

John 8

A Woman Caught in Adultery; Jesus Teaches in the Temple; The Pharisees Attack Jesus

Day 1

Read John 8:1-11

Scribes and Pharisees try to trap Jesus

1. From 8:2-6

- *Where and when* did the event occur? 8:2
- *Who* was involved? (Who was missing from the scene?) 8:3
- *What* was the issue? 8:4,5 (See Exodus 20:14; Deut. 22:22)

Optional Digging Deeper

What other events happened or will happen on the Mount of Olives?

- Luke 22:39-42

- Acts 1:9-12

- Zechariah 14:3,4

For Your Information: "Did they really execute people for adultery in Israel? It is true that adultery was a capital offense under Jewish law, but the rules for evidence in capital cases were extremely strict. The actual act had to be observed by multiple witnesses who agreed exactly in their testimony."
- David Guzik

- *Why* did the scribes and Pharisees bring the woman to Jesus? 8:6 Compare Matt 22:15; Luke 20:20 (*Picture the scene. How do you think this woman felt?*)

For Your Information: "**Pharisees:** Their name meaning 'separated ones,' they numbered about 6,000 and were spread over the whole of Palestine. They were teachers in the synagogues, religious examples in the eyes of the people and self-appointed guardians of the law and its proper observance. They considered the interpretations and regulations handed down by tradition to be virtually as authoritative as Scripture (Mark 7:8-13). The Pharisees were a legalistic and separatistic group who strictly, but often hypocritically, kept the law of Moses and the unwritten 'tradition of the elders'...According to Pharisaism, God's grace extended only to those who kept His law. The Teachers of the Law 'Scribes,' who studied, interpreted and taught the law (both written and oral.) The majority of these teachers belonged to the party of the Pharisees."
The Sadducees were more worldly and politically minded, and were theologically unorthodox-among other things denying the resurrection, angels and spirits."
- NIV Study Bible (1445,1496,1547)

"They were saying this, testing Him..." "They set a trap for Jesus. If Jesus says, 'Let her go,' then it seems that He breaks the Mosaic Law. If he says, 'Execute her for the crime of adultery,' then Jesus seems harsh and He breaks Roman law, because the Romans had taken away the right of Jews to officially execute people for religious offenses."
- David Guzik

2. What do you think Jesus was doing by writing on the ground? 8:6,8

Food for Thought: "I like to imagine He wrote a name. After all, where was her adulterous partner? Only half of the 'criminals' were present. Or the writing could have been a countercharge against the scribes and Pharisees, namely their secret sins. The Greek word used in 8:6, *katagrapho*, literally means, 'to write against.'" - Charles Swindoll (164)

3. How did Jesus turn the tables and end up “testing” the scribes and Pharisees? 8:7 (Compare Matthew 7:1.2; Deuteronomy 17:7)

- Why do you think He wrote on the ground “again?” 8:8

4. From the men’s reaction to Jesus’ statement, what can you conclude? 8:9 (Why do you think they left in order from oldest to youngest?)

Food for Thought: “Perhaps the oldest left first because they most easily understood that Jesus was talking about them. Or, others think that Jesus was writing on the ground an account of their own sins, beginning from the oldest to the youngest, and this explains the order of their departure.
‘Being convicted by their conscience.’ The embarrassment was no longer His, but theirs.” - David Guzik

5. What was Jesus’ verdict and instruction to the woman? 8:11 (Compare 3:17) What does this story communicate about Jesus’ attitude toward sin versus sinners?

- Who can forgive sins? Mark 2:7,10

6. Read the following verses and underline the phrases that describe God’s forgiveness.

- Psalm 86:5 For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon Thee. NAS
- Psalm 103:10-12 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. NAS
- Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.
- Isaiah 38:17 Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back. NIV
- Isaiah 43:25 "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins. NAS
- Isaiah 55:6-7 Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. NIV
- Romans 4:6-8 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him." NIV
- Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. NAS
- Colossians 2:13b ...God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, NIV

Applying the Word: Do any of the above verses on forgiveness personally speak to your heart? How should Christ's forgiveness affect the way you view your past? How should it affect your behavior?

Day 2

Read John 8:12-20

Attack on Jesus' witness

7. In 8:12 list:

- The "I Am" statement:

- The condition to receive:

- The promises given:

- How does this statement relate to what just happened?

Optional Digging Deeper

Fill out the 2nd "I am" statement on the chart: "I am Statements in John."

For Your Information: "Light was an important symbol in the Feast of Tabernacles. During the feast, many emblems and ceremonies remembered the pillar of fire that gave light to Israel during the Exodus. Now, Jesus takes this important symbol and simply applies it to Himself: I am the light of the world."
- David Guzik

"According to the Mishnah, priests erected four giant lampstands in the court of women during the Feast of Tabernacles. Each evening at sundown, young men climbed ladders to light these enormous oil lamps, which...reflected in every courtyard in Jerusalem.

Perhaps as the priests began to set each hanging lamp aflame, Jesus declared, 'I am the Light of the world; he who follow Me will not walk in darkness.' Note how the statement is exclusive, He didn't say I'm a light – one among many – but the light, the one and only source of truth."
- Charles Swindoll (168)

8. Underline the things connected with light in scripture.

- Psalm 43:3 Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. NIV
- Psalm 119:130 The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. NIV
- Psalm 27:1 The LORD is my light and my salvation--whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life--of whom shall I be afraid? NIV
- Ephesians 5:8-10 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. NIV
- 1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. NIV

9. Underline what is connected with darkness.

- Proverbs 4:19 But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble. NIV
- Romans 13:12-13 ...let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. NIV
- Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. NIV
- 1 John 2:11 But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him. NIV

10. What does the concept of light and darkness convey to you about the problems of this world?

11. What was the Pharisees' next accusation? 8:13 (*What had Jesus said that threatened them?*)

- Why is Jesus' witness true? 8:14 (Contrast 5:31)

12. What obstacle to belief did the Pharisees have? 8:15a (*How had the Pharisees shown this?*)

13. How did Jesus compare Himself? 8:15b (Cf. 3:17)

- Why would Jesus' judgment be true? 8:16

For Your Information: "When Jesus said that He judges no one, He was speaking within the context of His mission on earth. He had come to save people, not to judge or condemn them (12:47; 3:17). But this did not mean that He would never pass judgment during His time on earth. And at His second coming, He will pass judgment on the basis of what people have done with His offer of salvation (5:27; see also 2 Tim. 4:1)." – Africa Bible Commentary (1269)

14. From 8:17-18, why does Jesus' witness pass the requirements of the law? (Cf. 5:36,37)

15. Considering Jesus' birth, what were the Pharisees intimating by asking "Where is Your Father" (8:19a)? Compare 8:41

Food for Thought: "The Pharisees intended this as a deeply cutting insult to Jesus. They referred to His virgin birth, and to the rumors that it was not a miraculous conception, but an illicit one...They thought they had some special 'intelligence' or scandal on Him...But Jesus made it clear that they do not know anything about Him, or His Father." – David Guzik

16. Why didn't the Pharisees really know God? 8:19c (Cf. 14:7)

17. In what ways does the Son make the Father known (8:19)? See John 1:14; 5:36; 14:10; 20:30

18. Once again, why couldn't the Pharisees seize Jesus? 8:20

Optional Digging Deeper

What interesting teaching did Jesus give in the treasure area of the temple? Mark 12:41-44 (Contrast John 8:15a)

For Your Information: "This debate took place in the part of the temple (8:20) where there were thirteen chests into which people dropped the offerings that supported the various activities of the temple. It was thus an area where there was a constant flow of people."
- Africa Bible Commentary (1269)

Applying the Word: *The Pharisees judged Jesus on an earthly level and could not understand the spiritual meaning of what He was saying. When has your concept of the Lord been stretched from the earthly to the heavenly?*

Day 3

Read John 8:21-36

Jesus' warns about unbelief

19. What tone do you read in Jesus' statement in 8:21? (Compare Romans 5:12)

- On what level did the Pharisee's relate to what Jesus was saying? 8:22 (Compare their earlier interpretation in 7:34,35)

20. Why couldn't the Pharisees understand Jesus? 8:23 (Compare 1 Corinthians 2:14)

21. What remedy did Jesus give for sin? 8:24 (Cf. John 3:36)

- How would you describe the response of the Pharisees? 8:25 (See 5:17,18 for an earlier event when Jesus described who He was.)

For Your Information:

"Unless you believe that I am He" (8:24)

"The "He" is rightly in italics and added by the translators. The title 'I am' is a claim to deity, and if the Pharisees will be saved from dying in their sins, they must believe in Jesus and in who He really is - God the Son." - David Guzik

"His statement is rendered "I am He"; however, the Greek is simply ego eimi, 'I AM,' the classic self-designation of God."
- Charles Swindoll (169)

22. Record the phrases that describe how Jesus related His ministry to the Father.

- 8:26 “the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world”
- 28b
- 28c
- 8:29a
- 8:29b
- 8:29c

23. Describe in your own words, the answer that Jesus had given to their question (5:25)?

24. How much of what Jesus said did the Pharisees understand? 8:22,25,27 (Cf. 1:10,11)

- What event would be the turning point for many in understanding? 8:28a (Cf. 12:32,33)

Truth and Freedom

25. What is the measure of true discipleship? 8:31 (Compare 15:1-5)

- What does this lead to? 8:32 (Cf. 14:6)

IT'S GREEK TO ME “*disciples*” Strong’s #3101 *mathetes*, a learner, i.e. pupil

“**continue/hold to/abide**” Strong’s #3306 *meno*; to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy): Also translated: “abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry” KJV – Strong’s Concordance

“The ‘**holding**’ here involves hearing, accepting and obey His teaching...If they want to be in a real relationship with Him, they have to set out to live according to His teaching. As they open their hearts and minds to learn from Him, they will experience true freedom.” – Africa Bible Commentary (1270)

“To abide in Christ is to live in conscious dependence upon Him, recognizing that it is His life, His power, His wisdom, His resources, His strength and His ability, operating through you, which enable you to live according to His will.” (Bill Bright) – Irving Jensen (73)

“**The truth shall make you free**” “ Knowledge of the truth, acquired through experience, does not bring the liberty of which Jesus spoke. Knowledge itself is conditioned upon abiding in His word, which make spiritual revelation prior in importance to experiential knowledge.” – Merrill C. Tenney (147)

26. What kind of freedom did the Jews think Jesus was talking about? 8:33

For Your Information: “When they declared that they had not been in bondage to any man, they stretched the truth. They forgot conveniently enough the bondage in Egypt, the oppression in the period of the Judges, the Babylonian captivity, and the Roman yoke. Pride is usually blind to truth.” – Merrill C. Tenney (148)

27. What type of slavery was Jesus describing? 8:34 (Compare Proverbs 6:21-23 Romans 6:16)

For Your Information: "Sin in this passage is in a verb tense indicating a habitual, continual action. The person in habitual sin is a slave of sin...Slavery to sin is the worst kind of slavery, because there is no escape from ourselves. A Son must set us free, and the Son of God sets us free and brings us into the household of God."
- David Guzik

"The bondage of which Jesus spoke was of a deeper and deadlier sort than political or economic slavery...This was a declaration of the profound truth that slavery is not inflicted from without but from within. It is also progressive and inexorable. One sin becomes inevitably the cause of others."
- Merrill C. Tenney (148)

28. How does the position of a slave differ from the position of a Son? 8:35a (*To what hope is Jesus pointing?*)

For Your Information: "[The servant] is not the heir, and may at any time be expelled from the house of his master. But a son is the heir. He cannot be in this manner cast off or sold. He is privileged with the right of remaining in the family."
- Barnes' Notes

29. What/who sets us free? 8:32,36

Food for Thought: "The indwelling Christ inspires (does not compel) the believer to do what he should do, and empowers him to do it. This is true freedom."
- Irving Jensen (73)

Applying the Word: *From what lies has the truth set you free? Is there any way that you still feel enslaved to a lie? (Why does knowing Christ set you free in a way that just knowing the facts doesn't?)*

Day 4

Read John 8:37-53

Children of Abraham

30. Although the Jews were physically Abraham's offspring, what attitude showed they were not his children? 8:37b,40a (See also 8:6)

For Your Information: [Contrast 8:31 and 8:37] "Among the possible explanations of the different listeners are these:
a) The profession of faith in verse 31 was not a genuine, saving faith. b) After John 8:31,32, the larger group of unbelieving Jews came into the conversation and Jesus directed His words to them."
- Irving Jensen (72)

"**Abraham** is the spiritual ancestor of all who place their trust in God because he heard and obeyed God's word. Because Jesus is the Word of God in human flesh, to reject Him is to reject God. Therefore, the disbelieving Jews were descendants of Abraham in name only."
- Charles Swindoll (171)

31. Whom did the Jews claim as their Father?

- 8:39
- 8:41b

32. Who was their real “father” (8:41a,44a)? What two attributes did Jesus give him? 8:44

For Your Information: “A particular trait of John is his view of the universe as sharply divided between light and dark, truth and lie, life and death, the kingdom of God and ‘the world.’ For John there is no middle ground. And it is perhaps this discourse that set his perspective like concrete. Satan is everything that God is not, and to practice sin is to side with Satan against God (1 John 1:5-7). The plain and simple reason for the Pharisees’ rejection of Jesus, the Word of God, was their dedication to the father of lies.”
- Charles Swindoll (172)

- How would you describe the Jews’ response in 8:41b? (Cf. 8:19)

Children of the Devil

33. If God were their Father, how would the Jews have responded to Jesus and His word?

- 8:42
- 8:43,47

Optional Digging Deeper
Read Matt. 23:13-36 and
Luke 11:39-52 for Jesus’
indictments against the
scribes and Pharisees.

34. Why didn’t the Jews believe Jesus? 8:45 (What evidence did they have that Jesus spoke the truth? 8:46)

The claims of Jesus

35. What was Jesus’ closing indictment against the Jews? 8:47b

- Because they couldn’t refute Jesus’ words, what did the Pharisees do? 8:48

36. In response, what did Jesus say His life revealed?

- 7:49
- 7:50

37. In spite of their vicious attacks, what gracious offer did Jesus give? 8:51 (Compare 5:24; 6:39)

- How was it received? 8:52a (How did the Jews interpret Jesus’ words?) 8:52b

38. What tone do you hear in their questions in 8:53?

- What was their problem? 8:54-55

39. How different was Abraham's attitude toward Jesus? 8:56 (For how Abraham "rejoiced" to see Christ's day, see Hebrews 11:8-10)

- On what level did the Pharisees remain? 8:57

40. What revelation did Jesus give of Himself? 8:58 (Compare Exodus 3:14; Isaiah 48:12)

IT'S GREEK TO ME "I Am" "The ancient Greek phrase is *ego emi*, which is the same term used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament in Jesus' day to describe the Voice from the burning bush. In using the phrase *I Am* (John 8:24, 8:58, 13:19) Jesus used a clear divine title belonging to Yahweh alone (Exodus 3:13-14, Deuteronomy 32:39, Isaiah 43:10) and was interpreted as such by Jesus' listeners (John 8:58-59)." - David Guzik

"**Am**'...means timeless being. There never was a time when the Son was not. He could always assert, 'I am.' Three times in this context *I am* is used in the absolute sense...(vv. 24,28,58) In no one of these passages does the third personal pronoun *he* follow the *I am* in the Greek text. The italicized form shows that it has been inserted by the translators to complete the meaning in English...the phrase *I am* is an assertion of absolute, timeless existence." - Merrill Tenney (149-150)

41. Trace the escalation in the Jews' response to Jesus' teaching:

- 8:13
- 8:19
- 8:33
- 8:41
- 8:48
- 8:53
- 8:59

Food for Thought: "Violence is the last resort of defeated men, who, when reason fails, try stones. [Their] methods of attacks show the degeneration of a shallow belief into an active and vicious unbelief, which ended in compelling Jesus to withdraw from the very temple which was His Father's house." - Merrill C. Tenney (151)

Applying the Word: *The Samaritan woman and the Jews were both guilty of sin. It was not their sin but recognition of their need for a Savior that made the difference. Why do you think this is such a hard step for so many to take?*

Optional Digging Deeper

List the contrasts that Jesus made between himself and the Pharisees in John 8.

Jesus	Pharisees
8:14b "I know where I come from and where I am going"	8:14c
8:15b "I am not judging anyone."	8:15a
8:23 "I am from above...I am not of this world."	8:23
8:29, 38a "I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." "I speak the things which I have seen with My Father"	8:37,38
8:42 "I proceeded forth and have come from God"	8:44,47b
8:45 "I speak the truth"	8:55b
8:49b "I honor My Father"	8:49b