

## Lesson 30 – During Late Summer of 29 AD

In lesson 29 we followed Jesus south through Galilee after he had come down from the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. Hermon). He had evidently stopped in Nazareth where his brothers were leaving to go to the Feast of Tabernacles. He did not accompany them but waited until they left and went down a back route through Samaria to Jerusalem where He arrived unexpectedly and began teaching. This lesson begins when it was the eighth day of the Feast. It was 29 AD. In that year, the eighth day was on Tuesday. It was the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of Tishri by the Jewish Calendar. It was the 16<sup>th</sup> day of October by the modern Gregorian Calendar. It was just a few days under six months until His crucifixion.

**John 7:37a** **On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood**

The Psalm of that last day in 29 AD according to Edersheim was Psalms 82. In verse 5 through 8 it says: “They know nothing, they understand nothing. They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. I said, ‘You are ‘gods’; you are all sons of the Most High.’ But you will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler. Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations are your inheritance.”

This was the Psalm of Asaph which despaired at the fact that Solomon had proved to be a false Messiah.

At the time Jesus stood up to speak the people would have just finished singing Psalms 118 which we studied last week. It included verses 25-29 which said “O LORD, save us now (Hosanna); O LORD, grant us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you. The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine upon us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.”

This was what the crowd would sing on Palm Sunday when they would welcome Him into Jerusalem four days before their leaders had Him crucified.

**John 7:37b** **and said in a loud voice,**

This proclamation fulfilled the prophecy of the Messianic Psalm 40:

Psalms 40:9a “I proclaim righteousness in the great assembly.”

This was the “great assembly” that the Psalm had talked about. It is likely that Jesus stood up in one of the great plazas on either side of the Temple (*see picture of model Temple on page 20*). That location would have given Him the largest audience. It would have been filled with worshippers who had come for the Feast.

John 7:37c **“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.**

This was probably the most dramatic moment of Jesus’ teaching ministry to the Jews. It was similar to the bread of life message in John 6:35-58, but more dramatic in that it was delivered in the Temple Courts during the Feast of Tabernacles. It was paraphrasing Isaiah 55:

Isaiah 55:1-5 “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David (*the promise of David’s greater son – the Messiah*). See, I have made him (*David’s greater son*) a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples. Surely you will summon nations (*the יֵאֱלֹהִים {gō’-ē} Gentiles*) you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.”

Jesus continued:

John 7:38 **“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” NAS**

The Holy Spirit had always been given to believers in the Old Testament as a guide as promised in:

Isaiah 58:11 “The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.”

Jeremiah 17:7-13 which concludes with “O LORD, the hope of Israel, all who forsake you will be put to shame. Those who turn away from you will be written in the dust because they have forsaken the LORD, the spring of living water.”

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit had ministered from outside of the believer. However, the Holy Spirit had been promised for the age to come in a different way. In that time the Holy Spirit would be within the believer:

Isaiah 44:3 “For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I **will** pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.

Joel 2:28-29 “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

In the age to come the Holy Spirit would be part of the believer and inside of them. He would be a guide as before, but also He would be a seal certifying the believer’s salvation and their permanent access to the spiritual River of Life which flows from the throne of God and the foot of the Cross.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 “Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts **as a deposit**, guaranteeing what is to come.”

Ephesians 1:13-14 “And you also were included **in Christ** when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, **you were marked in him with a seal**, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a **deposit guaranteeing our inheritance** until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.”

Ephesians 4:30 “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom **you were sealed** unto the day of redemption.”

Jesus continued:

**John 7:39** **By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.**

Until Jesus Christ had died for our sins and had risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, the Spirit could not take up His new place of residence in our innermost being. Up until then the Holy Spirit could empower, but the Holy Spirit could not indwell.

**John 7:40** **On hearing his words, some of the people said, “Surely this man is the Prophet.”**

Some recognized Jesus as “the Prophet” who had been promised to Moses as we studied last time.

**John 7:41a** **Others said, “He is the Christ.”**

Others recognized Jesus as “the Christ.” Christ is the Greek for the Hebrew word “Messiah.” The Messiah had been promised to David in Psalms:

Psalms 132:17 “Here (*Mt. Zion in Jerusalem*) I will make a horn (*power*) grow for David and set up a lamp for my anointed one (*Messiah*).”

The time of the Messiah had been prophesied to Daniel as coming during that 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD generation, or 483 years from the rebuilding Jerusalem with “streets and a trench (moat).”

Daniel 9:25-26a “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One (*the Messiah*), the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens’ (483 years). It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing (*the Crucifixion*).”

**John 7:41b Still others asked, “How can the Christ come from Galilee?”**

In fact, the Scripture had taught that Christ would begin His ministry in Galilee:

Isaiah 9:1-2 “Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan-- The people walking in darkness have seen <sup>1</sup> a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”

**John 7:42 Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David’s family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?”**

Of course, we know from Matthew and Luke that Jesus had been born in Bethlehem and was directly related to David from both His legal father’s side and His biological mother’s side as the genealogies in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38 attest. Evidently, at that time, Jesus’ birthplace and lineage was not widely known. The priests who were keepers of the Jews’ genealogical records in the Temple could have attested to it, but they were hardly likely to advertise it. Jesus was not going to proclaim it until He was ready to publicly declare that He was the Messiah. He did not make that public declaration until the day of His trial and crucifixion.

**John 7:43-44 Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.**

Some were seriously considering that Jesus might be the Messiah. Some were at least asking questions to which there were positive answers. Others had already hardened their hearts against the truth. However, those who wanted to seize Jesus were restrained, possibly by the fear of the crowd. Riots during the Feasts were not uncommon. At any rate it was not God’s

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<sup>1</sup> Notice that something that would not happen for 700 years was spoken of in the past perfect tense - “have seen.” This is a common device in Old Testament prophecy. The LORD sees the future the same as the past. He created time just as He created space.

plan for Jesus to be arrested until the day of the Passover. Only on that day did God give them the power to arrest Jesus:

John 19:10b-11a “Pilate said. ‘Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?’ Jesus answered, ‘You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above.’”

**John 7:45 Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests (*high priests*)<sup>2</sup> and Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn’t you bring him in?”**

The Temple Guards had been dispatched to arrest Jesus even before He stood up to speak. When they returned empty handed, even after they knew exactly where to arrest Him, the Jewish leaders were exasperated. In the time of David, the Temple Guard had been called the Gatekeepers. They were traditionally from among the clans of the Levites (1 Chronicles 15:17-18).

**John 7:46 “No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards declared.**

Evidently the Holy Spirit had gripped the hearts of these men in such a powerful way that they could not bring themselves to proceed with their mission.

**John 7:47 “You mean he has deceived you also?” the Pharisees retorted.**

The High Priests were both Sadducees. They regarded the Scripture as little more than cultural myths to be followed or not as was convenient. The Pharisees were supposed to be the defenders of the Scripture as the Word of God. They were the ones who were outraged that Jesus’ preaching had touched the hearts of the Temple Guard.

**John 7:48-49a “Has any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? No!**

We know that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea,<sup>3</sup> who were “rulers” as members of the Sanhedrim,<sup>4</sup> had believed in Jesus. However, they had evidently concealed it to that point in fear of the others in that body.

**John 7:49b But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them.”**

The Pharisees even condemned the whole crowd gathered in the Temple because they had allowed Jesus to finish speaking. They were actually afraid of the effect Jesus’ preaching

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<sup>2</sup> *The two living High Priests at that time were Annas and his son-in-law Caiaphas.*

<sup>3</sup> *Mark 15:43 “Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God.”*

<sup>4</sup> *They were also probably Pharisees.*

seemed to have on the crowds. That was why, six months later, they had Jesus arrested, tried, and sentenced in secret from that “mob.”

**John 7:50-51 Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, “Does our law condemn anyone without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?”**

Nicodemus had heard Jesus’ presentation of the Gospel two and a half years earlier, which was recorded in John 3. He had evidently believed sometime in that time span. Although he didn’t confess to that faith, he appealed to them to follow the instructions of Deuteronomy 18:20-22 for determining if Jesus was “the Prophet.”

**John 7:52 They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.” ---**

However, they weren’t interested in hearing Jesus out in a public forum. They had already discovered that His knowledge of Scripture was far greater than theirs. Hence, they were determined to kill Him.

**John 7:53 Then each went to his own home.**

They went home frustrated.

### **The Next Day after the Great Assembly - Wednesday 10/23/29 AD**

Although the Codex Sinaiticus manuscript does not have John 7:53-8:11, it seems clear to me that it was part of the original Gospel of John as presented in the Textus Receptus. As related by the church historian, Eusebius (260-339 AD), there was, in his possession, an account written by Papias (cc. 70-155 AD). Papias had written of the story of the woman taken in adultery which was to be found in what was called, in his time, the Gospel according to the Hebrews. Today, we know it as the Gospel of John. Papias is said to have been a friend of the Apostle John himself. This probably accounts for the fact he called it the Gospel of the Hebrews, bowing to John’s obvious wish to remain unrecognized (he never named his own name once in the scriptures, or even the name of his brother James). Since the manuscript that Papias was familiar with would have been a much earlier manuscript of John (by several centuries) than any we have access to now, I would take this to be sufficient authority to verify that this passage was in the original Gospel of John. The account is found in the Eusebius’ Fragments of Papias VI: “And he (Papias) also gives another story of a woman who was accused of many sins before the Lord, which is to be found in the Gospel according to the Hebrews.”

This passage was evidently omitted from the Codex Sinaiticus because of a careless copyist. Certainly, there is evidence in the Codex Sinaiticus of many other omissions which account for

almost all of its differences with the Textus Receptus. Below is the scripture which was mistakenly omitted in the Codex Sinaiticus but is correctly included in the Textus Receptus:

**John 8:1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.**

The Mount of Olives was the location where most of the pilgrims camped during the Feasts in Jerusalem. It was close to the Temple, just east, across the Kidron Valley.

**John 8:2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts,<sup>5</sup> where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them.**

There wouldn't have been as great a crowd that day because the Feast was over and many of them would have returned to their homes. However, it is likely that many of them that stayed had stayed to hear more from Jesus.

**John 8:3a The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery.**

This whole scene has the smell of a set-up. For one thing, adultery requires two people. We have to ask: Where was the man?



## What the Temple Courts Looked Like

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<sup>5</sup> See picture below.

**John 8:3b They made her stand before the group**

They obviously rudely interrupted Jesus' lesson to drag this woman between Jesus and the group He was teaching.

**John 8:4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery.**

Adultery was defined by the Law of Moses as unmarried sex between a man and a married (or engaged) woman. Thus, we can surmise that this woman was married.

**John 8:5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?"**

They were correctly interpreting punishment required by the Law as set down in Leviticus and Deuteronomy.<sup>6</sup>

**John 8:6a They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.**

The Jews only intention was to embarrass or trap Jesus. Some things to consider:

1. This was not a trial. Trials were conducted with judges, witnesses, a prosecution, and a defense. There was none of that here.
2. The Pharisees were not going to begin to concede that Jesus had the authority to sit in the Judge's seat. However, they were obviously hoping that, at this question, He would assume that authority and deliver a verdict. It would have been grounds to accuse Jesus before Pilate.
3. In Jerusalem, no one had the authority to put a person to death except the Romans.
4. To have executed anyone on the Temple Mount would have been considered sacrilege.
5. Where was the man in this case of adultery?
6. It is more than likely that the woman the Pharisees found to accuse was one of Jesus' followers. That would have put Jesus' response to the accusation even more tricky.

**John 8:6b But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.**

There have been many interpretations of what this unusual action signified. I will give you mine. Jesus' finger writing on the floor of that building where they were about to reject Him reminded me of another time a visible finger of God wrote. I think both times the writing was the same. The other time is in the Book of Daniel during a feast of the Babylonians who were close to receiving the judgment of the LORD:

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<sup>6</sup> *Leviticus 20:10 "If a man commits adultery with another man's wife--with the wife of his neighbor--both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death."*

*Deuteronomy 22:22 "If a man is found sleeping with another man's wife, both the man who slept with her and the woman must die."*

Daniel 5:5-6 “Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way.”

Finally, the prophet Daniel was found to interpret the writing:

Daniel 5:25-28 “This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN ‘This is what these words mean: Mene: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. Tekel: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. Peres: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians (*given away*).”

**John 8:7** **When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.”**

By this, Jesus made it clear that He knew what was really going on. This was not a trial; it was their act of personal judgment. As such, Jesus gave the Divine standard by which one individual is entitled to judge another individual.

**John 8:8** **Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.**

I believe that Jesus then completed writing down the judgment which would fall on the Jews in forty years. It is never disclosed what He actually wrote. He did prophesy that destruction of the Jews publicly the day He entered Jerusalem six months later.<sup>7</sup>

**John 8:9** **At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.**

By the words “those who heard,” I take it to mean those who were of the party that had brought the woman before Jesus and had accused her. They were the ones who had crowded close to make their accusations and were in a position to hear what the stooping Jesus spoke. This wasn’t meant to include the whole audience that had been there before. It only included those who had been involved in trying to get Jesus to make a false step. They left the woman standing there between Jesus and his audience.

**John 8:10** **Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”**

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<sup>7</sup> *Luke 19:43-44 “The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you, and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”*

The Pharisees had only publicly accused the woman, they had never condemned her. They had hoped Jesus would do that.

John 8:11a **“No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared.**

The phrase “Neither do I” contrasts Jesus, the one person there who was qualified to judge and condemn, against all the rest. Jesus had not come to condemn:

John 3:17 “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world <sup>8</sup> through him.”

John 8:11b **“Go now and leave your life of sin.” -----**

The LORD always wants us to leave off sinning, not for His benefit, but for ours. The things He tells us not to do are self-destructive.

John 8:12a **When Jesus spoke again to the people,**

This makes it clear that Jesus’ original audience was still in front of Him.

John 8:12b **he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”**

Physical light is the means by which we can see to walk toward our goal past the pitfalls and barriers in the physical world. Jesus is the spiritual light who can lead us through this dark world to the LORD’s Kingdom. Jesus was often compared to the light in John’s Gospel from the very beginning:

John 1:4-9 “In him (*Jesus*) was life, and **that life was the light of men**. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John (*the Baptist*). He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man <sup>9</sup> was coming into the world.”

John 8:13 **The Pharisees challenged him, “Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.”**

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<sup>8</sup> Notice that contrary to one of the tenets of Calvinism, namely, limited atonement, Jesus came to save the whole world, not just a part of the world that He predestined apart from the exercise of their free will.

<sup>9</sup> This speaks of the unlimited availability of God’s salvation.

Evidently these were other Pharisees than the ones who had gone away. These Pharisees were trying to confuse the issue. The last time Jesus had been in Jerusalem (recorded in John 5) Jesus had undergone what amounted to an informal judicial inquiry after the healing of the cripple at the Pool of Bethesda. At that time Jesus had been responding to an inquiry as to where He derived His authority to teach. At that time, He agreed that His testimony had to fall under the rules of judicial evidence prescribed by the Mosaic Law. Under those rules He couldn't testify on His own behalf. However, this was a different occasion. Here He had been preaching to the multitude. The Jews here were trying to irrationally extend His preaching into being judicial testimony. They seemed to be trying to use the context of the previous "pseudo-trial" of the woman taken in adultery.

**John 8:14** **Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going.**

Jesus was not agreeing that He had been testifying rather than preaching, but rather that even if He had been testifying, His testimony was still valid because He was the only one in position to know the real truth of the matter.

**John 8:15** **You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one.**

While they were judging Him by human standards, He asserted again that He was not there at that time to judge them. He would judge the whole world at another time.

**John 8:16** **But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me.**

When He did judge them, He would judge righteously. His would be the judgment which would be the judgment of the all-knowing LORD. That judgment will come at the end of the Millennium and is described in Revelation:

Revelation 20:11-12 "Then I saw a great white throne <sup>10</sup> and him who was seated on it. Earth and ~~sky~~ *heaven* fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to ~~what he had done~~ *their works*.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Remember that white stands for the purity and holiness of God. In front of this purity the unregenerate world stands condemned. Believers on the other hand, stand in robes of purest white which stand for Christ's righteousness. Those robes have been given to all believers.

**John 8:17 In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid.**

This refers to Deuteronomy 19:15 “One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”

**John 8:18a I am one who testifies for myself;**

Jesus was the first witness. He had testified by His works and life. By His life and works He had fulfilled the qualifications of being “the Prophet.” He had used those things as the testimony He had sent back to John the Baptist (Luke 7:22-23).

**John 8:18b my other witness is the Father, who sent me.”<sup>12</sup>**

God the Father was the second witness. Part of His witness from the Father was the prophecies of the Word of God which He had fulfilled. Another part of his witness from the Father was that twice the Father had spoken from heaven and said of Him “This is my son.” The first time was at His baptism by John and the second time had been on the Mt. of Transfiguration.

**John 8:19 Then they asked him, “Where is your father?” “You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”<sup>13</sup>**

We must understand that these were not well meaning or sincere seekers of God who were just confused. They did not know God or seek to know God. They were using the Jewish religion as a path to power or prestige, but not to God. That is still common in the Church today.

**John 8:20 He spoke these words while teaching in the temple area near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his time had not yet come.**

This makes clear that Jesus was speaking openly only a few feet from dozens of Temple guards who were on duty to protect the Temple offerings. Edersheim points out that this occurred in

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<sup>11</sup> The Greek here is τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν which is literally “the works of them.” The book of works cannot contain a list of sins, because Jesus Christ died for the sins of the whole world, and they are no longer an issue.

<sup>12</sup> In this Jesus referred to His previous answer at His earlier “trial.” John 5:36 “I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me.” So, Jesus does not contradict Himself, but He does set aside the contradiction of logic by the Pharisees.

<sup>13</sup> Again, this is a repetition of what Jesus said in John 5:37b-38 “You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent.”

“the Treasury,” where usually only the Pharisees, or the members of the Sanhedrin, would venture to speak.<sup>14</sup> In spite of the Temple Guards, no one could or would arrest Him.

**John 8:21** **Once more Jesus said to them, “I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come.”**

He repeated His warning to them from John 7:34. When Jesus said they would look for Him, He probably meant it in the sense that they would keep looking for their Messiah, but never find Him because He had already come and they had rejected Him. When they died that would be the one “sin” that for which they would be condemned.

**John 8:22** **This made the Jews ask, “Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, ‘Where I go, you cannot come’?”**

A few days before, when Jesus had said ‘Where I go, you cannot come’ the Jewish leaders had retorted by saying Jesus must mean that He would go to the Jews scattered among the Gentiles. Now they mockingly wondered if He meant to kill Himself.

**John 8:23** **But he continued, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.**

Jesus ignored the insult with a condemnation of them as worldly. How could they understand Jesus who was not of this world?

**John 8:24** **I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I *am* the I am ~~{the one I claim to be}~~, you will indeed die in your sins.” RST**

Their attitude confirmed them in their unbelief. There is only one sin for which Jesus didn’t die. It was the sin of unbelief and they seemed destined to die in that sin.

The words that the NIV has translated “I am the one I claim to be,” is mistranslated. In the Greek it is only two words - ἐγὼ εἰμί {e-gō' ā-mē'}. Literally this means “I *am the* I am.” This was the Greek translation of the name that the LORD had given to Moses at the “burning acacia tree”<sup>15</sup> in Exodus 3:14-15. In the Old Testament it is translated “LORD.” It is sometimes transliterated as “Jehovah.” Jesus was saying that they needed to believe that He was the LORD of the Exodus. This phrase, “I *am the* I am,” will show up again when Jesus was arrested in the Garden.

**John 8:25a** **“Who are you?” they asked.**

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<sup>14</sup> *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah - the Descent, Chapter 8, Edersheim.*

<sup>15</sup> *Erroneously called the “burning bush.”*

I think this was meant to imply “Who are you claiming to be?”

John 8:25b **“Just what I have been claiming all along,”<sup>16</sup> Jesus replied.**

Jesus reminded them that, the previous time He had been in Jerusalem, He had said that the Son of Man, who was also the Son of God, would have power to judge:

John 5:25-27a “I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.”

John 8:26a **“I have much to say in judgment of you.**

As Jesus had told them in John 5, He would be their Judge at a future time. However, at this time His message was salvation. John 3:17 “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”

John 8:26b **but the one who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.” NRSV**

His judgment would come later (after His Second Advent). In His First Advent His mission was to present and declare God’s truth and reveal the love of God. He would later say of the truth: John 14:6b “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

John 8:27 **They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father.**

They did not understand that He was saying the Father sent Him. Perhaps they thought He was speaking of John the Baptist.

John 8:28-29 **So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I ~~am~~ [the one I claim to be] I am the I am<sup>17</sup> and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.”**

The NIV made the same mistake here as they made in verse 24. Jesus was saying that after His crucifixion they would have no reason to doubt that He was the great “I am” and that He was revealing, in Himself, the person of the Father.

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<sup>16</sup> That is by fulfilling the prophecies of scripture through His life and works.

<sup>17</sup> In the Greek it is only two words - ἐγὼ εἰμί {e-gō' ā-mē'}. Literally this means “I–the I am.”

**John 8:30 Even as he spoke, many put their faith in him.**

By God's grace, the Word and the Holy Spirit moved powerfully in that crowd and many believed in Him.

**John 8:31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.**

The evidence of real faith is always fruit as per John 15:8 "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

**John 8:32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."**

If they held to the teaching of Christ, the Living Word, they would see the world truly through the eyes of faith and that would set them free from the tyranny of the world, of sin, and of self.

**John 8:33 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"**

The "they" here were the Jewish leaders who had not believed in Jesus. They were insulted by Jesus' implication that they were not free. Their recorded statement was absurd. They had been slaves of the Egyptians, the Babylonians, and were now subject to the Romans. Perhaps they were trying to provoke Him into mentioning the domination of the Romans. They could then have used that as a pretext to accuse Him before the Romans of stirring up civil unrest.

**John 8:34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.**

Again, Jesus ignored their lie and stuck to the real issue, which was their spiritual slavery, not their political slavery.

**John 8:35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever.**

The Jews commonly believed that because they were part of God's "chosen" people they were automatically saved. They also believed that the Gentiles were "not chosen" and were thus automatically lost. This was particularly the predominant belief among the Pharisees. John the Baptist had warned them about the fallacy of this view:

Matthew 3:8-10 "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

**John 8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.**

They were born as slaves of sin. To be a part of the family of God, the Son of God had to set them free.

**John 8:37 I know you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word.**

He pointed out the discrepancy between their claim to be related to God and their actions.

**John 8:38 I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence, and you do what you have heard from your father.”**

Jesus implied that although they were Jews, they were actually part of a different family. Their spiritual “father” was one who would always be the “adversary” of the Word of God. Paul later explained the concept that Abraham’s true children are children through faith:

Romans 4:11b-12 “So then, he (Abraham) is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.”

**John 8:39 “Abraham is our father,” they answered. “If you were Abraham’s children,” said Jesus, “then you would do the things Abraham did.**

They didn’t get Jesus’ implication that being the physical descendants of Abraham wasn’t important and that what mattered was of whom they were the spiritual descendants. If they had been the spiritual descendants of Abraham, they would have followed his spiritual example. His spiritual example was recorded in Genesis:

Genesis 15:6 “Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”

**John 8:40 As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things.**

The fact that they were determined to kill Jesus for explaining the truth of their own scriptures proved that they were not the spiritual descendants of Abraham.

**John 8:41 You are doing the things your own father does.” “We are not illegitimate children,” they protested. “The only Father we have is God himself.”**

Here, they insulted Jesus by referring to the old slander that Jesus was illegitimate and a bastard. Undoubtedly, they encouraged the rumors that were circulated about the unusual nature

of Jesus' birth. Mary had become pregnant during a three-month absence from Joseph. There were only two explanations, the real one, or that He was illegitimate.

**John 8:42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me,<sup>18</sup> for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me.**

After all, Jesus was the human revelation of God. If God was their Father, they couldn't help but love Jesus.

**John 8:43 Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say.**

Here, Jesus asked and answered the question. He knew that the people who were attacking Him could never be saved as long as there was no place in their hearts for the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Paul talked about such people:

1 Corinthians 1:18a "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing."

**John 8:44a You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire.**

There was no place in the hearts of those Jews for the teaching of the Holy Spirit because their spiritual father was Satan himself.

**John 8:44b He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.**

Their father, Satan had always been an enemy of the truth ever since his original rebellion against God. He had always been a murderer of mankind. He had known, that by deceiving Adam and Eve, he would cause their deaths. The Jewish leaders were following the pattern of Satan by seeking to murder Him, the bearer of life and truth.

**John 8:45-46 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?**

Here Jesus was referring to the test by which "the prophet" who had been promised to Moses was to be judged.

**John 8:47 He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."**

They could not accept what He said because they were unspiritual. They were carnal.

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<sup>18</sup> *This was an important test of the veracity of a person's true Spiritual status.*

**John 8:48a** **The Jews answered him, “Aren’t we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?”**

You will notice that they did not take up His challenge to find Him guilty of sin. Instead, they again tried untrue slander about His birth.

By accusing Jesus of being a Samaritan, the Jews were doubling down on their previous slander. If he was not in fact descended from the Davidic lines as the Temple records confirmed, then He couldn’t be the Messiah, the promised Son of David. This slander claimed not only that He was of illegitimate birth, but that his real father was a Samaritan. Nazareth and Samaria were close together and Mary would have had to travel through Samaria to visit Elizabeth about the time she got pregnant. It was an effective slander to counter the rumors of a miraculous virgin birth. And of course, because the Jews despised the Samaritans it was an especially satisfying expression of their hatred of Him. In the next lesson we will see the connection of this accusation to the parable of the “Good Samaritan” which he told just after He left this Feast.

**John 8:49** **“I am not possessed by a demon,” said Jesus, “but I honor my Father and you dishonor me.**

They had added to the slander of being a Samaritan bastard the old accusation of doing His miracles by the power of Satan. Jesus countered their accusation by the testimony that His life had always honored the Father and His Word. That was an impossible thing for a demon.

**John 8:50** **I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge.**

Since they refused to try to find sin in Him, Jesus said that God would be the judge. When Jesus went to the Cross the Father would judge whether or not Jesus was sinless and righteous. If He was sinless He would be able to carry the sins of the world. If He was righteous He would be qualified to sit at the right hand of the Father. Jesus’ resurrection and ascension would show the Father’s judgment on those two issues.

**John 8:51** **I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps <sup>19</sup> my word, he will never see death.”**

Here, Jesus made another appeal to these hard-hearted Jews who wanted to kill Him. He appealed to them to be saved by taking His words to heart.

**John 8:52-53** **At this the Jews exclaimed, “Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will**

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<sup>19</sup> *The Greek word here is τηρέω {tā-re'-ō} which means to put under guard or watch.*

**never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"**

The Jews refused to acknowledge or understand that Jesus was speaking in Spiritual terms.

**John 8:54 Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.**

Jesus refused to be drawn off His message. The Father would glorify and vindicate Him by raising Him up to be seated with Him.

**John 8:55 Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word.**

The Jews might put Jesus to death for saying what He did, but He would never compromise the truth by changing His message.

**John 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."**

Abraham believed the promise that a descendant of His would save the world:

Genesis 22:15-18 "The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your *seed*<sup>20</sup> as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your *seed* will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your *seed* all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

**John 8:57 "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"**

He was actually about 32 ½ years old at that time.

**John 8:58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I ~~am~~ I am the I am!"<sup>21</sup>**

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<sup>20</sup> *The Hebrew word is עֶרְוָה {zeh'-rah} which is in the singular and means "seed" and means one descendant, not many descendants. The apostle Paul in Galatians made it clear that the singular is important: Galatians 3:16 "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say 'and to seeds,' meaning many people, but 'and to your seed,' meaning one person, who is Christ."*

<sup>21</sup> *In the Greek it is only two words - ἐγὼ εἰμί {e-gō' ā-mē'}. Literally this means "I—the I am."*

John 8:59a **At this, they picked up stones to stone him,**

It was strictly illegal both by Jewish and Roman law to stone someone without a trial, but it was evidently not unknown for a Jewish mob to take matters into their own hands. In Luke 20:5-6 the Pharisees were afraid of having the same thing happen to them. A stoning of Jesus of this sort would have accomplished what the Pharisees wanted, to be rid of Jesus and to be able to avoid the blame for His death. They tried this twice (here and in John 10:31). After that failed they settled on getting the Romans to take the blame.

It is worth noting that the Jews had started out the day bringing a woman to be stoned because of her sin. Jesus had stopped them cold by challenging anyone without sin to throw the first stone. Here, later the same day Jesus had challenged them to prove Him guilty of any sin. They had responded by trying to stone Him.

John 8:59b **but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.**

In this case Jesus evidently just slipped into the large crowd and disappeared from their view.



**A Model of Herod's Temple**