

John Chapter 8

The section that began (in 7:53), with “And every man went unto his own house”, until (8:11), dealing with the adulteress most likely was not a part of the original contents of John. It has been incorporated into various manuscripts at different places in the gospel (e.g. after verses 36, 44, 52 or 21:25), while one manuscript places it after (Luke 21:38). External manuscript evidence representing a great variety of textual traditions is decidedly against its inclusion, for the earliest and best manuscripts exclude it.

Many manuscripts mark the passage to indicate doubt as to its inclusion. Significant early versions exclude it. No Greek church father comments on the passage until the twelfth century. The vocabulary and style of the section also are different from the rest of the gospel, and the section interrupts the sequence of (verse 52 with 8:12).

Many however, do think that it has all the earmarks of historical veracity, perhaps being a piece of oral tradition that circulated in parts of the western church, so that a few comments are in order. In spite of all these considerations of the likely unreliability of this section, it is possible to be wrong on the issue, and thus it is good to consider the meaning of this passage and leave it in the text, just as with (Mark 16:9-20).

John 8:1 "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives."

This was Jesus' favorite place to go when He withdrew from the crowds in Jerusalem. This mount is just outside the city walls and across the Kidron valley.

The garden of Gethsemane is on the Mount of Olives. This also would be on the way to Bethany where some of Jesus' friends lived. Jesus probably went to the mount to rest and to pray.

John 8:2 “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 indication here, is that Jesus sat down; and they gathered around Him sitting (like in a circle), and He taught them. Perhaps He sat, because His teaching was for long periods of time.

It seems that possibly about day break Jesus went to the temple. When it speaks of the people, it does not mean the scribes and Pharisees or the priests, but the common people.

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.”

Women caught in adultery were not normally brought to Jesus. The scribes and Pharisees were seeking to trick Him to see whether He would uphold the law, or defend the sinner.

These scribes and Pharisees are doing everything in their power to catch Jesus doing anything that could be thought of as against their law, so they could accuse Him. This whole set-up is to try to trap Jesus.

Why did they bother to bring her to Jesus? They were so good at accusing, why didn't they just take her to the priest? They had not admitted that Jesus had the right to judge anyone. This calling Him Master here is in a mocking way. They had not recognized Jesus as their Lord or Master.

Another thing, where is the man she was caught with? The law said they were both to be stoned to death. If they want justice, why didn't they bring him, too? This whole thing, as I said, is a frame-up to trap Jesus.

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

The law covering this is in (Deuteronomy 22:23-24). You will notice, they are both to be stoned to death. Their leaders were not even carrying this punishment out, except in extreme cases.

This was in the law, because God wanted us to realize the seriousness of sins of the body. Christians' bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. You can see the serious nature of this sin, especially for a Christian. They have not heard of Jesus carrying out any punishment, and they feel that they will easily trap Him here.

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.”

If Jesus rejected the law of Moses (Lev. 20:10; or Deut. 22:22), His credibility would be gone. If He held to Mosaic Law, His reputation for compassion and forgiveness would have been questioned.

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.”

“He who is without sin” directly refers to (Deut. 13:9 and 17:7), where the witnesses of a crime are to start the execution. Only those who were not guilty of the same sin could participate.

Jesus' statement takes the focus off the woman's sin and on their own sin. This seems to have been a delaying tactic giving them time to think.

Jesus knew they were all guilty of sin. Without answering their question, Jesus has trapped them again.

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 eldest left first, readily admitting they were sinners. They knew they were guilty. They could not face their own sins being brought to light. They go out one by one, from the oldest to the least. They left without stoning her, and without trapping Jesus.

John 8:10 “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?”

This is not a license to commit adultery. These men had no right to judge her, because they were just as guilty as she was. This woman is standing before the Judge of all the world. This is a woman who is not a believer.

She is in the same state of being a sinner as we are before we come to Jesus.

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

Christians, after Jesus forgave her and set her free, in the next verse notice that He says "... go, and sin no more."

John 8:11 “She said, No man, Lord, And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”

We see several things in this. She was a sinner when she came to Jesus. She made Him her Lord. He forgave her (saved her), then said "... go, and sin no more." Actually meaning: leave your life of sin.

Jesus was the only one who could have condemned her, but He did not, partly because such cases demanded two or more witnesses. Also, He knew she was repentant, which explains why she did not flee when her accusers left. Jesus did not take her sin lightly; rather He commanded her to "Sin no more". The prerogative to forgive sins is a divine one, so in this instance Jesus demonstrates His deity (Luke 5:23-24).

Jesus came not to condemn the world, but to save it. He condemns her sin, but not her.

Excluding the story of the adulterous woman (in 7:53-8:11), this verse attaches itself well to (7:52). The word "again" indicates that Jesus spoke once more to the people at this same Feast of Booths, or Tabernacles, (see 7:2 and 10). While Jesus first used the water drawing rite as a metaphor to portray the ultimate spiritual truth of Himself as Messiah who fulfills all that the feast anticipated, He then turned to another rite that traditionally occurred at the feast: the lighting ceremony.

During Tabernacles, four large lamps in the temple's court of women were lit and an exuberant nightly celebration took place under their light with people dancing through the night and

holding burning torches in their hands while singing songs and praises. The Levitical orchestras also played. Jesus took the opportunity of the lighting celebration to portray another spiritual analogy for the people. "I am the Light of the world."

The Pharisees disputed His authority because He witnessed to Himself.

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 "I am" statement. (John 6:35). John has already used the "light" metaphor for Jesus (1:4). Jesus' metaphor here is steeped in Old Testament allusions. The phrase highlights Jesus' role as Messiah and Son of God. The Old Testament indicates that the coming age of Messiah would be a time when the Lord would be a light for His people as well as for the whole earth (Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6).

(Zechariah 14:5b-8), has an emphasis on God as the light of the world who gives living waters to His people. This latter passage probably formed the liturgical readings for the Feast of Tabernacles.

"He that followeth me", conveys the idea of someone who gives himself completely to the person followed. No halfhearted followers exist in Jesus' mind. A veiled reference exists here to the Jews, following the pillar of cloud and fire that led them during the Exodus (Exodus 13:21).

Notice Jesus is not a light; He is the LIGHT. Jesus is the source of all light. This LIGHT gives life. Jesus said He was the Light, and the Life. In Him we have our being.

We discovered in this that the sun and moon are containers that we see light in, but are not the source of Light. Jesus is the source. When His Light sets off inside of you, it does away with darkness. Christians walk in His Light; because when we receive Jesus, we receive His Light.

John 8:13 "The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true."

These Pharisees have no idea who they are speaking to. The Bible says by two witnesses, a thing shall be established.

From (verses 8:14 to 8:18), we see three reasons why Jesus' witness was true:

- (1) Jesus knew His origin and destiny while the Jews were ignorant even of basic spiritual truths, making their judgment limited and superficial (verses 14-15),
- (2) The intimate union of the Son with the Father guaranteed the truth of the Son's witness (verse 16),
- (3) The Father and son witnessed harmoniously together regarding the identity of the Son (verses 17-18).

John 8:14 “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.”

“My record is true”: Contrast this with (5:31), where Jesus did not claim Himself as a witness. Jesus said His own witness agreed with the witness of the Father, satisfying the law’s requirement of two witnesses.

You see, the miracles that Jesus did were witness enough. No man who ever lived had done miracles like Jesus. Even Moses’ miracles paled in comparison. There was really no question of who He was.

The Jews mockingly brought up Jesus’ own words from (5:31). However, Jesus’ words there and here are reconciled by the fact that Old Testament Law required not one but multiple witnesses to establish the truth of a matter. (Deut. 17:6).

Jesus was not alone in His witness that pointed to Him as Messiah, for many had already testified concerning this truth.

John 8:15 “Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.”

The truth is that when Jesus came to the earth this time, He came to save, not condemn or judge. He will judge at the end of the age when we all stand before Him on judgment day.

They didn't believe Jesus because of the flesh. Many choose the whole idea of who Jesus really was, and is, because they look only with their physical eyes. Only the Spirit can make us aware of who Jesus really is (Immanuel - God with us).

John 8:16 “And yet if I judge, my judgement is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.”

Jesus is saying in this that Father God and Jesus are in total agreement. When Jesus speaks, He is also speaking for the Father.

John 8:17 “It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.”

Had there been no witness except the fulfillment of the Scripture, that would have been enough. When a message is for all of humanity, it needs to be established by two.

John 8:18 “I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.”

Jesus was certainly speaking truth here, because on two separate occasions (at Jesus' baptism and at the transfiguration), a voice came from heaven and said “This is my beloved Son”. The dove that lit on Jesus at His baptism symbolized God the Holy Spirit. You see, this leaves no doubt.

John Chapter 8 Questions

1. Where does Jesus go in verse 1?
2. Where is this place?
3. What garden is located there?
4. What town is on the other side of this mountain from Jerusalem?
5. What time of day did Jesus come to the temple?
6. Who brought the woman to Jesus?
7. What were they accusing her of?
8. What name did they call Jesus that they surely did not mean?
9. Why did they bring her to Jesus?
10. What did Moses' law say was the penalty for this sin?
11. In Deuteronomy 22:23-24, who were to be punished for this sin?
12. What did Jesus do, instead of answering them?
13. What did Jesus say to the accusers?
14. What convicted the accusers?
15. What question did Jesus ask the woman?
16. What name did she call Jesus by?
17. What did Jesus tell her?
18. In verse 12, what did Jesus call Himself?
19. Where do Jesus' followers walk?
20. What did the Pharisees accuse Jesus of in verse 13?
21. Why did Jesus say His record was true?

22. How did Jesus say they judged?
23. Who is the second witness with Jesus?
24. Tell of two times when the voice from heaven said "This is my beloved Son".
25. In verse 18, who does Jesus specifically mention as the two witnesses?