

Tense Times in Jerusalem (John 8:12-59)

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Session 10

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Keywords

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Abstract

This session, taught by Dr. David Turner, focuses on John chapter 8, which is characterized by tense and tumultuous times for Jesus in Jerusalem as he continues teaching in the temple area. The lecture begins with a discussion of the major textual variant, the Pericope Adulterae (John 7:53–8:11), examining its external manuscript evidence and canonical status. Dr. Turner then analyzes key theological disputes, including Jesus' declaration as the "Light of the World" and his confrontation with religious authorities over spiritual fatherhood. Finally, the session explores the Old Testament background of Jesus' divine "I am" statements and the theological complexities of faith and perseverance in John.

Outline

I. Introduction to Session 10: Tense Times in Jerusalem

- A. Welcome and introduction by Dr. David Turner on John 8
- B. Setting: Jerusalem, teaching in and around the Temple grounds

II. The Textual Variant: Pericope Adulterae (John 7:53 - 8:11)

- A. Narrative interruption of the flow between John 7:52 and John 8:12
- B. External Evidence
 - 1. Not found in the more ancient manuscripts
 - 2. Located in different spots in other manuscripts
 - a. Gospel of Luke
 - b. End of John chapter 21
 - 3. Marked with obelisks in margins
 - 4. Left blank in some manuscripts
- C. Internal and Linguistic Evidence
 - 1. Contains vocabulary not typically found in John
 - 2. Breaks narrative continuity
 - a. Jesus' presence
 - b. Pharisees going home
- D. Power and Authenticity of the Passage
 - 1. Highly regarded by scholars as an authentic oral tradition from the life of Christ
 - 2. Reflects Jesus' character

- a. Does not tolerate sin
- b. Forgives sinners

III. Jesus as the Light of the World (John 8:12-20)

- A. The Great Sayings of Jesus
 - 1. "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12)
 - 2. Ethical dualism between light and darkness
- B. Pharisaic Challenge on Self-Witnessing
 - 1. Pharisees claim Jesus' testimony is invalid (8:13)
 - 2. Jesus' defense based on the Father's testimony (8:14-18)
 - 3. The requirement of two witnesses in the Law (8:17)
- C. Location of teaching: Court of Israel or near the offering treasury in the Temple courts

IV. Jesus' Departure and Warning (John 8:21-30)

- A. Announcement of Jesus going away (8:21)
- B. Jewish misunderstandings
 - 1. Suicidal claims
 - 2. Heavenly origin
- C. Warning: "Unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins" (8:24)
- D. The Son of Man being lifted up
 - 1. Echo of John 3:14
 - 2. Moses' serpent
- E. The response of the crowd: "Many believed in him" (8:30)

V. The Dispute over True Discipleship and Spiritual Fatherhood (John 8:31-47)

- A. True Freedom and Discipleship
 - 1. "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples" (8:31-32)
 - 2. The truth setting people free
- B. The Reaction of the Jewish Believers
 - 1. Rejection of the need for freedom: "We are Abraham's descendants" (8:33)
 - 2. Jesus' definition of slavery: "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin"
- C. The Debate over Ancestry and Fatherhood
 - 1. Abrahamic descent vs. Abrahamic actions
 - a. Abrahamic descent
 - b. Abrahamic actions
 - 2. Accusations of spiritual illegitimacy and being of God (8:41-42)
 - a. Accusations of spiritual illegitimacy
 - b. Claim of being of God
 - 3. The stark declaration: "You belong to your father who is the devil" (8:44)
 - 4. The devil's character
 - a. Murderer from the beginning
 - b. Liar from the beginning

VI. The Escalation of Hostility and the Divine Claim (John 8:48-59)

- A. Verbal insults: Calling Jesus a Samaritan and demon-possessed (8:48)
- B. Jesus' response: Honors the Father and denies demon possession (8:49)
- C. The comparison to Abraham and prophets (8:52-53)
- D. The Climax: "Before Abraham was born, I am" (8:58)
 - 1. Syntactical and Christological significance of *ego eimi* (I am)
 - 2. Old Testament background
 - a. *eheyeh asher eheyeh* (Exodus 3:14)
 - b. *ani hu* (Deuteronomy 32:39, Isaiah 41:4, Isaiah 43:10)
 - 3. Identification of Jesus with the preexistent and divine God
- E. The violent reaction: The crowd picks up stones for stoning/blasphemy (8:59)
 - 1. For stoning
 - 2. For blasphemy
- F. Jesus' escape and departure from the Temple grounds