

Daily Bible Study Commentary by Pastor Steve

We're excited to have you digging deeper into the Word. The best way to use this study guide is to read the Bible verse(s) first, then Pastor Steve's commentary. God bless you.

John 7:48-50

vs48-49: They told these guards that they were fools who had been deceived by an imposter. They asked them, "You have not also been led astray, have you? No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed Him, has he?" And then they added this statement, "But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed." Their point is that if there were any validity to Jesus' claims, the religious scholars in the Sanhedrin would have confirmed those claims. In their minds the common people followed Him because they were ignorant of the Bible, and their failure to follow its rules had placed them all under the curses it threatens to those who disobey (Dt 28:15-68). **v50:** The leaders of the Pharisees boldly asserted that not one of their group had believed in Jesus, but we, the readers of this gospel, know something they didn't. We know that Nicodemus, a highly respected Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin (Jn 3:1-10), had already secretly met with Jesus and affirmed that he and others were convinced that Jesus had been sent by God (Jn 3:2). John reminds us of that fact by calling Nicodemus, "The one from among them who came to Him beforehand" (literal).

John 7:50-51

vs50-51: Nicodemus didn't openly advocate for Jesus. Instead he tried to slow the rush to condemn Him by questioning the fact that the leaders had already decided that Jesus was guilty before interviewing Him, as the Law of Moses commanded (Ex 23:1-3; Dt 17:6; 19:15). He said, "Our Law does not judge a man unless it hears from him beforehand, and knows what he is doing" (literal). In other words, "We can't determine Jesus' guilt until after we have interviewed Him and evaluated the evidence carefully" (paraphrase). And of course, he was right. Anyone searching for a just decision would know that, but the high priests and leaders of the Pharisees weren't searching for justice. They had already decided to kill Jesus and were merely looking for an opportunity (Jn 5:18; 7:1).

John 7:52

v52: They responded to Nicodemus by insulting him. They asked if he too were an ignorant peasant from Galilee like Jesus. They suggested that he go and study the Bible until he discovered that the northern region of Israel called "Galilee" had never, throughout all of Israel's history, produced a prophet, let alone be the birth place for the Messiah. By the way, that statement isn't factual. At least Jonah was from Gath-hepher near Nazareth (2Ki 14:25), and Nahum came from Elkosh (Na 1:1) which was possibly Capernaum (Kfar Nahum: village of Nahum). They also ignored Isaiah's statement that specifically identified the tribal regions of Zebulum (Nazareth) and Naphtali (Capernaum) as places that would directly behold the Messiah's glory (Isa 9:1-7). Later on Nicodemus would take a bold stand for Jesus (Jn 19:38-42), but in the dangerous atmosphere of that meeting room, he tried to hide his growing faith with the result that he failed to protect Jesus and ended up looking foolish in his attempt.

John 7:53-8:11

vs7:53-8:11 (introduction): These verses describe another encounter between Jesus and the religious leaders. However, the vocabulary in this passage differs from the rest of John's gospel, and numerous early texts of the New Testament do not mention this event. So, many students of the Bible assume that it was written by someone other than John. But few, if any, question its authenticity because the event it describes sounds like something Jesus would do. It contains that level of spiritual depth which sets Jesus apart from everyone else. Who else would have even thought to have said what He said? But exactly who wrote it down is debated. My guess, as to its origin, is that it was recorded by someone who heard the apostle John tell the story after his gospel had been completed. Then at some point, it was inserted into the gospel at the place where John had said it occurred.

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John 7:53-8:11

vs7:53-8:11 (introduction continued): An interesting source of support for this possibility was one of the "apostolic fathers" named Papias (A.D. 60-130), who became the bishop of Hierapolis near Laodicea (Col 4:13) in Asia Minor. Papias knew John when John served as the pastor of the church in Ephesus (Rev 1:9). Apparently John traveled through the region to preach and teach. Irenaeus (died A.D. 200), a later bishop who grew up in Asia Minor (Smyrna), says Papias specifically mentioned "a story about a woman who was accused before the Lord of many sins which the gospel according to the Hebrews contains" (Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, Eerdmans reprint 1973, p.883 ftn; Cyril C. Richardson, ed., Early Church Fathers, Macmillan, 1970, p.395). So someone who was alive for probably 30 to 40 years while John was ministering, who knew him personally and heard him teach, mentioned a story about an accused woman being brought before Jesus. This means John could be the source of the story even though someone else wrote it down.

John 7:53-8:1

vs7:53-8:1: The significance of the observation that Jesus went to the Mount of Olives while everyone else went home, can be easily overlooked. We're told, "Each one went to his house, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives" (literal). Given the popularity of Jesus, many of the people in Jerusalem would have gladly invited Him to stay in their home as a guest, but Jesus refused. He insisted on camping in an olive orchard outside the city (Mk 11:19; Lk 21:37-38; 22:39). I believe the reason was that He felt it was not safe to stay in a home. A host or an observant neighbor might be persuaded to report His location to the religious leaders, giving them the opportunity to arrest Him secretly. Earlier in this gospel John made the statement, "But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them for He knew all men" (Jn 2:24). This distrust may have been reflected in where He chose to sleep.

John 8:2

v2: The day after the Feast of Booths is a special holiday of its own (Lev 23:33-36; Nu 29:35-39). It is called "Shemeni Atzeret," and in the city of Jerusalem on that same day "Simchat Torah" ("rejoicing in the Torah") is celebrated. Everywhere outside of Jerusalem Simchat Torah is celebrated on the ninth day (Ron Cantrell, The Feasts of the Lord, Bridges for Peace, Tulsa, OK, third printing 2007, p.84). It marks the final reading for the year from the five books of Moses. On the next day the first reading in Genesis begins the cycle of reading through the Torah all over again. Moses commanded that the nation gather "at the Feast of Booths" and "read this Law in front of all Israel, in their hearing" (Dt 31:10-13; Ne 8:14-18). In the time of Jesus, a great wooden platform was constructed in the Court of the Women from which the priests read the Torah (Israel Ariel, Chaim Richman, Carta's Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, the Temple Institute and Carta, Jerusalem, 2005, p.195). Priests would also "stand on street corners and in gateways blowing on their trumpets and announcing the hour of the Torah-reading ceremony" (Carta p.195). This background may help us understand why the scribes and Pharisees confronted Jesus about the Law on that day. It was a day to celebrate the Law of Moses.

John 8:2-3

vs2-3: Jesus arrived at the area of the temple called the "Treasury," in the Court of the Women, very early in the morning before the ceremonies got underway. After He sat down and began to teach, some scribes and Pharisees brought in a woman whom they said had committed adultery. It appears she was caught early in the morning and was being brought to the temple to be presented to the priests. When her captors saw Jesus, they saw an opportunity to expose to the public what they considered to be a lack of commitment by Jesus to the Law. The Law does specifically command that if a woman who is engaged to be married commits adultery she is to be stoned (Dt 22:20-24), yet it does not appear that executing people for adultery was common at that time. Divorce with financial compensation was done instead (Leon Morris, John, p.887).