

John 8:12-30

II. Jesus Reveals Himself to the World (1:19-12:50)

M. Trouble at Tabernacles (7:1-52)

N. The Woman Caught on Adultery (7:53-8:11)

O. The Sixth Discourse: The Light of the World, Part One (8:12-30)

With the departure of the woman caught in adultery, Jesus now returns to the crowd that was already assembled (vv. 2, 20).¹ He then speaks the second *I am* statement in John's Gospel: *I am the light of the world*. This harkens all the way back to 1:4-5, in which John writes that *the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it*. This contrast between *light* and *darkness* isn't uncommon in John. The *light* pertains to things of God and His kingdom, while *darkness* refers to the world and the devil (cf. 12:35, 46; 1 John 1:5-6; 2:8-11). When people *follow* Jesus (a synonym for *believe*, v. 23), they are *delivered from the power of darkness and conveyed into the kingdom of the Son of His love* (Col 1:13).

The Pharisees take issue with this, though, because there's no one to back Jesus up. As we considered last week, two witnesses were necessary to establish something as fact in the Mosaic Law (cf. v. 17). Jesus answers them by telling them that *the Father who sent Me* bears witness of Him (vv. 16, 18). His Father backs up everything the Son says and does. This foreshadows the conflict that will take place in 10:25-39, in which Jesus says *I and My Father are one* (v. 30). They'll understand fully what He means at that point; however, they're still a little clueless here in John 8. They ask Jesus where His Father is, to which He replies that they know neither Him nor His Father, because to know One is to know the Other.

People who claim to know God or believe in God, yet reject Jesus as their Savior, know neither Jesus nor Yahweh, the Most High God. To be a Christian is to be a disciple of Jesus (cf. Acts 11:26), not to simply pay lip service to a higher being who created all things. Not all of those who "thank God" for things in their life actually know who God is.

We understand what Jesus is getting at here when He speaks about His relationship with the Father; however, the Pharisees *did not understand* them yet (v. 27). It's likely for this reason that *no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come* (v. 20). This is now the fourth time we read this phrase in the Gospel (cf. 2:4; 7:6, 30). It continues to suggest that there will be a perfect time for Jesus to submit Himself to the Jewish authorities for His crucifixion. Everything happens on God's timetable!

Of that we can be certain, for He continues to needle the Pharisees in vv. 21-24: *I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come*. They ignore the *die in your sin* part for now, and are more concerned about where Jesus would go that they couldn't follow. Of course, Jesus is speaking of returning to His Father *above* (v. 23). The Pharisees are *of this world*; Jesus is not (v. 23). It really is that simple. We're either in the light or in the darkness. We're either of this world or we've been born from above. We as believers need to recognize our new position in Jesus, and then live in light of it!

Because Jesus is *not of this world*, they *will die in your sins. . . if you do not believe that I am* (v. 24). Now, all modern versions supply the word *He* after the words *I am*; however, they aren't found in the original Greek. It's common in the Gospel of John to have Jesus utter the word *I am* without anything following it (cf. 4:26; 6:20; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; 18:6, 8). The implication is – especially in verses like 8:58 and 18:6

¹The *them* of v. 12 is but one of several reasons why we should view 7:52-8:11 as authentic. Otherwise, who would the *them* be referring to?

– that *I am* points to the name of God as revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14. They must recognize that Jesus isn't simply the son of Joseph and Mary, Jesus is the great *I AM*. He is Yahweh in the flesh! God must fix the sin problem, and here He is in human form ready to do just that! Failure to believe that Jesus is fully God results in people dying *in their sins* (v. 24).

I read v. 25 envisioning the Pharisees' heads cocked to the side, eyes squinting with mouths slightly agape, saying *Who are You?* As in, You are one odd guy! Yet, Jesus replies that this is who He's presented Himself as being all along: One with the Father, sent by Him to proclaim a message of spiritual deliverance. Yet, *they did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father* (v. 27).

Nevertheless, the day would come when they would *lift up the Son of Man* (v. 28). This is not the typical New Testament word for *lift up*, such as we will see in John 15. Instead, this is a word that means both *to lift up spatially* as well as *to cause enhancement in honor, fame, position, power, or fortune*. Not only will they hoist Jesus up on a cross, but in so doing, it will also lead to His exaltation at the right hand of the Father after the resurrection. Jesus knows, even here in John 8, that these Pharisees will ultimately get their wish in seeing Him crucified. But for now, *His hour had not yet come!*

In the meantime, He is about His Father's business (vv. 28-29). The Father and the Son experienced unbroken fellowship during His ministry. Jesus did nothing of Himself; the Father was always with Him, never leaving Him alone; and the Son always did those things that pleased the Father. When we come to believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, much like the *many* did that day (v. 30), we too have fellowship with the Father and the Son (cf. 1 John 1:3), and we have a new nature by which we too can please the Father through that which we do.

But first we must believe in the Light of the world, that we would *walk in the light as He is in the light* (1 John 1:7).