
The Gospel of John

Part 6 - by: Ronald L. Dart

Jesus was a constant puzzle to the Pharisees and sometimes He's a bit puzzling to us and we've had a lot of time to digest what Jesus was saying. Some of the things He was saying were pretty far out. Let's face it, this is not just a good man that we are listening to, not merely a great teacher. The Pharisees were beginning to realize that there was something going on here.

Jesus Is the Light of The World

Jesus was standing in the environs of the Temple one day and He said to the people gathered around, "I am the light of the world. He that follows me will not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." That verse is in John chapter 8 verse 12.

The Pharisees were standing there, and they realized that this was a huge claim that Jesus was making, and they challenge it. They said, "Look, we are not going to believe this just because you say so, you are bearing record of yourself. You are standing here saying, "I am the light of the world, who are you that we should believe that?"

I don't think that is an unreasonable question. If I were a prophet and I told you I was a prophet, you would have every right to say, "That's what you say! Why should I believe it?"

So, Jesus answered the Pharisees and said, {14} "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid for I know where I came from and I know where I'm going. You have no idea where I came from or where I'm going. {15} You judge by human standards. I pass judgment on no one."

Now I think what Jesus meant here is that He judges no one by human standards because He is going to judge, but He is not judging by the kind of standards the Pharisees judged by.

Jesus Claimed That God Was His Father

He then went on to say, in verse 16 of John 8, "But if I do judge, my decisions are right because I'm not alone, I stand with the Father who sent Me. {17} In your own law it is written, that the testimony of two men is valid. {18} I am one who testifies for myself. My other witness is the Father who sent me."

Now Jesus is recognizing that in the law, there are two required witnesses and He said, "I have two witnesses," but this stuck in the crawl of his listeners because all of them had heard that

Joseph was not really Jesus' Father, and who could be surprised that the Pharisees would have a problem with the idea of a virgin birth.

So they fired back at him, {19} "Where is your Father?" And that was a nasty comment for them to make. And Jesus knew where they were going with it. They asked, "Where is your Father?" He said, "You don't know me, and you don't know my Father, If you had known me, you would have known My Father also."

Now this is a severe statement, because if Jesus was claiming that God was His Father, which He was, then He was saying that the Pharisees around Him had never known God, and yet, of all the people on the face of the earth, these were the people who held the Scriptures in their hands that tell us about God. These were the people who seem to know all about God. The Greeks had never heard of God, but I suppose there may be a difference between knowing about God, and knowing God, because Jesus looked at these men assembled before him and said, "You don't know God."

John tells us in verse 20 that Jesus was teaching in the treasury area of the Temple. He doesn't tell us why that might have been important, but he does note that in spite of what Jesus had just told them, "No one tried to arrest Him because," as John says, "His hour was not yet come." {21} Then Jesus said to them, "I go my way and you'll look for me and you will die in your sins, and where I'm going, you can't come." {22} Then the Jews said, "What is He talking about? Is He going to kill Himself because He says, "Where I'm going, you can't come," and Jesus continued {23} "You are from below. I am from above, you are of this world. I am not of this world. {24} I said therefore unto you, that you shall die in your sins, for if you believe not that I AM, you shall die in your sins.""

Man! These are strong words. We as Christians have read them many times and we oftentimes take them for granted, but Jesus said, "You are from below. I am from above. That is where I came from. You are of this world. I am not of this world!"

I AM

Well, Jesus was not merely a man, born of a woman, He was more than that, and He was from somewhere else. He said, "I say to you, you are going to die in your sins because if you don't believe that I am He, you'll die in your sins."

What Jesus said is, "If you believe not that I AM," and nearly every Bible translation play games with this, the King James Version, the New Revised Standard Version, the New American Standard Bible, all add the word 'He' and if you believe not that I am He." This word is not in the Greek. The New International Version tries to make sense of it and says, "If you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be." But that is not what Jesus said. He said, "If you don't believe that I AM." He just said, "I am not of this world. I said therefore to you. You shall die in your sins for if you believe not that I AM, you shall die in your sins."

John 8 verse 25, "Then they said. "Who are you?"

It's an interesting question because they had been talking to Him as though He was just a man born of Joseph and so forth. Now Jesus is making a claim that He is something entirely different.

They said, "Okay then, who are you? And Jesus said, "I am what I told you I was from the beginning. {26} I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He that sent Me is true and I speak to the world those things that I have heard of Him."

Oh, somebody sent Him. The Father sent Him and He heard the things that He is telling us from the Father,

Now in John 8 verse 27, gives us this parenthetically, it says, "They didn't understand that He spoke to them of the Father." By that He means, God the Father. {28} "Then Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall you know that I AM, and I do nothing of myself, but as my Father has taught me, I speak these things, {29} and He that sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, because I always do the things that please Him." {30} As He spoke these words, John said, quite a few people standing around believed on Him. {31} Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed on Him, "If you continue in my word, then you are my disciples indeed {32} And you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free." {33} Then they, (probably not the ones who believed on Him, it is hard to tell from the context), the people standing there said, "We are Abraham's seed. We were never in bondage to any man. How can you say that we are going to be made free?"

This is incredible. These people were under the Roman heel, their country was occupied by Romans. They were dominated by Romans. "What do you mean we have never been enslaved to any man?"

Pharisees Wanted to Kill Jesus

Jesus answered in verse 34 of John 8, "I am going to tell you the truth, whoever commits sin is the slave of sin. I'm here to set you free from that. {35} The servant does not abide in the house forever, but the son does, {36} If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. {37} I know that you are Abraham's seed, but you are trying to kill me, because my word has no place in you. {38} I speak what I have seen with my Father and you, you're going to do that which you have seen with your father." {39} They answered and said, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said, "No! If you are Abraham's children you would do the works of Abraham, {40} But now you're trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth, which I have heard from God. Abraham didn't do that!"

That's irrefutable, because they knew, and He knew, that they had been going about trying to figure out a way to get rid of Him. I mean permanently, to kill Him.

Jesus said, "Abraham would not have been doing that. {41} You're doing the deeds of your father." Now that stung, because then they replied, "Well we are not illegitimate children, born of fornication. We have one father even God."

That was a deliberate slur. They were trying to suggest that Jesus was born of fornication, that his mother had slept around, gotten pregnant and Joseph had married her just to keep her out of trouble.

Jesus said, {42} "If God were your Father, you would love me, because I proceeded forth and came from God, neither came I of myself but He sent me. {43} Why don't you understand My speech?"

How is it that I can stand in front of you and tell you all these things and you don't get it. The answer, because you can't. You just can't.

Jesus Said the Father of The Pharisees Was The Devil

John 8 verse 44, "You are of your father, the devil, and the lust of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it.""

These are pretty scalding words of Jesus that He is pouring out on these people standing by, because He is identifying them as sons of the devil.

Jesus said, {45} "Because I tell you the truth, you don't believe me. {46} Can any of you people standing here convict me of sin? Now if I am telling you the truth, why don't you believe me? {47} He that is of God hears God's words. You hear them not, because you're just not of God.""

There was a complete rejection of the faith of those Jews who were standing in front of Jesus. As I said, either Jesus was who He said He was, either He was the Son of God and He had the authority to say all kind of things or Jesus was a lunatic or worse. The Jews thought He was a lunatic.

Rumor of Who Was Jesus' Father

"The Jews answered and said, {48} "Don't we say well that you are a Samaritan and you have a demon."

You know, I suppose the rumor was that the real father of Jesus was some unnamed Samaritan. They are not only calling Him a bastard child, but the son of a Samaritan as well, and add crazy to boot. Right here is where you have to deal with the reality of Christ. Either you believe He is really who He says He is or you join the Pharisees who condemned Him as an insane illegitimate son of a Samaritan. You just can't get away with saying Jesus was a good man, a great teacher. His claims are too outrageous for that. You either have to believe Him as He presents Himself or join the Pharisees.

If A Man Keeps My Sayings He Will Never See Death

Jesus wasn't through with the Pharisees, and especially after the last shot they gave Him,

Jesus said, in John 8 verse 49, "I don't have a devil. All I am doing here is honoring my Father and you are dishonoring me. You're insulting me. {50} I seek not my own glory. There is one that seeks and judges, {51} Verily I say unto you, if a man keeps my saying He will never see death."

Once again, this is an outrageous statement, if He isn't who He says He is. If all Jesus was, was an itinerant preacher that came down out of the hills of Galilee, how could He say, "if a man keeps my sayings he will never see death."

"And the Jews said to Him, {52} "Now we know you have a devil! Abraham is dead and the prophets, and you say, "If a man keep my saying you shall never taste death." We've got you now! {53} Are you greater than Abraham? He is dead, and the prophets are dead. Who do you make yourself out to be?"

That is the question isn't it?

Jesus answered, {54} "If I honor myself, My honor is nothing. The truth is, it's the Father who honors me, of whom you say that He is your God. That is what you say."

"Now I'm going around healing sick people in the name of the Father, and you say, "He is your God, but you don't know Him." {55} "I know Him, and if I say I don't know Him, I would be a liar like you, but I know him, and I keep his sayings. {56} Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day and he saw it and was glad!"

This is outrageous, if you believe that Jesus was just a man, just an itinerant preacher, who walked down out of the hills of Galilee, then the Jews would've been totally justified in their attitude toward Him in that case, because He just called them a liar to their face. He said He knew God, and they didn't! This is strong stuff! Was it true?

I AM

The Jews said, verse 57 of John 8, "You are not yet 50 years old and have you seen Abraham? Jesus said, {58} "I will tell you the truth, before Abraham was, I AM!" {59} They grabbed stones to throw at Him, and He hid Himself and went out through the middle of them and passed by.

The Pharisees understood all too well what Jesus was saying here. That's why they took up stones to kill them. It wasn't just because He called them liars. He did that more than once. They were liars and they knew they were. It was that repeated "I AM" that they couldn't bear. Just as before, He had said "I AM." Now He says, "Before Abraham was, I AM." Do you know why that is such a hot button with the Jews who were listening to Jesus? Why that caused them to bend over and start picking up stones to throw at Him?

There is a short passage back in the third chapter of Exodus, in Exodus 3 verse 13, that you perhaps you have missed.

"Moses said to God," They are standing out there by the burning bush and God's talking to him, and he said to God, "When I come to the children of Israel and I say to them, the God of your fathers has sent me unto you, and they say to me, "What is His name? What shall I say to them?"

So now God is going to tell Moses what His name is? {14} "God said to Moses, "I AM THAT I AM. You shall say to the children of Israel. I AM has sent me unto you,"

God's name is the first-person singular of the verb 'to be'. It finds many ways of expressing itself in different languages. It simply means that God is eternal. He exists, He did not come into existence. He is not going out of existence. He simply IS and that's why his name is, "I AM" and it is translatable in any language on the face of the planet as the first-person singular of the verb 'to be.'

Now Jesus stood in front of these Jews and claimed to have existed before Abraham, but even more than that, He called Himself. "I AM" and it was rightly understood by the Jews as a claim to eternal existence, which meant in turn, a claim to be God. So, they took up stones to kill them.

Now are you beginning to see what I'm driving at here, when I say that if all Jesus was, was a good man, all He was, was a nice guy who came wandering down out of the hills of Galilee, preaching, you know from the Bible to people and claiming to be the Messiah. You know you can't just take it that far because Jesus went way beyond that in His claims and either He was what He said He was, or He was a lunatic or a liar or worse.

Jesus Healed the Blind Man

Chapter 9 of John, Jesus having left the Temple saw a man, who had been blind since the day he was born. {2} "And His disciples were walking by and they said, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?""

They couldn't get it through their heads, I guess exactly, that time and chance happen to all men. Genes break, things happen. It isn't necessarily a sin that someone has done that results in someone being sick, but it's a common belief that sickness and disease was because of sin, a particular sin, willful sin, or known sin that somebody could point at.

Jesus said, {3} "It isn't that he has sinned or his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I have to work the works of Him that sent Me while I can, {4} While it is day, because the night comes when no man can work, {5} As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." {6} When He told them this, He knelt down, spit on the ground, and He made some clay out of the spittle from the dirt that was there, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. He covered them up with clay. {7} He said, "Go down to the Pool of Siloam,"" and somebody had to help find the way because he was blind, "So he went his way and washed, and he came seeing."

Now it is almost impossible to get your mind around what this means because you have to understand we not only see with our eyes, but we see with our brain. You have to learn how to see and you have to learn the significance of what your brain is seeing. All of that was taken care

of and this man came up from the Pool of Siloam having washed seeing for the first time in his life. He had never seen the face of his mother. He had never seen a tree. He had heard birds chirping and had never laid his eyes on a bird. There he was, seeing.

Why the Clay?

Now why did Jesus make clay and put on this man's eyes? You have been reading about Jesus. We know that He could've just touched him. He could have just spoken the word. He could have said, "Be healed and see!" And he would have seen. Sure, He could have done it exactly that way. But Jesus had a very specific reason for this.

Jesus having made this clay, having put it on the man's eyes, sent him on his way to wash them and he came back seeing. Why the clay? What was the purpose of that?

Let's continue in John 9 verse 8, "His neighbors therefore, they which had seen the man and knew he was blind said, "Wait a minute, isn't this the guy that sat there and begged? {9} Some said, "Yes that is him." Others said, "Well it looks like him, but it can't be him." He said, "No, no, I'm the man!" {10} And they said, "How were your eyes opened." {11} He said, "Well, a man that is called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, "Go to the Pool of Siloam and wash," and I went, and I washed, and I received my sight. {12} They asked, "Where is He?" He said, "I don't know."

At this moment of time, this poor lucky fellow, who had been blind since birth, had not even laid eyes on Jesus and did not even know what He looked like, because Jesus put the clay mud on him and sent him away to wash and by the time he washed and was able to see, Jesus wasn't there for him to even look at Him, and he said, "I don't know where He is."

"So, they took this guy who had been blind and dragged him down to the Pharisees. And," verse 14, "it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes."

Now mind you, all Jesus did was to kneel down, spit on the ground and made a little clay and He put it on the man's eyes and told him to go wash. That is all Jesus did. No heavy work at all.

Continuing in verse 15, "Therefore the Pharisees again ask him how he received his sight, and he replied, "He put clay on my eyes. I washed and now I see." {16} Therefore, some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not of God because He keeps not the Sabbath day." But others ask, "How can a man who is a sinner do such miracles?" So, there was a division among them."

Well, mind you, the simple Sabbath Law of the Old Testament would not prohibit something so simple as making a little bit of clay, and putting it on the man's eyes. The Sabbath law didn't prohibits healing. In fact, the Pharisees didn't even like it when Jesus said to some poor guy who had a withered hand, "Stretch out your hand"(Mark 3:5), on the Sabbath and healed it. They said, "You shouldn't do that on the Sabbath day." Now you tell me why on earth, would that be breaking the Old Testament Sabbath law? Go back and read the Scriptures and see if you can find anything, I don't find anything there.

The Pharisees' rules prohibited it, but Jesus was deliberately flaunting the Pharisees rules. He did it on purpose. He could have healed the man and He could have done it in many other ways.

In one case as I said, Jesus walked into the synagogue, and there was a man with a withered arm and on the Sabbath day. All He said was, "Stretch out your arm" and the arm was healed just like the other one, and they wanted to kill Him for that.

Continuing in verse 17, "The Pharisees said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him that opened your eyes?" He replied, "Well, He is a prophet." {18} But the Jews wouldn't believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, so they called for his parents and dragged them in. {19} They said to them, "Is this your son, whom you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

Now these guys seem awfully snotty about this, but the fact of the matter is, you would have a little problem with it too. You would really want to know, "Now wait a minute, is this just a story? Are you sure this is the guy that was born blind? And Is this really your son?"

Verse 20, "They said, "Yes, this is our son. We know that. We know he was born blind, {21} But by what means he now sees, we don't know. We don't know who opened his eyes, he is of age, ask him. He will speak for himself." {22} Now the parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if any man confessed that Jesus was the Messiah, he should be put out of the synagogue." {23} His parents said, "He is of age, ask him." {24} Well the Pharisees called the man back again and they said, "Give God the praise, we know that this man is a sinner." {25} He answered and said, "Whether He be a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see."

This is hard to deal with, you know, you are a religious judge in a religious court and you drag this poor fellow in and you're going through all this rigmarole and they questioned him again.

""What did He do to you? How did He actually open your eyes?" {27} and he said, "I told you already and you didn't hear, why do you want to hear it again, is it is because you want to be His disciples?"

I think he must've been just a little sarcastic at this point.

"Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple. We are Moses' disciples. {29} We know that God spoke to Moses. As for this fellow, we don't know where he is from," {30} And the man answered and said, "Why here is a really marvelous thing, that you don't know where He comes from and yet He has opened my eyes." {31} Now we know that God doesn't hear sinners," (looking around at the men who were standing in front of him,) "but if any man be a worshiper of God and does His will, him He hears, {32} Since the world began, it was never heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. {33} If this man were not of God. He could do nothing."

The Pharisees were so furious, they said to him, {34} "You were all together born in sin and you're going to teach us?" And they cast him out of the synagogue."

They disfellowshipped him, excommunicated him. Nobody could have anything to do with him anymore.

"When Jesus heard that," {35} "He went and found him and said to him, "Do you believe on the Son of God?" {36} He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him." {37} And Jesus said, "You have seen Him, it's is He who talks to you." {38} He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped Him."

The late Ronald L. Dart was a Christian evangelist whose teachings still inspire thousands of people around the world. His legacy spans decades. For more information about the teachings of Ronald L. Dart, visit RLDEA.com where you will find booklets, articles, sermons, Bible studies, and books by Mr. Dart.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think Jesus meant when He stated that He passes “judgment on no one”?
2. What are some differences between God’s judgment and man’s judgment?
3. What would be some difference between knowing about God verses knowing God?
4. What are your thoughts about the fact that Jesus called the Pharisees the sons of the Devil?
5. Why do you think the Pharisees were so angry about Jesus healing a blind man?
6. Why do you think Jesus used clay instead of just healing the man?
7. Why do you think the Pharisees added to God’s law?
8. What do you think would happen if Jesus were to walk upon the earth today?
9. Do you wonder if people would believe Him or think that it was all trickery?
10. Have you ever wondered why the Jews acknowledge that Jesus did exist, but they refuse to believe that He was who He said He was?