

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 8:4-8

vs4-8: They made the woman stand in the midst of the gathering and said, "Teacher, this woman was seized in the act of committing adultery. And in the Law, Moses commanded [us] to stone such women. Therefore, what do you say?" (literal). We're told that their motive was to test Him so that they might have reason to formally accuse Him of a religious crime. But Jesus did not reply. Instead He stooped down and wrote in the dirt with His finger. Apparently He remained in that position and stayed silent for a significant amount of time, but they wouldn't give up. They kept questioning Him and demanding an answer until He finally stood to His feet and said, "[Let] the sinless one among you throw the first stone at her" (literal). And then He stooped down and began to write in the dirt again. In those few words, He told them that the qualification for punishing others is sinlessness and then asked them to judge themselves by that standard before they judged her.

John 8:9-11

vs9-11: After hearing what He said, those who brought the woman began to leave one at a time, beginning with the elders, until finally only the woman remained standing where they left her. While those men were wrestling with their conscience, Jesus had continued writing in the dirt, but after they left He stood to His feet and asked, "Woman, where are they? Does no one condemn you?" And she replied, "No one, sir." Then He said, "And I don't condemn you either. Go, from now [on], sin no more" (literal). After telling the woman's accusers that they were just as guilty as the woman they put in front of Him, by announcing that He forgave her, Jesus was saying, "That's why I'm here. I came to earth to save guilty people. You brought this woman to Me, and I, the Son of Man, have authority on earth to forgive sins (Mt 9:6). So I say to her, 'and I do not condemn you either.'" He was revealing the heart of God. The Father had sent Him here on a mission: to save people, not condemn them.

John 8:9-11

vs9-11 (continued): But He didn't stop there. He added this, "Go, from now [on], sin no more." In other words, Jesus did not ignore her sin or let her think that because of God's mercy she could keep on sinning, and there would be no accountability. What isn't explained here, but Jesus explains elsewhere, is that His death and resurrection would, in the future, make it possible for humans to actually fulfill the holy standards of the Law. By telling her to "sin no more" He was not giving this woman a hopeless assignment. He was not giving her a second chance only to see her continue to fail. In time, if she believed in Him, He would offer her everything she would need to become holy.

John 8:9-11

vs9-11 (continued): There were two major truths being taught by Jesus in this encounter. The first is the one we've studied up to this point: "Here's what happens to sinners who come to Me: They receive mercy." But there is also a second truth which is less obvious. We discover it by observing what He did rather than by listening to what He said. Twice during this confrontation with the Pharisees Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dirt with His finger. Many suggestions have been made about what He wrote there, but the fact is we don't know. Yet by focusing on what He wrote we overlook the more important question of why He did this. I believe He was issuing a warning to the men who brought the woman, by using a prophetic symbol found in the prophecy of Jeremiah. The message was this: "Here's what will happen to self-righteous people who don't come to Me: their names will be written in the earth, not in the Book of Life which is in heaven." To understand this, we must listen to Jeremiah: "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water" (Jer 2:13).

John 8:9-11

vs9-11 (continued): Only the day before (Jn 7:37-38), Jesus had cried out to those who were spiritually thirsty inviting them to come to Him and drink. He was proclaiming Himself to be the "Fountain of Living Water," and said that from those who believe in Him would flow "rivers of living water." Later on Jeremiah prophesied this: "And they that depart from Me shall be written in the earth because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters (Jer 17:13, KJV). As Pharisees, these men would have been very familiar with the symbolism in Jeremiah, and if they recognized that Jesus was deliberately using that symbol of writing in the earth they may have understood that He was warning them because they had rejected His claim to be the Messiah.

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John 8:12

v12: The crowd, that had gathered before the woman and her accusers arrived, was still present, so He turned to them and said, "I am the Light of the world (cosmos), the one who follows Me will not (at all) walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (literal). To understand what He meant by calling Himself "the light of the world" we must first hear it as that crowd, gathered on the eight day of the Feast of Booths, heard it. All the ceremonies of the Feast of Booths were designed to remind the people of Israel's years in the desert. During that festival the people would sleep in brush arbors to remind them of the crude shelters their ancestors had made while crossing the Sinai Peninsula on their way to the land of Midian (Ex 2:15; 3:1, 12). The priests would pour a pitcher of water into the altar of burnt offering each day to remind the people of the water God provided from the rock (Ex 17:1-7). The yearly cycle of reading through the Torah (five books of Moses) would conclude on the eighth day of the festival (Lev 23:33-36; Nu 29:35-39; Dt 31:10-13), and during the festival, four huge poles were placed in the Court of the Women, each having four large oil lamps at the top. These were lit at night to illumine the courtyard for the festivities (singing and dancing) that would be held there.

John 8:12

v12 (continued): Here's a quote from rabbinic sources describing these lamps: "Great lamps of gold were erected, with four golden oil cups at the top of each. Four young priests-in-training would climb to the top, carrying immense oil cans with which they would fill the cups. Once lit, there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that did not glow from the light of the celebration" (Sukkah 5:3) (Israel Ariel, Chaim Richman, [Carta's Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem](#), The Temple Institute, Carta Jerusalem, 2005, p.191). They were meant to remind worshippers of the Exodus. The light that radiated from them symbolized the pillar of fire that led Israel at night, rested above the tabernacle and shone from the top of Mt. Sinai (Ex 19:18; 24:17). They shone over the entire city, and how natural it would have been for a family sleeping outside in a brush arbor, on a warm autumn evening, to watch its glow streaming through the branches above them and to picture themselves back in that ancient camp with the great pillar of fire watching over them. The symbolism was unmistakable, but sadly the lamps were extinguished at the end of the week. So in that courtyard, on the day after the lamps were extinguished, Jesus announced, "I am the light of the world...."