

Lesson 8
John 8:1-59
Contrasts and Conflicts

Memory verse: “But he continued, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am He, you will indeed die in your sins.” (John 8:23-24 NIV)

The Feast of Tabernacles had ended, but Jesus took advantage of the opportunity to minister to the pilgrims in the temple. During the feast, word had quickly spread that Jesus was not only attending but openly teaching in the temple (see Luke 21:37). He taught in the court of the women at the place where the treasury was situated (John 8:20).

Is the story of the woman taken in adultery a part of Scripture? If it is, where does it belong in the gospel record? John 7:53—8:11 is not found in some of the ancient manuscripts; where it is found, it is not always in this location in John’s gospel. Most scholars seem to agree that the passage is a part of inspired Scripture (“a fragment of authentic gospel material,” says Dr. F. F. Bruce) regardless of where it is placed.

To many of us, the story fits right here! In fact, the development of the entire chapter can easily be seen to grow out of this striking event in the temple. Our Lord’s declaration on His being the Light of the World (John 8:12) certainly fits, and so do His words about true and false judgment (John 8:15–16, 26). The repeated phrase “die in your sins” (John 8:21, 24) would clearly relate to the judgment of the woman, and the fact that the chapter ends with an attempt to stone Jesus shows a perfect parallel to the opening story. The transition from John 7:52 to 8:12 would be too abrupt without a transitional section.

Our Lord found Himself again in conflict with the Jewish religious leaders, but this time, they set a trap, hoping to get enough evidence to arrest Jesus and get Him out of the way. However, their plot failed, but a controversy followed. In this chapter we see a series of contrasts that reveal the graciousness of Christ and the wickedness of man.

The most difficult people to win to the Saviour are those who do not realize that they have a need. They are under the condemnation of God, yet they trust their religion to save them. They are walking in the darkness and not following the light of life. They are sharing a “living death” because of their bondage to sin, and, in spite of their religious deeds, they are dishonouring the Father and the Son. These are the people who crucified Jesus Christ, and Jesus called them the children of the devil.

Whose child are you? Is God your Father because you have received Jesus Christ into your life (John 1:12–13)? Or is Satan your father because you are depending on a counterfeit righteousness, a “works righteousness,” not the righteousness that comes through faith in Jesus Christ?

If God is your Father, then heaven is your home. If He is not your Father, then hell is your destiny. It is truly a matter of life or death!

Scripture Reading: John 8:12-59

To learn in this lesson: 1) Light and Darkness 2) Freedom and Bondage 3) Honour and Dishonour

Discussion Questions:

1) How did the trap set by the religious leaders in the event (John 8: 1-20) back fire with Jesus’ responses?

2) What is the message from Jesus on the matter of life and death (verses 21 to 30) and that of freedom and bondage (verses 31 to 47) to the Jews of His day which is also applicable to the world today?

3) Why did the religious leaders who were proud of their heritage as descendants of Abraham accused Jesus as a demoniac and heretic (in verses 48 to 59) and what was the outcome?

