

Worksheet #9: John 8:1–59

Summary: Chapter 8 continues the cycle of events set in Jerusalem that began in chapter 7. Here we find Jesus in continued conflict with the Jewish authorities. This conflict escalates throughout the chapter as Jesus confronts the Jews again with the reality that he is the source of life (8:12). The Jews reject this identification, disputing his ability to bear witness of himself (8:13–18) and his relationship to the Father (8:19–30). This leads to an argument in 8:31–59 over paternity. The Jews allege that as descendants of Abraham, they have no need of salvation from their sins (8:31). In response, Jesus points out that as the Jews continue in their sin and reject him, they demonstrate that they do not belong to God (8:47). As the dispute intensifies, the story concludes with Jesus asserting his divinity and the Jews openly attempting to stone Jesus in the temple (8:58–59).

There is some question whether the text found in 7:53–8:11 (the story of the adulterous woman) appeared in the original text of John's gospel. It is important to recognize that the doctrine of inspiration is unaffected by this discussion, regardless of whether we accept or reject this passage as part of the original text. This is because inspiration is a quality of the *autograph*, that is, the *original document penned in the author's own hand*. In the case of every single book in our Old and New Testaments, the autograph no longer exists, and we are dependent on the *manuscripts*, or copies, to determine the original text. By comparing the variant readings that exist, it is possible to determine the original reading, many times with a high degree of certainty.

Abbreviated Outline¹ (current passage in bold):

- I. INTRODUCTION: THE WORD MADE FLESH (1:1–18)
- II. THE BOOK OF SIGNS: THE SIGNS OF THE MESSIAH (1:19–12:50)
 - A. *The Forerunner and the Coming of the Messiah (1:19–51)*
 - 1. The Testimony of John the Baptist (1:19–34)
 - 2. The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry (1:35–51)
 - B. *The Cana Cycle: Jesus' Inaugural Signs and Representative Conversations (2:1–4:54)*
 - 1. Sign 1: Changing Water into Wine at the Wedding in Cana (2:1–12)
 - 2. Sign 2: One of Jesus' Jerusalem Signs: The Clearing of the Temple (2:13–22)
 - 3. Representative Conversations: Nicodemus the Jewish Ruler, the Samaritan Woman (2:23–4:42)
 - 4. Sign 3: The Second Sign in Cana: The Healing of the Royal Official's Son (4:43–54)
 - C. ***The Festival Cycle: Additional Signs amidst Mounting Unbelief (5–10)***
 - 1. Sign 4 at an Unnamed Feast in Jerusalem: The Healing of the Lame Man (5:1–47)
 - 2. Sign 5: Galilean Passover: Feeding the Multitude and Bread of Life Discourse (6:1–71)
 - 3. **Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles (7:1–8:59)**
 - 4. Sign 6: The Healing of the Blind Man and the Good Shepherd Discourse (9–10)
 - D. *Final Passover: Climactic Sign, the Raising of Lazarus, and Other Events (11–12)*
 - 1. Sign 7: The Raising of Lazarus (11)
 - 2. Final Events of Jesus' Public Ministry (12)
- III. THE BOOK OF EXALTATION: PREPARING THE NEW MESSIANIC COMMUNITY AND THE PASSION OF JESUS (13–20)
 - A. *The Cleansing and Instruction of the New Covenant Community, including Jesus' Final Prayer (13–17)*
 - B. *The Passion Narrative (18–19)*
 - C. *Jesus' Resurrection and Appearances, Commissioning of Disciples (20:1–29)*
 - D. *Concluding Purpose Statement (20:30–31)*
- IV. EPILOGUE: THE COMPLEMENTARY ROLES OF PETER AND THE BELOVED DISCIPLE (21)

¹ Adapted from Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, The Cross, and The Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Academic, 2009), 307–308.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. Who is Jesus evaluating when he speaks about making “judgment” in 8:16? Who brings witness against them (8:18)?

2. How should we explain the Jews’ apparent misunderstanding (8:19, 22, 25, 27) of Jesus’ statements about himself?

3. Based on the nearby context, does Jesus seem to place much trust in the “many” who “believed in him” (8:30)?

4. What would it look like if the Jews were doing “the works of Abraham” (8:39)? Since they are not doing them, who is their father and whose works are they doing (8:40–41)?

5. What terms does Jesus use to describe his relationship with the Father in this chapter (8:18, 26, 28–29, 42, 49, 54–55)?

6. Why do the Jews attempt to stone Jesus in 8:59? What does that indicate about his statement in 8:58?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

7. What does this passage tell us about Jesus? How does it help us to understand “his place in the sweep of redemptive history”?²

8. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

9. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

² D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 102.