

VCBC SLG—The Gospel of John
Lesson #5

Chapters 7-9—From Galilee to Jerusalem with the Feast of the Tabernacle as the backdrop

Ch.7 I am the Living Water—resulting in some believing in Him

Ch.8: I am the Light of the World—ending with “Before Abraham was, I AM”

Ch.9: Powerful Testimony of the blind man, “I was blind, but now I see.”

The Prologue:

The True Light

“4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome[apprehended] it.

(1: 4-5)

His own rejected Him:

“He was in the world and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him.”

(1: 10-11)

The Testimonies in John’s Gospel

Chapter Seven

- A. 7: -1-9—Even His own brothers did not believe in Him**
- B. 7: 10-36**
 - a. Testimonies of the people**
 - i. Amazing teachings**
 - ii. Amazing miracles**
 - b. Jesus’ own testimony**
 - i. Teachings come from God**
 - ii. Sabbath healing (of invalid in chapter 5) did not break Law**
- C. 7: 37-52—I am the Living Water**

A. 7: -1-9—Even His own brothers did not believe in Him

“After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him (*the latest incident being His healing of the invalid, according to John’s account*). 2 But when the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near (*where it is believed that hundreds of thousands returned to Jerusalem to celebrate this very important feast—see note below*), 3 Jesus’ brothers said to him, “Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do. 4 No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.” 5 For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

Why didn’t His brothers believe in Him?

- Mary should have and must have told them of revelation by God to her concerning Jesus’ birth?

- These brothers had to have witnessed to His sinless life.

The likely answers are:

- Jesus was too “human”
- He must have gotten sick, just as they had
- He was also tired too, from time to time
- He had emotions of sadness and anger, just as they did (except He did not sin)
- Presumably He did not perform miracles growing up until now!

But, both James and Jude had come to believe in Him, both calling themselves “a servant of Jesus Christ” (James 1:1, Jude 1)

6 Therefore Jesus told them, “My time is not yet here; for you any time will do (or ready). 7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that its works are evil. 8 You go to the festival. I am not[yet] going up to this festival, because my time has not yet fully come (or fulfilled).” 9 After he had said this, he stayed in Galilee.”

- A very good reminder that if we are to do the work of God, we need to wait for His time
- Jesus did not say He would not go, just not together with them, and would only show Himself in public until half way through the feast (v.14)



About the Feast of Tabernacle

The Feast or Festival of the Ingathering, or the Festival of the Tabernacle, is one of the three festivals that the Lord told Moses to have the people observe in Exodus 23:

“Three times a year you are to celebrate a festival to me. Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread (which is merged with the Passover, by the way)...in the month of Abib, the month you came out of Egypt...Celebrate the Harvest with the first fruits of the crops you sow in the field (which is the celebration of the early harvest)...Celebrate the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year (which is the late harvest about the time of our October).” (23:14-16)

With the passing of time, many national historical events had taken place and the people had added many new traditions many of which were quite meaningful.

Now this is how they would celebrate this Ingathering or Feast of the Tabernacle, and when I describe to you, you will admire how powerfully Jesus uses the occasion to proclaim that **He is the Living Water.**

B. 7: 10-36

- a. Testimonies of the people
 - i. Amazing teachings
 - ii. Amazing miracles
- b. Jesus' own testimony
 - i. Teachings come from God
 - ii. Sabbath healing (of invalid in chapter 5) did not break Law

People amazed at His teaching:

“10 However, after his brothers had left for the festival, He went also, not publicly, but in secret. 11 Now at the festival the Jewish leaders were watching for Jesus and asking, “Where is he?” 12 Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, “He is a good man.”

Others replied, “No, he deceives the people.”

13 But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the leaders.

Jesus Teaches at the Festival

14 Not until halfway through the festival did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. 15 The Jews there were amazed and asked, “How did this man get such learning without having been taught?”

Jesus own testimony—teaching comes from God

16 Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me. 17 Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. 18 Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false (or evil) about him.

Keys to accept my teaching as from God:

- choosing to do the will of God (same today in understanding the Word of God)
- discern His character—pointing to and seeking God's glory, not His own

19 Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?”

20 “You are demon-possessed,” the crowd answered. “Who is trying to kill you?”

21 Jesus said to them, “I did one miracle, and you are all amazed. 22 Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a boy (*original Greek, man*) on the Sabbath. 23 Now if a boy (*man*) can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing a man's whole body (*Original a whole man*) on the Sabbath (*healing of the invalid in ch.5*)? 24 Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly.”

Their core problems

- None really kept the Law of Moses (i.e. not doing the will of God)
- Blind observation of the Law (on Sabbath)
- Judging Jesus based on appearance—elaborated in the following narrative (i.e. based on Him being a Galilean)

Testimonies of some of the people

25 At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, “Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill? 26 Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah? 27 But we know where this man is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from.”

Negative view:

According to OT scholar Lightfoot:

- They did not dispute that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem
- But they believed that He would be hidden for some time and then would appear out of nowhere (i.e. nobody would know where He had been hiding)
- According to *Midras Schir*’ (explanation): “My beloved is like a doe... (Cant. Ii.9) The doe will appear and quickly hide herself, and then would re-appear. Therefore, the first Redeemer (Moses) appeared and then hid himself, and will re-appear. Likewise, the last Redeemer (Messiah) shall appear in the same way to us, and then would hide himself; but how long will he be hiding? Still a bit longer...after 45 days (*likely alluding to Daniel 12:12*, italics mine), then he will appear again and cause Manna to come down among us.” (My translation based on Lightfoot. Commentary on the NT from the Talmud and Hebraica, Vol. 3, 316)

Positive View:

28 Then - Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, “Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, 29 but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.”

30 At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. 31 Still, many in the crowd believed in him. They said, “When the Messiah (*Xristos*) comes, will he perform more signs than this man?”

32 The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him.

33 Jesus said, “I am with you for only a short time, and then I am going to the one who sent me. 34 You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come.”

35 The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?

36 What did he mean when he said, ‘You will look for me, but you will not find me,’ and ‘Where I am, you cannot come?’”

- As much as the crowd did not understand what He was saying
 - o Upon His death and resurrection, these words would come back to open their eyes,
 - o But at this time, while they could only speculate, their speculation was not vicious compared to the response later from a more hostile crowd.

C. 7: 37-52—I am the Living Water

“37 On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has

said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”[c] 39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. 40 On hearing his words, some of the people said, “Surely this man is the Prophet.” 41 Others said, “He is the Messiah.” Still others asked, “How can the Messiah come from Galilee? 42 Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David’s descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?” 43 Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. 44 Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.”

45 Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn’t you bring him in?” 46 “No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards replied. 47 “You mean he has deceived you also?” the Pharisees retorted. 48 “Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? 49 No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them.” 50 Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, 51 “Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?” 52 They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.”

About the Feast of Tabernacle (Word, John, 113)

“It is virtually certain that the passage is based the rite of water-drawing that took place on each of the seven days of this festival:

- The pilgrims who came from all over the world, participated with greatest delight;
 - o In one ancient document (Sukk. 5:1) it is stated, "He who has not seen the joy of the water-drawing (of this festival) has not seen joy in his whole lifetime."
- At the break of day priests processed from the temple to the pool of Siloam.
 - o There they filled a golden pitcher with water and
 - o brought it back to the temple.
- On approaching the Watergate on the south side of the inner court
 - o the shophar (trumpet) was sounded three times—
 - o joyous blasts which were explicitly related to **Isa 12:3**,
 - o "*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*"
- The priests bearing the water then processed around the altar,
 - o watched by the pilgrims,
 - o while the temple choir sang the Hallel (i.e., Psalms 113-118).
- When the opening words of Psalm 118 were read, "*Give thanks to the Lord,*"
 - o every man and boy shook the **lulab** (a bunch of willow and myrtle tied with palm) with his right hand and
 - o held aloft citrus fruit in his left hand (a sign of the harvest gathered in), and
 - o the cry "*Give thanks to the Lord*" was repeated three times.
- The same thing happened at the cry "*O Lord save us!*" of Ps 118:25.
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- Since all this took place at the time of the daily offering,
 - o the water was offered to God in connection with the daily drink-offering (of wine).
 - o A chosen priest mounted the altar on which stood two silver bowls,
 - one for the reception of the drink-offering and

- the other for the water.
 - When the priest had poured the wine and the water into their respective bowls,
 - they were then poured out as offerings to God.
 - The crowd then called out, "***Lift up your hand!***"
- (The demand was made as a sign that the rite was properly fulfilled, since the Sadducees objected to the rite on the ground that it was not prescribed in the law).
 - Accordingly the priest had to raise his hand aloft to show that he had faithfully discharged his duty.

The ideas behind the rite were complex (but important to understand)

Since the festival was essentially bound up with the agricultural year:

- (1) Prayer for the sending of rain,
 - a highly uncertain element in Palestinian weather,
 - was a prime factor in the performance of the rite.
 - (There appears to be a reference to this significance of the rite in the prophecy of Zech 14:16-17.)
- Indeed, if rain fell during the festival
 - it was regarded as a sign of the plentiful rains that would be given in the coming agricultural year.
- (2) Since Tabernacles was also a celebration of the blessings of God upon Israel during the nation's forty years sojourn in the wilderness,
 - the water-drawing served as a reminder of the water
 - that came from the rock smitten by Moses, when the people were in danger of perishing from thirst (Exod 17:1-6).
 - According to rabbinic exposition, the rock remained with the people throughout their wilderness journeyings (cf. 1 Cor 10:4).
- (3) Furthermore the rite was also linked with the anticipation of the abundant gift of living water flowing from Jerusalem when the kingdom of God comes (with Isa 12:3, cf. esp. Ezek 47:1-12 and Zech 14:8, both passages being read during the festival).

The associations of the ceremony with the salvation of God, past, present, and future were accordingly evident to the people at the festival.



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Now, imagine, the priests drew water with the golden pitcher, and gingerly went up the altar and poured the water onto the bowls and then offered it up to the Lord,

- At that very moment, “on the last and greatest day”, John says, which should be the 7th day
- Jesus stood up and cried,
- ***“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me, and drink.***
- ***Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said,***
- ***Streams of living water will flow from within him.”***

The effect on the crowd could not have been greater!

- Everybody would have known whose cry it was, and its significance, namely that everything embodied in that rite of past experience of salvation, the present prayer, and future hope was available and offered through Jesus!

The message to the people was so clear that John said,

- “On hearing His words, some of the people said, ‘Surely this man is the Prophet’— meaning the One referred to by Moses that marks the end-time
- Others said, ‘He is the Christ’...”
- Even temple guards were so caught up with such emotions that they did not care to arrest Jesus as the priests had commanded to!
- They believed that
 - o Jesus is that rock which accompanied their forefathers and quenched their thirst
 - Later on, Paul would testify in I Corinthians 10 that indeed
 - Jesus is the Rock that accompanied Moses throughout the wilderness. Paul said,
 - ***“They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them. That rock was Christ!” (10:3-4)***

- But more than that, Jesus is the Living Water that is prophesied by Ezekiel that flows from the New Temple of God when the Kingdom of God comes—the salvation promised in the Psalms and the prophesies they read during this festival!

But to recognize Who He is—the Living Water, is just part of the response He desires

- One has to feel his thirst, not just the national thirst for God’s return and presence
- But personal dissatisfaction of one’s spiritual condition and our broken relationship with God
 - Are you satisfied with your spiritual condition and relationship with the Lord, honestly?
 - Have you been drinking from fountains other than the Living Water, Jesus himself to quench you inner emptiness, quest, and thirst?
 - Only if you feel the thirst, then you can be quenched
 - And it takes honesty within your soul to recognize your thirst
 - It takes a stillness within to pause to realize your thirst
 - And it takes a dissatisfied soul to respond to the call of Jesus
 - His invitation involves **(1) Come (2) Drink and (3) Believe in Him**

Come: is the action of repentance, making a U-turn in life—making a decision to leave whatever you are using to quench your inner thirst and go toward Jesus

Drink: is the action of opening your soul to Him and allowing Him to come into your life, water and all, to satisfy you; and

Believe in Him: Come and drink, therefore is the ultimate expression of your belief in Him, not just, as I said, based on a national thirst, in the case of the Jews, but a personal thirst. But to them, the coming and drinking takes risk, as they are in the midst of huge pressure from the religious leaders to renounce and even kill Jesus.

Yes, true belief in Christ, always means a total rejection of self and risking all that you have!

But the reward is worth it: Jesus says

“Streams of living water will flow from within him.”

- Meaning, you will not only find tremendous satisfaction in your soul
- You will become the source of tremendous blessings to many others
- Not blessings of this life only
- But more importantly, blessings to the souls for eternity!

Such a powerful declaration, at such a great moment

- Has such impact that even the temple guards were mesmerized by the moment
- And did not even care to arrest Jesus, not out of fear
- But out of joy!—they experienced the real meaning of the Feast of Tabernacle—the very Presence of the Lord!

This is powerful invitation followed later by an equally message in ch.8 which we now consider.

Chapter 8

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|--------------------|--|
| A. 8: 1-11 | Forgiving the adulterous woman |
| B. 8: 12-30 | I AM the Light of the World +Jesus’ Defense validity of His Testimony (again) |
| C. 8: 31-41 | The Great I AM—“Before Abraham was, I AM |

A. 8: 1-11

This narrative is unique to the John’s Gospel and modern scholarship mostly discounts this as not original to John’s narrative. As this is a familiar story to all of you, I shall skip this in today’s lesson except to mention the following:

A word about the passage, called “*Pericope of Adulteress*” (PA)

NIV/ESV notes: “The earliest and most reliable manuscripts and other ancient witnesses, do not have...”

1. Not a new controversy: Augustine (4th C.) wrote in “*Adulterous Marriage*” that “certain person of little faith or rather enemies of true faith fearing, I suppose, lest their wives should be given impunity in sinning, removed from their manuscripts the Lord’s act of forgiveness toward the adulteress, as if He who had said, ‘Sin no more’ had given permission to sin.” (Hodges, *The Text*, 330-31)
2. Majority of extant MS have PA, notably the Received Text (Western Text)
3. More reliable texts, meaning the Alexandrian Texts: some have, and some do not have—but those do not, only two uncials contain the complete Gospel, rest are partial only.
4. Augustine belonged to this (latter) school and was reading the Alexandrian Text (early 4th C.)
5. Ancient witnesses (i.e. some did skip commenting on PA, like Chrysostom, but others did, like Ambrose)
6. Jerome translated his Vulgate in the 4th C. (328 AD) based on extant Latin and Greek MS that have PA.
7. My opinion: agree with Augustine, plus the context fits perfectly the events of the time and the teaching absolutely in tune with the gospel
8. Modern Textual Criticism only adds 13 words not common to rest of John’s gospel!
9. Consult Marc Vandersluys: “Another Look at the Pericope of Adulteress (John 7:35 – 8:11)—Is it Authoritative for the Church?”
10. UBS Greek Edition: Inconclusive to rule it out!

B. 8: 12-30 I AM the Light of the World +Jesus’ Defense validity of His Testimony (again)

[I AM the Light of the World 8:12](#)

“12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

The adulterous woman’s account is to place this declaration by Jesus the day (or evening) after the “Last and greatest day of the feast” (7:37)



The Context: Since what happened here was the Last and Great Day of the Festival, meaning the 7th Day, Jesus, as usual retreated to the Mount of Olive in the evening, possibly for the sake of safety and also as a symbolic rejection of the sin of Jerusalem:

- Then He returned the next day in the temple courts where the scribes and Pharisees were trying to set a trap for him, arresting only the adulterous woman and not the man
- You know the story, how Jesus asked them to throw the first stone
- And everyone left without wanting to admit their sins!

Now, on the same day, likely towards the evening of this 8th day: allow me to quote from the same ancient documents:

“Toward the end of the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, people went down into the court of the women...

Golden lamps were there and four gold bowls were on each of them, and four ladders were by each;

four young men from the priestly group of youths had jugs of oil in their hands containing about 120 logs and poured oil from them into the individual bowls...

There were no court in Jerusalem that was not bright from the light of the place of drawing (water).

Men of piety and known for their good works danced before them with torches in their hands, and sang before them songs and praises...” (Word, John, 127)

Now, this procedure took place each of the 7 nights.

So, on the 8th night, as some would have begun to leave Jerusalem, and all felt the anti-climax of the festival, with the bright lights gone—all of sudden, all of the court areas seemed much, much darker, as a result.

It was at that moment, Jesus declared

“I am the Light of the World!

- ***Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of Life”***

Can you feel the impact of His words?

All these festive rites they came a long way to witness and experience

- All the food, the dancing, the excitement
- Lasted only for 7 days
- So fleeting, and they had to wait another year to have a taste of all these joy and excitement

And then Jesus, in essence is saying, *“Yes, even religious rites, the observance of the Law can only bring temporary relief and joy to you, and are of no use, no lasting value. You are still living in darkness, but you do not have to. I am the Light of the world. Come and follow me”*”

You see, it was the Feast of Tabernacle, and they were remembering the Pillar of Fire that hovers over the tabernacle in the wilderness

- Signifying the Presence of God
- Signifying God honoring His promise to lead them personally¹

So the invitation here is clear

- I am the God of the Presence
- Now, follow me, just as your forefathers followed the pillar of fire
- And you will never walk in darkness!

Never?

- Jesus is promising His eternal presence here!

But just as His declaration of being the Living Water

- Which demands, first and foremost a recognition or realization of one’s thirst and dissatisfaction of ones’ spiritual condition
- This declaration also demands our prior recognition that we are living in darkness without light

Jesus' Defense of His Authority (again) 8: 13-39

” 13 The Pharisees challenged him, “Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.” 14 Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. 15 You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. 16 But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. 17 In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. 18 I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.”

19 Then they asked him, “Where is your father?”

“You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” 20 He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.

21 Once more Jesus said to them, “I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come.” 22 This made the Jews ask, “Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, ‘Where I go, you cannot come’?”

Challenging Jesus' authority—because of the claim of Jesus and with such a powerful declaration, the unbelieving Pharisees had to challenge His authority, although back in ch.5, after the healing of the Invalid, Jesus forcefully put forward His argument about His four-fold witness. But still Jesus patiently reinforced what He already said before

- By reference to Deut. 19:15, the need for at least two witnesses, and
 - o That He is not the lone witness, but the Father also.
 - o And even if He is the lone witness, His testimony is valid because He is from above.
- This defense again invites the Pharisees to question who His father is [as they previously were offended by such a claim by Jesus (5:18), making Himself equal with God]

To cut a long story short

- Such arguments led to Jesus warning them twice that, “If you do not believe that I AM, you will indeed die in your sins.” (8:24, 28)—[skip the rest, just read vv. 23-28]

23 But he continued, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I AM (no “*he*”), you will indeed die in your sins.”

25 “Who are you?” they asked.

“Just what I have been telling you from the beginning,” Jesus replied. 26 “I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world.”

27 They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. 28 So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up[a] the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM (no” *he*”) and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.

29 The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.” 30 Even as he spoke, many believed in him.

C. 8: 31-58—“Before Abraham was, I AM”--Whose Children are They?

The lead-in: Truth will set us free:

(versus the way Oprah used it in the case brought us beef-ranchers in the US)

31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

- Free from what?

33 They (from the context and content, I believe that “they” were not part of those who believed) answered him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?”

- They understood being free as opposite of being slaves

34 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

- Jesus clearly points to being free from our slavery to sin!

37 I know that you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are looking for a way to kill me, because you have no room for my word. 38 I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father.”

- Their hatred of Jesus proves that they are still slaves to sin!

39 “Abraham is our father,” they answered.

“If you were Abraham’s children,” said Jesus, “then you would do what Abraham did. 40 As it is, you are looking for a way to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. 41 You are doing the works of your own father.”

“We are not illegitimate children,” they protested. “The only Father we have is God himself.”

42 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. 43 Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. 44 you belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! 46 Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me? 47 Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”

48 The Jews answered him, “Aren’t we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?”

49 “I am not possessed by a demon,” said Jesus, “but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. 50 I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. 51 Very truly I tell you, whoever obeys my word will never see death.”

52 At this they exclaimed, “Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death. 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?”

54 Jesus replied, “If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. 55 Though you do not know him, I know him. If I

said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.”

57 “You are not yet fifty years old,” they said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!”

58 “Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” 59 At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds

- This is the clearest statement by Jesus of who He is
- And the people understood it very well
- And so they wanted to kill Him—as He, in their opinion, had committed blasphemy!

The truth will set you free

- We know that Jesus would declare He is the Truth in chapter 14
- But the admonition here to those who had just believed in Him was
- “If you hold to (or remain in) my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”
 - o Yes, if you can remain in my teaching, i.e. able to withstand temptations and persecution for my sake—these are the tests of true disciples
 - o Then you are set free your former father, the devil, and no longer be slaves to sin.
 - o As opposed to Oprah admirably understanding of being on the side of “truth” (truth that is unrelated to Jesus) and was set free from her own fear (which has nothing to do with her own sin).

Chapter 9—Powerful Testimony by the Blind (Brief summary)

- Through the powerful testimony of this blind man who was born blind, John uses his words to clearly respond to the challenge of the Pharisees in chapter 8 concerning both
- -where Jesus came from and
- Who He is.

- a. Immediately after being healed—when asked by the Pharisees who rejected Jesus being from God because He healed on Sabbath:

“The man replied, ‘He is a prophet’.” (9:17)

- b. When the Pharisees insisted that Jesus was a sinner,

“He replied, ‘Whether He is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know, I was blind and now I see!’” (9:25)

- c. When the Pharisees insisted that they did not know where Jesus came from

“The man answered, ‘Now that is remarkable! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.’” (9: 30-33)

- d. When Jesus met him again and asked,

““Do you believe in the Son of Man?””

36 “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.”

37 Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.”
38 Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. (9: 35-37)

Through these words from the mouth of the healed blind man, John basically shuts the mouth of all those who doubt Who Jesus is and where He has come from.

A Recap of the three chapters

Chapter 7: At the last and the greatest day of the Feast, just as the priest pours down the “living water” of Israel’s past, present and future blessings, Jesus declares that He is the True Living Water that runs unto eternity—many, including the temple guard fell the joy and believed in Him.

Chapter 8: At the day or evening after the end of the Feast, just as all the bright lights that burnt throughout the seven nights of the Feast were gone; Jesus declared that He is the Light of the world. While some believed, the Pharisees remained defiant and still sought to challenge Jesus’ authority (to such claims), ending in Jesus’ rebuke of them being the children of the devil and not Abraham, and His even more powerful declaration that “Before Abraham was born, I AM.”

Chapter 9: while still in Jerusalem, Jesus healed the man who was born blind, leading to the powerful testimony by this blind man through whose mouth all the challenges by the Pharisees about where Jesus has come from and Who He is are soundly defeated!