



# International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

## **John 8:12-20 Commentary New International Version**

**Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse [International Bible Study Commentary](#). **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Study Forum](#).

**(John 8:12) When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."**

In John 1:3, we learned that all things came into being through Jesus. When God created the world, in Genesis 1:3, God's first words were, "Let there be light." Jesus created the world's light and all the sources of all light throughout the universe. Jesus is also the spiritual light and life of the world. To avoid walking in or practicing a way of life described as darkness, we must follow Jesus day-by-day. In John 1:5, we learned that the darkness cannot comprehend or overcome the light. Jesus' use of "I am" in this verse is His reference to His deity as in John 6:35, "I am the bread of life." The LORD provided bread in the wilderness to feed the Israelites after He freed them from slavery in Egypt. The LORD also led them with a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day. Jesus is the spiritual light and life that leads us through the moral and spiritual darkness of this world. Moses led the Israelites out of physical slavery and into the Promised Land. Jesus leads His followers out of spiritual slavery and slavery to sin into eternal life. To have spiritual life and light we must follow Jesus.

An often-used synonym for the spiritual light that Jesus gives is “truth.” When we follow Jesus, we follow the truth—the truth of Jesus’ words in the Gospels and the truth of the whole of Scripture. Spiritual darkness includes the moral darkness and spiritual falsehoods that lead to death, but the truth of Jesus can lead us out of moral and spiritual darkness and into the truth of God and all reality (for Jesus created all the reality of the world). Those of whom the Bible calls “this world” walk in moral and spiritual darkness. When Jesus spoke to the religious authorities and unbelievers in John 8:23, He said, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of ‘this world,’ I am not of ‘this world’.” Therefore, without the help of the Holy Spirit unbelievers will not comprehend the light (the truth) that they often seek to overcome when they “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18).

As Christians, to help unbelievers we must pray for them as well as teach them the truth of the Scriptures. Those who follow Jesus do not walk in moral and spiritual darkness; rather, they become lights that shine in the darkness. In Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus said, “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” To let our lights shine we must walk in the truth of Jesus that includes Jesus’ words and deeds. As Christians, we must walk in the eternal life and light that Jesus gives us now. In John 14:6, Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” If we follow Jesus and His teachings daily, we will have the light we need to walk in this life, and we will always be with Jesus.

**(John 8:13) The Pharisees challenged him, “Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.”**

The Pharisees did not refute the truth of Jesus’ words, for they could not overcome or comprehend the truth. They challenged Jesus by saying His testimony (like a witness in a trial) was not valid (legally acceptable). Because it was not valid, they said His testimony should not be accepted. They said His witnessing about himself was not valid because it did not

conform to the Law of Moses regarding testimony in a legal proceeding or trial. In Deuteronomy 19:15, we learn that to legally substantiate that something happened or is true there must be two witnesses. In their efforts to suppress the truth, the Pharisees wanted to completely disqualify Jesus as a witness for himself; they claimed that Jesus testified in His own behalf and there was no second witness.

**(John 8:14) Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going.**

Jesus replied that He was emotionally, mentally, and spiritually qualified to testify in His own behalf because He knew where He had come from (from His Father in heaven) and where He was going (back to His Father in heaven) when His saving work in the world was done. Jesus knew himself, but because the Pharisees did not know Jesus, that He was sent by the Father and returning to the Father and that He was the Son of God, they did not consider His testifying about himself as valid. If they had known God and Jesus, they would have accepted His testimony as the testimony of the divine Son of God.

**(John 8:15) You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one.**

Jesus accused the Pharisees of judging by their own “this world” standards and not God’s standards. They claimed to judge by the Law of Moses, but their words and actions showed that they judged by their own sinful human standards. The standards of darkness and of this world motivated them to try to trap Jesus and kill Him on more than one occasion. Jesus revealed how they judged by human standards instead of God’s standards when they brought the woman caught in adultery for Him to judge and condemn. Following the Law of Love, Jesus did not come to judge and condemn sinners, but to save them, so He did not condemn the woman. The Pharisees did not really judge according to what the Bible taught; instead, they judged others based on their own human sinfulness, their Pharisee-made laws and rules that set aside the Law of God, the Law of Love—just as

most governments (human and religious) of this world do today.

Jesus did not judge people based on human standards, but by God's standards as revealed in the Scriptures, God's Word (up to that time before Jesus' commands in the Gospels were written). Jesus did not come to judge the world but to save it. In John 3:19-21, we learned, "And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God." The Pharisees judged by human standards that were evil; therefore, they condemned Jesus who is "the true light of the world," who came to save the world and not judge.

**(John 8:16) But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me.**

Jesus said that even if He judged, and He will judge on the Last Day when He returns, His judgment is valid because He is not judging by himself. The Father and He, two witnesses, judge together; therefore, His judgment is valid according to the Law of Moses rightly interpreted and applied. Jesus and the Father together make valid judgments because of who they are: God the Father and the Son of God, who the Father sent to save and not condemn. Yet, judgment does come in relation to Jesus. In John 3:16-18, we learned, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God."

**(John 8:17) In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true.**

To substantiate what He taught (and as an example to all believers) Jesus referred to the Scriptures. Jesus always upheld the Law of God in the

Hebrew Scriptures and gave the correct divine interpretation and application of God's law. After making the claims about who the Father and who the Son were, and indicating that because of who they were their judgment was valid, Jesus referred them back to the Word of God written. As well as being divine, the Father and the Son fulfilled the Law of Moses in the Scriptures. They were God and they judged by God standards—not human standards or the standards of this world.

**(John 8:18) I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.”**

In several ways throughout John's gospel, Jesus declared that He was the Son of God and His Father gave testimony that He was the Son of God. The signs and works Jesus did that accompanied His words about himself were some of the ways the Father who sent Him into the world gave witness in behalf of Jesus. In John 10:37-38, Jesus told the Jews, “If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.” The Father and Jesus always worked and spoke together in perfect agreement.

**(John 8:19) Then they asked him, “Where is your father?” “You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”**

For the most part, with Nicodemus being a notable exception, the religious leaders refused to believe Jesus or accept the signs He performed as from God. They chose to remain in darkness and suppress the truth Jesus' signs pointed toward because their deeds were evil. Therefore, even though they knew many facts about God from the Scriptures, they did not know God. They knew neither Jesus nor the Father. Jesus then made the amazing statement to them (and to us) that means: to know Me is to know the Father. Throughout the Bible, Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father.

**(John 8:20) He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.**

The temple treasury was not where the priests stored the temple treasures or offerings. The treasury was where the priests collected offerings for various temple purposes in trumpet-shaped boxes. It was near, or in the place in the temple, where the women could meet but could go no further into the temple. By teaching in the temple treasury, Jesus could teach both men and women. The Pharisees wanted to arrest Jesus. The scribes and Pharisees tried to entrap Jesus. The temple police had been sent to arrest Jesus. The only significant reason that John gives for Jesus not been arrested after His stupendous claims about himself is “His hour had not yet come.” It was not God’s perfect timing, perfect place, and perfect way for Jesus to be arrested to fulfill the Old Testament prophets, and “His hour” eventually came when He glorified the Father and the Father glorified Him.

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. What types of light are there? What type of light is Jesus?
2. How can someone avoid walking in darkness? What kind of darkness did Jesus mean?
3. What standards did the Pharisees use when judging? What standards did Jesus use when judging?
4. Who were or what were Jesus’ two witnesses in His behalf?
5. If you know Jesus, who else will you know? Who did the Pharisees not know?

© 2020 by L.G. Parkhurst, Jr. All Rights Reserved.

*Permission Granted for Not for Profit Use.*

Contact: P.O. Box 1052, Edmond, Oklahoma, 73083 and [lgp@theiblf.com](mailto:lgp@theiblf.com).