

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

JOHN 8.12-30



T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study

And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,

He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Gospel of John: John 8.12-30
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Introduction to *John 8.12-30*

Jesus continues His conversation with the religious leaders of Jerusalem, and it's clear things aren't going as they hoped.

Jesus is firm, clear, unyielding, and unperturbed by their challenges. He continues to make large claims and to insist that He and His Father are all the authority He needs for His work. Jesus confounded His interlocutors even more by insisting they weren't even from the same worlds!

Jesus is an effective communicator and debater, and as a result, many people believe in Him. But as we shall see in our next installment, that's not enough for Jesus.

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1 “I am the light of the world”

Read and meditate on John 8.12.

We omit from this study John 7.53-8.11, since these verses are not included in the oldest and most reliable Greek manuscripts. The earliest complete manuscript of the New Testament in which they appear is from the 5th century. So how did these verses get into the Bible? They may have begun as a marginal note, recording a true incident from Jesus’ life, but not part of the text being copied. Over time, that lovely story began to appeal to transcribers, and it became included in the text. It may well record a true episode, but we should not regard it as Scripture. Our story continues at, or shortly after, the Feast of Tabernacles, and Jesus is teaching in the temple. He continues to pile on astonishing claims, and the people continue to be divided in their response.

*¹²Then Jesus spoke to them again, and said,
“I am the Light of the world. He who, instead
of doubting, follows Me, shall never in
the darkness walk again, but will within
himself possess the very light of life.”*

- John 8.12

Reflect

1. Let’s connect verse 12 with John 7.38, in which Jesus identified Himself with the rock which gushed water in the wilderness. Here He identifies Himself as the light of the world. This phrase, *the light of the world* (in the Greek, *to phos tou kosmon*) is amenable to a variety of translations, such as, “the light that illuminates the world,” “the light toward which the world inclines” (think of a flower, bending toward the light), and even “the light which explains” the world. Which of these seems to make the most sense to you? Why? Or is there some truth in each? Complete this prayer: *Lord Jesus, Light of my life, guide me today in the path of...*
2. Light includes many beneficial properties essential for life. Such as? Why is this an especially apt metaphor for Jesus to apply to Himself? *Let Your light shine in and through me today, Lord, so that...*
3. In our scientific age, we know a bit more about light – certainly more than the people of Jesus’ day would have known. But Jesus knew that light is comprised of two components, waves and particles. Photons of light follow wave patterns. One substance, two aspects. Hmmm. How does this point to Jesus? *Thank You, Jesus, that when You spoke the world into being, You made it to bear witness to...*
4. What does it mean to “walk in darkness”? Who walks in darkness? What is the effect of light on the darkness (recall John 1.5 and 3.19-21)? What are the implications of this for those who follow Jesus? *I want Your light to shine in and through me, Lord, and I know that, when it does...*
5. What is “the light of life”? How does following Jesus bring us into the light of life? What should we expect to be the effects of this *light* on our *lives*? Bring together into one the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

“Jesus reveals the ignorance of the scribes and Pharisees when he cries out, ‘I am the light of the world.’ He is saying, ‘You who go through the whole of holy Scripture and think that you will assess what is spoken about me through the prophets have strayed far from the way of life. And it is no wonder, for he who reveals mysteries and illumines the whole world, he who shines like a sun into the hearts of those who would receive

him—he is not in you. He who does not have the divine and spiritual light within himself must surely walk in darkness and stumble in great foolishness.’ The Only Begotten is light by nature, beaming forth from God the Father who is light by nature.... But we must note again that he says that he is the light not especially or solely for the people of Israel but for all the world.” *Cyril of Alexandria (375-44 AD)*

The cosmos is pervaded by light, and Jesus is the light of the cosmos. The vast cosmos is thus filled with a powerful witness to Jesus, but Jesus is determined that His light should shine above all else through us, His followers (cf. Matt. 5.13-16). What are the implications of this for you today?

Closing Prayer

The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His handiwork.
Day unto day utters speech,
And night unto night reveals knowledge.
There is no speech nor language
Where their voice is not heard.
Their line has gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.
In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun,
Which *is* like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
And rejoices like a strong man to run its race.
Its rising is from one end of heaven,
And its circuit to the other end;
And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

Psalm 19.1-6

Psalm 19.1-6 (*St. Christopher: Beneath the Cross of Jesus*)

The heav’ns declare God’s glory, the skies His work proclaim!
From day to day and night to night they shout His glorious Name!
No speech, no words, no voice is heard, yet all across the earth
The lines of His all-present Word make known His holy worth.

Behold, the sun arises, a bridegroom strong and bright,
Rejoicing as he runs his course from morning unto night.
From east to west across the skies his circuit he completes,
And none can hide his sinful eyes or shelter from his heat.

2 “My witness is true”

Read and meditate on John 8.13-16.

The Pharisees continue to try to discredit Jesus, since he is a threat to their position in Jewish society. Here they deny the validity of His witness to Himself. Jesus’ response inflames them even more.

¹³The Pharisees, set on a course of strife with Jesus, therefore said, “You witness to Yourself; therefore, Your witness is not true.”

¹⁴But Jesus answered, “Even if I do bear witness to Myself, My words are true, for I know where I came from, and I know where I am going; but you do not know where I am from, or where I go. ¹⁵You judge according to the flesh. But I? I judge no man. ¹⁶Yet if I judge, be sure of this: Whatever word I speak of judgment is the truth, for I am not alone, but I am with the Father, He Who dwells on high, and Who has sent Me.”

- John 8.13-16

Reflect

1. The Pharisees’ tactic here is to try to position Jesus’ claims as merely His own opinion. Have you ever heard that from someone, when you’ve talked to them about Jesus: “That’s just *your* opinion”? How should you respond to that? Complete this prayer: *I know You, Lord, and I know Your gift of salvation, so it’s not just my opinion that You are the Savior of the world, but...*
2. Jesus’ first response to this challenge may seem a little weak: “Even if [only] I bear witness to Myself, My witness is true.” Why did Jesus say this was so? What did Jesus know about Himself that gave Him such confidence? How should His assurance and confidence instruct us as His witnesses? *Lord, I know Whom I have believed! I know You, Lord, and so I can bear witness to You because...*
3. What did Jesus mean by saying that the Pharisees “judge according to the flesh”? What authorities for truth do people turn to in our day? Is this just another version of judging according to the flesh? Explain. *Lord, no opinion of man, discovery of science, or philosophical theory can change the fact that You...*
4. In verses 15 and 16, Jesus seems to be saying different things. He doesn’t judge, but if He does, His judgment is true. Is it possible that Jesus both *does* and *does not* judge? Explain. *Lord, I follow the judgment of Your Word today and every day, so that when I come to the final Judgment of God...*
5. How did Jesus describe His relationship with the Father? How would the Jews have heard this? What would they have understood Him to be saying? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

Summary

“In order to refute their arguments and to show that he adapted his expressions to address the suspicions of those who thought he was no more than a mere man, our Lord says, ‘Though I bear record of myself, my record is still true.’ And he adds the reason, ‘For I know where I come from,’ in other words, I am from God, I am God and the Son of God. Now, God is surely a competent witness to himself.” *John Chrysostom (344-407*

AD)

As Jesus' witnesses, we should draw strength for *our* witness from the confidence He had in *His*. Explain.

Closing Prayer

I will extol You, my God, O King;
And I will bless Your name forever and ever.
Every day I will bless You,
And I will praise Your name forever and ever.
Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
And His greatness is unsearchable.
One generation shall praise Your works to another,
And shall declare Your mighty acts.
I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty,
And on Your wondrous works.
Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts,
And I will declare Your greatness.
They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness,
And shall sing of Your righteousness.
The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion,
Slow to anger and great in mercy.
The LORD *is* good to all,
And His tender mercies *are* over all His works.
All Your works shall praise You, O LORD,
And Your saints shall bless You.
They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom,
And talk of Your power,
To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts,
And the glorious majesty of His kingdom.

Psalm 145.1-12

Psalm 145.1-12 (*Brother James' Air: The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want*)

I will extol You, God, my King, and ever praise Your Name!
I bless You, Lord, for everything each day, and e'er the same!
Great are You, Lord, my praise I bring; unsearchable Your fame!

To ev'ry generation we Your wondrous works shall tell.
The splendor of Your majesty we contemplate full well.
We speak of all Your mighty deeds and all Your greatness tell!

Then shall we all the glorious fame of Your great goodness sing –
Your righteousness, Your gracious Name, Your mercy: praise we bring!
Your steadfast love remains the same, mercy our covering.

Your works shall thank You; all Your saints shall bless and praise You, Lord.
Your reign we bless without restraint; Your power fills our words.
Our children we shall educate in all Your splendor, Lord.

3 “You know neither Me nor My Father”

Read and meditate on John 8.17-19.

Jesus is the Master of the slant answer. He’s not being disingenuous; He is trying to make people think, to reflect on all they know about Him, the Scriptures, the promises of the Father, and so forth. He is not skirting their questions, but trying to open their minds.

¹⁷“It is written in your Law, the testimony of two men is true. ¹⁸One I am Who bears witness to Myself; the Father, Who has sent Me to you, witnesses of Me as well.” ¹⁹So then they said, “Where is Your Father?” He again replied, “You do not know Me, and You do not know My Father. You would know Him, too, if only you had known Me.”

- John 8.17-19

Reflect

1. Jesus appealed to the Law of God in His defense (cf. Deut. 19.15). Is He here affirming some ongoing validity for the Law? Explain. Complete this prayer: *Lord, I know the Law cannot save us, but I affirm it as...*

2. Jesus insisted that His testimony about Himself fit the criteria for truth established in the Law. Whom did He “call” to affirm His claims? In what sense or way did the Father bear witness to Jesus? *Father, help me to fulfill my calling to bear witness to Jesus. As He did, and You did, so let me...*

3. What were the Jews asking in verse 19? Why did they ask this? Do you think they were thinking “Father” in the same way Jesus was thinking “Father”? Explain. *Father, be at work in me, by Your Spirit, that I might be faithful in my witness to Jesus today when I...*

4. It might have seemed obvious to onlookers that the Jews did not know Jesus or His Father. After all, they were challenging His claims, and they’d just asked about the whereabouts of His Father. But what was Jesus saying in the second part of verse 19? Is it important to make sure people know they are *lost* before we can reasonably expect them to want to be *saved*? Explain. *Lord, today I pray for lost friends or co-workers. Please, Lord, let them...*

5. “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.” What did Jesus mean by this? How does this help us to understand Jesus’ mission? What should we expect Jesus to do for us? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

Summary

“The Father and the Son are mutually revealing. When the Father is mentioned, one recalls his offspring, and similarly when the Son is mentioned we remember the one who begat him. And so, the Son is like the doorway leading to knowledge of the Father, and it is in this sense that Jesus says, ‘No one comes to the Father but by me.’” *Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

Jesus came to show us the Father, to bring us to the Father, to intercede for us with the Father, to reconcile us to God the Father, and to send us into the world as the Father sent Him. Give thanks to the Father for Jesus, and for what Jesus reveals about the Father to you.

Closing Prayer

I will bless the LORD at all times;
His praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.
My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;
The humble shall hear *of it* and be glad.
Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt His name together.
I sought the LORD, and He heard me,
And delivered me from all my fears.
They looked to Him and were radiant,
And their faces were not ashamed.
This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard *him*,
And saved him out of all his troubles.
The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him,
And delivers them.
Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good;
Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!

Psalm 34.1-8

Psalm 34.1-9, 3 (*Alleluia [Lowe]: Mighty God, While Angels Bless You*)

I will bless the Lord at all times; I shall praise Him evermore!
My soul makes its boast in Jesus – Him we gladly all adore!
Magnify the Name of Jesus!
Let us lift His Name in praise!

When I sought the Lord, He answered, and from fear delivered me.
Those who look to Him are radiant; shamed their face shall never be.
Magnify the Name of Jesus!
Let us lift His Name in praise!

When I cried to God, He heard me, and from trouble rescued me.
‘Round their camp His angel lingers that they may delivered be.
Magnify the Name of Jesus!
Let us lift His Name in praise!

Taste and see how good is Jesus; blessed are all who in Him hide.
None shall lack for any blessing who in Christ will e’er confide.
Magnify the Name of Jesus!
Let us lift His Name in praise!

4 “I am going away”

Read and meditate on John 8.20, 21.

We're still in the temple, specifically, in that part referred to as the treasury. This is *not* an incidental observation.

²⁰He was in the treasury when He spoke these words to them, as He was teaching in the temple. No one dared to lay a hand on Him (although they might have), for His hour had not yet come. ²¹Then Jesus said to them, “I’m going from you; you will seek Me, but will perish in your sin.” Where I go, you cannot begin to enter.”

- John 8.20, 21

Reflect

1. The temple treasury was where people came to give their gifts and offerings. Why do you suppose John took the time to point this out for us? Complete this prayer: *Lord, You are the Father’s greatest gift, and the only sacrifice that could...*
2. No one “laid hands” on Jesus at that time. When people came into the treasury, the priests “laid hands” on their offerings. Then what happened to those offerings? Was it time for this to happen to Jesus? Why not? *Lord, let my life be under Your control, just as Yours is, so that...*
3. John again mentions Jesus’ “hour.” To what is He pointing forward? Why does John keep bringing this up? Who is controlling the movement toward this “hour”? *You are Lord of time, Lord Jesus! Govern the time of my life so that...*
4. Jesus told the Jews that they would die in their sin. Well, that doesn’t sound like Good News? Or is it? Explain. *Lord, can people really understand the Good News without first...*
5. Jesus has moved from light and darkness to life and death in this brief conversation. Sounds like the Gospel Jesus proclaimed is rather cut-and-dried. It’s either *this* or *that*. Is the Good News about Jesus just your opinion? Or is it more? Explain. Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

Summary

“This is an instance of power, not of necessity. He waited for this hour. It was not the fated but the fitting and voluntary hour. This was that all might first be fulfilled that was supposed to be fulfilled before his death.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

We are waiting for another “hour” of our Lord Jesus Christ. Which is that? Are you as faithful in your witness toward *that* hour as Jesus was toward *His*?

Closing Prayer

Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,

Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*,
“Let us break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us.”
He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
The LORD shall hold them in derision.
Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
And distress them in His deep displeasure:
“Yet I have set My King
On My holy hill of Zion.”

Psalm 2.1-6

Psalm 2.1-6 (*Agincourt: O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High!*)

Why do the nations vainly rage,
Conspiring together from age to age?
Earth's kings and all of their counselors stand
Against the Lord and His Right Hand:

“Now let us cast His yoke below,
His Kingdom authority overthrow!
Throw off His Law, reject His Word;
No more be governed by this Lord!”

The Lord in heaven laughs in wrath
At all who embark on this cursèd path.
His angry Word to them is plain:
“Yet shall My King in Zion reign!”

5 “I am from above”

Read and meditate on John 8.23, 24.

We tend naturally to think of heaven as “above” the earth, and, while that’s not entirely accurate, thinking this way provides a useful frame of reference, as Jesus understood.

²³He said to them, “You from beneath are; I am from above. I come not from this world, as you do, for I am not of this world. ²⁴Therefore, now understand why I have said that you will perish in your sins, for you will surely die in sin if you do believe that I am He.”

- John 8.23, 24

Reflect

1. We recall that Jesus was talking with the Pharisees, who were the rulers of the Jews (v. 13), and considered themselves to be at the top of the pecking order in Jerusalem society. How do you suppose Jesus’ statement in verse 23 would have struck them? Why? Complete the following prayer: *Lord, we are all beneath You. Today, help me to keep this in mind, so that I...*

2. Beneath, above; this world, not this world. Is heaven located spatially somewhere *above* us? Why do we typically use this language when thinking or talking about heaven? Is it wrong to do so? Could it be helpful? *I know, Lord that heaven is all around us, but when I think of You, exalted in glory, I...*

3. From Jesus’ clarification in verse 23, we might get the impression there are two “worlds.” Is this true? Explain. *Lord, because of Your resurrection, and the gift of eternal life, I live in both worlds at the same time, which means...*

4. Jesus said that those who *remain* in “this world” would die in their sins. Apparently, to avoid that outcome, one must enter that world which is above. How did Jesus say that was possible? How can we know when we have made the transition to the world which is “from above”? *Lord, I want to know more of the life of Your world, the world above. So guide me today as I...*

5. Review Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus in John 3. Here he is saying the same thing in a different way. What does it mean to be *born from above* (“born again”)? Is being born again simply a matter of having one’s sin’s forgiven? Or of going to heaven when you die? Explain. Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

“We are those who bear about with us, in this living and moving image of our human nature, the likeness of God. It is a likeness that lives with us, takes counsel with us, associates with us, is a guest with us, feels with us and feels for us. We have become a consecrated offering to God for Christ’s sake. We are the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people who once were not a people but are now the people of God. We are those who, according to John, are not of those who are beneath but have learned all from him who came from above; who have come to understand the dispensation of God; who have learned to walk in newness of life.” *Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD)*

Believing in Jesus is a matter of becoming a whole person, of taking up residency in the *whole world* and living as *new creatures* who are oriented in all things to Jesus Christ. How does sin interrupt our experience of living in Christ?

Closing Prayer

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.
For I acknowledge my transgressions,
And my sin is always before me.
Against You, You only, have I sinned,
And done *this* evil in Your sight—
That You may be found just when You speak,
And blameless when You judge.
Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin my mother conceived me.
Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts,
And in the hidden *part* You will make me to know wisdom.
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Make me hear joy and gladness,
That the bones You have broken may rejoice.
Hide Your face from my sins,
And blot out all my iniquities.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Psalm 51.2-10

Psalm 51.1-9 (*Passion Choral: O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*)

Be gracious to me, Savior, according to Your love!
According to Your mercy, my sins, my sins remove!
O wash me, precious Savior, and cleanse me from all sin;
Look on me with Your favor, and cause my grief to end.

Against You only, Savior, have I become unclean;
Thus just the condemnation which You pronounce on me.
Lord, I was born to sinning, while You seek truth within;
To wisdom my heart winning, release me from my sin!

In Jesus' blood and mercy, Lord, cleanse my evil heart!
Let me washed, cleansed, renewed be and pure in whole and part.
Bring joy again and gladness; look not upon my sin.
Deliver me from sadness; renew me yet again!

6 “Then you will know”

Read and meditate on John 8.25-30.

The Jews keep trying to get Jesus to make His claims explicitly. He will not be trapped by their questions; at the same time, He will not deny that He is Who He claims to be.

*25They said to Him, “Who do You claim to be?”
He answered, “Just what I have said to you
from the beginning. 26I have much more to
proclaim to you, and judge concerning you,
for He Who sent Me thus to you is true,
and I speak to the world what I have heard
from Him.” 27They did not understand this word
was all about the Father. 28Jesus then
explained, “When you lift up the Son of Man,
then you will know that I am He; I do
of Myself nothing; what the Father to
Me shows, I speak these things. 29And He Who sent
Me is with Me; the Father has not left
Me on my own, for that which pleases Him,
I do.” 30So many then believed in Him.*

- John 8.25-30

Reflect

1. Remember: We’re at the Feast of Tabernacles, or just shortly after its conclusion. People are in Jerusalem from all over. Jesus is in the temple treasury, and His detractors want nothing more than to lay hands on Him and be done with Him. So they keep baiting Him, trying to get Him to make *the* claim that would justify their clapping Him in irons. Look at Jesus’ response to their question in verse 25. From what we have heard from Jesus at this feast (chapters 7 and 8), Who has He claimed to be? Complete the following brief prayer: *Lord, You have called me to explain You to others. I need to know You better, especially as...*
2. Meditate on Jesus’ comment in verse 26, especially the last part. Since we have been sent to the world as Jesus was sent (Jn. 20.21), what does this imply for our daily life in the world? *If I am to be effective as Your witness, Lord, I need to bear...*
3. Either the Pharisees are having a hard time making sense of Jesus’ claims, or they’re trying to trap Him by their constant badgering and questioning – or possibly, some of both. John explains (v. 27) that they didn’t understand Jesus was talking about the Father as the One Who sent Him, and Whose Word He spoke (v. 26). But this seems clear to us, doesn’t it? How could they *not* understand what He was saying? What does this suggest about the power of sin? *Give me grace and patience, Lord, as I bear witness of You to others, because I know...*
4. Clearly, Jesus knows where all this is headed (v. 28). That will only happen when He’s ready for it. What will happen once He has been “lifted up”? Will everyone know? Summarize the nature of Jesus’ relationship with the Father during His earthly sojourn, as He outlines it here (vv. 28, 29). In what ways do you experience this? *Lord, let Your Spirit be at work in me, to make me willing and able to...*
5. How do you understand verse 30? Glance ahead to verses 31-33. How would you describe the nature of this *believing* in Jesus? Is this mature and trusting faith? Or something else? Explain. Is it possible for someone to *believe* in Jesus, and yet not really *believe* in Him? Explain. Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

“When he brought his speech down to a more human level, many believed in him. Do you still ask why he spoke so humbly? And yet, the Evangelist clearly alludes to the reason [here], all but proclaiming aloud: Do not be disturbed at hearing so humble a speech from Christ, for those who had heard the greatest doctrines from him and were still not persuaded that he was from the Father were persuaded by these more humble words so that they might believe. This explains why he spoke these things in such a humble way. These then believed on him, yet not as they ought but only because they were pleased with the refreshing humility of his words. The Evangelist, in fact, shows their imperfect faith in his subsequent narration, which relates their unjust proceedings against him.” *John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

Clearly, “imperfect faith” is not where we want to be. How can believers help one another to grow into a more mature experience of believing in Jesus?

Closing Prayer

The LORD reigns;
Let the earth rejoice;
Let the multitude of isles be glad!
Clouds and darkness surround Him;
Righteousness and justice *are* the foundation of His throne.
A fire goes before Him,
And burns up His enemies round about.
His lightnings light the world;
The earth sees and trembles.
The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the Lord,
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
The heavens declare His righteousness,
And all the peoples see His glory.
Let all be put to shame who serve carved images,
Who boast of idols.
Worship Him, all *you* gods.
Zion hears and is glad,
And the daughters of Judah rejoice
Because of Your judgments, O LORD.
For You, LORD, *are* most high above all the earth;
You are exalted far above all gods.

Psalm 97.1-9

Psalm 97.1, 6, 9 (*Darwall: Rejoice, the Lord is King!*)

Rejoice, the Lord is King! O earth, lift up your voice;
Be glad, you islands, shout and sing: Rejoice! Rejoice!
Beyond, above all gods and nations be exalted, God of love!

The heav’ns above declare His glorious righteousness;
And tribes and peoples everywhere His Name confess.
Beyond, above all gods and nations be exalted, God of love!

7 Witnesses

Read and meditate on John 8.12-30.

Jesus used the Feast of Tabernacles to make more explicit claims about Himself and His ministry. But He was not sufficiently direct to allow the Pharisees to arrest Him, so they continued to press Him, hoping to wrest from Him some incriminating word. That would come soon enough, but not yet.

¹²Then Jesus spoke to them again, and said, "I am the Light of the world. He who, instead of doubting, follows Me, shall never in the darkness walk again, but will within himself possess the very light of life."
¹³The Pharisees, set on a course of strife with Jesus, therefore said, "You witness to Yourself; therefore, Your witness is not true."
¹⁴But Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness to Myself, My words are true, for I know where I came from, and I know where I am going; but you do not know where I am from, or where I go. ¹⁵You judge according to the flesh. But I? I judge no man. ¹⁶Yet if I judge, be sure of this: Whatever word I speak of judgment is the truth, for I am not alone, but I am with the Father, He Who dwells on high, and Who has sent Me. ¹⁷It is written in your Law, the testimony of two men is true. ¹⁸One I am Who bears witness to Myself; the Father, Who has sent Me to you, witnesses of Me as well." ¹⁹So then they said, "Where is Your Father?" He again replied, "You do not know Me, and You do not know My Father. You would know Him, too, if only you had known Me." ²⁰He was in the treasury when He spoke these words to them, as He was teaching in the temple. No one dared to lay a hand on Him (although they might have), for His hour had not yet come.
²¹Then Jesus said to them, "I'm going from you; you will seek Me, but will perish in your sin." Where I go, you cannot begin to enter." ²²They were puzzled, thinking He might kill Himself, because He said that He would go away. ²³He said to them, "You from beneath are; I am from above. I come not from this world, as you do, for I am not of this world. ²⁴Therefore, now understand why I have said that you will perish in your sins, for you will surely die in sin if you do believe that I am He."
²⁵They said to Him, "Who do You claim to be?"

He answered, "Just what I have said to you from the beginning. ²⁶I have much more to proclaim to you, and judge concerning you, for He Who sent Me thus to you is true, and I speak to the world what I have heard from Him." ²⁷They did not understand this word was all about the Father. ²⁸Jesus then explained, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He; I do of Myself nothing; what the Father to Me shows, I speak these things. ²⁹And He Who sent Me is with Me; the Father has not left Me on my own, for that which pleases Him, I do." ³⁰So many then believed in Him.

- John 8.12-20

Reflect

1. In some respects, this encounter with the religious leaders is all about their saying to Him, "Who says?" Jesus replied, "I say, and My Father." To what authorities do unbelievers look in rejecting the Gospel? To what do we look in embracing it? Complete this prayer: *Your Word, O Lord, is enough for me. Give me grace to stand firm on Your Word as I...*

2. The Pharisees tried to argue that the Law of Moses was on their side against Jesus. Jesus said the Law bears witness to Him. How does the Law – the five books of Moses – bear witness to Jesus? *Lord, You have said that all Scripture is about You, so help me to see...*

3. Jesus came *from* the Father, speaking the *words* of the Father, and doing the *works* the Father had given Him to do. He told the most religious people of His day that they didn't even *know* the Father. How can we know that we know Him? *Knowing You, Father, and knowing Jesus – this is eternal life. And I know that I have eternal life because...*

4. Jesus raised the question of two worlds – one above and one beneath, one where life and light prevail, and one where sin and darkness lead to death. How would you explain the two worlds Jesus mentions in this passage? In which world does the believer live? Explain. *Lord, You are the Center of my world. Help me in this world to...*

5. Jesus points us forward to the ultimate outworking of God's will in His life – His being *lifted up* so that people can know Him and the Father. Why was this necessary? Could not God make Himself known to us apart from Jesus being lifted up? Explain. Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

"Here Jesus is saying, 'Since you are looking only to the flesh, you believe that I am merely a man, and you suppose that I am just like you. But the dignity and the glory of the Godhead does not even enter your mind. However, you shall know that I am God of true God and Light of light through your dreadful and lawless act—my death on the cross. For when you see your mad foolishness come to nothing and the snare of death crushed in pieces—for I shall surely rise from the dead—ultimately you will be forced, even against your will, to agree with what I said, and you shall confess that I am God by nature.'" *Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

Believing in Jesus means entering the world of light and life and living water and forgiven sins and the household of God. This is Good News! Spend today thinking of all the reasons this Good News is so good

for you. Then share one of these reasons with someone else.

Closing Prayer

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
For He has done marvelous things;
His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.
The LORD has made known His salvation;
His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.
He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel;
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth;
Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.
Sing to the Lord with the harp,
With the harp and the sound of a psalm,
With trumpets and the sound of a horn;
Shout joyfully before the LORD, the King.
Let the sea roar, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell in it;
Let the rivers clap *their* hands;
Let the hills be joyful together before the LORD,
For He is coming to judge the earth.
With righteousness He shall judge the world,
And the peoples with equity.

Psalm 98.1-9

Psalm 98 (*Duke Street: Come, Let Us Sing unto the Lord*)

Come, let us sing unto the Lord new songs of praise with one accord!
Wonderful things our God has done: Jesus has our salvation won!

Now is God's saving mercy known; His glory to the world is shown.
Faithful and kind is God our Lord; earth has the Name of Jesus heard.

Raise to the Lord your loudest voice! Break forth and sing! Rejoice! Rejoice
Praise, praise to You our God and King, with all our hearts and strength we bring!

Now let the whole creation 'round burst into song with joyous sound!
Jesus will come to judge the earth; let all proclaim His matchless worth!

The Gospel of John: John 8.12-30

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. Why were the religious leaders of Jerusalem so eager to discredit and silence Jesus? Do we still see this happening in our day? Explain.
2. Jesus held out the prospect of life in a “world above.” What did He mean? How does one attain to such a life?
3. From listening to Jesus, as He talked with the religious leaders of His day, how can we grow as witnesses to the Lord?
4. How would you explain what it means to *believe* in Jesus? Is this merely a kind of intellectual assent? Or is it more?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from John 7.12-30? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

Items for prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.