

# John 8vs12-59

Family membership

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# Family membership

## John 8 vs 12-59

### *Setting the scene...*

You may be wondering why we're not starting at chapter 8 v 1...

Well, John 7:53 - 8:11 does not appear in many of the earliest manuscripts. It is generally thought that though it probably is the authentic teaching of Jesus, it was added in to John's account by later copyists.

So we are going to start at chapter 8 v 12....

Still at the Feast of Tabernacles – and therefore a logical continuation from Chapter 7 v 52... and the themes are the same too, as we deal with both the true identity of Jesus, and the true identity of those who reject him...

This study forms two parts:

Part 1: Jesus asks:

- a) where do you come from? (vs 12-20)
- b) where are you going? (vs 21-30)

Part 2: Jesus asks: who do you belong to? (vs 31-59)

Let's start by reading ch 8 vs 12-30:

*8 vs 12-30: Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." <sup>13</sup> So the Pharisees said to him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true." <sup>14</sup> Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. <sup>15</sup> You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. <sup>16</sup> Yet even if I do judge, my judgement is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. <sup>17</sup> In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. <sup>18</sup> I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me." <sup>19</sup> They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." <sup>20</sup> These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.*

*<sup>21</sup> So he said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come." <sup>22</sup> So the Jews said, "Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come?'" <sup>23</sup> He said to them, "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, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." <sup>25</sup> So they said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. <sup>26</sup> I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him." <sup>27</sup> They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father.*

*<sup>28</sup> So Jesus said to them, “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 authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. <sup>29</sup> And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.” <sup>30</sup> As he was saying these things, many believed in him.*

## **Part 1a – Jesus asks, “Where do you come from?”**

The issue is headed up by a claim by Jesus – he knows where he has come from... the question is: “given he has come from the Father, where have they come from??”

*Read v 12: Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

Where have we seen this claim before?

*ch 1 v4: In him was life, and the life was the light of men.*

The Light of life:

*ch 1 v 9: The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.*

*ch 3 vs 19-20: And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.*

Now read John 8 v 12:

*v 12: Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

What does Jesus imply here about those who will not come out into the light?

- They will continue to walk in darkness

The Pharisees object to this and immediately start to question Jesus’ credentials:

*v 13: So the Pharisees said to him, “You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true.”*

What is the accusation against him? ...That he testifies about himself.

How does Jesus respond?

Read ch 8 vs 14-18: *Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. <sup>15</sup> You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. <sup>16</sup> Yet even if I do judge, my judgement is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. <sup>17</sup> In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. <sup>18</sup> I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me."*

In short - Jesus is qualified to testify about himself because:

- He knows where he comes from
- His judgement is "backed" by the judgement of his Father, God
- He therefore passes the test of their law!!!

They are unable to grasp who he is or where he has come from because:

- They judge only by human standards
- They do not know the Father
- If they did know the Father they would recognise Jesus!!

v 19: *They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also."*

## **Part 1b- Jesus asks, "Where are you going?"**

Jesus knows where he is going... given he is going to the Father, the question is: "where are they going??"

Read vs 21-30: *So he said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come." <sup>22</sup> So the Jews said, "Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come?'" <sup>23</sup> He said to them, "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, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." <sup>25</sup> So they said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. <sup>26</sup> I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him." <sup>27</sup> They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. <sup>28</sup> So Jesus said to them, "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 authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. <sup>29</sup> And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him." <sup>30</sup> As he was saying these things, many believed in him.*

When he talks to "them" he is still in the treasury...

- So... "them" = the Pharisees in the temple ...at the Tabernacle
- These are the religious leaders of the day – including the Chief Rabbi et al!

Read vs 23-24: *He said to them, "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, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins."*

What is Jesus' analysis of them?

- They are "of the earth" – and they don't know God!
- They stand... condemned in their sins!
- Unless they turn to him and believe they will die in their sins – unforgiven!

Once again this produces serious questions about Jesus authority to say this!

vs 25-26: *So they said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. <sup>26</sup> I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him."*

Jesus underlines his identity and authority – he is NOT budging and there is NO compromise!!

The Pharisees and the Scribes will NOT accept or understand that when he is talking about his father, he is talking about God!

...yet:

v 26: *"...I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him."*

In verses 27-29 Jesus explains when and how we will be able to see who he is and where he is going.

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So what is Jesus pointing us to as ultimate evidence of his identity and destiny?

**"I AM HE"** .....is literally **"I AM"!!**

Once again Jesus uses the PERSONAL name of God!!

- v 28: **"The Son of Man"** is the title for God's absolute ruler who is given all of God's authority to judge and rule all people
- Jesus being **"lifted up"** refers both to his death on the cross and then his resurrection from the dead

So then – Jesus' ultimate power lies in his death and resurrection. This is his final and true vindication of all he did.

## Part 2: Who do you belong to?

The issue now moves from origin to paternity...

Read vs 31-47: *So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, <sup>32</sup> and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” <sup>33</sup> They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free?’”*

*<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup> The slave does not remain in the house for ever; the son remains for ever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. <sup>37</sup> I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. <sup>38</sup> I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.”*

*<sup>39</sup> They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, <sup>40</sup> but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. <sup>41</sup> You are doing the works your father did.” They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.”*

*<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. <sup>43</sup> Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. <sup>44</sup> You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup> But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. <sup>46</sup> Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? <sup>47</sup> Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”*

### “WHO IS OUR FATHER??”

Still in the Temple, Jesus now turns to (v 31) **‘the Jews who had believed in him’**:

Read v 32: *“...and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

Be set free from what?

- From their human nature

Yet with indignant rage they respond:

Read v 33: *They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free?’”*

Jesus then gives another of his famous “truly, truly” statements:

v 34: *Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.”*

- So that's all of us then!
- This slavery is BOTH a slavery in that we keep on sinning and can't stop... AND a slavery in that once we have sinned ONCE we have to face the consequences of our actions ....
 

.....ie God's judgement and separation from HIM.
- Only God can set us free!! How? Through the death of Jesus being "**lifted up**" on the cross.

He goes on:

v 35: *"The slave does not remain in the house for ever; the son remains for ever."*

- Jesus has made it clear to those listening to him - they are NOT true children of God
- In contrast to those who are in slavery... the son remains in a family for ever – because as a son he is the heir!!

We need the liberation that only the Son can give:

v 36: *"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."*

### ***Where we naturally come from...***

In vs 37-47 Jesus now pushes the logic to show whose family sinful human beings really do belong to. There are only two spiritual families – so the question is: "to which one do we belong by nature..?"

There are at least three steps of logic that provide the answer:

Step 1: "You have a different father"

vs 37-38: *I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. <sup>38</sup> I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father."*

- You show your family membership by behaving the way your father behaves: murder and lies!"
- "I show my family membership by speaking the words I have heard from my Father"

## Step 2: “Abraham is not your spiritual father”

vs 39-41: *They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, <sup>40</sup> but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. <sup>41</sup> You are doing the works your father did.” They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.”*

- “Abraham cannot be your father. If he were, you’d act the way he did...”
- “...You must therefore have a different spiritual father.”
- “Abraham might be your physical father but spiritually you’re from a completely different family.”

## Step 3: “God is not your Father”

vs 42-43: *Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. <sup>43</sup> Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.”*

- “If you were of God, you’d recognise and love me!”
- It’s a simple but devastating truth: They can’t bear to hear his WORD!
- “Therefore your rejection of God’s truth, which I am teaching, must mean that you do not belong to God’s family..!”

## Step 4: “The devil is your father”

v 44-47: *“You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup> But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. <sup>46</sup> Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? <sup>47</sup> Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”*

This is a staggering accusation, but the logic is irrefutable:

v 44: *“You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

By following Jesus’ logic, what does this tell me about my spiritual family membership if I reject Jesus and his teaching?

Read vs 46-47: *“Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? <sup>47</sup> Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”*



## *Time to pause...*

Let's compare this with what we have seen so far:

We are condemned and we are dead spiritually. Dead to God....yet:

Read John 5 v 24: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”*

Without the Spirit we are lost:

Read John 6 v 63: *“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”*

I am walking in darkness... yet Jesus says:

Read John 8 v 12: *Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

I am of this world.... I will die in my sin without Jesus....who is pretty clear about that!

Read John 8 vs 23-24: *He said to them, “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, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.”*

We are enslaved to sin...yet Jesus provides a wonderful promise of freedom:

Read John 8 vs 31-32: *So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

Having already exposed the state of the religious leaders, Jesus has also exposed the state of those who “believed” – saying the same thing!!

➤ In other words– we ALL need him!

None of us are sufficient on our own – ALL are sinners!

If we think we are decent enough to generate a spark of life on our own – we need to think again!!

## Finally...Jesus – the Father??

Read John 8 vs 48-59: *The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?”* <sup>49</sup> *Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon, but I honour my Father, and you dishonour me.* <sup>50</sup> *Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge.* <sup>51</sup> *Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”* <sup>52</sup> *The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’* <sup>53</sup> *Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?”* <sup>54</sup> *Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’* <sup>55</sup> *But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word.* <sup>56</sup> *Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.”* <sup>57</sup> *So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?”* <sup>58</sup> *Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”* <sup>59</sup> *So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.*

v 48: *The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?”*

- What a response – you must be the one from the devil, not us – who is YOUR father?!”

What do the Jews understand Jesus to be saying about himself?

v 58: *Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”*

- He is claiming to be God – the great “**I AM**”

Let’s look back to the Old Testament book of Exodus - verses they would know VERY well:

Read Exodus 3 vs 13-14: *Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?”* *God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.”* *And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”*

How do we know they fully understood what Jesus was claiming in v 58?

- Because they immediately pick up stones – to kill him for blasphemy!!

v 59: *So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.*

Jesus is not running away, but rather is in absolute control of events – his ‘hour’ has not yet come...

How does Jesus tell them that they will know who he is?

- God will glorify Jesus:

v 54: *Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’”*

When do we see that happen?

- At the Cross and the Resurrection ....just look again at v 28:

v 28: *So Jesus said to them, "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 authority, but speak just as the Father taught me."*

So Jesus is saying: "Your response to my death and resurrection will show, once and for all, which family you belong to!"

It's clear from this that Jesus won't allow "believers" to come to him unless they are prepared to come humbly before the Creator God...the great I AM....recognising that they bring nothing except their sin to be forgiven.....

- In short - WE NEED HIS HELP!
- After all... he is THE SAVIOUR.

And all by the free gift of GRACE:

Read John 1 v 14: *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

## *John 8 vs 12-59*

<sup>12</sup> Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." <sup>13</sup> So the Pharisees said to him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true." <sup>14</sup> Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. <sup>15</sup> You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. <sup>16</sup> Yet even if I do judge, my judgement is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. <sup>17</sup> In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. <sup>18</sup> I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me." <sup>19</sup> They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." <sup>20</sup> These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

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<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup> The slave does not remain in the house for ever; the son remains for ever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. <sup>37</sup> I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. <sup>38</sup> I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father."

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He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup> But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. <sup>46</sup> Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? <sup>47</sup> Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”

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