

John 8

Some translations omit the last verse of Chap 7 and first 11 verses of Chap 8. The account is missing from some of the older manuscripts therefore the question is: is the account a scribal omission or a scribal interpolation? However, the account is another attempt to entrap Jesus and it is in harmony with the Spirit of Christ, it is so characteristic of Him and it bears such marks of real history, we are compelled to believe it is a real incident in the life of Jesus. Augustine and other early church followers said it had been stricken from some manuscripts because some feared it would be used as a license for sin.

John 8:1 Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

The Mount of Olives was separated from Jerusalem by the valley of Je-ho-sha-phat through which flowed the brook of Kedron, and it overlooked Jerusalem from the east. It was the way of the road to Jericho and the Jordan river.

John 8:2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

The first day after the feast had ended; Jesus came and sat in “the treasury of the temple”. As soon as Jesus had taken His place as a teacher, the thrones were gathered. He was interrupted by the Scribes and Pharisees who were awaiting His coming.

John 8:3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

This is the only place that John mentions the Scribes, though they are often named by the other evangelists. From the time of Ezra they were a distinct class. They became the most influential teachers in Israel and had more to do in shaping the religious life of people than the priests. To this group belonged the rabbis and great doctors of the Law such as, Hillel, Shammai and Gamaliel, Jesus taught cf:

Matthew 15:9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

The “Scribes and Pharisees” has almost the same meaning as “the Jews”. The woman had probably been arrested during the night. There was no reason why they should bring her to Him. Judea was then a Roman province and Roman law was enforced, which did not punish adultery with death. The adulterous man was equally guilty according to the Mosaic Law, but, they pursued the course of corrupt men, letting him go, and fastened upon the helpless woman.

Deuteronomy 22:22 If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, *both* the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.

Leviticus 20:10 And the man that committeth adultery with *another* man's wife, *even he* that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

John 8:4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

John 8:5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

They thought by means of this guilty woman whom they had entrapped, they could find grounds for accusing Jesus the Prophet from Galilee.

John 8:6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not.*

The dilemma corresponds to that of paying tribute money or, taxes to Caesar. For Jesus to affirm the binding validity of the Mosaic Law, would be to counsel a course of action contrary to Roman Law. It would be contrary to the merciful spirit of Him who had called publicans and permitted sinners to weep upon His feet. On the other hand, to set aside the Mosaic Law would make Him liable in the people's eyes to the charge of breaking the Mosaic Law.

This is the only record of that Christ wrote. The writing on the ground was an object lesson which said that He would pay no attention to them.

When someone speaks to you, and you busy yourself doing something else, it signifies that you don't consider him worthy of attention.

John 8:7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

They kept pressing the question, "What sayest thou?" He knew their lives, their impure thoughts, and deeds, and His answer bids the sinless one among them to step forth in accordance with the Law of Moses, hurl the first stone at the poor, shame-stricken sinner who cowered before them. The answer affirmed nothing, cf:

Matt 7:1-5 Judge not, that ye be not judged. 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. 7:3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 7:4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? 7:5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Romans 2:1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

John 8:8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

Resuming His former attitude, He left them to ponder what He had just said and to act upon it. They had forgotten that the Mosaic Law provided that the witness on whose testimony the accused was condemned, should cast the first stone, cf:

Deut 17:5-7 Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, *even* that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die. 17:6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; *but* at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. 17:7 The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and

afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you.

According to their Rabbinical Law, the guilty husband could not demand punishment on a guilty wife. Before the judgment of the Law of Moses could be carried out, therefore, they must settle the question of their own innocence, yet His language shows knowledge of their guilt.

John 8:9 And they which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

In the presence of One who read their hearts, they were helpless, cf:

Hebrews 4:12-13 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Let us hope and pray that the woman remained because her heart yearned for forgiveness and a new life in the presence of The Sinless One.

John 8:10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

Misery was then in the presence of mercy.

John 8:11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

He will not pronounce sentence upon her. He does not condone her sin, but gives the opportunity for forgiveness in His words “go, and sin no more.” There is an implied rebuke of her past life, a charge to repent and live a better life, and an opening of the door of hope, if she obeys.

Men in their eagerness to entrap others often fall into their own snares.

Before we condemn others, we should examine ourselves.

Remember the merciful shall obtain mercy.

After this, still “seated in the treasury”, or that part of the court of the women, which contained 13 chests with trumpet-shaped openings, into which the people, and especially the Pharisees cast their gifts. In this court were 2 gigantic candelabras, 50 cubits high. At night, during the feast, these candelabra were lighted. Jesus, as was His custom, fixed His words in the minds of the people by referring to surrounding objects.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

He had said to His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount, that He was the light of the world, now He declares it to the Jewish Nation in the temple. Moses beheld the burning bush in Horeb, and when he returned from the presence of the Lord at Mount Sinai, his face was shining. The Pillar of Fire that lighted Israel on the Pilgrimage, was an emblem of the presence of God. The Shekinah descended into the Holy of Holies in a blaze of light. By this time, 3 of His disciples had beheld Him shining on the Mount of Transfiguration. Jesus is not a national Savior of a particular race, but, He came as the Light of the World. Hence, cf:

Mark 16:15-16 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

John 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

John 8:13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

They are saying His testimony is not enough to convince us.

John 8:14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, *yet* my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

Humans must have corroborative testimony. We suppose that Mohammed, Jim Jones (Jonestown), and the Mormon’s Joseph Smith, and all the other

enthusiasts, really thought they were inspired. Jesus knew Himself, what He was, and where He came from, and would return; hence, He was qualified to speak absolute truth. Jesus never spoke doubtingly or hesitatingly. He never stumbled, or had to change His answers. “Never man spake like this man”, cf: John 7:46

John 8:15 Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.

They looked on the outer appearances, as the world would. Jesus always let men’s deeds judge them. When they go before the throne, their consciences will judge them, good or bad.

John 8:16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

He came not to judge but to save. ALL lives are “naked and opened” to the sight of the Father.

John 8:17 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

Jewish Law declared the testimony of 2 witnesses was to be accepted, cf:

Deut 19:15 One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.

Besides His own witness there was other testimony that confirmed it.

John 8:18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

There was the testimony of the Father, the witness the Father had given in all the prophets who spoke of Christ, the witness given at the baptism of Christ spoken from Heaven. The Divine wisdom, and sinless nature, and mighty works of Christ were all witnesses of Christ.

John 8:19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

The question asked was not for information but is of a scornful spirit. The root of their problem, is, had they known Christ, this would have led to their knowledge of the Father by His being manifest in the flesh. It is a demonstration that men know not God, when they do not recognize Christ, because, cf:

Colossians 2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily

By their rejection of Christ, these Pharisees demonstrated that they knew not God.

John 8:20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

The treasury was part of the court of the women, the most public part of the temple. The Sanhedrin held its sessions in the hall of Gaz-ith, separated by a wall between the court of the women and the inner court. Jesus was teaching within hearing distance of the very headquarters of his enemies.

John 8:21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

His words are no longer confined to the Pharisees, but addressed to “the Jews”, the whole class of official opposers. The sin was the sin of rejecting the only Savior who could save them from their sins. This teaches us to seek the Lord while He may be found.

John 8:22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

We do not suppose that these Jews were so dull as their question implies. They did not understand the Lord because they did not want to understand. They judge He must be going to Ge-hen-na, where they thought all suicides go, rather than to Heaven, where they expected all Pharisees to go.

John 8:23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

The Lord increases His severity. Understanding their illusion to the Ge-hen-na the world below, He replies, “Ye are from beneath”, earthly, fleshly,

worldly, of a spirit that will cause you to go to your own place. When Jesus goes away, He will return to heaven where He came from.

John 8:24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.

The only way of escape from the fearful fate that He predicts is here stated, “if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.”. Their unbelief was due to their stubborn, willful blindness.

John 8:25 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even *the same* that I said unto you from the beginning.

With a sneer, they say, whom then dost thou fancy thyself to be?

His teaching was a demonstration of His character. The sentence ends in the literal Greek, “why am I even speaking to you at all”? or, in other words, why is He speaking to men upon whom His words are wasted.

John 8:26 I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

His words will only make them more bitter, but He represents Divine Truth, and the message must be given to the world.

John 8:27 They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

They were so preoccupied with thoughts of earthly things that they did not perceive what is so plain to us. There is no accounting for the ignorance of unbelief.

John 8:28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

The Jews did not understand His words, but they are clear to us, the lifting up always points to the Cross and His victory over His enemies, cf:

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

John 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.

His disciples were few in number until after He died. On Pentecost, 50 days after His crucifixion, three thousand of those who had said, “Crucify Him, crucify him”, cried “men and brethren, what shall we do”, cf: Acts 2:37

A little later, five thousand more became believers, cf:

Acts 4:4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

Thus the work went on, until the Cross became a badge of honor, instead of a symbol of the ultimate shame.

John 8:29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

Jesus always had a sense of the Father’s presence. He was “the Brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of His person,”.

John 8:30 As he spake these words, many believed on him.

From the instructions that follow it is evident that they did more than give assent to the proposition that He was an inspired man of God.

Their hearts were moved to trust and follow Him.

John 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;

Their faith was not yet made perfect by obedience; hence, He adds the conditions of discipleship. Nowhere in the New Testament is taught a justification by faith that does not lead to obedience.

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Doing, practicing and obeying the truth, not just studying it, is the way to know the truth, cf:

John 7:17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

The best way to silence doubts is to practice the Christian Life. The truth is known thru obedience to Christ's words. The Gospel obeyed *frees* – from the yoke of Satan, from the spiritual task-master, fear, and fills your soul with hope.

John 8:33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

The opposers in the throng of people answered. The Jews proudly boasted they were descendants of Abraham. Their race, rather than their obedience to God, was what they trusted in. They were liars. They had suffered bondage in Egypt where God delivered them. They were in bondage to their idols. They had suffered bondage in the Assyrian captivity where 10 tribes were forever lost. Since 586 BC they had been in bondage. First, they suffered seventy years of captivity in Babylon. Then they were in bondage and servitude to the Media-Persian empire, then the Macedonian empire under Alexander the Great. Then they were in bondage to Greece, Syria, and Rome. At that very moment they were in political bondage to Roman empire, spiritual bondage to the Rabbis and their human commandments, in bondage to pride, and in bondage to sin. Those are most deeply enslaved who call their bondage freedom.

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

Christ makes no direct argument in reply, but states truth and leaves them to apply it. Sinning makes you a slave of sin. Actions forms habits, which become a second nature. You become a slave of habit, cf: Romans 7:9-24

John 8:35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever.

A slave or servant has no claim to family, but may be changed at will. A son remains because he is a son. Jews were bondmen, not children, and would soon be expelled; only those made children could live in the Lord's House.

John 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Galatians 4:19-21 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, 4:20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you. 4:21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

John 8:37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

He admits to their boast of being Abraham's fleshly children, but, "my word hath no place in you." is proof they are not His spiritual children. This is a hint that the children of the promise were not necessarily of Abraham's flesh.

John 8:38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

Jesus was the Son and had dwelt in the Father's house; He declared what He had seen and heard; cf: verse 44

John 8:39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

They might be Abraham's flesh, but spiritually they had another father.

John 8:40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

Killing Him was totally unlike Abraham, and shows they are not Abraham's spiritual children.

John 8:41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God.

"the deeds of your father" – their father is going to be named in vs. 44

John 8:42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

This is in reply to their claim that they are God's children. Their assertion is disproved by their hate of Him who was sent from God. God's spiritual children would welcome "God manifest in the flesh."

John 8:43 Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word.

Satan, their father, held them captive, and their minds were so preoccupied, that they could not receive Christ's truth.

John 8:44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

He shows that there are 2 households on earth; the children of God, and the children or servants of the devil.

Romans 8:15-17 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

Satan inspired Cain's murder of Abe, and seduced the human race into disobedience and sought to destroy it. The temptation in Eden was attempted murder. The Jews were children of a murderer, hence their passion to kill Christ. Vs. 40.

John 8:45 And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not.

He is declaring that the devil is the father of liars and so, as his children, they rejected the truth and preferred falsehood.

John 8:46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

The argument is: “If I am not the Son of God, find out some human defect or weakness that proves that I am only a man, and therefore, imperfect like all others.”

John 8:47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

These Pharisees claimed to be of God, but proved otherwise by rejecting the Son of God.

John 8:48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

They hated Samaritans most, hence the charge; then they accuse him of being possessed by a demon, cf:

Matt 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard *it*, they said, This *fellow* doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

John 8:49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.

He is silent about the Samaritan charge; regarding being a devil. He proves it untrue, “I honour my Father”, a demon cannot do this.

John 8:50 And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

He didn't care about their abuse, so didn't defend himself. The “One that seeketh and judgeth” would see to His reputation.

John 8:51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

Here is a condition AND a promise. Notice: 1. It's universal character – any one. 2. The condition: obedience. 3. The promise: “never see death”, this does not refer to physical death, but the gate through which the believer enters upon a more perfect eternal life.

John 8:52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

The Jews scoffed pointing out everybody dies.

John 8:53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

They scorn Jesus by saying that He thinks those that heard God are dead, but, those that hear Jesus will live!

John 8:54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:

The Father who honors Him will settle that by His resurrection and exaltation.

John 8:55 Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

Jesus affirms that He knew and revealed God, and, could not deny it for He MUST tell the truth.

John 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad.

Saw it in promise by prophetic vision; whether or not “Abraham was greater” he rejoiced in the hope of the revelation of Christ.

John 8:57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

It had been about 2,000 years since Abraham. The Jews try to say Jesus said He saw Abraham, but they pervert His words.

John 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Exodus 3:13-15 And Moses said unto God, Behold, *when* I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What *is* his name? what shall I say unto them? 3:14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. 3:15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this *is* my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations.

This does not merely assert that He was before Abraham, but, before Abraham was, “Verily, verily” I AM. Jesus is claiming Divinity and that He is The I AM of the Old Testament, the eternal self-existent One.

Divinity is not past, present, or future tense; I AM is eternal and infinite.

John 8:59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

They regarded this blasphemy. Had He not been the Son of God, they would have been right. “but Jesus hid himself”, He quietly disappeared. No miracle was involved; He never worked one for His own benefit.

Sources: KJV, e-Sword, Clarke’s Commentary, & B.W. Johnson’s Commentary