

Eyes That Will Not See

As chapter 8 opens Jesus finds Himself in conflict again with the Jewish religious leaders. The Feast of Tabernacles has just ended, but Jesus remains in Jerusalem. He has more to do and proclaim on this visit.

Drawing Near: Dear Lord, I desire that Your Word be living and powerful in my life. Allow me to taste more fully the joy of walking daily in Your Light.

Read John 7:52-8:11 several times. Observe the movements in location and the new setting that is unfolding in chapter eight.

1. a. Why had Jesus gone to the temple?

- b. Why had the teachers of the law and the Pharisees gone to the temple?

- c. What does this contrast indicate about the spiritual leaders of that time?

Angered by Jesus' success and their inability to stop Him, the Jewish leaders devised a plan to ensnare Him by the law of Moses (Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22). If Jesus condemned the woman and called for her execution, He would never again be known as the friend of sinners. If He condoned her act, He would be upholding her sin and opposing the law of Moses. *Instead, these leaders had the law's searching light turned upon themselves.*

2. Picture the scene in verses 6b-9. How did Jesus uphold the law and express grace at the same time?

We do not know what Jesus wrote in the dust of the temple floor. Some have suggested that Jesus was writing the sins of the men who were accusing the woman. Or perhaps He was reminding them of the Ten Commandments that had been originally written "by the finger of God" (Exodus 31:18).

3. What do you think the leaders were acknowledging by their silent response as they left Jesus' presence one by one?

The woman is now left standing before Jesus with her sinful condition on public display. What a comfort it must have been to her desperate soul to hear Jesus' gentle words. Thoughtfully **reread verses 10 and 11.**

4. How is Jesus' response a poignant example of John 3:17 and John 1:17?

5. Do you think Jesus is condoning the woman's sin by not condemning her? Explain.

6. In what situation do you need to apply Jesus' example and teaching on forgiveness?

Against the backdrop of this scene Jesus continued to teach the people and reveal Himself in a most startling way. **Read and meditate on John 8:12.**

7. What analogy did Jesus use to explain who He was?

Jesus' claim to be the "light of the world" was made in the context of the spectacular candle-lighting ceremonies that took place each night during the Feast of Tabernacles. Every evening a priest would light the three huge torches in the women's court of the temple. When they were all lit, it is said that all Jerusalem reflected the light! In the context of such a powerful ritual Jesus' declaration to be the "light of the world" must have come with stunning force.

8. How might the first eleven verses of chapter 8 provide a solemn demonstration of the power of this "light?"

Jesus' teaching that He was the "light," not simply of His followers, nor even of Israel, but of the whole world, was breathtaking.

9. This claim contained more than allusions to the great Feast of Tabernacles; it also had its roots in the Old Testament. Compare Isaiah 9:1-2; 42:6; 51:4; and Exodus 13:21-22 with John 8:12. What significance do you see as you look at these passages in concert?

Personal Reflection: How does walking with Jesus empower a person to walk in the light of life? Consider Psalm 27:1; John 1:4-5 and Psalm 119:129-130.

Throughout the rest of chapter 8 Jesus continues to be confronted by His adversaries, not by the people at large. The discussion is triggered by Jesus' statement that He is "the light of the world." In this interchange Jesus shows us how to speak the *truth* in the face of hostility. He also reveals some amazing things about Himself.

10. **Read John 8:12-59** in one sitting if possible. Find and mark each reference to "**truth.**"

This section also contains several "I am" statements without a metaphor. Notice the context in which they were made (verses 23-24, 28-29, and 56-59). Finally, **reread** each section and identify what prevented Jesus' opponents from coming to the light. Briefly state the *real truth* Jesus spoke back to His antagonists.

- 8:12-20

- 8:21-30

- 8:31-47

- 8:48-59

It is hard to overstate the importance placed on the concept of "truth" in this gospel. You might want to glance back through chapters 1-8 and review Jesus' solemn "I tell you the truth" statements.

In this passage Jesus speaks of the liberating effect of truth in verses 31-32 and 34-36. This truth is not some vague concept; it is bound up with the very Person and work of Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

11. From what are we set free when we begin a relationship with the Lord Jesus and become His disciple? See Romans 6:18; 2 Corinthians 4:4; John 8:12, 51 and Romans 8:1 for a few examples. (Can you name others?)

12. The spiritual freedom we have in Christ has many facets. List some of the ways that you have experienced the liberating effects of truth in your own life.

Throughout his gospel, John is writing of One who stands in a unique relationship to the Father, One who is the supreme revelation of the Father. In this passage this relationship is one of the dominating thoughts. Review **John 8:23-24, 28-29, 56-59** and compare with **Exodus 3:14**.

13. Explain how each “I am” statement and the accompanying claim reveals Jesus’ true identity.

As the “light of the world,” Jesus speaks blunt truth to the darkened hearts of sinful people. Will we hear and obey? Or, like the Pharisees, will we resist and reject the truth of God?

14. Are there areas in your life where the Lord is speaking uncomfortable words to you? If so, how will you respond to His words of “truth” this week?

The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. Proverbs 4:18