

¹ But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

² At dawn He went to the temple complex again, and all the people were coming to Him. He sat down and began to teach them.

³ Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, making her stand in the center. ⁴ "Teacher," they said to Him, "this woman was caught in the act of committing adultery. ⁵ In the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do You say?" ⁶ They asked this to trap Him, in order that they might have evidence to accuse Him.

Jesus stooped down and started writing on the ground with His finger. ⁷ When they persisted in questioning Him, He stood up and said to them, "The one without sin among you should be the first to throw a stone at her."

⁸ Then He stooped down again and continued writing on the ground. ⁹ When they heard this, they left one by one, starting with the older men. Only He was left, with the woman in the center. ¹⁰ When Jesus stood up, He said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

¹¹ "No one, Lord," she answered.

"Neither do I condemn you," said Jesus. "Go, and from now on do not sin anymore."

¹² Then Jesus spoke to them again: "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life."

The Pharisees have intentionally chosen a time when Jesus is surrounded by a crowd.

Lev. 20:10; Deut 22:22, 23-24 – Stoning is the specific punishment for a betrothed woman who lays with another man.

- Specifically, both are to be stoned, which begs the question: where is the man in our current scenario?
- They aren't concerned with justice.

Attempting to create a "Catch 22":

- If He condemns her to death, He runs afoul of Rome, who held jurisdiction over capital punishment and would not condone execution for a mere personal matter.
- If He pardons her, He opposes the law of Moses by excusing her sin.

Deut 17:7 –

"The witnesses' hands are to be the first in putting [the condemned] to death..."

First, notice that Jesus doesn't say she isn't guilty nor that she shouldn't be sentenced to death.

However, Jesus points to the accusers' individual guilt as the gauge to determine if they are willing to carry out the punishment. What punishments might their own sins warrant? Jesus truly is the only one present who could level an accusation against the woman and judge her worthy of death, since:

- a) It was His word that gave the law in the first place.
- b) He is the only One "without sin"

Again, Jesus doesn't excuse her. Her secret sin has just been brought to light and to the Light (cf 3:19-21). Jesus now tells her not to regress into darkness ("*sin no more*"), but to remain in the light.

Scene:

8:20 says that Jesus is "by the treasury...in the temple complex" when He speaks these words.

- The 13 chests for the temple treasury were around the "Court of Women," a courtyard just outside the main temple complex.

During the Feast of Tabernacles, there is another ceremony – the "Illumination of the Temple":

- Four large (75 ft) lampstands were set up in this courtyard and lit, such that the entire city could see the light.
- Symbolized God's glory dwelling in the wilderness & temple and the promise of Isa. 9:1-2:
 - "*Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.*"

It may have been within this setting that Jesus makes this, the second of the great "I am" statements: "*I am the light of the world.*"

- John has already referred to Jesus as "the light of men" and the light that "shines in the darkness" (1:4-5).
 - The light exposes what is hidden in darkness and illuminates the path ahead.
- In the same chapter, Jesus is also "the true light, who gives light to everyone."
 - Jesus not only gives light to mankind; He is light, the only light. Jesus' immediate follow-up statement is to call men to follow Him.
- Because He is the true light, He offers the "light of life".
 - The word "follow" has implications of the disciple fully giving himself to the Master.
 - As with the disciples, one must be willing to completely leave their old way of life behind and submit to Jesus.

¹³ So the Pharisees said to Him, “You are testifying about Yourself. Your testimony is not valid.”

¹⁴ “Even if I testify about Myself,” Jesus replied, My testimony is valid, because I know where I came from and where I’m going. But you don’t know where I come from or where I’m going. ¹⁵ You judge by human standards. I judge no one. ¹⁶ And if I do judge, My judgment is true, because I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent Me judge together. ¹⁷ Even in your law it is written that the witness of two men is valid. ¹⁸ I am the One who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.”

¹⁹ Then they asked Him, “Where is Your Father?”

“You know neither Me nor My Father,” Jesus answered. “If you knew Me, you would also know My Father.” ²⁰ He spoke these words by the treasury, while teaching in the temple complex. But no one seized Him, because His hour had not come.

²¹ Then He said to them again, “I’m going away; you will look for Me, and you will die in your sin. Where I’m going, you cannot come.”

²² So the Jews said again, “He won’t kill Himself, will He, since He says, ‘Where I’m going, you cannot come?’”

²³ “You are from below,” He told them, “I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ Therefore I told you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”

²⁵ “Who are You?” they questioned.

“Precisely what I’ve been telling you from the very beginning,” Jesus told them. ²⁶ “I have many things to say and to judge about you, but the One who sent Me is true, and what I have heard from Him—these things I tell the world.”

²⁷ They did not know He was speaking to them about the Father. ²⁸ So 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 on My own. But just as the Father taught Me, I say these things. ²⁹ The One who sent Me is with Me. He has not left Me alone, because I always do what pleases Him.”

Par for the course, the Pharisees are here to oppose Jesus.

- Here, they challenge the validity of Jesus’ claim because there are no other witnesses to corroborate His statements.

Jesus is the only individual on earth who is familiar with His origin and mission, so His testimony about Himself has weight.

- He speaks of Himself using the same language He used to describe the Holy Spirit (3:8).
 - He perceives the spiritual side of things.

The Pharisees don’t consider things spiritually, so they aren’t qualified to judge the validity of His mission.

He goes on to reference the rule of law concerning witnesses – that two or more are needed to render a verdict (Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

- Jesus’ two witnesses are Himself and the Father (cf 3:2; 5:36-38)

It may be that this question is meant as an insult toward Jesus’ parentage.

- They knew He was speaking about God, but they feign ignorance.

Jesus rolls with the answer though, telling them that to know the Father, they must know the Son (see 1:18).

Consider this answer in light of some OT passages like Amos 8:11-14, where the “word of the Lord” would be hidden from those who sought it.

There is a large divide between Him and them that can only be bridged through belief (3:16-18).

- “Unless you believe that I AM, you will die in your sins.”
 - Jesus again connects Himself with the Father’s familiar title (Ex. 3:14).
 - If they reject Jesus, they have rejected God.

Jesus had enough reason to judge them on His own, based on their unbelief, but He is committed to the Father’s task (3:16-18), only speaking what the Father has given Him to say.

“When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM.”

- Jesus’ crucifixion and subsequent ascension will mark Him for who He is.
- It will also show the extent to which He would submit His will to accomplish the Father’s plan.

³⁰ As He was saying these things, many believed in Him. ³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, you really are My disciples. ³² You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

³³ "We are descendants of Abraham," they answered Him, "and we have never been enslaved to anyone. How can You say, 'You will become free'?"

³⁴ Jesus responded, "I assure you: Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵ A slave does not remain in the household forever, but a son does remain forever. ³⁶ Therefore, if the Son sets you free, you really will be free. ³⁷ I know you are descendants of Abraham, but you are trying to kill Me because My word is not welcome among you. ³⁸ I speak what I have seen in the presence of the Father; therefore, you do what you have heard from your father."

³⁹ "Our father is Abraham!" they replied.

"If you were Abraham's children," Jesus told them, "you would do what Abraham did. ⁴⁰ But now you are trying to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do this! ⁴¹ You're doing what your father does."

"We weren't born of sexual immorality," they said. "We have one Father—God."

⁴² Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, because I came from God and I am here. For I didn't come on My own, but He sent Me. ⁴³ Why don't you understand what I say? Because you cannot listen to My word. ⁴⁴ You are of your father the Devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and has not stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of liars. ⁴⁵ Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. ⁴⁶ Who among you can convict Me of sin? If I tell the truth, why don't you believe Me? ⁴⁷ The one who is from God listens to God's words. This is why you don't listen, because you are not from God."

Note: the following dialogue is addressed to those who have shown some level of belief in Him.

- This next section of Jesus' discourse will pose a sort of test to see who will respond to His message.
- Here we have a challenge, an offer and a reward:
 - Challenge: "Abide in My word..."
 - Offer: "...you really are My disciples."
 - Reward: "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free"
 - Consider this in light of Jesus' description of God in 8:26.

The crowd places Jesus' statement in the political sphere, but He then proceeds to teach them that the freedom granted here is from sin and death.

The slave has no family ties that would obligate his masters to him. The Son is a rightful partaker and heir of the privileges that come with being a part of the family.

To the Jew, connection to Abraham is everything because it is believed to establish their connection with God, since He made the covenant promises to Abraham and his descendants.

- Jesus disabuses them of this notion, stating that Abraham's actions were based on faith, so his true descendants are those who exhibit the same type of faith (Gal 3:16-29).
 - Abraham welcomed a messenger from God (Gen 18); the crowd seeks to kill the Messenger who "speaks what [He] has seen in the presence of the Father."
- Their actions are based on lies and pride, which are the trademarks of Satan.

This claim may have two interpretations:

1. In Hosea, Israel was compared to the children of an adulterous woman. They are claiming that they never belonged to an idolatrous nation, but had always worshipped God.
2. This may also be a veiled reference to Jesus' own unique birth and the inevitable rumors that most likely made the rounds concerning Mary.

Jesus asks this seemingly frustrated question that does actually get to the heart of the matter:

- "Why don't you understand what I say?"
 - Understand = *ginosko*, to have insight/familiarity based on study
 - They don't understand because they fail to listen.
 - They don't listen to the truth because they have grown to love the lies of the devil.

This question is rhetorical. It's obvious to all that Jesus has not sinned or spoken untruthfully, so the resulting question then is why didn't they believe Him?

- Because God is not their Father (cf 41b)!

⁴⁸The Jews responded to Him, "Aren't we right in saying that You're a Samaritan and have a demon?"

⁴⁹"I do not have a demon," Jesus answered. "On the contrary, I honor My Father and you dishonor Me. ⁵⁰I do not seek My glory; the One who seeks it also judges. ⁵¹I assure you: If anyone keeps My word, he will never see death—ever!"

⁵²Then the Jews said, "Now we know You have a demon. Abraham died and so did the prophets. You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste death—ever!' ⁵³Are You greater than our father Abraham who died? Even the prophets died. Who do You pretend to be?"

⁵⁴"If I glorify Myself," Jesus answered, "My glory is nothing. My Father—you say about Him, 'He is our God'—He is the One who glorifies Me. ⁵⁵You've never known Him, but I know Him. If I were to say I don't know Him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know Him, and I keep His word. ⁵⁶Your father Abraham was overjoyed that he would see My day; he saw it and rejoiced."

⁵⁷The Jews replied, "You aren't 50 years old yet, and You've seen Abraham?"

⁵⁸Jesus said to them, "I assure you: Before Abraham was, I am."

⁵⁹At that, they picked up stones to throw at Him. But Jesus was hidden and went out of the temple complex.

Having been convicted, the Jews resort to petty, baseless insults.

- Have a demon = madness
- Samaritan = enemy of Israel with a corrupt view of the law

Jesus denies the allegation, placing the burden of proof back on the Jews:

- His goal is to honor the Father; theirs is to disgrace Jesus.

Jesus' claim of eternal life was absurd to the Jews, who are again thinking in purely physical terms.

- If Abraham and the patriarchs - pillars of faith - died, how could a poor Galilean claim to have power over life and death?

Or, "*Who do You make Yourself to be?*"

Jesus' answer is to once again affirm that He glorifies the Father and the Father, in turn, glorifies Him.

- Whatever glory Jesus receives is both granted by, and directed back to, the Father.

This glory comes from a unique knowledge of God and a unique obedience to God.

Abraham's rejoicing was in the promised Messiah who would "bless all the nations of the earth."

Another display of earthly understanding prevents comprehension, though.

Jesus' reply is once again familiar: "*Before Abraham was, I AM.*"