JOHN 8

Before Abraham Was Born, I Am

a woman spared, the Light of the world, the truth that frees, and the I AM of the burning bush

> *"Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, 'I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.'"*
> JOHN 8:12

A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where we are in John

1. John 8 is still the Feast of Booths and its aftermath, still the temple, still the argument of chapter 7 — Who is this man, and where is He from?

2. Before verse 12 comes a passage the NASB prints in brackets: 7:53–8:11, the woman caught in adultery.

3. So how will we study it? As the NASB prints it: honestly bracketed, carefully read.

Go. From Now On Sin No More

A bracketed story, read honestly — a trap, a challenge, and mercy that commands holiness

JOHN 8:11

She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more."]

DAVID GUZIK

Unlikely original; He had the right to the first stone and did not throw it.

R.C. SPROUL

Not in the best manuscripts, yet authentic — "I leave for the ages"; go in forgiveness.

C.H. SPURGEON

A sentence like a drawn sword; He condemned the sin by His own holy life.

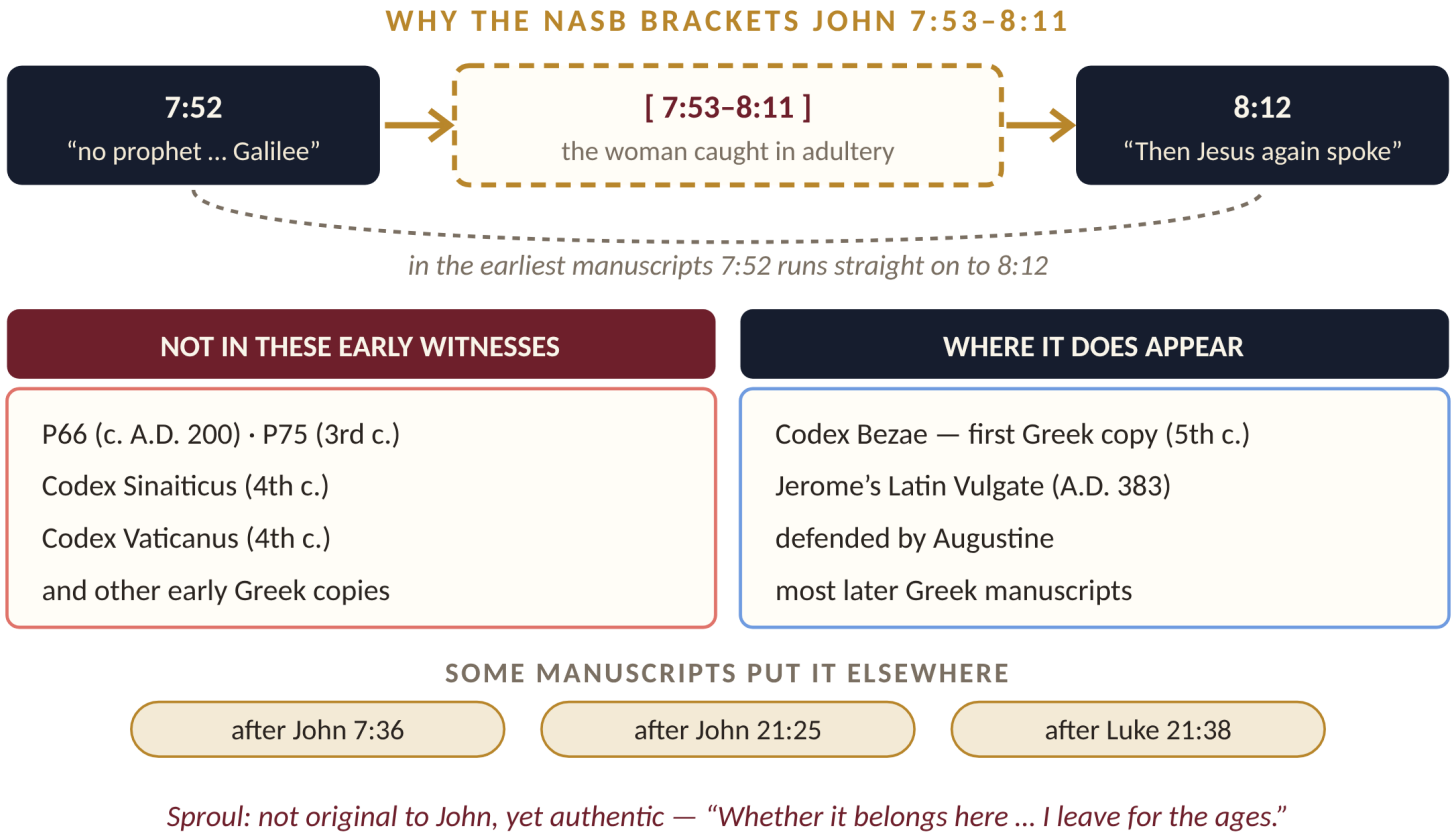
MATTHEW HENRY

Secrecy in sin is a delusion; needless to ask what He wrote.

ἀναμάρτητος
ANAMARTĒTOS · "WITHOUT SIN"

A- (not) + hamartanō (to sin): "sinless."

The bracketed passage



The earliest copies of John go from 7:52 straight to 8:12; the story of the woman is found in later manuscripts, not always in the same place.

I Am the Light of the World

A claim made beside the feast's great lamps, and two witnesses who agree

JOHN 8:12

Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

DAVID GUZIK

Lamps in the Court of the Women; the two witnesses are Jesus and His Father.

R.C. SPROUL

Not a witness to truth but truth incarnate; no Father, no Son.

C.H. SPURGEON

Follow the sun and walk in light; immortal till his work is done.

MATTHEW HENRY

None so blind as those who will not see; the sun under a cloud.

τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου

TO PHŌS TOU KOSMOU · "THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

Phōs (G5457) is light in the widest sense, and in Scripture God's self-revelation, holiness and saving truth.

Unless You Believe That I Am He

Two destinies — dying in sin or knowing Him when He is lifted up

JOHN 8:21

Then He said again to them, "I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come."

DAVID GUZIK

Death makes darkness permanent; the bare "I am" is a claim to deity.

R.C. SPROUL

The only other way to die is in your sins; egō eimi is a title of God.

C.H. SPURGEON

A short, stern sentence for every unbeliever; the Father seen in the uplifted Son.

MATTHEW HENRY

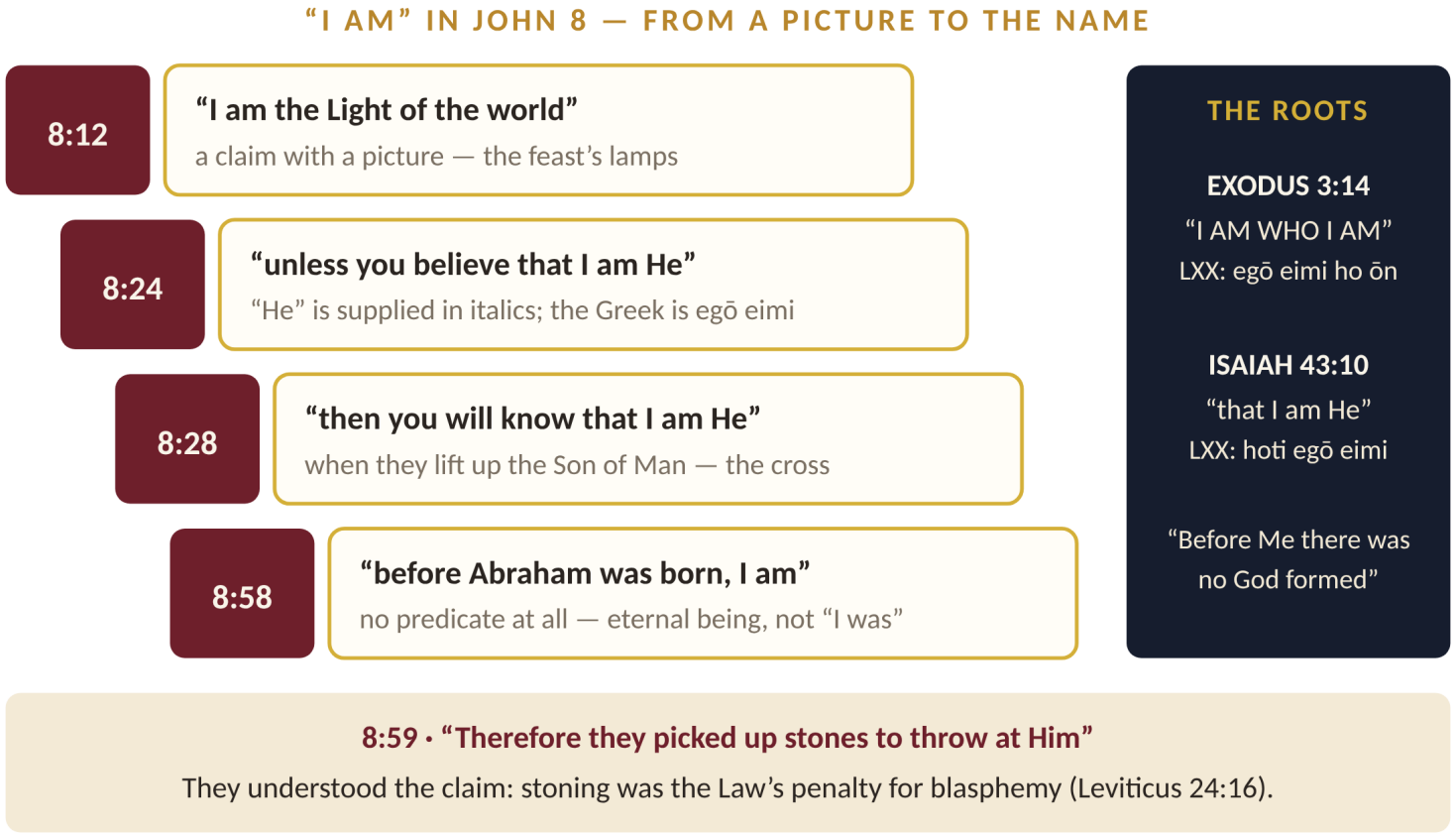
Unbelief is a sin against the remedy; crucified and glorified.

ἐγώ εἰμι

EGŌ EIMI · "I AM (HE)"

Eimi (G1510) is the plain verb "to be."

I am He — I AM



Read down the steps: each "I am" goes further, until verse 58 uses the bare name of God — and the crowd answers with stones.

The Son Makes You Free

Continuing in His word, knowing the truth, and the only freedom that is real

JOHN 8:32

and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

DAVID GUZIK

Abide in His word; slavery to self is the worst slavery.

R.C. SPROUL

Possess what you profess; slaves by nature.

C.H. SPURGEON

Free from and free to; beware a temporary faith; habits are chains.

MATTHEW HENRY

A state of sin is bondage; services are no inheritances.

ἐὰν ὑμεῖς μείνητε

EAN HYMEIS MEINĒTE · "IF YOU CONTINUE"

Menō (G3306) is "remain, abide, stay" — one of John's great words (15:4–10).

Whose Children Are You?

Abraham's seed who do not do Abraham's deeds — and the father whose desires they do

JOHN 8:44

"You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

DAVID GUZIK

Abraham's seed, not Abraham's children; the devil is a real person.

R.C. SPROUL

You are the children of the one you obey; volunteers in darkness.

C.H. SPURGEON

Children act like their Father; ungodly men reveal the devil.

MATTHEW HENRY

Judged out of their own mouths; an empty heart is a lodging for the devil.

ἀνθρωποκτόνος
ANTHRŌPOKTONOS · "MURDERER"

"Man-killer" — anthrōpos, man, + kteinō, to kill.

Whose children are you?

JOHN 8:37–47	WHAT A TRUE CHILD DOES	WHAT THEY WERE DOING
ABRAHAM	"do the deeds of Abraham" (v39)	"seeking to kill Me … this Abraham did not do" (v40)
GOD	"If God were your Father, you would love Me" (v42)	"you cannot hear My word" (v43)
THE DEVIL	Jesus speaks what He has seen with His Father (v38)	"a murderer from the beginning … a liar and the father of lies" (v44)
HEARING	"He who is of God hears the words of God" (v47)	"you do not hear them, because you are not of God" (v47)

Sproul: "You are the children of the one you obey."

Jesus tests every claim to a father by what the son does — Abraham's deeds, God's love, the devil's murder and lies, and whether a man hears.

Before Abraham Was Born, I Am

Insults, a promise of life, Abraham's joy — and the name of God

JOHN 8:51

"Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death."

DAVID GUZIK

The covenant voice of the burning bush; no miraculous escape.

R.C. SPROUL

The eighth I AM — the most dramatic of all.

C.H. SPURGEON

Impostor or God; first hard words, then stones.

MATTHEW HENRY

Not "I was" but "I am"; before all worlds.

πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι ἐγὼ εἰμί

PRIN ABRAAM GENESTHAI EGŌ EIMI · "BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS BORN, I AM"

Two verbs set side by side.

What to carry from this chapter

1

Honesty about the text honors the text.

The NASB brackets 7:53–8:11 because the earliest manuscripts of John do not have it.

2

No condemnation, then “sin no more.”

“I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more” (8:11).

3

Only the sinless could throw the first stone.

Anamartētos, only here in the New Testament.

4

The Light was spoken beside the lamps.

In the treasury, in the Court of the Women where the feast’s lamps stood (8:20), Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world.”

More to carry

5

"I am He" — the "He" is not in the Greek.

Verses 24 and 28 have the bare egō eimi of Isaiah 43:10.

6

The cross is where He is known.

"When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He" (8:28).

7

Believing is not the same as continuing.

Jesus spoke verse 31 to Jews "who had believed Him"; by verse 59 they held stones.

8

The worst slavery is to self.

Guzik: "Slavery to sin is the worst kind of slavery, because there is no escape from our self."

Talk it through

1. Which voice condemns me most loudly — my own, someone else's, the accuser's? What does Jesus say to that voice in 8:10–11?

2. When I'm quick to pick up a stone against another man, what sin of my own am I ignoring?

3. Where am I still walking in darkness — a habit, a secret, a resentment — that I need to bring into His light?

4. Am I continuing in His word, or did I believe once and drift? What does staying put look like for me this week?

5. What chain still holds me, and have I ever asked the Son — not my willpower — to make me free indeed?

CLOSING

John 8 begins with a woman who expected a stone and received mercy, and ends with a Savior who received the stones Himself. Between them He says who He is: the Light of the world, the Son who sets slaves free, the I AM who was before Abraham. Every man in the chapter must decide whether to follow the Light or pick up a rock.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study and reflection journal: see the John study page.