

# John 7:25-35

by St. John Chrysostom

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*Christ reveals His divinity and explains why the Pharisees and Jews cannot come to where He is because of their sins.*

**Scripture:** John 6:46, John 7:28-34, John 8:19

**Topics:** "Faith And Obedience", "Rejecting Christ"

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## Description

John Chrysostom preaches on the passage where some people of Jerusalem question if Jesus is the Christ, despite witnessing His miracles and bold teachings. He highlights the folly and madness of those who seek to kill Him while acknowledging His divine authority. Jesus addresses the people's contradictory knowledge of Him, emphasizing the importance of truly knowing Him and the Father through faith and obedience. He warns of the consequences of rejecting Him and failing to follow His teachings, urging listeners to keep their spiritual lamps burning with the oil of good deeds and mercy to enter the kingdom of God.

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## Transcript

Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaks boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence he is.

1. Nothing is placed in the Holy Scriptures without a reason, for they were uttered by the Holy Ghost, therefore let us enquire exactly into every point. For it is possible from one expression to find out the entire meaning (of a passage), as in the case before us. Many of them of Jerusalem said, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaks boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Now why is added, them of Jerusalem? The Evangelist by this shows, that they who had most enjoyed His mighty miracles were more pitiable than any; they who had beheld the greatest proof of His Godhead, and yet committed all to the judgment of their corrupt rulers. For was it not a great proof of it, that men furious and bent on murder, who went about and sought to kill Him, should be quiet of a sudden, when they had Him in their hands? Who could have effected this? Who thus quenched their absolute fury? Still after such proofs, observe the folly and the madness of the men. Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? See how they accuse themselves; whom, It says, they seek to kill, and yet they say nothing to him. And not only do they say nothing to Him, but nothing even when He speaks boldly. For one who spoke boldly and with all freedom would naturally have the more angered them; but they did nothing. Do they know indeed that this is the very Christ? What

do you think? What opinion do you give? The contrary, It says. On which account they said, We know this man whence he is. What malice, what contradiction! They do not even follow the opinion of their rulers, but bring forward another, perverse, and worthy of their own folly; We know him whence he is.

But when Christ comes, no man knows whence He is. Matthew 2:4

Yet your rulers when asked replied, that He should be born in Bethlehem. And others again said, God spoke unto Moses, but as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. John 9:29 We know whence he is, and we know not whence He is; observe the words of drunken men. And again, Does Christ come out of Galilee? John 7:41 Is He not of the town of Bethlehem? Do you see that theirs is the decision of madmen? We know, and, we know not; Christ comes from Bethlehem; When Christ comes, no man knows whence He is. What can be plainer than this contradiction? For they only looked to one thing, which was, not to believe. What then is Christ's reply?

John 7:28

You both know Me, and you know whence I am: and I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, whom you know not. 2. And again, If you had known Me, you should have known My Father also. John 8:19 How then says He, that they both know Him, and whence He is, and then, that they neither know Him, nor the Father? He does not contradict, (away with the thought,) but is very consistent with Himself. For He speaks of a different kind of knowledge, when He says, ye know not; as when He says, The sons of Eli were wicked sons, they knew not the Lord 1 Samuel 2:12; and again, Israel does not know Me.

Isaiah 1:3 So also Paul says, They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him. Titus 1:16 It is therefore possible, knowing, not to know. This then is what He says: If you know Me, you know that I am the Son of God. For the whence I am does not here denote place. As is clear from what follows, I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, whom you know not, referring here to the ignorance shown by their works. [As Paul says, They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him.]

For their fault came not merely of ignorance, but of wickedness, and an evil will; because even though they knew this, they chose to be ignorant. But what manner of connection is there here? How is it that He, reproving them, uses their own words? For when they say, We know this man whence he is, He adds, ye both know Me. Was their expression, We know him not? Nay, they said, We know him. But (observe), they by saying the, We know whence he is, declared nothing else than that He was of the earth, and that He was the carpenter's son; but He led them up to heaven, saying, You know whence I am, that is, not thence whence ye suppose, but from that place whence He that sent Me (has sent Me).

For to say, I am not come of Myself, intimates to them, that they knew that He was sent by the Father, though they did not disclose it. So that He rebukes them in a twofold manner; first, what they said in secret He published aloud, so as to put them to shame; after that He revealed also what was in their hearts. As though He had said, I am not one of the abjects, nor of those who come for nothing, but He 'that sent Me is true, whom you know not.' What means, He that sent Me is true?

If He be true, He has sent Me for the truth; if He be true, it is probable that He who is sent is true also. This also He proves in another way, vanquishing them with their own words. For whereas they had said, When Christ comes, no man knows whence He is, He proves from this that He Himself is the Christ. They used the words, No man knows, with reference to distinction of some definite locality; but from the same words He shows Himself to be the Christ, because He came from the Father; and everywhere He witnesses that

He alone has the knowledge of the Father, saying, Not that any man has seen the Father, save He which is from the Father. John 6:46 And His words exasperated them; for to tell them, You know Him not, and to rebuke them because knowing they pretended to be ignorant, was sufficient to sting and annoy them.

John 7:30

Then they sought to take Him, and no man laid his hand upon Him, because His hour was not yet come.

Do you see that they are invisibly restrained, and their anger bridled? But wherefore says It not, that He had restrained them invisibly, but, Because His hour was not yet come? The Evangelist was minded to speak more humanly and in a lowlier strain, so that Christ might be deemed to be also Man. For because Christ everywhere speaks of sublime matters, he therefore intersperses expressions of this kind. And when Christ says, I am from Him, He speaks not as a Prophet who learns, but as seeing Him, and being with Him.

John 7:29

I know Him, for I am from Him, and He has sent Me.

Do you see how He continually seeks to prove the, I am not come of Myself, and, He that sent Me is true, striving not to be thought an enemy of God? And observe how great is the profit of the humility of His words; for, it says, after this many said,

John 7:31

When Christ comes, will He do more miracles than these which this man has done?

How many were the miracles? In truth, there were three, that of the wine, that of the paralytic, and that of the nobleman's son; and the Evangelist has related no more. From which circumstance it is plain, as I have often said, that the writers pass by most of them, and discourse to us of those alone on account of which the rulers ill-treated Him. Then they sought to take Him, and kill Him. Who sought? Not the multitude, who had no desire of rule, nor could be made captives by malice; but the priests. For they of the multitude said, When Christ comes, will He do more miracles? Yet neither was this sound faith, but, as it were, the idea of a promiscuous crowd; for to say, When He comes, was not the expression of men firmly persuaded that He was the Christ. We may either understand the words thus, or that they were uttered by the multitudes when they came together. Since, they may have said, our rulers are taking every pains to prove that this man is not the Christ, let us suppose that he is not the Christ; will the Christ be better than he? For, as I ever repeat, men of the grosser sort are led in not by doctrine, nor by preaching, but by miracles.

John 7:32

The Pharisees heard the people murmuring, and sent servants to take Him.

Do you see that the violation of the Sabbath was a mere pretense? And that what most stung them was this murmuring? For here, though they had no fault to find with Him for anything said or done, they desired to take Him because of the multitude. They dared not do it themselves, suspecting danger, but sent their hired servants. Alas! For their tyranny and their madness, or rather, I should say, for their folly. After having often attempted themselves, and not prevailed, they committed the matter to servants, simply

satisfying their anger. Yet He had spoken much at the pool John 5, and they had done nothing of the kind; they sought indeed occasion, but they attempted not, while here they can endure it no longer, when the multitude is about to run to Him. What then says Christ?

John 7:33

Yet a little while am I with you.

Having power to bow and terrify His hearers, He utters words full of humility. As though He had said, Why are you eager to persecute and kill Me? Wait a little while, and even though you should be eager to keep Me back, I shall not endure it. That no one should (as they did) suppose that the, Yet a little while am I with you, denoted a common death, that no one might suppose this, or that He wrought nothing after death, He added,

John 7:34

And where I am, there ye cannot come.

Now had He been about to continue in death, they might have gone to Him, for to that place we all depart. His words therefore bent the simpler portion of the multitude, terrified the bolder, made the more intelligent anxious to hear Him, since but little time was now left, and since it was not in their power always to enjoy this teaching. Nor did He merely say, I am here, but, I am with you, that is, Though you persecute, though ye drive Me away, yet for a little while I shall not cease dispensing what is for your good, saying and recommending the things that relate to your salvation.

John 7:33

And I go unto Him that sent Me.

This was enough to terrify and throw them into an agony. For that they should stand in need of Him, He declares also . . .

John 7:34

You shall seek Me, He says, (not only you shall not forget Me, but you shall even seek Me,) and shall not find Me.

3. And when did the Jews seek Him? Luke says that the women mourned over Him, and it is probable that many others, both at the time and when the city was taken, remembered Christ and His miracles, and sought His presence. Luke 23:49 Now all this He added, desiring to attract them. For the facts that the time left was short, that He should after His departure be regretfully desired by them, and that they should not then be able to find Him, were all together sufficient to persuade them to come to Him. For had it not been that His presence should with regret be desired by them, He would not have seemed to them to be saying any great thing; if, again, it was about to be desired, and they able to find Him, neither so would this have disturbed them. Again, had He been about to stay with them a long time, so also they would have been remiss. But now He in every way compels and terrifies them. And the, I go to Him that sent Me, is the expression of one declaring that no harm will happen to Him from their plotting, and that His Passion was voluntary. Wherefore now He uttered two predictions, that after a little while He should depart, and that they should not come to Him; a thing which belonged not to human intelligence, the foretelling His own

death. Hear for instance, David saying, Lord, make me to know mine end and the number of my days, what it is, that I may know what time I have. Psalm 39:4 There is no man at all that knows this; and by one the other is confirmed. And I think that He speaks this covertly to the servants, and directs His discourse to them, thus specially attracting them, by showing them that He knew the cause of their arrival. As though He had said, Wait a little, and I shall depart.

John 7:35

Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go?

Yet they who had wished to be rid of Him, who did all in their power not to see Him, ought not to have asked this question, but to have said, we are glad of it, when will the departure take place? but they were somewhat affected at His words, and with foolish suspicion question one another, whither will he go?

Will he go unto the dispersion of the Gentiles?

What is, the dispersion of the Gentiles? The Jews gave this name to other nations, because they were everywhere scattered and mingled fearlessly with one another. And this reproach they themselves afterwards endured, for they too were a dispersion. For of old all their nation was collected into one place, and you could not anywhere find a Jew, except in Palestine only; wherefore they called the Gentiles a dispersion, reproaching them, and boasting concerning themselves. What then means, Whither I go ye cannot come? For all nations at that time had intercourse with them, and there were Jews everywhere. He would not therefore, if He had meant the Gentiles, have said, Where ye cannot come. After saying, Will he go to the dispersion of the Gentiles? they did not add, and ruin, but, and teach them. To such a degree had they abated their anger, and believed His words; for they would not, had they not believed, have enquired among themselves what the saying was.

These words were spoken indeed to the Jews, but fear there is lest they be suited to us also, that where He is we cannot come on account of our life being full of sins. For concerning the disciples He says, I will that they also be with Me where I am John 17:24, but concerning ourselves, I dread lest the contrary be said, that, Where I am, you cannot come. For when we act contrary to the commandments, how can we go to that place? Even in the present life, if any soldier act unworthily towards his king, he will not be able to see the king, but being deprived of his authority will suffer the severest punishment; if therefore we steal, or covet, if we wrong or strike others, if we work not deeds of mercy, we shall not be able to go there, but shall suffer what happened to the virgins. For where He was, they were not able to enter in, but retired, their lamps having gone out, that is, grace having left them. For we can, if we will, increase the brightness of that flame which we received straightway by the grace of the Spirit; but if we will not do this, we shall lose it, and when that is quenched, there will be nothing else than darkness in our souls; since, as while a lamp is burning the light is strong, so when it is extinguished there is nothing but gloom. Wherefore the Apostle says, Quench not the Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 And It is quenched when It has not oil, when there is any violent gust of wind, when It is cramped and confined, (for so fire is quenched,) and It is cramped by worldly cares, and quenched by evil desires. In addition to the causes we have mentioned, nothing quenches It so much as inhumanity, cruelty, and rapine. For when, besides having no oil, we pour upon it cold water, (for covetousness is this, which chills with despondency the souls of those we wrong,) whence shall it be kindled again? We shall depart, therefore, carrying dust and ashes with us, and having much smoke to convict us of having had lamps and of having extinguished them; for where there is smoke, there needs must have been fire which has been quenched. May none of us ever hear that word, I

know you not. Matthew 25:12 And whence shall we hear that word, but from this, if ever we see a poor man, and are as though we saw him not? If we will not know Christ when He is an hungered, He too will not know us when we entreat His mercy. And with justice; for how shall he who neglects the afflicted, and gives not of that which is his own, how shall he seek to receive of that which is not his own? Wherefore, I entreat you, let us do and contrive everything, so that oil fail not us, but that we may trim our lamps, and enter with the Bridegroom into the bride-chamber. To which may we all attain, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom, to the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, now and ever and world without end. Amen.

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