



# “The Truth Shall Make You Free”

John 5-8

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Adult Religion Class

New Testament, Lesson 17

22 January 2018

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## Introduction

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In these chapters, which are just part of the Feasts section, Jesus’ teachings on his mission and ministry are presented in the context of his attendance at key feasts in Jerusalem. There he continued to confront obstinate Jewish leaders who refused to see him for who he really was and who ignored the signs of his identity and thus the teachings that would bring them happiness and life eternal.

## Outline of John

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An overall outline for the book of John is as follows, with the section(s) covered in this lesson, in whole or in part, in bold:

- Prologue (1:1-18)
- The Book of Signs—Public Ministry (1:19 – 12:50)
  - Early Disciples (1:19-51)
  - First through Third Signs: Wedding, Nicodemus, Samaria, and Healing (2:1 – 4:54)
  - **Fourth through Sixth Signs: At the Feasts (5:1 – 10:42)**
  - Seventh Sign: Lazarus and Public Ministry Climax (11:1 – 12:50)
- The Last Supper—Private Ministry (13:1 – 17:26)
  - Washing Feet (13:1-30)
  - Farewell Discourse (13:31 – 16:33)
  - High Priestly Prayer (17:1-26)
- Death and Resurrection (18:1 – 21:25)
  - Arrest and Trial (18:1 – 19:16a)
  - Crucifixion and Burial (19:16b-42)
  - Resurrection Appearances (20:1 – 21:25)

Note: In each lesson on the gospels, where there are overlapping or parallel texts, those will be noted in the heading. References in bold are the preferred reading(s) and will be the principal section of analysis, though some unique points in the current gospel will be noted, as well as helpful JST changes.<sup>1</sup>

## The Book of Signs—Public Ministry (1:19 – 12:50)

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This lesson covers part of this section on the public ministry in the first thirteen chapters.

In these chapters, John gives seven specific signs of Jesus’ identity, each of which shows something about the nature of the Messiah. In between are other stories that recount something about Jesus’ mission and teachings. The seven signs are:

1. Changing water into wine (2:1-11)
2. Cleansing the temple (2:13-22)
3. Healing the nobleman’s son (4:46-54)

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<sup>1</sup> Not all JST changes are noted, only those of textual or doctrinal interest. Interested readers are encouraged to see Wayment, *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament* or the manuscripts themselves on the Joseph Smith Papers website ([josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org)).

4. Healing a lame man (5:1-15)
5. Feeding the 5,000 (6:1-15)
6. Healing the blind man (9:1-41)
7. Raising Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44)

## Fourth through Sixth Signs: At the Feasts (5:1 – 10:42)

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In this section, teachings by Jesus are interspersed with three more signs of his identity. We won't cover the entire section in this lesson but will discuss the fourth and fifth signs and related teachings and actions by the Savior.

### Fourth Sign: A healing at Bethesda on the Sabbath – John 5:1-18

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The Synoptics all have the story of the healing of the man with palsy on the Sabbath, after his friends let him down through the roof (Matt 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26). In this unique story of healing on the Sabbath, Jesus went to the ancient pool of Bethesda on the north end of the Jerusalem, and healed a man of his own will—there was no discussion before or after the healing of any faith or belief on the part of the man. He at least had as a partial motivation to bring himself to the attention of the Jewish leaders and confront them on their interpretation of Sabbath rules. He was very successful.

5:1 **there was a feast of the Jews.** It is not known what feast this is. It was probably either the second Passover of his ministry, a Feast of the Tabernacles (in the fall), or Pentecost, since it was a major feast that drew Jesus to Jerusalem.

5:2 **sheep market.** This is the 'sheep gate', also mentioned in Nehemiah 3:1, 32 and 12:39. This gate was at the north end of the temple enclosure and was used for bringing in animals for sacrifice.

5:2 **a pool . . . Bethesda.** The pool was one of the largest in Jerusalem, used for getting water and the washing of animals and humans. "Bethesda" means 'house of mercy' or perhaps 'house of two springs.' The discovery of this pool matching John's description is one of the things that has established the gospel's credibility as an eyewitness. Interestingly, also discovered there was a shrine to the deity Asclepius, a god of healing, offering some reason for pagan healing elements in the account.

5:2 **having five porches.** "Porches" is the Greek *stoa* or colonnades, covered areas surrounding the outside of the pool and one across the middle, to provide protection from sun and elements.

5:3 **the moving of the water.** It is not known how this superstition developed, but it is very similar to many pagan customs tied to the perceived actions of gods or spirits. In a world with minimal medical care (or none, if you're poor), people would grab on to any hope they could for getting better.

5:4 **an angel went down.** This verse and the last part of v. 3 are missing from the best manuscripts, indicating they were likely not in the original version of John. Most modern manuscripts leave it out entirely, skipping from v. 3a to v. 5.

5:5 **an infirmity thirty and eight years.** The age of the man is not given, but with an illness of that length, he was not young.

5:6 **Wilt thou be made whole?** Not 'Would you like me to heal you?' or 'Do you have faith to be healed?' Fascinatingly, Jesus just asked him about his desire to be rid of a thirty-eight year affliction.

5:7 **to put me into the pool.** This verse was probably the reason for the addition in vv. 3b-4. In an attempt to explain the man speaking of a pagan healing custom in Jerusalem, a scribe somewhere along the way created the story about an angel troubling the waters.

5:8 **take up thy bed.** "Bed" is the Greek *krabattos*, meaning a straw mat that could be rolled up and easily carried.

5:9 **the same day was the sabbath.** Jesus intentionally selected the Sabbath for this miracle. No doubt he went to the pool specifically looking for someone to heal, not only to bless that person's life, but to demonstrate his

position that the trappings of the Pharisees and scribes were *not* the law that Moses gave to the people from the hand of God. Note this quote:

The rabbis had determined thirty-nine chief or principal types of work that were forbidden [on the Sabbath]. In application, this came to mean that "scattering two seeds was sowing; sweeping away or breaking a single clod was ploughing; plucking one blade of grass was sin; watering fruit or removing a withered leaf was forbidden; picking fruit, or even lifting it from the ground, was reaping; cutting a mushroom was a double sin, one both of harvesting and of sowing, for a new one would grow in place of the old; fishing, or anything that put an end to life, ranked with harvesting; rubbing ears of corn together, or anything else connected with food, was classed as binding of sheaves." One could spit upon a rock but not upon the ground, for by scratching the earth you were guilty of cultivating. You could eat an egg laid by a fryer on the Sabbath but not an egg laid by a laying hen, because it was not the work of a fryer to produce eggs. Such distinctions, which went on endlessly, included prohibition against administering to the sick or afflicted. A broken bone could not be set or a dislocated joint put back, for if this were done, the body would start to heal itself, thus causing it to work. However, it was ruled that labor could be performed to save life. Thus, if someone were buried under ruins on the Sabbath, they might be dug and taken out if they were found alive, but if dead, they were to be left until the Sabbath was over.<sup>2</sup>

All of this from the simple command: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8-11).

5:10 ***it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.*** There is nothing in the Law of Moses that forbids such an activity. Rather, the traditions of the Jewish leaders made carrying of an object "from one domain to another" a violation of the Sabbath law against work.

5:11 ***He that made me whole.*** The man quite innocently tells them that he is carrying his bed because that man that healing him told him to. He was more concerned about being obedient to a miracle worker than a law he may well have been unaware of anyway.

5:12 ***What man is that.*** The Jewish leaders wanted to know who had told him to carry his bed. Note that they are not at all concerned about his healing, just his Sabbath violation (from their perspective).

5:13 ***he that was healed wist not.*** "Wist" means knew—he hadn't thought to ask his name, nor did he recognize him. It's unlikely he had even been to a place where he could hear Jesus teach, in his condition.

5:14 ***lest a worse thing come.*** This was not a linking of sin to illness. Jesus warned him to repent or a spiritual infirmity worse than what he'd already experienced physically would be his lot, which is true for all of us.

5:15 ***told the Jews.*** The man probably thought the Jewish leaders would be pleased to find Jesus, a man who could work such miracles. He surely did not believe that he might cause harm to come to Jesus by identifying him who had just so mercifully healed him. Sadly, their motives for identifying Jesus were not the same as his.

5:16 ***sought to slay him.*** The anger of the leaders at Jesus' flaunting of their Sabbath rules was such that they determined at this time to try and kill him. That was a goal Jesus was working toward, but it was not nearly time yet.

5:17 ***My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*** This phrase might be better translated: 'My Father has been working up to this day, and I am also working.' Rabbis agreed that God continued to work after he rested on the first Sabbath of creation, and that he, in fact, always worked without any violation since the entire universe was his domain and he could not lift anything above himself since he was the highest thing in the heavens. Jesus is clearly

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<sup>2</sup> Joseph F. McConkie, "The Divine Sonship and Law of Witnesses," in *Studies in Scripture, Vol 5: The Gospels*, 280.

making God his Father, taking their argument about God and applying it to himself, thus declaring his divinity. That the Jews understood this is shown in verse 18.

5:18 ***broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father.*** The two charges against Jesus were that he was a Sabbath breaker and that he declared a special relationship with the Father, even that he was his Son. The verb form used in both cases indicates that the Jewish leaders were not reacting to this single instance, but to an ongoing action: they were essentially saying, ‘You keep breaking the Sabbath and continually say that God is your Father.’

### The Son does what the Father does – John 5:19-30

Responding to the charges that he had violated the Sabbath laws (or had at least instructed the man he healed to violate them) and that he was “equal with God” (v. 18), Jesus declared his mission and divinity and how everything he did was patterned after his Father. This “extended monologue,”<sup>3</sup> which continues to the end of the chapter, is directed at his challengers—the Jewish leaders but also is a message for disciples following him. Jesus’ language is full of references to Jesus’ future fate and his power to save others.

5:19 ***what he seeth the Father do.*** Jesus declared that he would do “nothing of himself” (“nothing on his own,” NRSV) except what he first saw the Father do. He is indicating his subservience to the Father, similar to how an apprentice would serve his master and teacher, doing exactly and only what his master required.

5:20 ***greater works than these.*** This refers to healing the man at the pool; Jesus will do greater acts than causing a lame man to walk.

5:21 ***the Son quickeneth whom he will.*** Jewish belief of their day was that only God could raise the dead, and that only God would judge men (v. 22). These abilities were not attributed to the Messiah in their understanding, meaning Jesus was clearly calling out his own divinity, not just his role as the Anointed One.

5:23 ***That all men should honour the Son.*** The Father had given Jesus the ability to raise the dead and the right to judge all men so that men would honor the Son just as they do the Father.

5:23 ***the Father which hath sent him.*** Jesus was declaring himself to be the Father's *shaliah* – the 'sent one,' 'ambassador,' or 'spokesman,' meaning that he worked with the full authority of the Father, and spoke on his behalf. Rejecting Jesus was the same as rejecting the Father.

5:24 ***believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life.*** Though hearing Jesus; words was essential, those words directed people to believe in the Father, and those who so believed in the Father could enjoy eternal life.

5:25 ***hear the voice of the Son of God.*** The call to be resurrected comes from hearing the voice of the Son. See D&C 76:16.

5:26 ***hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.*** God gives life to us all, but Jesus said that the Father had given him life "in himself," a divine attribute. This ties back to v. 21 where Jesus claimed authority to raise “whom he will” from the dead.

5:27 ***authority to execute judgment also.*** Referring back to v. 22 where Jesus claimed authority to judge all men.

5:27 ***because he is the Son of man.*** John doesn't use this phrase quite as much as the Synoptics, but unlike in the other gospels, when Jesus uses it, it is equivalent with his role as the Son of God, much like it is explained in Moses 6:57 – “Man of Holiness is his name, and the name of his Only Begotten is the Son of Man, even Jesus Christ.”

5:28 ***all that are in the graves shall hear his voice.*** The voice of Jesus will cry out to all the dead; Jesus was teaching he would initiate all resurrections.

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<sup>3</sup> Bruce, *The Gospel*, 128.

5:29 **the resurrection of life . . . the resurrection of damnation.** Jesus declared two resurrections, depending on whether a person had “done good” or “done evil.” The translation and pondering of this verse led to the reception of D&C 76, the great vision of the degrees of glory. See the side note below.

5:30 **I can of mine own self do nothing.** Returning to the theme of vv. 19-20, Jesus reiterated that though the Father had given him authority to judge and resurrect, that power remained in the Father alone and Jesus only acted under his direction, doing the will of the Father alone.

## Witnesses to Jesus – John 5:31-47

### 5:31 JST

John 5:31 KJV	JST
If I bear witness of myself, my witness is <del>not</del> true.	<b>Therefore</b> if I bear witness of myself, <b>yet</b> my witness is true.

Though the point of the verse in the KJV is that Jesus’ witness of himself isn’t true alone (according to Jewish law), the JST removes the “not,” showing Jesus’ witness of himself *was* true because it was backed up by the witness of the Father (v. 32)—two witnesses testifying of the same truth. Compare the KJV of John 8:14.

5:33 **Ye sent unto John.** See John 1:19-28, when the Jewish leaders sent a delegation to John. Jesus reminded them that the result of that conversation with John was a witness of Jesus.

### 5:34 JST

John 5:34 KJV	JST
<del>But I receive</del> not testimony <del>from</del> man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved.	<b>And he received not his testimony of man: but of God. And ye yourselves say that he is a prophet, therefore ye ought to receive his testimony.</b> These things I say, that ye might be saved.

The verse changes from one strictly about Jesus to putting the emphasis back on John, who is the subject of this section already, while still maintaining the major point that Jesus speaks the truth that will save. They recognize (probably grudgingly) that John was a prophet, so Jesus derides them for not receiving that prophet’s testimony.

5:35 **He was a burning and a shining light.** As stated before, light is a strong theme through the book, though it typically applies to Jesus and his truths. Here John is described favorably as such a light, a lamb that is still burning and shining for all to see.

5:36 **works that I do, bear witness of me.** They did not have to accept Jesus at face value or take John’s word alone—the very acts that he performed, such as healing the man at the pool, demonstrated that he had come with the authority of the Father.

5:37 **ye have never heard his voice.** Because of their wickedness, they had not heard the voice of the Father, like John the Baptist did at Jesus’ baptism, nor seen “his shape,” meaning his outward appearance or ‘image.’

5:39 **Search the scriptures.** A better translation might be: ‘You diligently search the scriptures (for you think that through them you shall possess eternal life), and they bear witness that *I am*.’ The scriptures were a third witness after John’s testimony and that of the Father to Jesus’ divinity, his pre-existence, and his relationship to Israel. This was not a command to search the scriptures (though we often use it that way today) but it was a criticism that they read the scriptures without recognizing the testimony that they bore of him.

5:40 **ye will not come to me.** To come to Jesus is used in Matthew 11:28; Luke 6:47; 14:26; John 6:35-37, 44; 14:18. We come to Jesus as we hearken to his teachings, accept holy ordinances, and follow the Spirit as it guides us daily in our lives. “And they will feel His love and find joy in being drawn closer to Him.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Henry B. Eyring, “Come Unto Me,” April 2013 General Conference address.

5:41 ***I receive not honour from men.*** In an honor/shame society like theirs, to reject the honors of men was to break a multitude of social structures. Yet Jesus consistently rejected those kinds of interactions in favor of plain truth and deference to his Father. See also v. 44.

5:42 ***ye have not the love of God in you.*** A strong condemnation of a people that claimed to be the chosen people. That relationship led to a code of strict obedience to the interpreted rules of the day, but it did not lead to love.

5:43 ***come in my Father's name.*** Another statement of his authority from the Father, because to act in his name was to do exactly what the Father would do and say.

5:45 ***one that accuseth you, even Moses.*** Jesus stated that he didn't have to accuse them of anything, because Moses himself, whom they revered, would do it for him. If they truly believed Moses, they would believe Jesus (vv. 46-47).

5:46 ***he wrote of me.*** Compare Deuteronomy 18:15-22; see also 1 Nephi 22:20-21.

### [A comment on the Joseph Smith Translation and John 5](#)

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This is a significant chapter in the JST for two reasons. First, the translation of John 5:29 is what precipitated the reception of D&C 76. Second, at the end of the chapter, the translation method switched from fully writing out every word to only writing the specific changes made and indicating where they went with small marks in the Bible.

As Joseph Smith was translating this chapter of John, he and Sidney Rigdon came to verses 28 and 29. It is clear from the JST manuscripts that they wrote them out in full just as they are in the KJV, but then the Spirit taught them that some changes needed to be made. Sidney crossed out the words to be altered, and wrote them above the margin, except the last change which was written after the text. This shows they paused here because he had room to write the last change on the same line.

From there we pick up the story in D&C 76:

For while we were doing the work of translation, which the Lord had appointed unto us, we came to the twenty-ninth verse of the fifth chapter of John, which was given unto us as follows—Speaking of the resurrection of the dead, concerning those who shall hear the voice of the Son of Man: And shall come forth; they who have done good in the resurrection of the just; and they who have done evil, in the resurrection of the unjust. Now this caused us to marvel, for it was given unto us of the Spirit. And while we meditated upon these things, the Lord touched the eyes of our understandings and they were opened, and the glory of the Lord shone round about (D&C 76:15-19).

Following this, they received what Elder Bruce McConkie called the most marvelous revelation to come from the work on the JST (which says a lot, since that list would include the entire Book of Moses, Joseph Smith-Matthew, plus more than a dozen sections of the D&C, and countless other 'smaller' revelations).

The second thing that is interesting about John 5 and the JST is the change in the translation process that occurs at the end of the chapter. The translation started in 1830 with the Book of Genesis, and continued for several months in that book. Then on 7 March 1831, the Lord instructed the Prophet to start working on the New Testament (D&C 45:60-62), and so he began in Matthew the next day. During this time, Joseph would refer to his King James Bible and dictate the text in full to his scribes, even with verses where he made no changes. It was a laborious method, but resulted in hundreds of changes, some very important and others relatively insignificant. They worked in this manner through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and the first five chapters of John. At the end of John 5, they stopped writing out the text in full and instead started using a shorthand system where only the changed words were written in the manuscript, and the place where the change should be inserted was marked by Joseph in his Bible. This greatly sped up the work but also greatly decreased the number of changes that were being made in each chapter. Within a few months, they finished the New Testament and went back to complete the rest of the Old Testament, finishing the entire translation by July 1833.

## Fifth Sign: Feeding the five thousand – John 6:1-14 (Matt 14:14-21; Mark 6:34-44; Luke 9:11b-17)

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See Mark with notes from John's text. Both this story and the next (walking on water) are used in John's gospel to prepare us for the long Bread of Life sermon, which uses these events as the basis for the sermon.

6:2 **his miracles which he did.** Another nod to the records of the Synoptics; John has only recorded two healings so far: the nobleman's son and the lame man at the pool.

6:4 **the passover . . . was nigh.** John gives a rough time for the event, not in the Synoptics. Depending on how "nigh" the Passover was and when it was that year, this could be February to April.

6:5 **he saith unto Philip.** Only in John is the name of the disciple given that Jesus asked this question of, and why he asked him ("to prove him" meaning to test him, v. 6).

6:8 **Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.** Also unique to John's version is the name of the disciple who brought the young man with the bread and fishes to Jesus. As mentioned in chapter 1, John's portrayal of Andrew shows him bringing people to Jesus, which continues in this account.

6:10 **there was much grass in the place.** This also serves to show that the event was in the spring.

6:14 **This is of a truth that prophet.** The reaction of the crowd is also unique to John: they believed that he was the prophet spoken of by Moses.

## Jesus walks on water – John 6:15-21 (Matt 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52)

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See Matthew with notes from John's text.

6:15 **to make him a king.** Not only did the crowd think Jesus was the promised prophet, but as a result, they conspired to make him their new king, which Jesus did not want to happen. It reached the point where some were going to "take him by force" and crown him, causing Jesus to go into the mountains by himself.

6:19 **five and twenty or thirty furlongs.** "Furlongs" is the Greek *stadia*, equaling about 600 feet. This distance would put them about in the middle of the lake, roughly equally distant to any shore.

6:21 **immediately the ship was at the land.** There is no mention of Jesus calming the storm in John's version; however, he did miraculously cause the ship to instantly be at their destination, thereby averting an encounter with the storm.

## The bread of life – John 6:22-59

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After the feeding of the 5,000, many went seeking Jesus but for the wrong reasons (see John 6:15). He took the opportunity to teach them a metaphor about him to which we all can relate. This was perhaps done during a normal Sabbath day synagogue meeting in Capernaum, in which Jesus was invited to read and offer commentary (see John 6:59). The reading may have been from Exodus or from one of the passages that speak of the bread in the wilderness. This is a great commentary on the meaning of the symbol of the bread in the sacrament.

6:22 **none other boat there.** The disciples had taken their ship and left earlier, and Jesus had gone up to the mountain to pray. No one in the waiting crowd had seen Jesus leave, but they soon realized he was gone (v. 24). So though they couldn't explain his departure, they all made their way to Capernaum, which they must have known was his next destination.

6:25 **Rabbi, when camest thou hither?** They were puzzled: not just when but how did he get across the lake during the night?

6:26 **JST**

John 6:26 KJV

JST



Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye ~~did~~ eat of the loaves, and were filled.

Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye **desire to keep my sayings, neither because ye** saw the miracles, but because ye eat of the loaves, and were filled.

The JST clarifies that the people did not seek Jesus with the intention of keeping his teachings nor because they believed the miracles were evidence of his true identity. Rather, they just wanted to have enough food.

**6:27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth.** “Meat” here simply means ‘food,’ as is typical in the KJV. Jesus counseled the crowd who wanted to make him king and continue to provide them with food to seek after a different kind of food.

**6:27 him hath God the Father sealed.** This refers to the custom of putting a clay stamp on documents and other items and marking them with a ring or other stamp. The purpose of the seal was to validate or confirm authenticity and to identify ownership. The Father placed his seal on Jesus or, in other words, testified of Jesus' identity and work and identified him as his only Son.

**6:28 work the works of God.** The question implies doing something in the Mosaic Law, as if they asked, 'Which of Moses' commandments would get us closest to God?'

**6:29 believe on him.** Jesus testified that there is no list of laws that will save them, but belief on him as the Savior.

**6:30 What sign shewest thou.** A paraphrase would be: 'How will you show us that you are the Messiah? What marvelous sign will you do before us? For example, our fathers were given bread to eat from the heavens.' Just as under Moses they were provided with manna to feed them in the desert, so they expected the Messiah to provide them with miraculous bread from heaven. This is reflected in Psalm 78:23-25 (part of which is quoted in v. 31; "Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, and had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full") and the apocryphal 2 Baruch 29:8 ("And it will come to pass then that the treasury of manna will come down again from on high, and they will eat of it in those years because these are they who will have arrived at the consummation of time").

Note that these are many of the same people who were there just the day before when he miraculously fed thousands of them bread and fish. That they would still request another sign shows they had much to learn. Perhaps they felt that the miraculous providing of bread was not a strong enough sign of the Messiah, since the same had happened with Moses; they expected Jesus to do much more.

**6:32 the true bread from heaven.** Jesus' reply was to give them the greatest sign there was—the coming of Jehovah himself to earth, to give eternal life to those who believe in him (v. 33)—far beyond how bread can merely sustain life for a short time.

**6:34 evermore give us this bread.** As is typical in John, the audience of Jesus' sermon do not understand that he is speaking of himself. Instead, they continue to seek a physical blessing, a source of bread that will feed them for the rest of their lives.

**6:35 I am the bread of life.** Dropping the more vague references in previous verses, Jesus overtly declared that he himself was the bread that gives life. The “I am” at the beginning of this verse is another instance of the use of that phrase in John, representing the name of the Lord in Exodus 3:14. Jesus repeats this in v. 48.

**6:37 him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.** If someone displeased the Jewish leadership, they could cast them out of the synagogue. Jesus assured his audience that he would treat them differently, once they were committed to him.

**6:38 not to do mine own will.** Echoing the key theme of his response to the Jewish leaders in chapter 5, Jesus declared that he does not his own will, but only that of his Father, who sent him to the world.

6:39 ***I should lose nothing***. Jesus was promised by the Father whose will it is, that he should not lose any given him by the Father, but that all should be resurrected.

6:40 ***raise him up at the last day***. Picking up the phrase from the work on John 5:29 and D&C 76, the JST three times in this chapter adds the phrase, "*in the resurrection of the just*", in verses 40, 44, and 54. A similar statement about being raised up at the last day is found in the account of the Lamanite king and Aaron (Alma 22:18).

6:41 ***Jews then murmured at him***. Not that Jesus was forthright in his declaration, his audience murmured or complained about him. In v. 43, he asked them not to do so.

6:42 ***the son of Joseph***. The Jews in the synagogue knew Jesus' family (they had moved to Capernaum some months before). They don't seem to have known about or at least accepted his miraculous birth, though since many if not all of them had seen him feed the 5,000 people.

6:44 ***JST***

<b>John 6:44 KJV</b>	<b>JST</b>
No man can come to me, except <del>the</del> Father <del>which</del> hath sent me <del>draw him</del> ; and I will raise <del>him</del> up at the last day.	No man can come to me, except <b>he doeth the will of my Father who hath sent me. And this is the will of him who hath sent me, that ye receive the Son; for the Father beareth record of him; and he who receiveth the testimony, and doeth the will of him who sent me, I will raise up in the resurrection of the just.</b>

This substantial JST addition emphasizes the will of the Father being followed by Jesus, the Father bearing record of him, and the blessings of those who accept and live by Jesus' teachings as being from God.

6:45 ***And they shall be all taught of God***. The quote is from Isaiah 54:13; compare Jeremiah 31:34. Because the Father bears record of the Son, all who are taught by the Father will accept the Son and come to him.

6:46 ***he hath seen the Father***. This is not a contradiction of other scriptures (such as John 1:18; 1 John 4:12) but a clarification as to who can see God: "he which is of God." The implication in this dialogue is that Christ alone is "of God." See also 3 John 1:11.

6:49 ***fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead***. See Exodus 16:15.

6:50 ***This is the bread which cometh down***. Or, 'This person before you is the bread from heaven.' In contrast to the manna from the Exodus, Jesus stood before them, the gift of life from God sent to earth to live among men.

6:51 ***the bread that I will give is my flesh***. Jesus explained that all this discussion of 'bread' has a very real application, coming up shortly in his life: he will give his flesh that all might have eternal life through him.

6:52 ***How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*** Not understanding what he meant (which we only understand in retrospect), they wondered how Jesus would give his flesh, like bread, for them to consume.

6:54 ***eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood***. Today we see the symbolism of the words in vv. 53-54 in the sacrament, and indeed that is how we remember what Jesus has done for us. But his meaning here was an invitation to everyone to partake of his Atonement, which was enacted by the piercing of his flesh and the shedding of his blood. To those who fully do so, he promised that they "shall live by me."

6:56 ***dwelleth in me, and I in him***. Or 'stays with me, and I with him.' It is a permanent state, a fixed position.

6:57 ***he that eateth me, even he shall live by me***. Or, 'he shall live because of me.' As we symbolically take the sacrament and make covenants with God, the eternal life that we enjoy is because of and due to Jesus alone.

6:58 ***This is that bread.*** Jesus repeats many of his words through this dialogue; here he summarizes many of his previous points in one verse.

6:59 ***in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.*** Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, though it's not certain if that means as part of the Sabbath worship or some other arrangement that gave him access to the building.

### Many offended – John 6:60-71

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6:60 ***This is an hard saying; who can hear it?*** Many either didn't understand Jesus' teaching, or didn't like it. What was hard about it? The law of Moses is not the way to return to God. Instead, this peasant carpenter from Nazareth, this itinerant teacher declared that he was the source of salvation. He spoke in parables and metaphors, which are hard for those without the Spirit to understand. He provoked the authorities with no justification than his own words. And he refused to give them more bread, to be their king, to free them from Rome, or do anything but teach them truth. They wanted a Messiah, a political leader, a person who would ease their temporal burdens. He taught submission, humility, and obedience to a people already under the thumb of oppressors. They were not offended by his popularity, his miracles, or his healings; they were offended by his doctrine, because it challenged them to change, to grow, to give up that which held them back from God.

6:62 ***if ye shall see the Son of man ascend.*** Knowing his words were offending people, after claiming that he had descended from the Father to teach them, he asked if they might believe him if he returned up to heaven, from where he had originated?

6:63 ***It is the spirit that quickeneth.*** Or, 'that gives life.' Earthly food keeps us alive but doesn't give life—eternal life—as does the Spirit of the Lord. Jesus' words were of that Spirit and bring life.

6:64 ***who should betray him.*** There should be parentheses around the editorial comment that Jesus knew from the beginning who would disbelieve and even who would betray him.

6:65 ***except it were given unto him of my Father.*** Though coming to Jesus is a choice of will, faith and Atonement and many other things are acts of grace, gifts from a loving heavenly Father. This does not imply some type of predestination or limited access to exaltation; the Father gives these gifts to all who seek and ask.

6:66 ***many of his disciples went back.*** After his hard sayings (see v. 60), many left Jesus, for a variety of reasons.

6:67 ***Will ye also go away?*** Seeing many disciples leaving him was surely hard for Jesus. Peter's strong answer to this question (vv. 68-69) was indicative of his testimony and commitment. How do we answer? As we learn what the gospel requires of us, do we respond like the crowd?—'this is a hard saying'—or like Peter?—'we believe and are sure.'

6:69 ***Christ, the Son of the living God.*** Various manuscripts have different readings here. The most likely original phrase was "you are the Holy One of God" (NRSV, NASB, NIV, ESV, NLT, NJB). He is not just the Son of God but the one set apart, separated from others, made holy by the Father.

6:70 ***one of you is a devil.*** In John's gospel, Jesus is aware from the beginning of the coming betrayal of Judas Iscariot (as the editorial comment noted in v. 71), long before Judas himself likely knew.

### Jesus' brothers do not believe – John 7:1-10

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The time was early September, probably A.D. 29. Jesus' family requested that he make the trip to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Tabernacles. He declined at first, fearing a premature death, then went up quietly, no doubt to protect his life, for his time was not yet. It will be about six or seven more months until his crucifixion. This story with his family is the end of the Galilean ministry in John's gospel and starts a series of events that take him to his death.

7:1 ***Jesus walked in Galilee.*** He was safer in Galilee because the Jewish leaders in Judea sought his life.

7:2 ***feast of tabernacles.*** Also called *Sukkoth* or 'Feast of Booths' because of the little huts made of branches and leaves that the pilgrims slept in, Tabernacles was celebrated in mid-September to early October after the grape

harvest and before the Feast of Dedication (*Hanukkah*). For more details, see below and in the Bible Dictionary, under "Feasts."

7:3 ***His brethren***. These were Jesus' half-brothers, Mary and Joseph's children born after Jesus. They wanted him to go to Jerusalem and show himself openly, but not out of desire to spread his message. Rather, they *didn't* believe in him (v. 5), and so their invitation was more like a challenge ("shew thyself to the world," v. 4), which Jesus readily declined.

7:6 ***My time is not yet come***. Jesus knew his destiny and his mission, but also the timing of it, and it was not yet.

7:7 ***The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth***. Jesus is light and the world is darkness. Because light drives away darkness, the darkness hates the light.

7:8 ***I go not up yet***. He will go to the feast, but in his own time.

7:9 ***he abode still in Galilee***. His brothers and others left for Jerusalem for the feast while Jesus stayed behind.

7:10 ***as it were in secret***. This statement could mean any number of things, but the most likely seems to be that he avoided traveling with the large groups of people that would go up that way. Luke tells us that his path took him through Samaria, a route that would have helped preserve the secrecy of his journey, since few Jews went that way. It would also save him some time, so that if his family left a day or two ahead of him and went around through Jericho, he could have arrived at roughly the same time as them by passing through Samaria.

### The Feast of the Tabernacles – John 7:11-53

The rest of chapter 7 and most of chapter 8 take place at this feast, as Jesus took advantage of some public practices as part of the feast, using those symbols to represent himself and his mission to the world.

7:12 ***much murmuring among the people***. Many were talking and wondering where Jesus was (v. 11), and whether he was a good man or an evil one. But they knew the Jewish leaders were looking for him and his sympathizers, so they were careful about when and where they had their conversations (v. 13).

7:14 ***the midst of the feast***. In the middle of the week, Jesus came to the temple and began to teach the large crowds gathered there in the Court of the Women. So much for lying low, his disciples must have remarked.

7:15 ***How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?*** 'He knows the Law better than the scribes and rabbis. But he is a peasant from Galilee—how did he come to have such knowledge? He has not sat at the feet of our esteemed rabbis, such as Gamaliel. He has not been schooled in the doctrines of the scribes. He is not trained in our rabbinical arguments.'

7:16 ***My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me***. Rabbis of the day would cite as their authority earlier rabbis' interpretations of scripture, much as attorneys today cite prior law as precedence. Jesus was clear that the source of his doctrine was the Father himself, and offered the test that if they lived what he taught, they would know the source, too (v. 17). Deuteronomy 18:9-22 teaches that a false prophet should be put to death. Jesus told them that such a false teacher seeks his own glory, but Jesus "seeketh his glory that sent him" (v. 18).

7:19 ***Why go ye about to kill me?*** Jesus said they were trying to kill him, which at first they denied. He reminded them that last time he was in Jerusalem he had "done one work" (v. 21) where he healed a crippled man on the Sabbath (told in John 5:1-16), and for that they wanted to take his life. Then the people remembered him and acknowledged that indeed, he was the one "they seek to kill" (v. 25). Yet because the Jewish leaders seemed to do nothing to stop him, they wondered if perhaps Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

7:22 ***ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man***. A child was to be circumcised eight days after birth, even if that day was a Sabbath. Circumcision was a law that preceded the Mosaic Law (see Genesis 17:9-10) but kept for its symbolic teachings.

7:23 **made a man every whit whole on the sabbath.** Though no one was condemned for circumcising on the Sabbath, so Jesus asked them why he was condemned for doing good on the Sabbath for the man at the pool.

### Is this the Christ? – John 7:25-31

7:25 **Is not this he, whom they seek to kill?** “They” is the Jewish leaders, and the answer is yes, they were seeking to kill him.

7:27 **no man knoweth whence he is.** The people now compared Jesus to three traditions they had about the Messiah, to see if he fit what they believed. The **first** is in this verse: “no man knoweth whence he is.” They had developed a belief that the Messiah would appear mysteriously, unknown until he came to redeem Israel. But they knew Jesus—he was a carpenter from Galilee—so he couldn't be the Messiah, they reasoned. Jesus responded that it didn't matter what they knew about him, as long as they recognized who sent him (Jesus was the *shaliah*, the 'sent one' of the Father, who spoke in his name and with his authority).

7:28 **Then cried Jesus in the temple.** He was already in the temple (v. 14) but here he raised his volume of his address to take in more people in the courtyard.

7:28 **ye know when I am.** He had already taught them of his divine origin and who had sent him. He declared that they do not know the Father but Jesus does know him because he was sent by him (v. 29).

7:30 **they sought to take him.** Again being offended by his blasphemy, from their perspective, the Jewish leaders tried to arrest Jesus, though the scripture records that no one touched him “because his hour was not yet come.” However, the attempt continues in the rest of this chapter.

7:31 **When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these.** The **second** tradition was that the Messiah would do miracles, like Moses (see Isaiah 35:5). “Many of the people” had seen and heard of Jesus doing many such miracles, and this persuaded them that he was who he claimed to be. The “chief priests” (meaning the high priest and those who worked closely with him, such as the captain of the temple and the treasurers) could not refute this, so they decided it was time to act, and sent temple guards to arrest him.

### Attempt to arrest Jesus – John 7:32-36

7:32 **sent officers to take him.** As the people began to believe Jesus, the “Pharisees and the chief priests” sent officers of the Sanhedrin (or temple) to take Jesus and remove him from the people.

7:33 **Yet a little while am I with you.** Jesus anticipated the timing of his later arrest and death, warning the crowd that he would soon return “unto him that sent me.” They would then seek him but not find him because “thither ye cannot come” (v. 34; compared D&C 29:29).

7:35 **Whither will he go, that we shall not find him?** Not surprisingly, the crowd missed the larger point Jesus was making about his fate and wondered if he was going to go out among Jews dispersed in Gentile lands and teach them, or perhaps even teach the Gentiles themselves.

### Living water – John 7:37-39

7:37 **the last day, that great day of the feast.** The Feast of the Tabernacles—which began only five days after the Day of Atonement—included a daily ritual where the priests would march to the Pool of Siloam, draw water, then solemnly return to the temple and pour the water under the altar in a special receptacle, the wine offering being poured at the same time in another place. On the seventh and last day of the feast, the ceremony was even more elaborate, with the priests marching seven times around the altar and the people waving a forest of leafy branches while singing the final words of the *Hallel* (Psalm 118). At that dramatic moment, Jesus stood and yelled out, “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*” (vv. 37-38, italics added).

7:38 **He that believeth on me.** Some ancient manuscripts of John expand the verse after this phrase, adding “let that person come to me, and let that person who believes in me drink. As the scriptures say . . .”

7:39 **this spake he of the Spirit**. An editorial comment is appropriately in parentheses in the KJV. The editor's interpretation is that the "living water" is the gift of the Holy Spirit, which people had not yet received (see Acts 2) because Jesus was still among them. This is a point made in later chapters in John 14-15.

### Is this the Prophet? – John 7:40-44

7:40 **Of a truth this is the Prophet**. The crowd's reaction was instant and strong: some believed he was the Prophet of which Moses spoke (Deuteronomy 18:15-18), while others said he must be the Messiah (v. 41, not realizing that he was in fact both, because they are the same person). They clearly understood the scriptures behind Jesus' claims, which included Psalm 36:8-9; Isaiah 12:3; 43:19; 44:3; 55:1; and Zechariah 14:8, 16-17; the last was actually read during the feast as part of the ceremony.

7:42 **Christ cometh of the seed of David**. The **third** tradition was that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem (which contradicts the first tradition somewhat); see Micah 5:1-2 and Psalm 89:4. Jesus came from Galilee, they knew, so he could not fulfill this tradition. Ironically, they didn't seem to have any knowledge of what we get from Luke 2, that he was born in Bethlehem. Thus they saw Jesus as matching some of their traditions, but not all, so there was controversy about his claim to be the Messiah (v. 43).

7:44 **no man laid hands on him**. Even though the Jewish leaders had sent people to arrest Jesus, they still could not take him. John's point is that Jesus cannot be taken until he allows it, until it is the right time.

### Follow up on the attempted arrest – John 7:45-53

7:46 **Never man spake like this man**. The men the Jewish leaders sent to arrest Jesus were amazed at his teachings, so much that they left the temple without him. This stunned their leaders who thought they were "deceived" (v. 47), that Jesus must have corrupted them like he had the ignorant masses "who knoweth not the law" (v. 49), meaning like them, none of whom believed on him (v. 48).

7:50 **Nicodemus saith**. Nicodemus counseled patience and adherence to protocol (v. 51). The editor reminds us that Nicodemus came by night to Jesus (chapter 3) and that he was now a disciple of Jesus ("one of them").

7:52 **out of Galilee ariseth no prophet**. Meaning, no scripture ever indicated the Messiah would come from Galilee.

7:53 **every man went unto his own house**. They all returned to their homes, many surely frustrated that they missed this chance to arrest Jesus. Note that the best early manuscripts of John omit this verse and 8:1-11 (see below).

### The woman caught in adultery – John 8:1-11

This account (which actually starts at 7:53—our chapter breaks were not in ancient manuscripts!), well-known for its portrayal of forgiveness and mercy, probably doesn't belong in this place in John (some manuscripts have it start after John 7:36 or 21:25, and some manuscripts place it after Luke 21:38). It appears to be a late addition to the manuscript tradition—it's not there in the earliest manuscripts or translations of John. Scholars call this the 'Johannine Comma' ("comma" meaning short clause). That is not to say that it isn't an authentic story—scholars generally agree that it is. But it's clearly out of place here, interrupting the flow of the narrative of the Feast, which all happens at the same time. In other words, John probably didn't put it here in his original gospel, but it clearly happened in Jerusalem and probably during this week of the Feast, so some early copyist inserted it here or at the other locations mentioned. Generally, it should be considered and studied separately from the rest of John 7 and 8 so as not to break the flow of the narrative.

8:1 **Jesus went unto the mount of Olives**. In 7:53, the Jewish leaders went to their homes, probably in western Jerusalem. In contrast, Jesus went east, to the mount of Olives. The next morning, he returned to the temple (v. 2).

8:2 **he sat down, and taught them**. Teachers normally taught from a seated position, standing only to read or recite.

8:3 **a woman taken in adultery**. Where is the man who was her partner? They knew who he was, since she had been taken "in the very act" (v. 4). This demonstrates the double standard that was evident among some Jews

where the woman was guilty of sin but the man might be readily forgiven—‘she tempted him.’ See Numbers 5:11-31 for a full account of how the law dealt with this.

8:5 ***such should be stoned***. The citation is from Leviticus 20:10, which ironically calls out that both the man and the woman committing the sin should be stoned.

8:6 ***wrote on the ground***. Legends have developed, describing what he wrote, but we don’t know—the text doesn’t say. Also v. 8.

8:7 ***He that is without sin***. Referring to Deuteronomy 13:9 and 17:7, witnesses were to throw the first stones, but also had to be free of the same sin as the accused by their tradition. The fact that her accusers slunk away without picking up any rocks (v. 9) demonstrated that they, too, were adulterers.

8:10 ***hath no man condemned thee?*** Jesus waited for the crowd to go away, then stood up and spoke to her with the authority of a judge throwing out the case.

8:11 ***go, and sin no more***. Some have read this that Jesus was condoning adultery or sin in general, but the last verse cannot allow that interpretation. His clear command to “sin no more” leaves no room for misunderstanding—she had sinned but was to stop immediately. He did not offer forgiveness in this conversation but opened the door for repentance if sin ceased.

The JST adds at the end of the verse: “**And the woman glorified God from that hour, and believed on his name,**” completing the conversion and closing off the story for us.

## [The Feast of the Tabernacles II – John 8:12-59](#)

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The narrative picks up where 7:52 left off: the Jews were contesting what to do about Jesus and he was still teaching in the temple on the last day of the Feast of the Tabernacles.

### [The light of the world – John 8:12-20](#)

8:12 ***I am the light of the world***. Verse 12 picks up the narrative again with the next dramatic activity of the Feast (without the ‘Johannine comma’ in 7:53-8:11, the narrative flows quite naturally). At dusk each night, four huge lamps were lit in the temple Court of the Women. The lamps held many gallons of olive oil which were filled by young priests on tall ladders. The lamps themselves were taller than the walls of the temple so that the light filled the entire city of Jerusalem. The huge wicks were made of worn out priest clothing. The lighting ceremony was accompanied by multiple trumpet blasts, scripture recitals, music, and dancing with torches in hand. Only on the final night of the Feast were all four lamps lit, and the music and dancing could last all night. It is on this night that Jesus came forward with another declaration of his identity: “I am the light of the world.” This was another declaration that he was the fulfillment of scripture, as in Isaiah 49:6; 60:1-3; Psalm 27:1; 36:9; 119:105; and Proverbs 6:23.

8:13 ***Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true***. The Pharisees immediately understood his meaning, but challenged his declaring this only for himself. Jesus replied that he and his Father were both witnesses to his identity, but they didn’t know the Father (vv. 14-19). This was the major point of the discourse captured in this chapter. Compare the JST change at 5:31.

8:15 ***I judge no man***. He might have added “unlike you.” While faltering men judge according to “the flesh”—what we can see and hear and comprehend through our senses—Jesus didn’t come to judge as they did. V. 16 indicates that he did judge sometimes, when it was the Father’s will.

8:17 ***the testimony of two men is true***. The reference is to Deuteronomy 17:6.

8:19 ***if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father***. John continues to build on this theme: Jesus and his Father are so closely tied together in purpose that to know one is to know the other.

8:20 ***in the treasury***. This was in the Court of the Women where the trumpet-shaped receptacles for donations were kept and where the lamps were burning brightly.

## [I am from above – John 8:21-30](#)

8:21 **shall die in your sins.** Jesus warned them again that he was going away, and though they might seek him, they would do so in a false effort and end up dying in their sins. Compare Ezekiel 3:18-20 and Mosiah 15:26.

8:22 **Will he kill himself?** In what is perhaps a fit of wishful thinking, the Jewish leaders seemingly mock Jesus' statement about going away and turn it into a suicide statement. That was a place they would not go.

8:23 **Ye are from beneath; I am from above.** In a Jewish worldview, this meant that they were from beneath the earth (*Sheol*) and he was from above it, which are the heavens. Compare D&C 63:59.

8:24 **if ye believe not that I am.** Jesus made three clear identifications that he was Jehovah in the rest of this chapter alone, according to Exodus 3:14. We catch the most obvious one in verse 58, but usually miss the other two because the King James translators added the word 'he' each time, softening the statement. But in the Greek, it is just "I am"—see verses 24 and 28.

8:25 **Who are thou?** It wasn't that Jesus hadn't fully declared his identity or that he had not provided adequate proofs—signs—of the truth of what he said. The Jews in John's gospel, in their hard-heartedness, refused to acknowledge any of it, thus making the signs useless to them.

8:26 **I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.** Jesus continued to hammer home the point that he only did what the Father told him to do or say.

8:27 **They understood not.** Another editorial comment letting us as readers know that the Jewish leaders having this conversation with Jesus still don't get it.

8:28 **When ye have lifted up the Son of man.** There is no secret in John's gospel—Jesus is fully revealed in word and deed. The end of his mortal ministry was evident in all of his teachings.

8:29 **the Father hath not left me alone.** However, that will be the case on the cross; see Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34.

8:30 **many believed on him.** His last words were powerfully convincing to some, who believed him.

## [Jesus declares, I Am – John 8:31-59](#)

8:31 **continue in my word.** To be a disciple of Christ, we have to be faithful to his teachings, not just believe him. His gospel is one of action and commitment. The word "continue" can mean to remain, hold to, or even make a home.

8:32 **the truth shall make you free.** Living according to truth makes a person free. Giving in to sin brings suffering, confusion, pain, and restrictions or even loss of freedom.

8:33 **were never in bondage to any man.** While not historically correct that Abraham's seed had never been in bondage,<sup>5</sup> this prideful response indicates they interpreted his statement about freedom (v. 32) as a reference to Roman rule.

8:34 **Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.** Jesus clarified that the bondage he was speaking of was not political but spiritual. The word "servant" here is a slave (*doulos*).

8:35 **the servant abideth not in the house for ever.** Slaves might be welcome in a home for a time, as they served the master of the house. But when their term of service was ended or they were no longer useful, they would be forced to leave. But the son who was the heir, he would always be welcome—it would one day be his house. This could be an allusion to the story of Isaac and Ishmael in Genesis 21:10-14.

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<sup>5</sup> The Assyrians, Babylonians, Seleucids, and Romans had all excerpted control over the population that could be described as bondage—in some cases, very literally.



8:36 ***ye shall be free indeed.*** The only way to be freed from the slavery of sin was through the Son, who through the Atonement he enacted, can make us free.

8:37 ***ye seek to kill me.*** This is repeated in verse 40, to add emphasis. Jesus knew their plans and the thoughts of their hearts.

8:38 ***ye do that which ye have seen with your father.*** The traditional interpretation is that Jesus is saying the devil is their father, which ties to vv. 41 and 44. However, the best Greek mss have “the father” here, a definite article, not a second person possessive pronoun. That makes a better translation as “you should do what you have heard from the Father” (NRSV).

8:39 ***ye would do the works of Abraham.*** Returning to their claim of being Abrahams’s seed and therefore in a privileged position, and clearly being offended by his words, Jesus retorted that if they were truly Abraham’s seed, they would do what Abraham had done. Instead, they were trying to kill him, which Abraham would never do (v. 40).

8:41 ***We be not born of fornication.*** Some scholars believe this is a reference to Jesus’ birth story, accusing his mother of sexual impropriety.

8:41 ***the deeds of your father.*** This is where Jesus accused them of following the devil. They knew his meaning, replying that their father was God.

8:42 ***If God were your Father, he would love me.*** Because Jesus was sent from God, those who truly loved the Father would also love him.

8:43 ***ye cannot hear my word.*** The Jewish leaders refused to understand Jesus, but responded to him with pride and anger. It takes humility to hear the teaching and correction of Christ in our lives.

8:44 ***your father the devil.*** Jesus spent much time explaining who his Father was and how the Father supported and had sent him. Now he declared to the apostate Jews before him that their father was the devil—*diabolos*, the slanderer and accuser. The devil is not literally their father but by their actions, they have chosen to follow him instead of heavenly Father, so their actions reflect the will of Satan.

8:46 ***Which of you convinceth me of sin?*** As the footnote explains, the word “convinceth” should be translated either convicts or reproves. Jesus is stating that they cannot charge him with committing any sin—he has lived the perfect life and there is no sin in him.

8:47 ***ye are not of God.*** Those who are of God, who embrace him as their Father and heed his words, would live holy lives, worthy of God. Jesus accused them of the opposite, because they rejected his words—which were God’s words.

8:48 ***thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil.*** Unable to win any argument against Jesus with logic, reason, or even the scriptures, the leaders resorted to name-calling. Compare Mosiah 3:9.

8:50 ***I seek not mine own glory.*** Jesus taught that what he did was for the glory of the Father alone. Self-aggrandizement was never his purpose.

8:53 ***Art thou greater than our father Abraham.*** Jesus claimed in verse 51 that someone following him would “never see death.” But he Jews countered that Abraham was dead; doesn’t that prove that if that most righteous man in their history was dead, that Jesus’ promise of never dying could not be true?

8:55 ***I shall be a liar like unto you.*** Jesus answered again that he was not seeking his own honor, only the Father’s, and that if he were to teach any other doctrine, he would not be true to the Father, and thus a liar or hypocrite like them.

8:56 **Abraham rejoiced to see my day.** There is no record in Genesis of Abraham having a prophetic vision of the mission of the Savior, but there is no reason to believe that he did not, either, since prophets in general saw visions of Christ and testified of him (Jacob 4:4-6).

8:57 **Thou art not yet fifty years old.** The found number is not to indicate Jesus' age as much as that he was clearly younger than most of them. They seem to have intentionally scoffed at him and his words; he did not say Abraham and he had met but only that Abraham had prophetically seen this day.

8:58 **Before Abraham was, I am.** Or, as some have punctuated it, 'Before Abraham, was I am.' This is probably the most direct *I am* statement in the book. The clear reference to Jehovah of the Old Testament (Exodus 3:14) so angered the Jews that they took up stones to kill Jesus (v. 59)—not a legal stoning which required a trial and witnesses, but a reaction out of pure anger and frustration at him. Somehow (miraculously, John would have us say) he managed to simply slip out right in the middle of the crowd.

## Conclusion

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Jesus fully applied the temple activities of the Feast of the Tabernacles to himself, then openly declared his divinity in no uncertain terms. The people hearing his words either had to believe that he was who he said or believe that he was a great blasphemer. Both responses were evident in the crowd that day. Which one is ours?

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### Abbreviations:

- AT – Author's translation
- BYU – BYU New Rendition
- CJB – Complete Jewish Bible
- ESV – English Standard Version
- JST – Joseph Smith Translation
- KJV – King James Version
- LXX – Septuagint (Greek Old Testament)
- NASB – New American Standard Bible
- NIV – New International Version
- NJB – New Jerusalem Bible
- NLT – New Living Translation
- NRSV – New Revised Standard Version
- TNT – William Tyndale 1534 New Testament

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