

# Jesus, the Light of the World (John Chapter 8)

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**Reference:** <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/john-8/>

# Outline

- I. Jesus Shines Light into People's Hearts
  - The Woman Caught in the Act of Adultery (**John 8:3-11**)
- II. Jesus, the Light of the World, Answers Opposition at the Temple (**John 8: 12-59**)
- III. Concluding Remarks

# I. Jesus Shines Light into People's hearts

## – The Woman Caught in the Act of Adultery (**John 8:3-11**)

- Some teachers of the law and Pharisees brought in a woman who they said had been caught in the act of adultery.
- Making her stand before the crowd, they said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery.
- **In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?”** ([John 8:4–5](#)).



# Scribes' and Pharisees' Evil Intention

- The scribes and Pharisees were **hoping to catch Jesus in a trap.**
- **In cases of adultery, Jewish law called for stoning** ([Deuteronomy 22:22](#)). **If Jesus recommended that the woman be released, He could **be accused of breaking the law** or of **treating the Law of Moses nonchalantly** (that is, not interested or do not care).**
- On the other hand, **if Jesus recommended stoning the woman, He would be**
- (1) breaking Roman law,
- (2) bringing on the wrath of the government and
- (3) giving the Jewish leaders occasion to accuse Him.

# True Justice?

- The Jewish leaders cared nothing for **true justice**, evidenced by the fact **they only brought the adulterous woman**; **justice would naturally demand that the adulterous man face the same treatment.**

## Jesus' response with Godly wisdom to resolve this dilemma:

- Instead of stepping into their legalistic snare, **Jesus silently stooped down and began tracing** His finger in the sand.
- **The Pharisees and teachers kept on questioning Him** until He finally stood and said, “**Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her**” ([John 8:7](#)).

- **Jesus' response flawlessly preserved both Roman and Jewish law** while uncovering the evil intentions in the hearts of the woman's accusers.
- Bending down again, Jesus returned to writing on the ground. **One by one, the accusers walked away until Jesus and the woman were left alone.**
- Unlike the Pharisees who had no regard for the woman's life or well-being, **Jesus now cared for her most pressing needs.** **Jesus**
  - **(1) did not condemn the woman but**
  - **(2) extended grace, mercy, and forgiveness.**

# The Woman Was Offered a New Life – Go Now and Leave Your Life of Sin.

- Jesus asked the woman, “Where are your accusers? Didn’t any of them condemn you?”

“No, Lord,” the woman answered.

**Jesus reassured her with words of grace and truth:** “Then **neither do I condemn you. . . . Go now and leave your life of sin**” (John 8:11).

- With her guilt and shame addressed, Jesus now **offered her a new life.**
- **♠♠♠Forgiveness (“Go now”) should lead to holiness and newness of life (“Leave your life of sin”).**

- The most striking aspect of the story of the woman caught in adultery is **how skillfully it illustrates the harmony of justice and mercy in Christ's salvation.**
- God pronounces judgment on sin but provides a way to escape condemnation.
- Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
- Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

- **Jesus does not encourage the sin, but He loves the sinner.**
- The Lord silences the critics of this world while healing hearts that are burdened with guilt and shame.
- God never treats sin casually but calls sinners to turn away from their old, corrupt way of life ([Ephesians 4:17–24](#)).

## Ephesians 4:17–24 Instructions for Christian Living

- <sup>17</sup> So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the **Gentiles** do, in the futility of their thinking. <sup>18</sup> They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. <sup>19</sup> Having lost all sensitivity, **they have given themselves over to sensuality (i.e., physical, especially sexual, pleasure or satisfaction) so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.**
- <sup>20</sup> That, however, is not the way of life you learned <sup>21</sup> when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. <sup>22</sup> You were taught, with regard to your former way of life,
- **(1) to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;** <sup>23</sup>
- **(2) to be made new in the attitude of your minds;** <sup>24</sup> and
- **(3) to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.**

- The incident of the woman caught in adultery
  - (1) **shines light into each of our own hearts** and
  - (2) **exposes the widespread existence of sin.**
- 
- After Jesus prompted the accusers to consider their own lives, all of them dropped their stones and walked away, **knowing they, too, deserved the same punishment.**

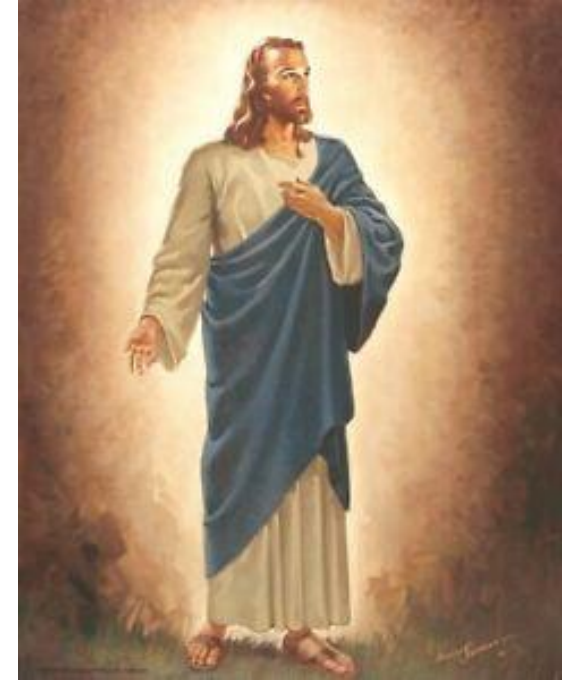
## Again, One Choice out of Two

- This episode provides an **excellent example** for us to follow when we find ourselves
- (1) **reacting judgmentally** or
- (2) with **an attitude of self-righteousness toward someone else's sin.**
- **One Choice out of Two (last week's message by Pastor Chang):**
- **James 4:7-8** <sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves, then, to God. **Resist the ♠♠devil**, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> ♠♠**Come near to God** and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, **you double-minded.** :9-10 **Lament and mourn and weep!** .... **Humble yourself**.... → ♠♠**Repent** vs. :11-15 ... **Who are you to ♠♠judge another?** ....

- We must remember
- (1) how much God has forgiven us and
- (2) that none of us has the right to throw stones ([Matthew 6:14–16](#); [Mark 11:25](#); [Luke 6:37](#)).
- God wishes to reconcile (i.e., agree and exist together) the world to Himself, and Christians are called to be [ministers of that reconciliation](#) – [2 Corinthians 5:18](#):
- All this is from **God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.**

- God sent His Son into the world to **save us from the condemnation we rightly deserve.**
- This truth is perfectly illustrated in **Jesus' interaction with the woman caught in adultery.**
- John 3:17 For **God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.**

## II. Jesus, the Light of the World, Answered Opposition at the Temple (John 8: 12-59)



- Jesus, the light of the world.
- **v. 12** Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”
- The Scriptures often spoke of **God’s Word as light**.
- ***Your word is a lamp** to my feet **and a light** to my path* (Psalm 119:105).
- *Oh, send out **Your light and Your truth**! Let them **lead me*** (Psalm 43:3).
- Since **Jesus is the Word**, it makes perfect sense that **He is also the light**.  
(**John 1:1-2** <sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.  
<sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning.)

## **vv. 13-16 The first witness to Jesus: Jesus Himself.**

- The Pharisees couldn't see His light, but it was because they were blind, not because the light of Jesus failed to shine.  
→ The Pharisees: Non-belief and Jealousy and pride → blindness spiritually
- Jesus can testify about Himself because He (and not they) had a view of eternity: I know where I came from and where I am going.
- Jesus can testify about Himself because His testimony was fully supported by God the Father: My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.

## **vv. 17-18 The second witness to Jesus: God the Father.**

- It is also written in your **law** that **the testimony of two men is true**: Jesus believed that His testimony was enough. Yet to accommodate (that is, to give what is needed to someone) them, He also brought another testimony.
- If the Jews then demand **two witnesses in order to satisfy the Jewish law of evidence**, those **two witness** exist; they **are Jesus and His Father**.
- **I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me**: God the Father also testified that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God and God the Son.
- “Our Lord speaks here exactly in **the character of an ambassador**. Such a person does not bring a *second* with him to vouch (that is, to be able from your knowledge or experience to say that something is true) his truth; **his credentials from his king ascertain his character**: he represents the king’s person. So **our Lord represents the Father as bearing witness with him.**”

- (vv. 19-20) Jesus knows His Father; the Pharisees did not.
- The Pharisees prided themselves on their knowledge of their God. Jesus tells them that they have no knowledge of Him at all.
- **Matthew 5:3, 6**
- Blesses are the **poor in spirit**, for **theirs is the kingdom of heaven**.
- Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness**, for **they shall be filled**.

- (vv. 21-22) Jesus tells of His coming departure; the religious leaders insult Him.
- Then Jesus said to them again, “I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin (the root sin of unbelief). Where I go you cannot come.” So the Jews said, “Will He kill Himself, because He says, ‘Where I go you cannot come’?”
- If we follow Jesus on earth, we will follow Him to heaven. If we express no desire to follow Him on earth, what would make us think we would follow Him to heaven?

## Two Destinies – Go to Glory (Light) vs. Die in Sins (Darkness)

- **(vv. 23-24) Two destinies:** Jesus will go to glory; on their present course they will die in their sins.
- If you **do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins** (those particular attitudes, words and actions which make up its fruit):
- These men were **religious leaders**, yet lived in darkness that filled their mind and their deeds. **The darkness remained because they rejected (do not believe) the light.** Jesus gave them a serious warning; the day of grace would *not* last forever. **Death would make their sinful darkness permanent.**

- **(vv. 25-27)** Jesus tells of His dependence on God the Father for all He said.
- Then they said to Him, “Who are You?”
- **Who are You?** This is a wonderful question to ask with a sincere heart. Yet **this question of the Pharisees came from a combination of willful confusion and contempt.** Though Jesus told them again and again who He was, **they continued to ask, always hoping for an answer they could use to trap and condemn Him.**
- Some questions aren’t used to discover the truth; they are used to resist the truth and justify a refusal to believe. The religious leaders asked **many hostile questions:**
  - *Where is Your Father?* (John 8:19)
  - *Will He kill Himself?* (John 8:22)
  - *Who are You?* (John 8:25)

- Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning: **Jesus** didn't have a new answer for them. He **would repeat the truths and themes He spoke to them many times before.**
- I have many things to say and to judge concerning you: I could speedily **expose all your iniquities** - **your pride and ambition, your hypocrisy and irreligion, your hatred to the light, and your malice** (that is, the wish to hurt or upset other people) **against the truth,** together with the present **obstinate** (that is, unreasonably determined and not to change at all) **unbelief of your hearts,** and show that these are **the reasons why I say you will die in your sins.**

- (vv. 28-30) Jesus tells of His dependence on God the Father for all He does.
- Then Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. **The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.**” As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.
- When you lift up the Son of Man: It had to do with “**lifting up**” Jesus off **the ground on a cross**. When Jesus was crucified, they would see the perfect obedience of the Son to the Father. They would see that truly, I do nothing of Myself.
- The Father has not left Me alone: The **unity between the Father and the Son continued and will continue**. **Despite the accusations of the Pharisees, Jesus was as close to His Father as ever.**

- **I always do those things that please Him:** It is easy to *say*, “I always do the will of the Father” when you only debate theological points. It is another thing entirely to “**always do the will of the Father**” when it means going to the cross. **The cross would prove the perfect obedience of Jesus.**
- **As He spoke these words, many believed in Him:** When the Pharisees heard Jesus speak they became more opposed to Him. Yet **there were many who heard the same words and believed in Him. They believed despite the evident opposition of the religious leaders.**
- **Jesus’ message of His unity with the Father was so well received by some because His life was consistent with the message.** Unlike the Pharisees, one could see that Jesus was close to God. **The Pharisees cultivated an image of intimacy with God, but it was evident they were not actually close to God.**

# Believe → Abide in My Word → My Disciple → Know the Truth → Truth Will Make You Free

- (vv. 31-32) Jesus offers **discipleship and freedom to those believing in Him.**
- Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, **“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”**
- a. **Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him:** The previous verse tells us that *many believed in Him* (John 8:30). Jesus spoke to those who had that beginning of belief, telling them what they needed to continue in belief.
- “This section of the discourse is addressed to those who believe, and yet do not believe. Clearly they were inclined to think that what Jesus said was true. But they were not prepared **to yield Him the far-reaching allegiance that real trust in Him implies.** This is a most dangerous spiritual state.”
- **If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed:** If we will be Jesus’ disciples, we *must* abide in His word. There is no other way. To be a follower of Jesus – the Word made flesh – is **to abide in (to live in, to dwell in, to make your home in) His word.**

- **What it means to abide in His word** – Welcoming it, being at home with it, and living with it so continuously that it *becomes part of the believer's life, a permanent influence and stimulus* in every fresh advance in goodness and holiness.
- This too is another statement **reflecting the unity between the Father and the Son**. Jesus called men **to abide in His word**.
- **You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free**: This is the result of abiding in the word of Jesus. We prove ourselves to be His disciples and we **know the truth**, and **God works His freedom in our life through His truth**. The freedom Jesus spoke of doesn't come from just an academic pursuit of truth in general; but **from abiding in His word and being His disciple**.
- There is nothing like the **freedom** we can have in Jesus. **No money can buy it, no status can obtain it, no works can earn it, and nothing can match it**. It is tragic that not every Christian experiences this freedom, which **can never be found except by abiding in God's word and being Jesus' disciple**.

- (vv. 37-41a) They prove themselves to be unlike their father Abraham.
- “I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.” They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” **Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the deeds of your father.”**
- I know that you are Abraham’s descendants: Jesus would admit that **they are Abraham’s descendants in a genetic sense, but Abraham was not their father in a *spiritual* sense.** **When messengers from heaven came to Abraham, he received them (Genesis 18); but these genetic descendants of Abraham rejected and sought to kill the One sent from heaven.**
- To cherish murderous intentions against someone who has imparted the truth of God to them is not the mark of the children of Abraham.
- **Because My word has no place in you: Their rejection of the word of Jesus and Jesus the Word proved that they were not like Abraham,** and that **they did not have the freedom that comes from abiding in His word.**

## ***Our Spiritual Parentage Is What Determines Our Nature and Our Destiny***

- **Spurgeon** considered **several ways that God's word should have a place in the believer.**
- The word of God ought to have **an *inward place*.**
- The word of God ought to have **a *place of high honor*.**
- The word of God ought to have **a *place of trust*.**
- The word of God ought to have **a *place of rule*.**
- The word of God ought to have **a *place of love*.**
- The word of God ought to have **a *permanent place*.**
- Jesus exposed the **inconsistency in their life**. They said **they were children of Abraham, but didn't act like it at all**. "If their origin could be wholly traced to Abraham, then their conduct would resemble his."
- Jesus' point was important. ***Our spiritual parentage is what determines our nature and our destiny.*** If we are born again, and have God as our Father, it will show in our nature and destiny. But if our father is Satan or Adam, it will also show in our nature and destiny – just as it shows in these adversaries of Jesus.

## **(vv. 51-53)** The great promise to those who accept Jesus and keep His word.

- **If anyone keeps My word he shall never see death:** This is another remarkable claim that only makes sense if Jesus is God, and is one with God the Father. **Jesus promises eternal life to those who keep His word.**
- **To keep my word**, as, *‘to continue in my word,’* verse 31, is **not only outward obedience, but the endurance in, and obedience of faith.**
- **Never see death:** *“Our face is turned away from death...When the gospel of the Lord Jesus comes to my soul, and I keep his saying by faith, I am turned completely round. **My back is upon death, and my face is towards life eternal.**”*

- **(vv. 54-55)** The claim of Jesus to know God contrasted with the claim of the religious leaders.
- It is **not difficult to honor oneself**; it is easy enough – in fact, **fatally easy – to bask in the sunshine of one's own approval**.
- **Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him**: The religious leaders *claimed* that the Father in heaven was their **God**, but it was not a true claim. **In truth, they did not know God, but Jesus did.**  
→ Religious Leaders' False Claim and Evil Deeds
- **I do know Him and keep His word**: **Jesus** could not lie and deny His true knowledge of God the Father, **demonstrated by a life of obedience to God's word.**  
→ Jesus' Claim and Demonstration

- **(vv. 56-59) Jesus makes the great declaration, I AM.**
- “It is interesting also that the Hebrew expression in Genesis 24:1, which stated that **Abraham** ‘went into the days’ (an expression translated in our Bible ‘was well-stricken in age’) was taken by some Rabbis to mean that he **saw into the distant future.**”
- **Before Abraham was, I AM:** With this dramatic phrase **Jesus** told them that He **was the eternal God, existing not only during the time of Abraham but before unto eternity past.** **Jesus claimed to be the great I AM**, the voice of the covenant God of Israel revealed at the burning bush (Exodus 3:13-14).
- “**Before Abraham came into existence I am, eternally existent...** No stronger affirmation of pre-existence occurs.”

- **Then they took up stones to throw at Him:** This demonstrates that the religious leaders understood perfectly what Jesus meant. **Jesus claimed to be eternal God, and they regarded that as blasphemy.** They felt He was worthy of death and intended to carry it out at the moment.
- **Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them:** ***They wanted to kill Jesus but could not because His hour had not yet come (John 7:30).***
- “In all probability he rendered himself invisible-though some will have it that **he conveyed himself away from those Jews who were his enemies, by mixing himself with the many who believed on him.**”

# Concluding Remarks

- The episode of “*The Woman Caught in the Act of Adultery*” provides an **excellent example** for us to follow when we find ourselves
- (1) **reacting judgmentally** or
- (2) with **an attitude of self-righteousness** toward someone else’s sin.
- ***Jesus shines light into people’s hearts: Forgiveness (“Go now”) should lead to holiness and newness of life (“Leave your life of sin”).***
- **One Choice out of Two (last week’s message by Pastor Chang):**
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- Jesus, **the Light of the World**, Answers Opposition at the Temple
- **Two Destinies** –  
Go to Glory (Light) vs. Die in Sins (Darkness)
- **Die in sin** (the root sin of unbelief); **Die in *sins*** (those particular attitudes, words and actions which make up its fruit)
- → Religious Leaders' False Claim and Evil Deeds (unbelief, pride, judgment)
- → Jesus' Claim and Demonstration (I AM, perfect obedience → cross)
- Believe → Abide in My Word → My Disciple → Know the Truth → Truth Will Make You Free
- Jesus offers great promise of eternal life to those who accept Him and keep *His word*.

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**The End**