

JOHN #10: John 8:12-59

Jesus: The I AM

“The light of the world and exposing the darkness”

- I. Backdrop: Jesus preached mightily and caused much controversy and division at the feast of Tabernacles. The next day, when he was teaching many people in the temple, the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery to him to see what he would say about what she deserved. Jesus did not fall into their trap. Clearly they were judging hypocritically as they only brought the woman to Jesus but did not bring the man who was involved. According to the law of Moses, if two people were caught in adultery, both the man and the woman were to be stoned; and the witnesses were to be the first ones to cast a stone. However, something was clearly off here as only the woman was brought before Jesus to trial. Jesus at his first coming did not come to execute judgment. He came to speak the truth in love. He was not sent by the Father to condemn the world (although all were worthy of condemnation), but he was sent to save the world. So Jesus ignores all their accusations and pressure and just simply stoops down and writes on the ground. After a bit, he stands up and declares that whoever is without sin among the Pharisee mob should cast the first stone. After a few moments, all of the accusers begin to leave one-by-one knowing that none of them is worthy to cast the first stone. Eventually all the accusers are gone and the only one left who is worthy to stone the woman is Jesus himself. However, Jesus did not come to condemn, but to shine the light of life. And so he releases her and commands her to go and sin no more.

- II. Overview: Jesus reveals to everyone that he is the light of the world. The Pharisees accuse him of not speaking the truth to make himself look good. Jesus reveals that his witness is true because he is not alone, but the Father is with him bearing witness of him. They ask him about his Father. Jesus reveals that they have no hope to go where he is going unless they believe in him. He is from above, they are from beneath. He always does those things that please his Father. And only those who continue in his word will know the truth and be made free. The Pharisees continue to contend and argue and defend themselves. Jesus has to expose the truth that even though they are the physical seed of Abraham, that they are nothing like Abraham and are not his spiritual children neither are they the children of God. Rather, they are the children of the

devil, and they will eagerly do his works (lie and murder). They cannot even hear his word. Ultimately, Jesus reveals to them who he is. He reveals that he is the “I am” of the OT. Upon this revelation, the Jews want to stone him, but because it’s not his hour yet, he escapes their hands.

III. Outline:

A. The Light of the world (8:12-20):

1. Jesus reveals that:

a. He is the Light of the world. (1 John 1:5)

b. Those who follow him:

i. Shall not walk in darkness. (1 John 1:6)

ii. Shall have the light of life. (1 John 1:7; 2:10; John 1:4)

- To truly believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, means to FOLLOW him. And if we follow him, we will walk in the light as he is in the light.

* The Pharisees accuse him of bearing record of himself and not speaking the truth.

2. His record is true:

a. Because he knows where he came from and where he is going.

- They can’t tell where he came from or where he is going.

b. He judges no man.

- They judge after the flesh.

c. But if he judges his judgment is true:

i. Because he is not alone, the Father is with him.

ii. The scriptures also confirm that the testimony of two men is true. - Deut 17:6; 19:5 (Interesting how he says “in your law”...)

* The Pharisees ask him where his Father is.

3. He responds that they don’t know him or his Father:

a. If they knew Jesus, they would know his Father also.

* Jesus was teaching all of this in the treasury. Neat symbolic picture. He is the ultimate treasure and he is revealing himself and his Father. Even though they want to kill him, they can’t yet, as it is not his hour.

B. The One from ABOVE (8:21-30):

1. Christ is going his way: (back to heaven and his Father where he came from)

a. The Jews will seek him.

- b. They will die in their sins.
 - c. Where Jesus is going they CANNOT come.
 - The Jews are NOT welcome in heaven in their current condition with their corrupted hearts. They will die in their sins unless they find repentance and come to faith in Christ.
 - * They don't know what Jesus is talking about. They speculate if he will kill himself...
2. Jesus is from ABOVE:
- a. They are from beneath (both the world and of hell...)
 - b. They are of THIS world (both natural flesh and under the devil's lordship).
 - c. He is NOT of this world.
 - d. They will die in their sins unless they believe that Jesus is HE. (He will unveil later who he is; but Isaiah 43:10-13 is an excellent cross reference!)
 - * They ask him: "Who art thou?"
3. The same that he said from the BEGINNING:
- This could be referring to the beginning of his ministry (that he is the Son).
 - This could also be a reference to his DEITY. He is the same God since the beginning!
 - a. He has many things:
 - i. To say to them
 - ii. To judge of them
 - b. The Father who sent him is TRUE.
 - c. He has spoken to the world the things which he has heard of HIM.
4. They will know that Christ is he!
- a. When they lift him (the Son of Man) up.
 - i. The earth will quake; the veil will be rent in half. The soldiers will come tell them that he rose from the dead. They will know that he is who he said he was.
 - b. They will know that Jesus did not do anything of (or by) himself.
 - i. Whatever the Father taught him is what he spoke.
 - ii. The Father who sent him is WITH him.
 - c. The Father has not left him alone.
 - i. For he always does what pleases the Father.
 - * Powerful truths: The Father is true; he has taught Jesus; he has sent Jesus; He is with Jesus; and Jesus always does what pleases him.

- * As Jesus spoke these words MANY believed on HIM! Hallelujah. People are coming to faith in WHO JESUS is.

C. The Son who makes you FREE (8:31-36)

- * Then Jesus turned and spoke to the Jews who believed on him:

1. How to become his disciples in order to be free:

- a. If you CONTINUE in CHRIST's WORD
- b. Then:
 - i. They will become his disciples INDEED (in truth and in action)
 - ii. And they will know the TRUTH.
 - iii. And the TRUTH shall make them FREE.

- This is one of the most key passages in John. Jesus spells out how to become his true disciples that will be made FREE from sin. This can only happen if you first believe in WHO CHRIST is. It all starts with his identity. Then, you must continue in CHRIST's word (his doctrine). This is both personal and involves persistence. And you must continue in CHRIST's word: what he taught, his commands; not man's word or the church's word. You must personally continue in Christ's word. And this continuance is unto OBEDIENCE. This is not just hearing and learning but not obeying. This is unto obedience which is what makes us TRUE disciples of Christ in deed (or in action). There are many DISCIPLES in the world and in Christianity. There are many who have been "discipled". But only those who personally and persistently continue in Jesus Christ's word unto obedience become JESUS CHRIST's disciples indeed. There are few true disciples of Jesus Christ. And only the true disciples of Christ can know the truth which will ultimately make them free. As we continue in this passage and compare with other key passages, it appears that the TRUTH that Jesus is referring to is HIMSELF. So it is one thing to believe in Jesus (that is where we must start). It is another thing to truly KNOW HIM. This is what Paul was pursuing. This is what is life eternal. This is what separated the fathers of the faith from the young men and little children. To KNOW HIM. Because only HE can make you free from sin.

- * The Jews are clueless and blinded by their pride. They respond by stating that they are Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man. So how can Jesus offer them freedom? They need a history refresher and a wake-up call: Israel was in bondage to many men throughout the centuries (Pharaoh, Eglon, Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, etc...) and they were currently under Roman occupation. This statement just reveals how their pride in their PHYSICAL identity so

blinded them to both physical reality and more importantly, spiritual reality.

2. Jesus responds that they are the servants of sin.
 - a. Whoever commits sin IS the servant of sin.
 - i. The servant does not abide in the house for ever (house could refer to Israel; but definitely implied that they will perish).
 - b. The Son abides for EVER.
 - i. Whoever the Son makes free, shall be free indeed.
 - * Only the Son (who is free from sin) can make people free from sin. Only he has the power to make us sons so that we can be free like him. This is what the new birth is all about: making us into HIS image and likeness so that we can be pure and holy in love like him.
- D. Exposing the children of the DEVIL (8:37-47)
 1. The Jews seek to KILL JESUS.
 - a. Because Christ's word has NO PLACE in them.
 - b. They are just doing what they have seen their father do (the devil).
 - c. Nothing like Christ: He heals and speaks the truth.
 - * They claim Abraham is their father.
 2. They are not Abraham's children!
 - a. If they were, they would do the works of Abraham.
 - b. But they seek to kill Christ: a man that told them the truth of God.
 - c. Abraham didn't do any such thing.
 - d. They do the deeds of their father (the devil).
 - * They try to take a jab at Jesus and say that they were not born of fornication (implying that Jesus was) and that God is their Father.
 3. God is not their Father:
 - a. If God were their father, they would LOVE Jesus, because he came forth from God
 - b. But they cannot understand Jesus' speech.
 - c. Why not? Because they cannot HEAR his WORD.
 4. The devil is their father:
 - a. They will do his LUSTS:
 - i. He is a murderer from the beginning.
 - ii. He is a liar:
 - (a) He abode not in the truth.
 - (b) There is no truth in him.
 - (c) He speaks his own lies that he makes up.
 - (d) He is the father of lies.

- b. They won't believe Jesus because he tells them the TRUTH.
 - i. Which proves that they believe and follow Satan because if they will not believe the truth it is proof that they believe LIES.
- c. They are not of God!
 - i. Whoever is of God hears God's words.
 - ii. They cannot hear God's words because they are not of God.
- * Note: This a very important passage to understand both in doctrine and in reality. Understanding what Christ is saying will help tremendously with discernment in learning to discern who is of God and who is not of God. To be able to discern who is a child of God and who is a child of the devil. These things are opened up more by John in 1 John chapters 2-4 especially. These things are very important to understand and live by.

E. Before Abraham was: I AM (8:48-59):

- * The Jews accuse Jesus of having being a Samaritan (a rejected, half-breed) and having a devil.
- 1. Jesus does not have a devil:
 - a. He honors his Father (but they dishonor him).
 - b. He does not seek his own glory (but the Father seeks and judges).
 - c. If a man keeps Christ's saying he shall never see death.
 - * They mock Jesus. "Now we know you have a devil. Abraham is dead and the prophets are dead... are you greater than Abraham and the prophets... who do you make yourself to be?" They have no idea how disrespectful they are being. They have no idea to whom they are speaking. They are speaking to their Creator and Lord who birthed and delivered the nation of Israel and sustained them through the centuries. Who does he make himself to be? They think he's some punk young man who is pretending to be something greater than he is. Meanwhile, he is the Creator who HUMBLLED himself in love and became man to give them the only hope they ever had to be saved from their sins and the wrath to come.
- 2. The Father honors Jesus.
 - a. Christ's honor is nothing if he honors himself; but he doesn't...
 - b. They claim the Father is their God but they don't know him:
 - i. Christ knows him and keeps his saying.
 - ii. He cannot deny him or else he would be a liar like them.
 - c. Abraham rejoiced to see Jesus' day:
 - i. And he saw it!
 - ii. And was glad!

- * The Jews respond by stating that Jesus is not even 50 years old and sarcastically ask if he has seen Abraham.
3. Jesus gives one of the most powerful statements ever regarding his identity (& deity): “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”
 - a. This is ABSOLUTE TRUTH (verily, verily).
 - b. This is CHRIST’s word and authority! (“I say unto you”).
 - c. Christ is preeminent over all the nation of Israel and all of it’s patriarchs (“Before Abraham was”)
 - i. He predates the “father” of Israel (Abraham).
 - d. “I am”
 - i. Jesus is the Jehovah of the Old Testament.
 - ii. He is the same God that appeared to Moses and brought deliverance to Israel.
 - iii. The Jews knew exactly what he was talking about: hence their reaction:
 - e. Jews response: They took stones to cast at him to kill him; but Jesus hid himself and slipped out.
- * Note: He just delivered the adulterous woman caught in adultery who was worthy of death. And now they want to kill him. Meanwhile, he is the longsuffering husband who has suffered much hurt and agony due to his adulterous wife (Israel) and yet still does not bring condemnation to her. Instead, he speaks the truth in love so that those who are willing to listen might be delivered (like the woman).

GOING Forward: Christ has now openly declared his deity to the Pharisees. He has openly exposed them as the children of the devil. There is no turning back. Jesus will still offer them more chances to repent and believe in him at least because of his mighty works. However, we will see them harden themselves more in hatred and ultimately Christ will hide from them for ever and only continue to reveal himself to his sheep. But Jesus still has some more work to do before his work is finished.