

# The Word

*one to one*

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*A guided read through  
John's Gospel  
Chapters 7-8*

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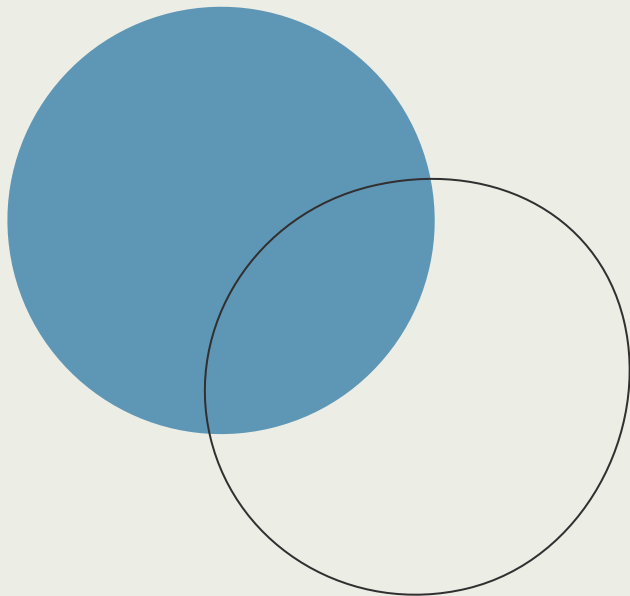
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# The Word

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# Episode 16



## Mixed responses

JOHN 7:1-52

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*In the previous episode:  
Jesus' teaching about  
His death makes  
some walk away.*

*In this episode:  
Jesus continues to  
divide opinion.*

<sup>1</sup> After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him.

<sup>2</sup> But when the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near, <sup>3</sup>Jesus' brothers said to him, 'Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do.'

<sup>4</sup> No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.'

<sup>5</sup> For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

## The time is not right

During the Festival of Tabernacles (tents), Jews came to Jerusalem and lived in tents to remember God's faithful leadership during the forty years in the wilderness after their escape from Egypt. It was one of three major religious holidays.

Look out for the wide range of responses to Jesus in this episode. Faith, confusion, amazement, hostility... some even think that Jesus is demon-possessed.

Almost everyone has an opinion, though not always the one you'd expect.

What do Jesus' brothers think He should do?

- They think Jesus should be in the capital city showing people how powerful He is, not stuck in the countryside. **(v. 3)**
- But they don't yet understand what it means for Him to be the Son of God. **(v. 5)**

<sup>6</sup> Therefore Jesus told them,  
‘My time is not yet here; for  
you any time will do.

<sup>7</sup> The world cannot hate you,  
but it hates me because I  
testify that its works are evil.

<sup>8</sup> You go to the festival. I am  
not going up to this festival,  
because my time has not yet  
fully come.’

<sup>9</sup> After he had said this, he  
stayed in Galilee.

<sup>10</sup> However, after his brothers  
had left for the festival, he went  
also, not publicly, but in secret.

<sup>11</sup> Now at the festival the Jewish  
leaders were watching for Jesus  
and asking, ‘Where is he?’

Here is the reason Jesus isn't ready to go public: the timing isn't right. This isn't the moment to arrive in Jerusalem with cheering crowds (we'll see that in chapter 12).

All the way through His ministry, Jesus is following a plan and is in control. He knows when His time will come.

Why didn't Jesus tell His brothers He was going to Jerusalem privately?

- This isn't the time to play into the hands of the religious leaders who want Him dead. **(v. 11)**
- Better to slip into Jerusalem without His usual huge following.

<sup>12</sup> Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, 'He is a good man.'

Others replied, 'No, he deceives the people.'

<sup>13</sup> But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the leaders.

<sup>14</sup> Not until halfway through the festival did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach.

<sup>15</sup> The Jews there were amazed and asked, 'How did this man get such learning without having been taught?'

Jesus provokes strong responses.

- Some think He is a good man. (v. 12)
- Some think He is a fake.

What does Jesus do?

- He slips in quietly in order to teach in the temple courts. (v. 14)

<sup>16</sup> Jesus answered, 'My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me.'

<sup>17</sup> Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

<sup>18</sup> Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.

<sup>19</sup> Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?'

How does Jesus answer the question of His identity?

- He insists He is from God. (v. 16)
- He insists He is true. (v. 18)
- He says that He is seeking God's glory, not His own. (v. 18)

And then He turns the spotlight on the religious leaders: they are the ones who want to commit murder. (v. 19)

*Jesus didn't need to go to the festival to build a public profile. He is here to teach for God's glory, not His own.*

But how will people respond?

<sup>20</sup> ‘You are demon-possessed,’ the crowd answered. ‘Who is trying to kill you?’

<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them, ‘I did one miracle, and you are all amazed.’

<sup>22</sup> Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a boy on the Sabbath.

<sup>23</sup> Now if a boy can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing a man’s whole body on the Sabbath?

<sup>24</sup> Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly.’

## Confused responses

Yet another strong reaction to Jesus. The crowd shouts out that He is demon-possessed.

But Jesus’ works support His word. (v. 21)

Jesus makes clear that those who accuse Him are hypocrites: they’ll circumcise a child on the Sabbath to keep the law but want to kill Jesus for healing someone.

The ‘one miracle’ that Jesus refers to here is the healing of the paralysed man by the pool in chapter 5.

*Because they are obsessed with the law, they’re totally missing the point of what Jesus is saying and doing.*

**Circumcision on the Sabbath:** under the Old Testament law, all Jewish baby boys were circumcised when they were eight days old. This was done even when the eighth day was a Sabbath, the weekly day of rest.

<sup>25</sup> At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, 'Isn't this the man they are trying to kill?'

<sup>26</sup> Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah?

<sup>27</sup> But we know where this man is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from.'

<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, 'Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, <sup>29</sup> but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.'

Not everyone is hostile. Speculation begins to grow. (v. 25)

Some wonder why Jesus is not being arrested. Perhaps He really is the Messiah? (v. 26)

What does Jesus say about Himself?

- He's come from heaven, and they should know that by now. (v. 28)
- He comes with God's authority. (v. 28)
- They show that they don't know God when they reject Him. (v. 28)
- God has sent Him. (v. 29)

<sup>30</sup> At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.

<sup>31</sup> Still, many in the crowd believed in him. They said, 'When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?'

Again, as Jesus speaks, people respond.

- Some try to arrest Him and fail. (v. 30)
- Others believe. (v. 31)

*Let's make this personal. Is there any basis for us rejecting the evidence for who Jesus is?*

*If His teaching and words are not from God, then where have they come from?*

*Remember that our response really matters: 'Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him.' (John 5:23)*

<sup>32</sup> The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him.

<sup>33</sup> Jesus said, 'I am with you for only a short time, and then I am going to the one who sent me.'

<sup>34</sup> You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come.'

<sup>35</sup> The Jews said to one another, 'Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?'

<sup>36</sup> What did he mean when he said, 'You will look for me, but you will not find me,' and 'Where I am, you cannot come'?

## Tables turned

The authorities realise they better do something and now order Jesus' arrest. (v. 32)

Why does Jesus talk about where He is going?

- He knows that He is on His way back to God... (v. 33)
- ...and people cannot reach God on their own. (v. 34)

The people's reaction? They just don't get it... and fear that the Greeks might! (v. 35)

<sup>37</sup> On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.'

<sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.'

<sup>39</sup> By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

## Overflowing life

The Feast of Tabernacles involved a lot of water because in the wilderness God supplied the people with water – on two occasions out of solid rock.

What is Jesus' amazing offer?

- Anyone who is spiritually thirsty can come to Him to drink. (v. 37)
- Those who come to Him will be given His life-giving, overflowing Spirit. (v. 38)
- A new era of Spirit-filled believers is about to become possible. (v. 39)

This fulfils what the feast was all about, God rescuing His people and giving them abundant life.

*In the middle of confusion and hostility, Jesus offers amazing grace.*

<sup>40</sup> On hearing his words, some of the people said, 'Surely this man is the Prophet.'

<sup>41</sup> Others said, 'He is the Messiah.'

Still others asked, 'How can the Messiah come from Galilee?'

<sup>42</sup> Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David's descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?'

<sup>43</sup> Thus the people were divided because of Jesus.

<sup>44</sup> Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

The people haven't realised that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, as foretold in the Old Testament.

It was only after His birth that Jesus' parents escaped to bring Him up in Galilee.

How do the people react to Jesus' offer?

They are divided. (v. 43)

<sup>45</sup> Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, ‘Why didn’t you bring him in?’

<sup>46</sup> ‘No one ever spoke the way this man does,’ the guards replied.

<sup>47</sup> ‘You mean he has deceived you also?’ the Pharisees retorted.

<sup>48</sup> ‘Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him?’

<sup>49</sup> No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law – there is a curse on them.’

The temple guards have to return and admit that they haven't arrested Jesus. (v. 45)

How do the guards respond to Jesus?

- They have never heard anyone like Him. They just couldn't arrest Him. (v. 46)

How do the Pharisees react?

- They say that Jesus is lying, deceiving people. (v. 47)
- They underline their power and position as they reject Jesus. (v. 48)
- They claim anyone who believes in Him is part of a mob. (v. 49)

<sup>50</sup> Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, <sup>51</sup> ‘Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?’

<sup>52</sup> They replied, ‘Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.’

## Mocked!

Standing with Jesus can have consequences.

Do you remember Nicodemus, ‘Israel’s teacher’? In chapter 3 he came for a secret one to one with Jesus. Now we see that he’s willing to take a stand so that Jesus gets a fair hearing. (v. 51)

What happens to Nicodemus?

- He defends Jesus and his fellow leaders mock him. (v. 52)

What an insult! No religious leader would be expected to come from mixed-race Galilee. They haven’t even checked where Jesus was born... they have just assumed.

*What are some possible responses?*

- *We choose to ignore the evidence and bury our head in the sand.*
- *We believe in God but on our own terms without Jesus – that’s also rejection of God.*
- *We act on the evidence, trust Jesus totally, receive His Spirit and stand out from the crowd.*

## Summary

What a huge range of reactions we've seen to Jesus.

- Jesus' brothers want Him to build His profile but He knows His hour has not yet come. (v. 6)
- Jesus heads to the festival in secret so that He can teach. (v. 10)
- Jesus' identity is already prompting differing views: some think He's a good man, others a liar. (v. 12)
- Some even think He is demon-possessed. (v. 20)
- At the height of the festival, Jesus makes an amazing offer: the living water of the Holy Spirit flowing through all those who believe in Him. (v. 38)
- Reactions strongly differ. For some, He's clearly the Messiah, but others want to seize Him. (v. 41)
- We meet Nicodemus again. He's now willing to publicly say that Jesus should get a fair hearing, despite the fury of the other leaders. (v. 51)

<sup>6</sup> 'My time is not yet here...'

<sup>10</sup> ...he went also, not publicly, but in secret.

<sup>12</sup> 'He is a good man.'...  
'No, he deceives the people.'

<sup>20</sup> 'You are demon-possessed.'

<sup>38</sup> '...rivers of living water will flow from within them.'

<sup>41</sup> 'He is the Messiah.'

<sup>51</sup> 'Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him...?'

Why not find a moment to re-read what we've looked at in this episode?

## John 7:1-52

<sup>1</sup> After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him. <sup>2</sup> But when the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near, <sup>3</sup> Jesus' brothers said to him, 'Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do. <sup>4</sup> No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.' <sup>5</sup> For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

<sup>6</sup> Therefore Jesus told them, 'My time is not yet here; for you any time will do. <sup>7</sup> The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that its works are evil.

<sup>8</sup> You go to the festival. I am not going up to this festival, because my time has not yet fully come.' <sup>9</sup> After he had said this, he stayed in Galilee.

<sup>10</sup> However, after his brothers had left for the festival, he went also, not publicly, but in secret. <sup>11</sup> Now at the festival the Jewish leaders were watching for Jesus and asking, 'Where is he?'

<sup>12</sup> Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, 'He is a good man.'

Others replied, 'No, he deceives the people.' <sup>13</sup> But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the leaders.

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<sup>16</sup> Jesus answered, 'My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me. <sup>17</sup> Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. <sup>18</sup> Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. <sup>19</sup> Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?'

<sup>20</sup> ‘You are demon-possessed,’ the crowd answered. ‘Who is trying to kill you?’

<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them, ‘I did one miracle, and you are all amazed. <sup>22</sup> Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a boy on the Sabbath. <sup>23</sup> Now if a boy can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing a man’s whole body on the Sabbath? <sup>24</sup> Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly.’

<sup>25</sup> At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, ‘Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill?’

<sup>26</sup> Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah? <sup>27</sup> But we know where this man is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from.’

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<sup>30</sup> At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. <sup>31</sup> Still, many in the crowd believed in him.

They said, ‘When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?’

<sup>32</sup> The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him.

<sup>33</sup> Jesus said, ‘I am with you for only a short time, and then I am going to the one who sent me. <sup>34</sup> You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come.’

<sup>35</sup> The Jews said to one another, ‘Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?’

<sup>36</sup> What did he mean when he said, ‘You will look for me, but you will not find me,’ and ‘Where I am, you cannot come?’

<sup>37</sup> On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.’ <sup>39</sup> By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

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Still others asked, ‘How can the Messiah come from Galilee?’ <sup>42</sup> Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David’s descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?’

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<sup>44</sup> Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

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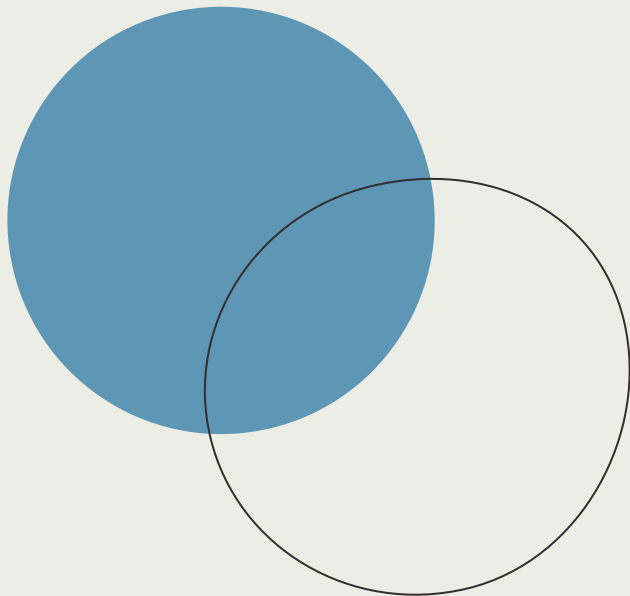
<sup>48</sup> ‘Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him?’ <sup>49</sup> No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law – there is a curse on them.’

<sup>50</sup> Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, <sup>51</sup> ‘Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?’

<sup>52</sup> They replied, ‘Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.’

*What comes next?  
A controversial family likeness.*

# Episode 17



# Family matters

JOHN 8:12-59

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*In the previous episode:  
Jesus strongly  
divides opinion.*

*In this episode:  
Following the  
Father's lead.*

<sup>12</sup> 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.'

## The light of the world

Jesus is still at the Feast of Tabernacles. The themes are the same: who is Jesus and what about those who reject Him? We start with a huge claim.

What does Jesus say about Himself?

- He is the light of the world.
- Following Him means stepping out of darkness and living in the light of His life.

Jesus takes us back to our very first episode. John 1:4 says, *'In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind!'*

You may be wondering why we're not starting at 8:1. It is generally thought that John 7:53 — 8:11 was Jesus' teaching but it is not found in the earliest manuscripts. So it appears to have been added to John's account when it was copied at a later date.

We will see more of what exactly it means for Jesus to bring light to the world in our next episode.

<sup>13</sup> The Pharisees challenged him, 'Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.'

<sup>14</sup> 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.'

<sup>15</sup> You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one.

<sup>16</sup> But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me.

<sup>17</sup> In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true.

<sup>18</sup> I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.'

## Where are you from?

How do the religious experts (Pharisees) respond?

- They ignore what Jesus says and challenge His right to say it. **(v. 13)**
- They say Jesus' testimony doesn't count because they claim He is His own witness. **(v. 13)**

However, Jesus is clear that He is qualified to testify about Himself because:

- He knows where He comes from. **(v. 14)**
- His decisions are backed up by His Father, God. **(v. 16)**
- The witness of both God and Jesus means He passes the test of their law. **(v. 17)**

Why do the Pharisees struggle to accept this?

- They judge only by human standards. In other words, they treat Jesus as just another human being. **(v. 15)**

<sup>19</sup> 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.'

<sup>20</sup> He spoke these words  
while teaching in the temple  
courts near the place where  
the offerings were put. Yet  
no one seized him, because  
his hour had not yet come.

The Pharisees are still thinking in human terms. They ask: 'Where is your dad?'

What does Jesus reveal about them?

- The Pharisees do not know who Jesus is. (v. 19)
- If they did, they would also know His Father, God! (v. 19)

This so angers them that they try to seize Jesus. But who is in control?

- They are physically unable to arrest Him. How can that be? Because it is not yet His time ('hour') to die. (v. 20)

*Jesus is still in the enclosed temple space, packed in by a huge crowd. He is surrounded by the very people who want to kill Him. Yet they cannot even seize Him.*

It's about to get worse for the Pharisees...

<sup>21</sup> Once more Jesus said to them, ‘I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come.’

<sup>22</sup> This made the Jews ask, ‘Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, “Where I go, you cannot come”?’

<sup>23</sup> But he continued, ‘You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.’

<sup>24</sup> 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.’

<sup>25</sup> ‘Who are you?’ they asked.

‘Just what I have been telling you from the beginning,’ Jesus replied.

<sup>26</sup> ‘I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world.’

## Where are you going?

Jesus knows that He will return to His Father in heaven. (v. 21)

Why can't the people listening go with Him?

- Even though they are religious, they don't know God (they are of the world). (v. 23)
- Jesus raises the stakes even higher. They will die in their sins, unforgiven, if they don't believe in Him. (v. 24)

*This is explosive. Jesus tells the religious people in the temple that they face judgement if they do not accept who He is: the light of the world.*

<sup>27</sup> They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father.

<sup>28</sup> So Jesus said, 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.'

<sup>29</sup> The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.'

<sup>30</sup> Even as he spoke, many believed in him.

The people listening still don't understand that when Jesus speaks about His Father He is talking about God.

How does Jesus spell it out?

- He calls Himself the 'Son of Man' (the title for God's absolute ruler who is given all of God's authority). (v. 28)
- He speaks of being 'lifted up', which refers to His death on the cross. (v. 28)

*We might think a leader's death would be a sign of failure. Jesus says that His death and resurrection will be evidence that He is God's appointed ruler and judge.*

How do people respond to Jesus' words?

- As He speaks, many believe that He is exactly who He claimed to be. (v. 30)

<sup>31</sup> To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

<sup>32</sup> Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'

<sup>33</sup> They answered him, 'We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?'

## A slave or a son?

Still in the temple, Jesus now turns to those who say they believe in Him.

Jesus immediately challenges them to stick with His teaching, the truth that will set them free.

Why does this make them angry?

- As God's so-called chosen people they didn't view themselves as slaves. (v. 33)

This is ridiculous. The whole point of the Passover was to remember Israel's rescue from slavery in Egypt.

During their history they had also been enslaved by the Assyrians and Babylonians and were currently occupied by the Romans.

**Abraham:** a major figure in the Old Testament, chosen by God as the father of His people.

<sup>34</sup> Jesus replied, ‘Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

<sup>35</sup> Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it for ever.

<sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

But what are they slaves to?

- Sin. (v. 34)
- Everyone who sins is a slave to sin. (v. 34)

*This includes all of us.  
We are slaves because  
we keep on sinning.*

Because we have sinned we will face God’s judgement.

Jesus contrasts being a slave and being a son. A slave isn’t part of the family; but a son is a family member for all time.

So how do we escape slavery and come into God’s family?

- Through trusting in Jesus’ words about His death, as the true Son ‘lifted up’ on the cross to pay for our sins. Then we are free. (v. 36)

<sup>37</sup> I know you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are looking for a way to kill me, because you have no room for my word.

<sup>38</sup> I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father.'

<sup>39</sup> 'Abraham is our father,' they answered.

'If you were Abraham's children,' said Jesus, 'then you would do what Abraham did.'

<sup>40</sup> As it is, you are looking for a way to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things.

<sup>41</sup> You are doing the works of your own father.'

'We are not illegitimate children,' they protested. 'The only Father we have is God himself.'

## Which family do we belong to?

Jesus now shows us that there are really only two spiritual families and the question is, which one do we belong to? He uses four steps...

**Step 1:** Family membership is shown in how we behave.

- They want to murder Jesus. (v. 37)
- By contrast, Jesus brings them truth from God. (v. 38)

**Step 2:** Abraham is not their spiritual father.

- Abraham cannot be their father. If he were, they'd act the way he did. (v. 39)
- Therefore, they have a different spiritual father; they're from a completely different family. (v. 41)

<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me.'

<sup>43</sup> Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say.

<sup>44</sup> You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

<sup>45</sup> Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!

**Step 3:** God is not their Father.

- If God were their Father, they'd recognise and love Jesus. (v. 42)
- But they can't bear to hear His word. (v 43)

**Step 4:** Actually, the devil is their father.

- They act like the devil. They want to murder Jesus and they are not interested in the truth. (vv. 44, 45)

Jesus just does not back off. Can you think of anything more offensive to such religious people?

*The truth is so confrontational.*

**The devil (or Satan):** Jesus spoke often about this invisible but real spiritual being, who leads all demonic forces in outright opposition to God. Satan deceives and manipulates humanity to do his will.

<sup>46</sup> Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?

<sup>47</sup> Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.'

← Jesus is making a staggering accusation, but they cannot argue with it because He is clearly blameless. (v. 46)

Why can't they accept Jesus' words?

- They do not belong to God. (v. 47)

*By following these steps, this tells us that our spiritual membership is either in God's family or the devil's. Our response to Jesus determines which.*

<sup>48</sup> The Jews answered him, 'Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?'

<sup>49</sup> 'I am not possessed by a demon,' said Jesus, 'but I honour my Father and you dishonour me.'

<sup>50</sup> I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge.

<sup>51</sup> Very truly I tell you, whoever obeys my word will never see death.'

Now the insults really start! They won't accept Jesus' verdict. Rather, they say that He must be the one who is from the devil. (v. 48)

How are we shown they are wrong?

- Because Jesus honours God, and they dishonour Jesus. (v. 49)
- Jesus has already made this truth clear. John 5:23, '*Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father...*'

But what a promise for those who do honour Jesus and His word - eternity with Him. (v. 51)

<sup>52</sup> At this they exclaimed, 'Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death.'

<sup>53</sup> Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?'

<sup>54</sup> Jesus replied, 'If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.'

Again they question who Jesus is, but Jesus points to where the proof comes from. It comes from God glorifying Him. (v. 54)

We've been consistently told by Jesus how this will happen – it will be at the cross. Everything is building up to that moment.

Remember the words of John 8:28, *'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.'*

<sup>55</sup> Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word.

<sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.'

<sup>57</sup> 'You are not yet fifty years old,' they said to him, 'and you have seen Abraham!'

<sup>58</sup> 'Very truly I tell you,' Jesus answered, 'before Abraham was born, I am!'

<sup>59</sup> At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

What does Jesus claim about their ancestor Abraham?

- God showed Abraham what the Messiah would come to do – and unlike many of the people in Jesus' day, Abraham was thrilled. (v. 56)

This is a very surprising thing for Jesus to say because Abraham has been dead for thousands of years!

What profound claim does Jesus make about Himself?

- He says that He was around before Abraham. (v. 58)
- Again, He uses God's special Old Testament name for Himself, 'I AM!' (v. 58)

*Jesus' listeners fully understand what He is claiming because they immediately pick up stones to kill Him for insulting God (blasphemy).*

Jesus is still in control of events. In this crowded, enclosed space they are determined to stone Him, but cannot. His hour has not yet come...

## Summary

Our response to Jesus' teaching reveals our real spiritual family.

- Jesus says that He is the light of the world, and promises that all who follow Him will have the light of life. (v. 12)
- The Pharisees immediately challenge Jesus' right to speak as He does. (v. 13)
- Jesus says that those who hold to His words will know the truth that brings freedom. (v. 31)
- Jesus shows that people are enslaved to sin... (v. 34)
- ...and only He can set them free. (v. 36)
- He shows that we are not naturally part of God's family. (v. 41)
- In fact, Jesus says that we are by nature part of the devil's family. (v. 44)
- The people listening totally reject Jesus' verdict. (v. 52)
- As Jesus again uses God's special name, I AM, for Himself, they try to stone Him but cannot. (v. 59)

<sup>12</sup> 'I am the light of the world.'

<sup>13</sup> '...your testimony is not valid.'

<sup>31</sup> 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.'

<sup>34</sup> '...everyone who sins is a slave to sin.'

<sup>36</sup> 'So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.'

<sup>41</sup> 'You are doing the works of your own father.'

<sup>44</sup> 'You belong to your father, the devil...'

<sup>52</sup> 'Now we know that you are demon-possessed!'

<sup>59</sup> ...they picked up stones to stone him...

Why not take a moment to re-read what we've looked at in this episode?

## John 8:12–59

<sup>12</sup> 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.'

<sup>13</sup> The Pharisees challenged him, 'Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.'

<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. <sup>16</sup> But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone.

I stand with the Father, who sent me. <sup>17</sup> In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. <sup>18</sup> I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.'

<sup>19</sup> 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.'

<sup>20</sup> He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.

<sup>21</sup> Once more Jesus said to them, ‘I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come.’

<sup>22</sup> This made the Jews ask, ‘Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, “Where I go, you cannot come”?’

<sup>23</sup> But he continued, ‘You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. <sup>24</sup> 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.’

<sup>25</sup> ‘Who are you?’ they asked. ‘Just what I have been telling you from the beginning,’ Jesus replied. <sup>26</sup> ‘I have much to say in judgment of you.

But he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world.’

<sup>27</sup> They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father.

<sup>28</sup> So Jesus said, ‘When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. <sup>29</sup> The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.’

<sup>30</sup> Even as he spoke, many believed in him.

<sup>31</sup> To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

<sup>32</sup> Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’

<sup>33</sup> They answered him, ‘We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?’

<sup>34</sup> Jesus replied, ‘Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup> Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it for ever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. <sup>37</sup> I know you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are looking for a way to kill me, because you have no room for my word. <sup>38</sup> I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father.’

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<sup>58</sup> 'Very truly I tell you,' Jesus answered, 'before Abraham was born, I am!' <sup>59</sup> At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

## Chapters 7 – 8: recap

Let's take a moment to pause and recap chapters 7 and 8.

Jesus offers spiritual life to all who come to Him:  
*'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink!' (John 7:37)*

We all need this life. Jesus says that we are spiritually dead, in darkness until we follow Him:  
*'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life!' (John 8:12)*

By nature we don't obey God and our sins bring death:  
*'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)*

We are all slaves to sin but Jesus provides a wonderful promise of freedom:  
*'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free!' (John 8:31–32)*

Jesus says this message is for everyone: the religious leaders; those who said they believed; even those just listening in.

Everyone needs to trust Jesus.

*What comes next?  
What does it mean  
for Jesus to be the  
light of the world?*



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