

JOH 8:12-20 "If You're in the Light, Walk in the Light"

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As was mentioned last time, this passage is one book end to the pericope of the woman caught in adultery, which starts in John 7:53. And as we saw, this is a later addition to the manuscript tradition that did not include that story in any of the Greek manuscripts for the first 300 plus years of the church's history.

And so, this portion picks up with what preceded at the end of John 7 where Jesus is being scrutinized by the temple guard who then went back to the Pharisees to report on what happened with their encounter with Jesus.

But as we come to our text this morning we see that Jesus continues to teach the crowds, and apparently the Pharisees will be back in the fray as they confront Jesus again.

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This exchange might be the same day with a different group of Pharisees, or it may be later, possibly days later as the same collection of Pharisees regroup and once again try and discredit Jesus.

The point is that Jesus is not deterred from speaking the truth concerning who He is and where He came from and why He came.

He begins with a statement that every Jew would have caught as a suggestion to deity.

JOH 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

These people knew that Jesus was not saying that He was a living 100 watt light bulb which would enable them to travel at night as they followed Him, or that He was some literal torch which would light their way.

This kind of language was reserved for only one person and that person is God Himself. We see this all throughout the Old Testament.

PSA 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?

JOB 29:2-3 "How I long for the months gone by, for the days when God watched over me, 3 when his lamp shone upon my head and by his light I walked through darkness!

ISA 60:1-2 "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. 2 See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.

For Jesus to come on to the scene and declare that He is the light, not just in a local setting, or even a regional setting, but the light of the world, tells us clearly that He was making the claim that He is the glorious God who has fulfilled the prophecy given to the prophet Isaiah.

ISA 9:2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

In fact, the apostle John, in writing this gospel drives home the point that Jesus Christ is none other than the God, the creator of all things, who revealed Himself to His people as the light of the world.

JOH 1:1-4, 9-14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 ***In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 9 The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.*** 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. 14 ***The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

These Jews, whom Jesus is teaching in the temple courts, would have understood His claim to light as that which only God could possess as he follows up His claim to being “the” light with the end of verse 12, "Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

What kind of a statement is this? Who in the world can make such a claim? "Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."?

Notice that Jesus equates the light with life. And the life He speaks of, and which the Jews would have understood, is life in the presence of God. After all, isn't that what every Jew longed for? Isn't that what every Jew understood as those who were chosen of God to represent Him as the nation of Israel?

Isn't that the promise that was made to Abraham which he understood to mean much more than mere possession of a promised land in Canaan?

HEB 11:8-10 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. 9 By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him

of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Abraham longed for being in the presence of God in heaven and every Jew longed to go to Abraham's side, sometimes referred to as Abraham's bosom, as they enjoyed the fellowship of their God and creator.

But Abraham was looking even beyond heaven as he acknowledges that this city, with foundations whose architect and builder is God, would turn out to a physical reality that was later revealed to Isaiah.

Isaiah 65:17 ¹⁷ "For behold, *I create new heavens and a new earth*; And the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.

Isaiah 66:22-23 ²² "For just as *the new heavens and the new earth Which I make will endure before Me,*" declares the LORD, "So your offspring and your name will endure. ²³ "And it shall be from new moon to new moon And from sabbath to sabbath, All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the LORD.

And now Jesus comes along and in no uncertain terms identifies Himself as that One who is the life Israel longs for. He is that life and salvation promised through the prophets.

MAL 4:2 But for you who revere my name, *the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings*. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.

Have you ever gone out on a farm and watched the young calves dancing and prancing out in the fields while their mothers are busy just idly munching on the grass?

The imagery is that God will shine upon us in such a way where we are set free to rejoice and glory in this freedom and salvation. But instead of looking to God as the freedom they needed Israel looked only to God as some sort of jailer who could release them from the bondage of Rome.

Instead of acting like calves that rejoice and bound in their youth, most Jews of Christ's day were acting more like fattened bovines who are only able to move their heads from side to side to graze the ground.

Their eyes were not set on things above, but on things below. They couldn't see past their own experiences. They didn't appreciate the

light God wanted to shine on them and how He wanted to lead them to green pastures by still waters. Jesus is showing them how He is that Shepherd who wants to accomplish that for them. But they don't have eyes to see the light.

And the Pharisees epitomize what it means to be spiritually blind to the light that they ought to be rejoicing in and directing Israel to, as the Messiah.

JOH 8:13 The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid."

The Pharisees understood what Jesus was intimating by calling Himself the light of the world. And so, as to undermine His assertion, they point out that anybody can claim anything about themselves.

For example, I can claim to be the President of the United States, but unless someone else can prove that my claim stands it's only wishful thinking. In other words, I need someone to testify or to bear witness that my claim is true.

The problem with claiming to be God though is that no mere human can testify or bear witness of such a thing, as mere humans are fallible and make mistakes. Suppose the High Priest of Israel were to stroll up to this discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees and say, "yes, this Jesus is most certainly God." Do you think any of these Pharisees would have accepted the witness of that man?

And by the way, these Pharisees were asking for much more than someone bearing witness that Jesus was simply acting on behalf of God. You and I, for example, can bear witness that Jesus Christ is God because we are on the other side of His resurrection.

What these Pharisees were really asking for is the only other witness who could testify about the validity of Jesus' claims, who was God Himself.

In the minds of these Pharisees, they once again thought they had caught Jesus in a dilemma He couldn't solve.

If you make the claim that you are the Son of God you must necessarily bring the Father and God of all creation into the mix to be your witness. The Pharisees knew this and so they ask what appears to be an impossible demand. "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid."

The implication is, 'you claim to be the light of the world, even as David attributes such light to God Himself. ("The LORD is my light and my salvation"). So, bring in your witness who happens to reside in heaven. Bring in Your Father, whom you claim sent You here.'

By the way, even Jesus acknowledges that two witnesses are needed to determine truth or falsehood.

JOH 5:31 "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid."

And so, when we come to verse fourteen of our text there are those who conclude that Jesus is contradicting Himself.

JOH 8:14 Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going.

So what do we do when we put these two statements of Jesus side by side? "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid."
"Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid."

Again, we must go to the context.

In John 5:31 Jesus was pointing out how He could never be alone in testifying of Himself since He always had the testimony of the Father because both He and the Father were united. Even when He uses the testimony of John the Baptist He didn't rely on such a human witness.

JOH 5:36-37 "I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me. 37 And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me...."

And so, when we come to our text when Jesus says, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid," Jesus is saying that since I am God I only need Myself to testify of Myself. God could never find a witness other than Himself to prove Himself.

Add to that, Jesus is part of the Godhead that cannot be separated; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This necessarily means that there are always two other persons in the Godhead who testify on behalf of the Son.

But, when Jesus addresses the testimony of the Father He is acknowledging what the Father has already said of the Son. And where do you suppose that testimony is contained?

The revealed written, Holy Spirit inspired, word of God.

Isaiah 42:1 ^{NAU} "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one *in whom* My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

And we see the fulfillment of this passage in a setting prior to Christ's resurrection at the Mount of Transfiguration.

Luke 9:32-35 ³² Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him. ³³ And as these were leaving Him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah "-- not realizing what he was saying. ³⁴ While he was saying this, a cloud formed and *began* to overshadow them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!"

And so, even when Jesus testifies of Himself He is never really without another witness because the Father also bears witness, since both Christ and the Father are one, or of the same essence, being united together, even though they are separate and distinct persons within the Godhead.

JOH 8:14-18 Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. 15 You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. 16 But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. 17 In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. 18 I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me."

Here Jesus is saying, at the end of verse fourteen, that these Pharisees cannot truly determine anything spiritual as it relates to Christ's claims, since they know nothing of the true nature of Christ.

JOH 8:14-15 "... But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. 15 You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one."

This is exactly what Jesus said earlier to these Pharisees who at that time responded by trying to kill Him.

JOH 7:28-30 Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, "...he who sent me is true. You do not know him, 29 but I know him because I am from him and he sent me." 30 At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come.

These Pharisees were making judgments about Jesus without having all the facts. Actually they were making judgments on the Lord without desiring any of the facts. Because the fact of the matter is that the testimony of the Father was already clear that He sent Jesus into the world to do His will.

They needed only to recognize the miracles Jesus was performing in the name of the Father. This is precisely what Jesus told the Jews.

JOH 10:24-25 The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. ***The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me,***

JOH 10:36-38 "..... Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'? 37 Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. 38 But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, ***believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.***"

They ask for a witness other than Jesus' own witness and they've had it all along. But they will not believe it because they don't know that Jesus is the real thing. They don't know where He came from. And so, they make a judgment based only on their perspective which does not take into account all of the spiritual evidence surrounding them in the miracles Jesus was performing.

JOH 8:15 "You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one."

They are judging Jesus really in two ways. One is forming an opinion based on their standard which excludes any spiritual illumination. But by inference they are also judging so as to condemn Him and yet Jesus responds by saying that He is passing judgment on no one to that end.

Jesus did not come into this world to condemn the world, but to save it through giving His life as a ransom for many. But this is not to say that Jesus doesn't or won't judge men.

JOH 3:18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Though Jesus' ministry of reconciliation did not include the kind of judgment which will come later from the hand of God, it doesn't mean that He will not judge men who stand condemned for their sin because they chose to pay their own sin instead of letting Christ pay it as they place their faith in Him alone.

In fact, what are we told concerning all judgments and who will carry them out?

JOH 5:21-23 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. 22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

Luke also points this out in the book of Acts.

ACT 17:31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.

But the kind of judgment Jesus is talking about in our text is not the kind of judgment which results in condemnation. He is using the term judgment to mean "to determine, to form an estimate, to arrive at a decision." (A.W. Pink)

In other words, like the Pharisees who had formed an opinion of Jesus, without taking the spiritual evidence into consideration, Jesus is not judging or forming an opinion without such evidence.

JOH 8:16-18 But if I do judge, [if I make a decision] my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. 17 In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. 18 I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me."

And now, we've come full circle. Jesus has been telling them all along that He was sent from the Father and as such He is the Son of God which means He is God Himself. And though they accuse

Jesus of testifying of Himself and therefore disqualifying Him as Messiah, Jesus says I do have a witness. It's My Father who sent Me.

And so, they naturally respond, well if the Father is your witness what Father are you talking about? Where is He? Produce Him here for us.

JOH 8:19 Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also."

Now, keep in mind that these Pharisees claim to be chosen of the Father, both as Jews and as leaders of Israel. For Jesus to come along and say you don't know the Father was the greatest insult these religious leaders could endure.

But notice that Jesus equates Himself with the Father and by implication He is saying that since you don't know the Father it's impossible for you to know the One He sent since you don't have eyes to see.

In fact, Jesus goes so far as to say that the reason you don't know the Father is because you don't know Me. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also."

There is only one way to know the Father and that is through the Son.

JOH 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

I was watching a program on the History Channel this week on the life of Bishop Pike who was kind of a rogue Episcopalian clergyman in the 50's and 60's. He was revered by many and yet much of his life was spent as an alcoholic, divorced twice, calling into question the virgin birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ and other major doctrines of Christianity.

After the suicide of his son he sought to contact his son through mediums. And the entire program kept bringing up how he never really understood the mystery of life. He continued to seek the meaning of life up to his death without finding it.

And yet, this man was a bishop in a very large "Christian" denomination. Imagine if you or anyone had said to him, you don't know the Father in heaven. He and others in his denomination

would take great issue with that statement. After all he was a religious man with spiritual connections.

Well, in the same way, Jesus spoke the truth about these spiritual leaders of Israel. And though it was not popular it needed to be said; not because they needed to be shown they were fools, but because Christ thought enough of them to show them the truth.

Today there are lots of "religious" people as well as non-religious people. They all need to be given the truth in love. We might be tempted to view them with scorn especially when they reject Christ, but we, like the Lord, need to take the attitude that they don't know what they're doing. They're lost. They're blind and deaf like we all were at one time.

EPH 5:8-9 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)
10 and find out what pleases the Lord.

But as we walk in the light we need to give the world the light that has been given to us so the Holy Spirit can illumine their hearts and minds and they can receive this life by faith found only in Christ.

If we know Christ, then we know the Father and can call Him Abba, dad, as a child who has an intimate relationship with the One who created us for fellowship with Himself, and to live in His presence forever to His glory.

As Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Follow the Lord. Stay by His side. Trust Him for eternal life, and for this life as well. When the darkness of trials and tribulations come seek the light and the life found only in our Savior; the Savior who loved us so much that He died for us and lives today seeking to meet us in person, and when He comes back we will live with Him forever.

REV 22:1-5 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants

will serve him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

REV 21:22-23 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

Christ's light and life in us. Walk as children of light.