

# Jesus – The Light of the World

John 8

Part 10 of the series – Three Years That Changed the World

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. (John 8:12)

- ✓ This is “probably” where John continues his narrative from chapter 7 where Jesus engages in dialogue with the Pharisees and other religious leaders
- ✓ Before we get to this second of the seven “I Am” statements made by Jesus that are recorded by John in his Gospel account – we must discuss the first eleven verses of John 8 as some translations include these verses, yet others do not.
- ✓ John 8:1-11 is not without “textual” controversy as most Bible Scholars conclude that John didn’t write the first 11 verses of chapter 8 and we’ll spend a few slides talking about why that is the case as it is important.
- ✓ For now – let’s rewind the tape and look at John 8:1-11 and then come back to verse 12 which sets the stage for Jesus to have further discussion with the Pharisees and religious leaders as to who he is.

***"Then they all went home, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts,** where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again, he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." (John 7:53-8:11)*

- ✓ Nearly all the textual scholars agree that these verse were not a part of the "original" manuscripts of John's Gospel account.
- ✓ The earliest and most reliable manuscripts do not contain John 7:53-8:11
- ✓ Most conclude this passage (taken from "oral tradition") was added to "later" Greek manuscripts by those who made copies (copyists)

## Several clarifying items before we look at the John 7:53-8:11 passage

- ✓ The Textus Receptus (Traditional Greek New Testament texts used to translate the King James Version – KJV, the German Bible and other English Translations) includes John 7:53—8:11.
- ✓ However, more modern translations, such as the NIV and the ESV, include these verses but choose to bracket or italicize it as not being original because the earliest (and many would say the most reliable) Greek manuscripts do not include the story of the woman taken in adultery.
- ✓ Several reasons as to why it is not included in modern translations:
  - The style and vocabulary of writing differ from the rest of John's Gospel account
  - The passage (John 7:53-8:11) interrupts the sequence of events from John 7:52)
  - There is overwhelming consensus among textual scholars that it is more of an oral tradition inserted here for an unidentified purpose.

## Several clarifying items before we look at the John 7:53-8:11 passage

- ✓ The question of “Divine Inspiration” comes into consideration:
  - If John didn’t write these verses then who did, when were they written and were these words “inspired” by the Holy Spirit (The Third Person in the Trinity)?
  - Keep in mind that with utmost certainty we can conclude that the Scriptures are inspired by God in their original writings.

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture is God-breathed** and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (II Timothy 3:14-17)

“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, **but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.** (II Peter 1:20-21)

## Several clarifying items before we look at the John 7:53-8:11 passage

- ✓ The question of “Divine Inspiration” comes into consideration:
  - The original autographs (written by the author) are inerrant (without error), but none of the original autographs are in existence today. What we have today are thousands of ancient manuscripts, documents and citations that have allowed us to (virtually) re-create those original autographs. Our translations (KJV, NIV, ESV, NASB etc.) are made from those recreations of the original autographs.
  - When we come across a passage such as John 7:53-8:11 that is in question by textual scholars, we consider their findings and draw our conclusions. There is no “doctrinal” significance to this passage and if inserted later by someone other than John we can accept that given John told us; *“Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name”* (John 20:30-31)

***“Then they all went home, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them.”*** (John 7:53-8:2)

- ✓ Given the dispute over whether this passage (John 7:53-8:11) was written by John then it is challenging to determine where the passage fits chronologically in the life and ministry of Jesus.
- ✓ This passage seems to parallel Luke 21:37-38 which would place the timing of this account later – so perhaps more during the passion week and just prior to the crucifixion of Jesus.
- ✓ Regardless of the timing of the event – the passage places Jesus in the temple courts with people gathered around him to hear him teach which was something he did on a regular basis.



*“The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again, he stooped down and wrote on the ground.” (John 8:3-8)*

- ✓ This was an odd dialogue between the Scribes and Pharisees given that Jesus was there in the temple courts to teach truth to the people.
- ✓ These Scribes and Pharisees were not interested in seeking justice but were solely motivated to trap Jesus into saying something that they could use against him to destroy his credibility



## Some interesting observations worth noting

- ✓ They only bring the woman who was accused of adultery, but this sin involves 2 people – where was the man?
- ✓ It is true that adultery was forbidden (7<sup>th</sup> commandment – Exodus 20:14) and punishable by death (Leviticus 20:10)
- ✓ What was the trap they were trying to set:
  - If he objected to having her stoned to death, then he would be guilty of opposing Mosaic Law and in their minds, this would discredit his Messianic claim
  - If he agreed with them to have her killed, then it would destroy his emphasis on showing compassion toward sinners (Matthew 9:10-12)

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- ✓ Jesus initially didn't answer their question but instead chose to write (we aren't told what) on the ground
- ✓ One has to wonder if the Scribes and Pharisees felt they had Jesus trapped and their persistence in questioning him probably added to their frustration.
- ✓ The response by Jesus was unpretentious and at the same time it was profound
  - He didn't minimize the woman's guilt
  - He mercifully spared the woman from death

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(John 8:7-11)

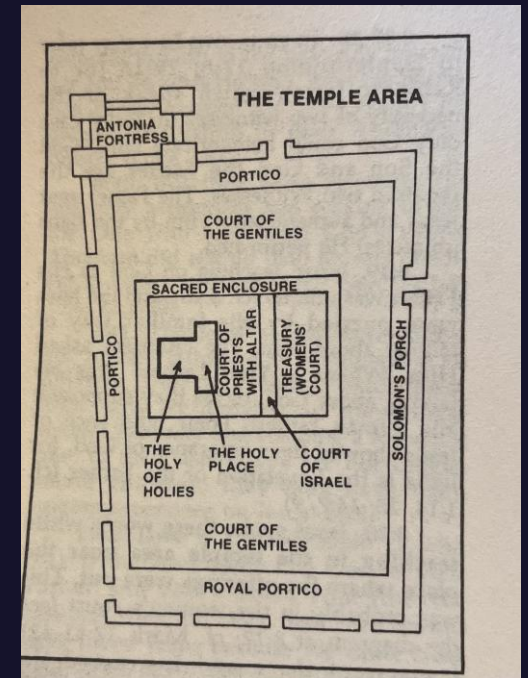
- ✓ Those who came to shame Jesus in turn left his presence ashamed
- ✓ Those who came to condemn the woman left condemned themselves
- ✓ That left only Jesus in the presence of the woman and yet instead of condemning her he chose to forgive her of her sin – **something only God can do.** He further instructs her to abandon that sinful lifestyle and instead live rightly.

“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.” The Pharisees challenged him, “Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.” (John 8:12-13)

- ✓ A little reminder of the context and narrative to set the stage for this important teaching/declaration by Jesus (“I am the light of the world”):
  - “After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him. But when the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near, Jesus’ brothers said to him, “Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do.” (John 7:1-3)
  - “However, after his brothers had left for the festival, he went also, not publicly, but in secret. Now at the festival the Jewish leaders were watching for Jesus and asking, “Where is he?” (John 7:10-11)
  - Not until halfway through the festival did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. The Jews there were amazed and asked, “How did this man get such learning without having been taught?” (John 7:14-15)
  - “On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them” (John 7:37-38)

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- ✓ A little reminder of the context and narrative to set the stage for this important teaching/declaration by Jesus (“I am the light of the world”):
  - One of the major features of the Feast of Tabernacles was the lighting of giant lamps in the women’s court in the temple
  - The light from the lamps would illuminate the temple area
  - The people would gather together to sing praises
  - The light was a reminder of how God was with them during their wilderness wanderings (Numbers 9:15-23)



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- ✓ This discourse/sermon by Jesus was a continuation of his teachings found in John 7
- ✓ It was no accident that Jesus made the declaration; “I am the light of the world” during the Feast of Tabernacles when the large lamps were burning.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:1-4)

- ✓ Jesus is speaking of salvation when he says; “Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life”

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- ✓ Walking in the “Light” is what makes a believer (follower of Jesus) a believer
- ✓ Christ followers do not walk in darkness:
  - “This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: **God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.**” (1 John 1:5)
  - “If we claim to have fellowship with him and **yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth**” (1 John 1:6)
  - “**But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.**” (1 John 1:7)



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- ✓ Given the response by the Pharisees, it’s hard to determine if they fully understood the “I am” claim as they didn’t publicly show a claim of blasphemy against Jesus
- ✓ Instead, they challenged the validity of Jesus’ claim of being the “light of the world” and his call for the hearers to follow him
- ✓ In their minds (the Pharisees) they gave no credence to Jesus’ claim, and they used an Old Testament legal technicality that required more proof than just “self authentication” to make a claim valid.
- ✓ There were plenty of others who could attest to the validity of Christ’s claims, but the Pharisees (the devil’s spin masters) were not interested in getting to the truth

“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. You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.” (John 8:14-18)

- ✓ The Pharisees were completely ignorant of Jesus’ heavenly origin and destiny
- ✓ This made them unable to judge Jesus because they only saw his flesh (humanity) but completely misjudged his deity.
- ✓ Jesus (at this point in time) did not come to judge people (that will come later) but instead he came to “seek and to save those who were lost” (John 3:17, Luke 19:10)

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(John 8:14-18)

- ✓ The phrase; “in your own law” could have been referring to Deuteronomy 17:6 and or Deuteronomy 19:15 but the application of those verses doesn’t fit this scenario. As such, Jesus is probably referring to their “rabbinical law”
- ✓ Whether it is the Old Testament passage or the traditions of their Rabbinical Law that Jesus is referring to, He is saying that only God could authenticate him and as such those are his 2 witnesses; God the Father and God the Son. The Pharisees clearly missed that point.

“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.” 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.” (John 8:19-20)

- ✓ The Pharisees were clearly confused on which father Jesus was referring to, but Jesus was not confused at all
- ✓ Had the Pharisees truly known God (The Father) like they thought they did then they would have recognized that Jesus was God.
- ✓ It is abundantly clear what Jesus is declaring here, He and the Father are One

Later in another exchange with the Jews who opposed him – “Jesus answered, I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father’s name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one” (John 10:25-30)

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- ✓ No matter how much power and authority that the Pharisees thought they had they were limited in what they could do as far as Jesus was concerned
- ✓ Jesus was working on God’s timetable and when it was his time to go to the cross to give his life as a sacrifice for the sins of man then and only then could they seize him and proceed with their diabolical plan to have him killed.
- ✓ Although the Pharisees prided themselves on knowing God, they (by their rejection of Jesus) revealed their blindness and hard heartedness toward God and his purposes.

“Once more Jesus said to them, “I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come.” This made the Jews ask, “Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, ‘Where I go, you cannot come’?” But he continued, “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 he, you will indeed die in your sins.” (John 8:21-24)

- ✓ In the same way that Jesus’ time was short, their (the Pharisees and other religious leaders) opportunity to trust in Jesus and submit to his authority was also limited.
- ✓ These self-righteous religious leaders were simply unwilling to believe in Jesus making them unforgiven, unredeemed, and unprepared to meet God.
- ✓ Jesus was going to a place where those who refused to believe in him can never come – “they will die in their sins” making it impossible to be with God.

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- ✓ Some conclude this was some type of mockery by the religious leaders toward Jesus. They naturally assumed they were going to heaven and the claim by them that Jesus spoke of killing himself would mean he (Jesus) was destined for hell.
- ✓ It is true that Jesus would give his life voluntarily, but he would not die by his own hand (commit suicide) but instead by the very ones who mock him now; “This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross” (Acts 2:23)



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- ✓ Jesus makes a direct contrast with those who oppose him revealing they were from completely different kingdoms; his home is heaven (above) and their home is of this world (below)
- ✓ They (the religious leaders) represented all that was evil making them blind to the truth and Jesus represented all that was good revealing he is the **source of truth**
- ✓ Jesus states they would die in their sins if they failed to believe that “I am he” meaning he was declaring to be God – “The I Am”. Those who reject him cannot be saved (go to where Jesus is going).

“Who are you?” they asked. “Just what I have been telling you from the beginning,” Jesus replied. “I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world.” They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.” Even as he spoke, many believed in him.” (John 8:25-30)

- ✓ The cross (where Jesus would give his life as a ransom for those who believe) would reveal that everything Jesus was telling them was true.
- ✓ The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ vindicates every claim made by Jesus as well as every claim by the apostles and prophets that Jesus was the Messiah
- ✓ There will be those who believe in Jesus at the present time, while others will believe later (Acts 2:36-37) but for those who don't they stand condemned.

“To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.” Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” They answered him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?” Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:31-36)

- ✓ One of the many things we learn from these encounters are that some and often many “believe in Jesus” because Jesus teaches truth (liberation from the bondage of sin by believing in him) which contrasts with what the religious leaders taught which continued the cycle (works of the flesh) of remaining in bondage to sin.
- ✓ As such, it was possible to “believe” (even the demons do that – James 2:19) in the message of salvation without being truly born again. Continuing in the truth is the sign of a true follower (disciple) of Jesus.

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- ✓ The history of the Jewish people (Israelites) reveals multiple times in which they were “enslaved” (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Syria, Rome) so they (the religious leaders) probably were speaking of “spiritual freedom”
- ✓ The religious leaders thought their security (being one with God) rested in their familial relationship to Abraham and their “religious practices”, but Jesus points out that by rejecting him, they are deceived and have no true relationship to God revealing they need to be set free from their spiritual bondage!

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(John 8:31-36)

- ✓ A son (according to Jewish custom) has permanent rights in the family while a slave has no rights.
- ✓ Although the Jews were descendants of Abraham (part of God’s chosen people) they (as taught here by Jesus) were in danger of forfeiting those rights because of their bondage to sin (Matthew 8:11-12)
- ✓ The truth (taught here by Jesus) is that only those who receive Jesus as the Son of God (regardless of their familial background) can truly be set free from sins bondage

“I know that you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are looking for a way to kill me, because you have no room for my word. I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father. “Abraham is our father,” they answered. “If you were Abraham’s children,” said Jesus, “then you would do what Abraham did. As it is, you are looking for a way to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things.” (John 8:37-40)

- ✓ Being a descendant of Abraham does not guarantee salvation and that is never more evident by what Jesus declares here in this dialogue with the religious leaders
- ✓ They had no room for his words (rejected his miracles, teachings and declarations)
- ✓ Rather than have faith and do as Abraham did (Genesis 15:6, Hebrews 11:8-19) and believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah, they instead are doing what their true father (the Devil/Satan) is telling them to do, which was to reject what Jesus was saying and look for a way to have him killed.

**“You are doing the works of your own father.”** “We are not illegitimate children,” they protested. “The only Father we have is God himself.” Jesus said to them, **“If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God.** I have not come on my own; God sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? **Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires.** He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me? **Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”** (John 8:41-47)

- ✓ This is about as clear as it can get – their father was not God! If God were their father, then they would embrace the words of Jesus and believe in Him.
- ✓ Instead, they will carry out the wishes of their father (the Devil/father of lies) and seek to have Jesus killed showing **they do not belong to God.**



“The Jews answered him, “Aren’t we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?” “I am not possessed by a demon,” said Jesus, “but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. Very truly I tell you, whoever obeys my word will never see death.” (John 8:48-51)

- ✓ To call Jesus a Samaritan would be the equivalent of calling him a traitor/defector from the true “religion” making him a false teacher and one not worth listening to
- ✓ To declare Jesus was demon possessed would suggest he is evil, mad and even unclean and it is ironic that this charge comes on the heels of Jesus’ declaration that they were of their father the devil.
- ✓ This was an attack against Jesus with the intent to dishonor and discredit him
- ✓ The choice was simple; honor Jesus and you honor God. Anyone who obeys the words of Jesus will “never” see death

“At this they exclaimed, “Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?” Jesus replied, “If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.” You are not yet fifty years old,” they said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!” (John 8:52-57)

- ✓ Given the spiritual condition of the religious leaders and their blindness to the truth they were simply ignorant of the truth that Jesus is greater than Abraham. He was before Abraham because he is God.
- ✓ If the religious leaders truly knew God – they would believe Jesus because he is God
- ✓ The affirmation of that was the fact that Jesus and Abraham knew each other

“Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds!” (John 8:57-58)

- ✓ This statement by Jesus; “before Abraham was born, I am” was nothing less than a full and complete claim of deity!
- ✓ The name “I Am” is the most sacred name that is used for God in the written Scriptures. There was no mistake in what Jesus was saying – He existed before Abraham because he is eternal. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning” John 1:1-2)
- ✓ Unwilling to accept this declaration by Jesus, the religious leaders decided to accuse God of blaspheming himself and picked up stones to throw at him with the intent to kill him
- ✓ This wasn’t the time or method of death for Jesus – so he kept it from happening

There are just two responses to the claims of Jesus:

1. If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, “**Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.**” For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (John 10:9-13)
2. “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but **whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son**” (John 3:17-18)