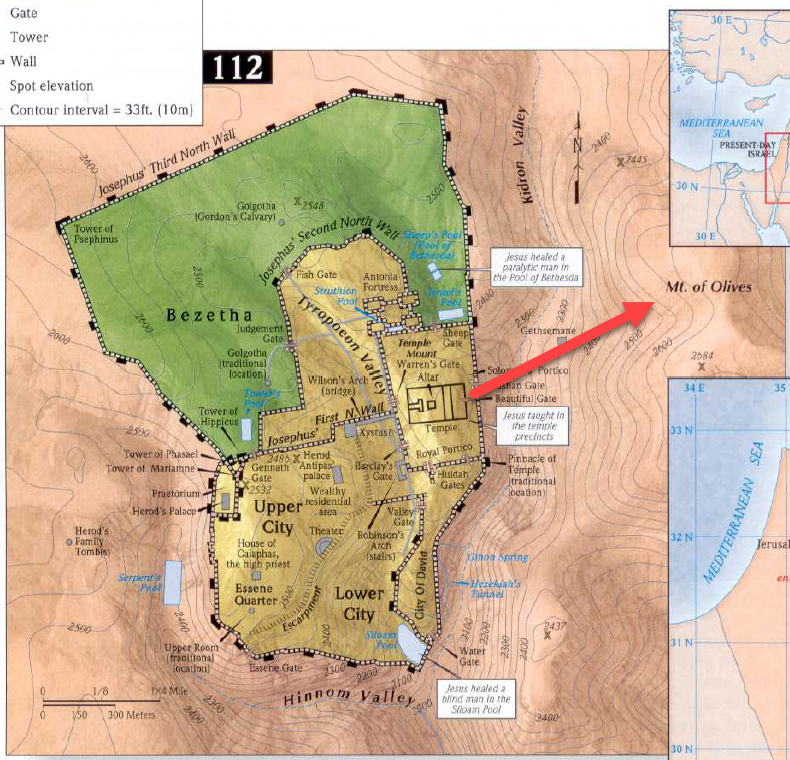
JOHN 8

*Depending on which version of the Bible you are reading, you may see brackets surrounding John 7:53-8:11. There is some discussion as to whether the story found in these verses is original to John’s gospel. For the sake of this study, we are going to assume they were part of the original text. If you have some time, I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the key points of each side of the debate.*

Joh 7:53  [[They went each to his own house,

Joh 8:1  but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

Joh 8:2  Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them.

* If you remember from the last chapter, the Pharisees and chief priests had sent guards to arrest Jesus but they had returned in astonishment of Jesus’ teaching.
* The Jewish officials were outraged and discussed Jesus’ claims amongst themselves.
* Following their discussion, everyone went to their homes for the evening.
* But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives and spend the night there.
* 
* Early the next morning, He got up and went back to the Temple in Jerusalem to teach.

Joh 8:3  The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst

Joh 8:4  they said to him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery.

Joh 8:5  Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?”

* Were the Pharisees right that a person caught in adultery (having a sexual relationship with someone who isn’t your spouse) was supposed to be put to death?
* Or was this just another one of their poor interpretations of the Law?
  + Lev 20:10  “If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.
  + Deu 22:22  “If a man is found lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman. So you shall purge the evil from Israel.
* In this instance, their interpretation was correct but their practice was flawed.
  + Both Leviticus and Deuteronomy instruct both the man and the woman to be put to death.
  + The Pharisees only seemed interested in the woman.
  + Why didn’t they bring the man?
  + They weren’t really interested in keeping the nuances of the Law, they just wanted to trick Jesus (we will see this in the upcoming verses).
  + The letter of the Law wasn’t their biggest concern, trapping Jesus was their biggest concern and it showed in their sloppy execution.

Joh 8:6  This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.

Joh 8:7  And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.”

Joh 8:8  And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground.

Joh 8:9  But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.

* Here their motives are revealed.
  + They pretended they are zealous for the Law of Moses.
  + But they were really just looking for a way to catch Jesus in a sticky situation.
* What was so tricky about this situation?
  + If Jesus told the Pharisees the woman shouldn’t be killed, He would be in contradiction to the Law of Moses.
  + If Jesus told the Pharisees to spare the woman’s life, He potentially would have been violating the law of the Romans.
    - Some people believe the Romans had stripped the Jews of their right to execute a person for religious violations.
    - If that was the case, by commanding the woman to be stoned, Jesus would have been breaking Roman Law.
  + The Jews figured this was a clever trap.
    - If Jesus spared her, the Jews would condemn Him.
    - If Jesus condemned her, the Jews would tell the Romans and they would condemn Him.
* I believe Jesus’ response is fitting based on the sincerity of their question.
  + Disingenuous questions don’t always deserve an answer.
  + Jesus just seems to ignore them and He begins writing on the ground with His finger (we don’t know what He wrote).
* They continued to press Him for an answer until He eventually stood up.
* His answer wasn’t the direct yes or no they wanted.
* He said, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.”
* APPLICATION:
  + Questions should not always be answered with a “yes” or “no” and they should not always be answered as they are asked.
  + We will find out as we read the rest of the New Testament not all spiritual questions were meant to be answered with a “yes” or “no.”
  + Not everything is so black and white.
  + And it is not uncommon for people to frame questions in oversimplified forms.
    - Sometimes that’s because the questioner isn’t mature enough to frame the question more accurately.
    - Sometimes it’s because they have malicious intent.
  + A wise response may require reframing a poorly stated question.
* This question was framed in a similar way to another question the Jewish officials used to try to trap Jesus, “Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”
* Once again, Jesus’ response was, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.”
  + I think Jesus responded this way to get the Pharisees and modern readers to begin thinking in a new way.
  + In the immediate moment, this woman had been caught in sin and deserved death.
  + In the broader perspective, what person standing around Jesus wasn’t guilty of some sin?
  + Romans 3 tells us the penalty for sin (all sin) is death.
  + In a few verses, Jesus is going to tell the Pharisees they are on route to “die in their sins” (verse 21).
  + So who among them didn’t deserve the punishment they were about to pronounce on this woman?
  + Jesus puts that question to all of the woman’s accusers and then bends down to write on the ground again.
* Oh how things have changed.
  + They tried to pin Jesus down with a question.
  + Jesus turned it around on them and now has them pinned down with a question.
  + Who was bold enough to announce themselves sinless by throwing the first stone at the woman?
  + The sinless man was free to pass judgement and begin handing out the punishment.
* We don’t know how long it took, but eventually the Pharisees began walking away from Jesus.
* Why did they walk away? I can think of two reasons:
  + 1. No one was willing to publicly themselves sinless, It would have been awkward and appeared arrogant. Especially if your peers knew some of your sins.
  + 2. They genuinely recognized the lesson Jesus was teaching.
    - They were all sinners.
    - They had sin guilt just like this woman.
  + If it weren’t for verse 9, I would consider the first reason better.
  + But verse 9 gives us, what I think, is an important tidbit.
  + It reads, “But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones…”
    - As I’ve gotten older, I’ve become more sympathetic to sinners.
    - The reason for that is because, as I get older, the number of times I’ve failed goes up.
    - And my appreciation for God’s grace increases.
    - I realize how sinful I’ve been and how I’ve been deceived by the same lies that are flooding the world and deceiving others.
    - That Satan is really good at His job.
    - I used to think everyone who was living in sin did so by shaking their fist at the heavens and telling God, “I know what you command but I’m not interested in doing it. I’m going to live how I want to live.”
    - I learned that isn’t always the case.
      * Some people have never known anything but the lies of the devil.
      * They don’t know where to go to find real satisfaction.
      * They don’t’ know there is a better life.
      * Some people allow the devil to win them back into sin after they’ve come to Christ, telling them it is what they’ve been missing.
      * Telling them sin has a joy Christ doesn’t offer.
      * They are tricked by dressed up lies.
      * That doesn’t remove personal responsibility, it is just to say it isn’t always as simple as “Well I hate God and that is why I commit sin.”
    - As I’ve gotten older and learned more about Jesus, I’ve seen my shortcomings more clearly.
    - As you get older, you should be more and more familiar with your own weaknesses.
    - Your own sinfulness.
    - And your gratitude and appreciation for God’s grace bringing you through all of those failings should increase.
    - Maybe that was the reason the older Pharisees walked away first.
    - They were the quickest to realize Jesus’ point and they couldn’t refute it.
    - They may have been malicious and full of pride, but even they weren’t misguided enough to claim they hadn’t fallen short a time or two.
  + Now, evidently, that wasn’t enough to convict them of their need for Jesus as their Savior, but it was enough for them not to throw the stones.

Joh 8:10  Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

Joh 8:11  She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”]]

* When Jesus stood up, no Pharisees remained.
* Interestingly, the text says nothing about the relief experienced by the woman but I assume it was overwhelming.
  + One moment she is surrounded by accusers, who want her dead, and have brought an undeniable charge against her.
  + The next moment, the charges have been lifted and she is free.
* The relief of Christians should be equally overwhelming.
  + The Bible calls Satan the accuser.
  + Satan wants us dead, spiritually dead, and separated from God.
  + He had an undeniable charge against us, sin.
  + Sin deserves death.
  + But Christ has forgiven us.
    - Here is something else to consider, if you aren’t a Christian, where does that leave you?
    - Answer: unforgiven.
* Don’t think for a second justice wasn’t done here.
  + Someone might say, “How can Jesus just ignore the Law of Moses’ demand for justice?”
  + “Forgiveness is great but what about justice? Isn’t that important?”
  + Answer: Yes.
  + And that is why Jesus, in a few months/years was going to pay for the sins of this woman.
  + He forgave her, but that forgiveness wasn’t free.
  + He was going to have to suffer for her sins.
* Jesus told the Pharisees that whoever was sinless could kill the woman.
* But the only sinless man (Jesus) chose to be killed instead of killing us for our sins.
* I think it’s important to note, Jesus didn’t pretend this woman was innocent.
  + At no point does He tell her she didn’t do anything wrong.
  + She was condemned to die and He spared her.
  + She was spared even though she had sinned and Jesus tells her plainly not to do it again.

Joh 8:12  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.”

* John told us Jesus was at least two things in the opening chapter of this book, do you remember?
  + Life.
  + Light.
* In previous chapters we’ve seen a lot of discussion about Jesus as the life, here we see the second theme brought to the forefront.
  + We did get a glimpse of this in John 3:19-21.
  + Joh 3:19  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. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”
* Jesus is the “light of the world.”
  + This theme will run throughout the rest of the New Testament.
  + The world is in the darkness of sin and Jesus is the light in the darkness illuminating the way to life.

Joh 8:13  So the Pharisees said to him, “You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true.”

* How did the Pharisees respond to this claim?
* They chose not to deal with the specifics of Jesus’ statement, but attack His overall authenticity as someone who was in a position to teach them.
* As we talked about in John 5:31ff, in a court of law, a person’s personal testimony isn’t enough to establish truth.
  + If a man claims he didn’t shoot his neighbor’s dog, he isn’t immediately pronounced innocent and sent home.
  + Sometimes people don’t tell the truth, especially when they have some kind of incentive to lie.
* The Pharisees are basically accusing Jesus’ of lying about who He is without having any witnesses to back Him up.
  + You might be thinking to yourself, “But wait, didn’t Jesus already address this perceived problem in John 5.”
  + “Didn’t he give John the Baptist as a witness and God as His witness (in light of His miraculous power)?”
  + Answer: Yes!
  + Jesus already delt with this question and now the Pharisees are bringing it up again (all their other tricks haven’t worked so they might as well retry an old one haha).

Joh 8:14  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.

* Jesus responds by telling them His words are true and there is a sense in which no one (no human being) can testify to their truth.
  + There were certain things Jesus was saying that no one could testify either for or against.
  + He alone was in a position to declare what was true an untrue.
* Verse 14 can be kind of confusing because it almost seems to contradict John 5:31
  + Joh 5:31  If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true.
  + In John 5, Jesus told them if He bore witness about Himself, His testimony wasn’t true.
  + In John 8, Jesus tells them if He bears witness about Himself, His testimony is true.
  + ?????????????
  + How can we reconcile those two texts?
* The answer is found in the second part of verse 14 and the following verses.
  + The second half of the verse reads, “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.
  + Jesus came from heaven, a place they had never been.
  + He came from God, a God they had never seen and did not know on the same level Jesus knew Him because He was “one” with Him.
  + Jesus brought heavenly truths from the Father.
    - Truths that no man had knowledge about.
    - He was the exclusive revealer of God’s character and God’s will on certain things.
    - He was the only one able to reveal the mysteries of God.
    - Jesus’ testimony was the only testimony.
  + Sense He was the only witness, His testimony was to believed.
* Now, did Jesus always ask people to believe Him just because “He said so?”
  + Was the truth of Jesus’ entire ministry and message based on His claim that He had seen things no one else had seen and therefore they just needed to believe Him without evidence?
  + Answer: No!
    - Why is that important?
    - Because many false religions are based on that kind of non-evidence.
    - Islam – Mohammed
    - Mormonism – Jospeh Smith
* This is why John 5:31 is important.
  + Yes, there were some things Jesus said that no human being was going to be able to fact check.
  + They weren’t going to be able to ascend up to heaven to evaluate whether the Father was really like Jesus claimed He was.
  + But, there were MANY facts and lines of evidence that attested to the truth of Jesus.
    - Why would a person believe Jesus’ words if they couldn’t be confirmed in an earthly way?
    - Answer: Because everything He claimed that could be confirmed in an earthly way was 100% accurate.
  + In John 5:31, I believe Jesus is talking about the evidence that humans could observe and check.
  + And as He said in that passage, there was no shortage of that evidence.
  + Someone who was seeking the truth could check:
    - How Jesus’ life fulfilled the prophecies in the Old Testament.
      * He was born in Bethlehem.
      * He was born of a virgin.
      * He went to the cross as the Lamb of God (Isaiah 53).
    - Jesus’ genealogy.
      * He was born from the tribe of Judah.
      * He was born of the house of David.
    - If John the Baptist (who Jesus cited as a witness) believed Jesus was the Messiah.
    - They could scrutinize His miracles.
      * Were they cheap tricks?
      * The scriptures don’t record any critic of Jesus who thought discrediting His miracles was the best angle of attack.
    - They could evaluate whether His words were consistent with the God who had been partially revealed to them in the Old Testament.
  + If someone did an honest evaluation of all those things, they would know Jesus’ wasn’t some phony who was claiming things He couldn’t prove.
  + All of the provable facts that witnessed to Jesus’ claim of being the Messiah were reason to believe the spiritual claims He made.

Joh 8:15  You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.

Joh 8:16  Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me.

* The Pharisees condemned Jesus for His claims and wanted to kill Him.
* They accused Him of not having any witnesses to back up His claims.
* How had they reached those conclusions?
  + Their earthly perspective was leading them to improper judgements.
  + Their minds were so carnal, they were driven by physical desires, and they couldn’t think clearly when it came to spiritual things.
  + Their judgement was distorted by their pride, their love of the praise of men, and their inability to do as John the Baptist had done and step aside to make way for the Messiah.
* I think what Jesus means when He says, “I judge no one,” is that, unlike the Pharisees who are ready to pass final judgement on Jesus, Jesus wasn’t on the earth to pass final judgement on its inhabitants.
* If that was the case, Jesus wouldn’t have died on the cross.
  + There will be a day when Jesus comes to the earth as a judge.
  + But it wasn’t this day.
* But He says, even if He had come to judge the world this day, His judgement would be accurate and just, unlike theirs.
  + It wouldn’t be the misguided judgement of carnally minded men.
  + It would be perfect and fair judgement of God.

Joh 8:17  In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true.

Joh 8:18  I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.”

* The Old Testament Law required at least two witnesses to condemn a man.
* Deu 17:6  On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.
* Jesus provides His two witnesses in verse 18, God and Himself.
  + That answer wasn’t very satisfactory to Pharisees.
  + But if they had taken the time to actually listen to God and listen to Jesus, they would have found it more than sufficient.
* Jesus doesn’t bend over backwards to give them an answer they will deem satisfying.
* APPLICATION:
  + I think that is an important lesson.
  + There are some people you will never satisfy.
  + They want to be your critic and nothing you will say will convince them otherwise.
  + We should be willing offer them a complete answer to their criticisms but we also need to be wise enough to know when someone isn’t really interested in answers.
  + We don’t need to give those people the balance of our time.

Joh 8:19  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.”

* It was probably in jest and insult that the Pharisees said, “Where is your Father?”
* They wanted Him to produce His invisible witness.
* It isn’t clear how much the Pharisees knew about Jesus’ birth and earthly fathers.
* But they seemed to think Jesus is referencing some physical man.
* This wasn’t the first time Jesus had talked about God as His Father.
  + But according to verse 27, they didn’t understand He was talking about God.
  + Why?
    - It may have been because they weren’t listening.
      * They weren’t considering Jesus’ teaching.
      * They had determined in their minds Jesus wasn’t the Messiah and His words were going in one ear and out the other.
      * They didn’t have “ears to hear.”
    - Perhaps they had forgotten Jesus’ prior teaching because some time had past since they initially heard it.
    - Maybe He was talking to a new group of Pharisees in John 8 who hadn’t previously heard Him present this concept.
  + I kind of think it was the first reason, because Jesus tells them they don’t know His Father because they don’t Him.
  + They were unwilling to get to know Jesus.
  + Because of that, they couldn’t get to know the God He had been sent into the world to reveal.

Joh 8:20  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.

* Jesus taught these words boldly in the Temple.
* But no one arrested Him because “his hour had not yet come.”

Joh 8:21  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.”

Joh 8:22  So the Jews said, “Will he kill himself, since he says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’?”

Joh 8:23  He said to them, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

Joh 8:24  I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.”

* In verse 19, they asked, “Where is your Father.”
* Jesus’ Father, God, was in heaven.
* It would not be long until Jesus returned to Him.
* This is the meaning of His statement in verse 21.
  + Jesus was going to leave the earth and go back to heaven (the place they couldn’t come).
  + People would look for Him but wouldn’t be able to find Him.
* The Jews, who didn’t know Jesus was talking about God as His Father, couldn’t understand the statement.
  + Where would Jesus be able to go where He wouldn’t be found?
  + Especially sense all Judaea was continually searching Him out.
  + Was He going to kill Himself? That would be a place people couldn’t follow Him.
* What they failed to understand was Jesus wasn’t like them.
  + He was a divine being from Heaven.
  + They were earth born human beings.
* Jesus gives the Jews a rather direct piece of instruction.
  + They could either believe He had come down from heaven and would return to heaven…
  + Or they would die in their sins.
    - Which they were already doing, they were already dead in their sins.
    - If they rejected Jesus as the Savior come to lead them from darkness to light, they would live and die in their sins and be separated from God forever.

Joh 8:25  So they said to him, “Who are you?” Jesus said to them, “Just what I have been telling you from the beginning.

Joh 8:26  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.”

Joh 8:27  They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father.

* Jesus had just said to them, “unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.”
  + They responded, “Who?” “Who are you?”
  + Not that they were genuinely interested in learning anything from Him.
* Jesus’ message about His identity had been consistent from the beginning of His preaching.
  + Jesus was the One sent from God to reveal God’s message.
  + And all His actions and words had been consistent with that identity.
* Jesus’ words could be tested and judged and shown to be consistent but what about their words and their identity.
  + Jesus tells them He has “much to say” and “much to judge” about their true identity.
  + Their actions and words were far from consistent with their claims about their own character.
* APPLICATION:
  + Would Jesus have “much to say” and “much to judge” about our character?
  + Do we claim to be somebody we aren’t?
  + Are our claims about our character consistent with our actions and words?
    - Jesus wasn’t ever harsh to the weak, those who were struggling and admitted it.
    - He was harsh to the hypocrites.
* In verse 27, as we mentioned earlier, John tells us the Jews didn’t understand what Jesus was talking about when He referred to His “Father.”
  + Were they genuinely trying to understand but Jesus was being to vague?
  + No, that doesn’t seem to be the case.
  + It appears they failed to understand because they wanted Jesus dead and didn’t have any interest in understanding.
* APPLICATION:
  + You may have the opportunity to hear the greatest teacher in the world but if your heart is resistant to being taught, you will walk away without learning anything.

Joh 8:28  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.

Joh 8:29  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.”

Joh 8:30  As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

* Jesus uses this term, “lifted up” to refer to His crucifixion.
  + He used the same language in John 3:14.
  + The serpent was lifted up in the wilderness for all to observe, He was going to be lifted up on a cross.
  + John 12:34 shows us the people understood this term as referring to Jesus’ death.
  + It may have been commonly used to refer to crucifixion (especially sense crucifixion was very during this period of history).
* Jesus predicts the Jews would kill Him, even though at that very moment they were denying their desire to kill Him.
* He tells them His death and the events surrounding it would be the evidence He came down from heaven.
* This is a powerful prophecy because Jesus is basically putting the truth of His claims into the hands of the Jews that hated Him.
  + All they had to do to prove Jesus was wrong was NOT KILL HIM!
  + Were they successful? NO!
* Any honest hearted Jew who heard Jesus say this and then observed the murder of Jesus on the cross should have recognized it as a powerful display of Jesus’ divine foreknowledge based on His ability to see into the hearts of these men.
  + The Jews said, “We don’t want to kill you!”
  + Jesus said, “Yes, you do, and when you do, you’ll know I came from God.”
* Jesus spoke the words of the Father and always did the things that pleased the Father.
  + Including going to the cross.
  + It is one thing to be right about the doctrines of God, to debate about those doctrines with others, it is another thing to go to the cross to please God.
* Jesus recognized that, although He was separated from God in a sense because of His physical incarnation, God was always with Him.
* Amazingly, the same promise is made to us. While we are “away from God” in our physical bodies, God promises to always be with us.
* Verse 30 reveals that although there were many stubborn and hard hearted people in the audience, there were also many who were willing to be taught by Jesus and believe in Him.

Joh 8:31  So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,

Joh 8:32  and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

* Jesus looked to those who believed and told them what they really needed was freedom and they could be free if they were willing to “abide” in His words.
* What does it mean to “abide” in words?
  + They were to live according to His instructions.
  + To subject themselves to the words Jesus had brought down from God.
* Jesus was sharing the “truth” with them.
  + The truth about the sinfulness of man.
  + The truth about God’s plan to fix the problem.
  + The truth about living water, the bread from heaven, life, light, the new birth, the Spirit of God, etc…
* From what did they need to be set free?
* We will find out in the next verses.

Joh 8:33  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’?”

Joh 8:34  Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

* The “they” who answered Jesus in verse 33 evidently weren’t the believing Jews Jesus was addressing but the other non-believing Jews within earshot of Jesus.
* They protested to the idea they needed to be set free.
  + They said, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone.”
  + This is a really strange statement and must have originated in their Jewish pride because it certainly wasn’t based on the facts of history.
  + The Jews had been enslaved to many nations.
  + Egypt, their oppressors during the time of the judges, Assyria, Babylon, and most recently, Rome.
* They were wrong about their history but more importantly, they were wrong about their current state.
  + They could think only in physical terms.
  + It was true they were not technically slaves of the Romans but there was a power greater than the Romans oppressing them.
  + The power of sin!
  + And their sin had a firm grip on them.

Joh 8:35  The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever.

Joh 8:36  So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Joh 8:37  I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you.

* You notice that the Jews just brought up the fact that they were children of Abraham.
* They believed that being children of Abraham made them the people of God and gave them the security of God's favor.
* Jesus challenged that idea and told them that anyone, including Abraham's children, who committed sin was a slave.
* They thought they were sons but they were slaves.
* And a slave does not have security.
  + If a slave displeases his master, the master can turn him out.
  + A slave/servant has no guarantee of his masters favor.
* But a son has a security.
  + The son is the heir of his father.
  + He is part of the family and that comes with special privilege.
* Jesus is telling them being a son of Abraham doesn’t make a difference so long as you are a slave.
* But you can be set free by the Son (Jesus).
* They needed to transfer the importance they gave to being a son of Abraham and put it on the word of the Son of God.
  + And although Jesus doesn’t spell it out for us here, the New Testament is going to talk about how through THE SON we are offered the opportunity to be sons of God.
  + To be invited into the freedom and privilege of the family.

Joh 8:38  I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.”

Joh 8:39  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,

Joh 8:40  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.

* In verse 38, Jesus contrast His Father (God) with their father and they don’t get it.
  + Verse 27 still seems to be true in the case of these unbelieving Jews.
  + They aren’t connecting the dots that Jesus is talking about God when He is talking about His Father.
* Because of their lack of comprehension, they think Jesus is telling them they aren’t the physical children of Abraham.
  + And they are saying, “Of course we are!”
  + “Abraham is our father” (verse 39).
* Jesus’ words are going over their heads and Jesus lets it happen and continues telling them they are mistaken.
* If they were “Abraham’s children,” meaning if they shared the same temperament towards God and His instructions as Abraham, they would submit to the words of God, like Abraham did (you can read about Abraham in the book of Genesis).
  + The fact that they’ve responded to the message of God with such hostility reveals they don’t share Abraham’s spirit.
  + Abraham was a man of faith and humility.
  + They are neither of those things.
* Instead of submitting to God’s words, they wanted to kill the Word of God.
* The truth had been revealed to them.
  + The truth was that they were slaves.
  + They needed a deliverer.
* They hated the truth and the messenger of truth.
* That isn’t how Abraham would have responded.
  + This would have been a big blow to the pride of these unbelieving Jews.
  + Imagine if you had a well respected grandfather.
    - He had a great reputation.
    - He was known as an honest man.
    - A hard working man.
  + Then one day, someone got angry at you and told you that you were nothing like your grandfather.
  + Told you that you should have been better because of the role model you had but you ended up on the opposite end of the spectrum.
  + APPLICATION:
    - There is certainly a sense in which Jesus is loving and kind and gentle.
    - Those are the qualities we hear talked about the most.
    - But it is important to remember Jesus was also very straightforward and direct in dealing with men whose hearts were enslaved to sin.

Joh 8:41  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.”

* Jesus tells them they are not doing the works of Abraham, they are doing the works of their father (Jesus is alluding to the devil but doesn’t come out and say it yet).
* The Jews again protested they had any father but Abraham, and by extension God!
  + They were the children of God’s nation.
  + The Old Testament talks about the marriage-like relationship between God and the nation of Israel.

Joh 8:42  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.

Joh 8:43  Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.

* If there is one thing Jesus has been clear about in the text of John, it’s that He and God are a package deal.
* You can’t have one without the other.
  + If you claim to love God you must love the Son.
  + To deny one is to deny the other.
* If they were in a right relationship with God, if they loved the things He loved, if they were His children, they would have loved Jesus.
  + Jesus was God on earth.
  + If they didn’t love God on earth, why would they love God in heaven?
* Jesus plainly states their comprehension problem was due to the fact that they couldn’t “bear to hear” His words.
* They hated everything about Jesus and wouldn’t open their ears, hearts, or minds.

Joh 8:44  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 does not stand in 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.

* If they were not children of God and they were not children of Abraham, whose children were they?
* In a past verse, Jesus contrasted His Father (God) with their Father but didn’t specifically name their father.
* In verse 44, Jesus gives it to them straight.
* Their Father is the devil.
  + They do their father’s will (rebellion against God).
  + They are slaves to their sin.
    - The Jewish people had often been in physical slavery.
    - And, all too often, they had been in spiritual slavery.
  + Jesus told them “truth” to set them free.
  + The devil has “no truth in him.”
    - He lies to keep people enslaved.
    - The first recorded words of the Devil were a lie (Genesis 3).
    - He wants the word of God suppressed so the world will be filled with lies.
  + Why does he lie?
    - Because he is a murderer.
    - He wants people spiritually dead.
* Let’s think about the actions of the unbelieving Jews in chapter 8. Can we determine whose children they are based on their actions?
  + The Devil is a murderer… They intend to murder Jesus.
  + The Devil is a liar… They’ve already been caught lying in this chapter about wanting to kill Jesus.
  + The Devil wants to suppress the word of God… They are actively trying to silence God’s message and His Son who brought the message.
  + The Devil wants people spiritually dead… The Jews don’t want people to believe in Jesus, but what did Jesus say would happen to those who didn’t believe in Him? They would die in their sins… Spiritual death!
* Are they children of Abraham and God? Or are they the children of the Devil?
  + Pretty obvious, right?
  + This whole book, Jesus has been telling the Jews He came to do His Father’s work and His actions and words confirm His identity.
  + Jesus is now revealing the identity of the unbelieving Jews using the same standard. Their actions confirm their identity.

Joh 8:45  But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.

Joh 8:46  Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?

Joh 8:47  Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”

* The Devil had uttered nothing but lies to them from the beginning, and here Jesus is, finally delivering truth to the world.
* They didn’t believe Him.
* Why?
  + Notice the parallels between what Jesus is saying in chapter 8 and what He said to Nicodemus in chapter 3.
  + Joh 3:19-21  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. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”
  + Light has come into the world. Jesus just announced Himself as the light of the world in 8:12.
  + But men love the darkness.
    - They get comfortable in the devils lies.
    - They recoil from the light lest their sins and shortcoming be revealed.
  + But anyone who “does what is true.”
    - Anyone tired of being lied to.
    - Anyone who wants truth, no matter how uncomfortable that truth may be, searches out the light.
  + They search out the light so it can be clearly seen that their “works have been carried out in God.”
    - That they are doing the work of God.
    - Who does the work of God?
    - Answer: Children of God.
    - Those set free by truth and light.
  + Chapter 3:19 begins with the words, “And this is the judgement…”
    - Why are men going to be judged?
    - Not because they aren’t perfect.
    - It will be because they didn’t search out the light.
  + APPLICATION:
    - Have you ever had someone turn on the light when you’re sleeping?
    - You probably squinted your eyes and pulled the blankets over your head and grumbled something incoherent.
    - What did you want to do in that moment?
    - Turn the light off and go back to sleep?
    - Why?
    - Because the light was harsh and you were comfortable in the dark.
    - Usually a person comes into your room and turns the light on because they need you to wake up, there is something you need to do.
    - See the application?
      * The light of Jesus can be kind of harsh.
      * It illuminates our lives and tells us we need to wake up.
      * The temptation is to turn the light off, block it out, so that we can go back to continuing on comfortably.
* Were the Jews going to turn Jesus away because He told them the truth?
* Could any of them point out a sin, some inconsistency, some error in Jesus’ message as to why they didn’t believe?
* If no one could bring an accusation of sin or inconsistency against Jesus, why didn’t they believe Him?
  + Jesus knew the answer.
  + But He spelled out the logic to make their incoherent position as obvious as possible.
  + Jesus offers them the opportunity to bring to light the reason they don’t believe.
  + He was met with silence.
  + They couldn’t even give a reason!
  + Their inability should have led them to believe in Christ and come to the light but they loved the darkness.

Joh 8:48  The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?”

Joh 8:49  Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me.

Joh 8:50  Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge.

Joh 8:51  Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”

* Again, we see the Jews throwing insults instead of giving coherent reasons for their unbelief.
* The Jews dishonored Jesus but that wasn’t His main concern.
  + He wasn’t interested in His own reputation.
  + He was interested in the Father’s glory.
* He would let God, “the judge,” concern Himself with His reputation.
* Jesus didn’t need the praise of feeble men to complete what He came to do.
* In verse 51, Jesus tells His audience they will never die if they keep His words.
* We see John’s two themes present in this chapter.
  + Jesus is the light in the darkness of sin.
  + Jesus gives life to those dying in their sins.
* Jesus was talking about spiritual death (separation from God after this life).

Joh 8:52  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.’

Joh 8:53  Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?”

* Notice how quick to slander and slow to consider.
* They immediately conclude Jesus is crazy because they immediately assume He is talking about physical death.
* Their accusation is built on an assumption and their assumption is wrong.
* APPLICATION:
  + This should be a warning to us.
  + To be slow to speak and quick to listen properly.
* As we’ve observed in other chapters, the Jews don’t ask Jesus for clarification.
  + They are too proud to consider the possibility they might be confused.
  + They declare Jesus to be the confused one.
* Their declaration is based on this line of thinking:
  + Abraham was a follower of God’s words.
  + Abraham died.
  + Therefore Jesus words must be a lie.
* They asked Jesus, “Who do you think you are?!”
  + “Do you think you are greater than Abraham?”
  + “Do you think you are greater than the Old Testament prophets?”
  + In their minds, these were rhetorical questions.
  + They couldn’t imagine Jesus would ever answer any of them with a “yes.”

Joh 8:54  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.’

Joh 8:55  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.

Joh 8:56  Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.”

* If Jesus claimed a title of greatness for Himself it wouldn’t mean anything more than if any man claimed a title for himself.
* Instead, Jesus appeals to the Father, the God the Jews claimed to serve.
  + As we’ve discussed before, God testified to Jesus’ identity.
  + The God the Jews said they loved didn’t leave any question about who Jesus was.
  + Between the voice from heaven at Jesus’ baptism and Jesus’ display of heavenly miracles working power, there wasn’t any question that God approved of Jesus.
* Jesus told the Jews God had and would honor Him.
  + To say otherwise would make Jesus a liar.
  + Anyone who knew God would know Jesus was telling the truth.
* Abraham knew God and Jesus tells His critics Abraham rejoiced to see Him come.

Joh 8:57  So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?”

* Abraham died about 2,000 years before Jesus’ birth.
* So the Jews asked the expected question.
* “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?”
* How could Jesus claim to know what Abraham thought about His arrival on earth?

Joh 8:58  Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”

Joh 8:59  So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

* Jesus’ claim in remarkable and may be a bit confusing to understand at first.
* How did He know what Abraham thought about Him?
  + Because He existed before, during, and after Abraham.
  + He uses “I am” to describe His present tense existence before Abraham.
  + How can a person be currently present before an event that happened in the past?
  + That person would have to be outside of the typical time structure humans with which humans are familiar.
  + That person would have to be God.
* But there is a second part to Jesus’ words, maybe the most important part.
  + Jesus’ claim to be able to bend His presence through time is certainly a claim to deity, but Jesus made a simpler and more obvious claim to equality with God when He chose the words of His answer, “I Am.”
  + Those exact words were used by God when He was talking to Moses at the burning bush.
    - Exo 3:13-14  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.’”
    - Moses asked God what His name was and God answered “I AM.”
  + Here, Jesus claims God’s title for Himself
* Who did Jesus think He was?
  + Did He believe Himself greater than Abraham?
  + Answer: Yes!
  + Jesus was Abraham’s God.
* Now, the Jews are having a meltdown at this point.
  + The gravity of Jesus’ words aren’t lost on them.
  + They would have been familiar with the title “I Am.”
  + They knew exactly what Jesus was saying and it was too much for them to take.
  + They picked up stones to kill Jesus right there in the Temple (a sacred place) but Jesus hid Himself (probably miraculously) and escaped.
* SIDE NOTE: Some people try to say Jesus never claimed to be God in the New Testament.
  + A proper understanding of Jesus’ words in this passage should dismiss that idea.
  + In addition to Jesus’ words, the reaction of the Jews supports the interpretation that Jesus is claiming to be God.