

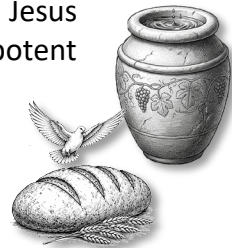
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
JOHN
LESSON 8
John Chapter 8

Recap

John began his Gospel not at Bethlehem, but **before creation**: “In the beginning was the Word.” From the opening verses, John establishes his central argument—Jesus Christ is not merely a prophet, teacher, or miracle worker; He is the eternal **Logos**, God manifested in human flesh. Everything that follows—the testimony of John the Baptist, the calling of the disciples, the signs, the discourses, and the growing opposition—is designed to bring the reader to John’s stated purpose: **“that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name”** (John 1:1-14; 20:30-31).



Through the first seven chapters, John has steadily accumulated evidence. Jesus turned water into wine at Cana, healed the nobleman’s son, healed the impotent man at Bethesda, fed the five thousand, walked upon the sea, and declared Himself the **Bread of Life**. Along the way we have encountered Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, hostile religious leaders, confused crowds, wavering disciples, and men such as Peter who recognized that Jesus alone had “the words of eternal life” (John 2:1-11; 3:1-21; 4:1-42, 46-54; 5:1-47; 6:1-71).



Chapter 7 brought us to Jerusalem during the **Feast of Tabernacles**, where the division surrounding Jesus became impossible to ignore. Some believed He was the Christ; others called Him a deceiver; the religious leadership attempted to arrest Him; and even the officers sent to seize Him returned empty-handed, declaring, **“Never man spake like this man.”** On the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and offered **living water** to anyone who would come to Him and drink (John 7:2, 14, 32, 37-39, 40-46).

Introduction

The Feast of Tabernacles has just ended, but the confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees becomes **intensely personal**. John 8 opens with the dramatic account of the **woman taken in adultery** but quickly moves into one of the sharpest exchanges between Jesus and the religious leadership recorded anywhere in the Gospels. Jesus declares, **“I am the light of the world,”** and the chapter develops around a series of stark contrasts: **light and darkness, truth and falsehood, freedom and bondage, God and the devil, belief and unbelief**. But the chapter reaches its climax when Jesus makes the ultimate claim, declaring, **“Before Abraham was, I am.”**

At that moment the argument is no longer merely about whether Jesus is a prophet or even the Messiah; it is about **who He is eternally**—and His opponents understand the claim well enough to pick up stones (John 8:12, 24, 32, 36, 44, 56-59; Exod. 3:14).



John 8:1-2] *"Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them."*

The previous chapter ended with the striking statement, **"And every man went unto his own house,"** implying that **no one invited Jesus home with them.** Jesus instead withdrew to the Mount of Olives, a familiar place of retreat and prayer during His ministry in Jerusalem.

The expression translated **"early in the morning"** (*orthrou*) means **before sunrise**. The Feast had technically ended, yet pilgrims were apparently still present in Jerusalem. Jesus did not wait for the city to come alive; He was already returning to the Temple to teach. We see a developing theme of **Light**. Darkness is giving way to morning as the One who is literally the Light of the World enters the Temple.



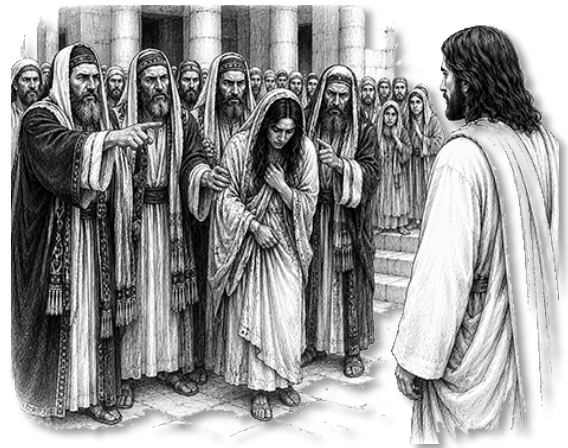
One detail can easily escape us here. Jesus **"...sat down and taught them."** Sitting was the recognized posture of an authoritative Jewish teacher. The Greek word translated "having sat down" (*kathisas*) tells us that it is the posture of teaching authority.



John 8:3-4] *"And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act."*

Jesus' peaceful morning teaching is suddenly interrupted when the scribes and Pharisees drag a woman into the middle of the gathering and publicly expose her adultery. We must notice that **their real target is not the woman—it is Jesus.**

There is an interesting detail unique to this passage. This is the only place in John's Gospel where the **scribes** are specifically mentioned. The scribes were professional students and copyists of the Law, making their participation especially significant; they knew precisely what the Mosaic Law required.



There is no indication that the woman's guilt was fabricated. But there is an enormous problem with their case. **Where is the man?** Adultery cannot be committed by one person. Under the Mosaic Law, **both participants were guilty** and subject to judgment (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22). The Pharisees are making her sin become a public spectacle.

The no-win scenario: The leaders believe they have engineered a situation from which Jesus cannot escape.

- ✓ **Reject Moses:** They can accuse Him of disregarding the Law.
- ✓ **Demand execution:** He collides with Roman authority.
- ✓ **Release her:** His reputation for righteousness can be attacked.



The larger pattern is important. **Their first trap failed, so they escalate.** This trap is particularly calculated because Jesus' enemies hope that whatever answer He gives will, in turn, give them grounds against Him.



John 8:5] *"Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?"*

Now the trap is sprung. Notice their strategy. **"Now Moses in the law commanded us..."** They are not asking Jesus whether adultery is sinful; they already know what the Law says. They deliberately place **Moses against Jesus**, hoping His answer will either undermine His authority or place Him in conflict with the Law.

But their appeal to Moses is selective. The Law did prescribe death for adultery, but it prescribed it for **both guilty parties**, not merely the woman (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22). Notice Lev. 20:10:

*"And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, **the adulterer and the adulteress** shall surely be put to death."*

That makes the missing man even more conspicuous. If she was caught "in the very act," then they knew his identity. Their own handling of the case already exposes that something is seriously wrong with their supposed concern for Moses' Law. And there was another requirement these men conveniently ignore: **a capital judgment required proper witnesses** (Deut. 17:6-7).

So this is not simply, *"Moses says stone her."* The system required **lawful accusation, adequate witnesses, proper judicial procedure, and accountability by the accusers themselves** (Deut. 17:6-7; 19:15).

Here is the heart of their trap: **"...but what sayest thou?"** They already know what Moses said. What they want is Jesus on record.

- **If He refuses the sentence** → They accuse Him of disregarding Moses.
- **If He approves the execution** → He creates a problem with Roman authority.
- **If He excuses adultery** → They attack His moral credibility.

Rome had deprived the Jewish authorities of the unrestricted right to carry out capital punishment, so they believed either answer would damage Him.

The entire maneuver in modern legal language is **entrapment**.



John 8:6] *"This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not."*

John now removes any doubt about what is happening: **the woman is the bait; Jesus is the target.** Rather than accept their carefully constructed dilemma, Jesus stoops down and begins writing on the ground with His finger. But why specifically mention **His finger**? Exodus 31:18 tells us that the law given to Moses was **"...written with the finger of God."**

The scribes are appealing to commandments written by the finger of God while standing before the incarnate God who wrote them. Moses received the Law; Jesus is **the Lawgiver** (Exod. 31:18; Jas. 4:12).



Jesus does not play their game. They demand an answer; He gives them silence.

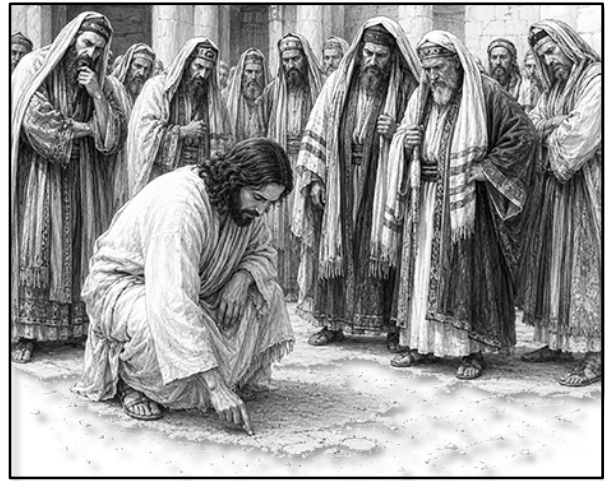


John 8:7-8] *“So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, **He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.** And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.”*

Jesus’ silence did not discourage them. They apparently interpreted it as hesitation and kept pressing their supposed advantage. Then Jesus rises. **“He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”**

Jesus does **not** say that adultery is unimportant. He does not repeal Moses, invalidate the Law, or declare the woman innocent. Instead, He forces the accusers to confront the very Law they are attempting to use against her.

Then Jesus does something fascinating. **“And again he stooped down...”** and **He writes again.**



This is a fascinating detail. God wrote the commandments on stone **twice**, because Moses broke the first tablets and a second set was given (Exod. 31:18; 32:19; 34:1, 28). Here in John 8, **Jesus also writes twice.**



But what Did Jesus Write? John never tells us, but this incident connects to two fascinating Old Testament passages:

“O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.” Jer. 17:13.

That verse is extraordinary in this setting. Those who forsake the LORD are **“written in the earth.”** And notice the final phrase: they have forsaken **“the LORD, the fountain of living waters.”** So Jeremiah connects both images now appearing in John's narrative: **writing in the earth and the fountain of living waters** (Jer. 17:13; John 7:37-38). Then, this brings in another passage:

“Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.” Ps. 90:8.

It is my opinion that Jesus was writing **the secret sins of the accusers**—things these men knew that Jesus could not possibly know by ordinary means. As they looked over His shoulder and recognized their own hidden sins appearing in the dust, their confidence would have evaporated. Again, John does not identify the writing, but their next actions fit the possibility:



John 8:9] *“And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.”*

The men who arrived publicly exposing the woman's sin now find **their own consciences exposed**, and they quietly leave the Temple one by one. The trap has completely reversed. They entered as **accusers**, confident that Jesus would have to answer them; they leave as men personally convicted under the searching authority of the One they attempted to judge. This also destroys the legal case against the woman.



John 8:10-11] *“When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”*

The accusers are gone, leaving the guilty woman alone with the only Person present who actually **is without sin**. Jesus does not deny her guilt or redefine adultery; instead, He demonstrates how **justice and mercy meet in Him**. The extraordinary result: a genuinely guilty sinner leaves the presence of Christ **uncondemned**, but not unchanged—**“go, and sin no more.”**

“Neither do I condemn thee...” This is one of the most remarkable declarations in the chapter. Jesus condemned the sin but accepted the sinner. He refuses to call adultery acceptable, yet neither does He treat the guilty woman as beyond redemption. That is the biblical order of salvation. We do not reform ourselves in order to earn God's acceptance; having received His grace, we are called to walk differently (Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 2:11-12).



The account of the woman taken in adultery, often called the **Pericope Adulterae**, is absent from some early Greek manuscripts, while other manuscripts include it here or place it elsewhere. I side with scholars who regard the passage as legitimate, noting that removing it raises questions about continuity. Augustine claimed that some earlier copyists deliberately removed the account because they feared Christ's mercy toward the adulterous woman might encourage sexual immorality. The episode was already known and cited in the early Church. Thus, while its manuscript placement has been debated, I accept the passage as genuine and most modern English Bibles preserve the account.



LESSON

John 8 gives us neither legalism nor permissiveness. Legalism says: **“Change, and perhaps God will accept you.”** Permissiveness says: **“God accepts you, therefore change is unnecessary.”** Jesus says neither. His order is: **“Neither do I condemn thee” → “Go, and sin no more.”** Grace removes condemnation and then produces a new direction (Rom. 8:1; 6:1-4).



John 8:12] *“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”*

This is the second of Jesus' great **“I AM” statements**. Jesus does not merely claim to *teach* the light or *point toward* the light—He declares, **“I am the light of the world.”** The Feast of Tabernacles has just ended. During the feast, enormous golden lampstands were erected in the Court of the Women in the Temple. When the feast ended, those lights went out. And Jesus stands in the Temple and announces: **“I am the light of the world.”** The ceremony was the illustration. **Christ is the reality.**



Old Testament Connection: { John 7 — **Water from the rock** → **“Living Water.”**
John 8 — **Pillar of fire** → **“Light of the World.”**

Paul supplies the astonishing identification concerning the wilderness Rock: **“and that Rock was Christ”** (1 Cor. 10:4). Likewise, with the **“...pillar of fire, to give them light...”** (Exod. 13:21), Jesus places Himself in the position occupied by the divine presence in the wilderness. John joins two of his foundational themes: **Life and Light**.



John 8:13-14] *"The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go."*



John 8:15-18] *"Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me."*

The Pharisees immediately challenge Jesus' declaration, **"I am the light of the world,"** on legal grounds: a man cannot establish his case merely by testifying about himself. The legal principle requires corroborating witnesses. They are essentially saying, *You have just made an enormous claim about Yourself, but You are Your own witness; therefore we are not obligated to accept it.*

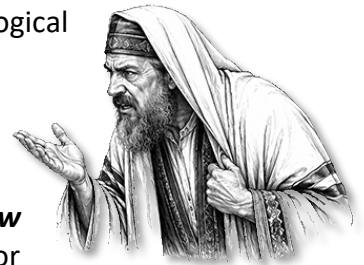
Jesus answers that His testimony is inherently true because He knows His heavenly origin and destination, while they judge only from the limited perspective of the flesh. Then He meets them on their own legal ground: **there are two witnesses—the Son and the Father who sent Him.**



John 8:19] *"Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also."*

The confrontation now becomes personal and is no longer a theological disagreement. When the Pharisees ask, **"Where is thy Father?"**

they are not innocently asking a question. The Pharisees are moving from challenging Jesus' testimony to attacking His birth and character, insinuating that His birth was illegitimate. Jesus ignores the insult and answers at the spiritual level: **"Ye neither know me, nor my Father..."** Jesus neither defends Mary's reputation nor



explains the Virgin Birth. He goes directly to the real issue: **You do not know God.** That is an astonishing indictment of men whose entire identity rested upon being Israel's religious authorities. They knew the Torah, the Temple ceremonies, the traditions, and the vocabulary of religion—but Jesus says plainly that they **did not know the Father** (John 5:37-40; 7:28-29).

Psalm 69 and the "Silent Years"

The question—**"Where is thy Father?"**—also directs us to an interesting aspect of Jesus' childhood. For that, we turn to **Psalm 69**, which offers remarkable glimpses into Christ's otherwise largely unrecorded childhood and young adulthood.



Psalm 69 is unmistakably Messianic, and even Jesus Himself applies Psalm 69:4 to Himself: **"They hated me without a cause,"** (Ps. 69:4; John 15:25). Then in Psalm 69 comes this fascinating verse: **"I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children."** (Ps. 69:8). Notice **"My mother's children,"** Not *my father's children.* Jesus' half-brothers and half-sisters were Mary's children through Joseph, but Joseph was **not Jesus' biological father.** We can therefore see Psalm 69:8 as another subtle fingerprint of the Virgin Birth (Matt. 1:18-25; 13:55-56; Mark 6:3).

Psalm 69 portrays rejection, shame, reproach, and alienation, leading him to suggest that Jesus' childhood in Nazareth may have been far more painful than the Gospel narratives explicitly describe (Ps. 69:7-12).

Think about what the Pharisees are doing in John 8.

The circumstances of Jesus' conception were apparently still being used against Him **thirty years later**. When they eventually say, "**We be not born of fornication**," the insult becomes unmistakable (John 8:41). Psalm 69 opens a window into those "silent years": the stigma surrounding Mary's pregnancy may have followed Jesus throughout His youth.

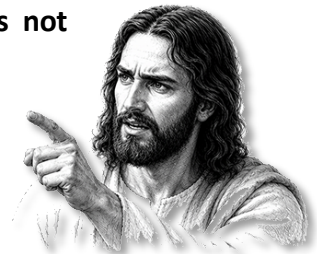
 **John 8:20]** *"These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come."*

John pauses the escalating argument to tell us **exactly where Jesus is teaching** and to emphasize again that His enemies remain unable to seize Him. The location—the Temple treasury in the Court of the Women—ties the entire chapter together: the adulterous woman, the great Temple lamps, and Jesus' declaration that He is the Light of the World all belong to this same setting. Most importantly, John repeats a theme we have already encountered: **Christ's enemies cannot act until God's appointed hour arrives**.

 **John 8:21-22]** *"Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come?"*

 **John 8:23-24]** *"And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."*

Jesus now presses the issue to its eternal consequence: **unbelief is not intellectually neutral—it leaves a person in his sins**. He is returning to the Father, but His opponents cannot follow because they belong to a fundamentally different realm: "**Ye are from beneath; I am from above**." The climax comes in verse 24: unless they believe that Jesus is "**I AM**," they will die in their sins.



There is a significant escalation from Chapter 7. Previously Jesus said, "**Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me**." Now He adds the terrible consequence: "**...and shall die in your sins**." (John 7:34). They cannot follow Him because unbelief separates them from the life He possesses and the Father to whom He returns. They claim relationship with God while rejecting the Son whom God sent. But **there is no route to the Father that bypasses Christ**. (John 5:23; 8:19; 14:6).

Still, they completely misunderstand Him, speculating, "**Will he kill himself?**" To the Jew, suicide brought damnation; therefore their insinuation is essentially: *Perhaps He intends to kill Himself and go somewhere so terrible that we cannot follow Him*. Their sarcasm unknowingly exposes how completely they have misunderstood both Jesus and their own spiritual condition.

 **John 8:25-26]** *"Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him."*

After Jesus warns that they will die in their sins unless they believe that He is **"I AM,"** His opponents respond with the fundamental question: **"Who art thou?"** Jesus' answer is essentially: "I have been telling you from the beginning." Jesus does not modify His claims as opposition increases; **His answer is always the same.** He consistently presents Himself as the Messiah, the Savior of the world, and in John repeatedly makes claims belonging to deity.



A practical question: **Can someone genuinely be saved on his deathbed?**

The short unequivocal answer: **Yes—if he receives the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.** Salvation rests upon Christ rather than upon how many years remain afterward to perform religious works. The thief beside Jesus provides the classic example: near the end of his life he turned to Christ and received the promise, **"To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."** (Luke 23:39-43; Eph. 2:8-9).

But I do believe that **a person can persistently reject Christ until his heart becomes hardened against the very truth he has repeatedly refused.** These Pharisaical leaders are a prime example—the more revelation they receive, the more determined their rejection becomes. That pattern runs throughout Scripture. Pharaoh repeatedly resisted God's revelation until his hardened heart became fixed in rebellion; Romans 1 likewise describes persistent rejection culminating in God **giving men over** to the course they have chosen. (Exod. 7:13-14; 8:15, 32; 9:12; Rom. 1:21-28).



John 8:27-28] *"They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."*

The religious leaders still fail to understand that Jesus is speaking of **the Father**, demonstrating exactly what He has just said: they are "from beneath" and cannot grasp heavenly things. He then points ahead to the event that will unmistakably expose His identity—the **Cross**. The phrase **"lifted up"** is the second of three deliberate references in John to the Crucifixion, while the title **"Son of man"** opens an important connection to Daniel 7 and Christ as our Kinsman-Redeemer.



- **John 3:14 — The Type** - Moses lifts the serpent.
- **John 8:28 — The Prediction** - The Son of Man will be lifted up.
- **John 12:32-33 — The Explanation** - John explains the lifting up as Christ's death.

What Moses enacted symbolically in the wilderness, Jesus fulfills historically at Calvary.



John 8:29] *"And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him."*

Jesus continues emphasizing His perfect unity with the Father: **He was sent by the Father, accompanied by the Father, and perfectly obedient to the Father.** The final statement is staggering—"I do always those things that please him." No ordinary human being could truthfully make that claim; it is a quiet but powerful testimony to the **absolute sinlessness of Christ.**

We routinely end the day remembering something we should have said differently, something we should not have done, or something good we failed to do. **Jesus never had such a day.**



John 8:30-32] *“As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*

Something remarkable happens in the middle of this increasingly hostile confrontation: Despite the Pharisees' hostility, Jesus' words are reaching others in the crowd. The more clearly He reveals His identity, the sharper the division becomes: some reject Him with increasing hostility while **many believe on Him**. (John 7:40-43; 8:24, 28-30).

Christ is showing believers the pathway into genuine discipleship: **remain in My Word**. He lays out a three-step progression: ① **Continue in My Word**. ② **You shall know the truth**. ③ **The truth shall make you free**.

People love quoting: **“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”** But Jesus begins with: **“If ye continue in my word...”** This truncated quotation appears on countless public and private buildings, but once the opening condition is removed, **the whole point is missed**. The verse is not primarily a tribute to academic freedom. It is a statement about **discipleship under the authority of Christ's Word**.



We live in an information culture with unprecedented access to facts, yet we are increasingly divided over whether objective truth even exists. Jesus gives a radically different sequence: **His Word → Truth → Freedom**. As AI, algorithms, media systems, and institutions become increasingly capable of shaping perceived reality, the believer's anchor becomes even more important: **“If ye continue in my word... ye shall know the truth.”** John 8:31-32; 17:17.



John 8:33] *“They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?”*

Jesus has just promised freedom through truth, and His hearers immediately object: **“We were never in bondage.”** This statement is astonishing because Israel's history was filled with foreign domination—and at that very moment Judea was under **Roman authority**. But their deeper blindness is spiritual: they interpret Jesus politically when He is talking about humanity's far more serious bondage to **sin**.



John 8:34-36] *“Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”*

The double **“Verily, verily”**—*amen, amen*—marks the statement with solemn authority. Jesus answers their claim, **“We were never in bondage,”** by identifying a slavery far deeper than Egyptian, Babylonian, or Roman domination. A person may possess political liberty while remaining completely enslaved spiritually.

Drugs, alcohol, sexual appetite, materialism, power—or any appetite permitted to rule—initially promise satisfaction and freedom but progressively increase their **demands**. Sin does not remain merely something a person **does**. Eventually, it becomes something that rules (Rom. 6:12-14, 16-18; 2 Pet. 2:19). Jesus then contrasts the insecure position of the slave (slave to sin) with the permanent position of the Son and declares that **true freedom comes only through Him**.

Free from what?

- ✓ **Condemnation and God's wrath** — Isa. 42:7; 60:1; Rom. 8:1.
- ✓ **The power of Satan** — Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13; Heb. 2:14-15.
- ✓ **The bondage of sin** — Rom. 6:14, 18.
- ✓ **Human spiritual domination—free to serve God** — Gal. 4:8-9; 5:1; Col. 2:20-22; 1 Cor. 7:22; Rom. 6:16-18, 22.

Slave of sin → liberated by Christ → brought into God's family → free to serve God.

Jesus' statement does not mean the believer becomes incapable of committing sin. The freedom Christ gives is freedom from **sin as ruling master**. Paul states it precisely: ***"For sin shall not have dominion over you."*** Rom. 6:14. The Christian still battles sin, but he no longer belongs to it.



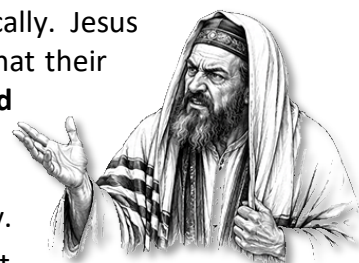
John 8:37-38] *"I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father."*

Jesus now begins to dismantle the Pharisees' confidence in their **physical descent from Abraham**. He acknowledges the biological fact—*"ye are Abraham's seed"*—but immediately exposes the contradiction: Abraham's true children would receive God's Word, while these men are seeking to kill the One sent by God. The argument is moving toward an increasingly sharp distinction between **physical ancestry and spiritual parentage**. The irony is profound: **Abraham believed God's Word. His descendants reject the Word made flesh.**



John 8:39-41] *"They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God."*

The argument over spiritual parentage now sharpens dramatically. Jesus acknowledges their physical descent from Abraham but denies that their behavior reflects Abraham's character: **Abraham believed God and welcomed divine revelation; these men seek to kill the One who speaks God's truth.** Jesus is systematically leading them to a conclusion they do not want to hear. Then the exchange turns ugly.



"We be not born of fornication..." Again, a deliberate slur against Jesus' birth. They are effectively saying, *We know who our father is. Can You say the same?*



Jesus exposes the weakness of **inherited religion**: ancestry, tradition, institutions, and religious labels cannot substitute for **personal faith in God and reception of His Son**. As ironic as it sounds, a culture can retain Christian vocabulary and historical identity while progressively rejecting the Christ around whom that heritage was built. John 8 gives the diagnostic test: not *"What religion do we claim?"* but ***"How do we respond to Christ and His Word?"*** (John 8:31, 39-42.)

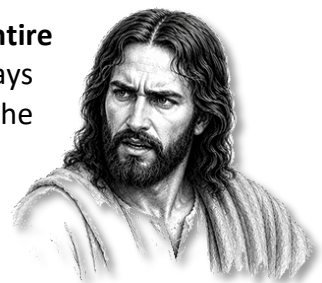


John 8:42-43] *"Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word."*



John 8:44] *“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”*

Jesus now identifies the **spiritual conflict beneath the entire confrontation**. His opponents claim God as their Father, but Jesus says their rejection of Him proves otherwise: if they truly belonged to the Father, they would love the Son whom the Father sent.



Now Jesus finally identifies the Pharisees' father, whom He has been referring to since verse 38, and this is one of the strongest statements Christ makes to the religious establishment: **“Your father [is] the devil.”** Jesus always divides humanity spiritually into **two families**—the children of God and the children of Satan. Children reproduce the characteristics of their father, and these men reproduce the desires of **their father, the devil**. Jesus now gives us one of Scripture's clearest descriptions of Satan:

- ✓ He is a murderer → The murderous pattern appears immediately after the Fall.
- ✓ Satan abandoned truth → The originator of the lie.

Satan's main weapon is not merely overt wickedness; it is **deception**. It is the

Satan	Christ
Satan → murder and death.	Christ → life.
Satan → Lies → Bondage.	Christ's Word → Truth → Freedom.

construction of falsehood that masquerades as truth (Gen. 3:1-5; 2 Cor. 11:3, 13-15; Rev. 12:9.)

A huge problem we see in our society today is that a sufficiently large falsehood, repeatedly asserted, can eventually become accepted as truth within a society. That principle is operating powerfully in politics, culture, science and public discourse.



John 8:44 may be one of the most important passages for understanding an age dominated by information warfare, algorithmic narratives, synthetic media, propaganda, and realistic artificial intelligence (AI) content. Satan's ancient strategy remains unchanged: **challenge God's Word, replace truth with a counterfeit reality, and repeat the deception until it becomes culturally normal**. The believer's defense is exactly what Jesus gave earlier in this chapter—**“continue in my word”**—because the contest between truth and deception ultimately remains spiritual. The indwelling spirit will direct you to truth, regardless of the technological deception. (Gen. 3:1-5; John 8:31-32, 44; 17:17; Rev. 12:9).



John 8:45-47] *“And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”*

Jesus now brings the conflict over **truth and spiritual parentage** to its conclusion. The remarkable charge is that they reject Him **because He tells them the truth**, and He then issues a challenge none of His enemies can answer: **“Which of you convinceth me of sin?”**

From approximately verse 40 onward, Jesus' enemies are intensely hostile and looking for anything they can use against Him. Yet when Christ openly challenges them to produce evidence of sin, **they have nothing**. Later they will resort to false witnesses because legitimate evidence simply does not exist.



There is an important lesson here for Christian witness. We sometimes assume that if truth is explained clearly enough, everyone will accept it. Jesus Himself disproves that assumption. No one ever spoke truth more perfectly, lived more consistently, or presented God's revelation more accurately—and still many rejected Him. John 8:45-47. Faithfulness therefore cannot be measured simply by **whether people agree with us**. Our responsibility is to speak God's truth faithfully; the hearer's response reveals something about the condition of the heart (Ezek. 2:5-7; 2 Tim. 4:2-4).



John 8:48-50] *"Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth."*

"If facts and logic don't work: resort to ridicule." Their argument has deteriorated from theological debate into name-calling. They call Him a Samaritan and accuse Him of being demon-possessed—two deeply contemptuous insults in their setting.

Jesus does not return insult for insult. He simply denies the accusation, saying, **"I have not a devil."** He immediately brings the discussion back to His relationship with the Father. **"I honour my Father and ye do dishonour me."** These men claim to honor God while deliberately dishonoring His Son. Their insult against Christ therefore exposes the falseness of their claim to know and honor God.



John 8:51-53] *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?"*

Again we encounter Jesus' distinctive **"Verily, verily"**—*amen, amen*. What follows carries His personal divine authority. Then Jesus makes another staggering claim: **the one who keeps His word "shall never see death."** His opponents interpret Him entirely on the physical level and believe He is saying that believers will never experience **physical death**.

The Pharisees counter that statement immediately and point to Abraham and the prophets, all of whom died. Abraham died. The prophets died. Therefore, anyone claiming that His Word can prevent death must, in their reasoning, be deranged or demonically influenced. They hear **eternal life** and think only of **physical mortality**. But they miss the distinction between **physical death and spiritual life**.



John 8:54] *"Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:"*



John 8:55] *“Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.”*



John 8:56-57] *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?”*

The confrontation now races toward its climax. Jesus refuses to glorify Himself and points instead to the Father—the very God His opponents claim as their own—then declares that **they do not actually know Him**. Finally Jesus makes the extraordinary statement that **Abraham rejoiced to see His day, saw it, and was glad**, prompting the incredulous response, **“Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?”**

When did Abraham see Christ's day? There are seven possibilities:

1

Abraham in Paradise (Luke 16:22–31): Jesus Himself portrays Abraham conscious in Abraham's bosom, aware of events involving those who had lived after him. It is possible that Abraham saw Christ's day from Paradise.

2

Between the Cross and Resurrection: An ancient tradition preserved in writings such as the *Gospel of Nicodemus/Acts of Pilate* concerning Christ's proclamation to the departed. The canonical connection is Peter's statement that Christ “went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” (1 Pet. 3:18-20; 4:6).

3

Abraham Saw Christ's Day in the Promise that God told Abraham: “And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 12:3). That promise ultimately points to Christ. Paul explicitly interprets the Abrahamic promise Messianically: “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham...” Gal. 3:8, 16. Notice Paul's language: The Gospel was preached beforehand to Abraham.

4

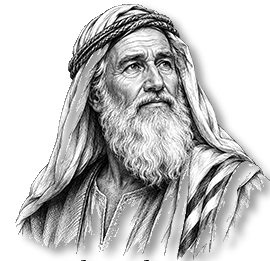
Abraham Saw the Prophetic Program — Genesis 15: In Abraham's remarkable covenant experience in Genesis 15, God gives Abraham a prophetic panorama involving his descendants, their affliction, their deliverance, and their inheritance of the land (Gen. 15:8-21). Abraham was therefore given a supernatural view into future redemptive history, showing him what would happen to his descendants and God's covenant program after him (Gen. 15:13-18).

5

The Promise of Isaac — Genesis 17: The promised birth of Isaac. Gen. 17:15-19. Abraham was nearly one hundred years old when God announced that Sarah would bear the covenant son. Paul later uses Abraham's faith in this impossible birth as a model of saving faith and resurrection confidence (Rom. 4:17-22).

6

The Theophany of Genesis 18: Another fascinating possibility: Abraham may literally have encountered the preincarnate Christ. Genesis 18 begins: “And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre...” Gen. 18:1. Three visitors appear, yet the narrative repeatedly identifies one of them as YHWH. Abraham speaks directly with Him concerning the promised son and later intercedes concerning Sodom (Gen. 18:1-33). This is a classic Christophany—an Old Testament appearance of the preincarnate Christ.



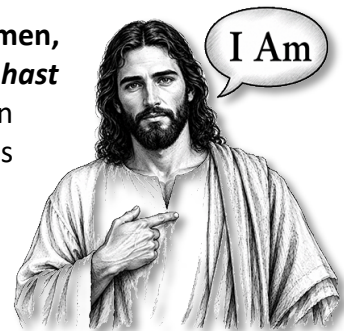
Abraham

7 Mount Moriah — Genesis 22: This is perhaps the richest connection of all. God commands Abraham: *“Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest...”* Gen. 22:2. This is the first occurrence of “love” in Scripture, and remarkably it concerns the love of a father for his son. Abraham was willing to offer Isaac because he was: *“Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead...”* Heb. 11:19. Why? Because God's covenant promises depended upon Isaac. Abraham reasoned that if God required Isaac's death, God would have to raise him in order to keep His Word. Gen. 17:19; 21:12; Heb. 11:17-19. So Genesis 22 contains not merely sacrifice but a prophetic shadow of: **Father → Son → Sacrifice → Resurrection.**



John 8:58] *“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”*

Once again Jesus introduces the declaration with the solemn **“Amen, amen.”** The leaders had asked: **“Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?”** This is the **“grand finale”** of this confrontation as Jesus answers, **“Before Abraham was, I AM.”** He deliberately uses the divine designation **“I AM”** (*egō eimi*), identifying Himself with the eternal God revealed to Moses. The reaction from the religious leaders proves that His opponents understood exactly what He meant: **Jesus has openly claimed deity.**



John 8:59] *“Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.”*

The response to Jesus' declaration **“Before Abraham was, I AM”** is immediate. No one asks Jesus to clarify what He means by **“I AM”**; instead, they pick up stones to kill Him. Their reaction is itself evidence that **they understood His claim perfectly**—they believed He had committed blasphemy by identifying Himself with God. Yet they cannot kill Him, because His death will occur only at the Father's appointed hour and in the Father's appointed manner.

The confrontation has therefore completed its progression:

Questioning → contradiction → ridicule → accusation → attempted murder.

John 8 leaves no comfortable middle ground concerning Jesus. ✓ He has claimed heavenly origin (John 8:23). ✓ He has claimed authority over eternal death (John 8:51). ✓ He has claimed existence before Abraham (John 8:56-58). ✓ And He has taken the divine **“I AM”** upon Himself (John 8:58). Therefore, it ends with the personal question for each person: **“Whose child are you?”** Jesus always divides humanity spiritually into **two families**—the children of God and the children of Satan. John's Gospel is not merely asking us to admire Jesus. It demands a verdict concerning **His identity**.

Next Lesson: Read John Chapter 9. The healing of the blind man. We will look at why Christians have trials.



Lesson materials can be found at:
www.TrustingInGrace.com

