William Hendriksen, p. 19.

B. He gave three predictions about them. The predictions? One, *you will look for me*. Two, *but you will not find me*. And three, *where I am, you cannot come*.

What's He talking about? He's talking about what's going to happen after He dies. He's going to be raised from the dead and ascend back to heaven, and they're going to look for Him, and not find Him, and accuse the disciples of stealing His body. But they won't find Him because they can't come where He is going to be.

Do you see a sobering contrast here? To these unbelievers Jesus just said, "Where I am, you cannot come," but to His own He will later say, "that where I am, there you may be also (John 14:3)."⁵

Ponder those words. *You cannot come*. Hendriksen is right, "In the presence of the Father there is no room for those who have refused to accept the Son."⁶ So much for the notion that Jesus is just one way to the Father, along with the other religious figures. If you don't believe in me, says Jesus, *you cannot come to where My Father is*.

Not surprisingly, in the scene five...

V. Scene five: The people responded with questions about Jesus (35-36).

They don't address the questions *to* Him this time, but *about* Him. In verses 35-36, "The Jews said to one another, 'Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? What did he mean when he said, 'You will look for me, but you will not find me,' and 'Where I am, you cannot come'?"

Questions, questions, questions. *Where? Will? And what?*

First, *where* is He going? Where does He plan to spread His poison next?

Second, *will* He go where our people are living among the Greeks (the word is *diaspora*, for there were Jews scattered all over the Middle East outside of Israel)? Is that where He is going? And is He going to teach the Greeks there, too?

Though unintended, the Jews actually make a wonderful prediction here, and John wants us to see it. In time Jesus did go to the Greeks and offer them the gift of eternal life, too. When? When He traveled throughout the Roman Empire while indwelling His followers.

And three, *what* did He mean? they asked. And they repeated His words verbatim. *You will look for me, but you will not find me,* and *'Where I am, you cannot come'*? They heard Him. The problem wasn't with their hearing. They heard the very words He said, but it did them no good. *What did he mean by that?* is all they can say.

They don't get it. They've missed Jesus' warning. He wanted them to drop their guns and respond rightly to Him before it was too late. But they refused. "Today is the day of salvation," says Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:2. "Today if you hear His voice do not harden your hearts," says Hebrews 4:7.

And how did Jesus answer their questions? Apparently, He didn't. John just ends the story and he doesn't pick it up again until three days later when he tells us what Jesus did on the final day of the seven day feast. Why didn't Jesus answer their final set of questions? Maybe He did and we're just not told. Or maybe, John did tell us. *But these are written that you may believe*.

There's the reason. It doesn't really matter what happened next to the people who heard Jesus speak in that crowd. They're dead and gone. What matters is what's happening to the people in this crowd.

⁵ Observation by Wiersbe, p. 317.

⁶ William Hendriksen, p. 20.

Implications: What do we learn from this?

I see three things.

1. *We learn the proper response to Jesus.* We've just seen the improper response, haven't we? To resist Him, to attack Him, to believe in Him *sort of*, to get sidetracked with peripheral questions. That's not the right response. So what is? The very next words that Jesus will speak, as we'll see next time, the Lord willing, give us the answer...

Verses 37-38—"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." There it is. *Come to me. Drink. Believe in me.*

Is your soul thirsty, my friend? Then hear the Savior's invitation. *Come and drink.* But don't keep the water to yourself!

2. *We learn how to help others respond properly to Jesus.* How do you help people who are believing wrongly about Jesus? Learn from Jesus. Give them truth. It's the truth that sets people free. They need to hear the truth about Jesus, so let's look for ways to give it to them, first with a life that shows them what He's like, and then with words.

Who can you help this week? Who has the Lord put in your life that needs to know Him?

3. *We learn how much Jesus loves His Father and us.* Oh, how He loves His Father! And oh, how He loves us! Let's thank Him.