

BIBLE STUDY HELPS

TITLE: He Sent Me

TEXT: John 7:14-29

TARGET: SESSION IN A SENTENCE

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

Resource to Consider: 8-minute video overview of John 7:10-12. Great for personal study or to share with your group. Good material for explaining how we should seek the truth about Jesus Christ: [Click to view](#).

LOOK UP: FOCUSING THE GROUP

Introduce: Google and other search engines are sometimes helpful and sometimes they reveal some of the craziest questions people might ask. A [2018 article from the UK website, Metro](#), listed the top 25 weirdest questions Google was asked. Here are a few of the funniest: How many toes does a rhinoceros have? Why is your face on your head? Why does cucumber taste like shampoo? What is the length of spaghetti? How do I get my husband a brain transplant? Who let the dogs out? Where are my keys? How does a giraffe clean its ears? Why don't duck feet stick to ice?

Video Option: A few years ago, a video captured everyday people on the street being asked what question they might ask Jesus. Warning, some of the answers might be uncomfortable for some to hear. CLICK TO VIEW: <http://vimeo.com/1891011>

- What do you think of their questions?
- Which one of these questions seemed legitimate? Which ones seemed ridiculous?
- What would be the difficulty of talking to someone who had these types of questions?

If Jesus were here, what questions might you desire to ask him?

As we look at the verses in this session, we will see that the questions are easier to ask than they are to answer. We will see that, many times, the answer Jesus gives aren't what people want to hear.

Jesus remained in Galilee for a season of time following His revelation in Capernaum that He was the true, real Bread from heaven that gives eternal life. But, at some point, it was time for the Festival of the Shelters, also known as the Festival of Tabernacles, to be celebrated in Jerusalem. Jesus chose to delay going to Jerusalem until mid-way through the festival.

This festival was one of three major Jewish festivals. Every adult Jewish male who lived within 20 miles of Jerusalem was required to attend. It lasted seven or eight days and commemorated the period the Israelites journeyed and camped in the wilderness. Everyone who attended stayed in makeshift covers or tents instead of staying in homes. When the children complained about staying in these tents, the adults would remind them of the hardships the Jews experienced in the wilderness and how God provided for them.

Mid-way through the festival, Jesus quietly returned to Jerusalem and began teaching in the temple as the festival continued. When the people heard Him teach, they began to wonder if He really was the Christ, which generated more and more questions.

We will see in these passages, the questions people asked and the response of Jesus to those questions. The first question relates to the validity of Jesus' teaching.

LOOK IN: UNPACKING THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Is Jesus' teaching valid? – John 7:14-18

¹⁴ When the festival was already half over, Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach. ¹⁵ Then the Jews were amazed and said, "How is this man so learned, since he hasn't been trained?" ¹⁶ Jesus answered them, "My teaching isn't mine but is from the one who sent me. ¹⁷ If anyone wants to do his will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own. ¹⁸ 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.

As mentioned in a previous session, Mount Moriah is where the temple was located, at the northeast side of Jerusalem. The temple had multiple sections. There was the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place. It was surrounded by porches, the treasury, and other sections and courtyards. It was at one of the various porches and courtyards that Jesus *began to teach*.

When the people heard Jesus teach, it was obvious that He had not been trained in the rabbinical schools. The listeners were *amazed*, implying bewilderment. The people could not understand how He had become so *learned*. Unlike other teachers, He did not parrot well-known rabbis, and His mastery of Scripture surpassed anything they had heard. A major feature of the divine will was for Jesus to teach the Jews the truth about the Scriptures, freeing them from the bondage of centuries of human traditions that had hedged in and smothered the true Word

Jesus declared God the Father had sent Him on his redemptive mission, and He spoke with God's authority. There was something very different about His teachings. Perhaps they recognized as others did at other times recorded in Scripture, that He taught as one having authority (see Matthew 7:28-29).

Discuss:

- If Jesus were teaching today and we didn't know what we know today as believers, what credentials would He need before people would listen to Him? (Examples Include: Doctorate, possibly a large following on some social networking site, a proven track record, experience speaking to large crowds, have written a best-selling book, recommended by someone who we trust, etc.)
- What does Jesus say invalidates a person's teaching? (If a person speaks for himself or seeks his own glory.)
- What credentials are most important to determine the truth of someone's teaching or preaching?
- What does this say then, about how we should validate truth today since we are living in such a celebrity driven culture? (We must look beyond people and to the Word of God. Our final source for valid answers is the Bible, not people.)
- How would you explain to someone how you know that Jesus' teachings are valid?

Jesus declared that his teachings were not motivated by self-promotion. He did not seek others' applause or praise. He was not out to make a name for Himself. His consuming purpose was to honor God, the One who sent Him and was the Source of His teachings. Jesus taught from flawless character. He consistently sought God's glory. He was true—genuine, a Person of integrity and devoid of unrighteousness—and thus trustworthy.

If we trust Jesus and truly desire to align our will with His, then He will answer our questions. Today, as was true with the Jews, we need to be careful to avoid seeking answers from people around us without first validating the answers through the Word of God. If we have to quote someone else's beliefs before understanding what the Word of God says, then we can fall prey, as did the Jews, of missing the true answer to their questions about Jesus.

This leads to a second question, "Was Jesus crazy?"

Was Jesus crazy? – John 7:19-24

¹⁹ *Didn't Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?"* ²⁰ *"You have a demon!" the crowd responded. "Who is trying to kill you?"* ²¹ *"I performed one work, and you are all amazed," Jesus answered.* ²² *"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.* ²³ *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?"* ²⁴ *Stop judging according to outward appearances; rather judge according to righteous judgment."*

Option: Ask several to read the passage from different translations or paraphrases of the Scripture. If no other translations or paraphrases are available, read the following to explain what Jesus is saying in this passage:

The Message can help us better understand what Jesus is saying in this passage: *It was Moses, wasn't it, who gave you God's Law? But none of you are living it. So why are you trying to kill me?"* ²⁰ *The crowd said, "You're crazy! Who's trying to kill you? You're demon-possessed."* ²¹⁻²⁴ *Jesus said, "I did one miraculous thing a few months ago, and you're still standing around getting all upset, wondering what I'm up to. Moses prescribed circumcision—originally it came not from Moses but from his ancestors—and so you circumcise a man, dealing with one part of his body, even if it's the Sabbath. You do this in order to preserve one item in the Law of Moses. So why are you upset with me because I made a man's whole body well on the Sabbath? Don't be hypercritical; use your head—and heart!—to discern what is right, to test what is authentically right."*

The Jewish leaders confronted Jesus when He accused them of trying to kill Him. This prompted them to basically say He was crazy and paranoid. Some even thought He was possessed by an evil spirit. The Jewish leaders and others were so threatened by Jesus' righteous actions that they attacked His character.

There was one work that instigated the Jews' hatred. It involved the healing of a man on the Sabbath. Even though the Jews would circumcise on the Sabbath, Jesus healing someone on the Sabbath was condemned. So, what really caused them to respond as they did, is the fact that He accused them of being hypocrites. He revealed their hypocrisy regarding works of righteousness. Jesus rebuked their hypocrisy and told them to *stop judging according to outward appearances*.

Discuss: What makes seeing our own hypocrisy difficult? (PSG, p. 87) How does knowing Jesus was not a hypocrite help us avoid hypocrisy in our lives?

As believers, we must examine our own lives for such hypocrisy. Modern Christians do not face culture wars over circumcision, but we do encounter other issues just as controversial.

Jesus was not crazy! He revealed the way one should live perfectly in a world that was imperfect. This leads us to a final question from this passage, "Is Jesus really the Messiah?"

Is Jesus really the Messiah? – John 7:25-29

²⁵ Some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Isn't this the man they are trying to kill?" ²⁶ 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? ²⁷ But we know where this man is from. When the Messiah comes, nobody will know where he is from." ²⁸ 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; ²⁹ I know him because I am from him, and he sent me."

Discuss:

- What did the crowd make of this openness on Jesus' part and silence on the authorities' part? (They began to question whether the authorities actually knew Jesus was the Messiah, or Christ.)
- What was it about Jesus that caused them to struggle with the truth that Jesus was the Messiah? (Where He was raised. It didn't fit into their theological framework that they had created as to what they expected from a Messiah)
- Who do people think Jesus is today? How does that affect their ability to embrace Him as Savior?
- What are the dangers of not knowing the full facts about Jesus? (PSG, p. 88)

By this time, it's apparent that Jesus was not paranoid and there were some who were trying to kill Him. These verses focus on one question: Was Jesus the Messiah or not? Because He had been "speaking publicly" without rebuke, many wondered if the leaders' silence meant Jesus really was the Messiah.

Others believed He wasn't the Messiah because they knew He was from Galilee. Many Jews believed that the Messiah's identity would remain a mystery until he set them free from the Romans. Neither side really understood Jesus. As a result, neither side could really accept Him and find life in Him.

Their irrational thinking led them to dismiss Him as the Messiah altogether, because it didn't fit into their theological framework they had created as to what they expected from a Messiah.

LOOK OUT: LIVING OUT THE TARGET

Believing in Jesus means we have to look beyond the physical and the present. We have to look to the spiritual and through eyes of faith. This crowd was still thinking in the confines of what they could see. Jesus knew that seeing was not going to be enough.

Challenge: We began this session by considering questions someone might ask Jesus. How might someone find the answers to these questions and other questions they have about Jesus? Knowing that the teachings of Jesus originated with the Father, 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? (PSG, p. 90)