

### The Jewish Religious Leaders Attempt to Arrest Jesus

#### John 7:30-36

John 7:30-36 – *“Therefore they sought to take Him, but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.*

<sup>31</sup> *And many of the people believed in Him, and said, “When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?”* <sup>32</sup> *The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him.* <sup>33</sup> *Then Jesus said to them. “I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me.* <sup>34</sup> *You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come.”*

<sup>35</sup> *Then the Jews said among themselves, “Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?”* <sup>36</sup> *What is this thing that He said, ‘You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come’?”*

#### Background Notes

The crowd the Lord Jesus was addressing in the Temple area was a mixed multitude. Because this was the Feast of Tabernacles, one of the major feasts of the Old Testament, Jews from all over the Roman world (and as far east as Babylon) were in Jerusalem to celebrate the feast. Many of these Jews had possibly heard about Jesus, but this was the first time that they were actually seeing Him. Many in this crowd were from Judea and Galilee who would have heard Jesus before, and maybe seen some of His miracles. Maybe some of them were believers (v31).

In addition to the pilgrims, the Jewish religious leaders of Jerusalem were part of the crowd. They were monitoring everything that Jesus said and did, because they and their followers were looking for an opportunity to arrest Him. *“Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come”* (v30). These leaders were the Pharisees and the chief priests of verse 32: *“The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him”* (v32).

The “chief priest” was the leading priest from Sadducee party. The Sadducees came from wealthy and powerful families in Jerusalem. The “officers” that were sent to arrest Jesus were not Roman soldiers - they were Jerusalem’s “Temple police,” who were under the direction of the high priest. Their job was to keep law and order in the Temple precincts.

After the Lord said, *“You will seek me, and not find me,”* the Jewish leaders discussed among themselves, *“Where does He intend to go?”* Is He planning to go to another country, to the Jews who are dispersed among the Greeks, or even teach the Greeks?”

The term “Dispersion,” or *diaspora*, refers to Jews who were not living in Israel, but were scattered all over the Greek-speaking and Roman world. The “dispersion” began when the Jews were taken into captivity in Babylon, and some of the Jews who were not taken captive fled from Jerusalem to Egypt at that time. The dispersion continued even after some of

the exiled Jews came back from the Babylonian captivity, because many Jews remained in Babylon and Persia, or moved to other foreign lands. The dispersion continues today. Jews live all over the world today, mainly because they have had to flee from persecution over the centuries.

The question that the Jewish leaders were asking here was whether or not Jesus was going to go to live among the Gentiles and teach them. That thought infuriated the Pharisees and priests! From the Jewish point of view, Gentiles were “dogs” - unclean and despised. These Jewish leaders didn’t realize how predictive their question really was. The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ would indeed go out to the Gentiles, because the Lord Jesus Christ was rejected by His own people.

## Doctrinal / Teaching Points

### 1. Logic should lead an unbeliever to the threshold of faith.

Verse 31: *“And many of the people believed in Him, and said, “When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?”* Were these people true believers, or did they only say they were believers? Were they like the people in John 2:23-25? *“Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.”*

Were the people in verse 31 true believers, or were they more like the people who only “professed” to believe? We can’t be sure! I would like to think that they were true believers. It’s very possible that some of the Jewish pilgrims from this mixed multitude became true believers. Remember - after the resurrection the Lord appeared to more than 500 believers at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6). Thus we see that even before Pentecost there were many more believers than just the disciples. Maybe the believers here were part of those 500 believers!

In any case, if these people came to true faith, they took that step of faith **logically**. They heard His teaching. They heard about, and some of them even saw, the miracles that Jesus did. Thus they logically concluded that Jesus was the Messiah, and therefore they believed.

In Matthew 11 and Luke 10, the Lord pronounced judgment on the towns of Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum because the people of those towns had seen His miracles, but didn’t believe. Logically, they **should** have believed! Refusing to believe was against all logic! The Lord said that even the pagan cities of Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon would logically have come to repentance and believed if they had seen His miracles.

Now we know that logic can’t save a person, but logic can bring a person to the threshold of faith. John 20:30-31 gives us the purpose of the Gospel of John: *“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”* So after reading about the “Sign Miracles” of Jesus, a person should **logically** conclude that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and then exercise faith: believe in Him, and receive life in His name.

We know that God's sovereign hand is working behind the scenes in regard to a person's salvation - that's for sure! But from the human perspective, logic should lead an unbeliever to the threshold of faith. That is why we use "Christian **evidences**" and apologetics in our witness. Reason doesn't save us; it is faith that counts. But it is a reasonable faith. Logic should lead an unbeliever to the threshold of faith. That is the way it worked for the believers in John 7:31, and that's the way it should work in our lives, too.

If you're an unbeliever, is it **logical** to think that this universe could have created itself? Is it **logical** to think that Jesus lied when He claimed to be God? Is it **logical** to believe that the miracles were just tricks or sleight-of-hand? Does it make sense to believe that the miracles were merely "exaggerated stories" made up by the early Christians – many of whom were willing to die a martyr's death for a religion that they **knew** was based on lies, exaggerations and fabrications?!

Logic can't save you, but it can lead you to the threshold of faith. If you're at that threshold right now, step across the threshold and become a Christian! Receive Jesus Christ as your Savior. Remember, logic should lead an unbeliever to the threshold of faith.

## 2. There is a point of no return.

In verses 33-34 the Lord said, *"I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come."* The people didn't understand what the Lord meant, as we see in verse 36. They thought He meant that He would leave Israel and go to the "dispersion."

The Lord, of course, meant that He was going back to Heaven, and they would look for Him and not find Him. This prediction was literally fulfilled after the Lord's resurrection and then His ascension. Where Jesus was, those unbelieving Jewish leaders were not able to come. There is a "point of no return."

The Lord said, *"You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come?"* Notice that the Lord **didn't** say to the Jewish religious leaders, "After I'm gone, you will seek Me and not find me, but then you will come to your senses. You'll change your mind, and then you will become believers." No, He didn't say that, did He? He said, *"You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come."* He was indicating that there is a point of no return.

Look at John 8:21, where the Lord said essentially the same thing: *"I am going away, and you will seek Me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come."* What was the point of no return? Well, look at John 8:24, where the Lord went on to say, *"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."*

"I AM" is the divine title of God, the divine Name of God from the Old Testament. By using the divine title when referring to Himself - "I AM He" - the Lord was proclaiming His deity. People who would not accept Him as God and as their Messiah had reached the point of no return. They would die in their sins, with no second chance. There was a point of no return, and sadly, those people to whom the Lord spoke are in hell today.

Have you acknowledged the Lord Jesus as God, and as your Savior? There is a point of no return! If you continue to put off the decision to trust in Him, a “hardening” process sets in. Your heart becomes callused. You drift further away.

Don't cross beyond that “point of no return”! Psalm 95:8 says, *“Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, as in the day of trial in the wilderness.”* Don't harden your heart! Acknowledge Jesus Christ as God, and as the One who died for you. Do it now! Commit your life to Christ, because there is a point of no return.

## Practical Application

**We are “immortal” until our mission on earth is accomplished.**

*“Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come”(v30).*

Until the time that our Lord went voluntarily to the cross, there was nothing the Jewish leaders could do to take His life. They could plot to kill Him, they could send officers to take Him, but He could not be taken and crucified until His hour came.

Look at verse 33: *“Then Jesus said to them, “I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me.”* In other words, the Lord was saying, “Whether you like it or not, I will be here a few months longer. Then I will voluntarily lay down my life and go back to my Father - and there is nothing you can do to change that plan.”

The word “immortal” means “exempted from death.” The Lord Jesus was untouchable until “His hour” came – when His mission on earth was accomplished. And as Christians, we are “immortal,” too - until our mission on earth is accomplished. We don't know how or when we are going to die, but we can be sure that we are “immortal” until our mission on earth is accomplished, because God has a plan for our lives.

Now some of you may be thinking, “But what if a Christian commits suicide?” Or, “What if I drive too fast on an icy road and die in a car crash?” Seriously speaking, if you are walking with the Lord and seeking to serve Him and using your God-given common sense, you can be sure that your life is not “up for grabs” - because God is in complete control!

God is in complete control! This truth is a great comfort, especially when a Christian is taken home to Heaven because of an accident. It was **not** an “accident,” from God's sovereign point of view! We are “immortal” until our mission on earth is accomplished.