

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #39

John 8:21-30

Every now and then we learn of some mentally deranged person who walks into a school or place of employment and opens fire, killing innocent people and often killing themselves. Just recently, some people who knew the killer said, “We thought we really knew him, but I guess we didn’t.” That is the way it was when Jesus Christ was on earth. Many people thought they knew Him but they really didn’t.

The people who were questioning Jesus Christ were absolutely convinced that they were right with God. They were religious, they kept laws and they were leaders. They thought they had a true and total grasp of salvation and Jesus would tell them - “you shall die in your sins.”

When we come to John chapter 8 and particularly this section - we come to a sober and serious and threatening phrase that occurs three times, once in verse 21 and twice in verse 24 - “you shall die in your sins.” In verse 21 the noun “sin” is singular and in verse 24 the noun “sins” is plural. The singular noun in verse 21 means that if you refuse to believe in Jesus Christ, that sin (singular) of unbelief will send you to hell. The sin is the rejection of Jesus Christ. The plural noun sins in verse 24 means that if you refuse to believe in Jesus Christ, all of your specific sins, that you have ever committed personally, will send you to hell. Jesus Christ is the only chance any person has for everlasting life.

Now the passage is even more threatening than this. Apparently there is a time frame in which one may believe on Jesus Christ and once that time frame has expired, that person will die in his or her sin. There is a very sober lesson to be seen from this text and it is this:

UNLESS A PERSON IS WILLING TO PLACE ALL OF HIS FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST, THE GOD /SAVIOR FOR SALVATION, HE WILL DIE IN HIS SINS.

Now Jesus Christ is addressing religious Jews (8:13, 19, 22) who had the finest religious system of works in existence. Christ was not impressed with their religious system of works and He gives them a twofold warning: **Warning #1** - Your time is running out; **Warning #2** - You will die in your sins.

Now there are six key facts I want us to see:

FACT #1 – Jesus tells the Jews that they will die in their sin. 8:21

We may notice that the adverb “again” indicates that He is about to tell them the truth one more time. This is not the first time He had given them this theological information. Some of the Jews apparently wanted to know whether they would get another chance to be saved once this life was over. This verse answers that question. Jesus says you make a choice now, while you are alive, because you will not get another chance once this life is over. The Gospel of John does not give one ray of hope for any who die having not believed on Jesus Christ. Now this verse gives the Jews a very serious warning with the following four features:

(Feature #1) - Jesus is going away.

The truth is, He has gone and I cannot wait until He comes back.

(Feature #2) - Jews will seek Jesus.

There are those who teach that anyone, at anytime may always find love and forgiveness with God. That is not quite theologically accurate -

Psalm 18:41 - "They cried for help, but there was none to save, even to the LORD, but He did not answer them."

Isaiah 1:15 - "So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you, Yes, Even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood."

Zechariah 7:13 - "And it came about that just as He called and they would not listen, so they called and I would not listen, says the LORD of hosts."

Just because one wants to seek God, does not mean God lets them find Him. The Jews would seek Jesus and would die in their sin.

(Feature #3) - Jews will die in their sin.

There are many who postulate that God is such a God of love that He could not ever send one to hell. Look carefully at what Jesus is saying right here.

(Feature #4) - Jesus is going to a place that they are not capable of going.

Don't miss this - **there is nothing in and of yourself that you can do to go to heaven** - "you cannot come." It isn't that people don't want to go to heaven, they cannot go there because of their sin. If a person dies in his sin, he cannot go to where Jesus went, to heaven. Because in heaven there is no sin. The problem every person has is a sin problem. So the right question to ask is - **what can we do so we will not die in our sin? The only answer is - "believe on Jesus Christ."**

Now the obvious implication of this verse is that their time for believing on Jesus Christ was running out. Once it did run out they would not be able to have their sins forgiven. These Jews had been familiar with Jesus Christ for about 2 1/2 years and time was almost up. They face a very real threat of never seeing Jesus Christ again.

I truly believe this - if you have had opportunity to be exposed to the power of the Word of God and you persistently refuse to respond to God's amazing grace, you reach a point in which God permits your time to run out. You obviously can reach a point in which it is impossible for you to repent and the end result is you die in your sin.

FACT #2 – The Jews have no idea what Jesus is talking about. 8:22

Jesus Christ has been hammering truth that one must believe in Him to have their sins forgiven. One does not need be a rocket scientist to figure this out. He has just told these people that they risk dying in their sin and the only thing they think about is that He said - He was going someplace they could not come. Instead of turning from trusting themselves to turning to trusting Him, they start making up their own interpretations as to what He meant.

I have personally seen this - you clearly teach something and then people make up their own interpretation. One time, I was teaching on the truth that works for a believer can earn them rewards - and someone went and said I was teaching a works salvation.

They wondered whether or not He was going to kill Himself. They actually think that Jesus is going to commit suicide. Josephus said that the Jews thought suicide was a sin that would put one into the darkest regions of hell. Suicide is certainly wrong, but it does not send one to hell. What sends one to hell is not believing on Jesus Christ. They didn't wonder about their own eternal destiny. Truth is, Jesus will lay down His own life (John 10:11, 18). **He will not kill Himself, but He will allow Himself to be killed.**

Here Christ is warning these people they will die in their sin and that does not faze them. In all reality, they are the ones committing spiritual and eternal suicide.

FACT #3 – Jesus contrasts His heavenly origin with our earthly origin. 8:23

Jesus does not respond to their suicide insanity. Jesus Christ was the God/man. He was fully God and fully man. Now His assessment of humanity is this: 1) All people of this world are from below and from this world. 2) Jesus is the only Being who is not of this world but comes from above. Jesus was not a normal human who gained enlightenment in religion. He was from above. The Mormon religion teaches that a person previously existed in heaven prior to coming to this earth. That teaching is absolutely false. Jesus Christ makes it very clear right here in this verse that every human being has come from below and from this earth. **He is the only One who came to this earth from heaven.**

FACT #4 – Jesus warns that if people do not believe in Him, they will die in their sins. 8:24

We will all die because we are sinners, but one who goes to hell will do so because he has rejected the Savior. Now I want to point out something that is so very important in this verse and in chapter 8. Jesus Christ identifies Himself as the "I Am." He does this in 8:24, 28, 58. One must come to terms with the fact that Jesus Christ is God. He is the God/Savior. He is the "Great I AM." Now Christ warns "unless" you come to terms with who He is, you will die in your sins. That word "unless" means that eternal life will be "nonexistent" if one does not believe in Jesus Christ. If you do not come to terms with Jesus Christ you will die in your sins, it is a fact. Every sin you have ever committed will send you to hell. All you have to do to go to hell is nothing. **Jesus Christ in this verse demands that you either recognize or reject His Deity.** Jesus Christ promises that if you do not personally believe in Him as the only God/Savior you will die in your sins. **Notice the matter of your salvation is your belief, not your works.**

FACT #5 – Jews ask Jesus who He is. 8:25a

He has just told them He is the “I AM.” The Jews knew there was talk of Him being the Messiah., of Him being God and the God/Savior. So they wanted to know “who He was.” You can toy with the idea of who Christ is for too long. You can hear things and learn things about Jesus Christ and **never** really respond. You can question spiritual things the rest of your life, until you die in your sins.

FACT #6 – Jesus reveals to the Jews who He is. 8:25b-27

There are those who say you should never say anything religiously offensive. I want you to carefully notice how blunt Jesus Christ is in what He says. He offers seven point blank teachings here: Jesus says I am who I have been telling you I am from the beginning.

(Teaching #1) - He is who He is from the beginning (8:25b) -
I have been in existence from the beginning of everything.

(Teaching #2) - He is the judge (8:26a) - I am your judge and can judge everything about you.

(Teaching #3) - He is God the Son, sent by God the Father (8:26b) - He is the true God and so am I.

(Teaching #4) - He is the Teacher of God’s truth because God the Father taught Him what to teach. 8:26c - Everything Jesus taught came from a Divine classroom in which the Father, taught the Son.

Notice verse 27 - these Jews did not realize the connection He had with God the Father. One will only begin to grasp truth about God by believing on Jesus Christ. It is the same problem today. People cannot seem to get into their brain the idea that there are three members of the Godhead - God the Father; God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. One God yet three distinct Persons of the Godhead.

(Teaching #5) - He is the One who will be crucified. 8:28a

The idea of being lifted up is a reference to the “crucifixion” (John 12:32-33). Jesus is predicting that He is the One who would be crucified **by them**. Now one must ask, how is it possible for God to be crucified? How could sinful finite people crucify God? Only by Divine permission. The entire program of God demands a God/Savior and there will come a day in which every person in the world will recognize that Jesus Christ is the only God/Savior who can keep one out of hell. The problem for most is that it will be too late when they acknowledge this.

(Teaching #6) - He is the Son of Man. 8:28b

The title “Son of Man” was a title used by Daniel to describe One who would appear before and as the Ancient of Days who would rule the world (Daniel 7:13-14). The emphasis here is on Christ’s Divine humanity that will one day rule the world.

By virtue of the fact that Christ uses this title in this context - He is basically saying to Israel - **I am the One who will eventually be crowned ruler of the world but I will first be crucified as the Savior of the world.**

Notice Christ says when I am crucified, you will know that I am the "I AM" who will One day rule the world.

(**Teaching #7**) - He does everything in precise conformity to the will of God the Father.
8:28c-29

Jesus Christ was never deserted by the Father. God the Father sent the Son, but He was always present with the Son.

Jesus Christ does nothing by His own initiative. Everything He did and said He did in complete conformity with God the Father. Jesus Christ spoke in exactly the way God the Father wanted. He was so vitally linked to God the Father that they were always together.

Now notice the end of verse 29 - **He always did what was pleasing to God the Father.** No other person can make this claim. Jesus Christ never looked back over a day and said - I wish I would have done that or said that or not done this or that. Every day was a day of perfection of Him carrying out the will of God. It is not that way with us for we have all sinned.

This is strong stuff. Unless one comes to terms with Jesus Christ, he will die in his sins. But notice verse 30 - many came to believe as a result of this very teaching. The question is will you believe?

Listen, if you will believe on Jesus Christ, you will have life. If you reject Jesus Christ you will die in your sins.