

**v.7:1** *After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.*

With the phrase “after these things,” John covers what we know from the other gospels to be a six-month period in the ministry of Christ. (In the gospel of Mark this period is covered in chapters 7-9) During this period He spent a lot of time with His apostles as He covered most of the Galilean region.

- a) The reason given for staying in Galilee is that the Jewish leadership sought to kill Him. (v. 5:18) By staying and traveling in the Galilean region He avoided those Jews who did not have as much power and authority in this region as they did in Judea.

**v.7:2-5** *Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For [there is] no man [that] doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him.*

Jesus must have been in or near His hometown of Nazareth for John resumes his narrative with a conversation that took place between Jesus and His brothers. He also tells us that it was at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, which takes place in late September.

[This was the last of three feasts requiring the attendance of all male Jews. It was an eight-day feast in which the people built and lived in booths commemorating their ancestors stay in the wilderness. Many sacrifices were offered. It was probably the largest and most joyous feast.]

- a) His brothers, seeing that He was not preparing to go to the feast, begin to urge Him to go. Their reasoning is that if He is seeking to be known or accepted by the people as the Messiah then why is He working in relative obscurity in the Galilean region. All of His supposed followers would be in Judea for the feast, so He should perform His miracles in Jerusalem and would in this way show himself to the whole world.
- b) John states that Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him. The phrase “if thou do these things” suggests that they were even skeptical of His miracles. It is probable that they never had witnessed a miracle and had only heard the reports of His works coming from the far reaches of the Galilean province. In His hometown at one point they thought Him to be mad. (Mark 3:21, 31)
- c) With all that He had done and the fame He enjoyed, even in Jerusalem, it is hard to believe that His brothers totally discounted His power. At any rate, they surely did not believe that He was the Messiah, for they would have probably shared the same views as those disciples who had left Him six months earlier. They want Him to go the Jerusalem to prove himself or so an end would be put to His ministry.

**v.7:6-9** *Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come. When he had said these words unto them, he abode [still] in Galilee.*

The brothers of Jesus evidently seeing that He was not preparing to go up to Jerusalem to attend the

*Feast of the Tabernacles and out of a spirit of unbelief, urge Him to attend. They probably either want Him to prove himself to the people and religious leaders or to end talk of being the Messiah of God.*

- a) *Jesus responds that they can go to the feast anytime they desired but as for Him the proper time had not yet arrived. Jesus probably refers to the time of His death, which would take place during the next Passover feast.*
- b) *He speaks of the world hating Him because He testifies against it. His truth exposes the evil of the world and in the hearts of men. (vs. 3:19-20) His brothers, on the other hand, were of the world. They did not excite any opposition for they espoused the same principals and philosophies as did the world. They did not excite controversy and hate.*
- c) *Jesus tells them to go to the feast, repeating again that it is not His time. The best guess as to why He did not go early with the caravan was that it would have drawn a lot of attention and would have given the Jewish hierarchy time to devise a plan against Him. This is exactly what did happen at the Passover when He arrived in Jerusalem with much fanfare and the plan to kill Him was devised and initiated.*

***v.7:10-13 But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.***

*Sometime after the departure of His brothers Jesus and His apostles went up to Jerusalem for the feast. The fact that He went in secret simply means that He went undetected. He waited until the roads to Jerusalem were deserted and probably took the back roads or traveled by night.*

- a) *The popularity of Jesus is shown as we see Him to be the topic of discussion among the Jewish leaders as well as among the people. The Jewish leaders expected Him to come and were openly seeking Him. They wondered where He was when He did not immediately arrive.*
- b) *The Jewish leadership had a stranglehold on the common people. No one would dare speak of Jesus openly for fear of these leaders. If not careful they would be probably ostracized or even put out of the synagogue. These men virtually controlled religion and so enjoyed great power over the people.*
- c) *The opinion among the people was divided. The word murmuring means arguing. Based on His works and miracles some said that He was a good man but the fundamentalists in the group, based on His teachings, probably called Him a deceiver. In other words, He does good works but His doctrine is not sound. He appears as one thing but is really another, therefore He is a deceiver.*
- d) *Even the allies of Jesus in the crowd would only say that He was a good man. It seems that very few took His claims of being the Messiah sent by God seriously. His teachings concerning the Messiah, as well as the law and Judaism as a whole was radical to what Judaism had become.*

*v.7:14-18 Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or [whether] I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.*

*About halfway into the weeklong feast Jesus showed up at the temple and began to preach. The Jewish leaders soon made an appearance and confront the crowd that had gathered to hear Him. They wanted to know what gave Jesus the right to teach. They attempted to discredit Him in front of the crowd.*

- a) *“Knowing letters” referred to being schooled in the scriptures and in their interpretation. One would enroll in a rabbinical school at an early age to be properly instructed. They knew that Jesus was not affiliated with such a school. He had not been the pupil of a well-known Rabbi.*
- b) *What they accused Jesus of was teaching His own doctrine. They marveled that He would sit there, void of any accreditation, interpreting the scriptures, and in the temple no less. They ask the crowd how this man can possibly know what He is talking about having never been properly instructed.*
- c) *He states that the doctrine that He teaches is not of His own invention but is the very doctrine of God, which He was sent to reveal. That He and God were of the same mind and in fact that He shared in the divine nature is the main theme of this gospel. The fact has been mentioned or implied in each recorded discourse. (vs. 5:30, 6:38)*
- d) *Jesus never asks them to put blind faith in Him. He never expected them to simply take His word for it that He was from the Father. (v. 5:31) He always offered as proof the witness that God bore of Him through the miracles and in the scriptures. (vs. 5:36, 39, 46)*
- e) *Here also Jesus invites this particular group to put His doctrine to the test. He tells them that if they have a heart within them that truly desires to do the will of God, then they will know if the teaching is of God or whether it is not. Jesus says that those who are truly motivated to do the will of God, who impartially and in an unbiased manner seeks only the truth, will find it.*
- f) *This is what He told Nicodemus when He compared those that love darkness to those that come to the light. (vs. 3:20-21) Those who love darkness gravitate to systems and philosophies that condone or even justify their actions. Their goal is self-satisfaction. Those who love the light seek to do the will of God. They conform their life to God’s truth.*
- g) *Jesus speaks of spiritual regeneration. Those that desire to do His will, will inwardly know the truth, for God will draw them. God will teach them and they will individually recognize it. (vs. 6:44-45)*
- h) *Jesus adds that those who speak on their own or according to their own agenda, as they accused Him of doing, seek after their own reputation and glory. Jesus sought only the glory of God. His doctrines exalted God and humbled man. He never sought glory in His teachings or His miracles. Therefore He was not a deceiver or an imposter but of the truth.*

*v.7:19-24 Did not Moses give you the law, and [yet] none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*

*After answering their accusations that He simply taught His own doctrine according to His own interests, Jesus suddenly takes to the offensive. He accuses them all of being law-breakers.*

- a) *They had great reverence for Moses and put a great deal of effort into keeping the law, that he, by the hand of God, had given them. Jesus, in a very severe and straight-forward manner tells them that they all have a total disregard of the law.*
- b) *The Jews were hypocrites. Outwardly they had the appearance of keeping the law, exhibiting often times fanatical behavior to follow the law to the letter. But they missed the spirit of the law by focusing on the letter instead of the intent. (Mark 7:6-7)*
- c) *Jesus specifically accuses them of plotting against Him and seeking to kill Him. This in itself was a violation of the law. (vs. 50-51) The idea of these verses seems to be, "Moses gave you the law and none of you keep it, so why do you plot to kill me for supposedly breaking the same law?"*
- d) *The people vehemently deny trying to kill Him, even to the point of saying that He has a demon, or in modern language, must be crazy. Jesus relates to them a particular incident that should jog their memory.*

*[It is possible that the crowd was not aware of the desire of their leaders to kill Jesus. There were many pilgrims in the city for this feast, therefore, they may have been surprised and even offended by the accusation of Jesus. It is just as likely that they knew he was exposing them and they were denying the accusation in a cover-up attempt. (v. 25)]*

- e) *During the last visit to Jerusalem Jesus healed the man by the pool. The healing took place on the Sabbath and to make matters worse, Jesus ordered the healed man to pick up his bed and take it home. For supposedly violating the Sabbath in this manner they had sought to kill Him. (vs. 5:15-16)*
- f) *Jesus compares this incident with the way they viewed the law of Moses concerning circumcision. Circumcision predated the Mosaic Law. It was part of the covenant made with Abraham. (Gen. 17:9-10) Moses, in turn, incorporated this practice into the Mosaic Law. (Lev. 12:3)*
- g) *Jesus argues that if the eighth day fell on a Sabbath the circumcision was still performed. This would be considered work in the strict sense of the Sabbath law. The Jews put one law over another, deeming circumcision to be a necessary work.*
- h) *The logic presented to them by Jesus, in light of their own practices, is that if they deem the care of one part of the body as permitted on the Sabbath, then how can they be angry with Him for performing a work of mercy that healed a man's entire body of disease. For this they were angry to the point of putting Him to death.*

- i) Jesus exhorts them to look into the spirit and the intent of the law. They were not to judge according to outward appearance, void of any thought, reflection or even common sense. Mere appearance could be deceiving. They were to judge righteously according to truth. (Matt. 23:23-28)

**v.7:25-27** Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

The writer of this gospel gives us the beliefs and reasoning of the people of Jerusalem at this time. While some vehemently denied knowledge of a plot to kill Jesus, others openly spoke of such a plot.

- a) The people seem to perceive a change of attitude among the leaders. They reason that these leaders might have new evidence that Jesus is indeed the Messiah since at one point they wanted to kill Him, but now allow Him to preach openly in the temple.
- b) The leaders ruled Judaism with an iron fist. It was unusual for a man to speak out openly against them for very long, yet Jesus continued to speak boldly and confidently right in their midst with little or no action taken.
- c) They further reasoned that He could not be the Messiah no matter what the rulers might think because they knew where He was from. Jesus was from Nazareth and they knew His mother and father. (v. 6:42) The Christ would be born in Bethlehem. (Matt. 2:4-5)

[For more insight into Jewish beliefs at the time concerning the Messiah see Barnes Notes page 301]

**v.7:28-29** Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

The crowd reasoned among themselves that Jesus could not be the Messiah because they knew Him and knew where He was from. (v. 27) They also viewed Him as a self-proclaimed prophet. Not sanctioned by the leadership, they believed that He preached His own doctrine. (vs. 15-16) Jesus, hearing their reasoning or supernaturally perceiving them, suddenly responds.

- a) Probably out of frustration with them, Jesus cries out a sarcastic rebuke amounting to, "So you in your great reasoning believe that you know me and where I am from?" The implication is that they still do not know Him at all, even though He had repeatedly told them.
- b) Jesus preached openly that He was the Messiah and that He had come from above. Here, He cries out or shouts it to them. He again tells them that His doctrine is not His own but the doctrine of the One by whom He was sent. Referring to God, He says that He was sent by the True One or the Real One.
- c) Jesus tells them that they do not know God. It is implied that this is the reason why they do not know Him. This is the reason they do not understand His words. Their interpretation of the law and the prophets was flawed. They thought they knew Jesus, but they didn't. They thought they knew God, but they didn't. (vs. 5:37-38, 6:36, 8:19)

- d) Jesus tells them plainly that He knows God because He is from God. In other words, He was in God's presence and sent to them by God himself.

**v.7:30** *Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.*

Jesus had publicly ridiculed this group as to their supposed knowledge of Him. He plainly told them that they did not even know the God they worshipped. He then himself claimed to have intimate knowledge of God and in fact, claimed to be sent directly by God. Probably filled with rage the crowd desired to get a hold of Him.

- a) The idea is that His words worked them up into such a frenzy the only explanation for their restraint was a supernatural one. In the plan of God it was not yet time for them to take Him. This particular incident ends with this verse.

**v.7:31-32** *And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this [man] hath done? The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.*

Many at this feast, because of the His miracles, expressed a belief in Jesus as the Messiah. (At least their idea of the Messiah) Their reasoning was, "Could a man possibly do more miracles than He had already done? Could greater things be done by anyone?"

- a) At least some of the miracles were beginning to have the desired affect. They started to see the miracles as bearing witness to what He said. Based on the miracles alone they could not discount His claims or teachings. Maybe their ideas were wrong. Maybe He was the Messiah.
- b) Such talk put a scare into the religious leaders. Through their reasoning He was not the Messiah. They could not allow Him to gain such acceptance, and so, actually sent out men authorizing them to take Him away from the crowds and into custody.

[In the previous instance the crowd had a desire to immediately take Him because of His claims. It was out of anger. Here the leaders make a calculated decision to get Him away from the people because He was gaining support. We see the emotions stirred up and the turmoil caused by His presence at the feast. He caused controversy. He did not come to bring peace, but a sword.]

**v.7:33-36** *Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and [then] I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find [me]: and where I am, [thither] ye cannot come. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What [manner of] saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find [me]: and where I am, [thither] ye cannot come?*

Yet another discourse of Jesus given during this feast is related by John. In it, Jesus tells the people of both His death and His resurrection. He tells them He would remain with them a little while longer because He was going to return to the Father. (His death would occur in about six months)

- a) The fact that they would seek Him and not find Him can be understood in that He was truly the

Messiah. After He left they would continue to seek the Messiah, but would not find Him. They would continue to desire deliverance but would not be delivered. He would have indeed come and gone but they would not recognize Him.

- b) They could not approach the Father to find Him, for they could only know the Father through Him. Jesus was going to the Father where they could not go apart from Him. As long as they rejected Him there was no other way, nothing or no one else would ever come along. If you reject the truth you will never find truth. (Amos 8:11-12)
- c) The divine plan was nearing fulfillment. He would give His flesh and return to the Father from where He came. Salvation would be accomplished despite their unbelief. The warning to them in these words is that of Psalm 95:8-11.
- d) Instead of questioning Him or seeking the meaning of His words this particular group also mocked Him. They presume that He has met failure and will leave. Will He take His teachings to the Jews scattered abroad? When He again meets failure will He attempt to become the Messiah of the gentiles?

[It is ironic that the prediction in their mocking was fulfilled. Rejected by His own He became the Messiah of the gentiles and of all men.]

**v.7:37-39 In the last day, that great [day] of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given]; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)**

The Feast of the Tabernacles was the last feast of the Jewish year. It was a joyous feast as the people remembered their deliverance from Egypt and looked forward to their future salvation, or to the time that the Messiah would appear. The last day was marked by many ceremonies and much pageantry as the people were worked up into a joyous frenzy.

- a) A particularly great moment was when the priest took water from the stream of Siloah, which was under the Temple Mount, and poured it upon the altar. The people then sang the words of Isaiah 12:3.
- b) It was probably at this point that Jesus stood up and emotionally cried out this invitation to come to Him for salvation. The salvation that they sought and sang of had come to them. Jesus probably cried out these words with an emotional mix of love, frustration, pity, and even anger, as they failed to see Him as the Messiah, the fulfillment of their song. The joy that this feast put in their hearts could be everlasting joy if they recognized and turned to Him.
- c) Using the concepts of thirsting and drinking, hungering and eating, to express spiritual ideas were not new to these people. They are used throughout the Old Testament in referring to spiritual cravings and the resulting satisfaction. They are often employed by Jesus in His teachings. (Is. 55:1-3; Matt. 5:6)
- d) Coming and drinking is again defined as believing. If anyone spiritually thirsts then let them believe in Jesus. "Belly" refers to the inner man. It is the heart and soul of a person. "Rivers"

*always refers to abundance or an inexhaustible supply. The idea is that not only will the believer be satisfied but also he in turn would become a source of spiritual blessing to others. Within himself the believer would have a self-sustaining spring of grace.*

- e) *There is not a specific scripture Jesus is referring to in comparing regeneration to an inward fountain that would satisfy and flow out to benefit others. He seems to say that the scriptures in general speak of this. (Is. 58:11; Zech. 14:8-9; Is 44:3-4)*
- f) *John in a parenthetical expression [or explanatory way] confirms that Jesus is speaking of spiritual regeneration when He speaks of rivers of water flowing out of the believer. These rivers of living water are the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the essence of the new man. It is the strength and peace present in the believer. It is the confirming agent of God and the "down payment" of our salvation. (Eph. 1:13-14)*
- g) *John explains that the Spirit was not yet given in this manner because Jesus must first be offered, raised and ascended. (16:7-8)*

*[About 550 years earlier the prophet Haggai uttered a prophecy to the returned remnant that was reconstructing the temple. The prophecy speaks of the second temple being greater than the first, but with its Messianic overtones seems to imply that the Messiah would stand in this temple. (Hag. 2:6-9) This prophecy was uttered on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the seventh month. (Hag. 2:1) The last day of the Feast of the Tabernacles was on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the seventh month. (Lev. 23:34) Jesus cries out the invitation of salvation to the people on the same day that Haggai prophesied of the glory that would fill the rebuilt temple. Could Jesus have been standing in the same exact spot as Haggai?]*

***v.7:40-43 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him.***

*John once again demonstrates the confusion and controversy among the people caused by the teachings and saying of Jesus. It seems that everyone had an opinion about Him and to the dismay of the leadership He was the talk of the feast.*

- a) *There were two main opinions among the people as to the identity of Jesus. First, was that He was that unnamed prophet that would be like Moses. (Deut. 18:15-18) In this particular part of the ceremony in the feast, they remembered the water supplied by God through the hand of Moses when their ancestors were in the wilderness. Jesus' invitation to come to Him and drink would seem to them as a fulfillment of this prophecy. They all were not of the opinion that this prophet and the Christ were one and the same. Earlier, some thought that John the Baptist might be "that prophet." (v. 1:21)*
- b) *The other opinion was that Jesus was indeed the Christ although we must keep in mind that the idea of the Christ was quite different from the truth. They tended to believe that He would save them from want and from the Romans, but had no idea that He would be offered for their sins.*
- c) *Another group objects, saying that He cannot possibly be the Christ because of His Galilean roots. This is the same objection raised at least twice before. (vs. 6:42, 7:27) They assumed that they knew Him, but did not. Their assumptions concerning Him were wrong. Did they not ask*

or inquire of Him because they assumed that no one His age could have been born in Bethlehem?

**v.7:44-49** *And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.*

During the weeklong Feast of the Tabernacles in Jerusalem the Jewish leaders saw that Jesus was beginning to gain acceptance among the people as the Messiah. They had authorized certain officers to seek out Jesus and to take Him into custody. It seems that on the last day of this feast these officers were present in the crowd. They heard His discourse and in the turmoil of the aftermath had opportunity to take Him, however, they did not lay a hand on Him. (v. 7:32)

- a) Returning without Him and upon the questioning of their superiors, the officers reply that Jesus doesn't speak like a man. These officers were obviously greatly impressed or even in awe of both His words and His delivery. At the very least they recognized Jesus as someone very unique and were afraid to take Him.
- b) Having failed their mission, by blatantly disobeying their orders, the Pharisees accuse these officers of having been deceived. They belittle the officers by puffing-up themselves. Their argument is that since none of them believe in Jesus then this proves that He is an imposter and a deceiver.
- c) The word translated "the people" is a word that expresses contempt. In modern terms it could be translated "the riff-raff." The Pharisees portray themselves as the learned, and now lump these officers in with the ignorant common people.
- d) The relationship that existed between the leaders and the people is apparent in these verses. The leaders were the clergy. They were the ones who were formally instructed in the law. They judged and believed that they knew what was best for the people. When the people thought for themselves they were considered deceived, ignorant and heading for perdition.
- e) One of the reasons why the leadership was so upset with Jesus and sought to kill Him for little or no reason, was that He bypassed them and went to the people. He took the truth to the common man and gave the leadership a taste of their own medicine. He basically treated the scribes and Pharisees the same way that they treated the people.

**v.7: 50-53** *Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge [any] man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. And every man went unto his own house.*

It had been about three years since Nicodemus came by night to talk to Jesus. Here he is mentioned again as indirectly coming to the defense of Jesus in a meeting of the Jewish leaders. He did not directly defend Jesus or His teachings, but simply suggested that Jesus should be heard.

- a) Nicodemus was probably still torn between what Jesus had told him and his Jewish beliefs. His hope was probably that if they as a group would hear Him and His teachings, as he had secretly

*done, then any conflict could be resolved. As we have seen, Jesus would never go to these rulers because He knew them for what they were. On the other hand, the rulers would never go to Jesus because He had bypassed them and went to the people.*

- b) The wisdom of Nicodemus is seen as he very strongly rebukes the assembly, but in a subtle manner. The leaders had just expressed their superiority over the people saying that the people did not know the law. Nicodemus asks the question if the law judges someone before they are heard. The question showed that the guardians of the law were themselves guilty of breaking the law.*
- c) They as a group had judged Jesus to be a deceiver. (v. 7:47) They tried to arrest Him, (v. 7:32) and even wanted to put Him to death. (v. 5:18) All of this before they ever had any sort of formal audience with Him. (Ex. 23:1-2; Deut. 1:16-17, 19:15-18; Lev 19:15-18)*
- d) The only way they could answer the question of Nicodemus was with contempt and ridicule. They imposed the law on the people, but they saw themselves as being above the law. Asking Nicodemus if he was Galilean was an insult to him. The implication was that only someone from Galilee, where the law is not studied or known, would possibly come to the defense of Jesus. The other implication is that Jesus did not deserve the protection of the law.*
- e) Approximately the last two years of Jesus' ministry had been in the Galilean region. Those most familiar with Him and His miracles were from Galilee. These people, not knowing the scriptures, according to the leaders, would be the only ones to believe that Jesus could possibly be the Messiah.*
- f) The feast being over, and having missed their opportunity to take Him, they tell Nicodemus to "brush-up" on the scriptures and the meeting adjourns.*

*v.8:1-11 Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. 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. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? 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]. 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. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 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. 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? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.*

*The fact that Jesus went to the Mount of Olives seems to be a contrast with the last verse of chapter 7. Everyone went to their own home, but Jesus, who had no home, went to the Mount of Olives which was outside the city.*

- a) *The next morning Jesus again appears in the temple preaching. The Scribes and Pharisees who had failed the previous day to take Jesus into custody devise yet another plan to try to entrap Him. The words of Nicodemus must have hit the mark because now instead of merely taking Jesus they are attempting to set Him up to get evidence against Him.*
- b) *They bring before Jesus a woman caught in adultery. The case was clear cut for she was caught in the every act. The law said that the penalty for such an offense was death. (Deut. 22:22) No mention is made of her male counterpart, so it is clear that they were not interested in justice at all but were simply using the woman to get at Jesus.*
- c) *Their plan was well thought out. If Jesus had told them to spare the woman they could accuse Him of setting aside the Law of Moses. Jesus was already thought to be a friend of sinners and they could accuse Him of now excusing the grossest case of immorality if He let the woman live. (Luke 15:2)*
- d) *On the other hand, if He ordered them to put her to death He would be in violation of the Roman law that forbid the Jews from executing anyone apart from the Roman system. They tried at other times to set Him against the Roman state. (Matt. 22:16-17; John 19:12)*
- e) *Jesus bends down and begins writing in the dust. Exactly what He was thinking at this moment we are not told. These men had just barged in on Him as He was teaching. Jesus appears to be ignoring them, showing them that He would rather continue teaching them to fall for their trickery.*
- f) *Convinced that they have come up with a brilliant scheme and encouraged all the more by Jesus' silence they press Him for an answer. Jesus stands up and says that the one without sin should cast the first stone. In the original language the command is more specific. Jesus literally says that the one among them not guilty of any sort of immorality should cast the first stone.*
- g) *At this time, with all of their liberal divorce and remarriage laws, the leadership had virtually legalized adultery. Their consciences pricked by the word of God, they begin to leave. Eldest*

*refers to the highest in rank. They knew that they had become an immoral society and those most familiar with the holiness of God were the first to leave.*

- h) While this is going on Jesus again takes himself out of the situation and lets His words deal with them and their foolish plan. The crowd that He was teaching observed the entire incident, which greatly embarrassed these leaders and made them all the more determined to put an end to Him.*
- i) Jesus stands up to deal with the woman who is still standing before Him. No man could condemn her for they themselves were all guilty, the only difference being that their sin was hidden but hers was obvious. As the Son of Man, Jesus did not come to condemn, but to save. (v. 3:17)*
- j) Jesus tells the woman to go but instructs her to avoid this sin. Her actions are not excused, but through the mercy of God the immediate consequences are this time forgone.*

*[There is much controversy among biblical scholars concerning this story. Many maintain that it was not a part of the original gospel but added at a later date. Most of the earliest manuscripts available do not contain this story. There is evidence however that this story was purposely removed from the earliest manuscripts because it was feared that women might appeal to this story in excusing their infidelity.]*

***v.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.***

*Following the interruption, Jesus resumes teaching the people who had gathered around Him in the temple. Making use of yet another metaphor Jesus proclaims himself to be the light of the world. In various discourses He has compared himself to bread and to water. He now adds light.*

- a) Food, water and light are some of the basic necessities of life. Through these comparisons Jesus shows that He is the basis for spiritual life. What food, water and light are to the body, He is to the soul. Apart from Him there is no spiritual life.*
- b) Light in the scriptures represents truth, holiness and knowledge. Jesus Christ is the source of God's truth to man, a reflection of the holiness of God, and as the manifestation of God, the only one who can impart any knowledge of Him. Through Jesus Christ shines all of the attributes of God.*
- c) To those that follow Him, the light becomes life. He illuminates the darkness of the mind and a conscience seared by sin and enables one to see the path to true and eternal life.*
- d) John began this gospel comparing Jesus to light and also making the correlation between light and life. (v. 1:4-9)*

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

*Jesus, who was teaching in the temple, had just proclaimed to be the light of the world. (v. 12) The Jewish leaders immediately object on the grounds that Jesus is simply bearing record of himself. In their opinion His words to them are mere boasting and there is no one that confirms His testimony.*

- a) *They are not saying that the testimony of Jesus is not true simply because He bears witness of himself. They, as the leaders, had judged His testimony to be false. Also, there was no one confirming His testimony, and so in their eyes He was merely boasting. They had earlier accused Him of making up His own doctrine. (v. 7:15-16)*
- b) *Jesus had brought up this same point in a previous confrontation with them. (v. 5:31) He basically said that He did not expect them to believe based merely on His testimony. He went on to show them that the Father, Moses and the scriptures in general confirmed His testimony to be truth. (v. 5:36, 39, 46)*
- c) *In view of the power that the Pharisees held, they would be hard pressed to find anyone to publicly proclaim that the words Jesus spoke were truth. People were afraid to even publicly speak of Him. (v. 7:13) Jesus did not need the testimony of men. (v. 5:34)*

***v.8:14-16 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. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.***

*Jesus assures them that what He says is true despite the fact that they, the religious leaders, had judged Him and His words to be false. Their acceptance or rejection could not change what He knew to be truth.*

- a) *Jesus appeals to His superior knowledge concerning himself, specifically of His origin and His destination. The Pharisees were in no position to judge His testimony to be false. Jesus had told them that He had come down from heaven and He knew that He would soon return. (vs. 6:38; 7:33-34) His was a special case. They had no physical or tangible way of verifying His words. The testimony of men was worthless for no man had ever been with the Father except the Son. (vs. 1:18; 3:13)*
- b) *Jesus had rebuked the crowd several day earlier for assuming that they knew all about Him. (v. 7:28-29) The fact was that they did not know Him at all and could not know Him except by His testimony.*
- c) *The Pharisees could only judge Him according to human standards, being limited to human knowledge. They could only judge according to appearance. They could readily see His flesh, but not His deity. Again, their abilities and insights were limited and subject to human bias, while the knowledge of Jesus was eternal and true.*
- d) *Jesus did not come to judge the world for the world had already been judged. (v. 3:17) The Father in himself judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son. (v. 5:22) The Father has given the Son authority to execute judgment. (v. 5:27) The Son also in himself judges no man. (v. 8:15) The idea seems to be that all judgment is a joint effort of the Father and the Son. It is true and righteous judgment according to the perfect knowledge of God and yet executed upon man by a man. The judgments of Jesus were not His own, but in complete agreement and accord with the divine will.*

***v.8:17-18 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.***

Jesus appeals to their own law that stated that the testimony of two witnesses was true and reliable. This could be a reference to the law of Moses or to the Rabbinical laws adopted from it which had been put in place. Furthermore, such witnesses needed to be deemed reliable. (Deut. 19:15-19)

- a) Jesus had just established himself as both a reliable witness and as one who could testify of himself. The only one who could authenticate the witness of Jesus was the Father, who did so through the miracles and by the scriptures. Jesus and the Father were the two reliable witnesses called for by their law.

**v.8:19-20** 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. 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 Jews responded with contempt. Probably looking around, they mocked Him by asking Him, "Just where is your Father?" They knew that He was speaking of God, but they could not stand the fact that He spoke of God in such a casual and familiar manner.

- a) They did not believe that He came from heaven and could have this type of relationship with God. They knew Him as Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth. Of this they were convinced.
- b) Jesus challenges their belief telling them that they do not know Him. He affirms His relationship with the Father telling them that they also do not know God, for if they knew Him then they would also know the Father.
- c) This discourse was given in the temple, in the area known as the woman's court, where the offerings were kept. The last several recorded discourses of Jesus have invoked the same response. The Jews are convinced that they know Him and so judge His claims to be false. Jesus assures them that they are mistaken. His accusations that they do not know God and His casual references to God as His father then incite strong feelings against Him. We are again told that this particular crowd would have taken Him, but were restrained by the divine will and purpose of God.

**v.8:21-22** 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. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

Based on their rejection of His teachings and the hardness of their hearts that prevented them from seeing His true identity, Jesus pronounces their doom. Unbeknownst to them, Jesus predicts His death and His return to the Father. Several days earlier He had pronounced the same warning with similar results. (v. 7:33-34) They mocked His relationship with the Father and so could not understand.

- a) After Jesus ascends to the Father He predicts that they will continue to seek a deliverer, but none will be found. He does not mean that they will specifically seek Him, but the Messiah. Rejecting Him and the truth of a spiritual Messiah they would die in their sins.
- b) Jesus was going to the Father. By rejecting the Son they could never stand in the presence of God. Where He was going they could never follow. They had rejected the way, the truth and the life. The wrath of God would be upon them.

- c) *The Jews do not take the pronouncement of their doom seriously, but rather mock Him among themselves. They suggest that maybe He will commit suicide for then He would be in a place where they could not find Him or follow Him. You can see their disdain for Him escalating. A few days earlier they had Him going away to teach the gentiles, but now suggested that He is going to commit suicide. (v. 7:35) It almost seems that the people were beginning to tire of Him. They found out what He was all about and the novelty was wearing off.*

*[This idea of Jesus committing suicide was ironic for Jesus, in reality was speaking about His death. He would soon willingly give up His life. By rejecting Him they would not be able to follow Him to heaven upon their own death.]*

***v.8:23-24 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. 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.***

*Jesus answers their contempt for Him by contrasting himself with them. In so doing, He come again portrays himself as being unique among men.*

- a) *They were of the earth, driven by the lusts of their fallen natures. They were lovers of darkness rather than lovers of light. Jesus, on the other hand, was from above. He was not of the world but a partaker of the divine nature.*
- b) *Because they are of the world they will die in their sin. The world is opposed to God. (James 4:4) The remedy for their doomed condition was belief in Him. They could be regenerated and become partakers of the divine nature. They too could be not of this world and stand with Him in the presence of the Father. (1 John 4:5-6); 1 Cor. 15:45-49)*
- c) *Jesus literally says that they must believe that He is 'I Am'. This was their name for God. If they did not believe that He was God, then they would not be saved, but die in their state of sin. (Ex. 3:14)*

***v.8:25-27 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even [the same] that I said unto you from the beginning. 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. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.***

*Jesus had just told them that by taking the title I AM that He was God. Either in total disbelief or in rage they immediately ask Him to repeat what He had said. They want a clarification. "Who are you?"*

- a) *Jesus does not answer them in a direct manner but says that He is who He has said He was all along. He had previously declared himself to be equal with God or possessing the same nature as God. (v. 5:17-18) He had plainly declared himself to be the Messiah. (v. 4:25-26) Also, He had declared many times that belief in Him was the only way of salvation.*
- b) *In the original language (Greek), the construction of this verse gives a sense that transcends the present. Jesus seems to be speaking as God. The word beginning would then refer to the beginning of time. The idea is that He has been telling them just who He is throughout history, through the fathers, the scriptures and often times in a direct manner. Nothing has changed and He is still telling them who He is.*

- c) *Jesus had many things to say to them and everything that He said exposed their hypocrisy and sin, and so was a judgment against them. The crowd believed that He was speaking of His own authority and so in effect bearing witness of himself. He assures them that what He says is truth for He speaks what He has heard from the Father. He does not speak of His own authority or on His own behalf.*
- d) *The author adds that despite His words and claims they did not believe that He spoke the words of the Father. They refused to believe that He was from above, one with the Father and the manifestation of God to man.*

**v.8:28-29** *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. 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 continues His discourse in the temple treasury. He has been telling His listeners that He is a partaker of the divine nature. He said that He was from the heavens and would soon return. In this verse Jesus again predicts His death, but also that some in the crowd would come to believe in Him.*

- a) *He refers to His death on the cross with the phrase "lifted up." It was a comparison of His upcoming death on the cross to the lifting up of the serpent by Moses in the wilderness. (v. 3:14) He predicts that as a direct result of this event some of them would come to know the truth.*
- b) *This crowd did not believe that He was from the heavens or that He had the intimate relationship with God that He claimed. Instead, they believed that He promoted His own doctrine. (vs. 13, 27) After His death and resurrection some of them would come to know that He was indeed who He had claimed to be. They would then know that His doctrine was not His own but that of the Father. They would see Jesus as the Messiah and the fulfillment of the scriptures. (v. 24)*
- c) *There would be many signs connected with His death and many scriptures fulfilled. The darkness, the earthquake, individuals coming out of graves, the tearing of the curtain in the temple, the resurrection and the 40 day period of appearances would all bear witness of His words and bring some of them to a belief in Him.*
- d) *Jesus confirms to them the relationship that He has with the Father. He assures them the Father is with Him and that everything H does is in conjunction with the Father's will.*
- e) *Everything that He does is pleasing to the Father. They may mock Him asking, "Where is thy father," and believe that He is acting on His own, but He assures them that this is not the case.*

**v.8:30-32** *As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

*The author interrupts His narrative of this discourse to Jesus to let the readers know that as this discourse progressed many came to believe in Jesus. There were various opinions of Him out there in the crowd but we are told that many were beginning to listen to His words.*

- a) *Belief in this instance does not mean saving faith. They did not understand the concept of a spiritual Messiah. At this point the apostles themselves did not understand that Jesus, as the*

*Christ, would die a sacrificial death and be raised. Belief means that they started to put a rudimentary faith in Him over the objectives of their leadership and even over their religion.*

- b) *Jesus had just said that they would not know or fully understand until His mission had come to a climax. Then they would know that He was the Messiah. The scriptures would come to light and they would see that He had carried out His Father's plan. (v. 28)*
- c) *Jesus addresses these would be believers, telling them that if they continued on the path that they had chosen, if they continued in His word, then they would be true followers of Him. The path would lead them to knowledge of the truth and in turn the truth would liberate their soul.*
- d) *Jesus tells them of a spiritual regeneration that they knew little about. His promise to them is that if they continue in His word, if they continue to seek the truth, then all things would soon come to light. (v. 7:17)*

***v.8:33-36 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: [but] the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.***

*Others in the crowd object to the words of Jesus as another direct confrontation develops between Him and the crowd. The ability of those whom He had just addressed to continue in His word, is immediately put to the test as His words are challenged. It is possible that even some of those who began to believe in Him quickly turn on Him based on His last remark.*

- a) *They take exception to the idea of being made free. They took great pride in their religious heritage. They were the seed of Abraham through Isaac and not of Ishmael, who was born of the bondswoman. They were the covenant people who worshipped the One True God. They may have been slaves many times in their history, but no man or king had ever broken them spiritually. Even now, the Romans understood that to have any sort of control they had to tolerate the Jew's religion. They believed that they had spiritual freedom. What would He free them from?*
- b) *Jesus solemnly assures them that they were in spiritual bondage to sin. They could not please God in their fallen state. As sinners, they were the servants of sin. The purpose of the law was to show them their bondage but they had long ago circumvented the purpose of the law with their own doctrines and ideas. (Rom. 3:9-10, 19-20; Gal. 3:22-24)*
- c) *Jesus tells them that as servants there is no security. They could be dismissed by God at any time for their unfaithfulness. Just as Ishmael was cast out of the house of Abraham, so they as servants would be cast out. The Son, on the other hand, is the heir. Only by becoming adopted sons through Jesus would they have true security. Only through Jesus could they experience true freedom. Their physical ties to Abraham meant nothing. Would they remain the servants of sin and be cast out or through Jesus be given the security of a son? (Gal. 4:28-31)*

*Authors note:*

*Jesus merely touches upon many of these ideas that are thoroughly explained by the writers of the New Testament through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Paul was instructed in these things by the glorified Lord and would write entire letters to the churches explaining the purpose of the law, man's bondage to sin, the allegories of Isaac and Ishmael, Esau and Jacob and the freedom in Christ.*

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

Jesus admits to them that they are of the seed of Abraham but also begins to differentiate between the physical children of Abraham and the spiritual children of Abraham.

- a) *They were the physical descendants of Abraham, which afforded them many advantages. (Rom. 3:1-2, 9:4-5) But now, by their plots to kill Him, the very one that Abraham looked for, they were denying Abraham. Consumed by their sin there was literally no room in them for the word of God. Believers in Jesus were the true spiritual children of Abraham. They were not. (Gal. 3:6-7)*

**v.8:38-41** *I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. 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. 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. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, [even] God.*

With each verse this differentiation between the spiritual and physical becomes more pronounced. Jesus suggests that they have different fathers. Jesus cannot be referring to the physical because He like them was a Jew. Jesus was the physical descendant of Abraham as well as His opponents.

- a) *Jesus presents an interesting contrast between himself and these Jews. The phrase "seen with" can be translated "learn of." Jesus speaks what He has learned of His Father, while they do what they have learned of their father. They speak of Abraham as being their father, however, their actions prove that they are imposters as they do what they have learned from another.*
- b) *They emphatically reply that Abraham is indeed their father. They did not know exactly what Jesus was getting at, but wanted no part of it. Everything they believed was built on the fact that they were of Abraham. This was their ticket to heaven and their hope of salvation. John the Baptist had earlier warned them that this was a false hope. (Luke 3:8)*
- c) *Jesus clearly tells them that they are not the children of Abraham as He demonstrates that their behavior is not consistent with their claim. Jesus came to them with the truth of God and they sought to kill Him for it. Abraham was a man of love and of hospitality. He received the revelations of God no matter how impossible they seemed. He was a man of faith and noted for his obedience. They were not of Abraham for there was no similarity in character or purpose.*
- d) *Having offered proof, Jesus again tells them that they do the deeds of their father as opposed to Abraham whom they claimed. Their father remains unnamed. Indignant at the remarks of Jesus and yet unable to argue with His logic, they appeal to God himself. In the scriptures "children of fornication" referred to idolaters or those who did not worship the One True God. Not able to reply on their deeds as proof, their argument becomes, "we are the children of Abraham because we worship the One True God. We are not idolaters."*

**v.8:42-44** *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. Why do ye not understand my speech? [even] because ye cannot hear my word. 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.**

Jesus responds to this latest argument by questioning their right to call God their Father. His grounds are their inability to recognize Him and their inability to understand His teachings. Having proved that neither Abraham nor God was their Father He identifies who is.

- a) Jesus was the manifestation of God. He was the Word made flesh and a partaker of the divine nature. He was the fulfillment of their law and the scriptures. He was whom their prophets had spoken of, yet they did not recognize Him. They did not understand His doctrine and couldn't bear His teachings.
- b) If God were their Father, if they sought after Him, then they would have recognized the Son and accepted His teaching. They would seek the truth as children of light. (1 John 5:1)
- c) Jesus identifies their father as the devil on the grounds that their actions were consistent with his character. Satan is a murderer and they likewise sought to murder Jesus. Satan did not continue in the realm of truth and they likewise could not bear the truth.

[The beginning usually refers to the beginning of the world. Satan introduced sin into the world, which resulted in death. In this way he is responsible for the death of every human being and murderer from the beginning. He was the first to leave the realm of truth and in so doing became the opposite of truth. He was the first to introduce an agenda apart from that of God's. Being the opposite of truth he is a liar, the original liar.]

**v.8:45-47 And because I tell [you] the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear [them] not, because ye are not of God.**

The discourse of Jesus in the temple treasury continues. The Jews had claimed Abraham and then God himself as their Father, but Jesus had identified their father to be Satan. His proof is that they do not recognize Him, that they do not understand His word and that their actions mirror the character of the devil. (v. 42-44)

- a) Influenced by their father the devil, they do not believe the truth of God that Jesus speaks. It is implied by Jesus that if He would tell them what they wanted to hear according to the lies of the devil that they had accepted, then they would believe Him. The reason they do not believe Him is that He speaks truth.
- b) This is an indictment by Jesus against the very nature of man. They could not accept the truth because they were given over to a lie. (Rom. 1:28-32, 3:11-18) All men were in this position and so salvation is an act of God. (vs. 5:44,65) Jesus is enlightening them as to their spiritual condition.
- c) Jesus challenges them to charge, and then to prove Him to be guilty of sin. Since they could not prove Him guilty of sin or false doctrine it follows that He must be speaking the truth, and if He is speaking the truth then why do they not believe Him? Jesus is attempting to reason with them. The proof is overwhelming and yet they refuse to believe.

- d) Jesus provides the answer to His question. Those that are of God hear God's words. Those that are not of God do not. Once again He tells them that their hearts are hardened and that they are filled with the spirit of unbelief. Their wills are influenced by the devil.

**v.8: 48-50** *Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.*

The opinions of the people as this discourse progressed had now come full circle. At one point many came to believe Him, but now, unable to answer His accusations against Him, they mock and insult Him. (v. 30) In fact, they go as far as to put it to Jesus in the form of a question. "Aren't we correct in our opinion that you are a half-breed Jew and possessed by the devil?"

- a) Calling Him a Samaritan was the same as calling Him a heretic. A difference of opinion existed between the Jew and the Samaritans as to who had the proper form of religion. One of the disputes involved the proper place to worship. (v. 4:19-20) Jesus taught the Samaritans and so they label Him as being a part of this heretical sect.
- b) The reasoning of the Jews seems to be that only one possessed by an evil spirit could denounce them who claim the One True God as their Father and who are descended from Abraham.
- c) Jesus denies their accusation and tells them that on the contrary, it is He who knows the Father and seeks only the Father's glory. His denunciation of them was not of satanic origin but inspired by His zeal for the Father. In turn, they dishonor the Father by dishonoring the Son. When they insult the Son they insult the Father and prove that they are not His children. (v. 5:23)
- d) Jesus did not need to seek His own glory or to prove and defend himself against their accusations. He had committed himself to the Father. It was the Father who would testify and bear witness of the Son, and gain the respect and glory for Him in the hearts of men. It was the Father who would vindicate Him among men and prove Him to be true.

**v.8: 51-53** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. 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. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?*

In a solemn statement that amounts to, "I tell you a truth," Jesus tells them that those who keep His sayings will never experience death. The Jews, who again take His words very literally, immediately object.

- a) The phrase "keep my saying" means to obey His word or message. It is synonymous with, "heareth my word" (v. 5:24) and "continue in my word" (v. 8:31). It includes accepting Him as the Messiah, the One from heaven and sent by God.
- b) Jesus speaks of eternal life. He speaks of the soul, that though the body die, will never be separated from the love and presence of God. For these, physical death holds no terror and the hope of a bodily resurrection and life forever with God is a sure hope. (1 Cor. 15:53-55) They had

*no reason to take Him literally for He had many times spoken of and defined everlasting life to be spiritual (vs. 6:40, 50)*

- c) *Nevertheless, they do indeed take the words of Jesus to apply to physical death. The logical extension of these words of Jesus is that if His followers would not die then He himself would not experience death. They appeal to Abraham and the prophets. The idea is that Abraham and the prophets died, as did all of their followers, so you Jesus are making yourself greater than Abraham and the prophets.*
- d) *They conclude that He is guilty of self-exhalation in the grossest sense by making himself greater than Abraham and suggesting that neither He or His followers would die. As a result they repeat more emphatically that He is demon possessed.*

***v.8:54-55 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: 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 tells them that if His honor comes only from himself, as they suppose, then that honor has no substance. Any man whose sole source of honor is himself is deceived. (Prov. 25:27, 27:2) Jesus had just told them that He did not seek His own glory and here tells them that neither does He honor himself. (v. 50) He had told them that it is the Father that seeks His honor and now tells them that the Father does indeed honor Him.*

- a) *Jesus adds that it is the one that they call their God that honors Him, continually seeks His glory and who will vindicate Him. It is implied that if their God honored Him and sought His glory then they, in opposing Jesus, were in opposition to their God. If they opposed God then they were in allegiance with Satan. (v. 44)*
- b) *In word, Jesus and the Pharisees refer to the same God; however, the difference is that Jesus knows God, while the Jews do not. A different verb is used in two occurrences of the word "know" in verse 55. Jesus tells them that they do not recognize their God, that they had not seen His revelation or learned His will. On the other hand, Jesus tells them that He knew God directly or intuitively. He tells them that He had always had a complete and intimate knowledge of God.*
- c) *This again is not new information. He has claimed this intimate knowledge of God throughout His ministry. They simply refused to believe it. (vs. 3:31-32, 6:46, 7:29) He had repeatedly told them that they did not know God, but in their pride, they refused to believe Him. (vs. 5:37-38, 7:28, 8:19)*
- d) *Jesus spoke the truth. He accurately described His relationship with the Father. He could not compromise or distort the truth to convey to them some false sense of humility in order to appease them. He did not seek His own glory and yet He could not deny who He was. He was sent to make himself known to man. To portray himself as anything less than whom He was would make Him a liar and bring dishonor to the Father.*
- e) *The Jews were liars and hypocrites. They said that they knew God but in reality they did not. The word of Jesus shows us that those who, in reality, do know God and yet pretend they do not, are equally guilty of lies and hypocrisy.*

- f) *The mark of one who knows God is obedience to His word. This is the evidence given by Jesus that He knows God. The evidence that Jesus used against them in proving that they did not know Abraham or God was that they did not do the works of Abraham or the deeds of God. (1 John 2:3-6)*

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

*Jesus closes what has now turned into a debate by answering one of their earlier questions. He assures them that He is indeed greater than Abraham. He tells them that Abraham looked to His coming with great desire and expectation and when he did see it he gave his approval with great joy.*

- a) *What Jesus refers to is the expectation of Abraham for the birth of his son, Isaac. His birth confirmed the promises of God that were eventually fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Abraham waited many years for the birth of Isaac and at the age of one hundred greatly rejoiced upon his birth. The name Isaac means laughter. Abraham saw the promise but from afar off. (Heb. 11:13)*
- b) *Abraham was convinced that the promises would be fulfilled through the line of Isaac, so much so, that when he was ordered to sacrifice him, he believed that God would raise him from the dead. (Heb. 11:17-19) The entire incident was a prefiguring of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Abraham named the spot Jehovah-jireh which means "it shall be seen!" Abraham also knew Melchisedek as a priest of the Most High God. He dealt with Ishmael, the incident an allegory concerning the children of promise, and those in bondage to sin.*
- c) *Exactly how much of these events Abraham understood is not known. The idea is that he believed God, anticipated the promises and recognized and rejoiced in their fulfillment, according to his revelation. The Jews who were of Abraham had the actual fulfillment of the promises in their midst and did not recognize Him but rejected Him. Abraham as well as Moses would be their accusers. (v. 5:45-46)*

**v.8:57-59 *Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. 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.***

*Jesus is speaking from a spiritual and eternal perspective, while the Jews once again can only interpret His words literally. As before, they mock Him for saying that He, a relatively young man, can claim that He had direct dealings with Abraham who lived thousands of years earlier.*

- a) *As was the case with those who questioned His parentage, an explanation was futile. Their hearts were hardened by a spirit of unbelief. His final words to them is a solemn testimony as to His deity. He tells them that He existed before Abraham and in so doing takes the title of God. (Ex. 3:14)*
- b) *The crowd became so indignant with Him that merely mocking Him was no longer enough. They picked up stones to throw at Him but Jesus slipped through the crowd. He could have escaped by supernatural means or merely mixed in with the crowd. The temple was not an ideal place for a stoning and so getting lost in the crowd was very possible.*