

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
IHOP BIBLE STUDY  
October 2003  
(Pownol, Vermont)

**Topic: John 8: 12 to 8: 42**

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 is the first study in this last section. This is the first of four studies.

I. I. Read the assignment in one reading.

The Key Verse in this section is 8:23, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will certainly die in your sins."

This key verse is supported in 8:40 in the statement, ". . . a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God."

**THE FIRST WORK OF GOD JESUS VALIDATES**

What is the source of such confidence? The "head trip" response is the most obvious, "Jesus is God's Son." This is wrong for all the right reasons. The first question to ask is "what does it mean to be God's Son? At this point, our key verse above is helpful when we do a "gut trip analysis."

Let's remind ourselves that the writer, John, is addressing Jews in Diaspora living in a Roman/Greek Culture world. When John writes of Jesus reporting he is "from above," Jesus is thinking like a Jew and speaking like a Greek. **Greeks are dualistic philosophers where there is a realm of truth, and a realm of this world of darkness;** they believe in a REALM of truth that is not of this world! **Jews are monistic philosophers: God is One!** This is the truth Jesus is conveying!

I am from above. You are from below. (8: 23)

I am not of this world. (8: 23)

I am the light. (8: 12)

Second, it is helpful to remind ourselves that the God of Jesus is not an *object to be studied*, rather *God is a relationship*. So intimate is Jesus in this relationship that Jesus considered God his father. In this sense, Jesus is speaking of the relationship and not a physical father.

Third, God is understood as The Perfect At-One-Ment. Jesus understood this TRUTH so clearly that he embodied within himself "the truth" (8: 40), and as "the light" (8:12). The concept of "the light" is clearly aimed at the Greek mindset. Darkness is associated with *this world* while light is associated with *the truth*.

**THE SECOND WORK OF GOD JESUS VALIDATES**

An understanding of sin is the second thing Jesus validates concerning the work of God. (See 8: 23 – 26; 8: 31 – 34.) Again, "sin" is not an object to be studied. Instead, it is a relationship we take to God as the Perfect At-One-Ment. Anything that keeps us **separated** from the love of Perfect At-One-Ment is sin! Consequently, any kind of separation is an activity of sin.

Again, this truth Jesus understood and embodied. Also, Jesus knew that sin is spiritual death; in separation we live without spiritual oxygen. The longer we “sin,” the nearer we get to spiritual death. Consequently, when we live separated from our neighbors (spouses included!), and/or we live separated from ourselves (self depreciation/self-aggrandizement), and we live separated from Perfect At-One-Ment, we are dead spiritually.

This supports the material in 8: 31 about knowing the truth that sets you free, and in 8: 34 concerning being slaves to sin.

II. II. With this background, brood on the following:

What does it mean to “die in our sins?” 8: 23

What does it mean to be “my disciples” of Christ? 8: 31

What does it mean in 8:41 “We are not illegitimate children?”

What does it mean to judge by the standards of God, “who sent me?” 8:16

III. III. Do background research on “The Son of Man.” 8: 28. Find out where Jesus got this statement, and why does our writer of this gospel included it?

IV. In light of our brooding above, what does it mean to “really be disciples” of Jesus Christ?