

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY
October 2003

Topic: John 7: 25 to 8: 11

NOTE: This is our third major section of the Summary Chart of John's Gospel. The overview of these seven sessions is to define the Work of God. In my reflections, this definition has two parts: "To do the work of God," and the "Validity of Jesus' Teachings." Today's session continues to define "The work of God" through the words Sent from God.

I. Read through the assignment at one time.

The basic issue to solve is from where did Jesus come? Remember, the term "Jesus" always implies the Logos or the Christ. In this assignment, even the ordinary Jews reminds us of this [7:26, 41]. Also, it is interesting to note that John reminds his readers that many of the Jews were in Diaspora, or dispersed, among the Greek-speaking world (7:35).

To solve this issue we must dig deeper into the words "faith" (7: 31), and "sin" (8: 7ff).

FAITH--

Note that there is a difference between "faith" and "belief." Belief is a system or an organization of principles, philosophy or theology. Basically, we believe we are Christians; i.e., we have organized ourselves as followers of the Christ. Our systems of belief are diverse leading us into denominationalism.

On the other hand, faith is not a system, rather it is profound trust. Faith is the practice of taking the leap into the full trust of The Guarantor (At-One-Ment; Meaningfulness; God). We can believe many things, but we can only faith in God.

Consequently, when the writer John tells us, "Still, many in the crowd put their faith in him," these people were pointing to the One to whom Jesus belonged.

SIN-

In the second half of our assignment in 8:1-11, we read this wonderful drama of Jesus, the Pharisees, and the Adulterous Woman. The issue is "sin." Unless we read this very carefully, we get a poor picture of the Law of Moses, and a poorer understanding of "sin."

Sin is never a moral issue. Sin always is the indicative: it is The Way Life Is. Sin results in separation. Sin is the defeat of At-One-Ment! Sin separates us from each other, and finally it separates us from Perfect At-One-Ment (God).

Concerning the Law of Moses (The 10 Commandments 8: 5) -

Traditionally, many Christians, and most United Methodists, believe the 10 Commandments are rules to make us holy. Used in this way, holy is a moral category and means pious. This is NOT THE MEANING OF THE WORD HOLY.

The Jews, Jesus, and Christians practice the 10 Commandments because WE ALREADY ARE HOLY! God as The Guarantor makes us holy. Used in this way, holy is an indicative category, and represents The Way Life Is.

Separation-or Sin-also is The Way Life Is. Hence our dilemma. At once, we are Holy, and we are Sinners. What to do?

DON'T DO A THING. THERE IS NOTHING TO DO. ONLY ACCEPT YOUR ACCEPTANCE AS A GIFT FROM THAT WHICH UNITES US (GOD'S GRACE!).

This is Jesus' point. "He [or she] who already does not live in separation, cast the first stone." Not one of the Pharisees, nor one of us, could throw the stone. Also, this is why Jesus could not condemn the adulterous woman.

Wait a minute. What about the curious statement made to the adulterous woman by Jesus in 8:11, ". . . leave your life of sin?"

There is only one way to "leave the sinful life," and this is through a Faith in The Guarantor. The Faith that Jesus The Logos reveals.

One more observation. Our faith is not in Jesus. Rather, our faith is in Christ/Logos revealed in and through Jesus. OBSERVE CAREFULLY: No one is saved through Jesus! We are saved through a personal relationship to THE CHRIST/LOGOS revealed through Jesus. (Carefully read 7:31; 7:37 - 40.) Today, in our own time, the word "Jesus" carries the whole burden. However, we must be clear about this or we fall into idolatry.

Three additional words must be said.

First, we can observe where Jesus is from. Jesus (the Christ/Logos) tells us that he is from the place of the "Spirit," which also is the source of the "streams of living water." (7:35 - 40.)

Second, this passage contains an historical note concerning 7:53 - 8:11. Obviously, this material was added much later. Evidently, some biblical scholar needed to hammer home the point I'm making. I want to thank him or her. <:-)

Third, our writer, John, wants to make the point that the Jews and the Pharisees mistake who Jesus the Christ/Logos is, because they don't remember that Jesus is of the line of David. This lineage is from Bethlehem and not Nazareth! (7:25 -27; 7:41b - 44.) Jesus was raised in Nazareth in northern Israel, but his heritage home is that of King David in Bethlehem in southern Israel.

II. Now, re-read the assignment again.

III. Discuss, or brood on, how this discussion supports the material revealed in the

Summary Chart of the Gospel of John. The "Work of God Defined," and in the section "To do the work of God," and The Christ/Logos was "Sent from God."