

John 8:13–20

¹³ The Pharisees therefore said to Him, “You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.”

¹⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going.

¹⁵ You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.

¹⁶ And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.

¹⁷ It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true.

¹⁸ I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.”

¹⁹ Then they said to Him, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.”

²⁰ These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.

“The Darkness that Is in the World” John 8:13-20

INTRO:

What do we do when we are faced with a reality we do not like? People tend to respond in a variety of ways. **(1)** Some choose to ignore that reality and just pretend it does not exist. This is called denial. **Romans 1** describes this kind of response as mankind repressing the knowledge of God. **(2)** Others try to put a spin on their view of reality to make it less offensive. *“Oh ,sure God exists, but He is so loving that even when He disapproves of how we live, He just says, ‘I forgive.’”* **(3)** Still others will find what they think is a technical problem in what is being said, and use the perceived problem to mask the truth which is being presented. This is the approach the Pharisees are taking here in **John 8:13-20**.

In **John 8:12**, the Lord Jesus once again asserted His deity by claiming He was and is *“the light of the world.”* Light does two things: **(1)** it dispels darkness and **(2)** it reveals what is hidden in the darkness. Our Lord Jesus, who is the light of the world, did both of these things. First, He dispelled the darkness of ignorance of God. He is the expounder of who God is in **John 1:18**. Second, He exposes the sinfulness of humankind. This is what Jesus was talking about in **John 3:19-21**. *“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be*

clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” Light in this way produces pressure and it is this pressure which the Pharisees feel and respond to in our text. We will explore this text in terms of two divisions.

I. Their blindness is seen in their avoidance the truth. (v. 13-18)

II. Their blindness is seen in their ignorance of God. (v. 19-20)

I. Their blindness is seen in their avoidance the truth. (v. 13-18)

“The Pharisees therefore said to Him, “You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.” Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me. It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.” John 8:13-18

A. The background of this whole exchange is our Lord’s statement in verse 12.

“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’”

John then demonstrated how dark the world really was and still is by recording the Pharisee’s response.

“Therefore the Pharisees said to Him, ‘You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.’”

The Pharisees heard what Jesus said, but they just did not like it. How did they respond?

1. They could simply ignore His statement. This would not erase it from the minds of those who heard it. They certainly didn’t want to let His affirmation go unchallenged. So, ignoring was not an option.

2. They could put a different spin on it. This possibility also did not seem to be a good option. What possible way could they twist His words to soften the impact of what He said? Nothing presented itself to their minds.

3. So, option number three is the one they chose. They challenged His statement on a technicality. Their technicality was built on the statement in Moses’ which actually applied to capital cases. **Deuteronomy 19:15** reads,

“One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.”

These were the very words of Moses, so surely they had Him in a bind.

B. This response to the Lord’s teaching is a common one.

1. Remember the Samaritan woman in **John 4**? Jesus approached her and asked for a drink. Her first response was one of shock because He was a Jew and she a Samaritan. When He went on to begin to teach her in **verse 10**, she immediately pointed out a technical problem in what He said.

“Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water. The woman said to Him, Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water?”

2. Again, remember the crowd that sought the Lord for the free lunch in **John 6**? He challenged them about their motivation and they responded with a technical question. In **John 6:27-29** Jesus said, ***“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”*** Then they said to Him, ***“What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”*** Jesus answered and said to them, ***“This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”*** Jesus said, give your life to seeking the food that remains and not that which passes away. But they latch on the word ***“labor”*** and ask Him to define that work!

C. Why did all these people respond this way? The reason the Pharisees, the Samaritan woman, and the crowd in **John 6** latched onto technicalities was because they could understand these technicalities, but they did not understand the truth the Lord Jesus communicated. They were all in spiritual darkness. All they knew was that the truth made them uncomfortable so they fled to a technicality they thought they understood.

1. Jesus underlined this truth in His discussion of the point they raised. They didn't understand the truth in **verse 12**, because they did not know where He came from and where He would return (**verse 14**). Where did Jesus come from and to where was He going to return? In **John 16:28**, the Lord told us.

“I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.”

These Pharisees, who prided themselves on their knowledge of the Old Testament, didn't really understand anything about the Lord Jesus being sent forth from the Father into this world.

2. In **verse 15**, our Lord provided them a second reason why they could not understand what He said. They could not understand because they judged things according to the flesh. They passed judgment on Him and His credentials based on human thinking, not divine revelation. There is a very important passage that touches on this problem.

1 Corinthians 2:14-16

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is rightly discerned by no one.”

These Pharisees were natural men. They did not understand spiritual reality. Only the Lord can give discernment to us!

3. In **verses 16-18**, He told them they couldn't understand that their technicality was invalid, because they could not receive the testimony of the Father to His Son. God the Father bore eloquent testimony to the identity of His Son in the Old Testament

Scriptures. The Pharisees prided themselves on knowing intimately these very Scriptures. Remember what Jesus said in **John 5:39**?

“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.”

II. Their blindness is seen in their ignorance of God. (v. 19-20)

“They said to Him therefore, ‘Where is your Father?’ Jesus answered, ‘You know neither Me nor My Father. If you knew Me, you would know My Father also.’”

John 8:19-20

A. Now the gloves come off. The Pharisees were incensed that Jesus would call God the Father as a witness. So, they replied with a little sarcasm.

“They said to Him therefore, ‘Where is your Father?’”

They knew Jesus claimed to be the very Son of God and to have been personally sent by the Father into the world. Yet, they just wanted to cast doubt on the Lord’s origin.

B. Listen to what Jesus said to this.

“Jesus answered, ‘You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.’”

Although they thought they knew Jesus and God, in fact, they knew neither one of them.

They did not know the God of the Old Testament whom they claimed to serve, nor did they know His Son whom He sent into the world.

1. There are really two sides to what Jesus has said. In **7:17**, Jesus told us

“If anyone wants to do His (God the Father’s) will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.”

The way to know the Son is to be committed to the will of the living God. The identity of the Son was not hidden to the ones who knew God the way He had designed them to know Him.

2. Here in **John 8** the Lord turned the coin over and said in effect, You Pharisees do not know me. If you knew me, you would know the Father! Jesus said in **Matthew 11:27**

“All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”

Because they rejected the Son, they would not and could not ever really know the Father.

What do we learn from this?

1. We learn again who Jesus is and why the Pharisees and Old Testament scholars of His day did not recognize Him.

2. Second, we learn how privileged we are to know the Lord Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord. He is the light of the world, only if we see the light will we believe in Him. Everything that

we are and everything we have is ours because of the Grace of God. We can look at these poor Pharisees and realistically say, *“Except for the grace of God there go we.”* We too could be walking in darkness had God not opened our eyes.

3. Third, it challenges us as to how we respond to God’s Word in our lives. When God speaks to us and it makes us uncomfortable, how do we react? Do we ignore the reality? Do we try to make the reality more appealing? Or do we accept it as God presents it to us?

Hymn #381 *Open My Eyes, That I May See*