

## JOHN 8

## JESUS, THE BRINGER OF TRUE FREEDOM

This unique passage does such an outstanding job in characterizing the wisdom, holiness, and goodness of our Savior (verses 1-11). Here we see that the motive of the Pharisees is not love for God, or zeal for righteousness, or a passion for purity and holiness, or indignation against sin; but their whole desire is to entangle Jesus, and to secure from Him some word or utterance which may lead to His arrest, condemnation, and death. It is worthy of notice that the desire which some people feel for the punishment of wrongdoers can often be traced to motives which would be considered discreditable if they were truly revealed. The religion of some persons seems to consist in hatred of their fellow human beings, or in a passion for the punishment of others. We see an example of this here as the Pharisees endeavored to place Jesus in a dilemma. If He acquitted the woman who was guilty of adultery, then He would be in trouble for opposing the Law of Moses. But He could not condemn the woman to death, either; for then He would be encroaching upon the authority of the Roman government, who had taken away from the Jews the power of inflicting capital punishment.

But Jesus was not fooled by these cunning plots against Him. His reply was a revelation of His Divine wisdom and grace. At first, He did not speak; He merely stooped and wrote some unknown words upon the ground. But then He said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone." By this utterance, Jesus lifted the question out of the sphere of mere legal technicalities and placed it in the realm of moral realities. He showed Himself to be qualified to judge all persons rightfully and justly. And hereby He silenced, convicted, and condemned His enemies. If these Pharisees wished to stand in the place of God and be self-appointed executors of Divine Justice, then they should also be like God in the purity of their lives. They may not have been guilty of the particular sin in question, but their own consciences reminded them that they could not say that they were innocent of sin. Evidently no one in that group felt morally qualified, when tested by this standard that Jesus proposed. He thus upheld the Law of Moses, but He also convicted the proud and hypocritical accusers of being worthy of condemnation themselves.

The defeat was obvious; the Pharisees withdrew. When they had gone, Jesus addressed the woman whom they had left behind; and in His words to her, He practically made a claim of sinlessness for Himself. He implied that He could have justly condemned her with the sentence which they feared to pronounce. But He did not do so. Rather, He encouraged her to repent and believe. His words were full of grace, and we cannot help concluding that she must have

**Outline of the chapter:**

- ❖ Christ skillfully evades the snare which was laid for Him, by the scribes and Pharisees' bringing to Him a woman taken in adultery – verses 1-11
- ❖ He discourses with the Jews on several different topics – verses 12-59



gone away to a new and better life.

After the malicious and cunning Pharisees had gone away, Jesus resumed His teaching of the people, which He had been engaged in when they arrived on the scene. In verses 12-20, He compares Himself with that cloudy pillar of glory which had led the children of Israel through the wilderness. In the last chapter, during the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus had taken the opportunity to compare Himself with the split rock that miraculously provided life-giving water; and now He also declares Himself to be the true Pillar of cloud and fire, for He is able to guide and give light to all His followers.

Christ also solemnly declared (verses 21-30) that if the Jews did not believe in Him, they would die in their sins. This message is applicable to anyone who refuses to believe in Jesus alone for redemption. Sin is the alienation of the heart from God; therefore, those who die without having their sins pardoned by Jesus can expect nothing else than that heaven will be closed against them.

To those who were His nominal followers, Jesus now applied a test which would show whether or not their faith was real (verses 31-59). He told them, "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." No passing emotion or empty profession constitutes true Christian discipleship; but rather, it is shown by a patient continuance in the study and practice of the teaching and will of Christ. The result will be a moral freedom that cannot otherwise be obtained anywhere. But sadly, Jesus' hearers were offended at the implication that they were slaves. They kept reassuring themselves of their descent from Abraham, and their hope of a glorious national future in fulfillment of God's promises; and this made them sensitive to any implication of servitude – in spite of the political domination of Rome that they were under, at the very time when Jesus uttered these words! But He reminds them that yielding to sin results in moral slavery, and this was the servitude that they were under. Nevertheless, true faith in Him will secure freedom from sin, the liberty of the sons and daughters of God, and everlasting life. But when the Jews interpreted His words literally and objected that death is a universal experience for all people, Jesus startled them by replying that, for Him, life has been and always will be an eternal state! "Before Abraham was born," He declared, "I AM!" Now this was nothing short of a claim of identity with God Himself, the great "I AM" of Exodus 3:14! No wonder, then, that the Jews "took up stones ... to cast at him!" For since they refused to acknowledge His claim of Divinity, they had no other choice except to regard Him as a blasphemer. There is no other alternative! The claims of Jesus are unmistakable. He was either a deceiver and a blasphemer, or else He really was and is what He asserts Himself to be – namely, the Divine Son of God!

*Thank You, Lord Jesus, for bringing us from the Adam-nature and servitude of sin, into the freedom and adoption of sons and daughters in Your family! Amen.*