

## Gospel of John Chapter 8 - John Karmelich

I think the best title for this lesson is the "Hostile Q&A." Most of us have seen press conferences with reporters asking tough questions. Granted, Jesus answers them and well: "Who can argue with God?" I realize we're not God and we can't answer questions like He does. Still, God promises us that if we will be a witness for Him, He'll guide us through situations where people have questions about Him. I have had my share of debates with nonbelievers. I can't convert people, but I'm amazed at the positive things come out of my mouth when I speak of Him. Anyway Chapter 8's a long one where Jesus tells truths of who He is and why He's here. He gets questions designed to trap Him and deny He's God! I know this Gospel was written for those who don't believe Jesus is God (stated in Chapter 20), but even Christian "vets" who believe strongly Jesus is God can learn a lot from this question and answer session. This is not here make us great Bible debaters! They're to help us draw closer to Jesus as we study His life and what He did for us. Therefore, my theological question for this lesson is, "How do we deal with those who pick on us for our faith in Jesus?"

With those thoughts out of my system, it's time for a disclaimer. The first 12 verses of this chapter are not in the original text. If you read Chapter 7, Verse 52, and then read Verse 13 of Chapter 8, you'll see how they flow together. So why are the first 12 verses here plus the last one of Chapter 7? Most Bible scholars argue that these verses were factual. It is a good place to put them as the verses that surround them take place on the Jerusalem on temple "grounds" as do those verses. Whether these first 12 verses should be part of the Bible or not, they fit in well with the "Hostile Q&A" aspect! Realize less than 1% of the entire Bible is questioned by the best scholars. That means 99% of the text is authentic. We can also validate the original Bible by thousands of manuscripts written before the printing press, plus the Bible quotes by early pastors we still have today. That validates the 99% of the Bible as being part of the original text!

The next thing to keep in mind is both Chapters 7 and 8 deal with hostility towards Jesus. This problem started in the last chapter, and Chapter 8 gets stronger. For example the Jewish leaders state they think Jesus was a "bastard child," denying His virgin birth. Even the official Jewish commentary (called the "Talmud") states that Jesus as the illegitimate son of Mary. So at the least, it states that He did live at that time and is acknowledged by His "enemies" that He really existed!

Let's keep one more thing in mind as we read this. Jesus is God, and could say to the Jewish leaders, "I know all of you will be in hell soon, so I won't even bother!" It shows us Jesus is stating God's truths in spite of the consequences. It shows He doesn't want to see anyone in hell, despite how He's treated. It's a reminder that we're to be witnesses to all people. I'm well aware that some people refuse to believe in Him no matter what, and after a while we "use our ammo" wisely. I should remind us as we read all of this that Jesus calls us to be witnesses to all people despite the consequences, as Jesus demonstrates in this text.

Anyway, Chapter 8 opens with "debated text": It was a woman caught in adultery, and put in front of Jesus. Obviously it's a trap for both Jesus and the woman as "It takes two to tango." The Jewish leaders set this up because if Jesus says "Don't stone her," then He is saying God's laws do not apply. (Makes me wonder why adultery is a capital crime but stealing is not. I suspect it's to show that breaking one's commitment to God and our family is to be taken seriously). If Jesus said kill her, then He would not be considered compassionate to sinners. The text says Jesus wrote on the ground, but it doesn't tell us what He wrote. I don't know what Jesus wrote, but it convicted the "stoners" that all of us are sinners!

It got them to leave the scene. Then Jesus said to the woman, "I don't convict you, AND He said sin no more!"

OK back to what the text actually says. Jesus then makes the statement that He's the light of the world. It's not a reference to literal light, but the fact that we have life within us once we're saved and then we can be a witness (light) to others about Him. This led to the next hostile Q&A session: He was accused of being a witness for Himself (i.e., no one to corroborate His story). He then says in effect, "I'm God, so that should be good enough!" He then says God the Father corroborated it when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist (and the Father spoke at that moment). Consider that none of the Jewish writings of that time era ever deny His miracles!

What is to be noticed is that in spite of the heated debate, Jesus is in charge and He knew He won't die at this point because everything was going according to God's timetable. In spite of all the accusations, Jesus stuck to His "talking points," saying, "If you knew Me, you'd know My Father, too." This comes down to the fact that Jesus was either a madman or God. The proof is the resurrection! The fact that all but one of the disciples refused to deny that fact while being tortured to death is a great argument He is God! I assume if you're reading this you already believe that, so back to the debate!

The next debate is when Jesus says, "Where I'm going you (plural) can't come." Obviously, it refers to heaven. It implies Jesus knew they didn't believe Him. So why bother? Just as we're to be witness to all people, so Jesus must explain the truth even if it hurts people to hear it. Just so you know, it's not a total waste of time. Verse 30 says, "As He was saying these things, many believed in Him." The point being, it is never a waste of time to preach Jesus as some will get it! Jesus then makes a statement for those who do believe in Him that if we abide in His word, it will set us free! I don't believe one can sin enough to lose one's salvation. A debated topic, but if it were possible for me to blow it, I would find a way, so I accept the fact I can't blow it! If we trust in the truth that He paid the complete price for our salvation, then we don't have to worry about that as long as we live!

All of this leads to more insults by the Jewish leadership. When the text says, "The Jews," that only is a reference to the religious leaders, not all Jewish people. They accuse him of being born of fornication, (denial of the immaculate conception). They also call Him a "Samaritan" (an insult for Jewish people). It led to Jesus answering with the truth of who He is. Jesus even said Abraham, the first Jew, in effect, rejoiced to see His day, a reference to the fact Abraham believed God and then lived his life trusting in God's existence. Then we get a strange reference to the fact that Jesus was not 50 years old yet (He was 32 or 33 then), and didn't know Abraham. Most likely it refers to one needs to be mature enough to get what Abraham knew and struggled with.

The chapter ends with Jesus making a statement that He is the great "I am," a reference to "Jehovah" or in other words, Jesus is blatantly stating He is God. If you have any doubts about that, the last verse of the chapter has the Jewish leaders picking up stones to throw at Jesus for claiming to be God. Yes they "missed" with their stone throwing, since the crucifixion stage will be six months (roughly) later.

Yes I know I skipped a lot of stuff. This is meant to be a two-page summary, not a detailed study of the chapter. Remember, I write these studies for people who already believe Jesus is God. What we are to do with that information is what My ministry is about. I realize we are not God, and we cannot answer these questions as such. Still let me remind you of what Jesus promised when we're a witness for Him: "Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict." (Luke 21:14-15).

Bottom line, if we're willing to be living witnesses for Him and study what He said, He'll guide us in what to say at the right time!

If you liked this little study, I wrote a more detailed account about twenty years ago! To read the other one, click on one of the two links on this page. Thanks again for reading this. John