

JESUS' DESCRIPTION OF THE JEWS
(John 8:12-30)

¹² The 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. ¹³ The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. ¹⁶ And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. ¹⁷ It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. ¹⁸ I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ 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. ²² Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. ²³ And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ 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. ²⁵ Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even *the same* that I said unto you from the beginning. ²⁶ 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. ²⁷ They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. ²⁸ 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. ²⁹ And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. ³⁰ As he spake these words, many believed on him. ³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; ³² And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. ³³ They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? ³⁴ Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. ³⁵ And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever. ³⁶ If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. ³⁷ I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. ³⁸ I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. ³⁹ 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. ⁴⁰ 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. ⁴¹ Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God. ⁴² 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. ⁴³ Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word. ⁴⁴ 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. ⁴⁵ And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not. ⁴⁶ Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? ⁴⁷ He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

Jesus has just told these unbelieving Jews that he is the light of the world. By this, Jesus meant nothing less than he was God Almighty. Not only is Jesus light, but he is *the* light. And he is not just a local light, he is the light of *the world*.

Now it is one thing for a man to say, *I am a light*. But Jesus said, I am *the* light. He said that he was light in a way that no other man was light. Caesar may have been a light. Aristotle and Plato may have been a light. Gamaleal may have been a light. But Jesus was *the* light. And Caesar may have been a light in Rome. Aristotle and Plato may have been lights in Greece. Gamaliel may have been a light in Jerusalem. But Jesus was the light of the *world*.

And so you begin to see the breadth and the depth of this statement of Jesus when he said, *I am the light of the world*.

And the Jews knew that he was equating himself with God. And so, they said to him,

Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

They basically told Jesus he was a liar. They told him, "Anyone can say he is God, but that alone does not make it true."

Now under the Law of Moses, in criminal matters where capital punishment was being considered, it was necessary to have at least two witnesses and it was better to have three. And this seems to be what the Jews are referring to here. They are not willing to accept Jesus' testimony about himself and they are demanding corroborating witnesses.

Notice the presumptive arrogance and ignorance of these Jews. Because Jesus testified about himself, they jumped to the conclusion that his statement was not true.

This is the nature of unbelief. Unbelief is quite willing to believe that Jesus is not true. But it is not willing to believe He is true. Unbelief is forever chained to unbelief. Unbelief is a bottomless pit of ignorance. Unbelief is a natural condition that cannot be undone naturally. It is a hopeless condition and it is our very nature. And so, they told Jesus, *Your record is not true.*

Jesus Overcomes the Argument of the Jews

So, how does Jesus defend himself against the assertion that he is a liar? He does so by pointing out the vast and critical difference between himself and the Jews. And we will see these various differences under the following headings:

- I. I know where I came from, but you do not know where I came from. (v.14)
- II. You judge by earthly standards, I do not. (v.15)
- III. The Father does bear witness to me. (v.18)
- IV. You don't know the Father, I do. (v.19)
- V. You are from beneath, I am from above. (v.23)
- VI. You have a different Father than me. (vs. 38-45)
- VII. I am not a sinner and you are. (vs. 46)
- VIII. I am of God and you are not. (v.47)

- I. I know where I came from, but you do not know where I came from. (v.14)

Jesus tells them that he has a right to speak about these things because he has firsthand knowledge of heaven and heavenly things. What these Jews don't know is that Jesus existed before the foundation of the world. He is the preexisting One. *In the beginning was the Word.* (John 1:1) They are disputing with the One who was before all things. And, he is the One who was with God the Father before the foundation of the world. *And the Word was with God.* (John 1:1) And they are disputing with God himself. *And the Word was God.* (John 1:1)

You see, Jesus had knowledge of all things heavenly because he formerly lived there. Furthermore, he is going back there. Heaven is his natural abode. It is where he always was and it where he is soon going. And he knows about heaven because it is his home town. But heavenly things is something the Jews know nothing about. Jesus knows all about it, but they know nothing. And so Jesus tells them that he is highly qualified to talk about heaven and heavenly things. And when he says, *I am the light of the world*, he is highly qualified to say such things.

When it comes to things in Russia, it might be good to get the testimony of a Russian. And when it comes to heavenly things, it is a good idea to get the testimony of the One who has been there. This is essentially what Jesus told Nicodemus.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

John 3:11-13

II. You judge by earthly standards, I do not. (v.15)

Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.

John 8:15

Jesus told them that they judge according to the flesh. Now you might remember that Jesus previously told them that they judge according to appearances. (John 7:24) Certainly, this is the way of human judgment. Men cannot see into the heart. Men often cannot see reality. But they judge by all appearances. Men see the outside of the cup. Men see the circumstantial evidence and the outward appearances and they make their judgments.

But this verse says that the Jews judge *after the flesh*. This is probably even worse than judging by appearances. This is judging according to the dictates of fallen human nature. The fallen mind and the fallen heart are not capable of making right spiritual judgments. Their judgments are dictated by a compelling state of sin and unbelief. And therefore their judgments are skewed and unreliable.

On the other hand, the judgments of Jesus are not according to the flesh. *I judge no man*. Jesus is not here saying that he makes no judgments but rather, he makes no judgment after the flesh.

Example: Jesus made judgments every day. But his judgments were born of knowledge and not of appearances. His judgments were born of the Spirit and not of the flesh. He told the Jews that they were unbelievers, but he did this because he knew what was in the hearts of men. (See John 2:24; John 6:64)

III. The Father does bear witness to me. (v.18)

They had accused Jesus of testifying of himself. And they called him a liar because he did so. But Jesus said, Wait a minute, I do have another witness after all. And it is the best witness of all. It is the witness of the Father.

I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

John 8:18

Now the Father had been testifying of Jesus all along. You remember that at the baptism of Jesus a visible sign came down out of heaven in the form of a dove and rested upon Jesus. And a voice came down out of heaven which said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." And so, at least on this one occasion the Father bore witness to Jesus with an audible voice.

And, God sent a prophet to tell the people that the Messiah was coming. And that prophet was John the Baptist. And John told the people about the coming Messiah. And then, when Jesus came to the river Jordan, John pointed at Him and said, "Behold the Lamb of God."

But in what other way did God testify concerning Jesus? God also testified by giving Jesus miraculous works. God confirmed the ministry of his Son with great and mighty miracles that had never been seen before on the face of the earth. These miracles attested to Jesus first of all by their quality. They were undisputed miracles of God. "No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." (John 3:2) The magicians drew a few people out of curiosity. But Jesus drew great multitudes because they knew his miracles were divine in origin. And so, God testified to Jesus by the miracles which he performed through his Son.

But God also testified of Jesus by the sheer quantity of miracles. Never had there ever been a man like this who performed so many miracles that *if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.*

John 21:25

Of course later, God bore witness to Jesus by raising him from the dead and showing him to many there in Jerusalem. And so, there was a witness after all, and it was the witness of the Father himself.

Now remember, that Jesus is explaining why his testimony is true and why the Jews do not recognize Him as the Christ and as God.

You don't know the Father, I do. (v.19)

You neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

John 8:19

This was a serious indictment of the Jews. They certainly claimed to know the Father. They thought they knew the Father. They thought they knew the Father through the Law and through their rituals. But they really did not know the Father after all. This was the serious deficiency of the Jews. They had a religion, but they did not have a relationship. This is why they died in the wilderness in unbelief. This is why they killed the prophets throughout their history. And this is why they rejected Jesus – they did not know the Father.

Now the truth of the Gospel of John is that Jesus and the Father are one. Jesus is the exact replica of the Father. They are one in essence. They say the same words. They work the same works. Their character is the same. Their judgments are identical. So, if the Jews had known the Father, they would have recognized the Son.

IV. You are from beneath, I am from above. (v.23)

Here Jesus gives them another reason why their judgment is faulty and his judgment is faultless. It is because they come from two different realms. They come from beneath. That is, they come from this world. They come from this fallen world. They come from a place of darkness and rebellion. They come from a place where deeds are evil. And that is the fundamental reason why the Jews would not accept him.

On the other hand, Jesus did not come from this world. He only came to it. Jesus came from another realm. Jesus came from a place that is not a place of corruption, indeed where no corruption can endure. The evil angels sinned and they were cast out because no impurity can be tolerated in heaven. And Jesus came from that holy place. His eyes are not blinded because of sin. His heart is not inclined toward evil. In fact, his whole disposition is to do the will of the Father.

Do you see the great contrast? They come from beneath. He comes from above.

V. You have a different Father than me. (vs. 38-44)

Earlier we saw that they didn't know the Father. But here we see even deeper into the reality of things. They had a different father!

VI. I am not a sinner and you are. (v.46)

This was also a fundamental difference between Jesus and the Jews. They were sinners! It is interesting that Jesus opened himself up for public inspection.

Which of you convinceth me of sin?
John 8:46

No other man on the face of the earth could ask such a question because every man's sin is evident. But Jesus could ask such a question and no one could make any argument. Not one man in the crowd could ever remember Jesus committing a sin. They tried to twist his words into sins, but they knew better.

VII. I am of God and you are not. (v.47)

The ultimate conclusion is that Jesus was of God and they were not. He could perform miracles and they could not. His words were true and theirs were not.

And so, Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." And who could dispute his claim? Not one could rightfully do so. Let God be true but every man a liar. (Romans 3:4)