



## John 8 By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now in our Bibles to John's gospel chapter eight as we continue our journey through the Bible.

The seventh chapter ended at the end of the last day of the feast of tabernacles. That great day of the feast. And as the chapter ends, it ends with these words, "And every man went unto his own house" (John 7:53). The feast is over, the day is over, every man went to his own house. But in chapter eight it said,

*Jesus went unto the mount of Olives (8:1).*

Every man went into his own house but Jesus went to the mount of Olives. It sort of goes back to the words of Jesus where He said, "The birds of the air have their nests, the foxes have their holes; but the Son of man has not where to lay His head" (Matthew 8:20). They went to their houses, Jesus went to the mount of Olives. No doubt to spend the night there on the mount of Olives in a garden area that He was used to going to with His disciples, a place where they usually spent the night. And we find that six months later, He will again be going into that area in the mount of Olives where He will finally be arrested and Judas will betray Him. Judas knew the place that Jesus was accustomed to going there on the mount of Olives. So it's sort of poignant kind of a, Every man went to his own house and Jesus went to the mount of Olives.

*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 (8:2).*

Yesterday the last day of the feast, we find Jesus stood and cried saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink" (John 7:37). Now He is sitting down and teaching. He is assuming now the position of a Rabbi and as we have shared with you, in that time and culture, the teachers sat and the pupils stood. And so when Jesus is sitting, He is now in the position of the Rabbi, the teacher, He is sitting to teach the people.

When a person is heralding a truth, they would stand to herald the truth. And so when Jesus was proclaiming the way of salvation, when He was proclaiming the Gospel, a herald of the Gospel, Jesus stood and He cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink." Now He's going to teach and thus, He sits there in the temple and the people have gathered to listen to Him. And as He is teaching the people, suddenly there is a commotion,

*As the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They said unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what do you say? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him (8:3-6).*

Early in the morning He's teaching. The scribes and Pharisees have caught a woman in the very act of adultery. Probably had spent the night with a man. And now they come dragging her to Jesus. She is probably defiant, rebellious, screaming, quite a commotion. They set her in the midst and they said, We caught this woman, very act of adultery. Moses law said we are to stone her. What do you say? But John is careful to point out, They're trying to catch Jesus.

They knew that Jesus was full of grace and truth. And they're trying to put Him at conflict with the Mosaic law. Because they understood that the law came from God through Moses. And as John said in the first chapter, the law came by Moses and grace and truth by Jesus Christ. And so they're trying to put Him at odds with the Mosaic law. Not only that, the Roman law. The Romans had taken from the Jews the power of capital punishment and only Rome could give the death sentence to a person.

If Jesus now advocates stoning her, then they will go to the Roman authorities and put Jesus as a rebel to the Roman authority. So they feel that they have Him pretty well trapped in this situation. He can't say, Well, be gracious and merciful, because then they'd say, He is at odds with the Mosaic law; and He can't say, Stone her, because then He would be at odds with the Roman law.

*So Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground (8:6),*

Some of the old manuscripts read,  
*as though He heard them not (8:6).*

Just sort of ignored them. Just started writing on the ground. So they persisted. They weren't going

to let Him get off the hook.

*So they continued asking him, and so he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her (8:7).*

That “without sin” is sort of “who has never sinned” among you, let him cast the first stone.

*And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground (8:8).*

This word “to write” in Greek is “graphin” and this is the word, “kato graphin.” The word “kato” is down, or to cast down. So it has given rise to the theory that what He is writing is incriminations against them. He is recording perhaps there in the dirt their sins. He had just said, “He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone.” And then as He began to “kato graphin,” to write down, to make note of, to make a record of, from the oldest to the youngest they began to excuse themselves and leave. Probably as He was writing, first of all, their name and then starting to list some of the things that they have been doing lately, they remembered other obligations that they had and they left. One by one, until they were all gone.

*And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience (8:9),*

It was probably related to their sins. They were convicted by their own conscience,

*they 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. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are your accusers? hath no man condemned thee (8:9,10)?*

I imagine there was a bit of humor in that, What happened to them? Doesn't anybody condemn you?

*She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I: go thy way, sin no more (8:11).*

There was only one person in that whole crowd who was qualified to cast a stone and He refused to do it. There was only one who was sinless among them.

This goes back to the conversation that Jesus had with Nicodemus in the third chapter of John's gospel, where Jesus said, “God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. And he that believeth is not condemned: he that believeth not is condemned already, seeing he has not believed in the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, light came into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. They would not come to the light, knowing that the light would expose them” (John 3:17-20).

So here were men who came to the light and they were exposed. They left. Only the woman was left. I believe that there was a total change in her attitude. I believe that she came in screaming, scratching, kicking. But as the accusers began to leave, she was moved by Jesus. And when He said, “Where are your accusers? Doesn't anyone condemn you?” She said, “No man, Lord.” I think that there was that total change of her attitude; the rebellion was gone, the anger was gone, the flash in the eye was gone and I think there were tears in her eyes as she looked at the Man of compassion, full of grace and truth, and to hear His words, “Neither do I condemn thee.”

Jesus said that He didn't come to condemn but to save. “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Here was one that He was going to die for. Here is one that He came to save. And thus, this beautiful picture.

There are some who say that this does not belong in the Bible. There are a couple of older texts, mainly the Codex Sinaiticus in which this particular account is absent. And thus, Wescott and Hort who compiled a Greek New Testament from which translations are made, decided to leave it out of the text at this point. They did put it in at the end of the gospel of John as sort of an appendage. And some of the modern translations put it in brackets and an explanation of the fact that in some of the older manuscripts, it doesn't exist. They usually say some of the best manuscripts. But I would challenge that the Codex Sinaiticus was a good manuscript. I think it's a very poor manuscript. And I think that's why it has survived. No one wanted to read it because it was poor. So the others that were good manuscripts were worn out and this one remain.

But there is a man who is much more of a scholar than I would ever hope to be, specially in the realm of the original text, Dean Burgon from England who wrote what he called the apostrophe of John in which he gives very strong, powerful arguments for the inclusion of this in the text where it is in the text and shows that the text would be incomplete without it.

I personally feel that it is a part and surely it is in the majority text, the Textus Receptus and all, it

is there because the majority of the text includes this story in place.

*Then said Jesus again unto them (8:12),*

The Pharisees and the scribes who brought the woman, they've left. The people are still there. And "Jesus spoke 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 (8:12).*

Jesus has come to bring light into the world that is dark by the result of sin. Light illuminates. Men will not come to the light because it exposes. "This is the condemnation, light has come into the world but men loved darkness rather than light." And so again, the affirmation and it's interesting that it is again related to not condemning. "God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world." "Neither do I condemn thee." "I am the light of the world." I didn't come to condemn but to bring light. And "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness."

John in writing his first epistle said, "That which was from the beginning which we have seen and heard, and have touched" (1 John 1:1). He came and John speaks about how that "if we walk then in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. But he that saith he is in the light and walks in darkness, lies, and does not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, then we have fellowship, and the blood of Jesus Christ is cleansing us from all sin" (1 John 1:6,7). So here Jesus and John is no doubt remembering these words of Jesus when He said, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness." So a man and often men say, I'm in the light or I'm walking in the light. And yet, they are living in darkness. Their lives are still fraught with sin, darkness. You say you have fellowship with God but John said, You lie, you really do not. "We walk in the light, as He is in the light."

*The Pharisees (8:13)*

Who were still there from the, not the ones that brought the woman to arrest her, but "the Pharisees"

*therefore said unto him, You are bearing record of yourself; your record is not true (8:13).*

Back in the fifth chapter, verse thirty-one, you remember that Jesus said, "If I bear record of Myself, My record is not true." He is saying what they would say if He bore record of Himself. And so He said, My Father bears record of Me, John bore record of Me, the works bear record of Me, and He told of all of the witnesses that He had who bore record of Him. Now He declares, "I am the light of the world." And they immediately pound on that and they said, You're testifying for Yourself, and thus we reject it. That's basically what He was saying back in John 5:31, If I would testify, you would reject it. You'd say, You're testifying for Yourself.

So here Jesus then defends it,

*He said, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know from whence I came, and whither I go; but you cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go (8:14).*

I know who I am. And I know where I've come from. I know where I'm going, you don't.

*You judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me (8:15,16).*

So there's another who bears witness with Me. Yes, I've born witness of Myself. But there's another who bears witness with Me, My Father.

*It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true (8:17).*

There is the confirmation to My witness and that is My Father.

*I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me He bears witness of me. Then said they unto him, Where is your Father (8:18,19)?*

This is one of the many questions that we have in this chapter, Where is Your Father? In other words, Alright, You say Your Father bears witness, show us. Produce Your Father, where is Your Father?

*Jesus answered, You neither know me, nor my Father: if you had known me, you should have known my Father also (8:19).*

Where is Your Father? Produce Him. He said, You don't know Me, if you know Me, you know My Father. You remember in the fourteenth chapter of John, which we will be coming to, Philip said, Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. This is pretty much what, Show us the Father. And they're saying pretty much, Show us the Father. Jesus answered Philip and said, Have I been so long a time with you, Philip? Haven't you seen Me? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.

Here Jesus is saying, If you have known Me, you would know the Father. In other words, there is

such an identity, there is such a oneness that to know the One is to know the other. To see the One is to see the other. And so My Father bears witness but you don't know Him. If you'd known Me, you would have known My Father also.

*These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple (8:20):*

The treasury was the court of the women. That's where the treasury was. There was the outer court of the Gentiles. Then the court of the women. And then from there, the court of the men, and then on into the actual place of sacrifice. And a woman was only allowed to pass through the court of the men if she was taking a sacrifice in. But there was the outer court of the women and this is where the treasury was. There were thirteen large containers for the treasury.

The first six of them were for designated purposes. The first one is for the half shekel, the temple tax that every Jew had to pay each year, the half shekel temple tax. But then the next one was to purchase the sacrifices; for the women the turtledoves and so forth that they had to offer for purification. And then the next one was to buy the wood for the fires that were on the altars. And so the upkeep of the vessels and so forth.

So until there was I think about seven of them that had sort of designated for different, and then the rest were just for anything you have left. Drop it in. And so you had to go by the thirteen collection points and that's where Jesus was teaching now. Porches, large colonnades and porches there where Jesus was teaching. John throws that in, "He was saying these things in the treasury, as He taught in the temple,"

*and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come (8:20).*

This hour in which He is to be crucified, this hour in which He calls it, He was to be glorified. The hour of His full dedication and submission to the will of the Father in going to the cross and bearing our sins.

*Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sins: for where I go, you cannot come (8:21).*

They are confused by this.

*And the Jews said, Will he kill himself? because he said, Where I go, you cannot come. And he said unto them, You are from beneath; I am from above: you are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that you shall die in your sins: for if you believe not that I am, you will die in your sins (8:22-24).*

"Where I'm going, you cannot come." Why? Because you don't believe that I am. The only way, the only way we can possibly hope to gain heaven as an eternal dwelling place is to believe in Jesus Christ. He said, "I am the way, the truth, the life: no man can come to the Father but by Me" (John 14:6). He's talking about, If you know Me, you would have known My Father. Now I'm going to go away. You're going to seek Me, you won't be able to come where I'm going. Heaven will not be open to you. Though you be a practicing Jew, heaven will not be open to you. You have to believe in Me to gain entrance into heaven. "For if you believe not that I am, you will die in your sins."

God has made only one provision for your sins to be forgiven. And that is through His Son, Jesus Christ. You cannot atone for your own sins. You cannot do good works and bring justification. God has only one provision for the forgiveness of your sins and that's through faith and trusting in His Son, Jesus Christ. Very narrow? Yes, it is. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way [that leads to eternal life], few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14). Jesus said, "If a person tries to come by any other way, the same is a thief and a robber" (John 10:1). There's only one way. There's only one door to the sheepfold—Jesus Christ.

So the second question,

*Then they said unto him, Just who are you? And Jesus said unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. They did not understand that he spoke to them of the Father (8:25-27).*

He is now again laying claim that He is only declaring to them the things of the Father, the things that He heard.

*Then said Jesus unto them, When you have lifted up the Son of man (8:28),*

This is a term by which is a reference to the cross, "lifted up on the cross." Again He'll say, "And I, if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me. Signifying by what manner he would die" (John 12:32,33).

I cringe when I hear the chorus, "Let's lift Him higher, Let's lift Him higher, that all the world may see." Oh no, that's poor theology. It's referring to the cross and being lifted up on the cross. Here He's saying, When I am lifted up, when I'm dying on the cross, then you will come to recognize.

When Jesus was being nailed to the cross, Luke tells us that He prayed, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

When on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out, people gathered to observe the phenomena. Peter stood up and he preached to them. And as he preached to them, he preached to them of "Jesus Christ, who is proved to be of God by the signs and the wonders, which He did in the midst: Whom you, according to the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, with your wicked hands have crucified and slain. Who God has raised from the dead, and who has ascended into heaven. And has given forth this gift of the Holy Spirit, which you now see. The people being convicted, said, Men and brethren, what shall we do since seeing we have crucified the Lord of glory? Peter said, Repent, and be baptized, in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, you'll receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:22,23,24,32,33,38).

He acknowledged, For I realize that in ignorance, you did it. Interesting, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). They're ignorant of what they're doing.

Now these people who were there, crucifying Him in ignorance, lifting Him up in ignorance, now they are saying, What shall we do? Peter said, I know that you did it ignorantly. But he offered to them the way of salvation because what you did, you did ignorantly. So the prayer of Jesus was really answered on the day of Pentecost. When Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

Jesus is saying, When I'm lifted up, you'll understand now these things, when I'm crucified.

*And then you shall know that I am (8:28),*

The word "he" is inserted. He's just using this name of God, "I am," the "ego eime."

*and that I do nothing of myself; but as the Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father has not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him (8:28,29).*

What a statement. "I do always those things that please Him." Would to God I could make that statement! I do so many things to please myself. Only Jesus could say, "I do always those things that please Him."

As we read in Psalm 40 this morning, when it becomes prophetic concerning Jesus, in verses seven and eight, "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:7,8). Goes right along with, "I do always those things that please Him." The Father's with Me, He hasn't left Me alone.

And where was this really fulfilled then? He's talking about being lifted up. When I'm lifted up. When Jesus is on the cross, He is there to please the Father. For it has pleased Him to put Him to death for our sins. "Not what I will, Thy will be done" (Mark 14:36). It was submission to the will of the Father.

"This is My beloved Son," He said, "in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). When did He say that? When Jesus said, "It becomes Me to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). That is, to be obedient in all of the issues of righteousness and the Father acknowledges, "I am well pleased." "I do always those things that please Him."

It should be a goal of each of our lives. What would please the Father in this? How can I please the Father? What would please the Father? I think that oftentimes we make a mistake by trying to drive a fine line of definition between right and wrong. And I think that often we are able to justify certain things like, It's not too bad, there's nothing really wrong about it. And we're trying to define right and wrong, and I don't think that really is the issue. I don't think that that's the question we should be asking. Is it right or is it wrong? I think the issue is, Is it pleasing? Does it please the Lord that I do this? Is He pleased with my actions? And Jesus could say, "I do always those things that please the Father," and that should be really our goal and our aim, to please the Father. Because I may be able to prove that it's alright to do it, but it may not be pleasing to the Father that I do it. Does it please Him?

*As he spake these words, many believed on him (8:30).*

But now He's going to address those that believe upon Him because it's, at this point, just a persuasion but it isn't a commitment. There are a lot of people who come to sort of a persuasion that yes, these things are true. Yes, He must be the Son of God. They have a mental persuasion but there's

not a commitment. And so Jesus is going to really challenge them now. He's going to really test their belief. He's going to say things that are going to upset them. Find out just what you do believe.

*Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him (8:31),*

He's addressing them now and He's going to get into some pretty heavy-duty stuff with them. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him,"

*If you continue in my word, then you are my disciples indeed (8:31);*

You believe now but there's more than just believing. You must continue in the word to be a disciple. Got to be more than just a head trip. More than just, Well yes, this must be the Son of God. There's got to be that commitment of the heart and the continuing in the word. Then a true disciple.

*And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We are Abraham's seed, we were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, You shall be made free (8:32,33)?*

The nation of Israel was in bondage in Egypt. They went into bondage to Babylon. They were in bondage to Syria. And now they are in bondage to Rome. What do they mean, We were never in bondage to any man? Roman soldiers are walking their streets. They're paying taxes, just resenting it, to the Roman government. And yet they say, We were never in bondage to any man.

In a sense, this is true that spirit was never conquered. They were always rebelling against whatever authority was over them, even the authority of God. They were never really in real submission to God. And that spirit seems to be just a part of them and thus they declare, We were never in bondage to any man. Oh yeah, they might be ruling over us, they might be walking our streets and we might pay taxes to them but in our hearts, we're still not in bondage.

*But Jesus answered them (8:34),*

And of course, they're thinking of it in a physical way and Jesus is talking to them in spiritual things and always there is that misunderstanding because Jesus is so often speaking in the spiritual realm and man is thinking in the physical realm. And so Jesus answered them and said,

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is a servant of sin. And the servant abides not in the house for ever: but the Son abides ever (8:34,35).*

If you commit sin, you are a servant to sin. By whatsoever a man is overcome, by the same is he brought into bondage. A servant of sin. "Whatever it is by which you are overcome, you become a slave to it" (2 Peter 2:19). So Jesus is talking about the bondage of sin, the bondage of corruption, as the scriptures call it. The servant does not abide in the house forever. He can be released at any time. But the Son, He abides forever.

*If the Son therefore shall make you free, you will be free indeed (8:36).*

The true freedom that we have in Jesus Christ Who breaks the power that sin had over your life. I love that song,

*He breaks the power of cancelled sin,*

*He sets the prisoner free.*

*His blood can make the foulest clean,*

*His blood availed for me.*

The power of Jesus. "Whom the Son sets free is free indeed." How we enjoy and love that freedom that we have in Jesus Christ. And He said,

*I know that you are Abraham's seed (8:37);*

They said, We're Abraham's seed, we were never. I know you're Abraham's seed,

*but you seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and you do that which you have seen with your father (8:37,38).*

Now He's making the distinction. My Father and your father. I'm doing the things of My Father; you're doing the things of your father. You're trying to kill Me. That's the desire of Satan, to destroy the Son of God. So you're going about to kill Me and thus, you're doing the things that you have seen with your father.

*They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said unto them, If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: Abraham didn't do this (8:39,40).*

“Abraham believed God; it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6). Paul said, “Not all who are of Israel, are Israel” (Romans 9:6). They again are thinking in the terms of the physical. I’m a physical descendant of Abraham. My genealogy goes back to Abraham, we have Abraham as our father. And Jesus said, “No, if you were Abraham’s children,” now Jesus is talking in the spiritual realm, “then you’d be doing the works of Abraham.” Abraham was the father of a spiritual race, of those who believed in the word of God. And so, Abraham didn’t do what you’re doing.

*You do the deeds of your father. Then they said unto him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God (8:41).*

Jesus is actually here pressing the issue, their father, and they are now cutting, very cutting. “We are not born of fornication.” Sort of an intimation concerning His birth. That secret of Mary was not a secret. When Mary and Joseph were married, the people counted the months. And thus, Jesus was accused of being conceived out of wedlock, which indeed, of course, He was. But they are using it now, “We were not born of fornication” as a very cutting remark to Jesus. And they said, “We have one Father, even God.” Now they are claiming God is their Father.

*But Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, you would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me (8:42).*

You’re wanting to kill Me because your father, Satan, wants to destroy Me. You’re doing the works of your father because you want to kill Me. “If God were your Father, you’d love Me.” And so, when you see people today it’s their response and reaction to Jesus Christ is very revealing as to who their father really is. If God is your Father, then you would love Him. “For I proceeded forth and came from God; neither did I come of Myself, but He sent Me.” He said, I didn’t come to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.”

*Why do you not understand my speech? even because you cannot hear my word (8:43).*

There is that hardness of heart, deafness of ear.

*You are of your father (8:44)*

Now He’s going to get very pointed. “You are of your father”

*the devil, and the desires of your father you will do (8:44).*

They did crucify Him. They did fulfill the desires of their father, the devil, in seeking to destroy God.

He was a murderer from the beginning, and he abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. *When he speaks a lie, he is speaking of his own nature: for he is a liar, and the father of it (8:44).*

Two accusations, he’s a murderer and he’s a liar. He wants to murder Me. I am the truth, he wants to extinguish the truth. He’s a liar and has been a liar from the beginning. You will know the truth, the truth will make you free. But the lies of Satan will bring you into bondage, into the bondage of corruption and sin. Powers of darkness.

*And because I tell you the truth, you do not believe me. Which of you convinces me of sin (8:45,46)?*

Which of you can point out sin in Me? I wouldn’t dare say that. We could get a long line of witnesses here. But Jesus lived such a life He could say, Which of you convinces me of sin, can show sin in Me?

*And if I say the truth, why do you not believe me? He that is of God hears God's words: you therefore hear them not, because you are not of God (8:46,47).*

Very strong statements but yet very probing kind of statements by which we need to look at ourselves. Do I hear His words? Do I submit? That is, hearing in the sense of submitting to the word. Then I am of God. But if I am rebelling, not listening, then I am not of God.

*Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Did we not say well that you are a Samaritan, and you have a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and you dishonour Me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeks and judges. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man will keep my saying, he shall never see death. Then the Jews said unto him, Now we know that you have a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and you say, If a man keeps Your saying, he will never taste of death (8:48-52).*

Again they’re thinking in terms of the physical, Jesus is speaking in the realm of the spiritual. It’s awfully hard to converse with a person that only thinks in the realms of the physical; hard to talk to them about spiritual things. “The natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit: neither can

he know them, they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14). And so we find ourselves oftentimes frustrated as we’re trying to talk to people about spiritual things and they can only think in the realm of the natural.

When Jesus said, “If a man keeps my words, he shall never see death,” He’s not talking about physical death. He’s not saying that you’re going to go on living forever in this old corrupted body. Wouldn’t it be horrible to have to live forever in this body of corruption? I could think of nothing worse than living forever in this body that’s getting more decrepit everyday. Going to pieces. But you got to stay in it, man. No way! Free me.

Paul said, “We know that when this tent is dissolved [this body in which we presently live], we have a building of God, not made with hands, that is eternal in the heavens” So then, we who are in these bodies do often “groan, earnestly desiring [to be free. Not to be an embodied spirit but] to be clothed upon with a body which is from heaven” (2 Corinthians 5:1,2). And as time goes by, and as the body begins to wear out, and it can no longer fulfill the purposes and functions for which God designed it, for He designed it to be the medium by which I can express myself. But I find that my body is beginning to restrict me. I’m not as agile as I once was. I can’t jump off of walls anymore. I let myself down carefully. You learn to live with the limitations and you get to the place where you begin to long to be free. Not to be unembodied, but to receive that new body which is from heaven and to move on into the eternal aspects of the kingdom of God.

So Jesus when He said, You will never die, He’s talking about the second definition of death in the scriptures which is the separation of a man’s consciousness from God. The Bible says that a person who lives for pleasure is dead while they yet live. There’s no consciousness of God. That’s spiritual death. And when Jesus is here saying, “If a man keeps My saying, he will never see death,” He is saying, You’ll never be consciously separated from God. Spiritual death.

He’s not saying you’re going to live forever in this body. Don’t worry. But you’ll never be separated from God. And “to be absent from this body is to be present then with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8). So they are thinking in the terms of the physical, and the Jews said unto Him, “Now we know that You have a devil. Abraham is dead, the prophets, and now you say, If a man keeps Your saying, he will never taste of death.”

*Are You greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets who are dead: whom do you make yourself (8:53)?*

An important question. “Whom do you make yourself?”

*Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom you say, that he is your God (8:54):*

“Who do you make Yourself?” Tell you what, My Father is the One You’re calling God. You call Him God. He’s My Father. So who’s He making Himself? He’s making Himself the Son of God.

*Yet you have not known him; but I know him: and if I would say that I don’t know him, I would be a liar like you: but I know him, and I keep his saying (8:55).*

Things are pretty hot at this point. They’ve accused Him of being born of fornication and all, Samaritan, You have a devil. They’re making all of these accusations. And so Jesus comes back and He said, If I said I didn’t know Him, then I would be a liar just like you are. And then He said, “Yet you have not known Him; but I know him,” and so forth. “But I know Him, and I keep His saying.” So “I do always those things that please the Father, I do the things that I see of the Father.” And now, “I keep His saying.”

*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. The Jews then said unto him, You’re not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham (8:56,57)?*

What did Jesus mean, “Abraham rejoiced to see My day?” Of course, there could be a couple of things. God spoke to Abraham and gave to him a promise. That from his seed, all of the nations of the earth would be blessed. Abraham rightly interpreted that as meaning that he would be a progenitor of the Messiah. That’s what God was promising. And so Abraham believed God, this promise of God, and “it was accounted unto him for righteousness.” His faith in this promise of God that the Messiah will come from you. He’ll be a descendant of yours. His belief in that, God counted his belief for righteousness. Belief what? That the Messiah would come from him. So Abraham believed in Jesus.

We are told in the book of Hebrews that “these all died in faith, not having received the promise, but seeing it afar off, they embraced it, and they claimed they were just strangers and pilgrims” (Hebrews

11:13). So hearing the promise of God, seeing it afar off, he embraced it. But “Abraham rejoiced to see My day.” In a spiritual sense, Abraham saw His day, or saw Him.

What do you mean Abraham has seen You? In the Old Testament, when Lot was captured by the five kings who invaded that territory and took captives, when Abraham got his servants and they pursued after the five kings and delivered Lot, as they were returning back to the area, the priest and the king, he is called both the priest and king, of peace came out to meet Abraham. His name was Melchizedek. And Abraham gave to him a tenth, a tithe of all of the loot that he had taken in the battle against the five kings. And he offered to Abraham bread and wine, the symbols of communion.

There are many who believe that Melchizedek was one of what they call the Christophanies or the appearances of Christ in the Old Testament. We do read in the book of Hebrews that Jesus is a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek. The declaration of Jesus was a high priest would be challenged by the Jews, He is of the tribe of Judah, the tribe of Levi was appointed as the priestly tribe. And so the book of Hebrews declares, He is a tribe, not after the Levitical order but “He is a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 6:20). And so there are those who believe and affirm, and I am one of them, that Melchizedek was an appearance of Jesus. The fact that He’s called the King of peace and the King of righteousness. And He appeared to Abraham. Abraham paid tithes unto Him. And of course, the tithes are paid by the lesser to the greater.

So “Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad.” So they challenged Him and said, “You’re not yet fifty years old.”

I wonder if Jesus, because of the hardships in life looked older than, He was only in His early thirties at this point. But I wonder if the severity of life made Him look older. “You’re not yet fifty years old.” Have you seen Abraham?

*Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily (8:58),*

When He gets to these “Verily, verily,” stop. You’re going to get some important stuff here. Back in fifty-one, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that keeps my saying, shall not see death.” Now again, “Verily, verily,”

*I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am (8:58).*

He didn’t say, I was. Before Abraham was, I was. But “before Abraham was,” and now He uses that eternal name of God, “I am.” Who are you? Who do you make Yourself? You want to know? Before Abraham was, I am. The eternal.

Their response was the response of their father, the murderer from the beginning because,

*They took up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by (8:59).*

The idea or indication seems to be that He just sort of became invisible. Walked right on past them. But as we can well imagine, the tensions are hot. They’re ready now. And since they believed Him, so He said these to those that believed. But boy, now they’re ready to take up stones. They can’t handle His words. “Before Abraham was, I am.”

That either makes Jesus a colossal liar or the Son of God. To make that claim that’s so radical, if it is not true, He is a colossal liar. And we may as well not meet next Sunday.

But if it is true, then we better pay close attention and submit ourselves to the truth. Receive the truth. And in receiving the truth, receive freedom from the bondage of sin. We shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

Throughout this congregation tonight, one after another to the hundreds could stand up and give witness of how the truth has made them free. After the first service today when we spoke on the subject, a fellow came up, pulled up his sleeve and showed me the track marks, and he said, Jesus has set me free. I can witness to what you said. “I was a heroine addict and Jesus set me free.” After the third service, a fellow came up. And he said, I have had fifteen years of sobriety, thirteen and a half years of struggle, like Ulysses bound to the mat. But a year and a half ago, I found Jesus Christ and now I am free indeed.

Yes, you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. Or if the Son shall make you free, then you are free indeed.

Father, thank You for that wonderful freedom that we have in and through Jesus Christ. And Lord, it is our desire to know You, to love You, to serve You. We desire to be always those things that please You. Take us by the hand and lead us in Your path, let us walk in Your light that we would not stumble but have the light of life through Jesus Christ. In His Name we ask these things, Father, and for His

glory. Amen.

May the Lord bless and give you a good week of spiritual growth, understanding. May you be diligent in your pursuit after the will of God. And as you study the word, may God open the truth to your heart. May we by next Sunday be another step up the rung of the ladder, into His image, into His likeness, as He draws us unto Himself.