

# Summary Sheet for John 8 vs 12-59

## ...to accompany Notes 16

GOAL of these 1-2-1 studies

See the true horror of unbelief, its reasons and consequences

### Context – how does this chapter fit in?

Ch 8:12 follows directly from ch 7:52 - Jesus is still at the Feast of Booths speaking to the hostile Pharisees, extending his offer of salvation to 'whoever' will follow him. In ch 7 God's historic people appeared to be divided on account of Jesus and many rejected him. In the first half of ch 8 Jesus reiterates the fact that those who are hostile to him are from this world and therefore cannot follow him. But the second half of the chapter contains a far greater shock: even the faith of those 'many' who appear to believe in him is exposed by Jesus to be phoney and horrific.

### Impact on us

It's shocking to realise that even God's historic people – want to kill him. Jesus strips away any claim to religious superiority to show the true reality. Resistance to Jesus is a sign of not loving God and not belonging to him but of in fact hating him. So, the exposure of their unbelief should reassure us to keep believing in Jesus' words. The Jew's unbelief should not unnerve us and the exposure of their true state underlines the necessity of Jesus' rescue.

### How John writes to make his point

Chs 7 & 8 are part of the same extended dialogue between Jesus and the Jews, and the deepening conflict between them. Ch 7 opens with Jews wanting to kill Jesus and Jesus avoiding them, ch 8 ends with Jews wanting to kill Jesus and him hiding from them. Through the chapters John exposes for us the features, reasons and terrible consequences of unbelief in Jesus and in so doing gives us reason to keep trusting in Jesus as we see how right and necessary is his rescue.

#### Structure

- 8:12-20 **Where from?** Jesus is from above and knows God. The Jews judge according to the flesh and because they don't believe Jesus they are unable to know the Father.
- 8:21-30 **Where going?** Jesus is going to the Father. They are of the world and so can't go to God and so will die in their sins.
- 8:31-59 **Who belong to?** Jesus' exposes the fake faith of the 'believers' of v30. They are wrong to be confident in themselves and their physical family heritage. They won't accept the truth from Jesus. They are really 'children of the devil' and prove it by trying to stone 'I AM'!

### Avoiding red herrings and bear traps – *Why not look at John 8.1-11, its really famous?!*

While the incident may well have happened it is unlikely to be part of John's original Gospel but to have been added by a later copyist. The earliest manuscripts don't include it and it includes words/phrases not found elsewhere in John's writing. Also, as we will see 8.12 seems to follow neatly on from 7.52.

## John's references to the Old Testament and why they matter

### - Light

This is a big idea in John's gospel (see 1vs7-9, 3vs19-21). 8v12 seems to follow on directly from 7v52, where Galilee is mentioned. It seems likely that John wants us to remember the promise of Isaiah 9 v 1-2, where God promised that out of Galilee he would provide a great light to help those 'who walked in darkness'. (See also Isaiah 48-49) Jesus has come to be that Person, not just for the Jewish people, but to be the Light of the whole world. (But many of the Jews seem to be blinded by the light.)

### - Abraham

The Jews believed that their racial descent from Abraham guaranteed for them all the blessings of God's covenant with Abraham. They were fiercely proud of their membership of his family and saw belonging to Abraham as synonymous with belonging to God. Yet Jesus now points out that their confidence is misplaced. They can't be members of Abraham's family, because Abraham would have listened to Jesus and believed in him (8v56). Their response to Jesus actually shows they are children of the devil...

### - "I AM"

When God revealed himself to Moses in Exodus 3, he called himself Yahweh - literally, 'I am what I am' or 'I.' In context, the name was a promise of God's presence with His people.

Several times in ch 8 (v24, v28 & v58) and many times in John, Jesus takes this divine name for himself and thereby claims to be the rescuer and God of his people.

## Some questions to consider - 8 vs 12-59

**Opener:** To what extent do you sympathise with people who don't believe in Jesus?

**Considering the text1:** How does v12-13 seem to follow on from 7.52?

**Considering the text2:** How does Jesus show that his testimony is true in vs14-30 and that the unbelief of his opponents is unfounded by focusing on where he is from and where he is going? What do we discover about the reasons and results of unbelief?

**Considering the text3:** Who do the Jews think they are? How does Jesus reveal their true family membership in vs31-47? What are the reasons and results of their unbelief?

**Considering the text4:** How do vs48-59 expose the true horror of the Jews' rejection of this man Jesus? Who are they trying to stone in v59?

**Sum up:** Chapter 8 ends in much the same way as chapter 7 started. After both these chapters, what have we learned about both true belief and unbelief from the exposure of the unbelief of many of the Jews.

**Ones to keep chewing on:** How does the unveiling of people's unbelief in this chapter reassure us that what Jesus says about himself and his rescue is true?

What questions are we left asking?