

## **Lesson 8: *From Beneath***

### **Thursday, November 21, 2024**

*Ryan Day*

In our study of John so far, we've seen that John shows how Jesus, indeed, is the promised Messiah, the great hope that the Jewish people had been longing for.

And yet, many of the religious leaders, the spiritual guides of the people, were His biggest enemies instead.

Why?

**Read John 8:12–30. What is the dynamic between Jesus and these religious leaders here? Which texts help best to explain why many rejected Him?**

<sup>12</sup> Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

#### **Jesus Defends His Self-Witness**

<sup>13</sup> The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true."

<sup>14</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. <sup>15</sup> You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. <sup>16</sup> And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I *am* with the Father who sent Me. <sup>17</sup> It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. <sup>18</sup> I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."

<sup>19</sup> Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?"

Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."

<sup>20</sup> These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.

### **Jesus Predicts His Departure**

<sup>21</sup> Then Jesus said to them again, “I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.”

<sup>22</sup> So the Jews said, “Will He kill Himself, because He says, ‘Where I go you cannot come’?”

- <sup>14</sup> But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.—**1 Corinthians 2:14**

<sup>23</sup> And He said to them, “You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. <sup>24</sup> Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.”

<sup>25</sup> Then they said to Him, “Who are You?”

And Jesus said to them, “Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. <sup>26</sup> I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him.”

**27** They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

- <sup>14</sup> And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; <sup>15</sup> For the hearts of this people have grown dull. *Their* ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, so that I <sup>[b]</sup>should heal them.’—**Matthew 13:14, 15**

<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. <sup>29</sup> And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.” <sup>30</sup> As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.—***John 8:12-30***

Jesus says that they know neither Him nor the Father (*John 8:19*). They should have known both, but these men were self-deceived. They were so caught up in their own traditions and philosophies that even with Jesus right before them, doing all the things that He did and saying the things that He said—all powerful revelations of the Father—they still rejected Him.

Second, Jesus says to them, “ ‘You are from beneath’ ” (*John 8:23, NKJV*). In other words, however religious they might be, these were not spiritual, godly men. They had a “form of godliness” (*2 Tim. 3:5*), but that was all. They had outward piety but inward disbelief.

This was nothing new: “ ‘Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men’ ” (*Isa. 29:13, NKJV*). This very concept is echoed by Jesus centuries later, when He said, “ ‘And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men’ ” (*Mark 7:7, NKJV*). Their human teachings, their human commandments, were “of this world” (*John 8:23*) and, as Jesus then said, “I am not of this world” (*John 8:23*). It was bad enough that these men had been deceiving themselves; the tragedy was made worse because they also led others astray, even though, interestingly enough, John wrote that as a result of the exchange depicted in these verses, “many believed in Him” (*John 8:30, NKJV*).

Thus, even despite bad leadership, many Jews were able to get beyond them and see, for themselves, who Jesus was.

**What lessons do you draw from Jesus’ exchange with the religious leaders? How can we be “from above” and not “from beneath”—and how can we know the difference?**

<sup>5</sup> having a form of godliness but denying its power.—***2 Timothy 3:5***

“The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. <sup>3</sup>Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. <sup>4</sup>For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men’s shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers. <sup>5</sup>But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. <sup>6</sup>They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, <sup>7</sup>greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’

<sup>13</sup> “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in *yourselves*, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

<sup>15</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

<sup>23</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. <sup>24</sup>Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

<sup>25</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup>Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

<sup>27</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men’s* bones and all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup>Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.—**Matthew 23:2-7, 13, 15, 23-28**

<sup>6</sup>He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors Me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from Me. <sup>7</sup>And in vain they worship Me, teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men.’ ... <sup>9</sup>He said to them, “*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.—**Mark 7:6, 7, 9**