

John 8

John 8:5 **Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned**

It wasn't Moses who had commanded the stoning of adulterers; it was Jehovah. The words, 'the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death' (Lev. 20:10), came from Jesus when he communed with Moses and gave him the law (3 Ne. 15:5). Ironically, Christ is tempted to conform to the very law he gave to a previous generation. His response, therefore, is even more fascinating and instructive. **Elder Orson Hyde** noted:

"The letter of the law would have killed that woman then and there. But the Spirit of God, in the person of his Son, the living oracle, opened her way unto life. It is the living oracles that lead the people of God. In them there is life; but in the letter of the law there is death.

"The early commandments of God to his Church and the manner in which we were led at that time will not fit our case in all respects now. We must have teachings and revelations adapted to our present circumstances and condition." (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 7: 151.)

At one time, when Israel was ruled by a righteous judge, i.e. Moses, when the Lord was trying to teach the people the difference between the holy and unholy (Lev. 10:10), and when deviance from the law could not be tolerated, Jehovah commanded that adulterers be put to death. In the meridian of time, when Israel was ruled by wicked men, when the tempters motivation was not holiness but wickedness, when Christ's mission was a mission of mercy and not judgment (Jn. 3:17), the Lord's answer condemned the scribes and Pharisees, not the woman. And he did so without nullifying the law he had previously given. Christ knew that the woman's accusers were guilty of the very same crime (see Matt 12:38-39), they just hadn't been caught 'in the very act' (v. 4).

"Jesus, who knows the hearts of every person, knows the hearts of those Pharisees...When they continue to press him for an opinion, he says: 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her' (John 8:7 John 8:7), and he writes again on the ground. The Pharisees, each convicted by his own conscience, leave one by one.

"We do not know what Jesus wrote, but we know that he regarded many of the Pharisees as adulterers themselves. When he said that any in that

crowd who was 'without sin' could cast a stone, he didn't mean just any sin, he meant anyone there who was not as guilty of adultery as she was." (Robert J. Matthews, *Behold the Messiah* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994], 197.)

Bruce R. McConkie

"[Jesus] was here dealing with men who themselves were guilty, either actually or in their sin-laden hearts, of the same offense charged against the woman; that is, they were in effect adulterers worthy of death according to the terms of the very law they now sought to invoke against the woman." (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1973], 1: 451.)

John 8:6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him

Bruce R. Mcconkie

"This cunningly devised interrogatory was in no sense a search for guidance, nor did it raise any point with reference to an infamous act of adultery that needed a decision. Though it was the custom to consult distinguished Rabbis in cases of doubt or difficulty, this was not such a case. They knew, and everyone knew, that Moses decreed death for adulterers, both of them, the man and the woman, and that the accuser's hand should cast the first stone. This was not such a case. The guilty man was absent; the aggrieved husband was lodging no charge; and no witnesses had been summoned, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word might be established. Their purpose, rather, as John expresses it, was to tempt him, 'that they might have to accuse him.'

"The character of the conniving religionists is seen perfectly in their callous use of the woman. 'To subject her to the superfluous horror of this odious publicity-to drag her, fresh from the agony of detection, into the sacred precincts of the Temple-to subject this unveiled, dishevelled, terror-stricken woman to the cold and sensual curiosity of a malignant mob-to make her, with total disregard to her own sufferings, the mere passive instrument of their hatred against Jesus-and to do all this, not under the pressure of moral indignation, but in order to gratify a calculating malice-showed on their parts a cold, hard cynicism, a graceless, pitiless, barbarous brutality of heart and conscience, which could not but prove, in every particular, revolting and hateful to One who alone was infinitely tender, because He

alone was infinitely pure." (*The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary*, 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979-1981], 3: 141.)

John 8:7 He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her

"We see Jesus' wisdom when he is confronted by Jewish leaders who have discovered an adulterous woman. He knows that his enemies will criticize any sentence he pronounces, so he wisely puts the burden of responsibility on them, at the same time exhibiting a sensitive concern for the woman's embarrassment. Whereas she had been the focal point of a public scandal and trial, she was now able to quietly return home and, with the Savior's encouragement, repent of her sins. (John 8:3-11.)" (Victor L. Ludlow, "John: The Once and Future Witness," *Ensign*, Dec. 1991, 52-53)

John 8:11 neither do I condemn thee

Chieko N. Okazaki

"Think of the balm he poured on that woman's bruised spirit! She was guilty as charged, and he acknowledged that by telling her to leave her sins behind her. But he told her to go as a free woman into that new life. He did not make her acknowledge her guilt. He did not humiliate her. He did not rub her nose in it. Think of the empowerment with which she stepped forward into that new life!

"This story about Jesus and the adulterous woman teaches us about self-esteem based on having a personal, firsthand understanding of the Savior and his charity, or pure love. Today we are barraged by accusing voices. People seem to stand in line to condemn us. And if the line gets short, we stand in it ourselves to make ourselves feel guilty. We feel guilty for things we have done, for things we haven't done, for things we did but did wrong, for doing too much, for doing too little, for doing things at the wrong time, for doing things at the wrong place, for wearing the wrong color of shoes when we did them-you name it! We're guilty!

"What is the message of the gospel? Is it that we're weak, frail sinners? That Heavenly Father is disgusted and angry with us? That Jesus is sorry he died for us because it was a real waste of the Atonement? That all the angels have decided that giving us agency was a stupid thing to do? No! The message of the scriptures is that *nothing* can separate us from the love of Christ. Paul, in trying to make his Roman converts understand this, wrote this beautiful, powerful passage: 'If God be for us, who can be

against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect . . . Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' (Romans 8:31-39.)

"Isn't that thrilling!" (*Lighten Up!* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993], 156 - 157.)

John 8:11 go, and sin no more

Spencer W. Kimball

"Repentance [is not] complete when one merely tries to abandon sin. To try with a weakness of attitude and effort is to assure failure in the face of Satan's strong counteracting efforts. What is needed is resolute action...It is normal for children to try. They fall and get up numerous times before they can be certain of their footing. But adults, who have gone through these learning periods, must determine what they will do, then proceed to do it...

"This connection between effort and the repentance which attracts the Lord's forgiveness is often not understood. In my childhood, Sunday School lessons were given to us on the 8th chapter of John wherein we learned of the woman thrown at the feet of the Redeemer for judgment. My sweet Sunday School teacher lauded the Lord for having forgiven the woman. She did not understand the impossibility of such an act. In my years since then I have repeatedly heard people praise the Lord for his mercy in having forgiven the adulteress. This example has been used numerous times to show how easily one can be forgiven for gross sin.

"But did the Lord forgive the woman? Could he forgive her? There seems to be no evidence of forgiveness. His command to her was, 'Go, and sin no more.' He was directing the sinful woman to go her way, abandon her evil

life, commit no more sin, transform her life. He was saying, Go, woman, and start your repentance; and he was indicating to her the beginning step to abandon her transgressions.

"The Lord's prophet Amulek had said emphatically: '. . . Ye cannot be saved *in* your sins.' (Al. 11:37. Italics added.) It was this same Lord Jesus Christ who made the laws, and he must observe them. Accordingly, how could he have forgiven the woman in her deep sin? When she had had time to repent; when she had abandoned her evil ways and evil associates; when she had made restitution so far as she could; and when she had proved by her works and the living of the commandments that she was 'born again' and was a new creature-when she had done these things the forgiveness of the Savior could overshadow her and claim her and give her peace." (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 164-166)

Gordon B. Hinckley

"Even those who transgress, we want you to know that we love you. We cannot condone the sin, but we love the sinner." (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 89)

John 8:12 I am the light of the world

Neal A. Maxwell

"At night, two millennia ago, the celebration of the great Feast of Tabernacles featured illuminated candelabra in the courtyard of the temple at Jerusalem. Fresh from that experience the Master Teacher went on to declare that He was the Light of the world, that His followers, regardless of time or season, need never walk in darkness (see John 8:12).

"In this age we are blessed daily by electrical light. It takes a power failure to remind us how much we take that blessing for granted. As Jesus told his followers in the above passage, however, there is never a spiritual power failure when the gospel 'casts away the veil of unbelief' and dispels 'the cloud of darkness,' thus producing an endless daytime of understanding and rejoicing. The gospel can 'light up [our] minds,' so that we can function as illuminated individuals-without interruption. (See Alma 19:6.)" (*A Wonderful Flood of Light* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990], 53.)

John 8:12 I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life

Thomas S. Monson

"Late one evening on a Pacific isle, a small boat slipped silently to its berth at the crude pier. Two Polynesian women helped Meli Mulipola from the boat and guided him to the well-worn pathway leading to the village road. The women marveled at the bright stars which twinkled in the midnight sky. The friendly moonlight guided them along their way. However, Meli Mulipola could not appreciate these delights of nature-the moon, the stars, the sky-for he was blind.

"His vision had been normal until that fateful day when, while working on a pineapple plantation, light turned suddenly to darkness and day became perpetual night. He had learned of the restoration of the gospel and the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His life had been brought into compliance with these teachings.

"He and his loved ones had made this long voyage, having learned that one who held the priesthood of God was visiting among the islands. He sought a blessing under the hands of those who held the sacred priesthood. His wish was granted. Tears streamed from his sightless eyes and coursed down his brown cheeks, tumbling finally upon his native dress. He dropped to his knees and prayed: 'Oh, God, thou knowest I am blind. Thy servants have blessed me that if it be thy will, my sight may return. Whether in thy wisdom I see light or whether I see darkness all the days of my life, I will be eternally grateful for the truth of thy gospel which I now see and which provides me the light of life.'

"He arose to his feet, thanked us for providing the blessing, and disappeared into the dark of the night. Silently he came; silently he departed. But his presence I shall never forget. I reflected upon the message of the Master: 'I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'" ("For I Was Blind, but Now I See," *Ensign*, May 1999, 56)

Bernard P. Brockbank

"The light of life is divine light that permeates and radiates in the human soul and brings out the godlike qualities and attributes of godliness. The light of life is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of love. The light of life has within it the glorious promises from God of eternal life in his heavenly kingdom. The light of life will bring divine truth and happiness and peace into a troubled heart. The light of life brings divine light into the problems

and troubles of this life and helps to turn life's problems into steppingstones to eternal progression and to developing a godlike character.

"Jesus also said: '... light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.' (John 3:19-21.)

"To know God, you must walk in the light of life. To know God as a living child of God, we should know our relationship to him, our divine potential, and we should know that in knowing God there is great responsibility to respect and love and follow his counsel and his doctrines and his commandments and to grow as a child to become more godlike."
("Knowing God," *Ensign*, July 1972, 122)

Jeffrey R. Holland

"My declaration is that this is precisely what the gospel of Jesus Christ offers us, especially in times of need...There really is light at the end of the tunnel. It is the Light of the World, the Bright and Morning Star, the 'light that is endless, that can never be darkened.' It is the very Son of God Himself. In loving praise far beyond Romeo's reach, we say, 'What light through yonder window breaks?' It is the return of hope, and Jesus is the Sun. To any who may be struggling to see that light and find that hope, I say: Hold on. Keep trying. God loves you. Things will improve. Christ comes to you in His 'more excellent ministry' with a future of 'better promises.' He is your 'high priest of good things to come.'" ("An High Priest of Good Things to Come," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 36)

John 8:18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me

"If there be justice in the heavens, the matter of accepting or rejecting Jesus as our Savior cannot be a matter of good fortune contrasted with another's misjudgment. There must be a divinely ordained system whereby all might know with perfect surety those truths upon which salvation rests, and so there is...The divine law states it thus: 'In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.' (2 Cor. 13:1.) No testimony is to stand alone. There are no exceptions: the message of all who would claim themselves prophets must comply with this heaven-given standard. It is for this very reason that the Godhead consists of three separate and

distinct personages-two Gods to bear witness of the third. Thus Christ explained: 'I bear record of the Father, and the Father beareth record of me, and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me.' (3 Ne. 11:32.)" (Joseph F. McConkie, *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 5: The Gospels*, ed. by Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1986], 285.)

"An honest, candid reader with only a fourth-grade education can see that the Old and New Testaments teach that God himself establishes his truth in the earth by virtue of the law of witnesses and leaves men without excuse. The concept is clear and open and without argument or equivocation.

"It must be equally clear to any reader that since Jesus invokes his Father as his second witness in John 8:18, the Father and the Son must be two separate men; otherwise, they are not two witnesses and could not fulfill the requirement wherein Jesus says, 'I am one witness and the Father is the other witness.'

"We thus have this eternal and divine principle showing that God uses witnesses to establish his word. And so in like manner we have been given the Book of Mormon to establish the truth of the Bible-not just the truth of the Bible as history and as a cultural record, but to establish the greatest truth that the Bible was intended to declare, and that is to prove that the testimony of Jesus Christ contained in the scriptures is true and correct." (Robert J. Matthews, *Selected Writings of Robert J. Matthews: Gospel Scholars Series* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1999], 56 - 57.)

John 8:25 who art thou?

What if Christ had openly and boldly answered this question? He could have replied: "I am the Great Jehovah, the Only-Begotten Son of the Father, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I am he that gave the gospel to Abraham and gave the law to Moses whom you hypocritically claim to follow. I am the Lord your God and the Holy One of Israel. I have been sent by God the Father to reprove you for your wickedness and provide salvation for all those who will believe on my name." In essence, this is what Christ said. Finally, he answered their question saying, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was I AM.' (v. 58). This declaration meant that he was the God of Moses, for "I AM" was the name given to Moses when Moses asked 'who art thou?':

'...when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What *is* his name? what shall I say unto them?

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this *is* my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations.' (Ex. 3:13-15)

John 8:29 I do always those things that please him

Ezra Taft Benson

"During my early teens a small book or pamphlet titled 'What Would Jesus Do?' came into my hands. I do not now remember the name of the author, nor do I remember what he said. The title, however, has been in my mind ever since. The question posed epitomized the desire I had had from my childhood. Countless times as I have faced challenges and vexing decisions I have asked myself 'What would Jesus do?'...It was therefore natural for me, as I pondered the question, 'What would Jesus do?' to turn to the scriptures in search of the answer. There in the Gospel as recorded by St. John, I found the clear and certain answer: Jesus would always do the will of his Father. This he himself repeatedly declared.

'... I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

'And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

'I and my Father are one.' (John 7:15-18; 8:26, 28-29;10:30.)

'Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.'(John 5:19.)

"Having learned that Jesus would always do the will of his Father, my next objective was to find out what Jesus would do to ascertain the will of his Father. Searching the New Testament, I discovered that one thing he did was to thoroughly familiarize himself with what his Father had declared his will to be as recorded in the Old Testament. That he did this is evidenced

by the fact that in his statements as recorded in the New Testament, Jesus quoted or cited scriptures from the Old Testament more than one hundred times.

"Finally, and most importantly, I learned that he communed constantly with his Father through prayer...Relying upon the foregoing and companion scriptures, I decided in my youth that for me the best approach to the solution of problems and the resolving of questions would be to proceed as Jesus proceeded: foster an earnest desire to do the Lord's will; familiarize myself with what the Lord has revealed on the matters involved; pray with diligence and faith for an inspired understanding of his will and the courage to do it." (*Come unto Christ* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983], 43-45.)

John 8:32 ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free

Marion G. Romney

"If ye continue in my word ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' (John 8:31-32.) The truths that can free us from our sins, guilt, false concepts, erroneous understanding, and unproductive habits and behavior are to be had only through the Holy Spirit.

"There has never been a day such as now in all of earthly history when secular learning was so far advanced and widespread as it is today. Yet so many of those around us do not enjoy the truths and the freedom those truths bring of which the Master taught. Rather, to so many people, it seems that truth and true freedom elude their grasp.

"The central core of the Father's plan of salvation is that to obtain these truths and the peace, happiness, security, and freedom these truths bring to their righteous adherents, we must draw upon a source of knowledge that lies above and beyond the reach of ordinary learning processes.

"The road to this sure knowledge is a sincere and honest desire to obtain truth from God, seeking such truth through sustained prayer, through devoted study of God's scriptures, and through righteous, charitable behavior in our daily lives." ("Receiving and Applying Spiritual Truth," *Ensign*, Feb. 1984, 4)

James M. Paramore

"Haven't we all been delivered from various forms of captivity? How did you feel when the doors were opened to your personal prison? How was it to feel free? How wonderful it is to be liberated from any kind of a prison.

"I remember how I felt forty-one years ago when I was taken from a train in Europe at 2:00 A.M. by two soldiers of a hostile nation and held against my will. I was verbally and physically abused. I felt I would never see my family or my country again. I assure you that while I was held captive, the blood coursed through my veins like adrenaline. Though the captivity lasted less than a day, it seemed like an eternity. And when I was put on another train and sent back to safety, my gratitude to the Lord knew no bounds. I was free! As I talked to the train conductor, I learned that hundreds had not been so lucky.

"...Years ago, an acquaintance of mine was captive, for over twenty years, to a serious alcohol problem, which bound him every day. He would leave work, buy his alcohol, drive into the countryside, and drink until he could barely find his way home. He truly was under the captive spirit of the devil and lived in hell. A faithful home teacher loved this brother, saw him often, taught him to pray for help, and prayed for him often. One day while he was driving his pickup truck into the countryside to begin his daily alcohol ritual, he felt a powerful influence to stop his truck, walk out into a field, fall to his knees, and plead for help from his Father in Heaven. Later, he tearfully testified that as he arose from his knees, the desire to drink alcohol had completely left him. He had been delivered from a twenty-year prison. God heard his prayer, felt the desire of his heart, and opened the prison doors that bound him.

"Beloved friends, it is Jesus who has unlocked and will unlock the doors of our personal prisons. It is a glorious promise to all who are captive, for whatever reasons, upon the condition of repentance." ("By the Power of His Word Did They Cause Prisons to Tumble," *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 9-10)

N. Eldon Tanner

"Freedom is based on truth, and no man is completely free as long as any part of his belief is based on error, for the chains of error bind his mind. This is why it is so important for us to learn all the truth we can from all the sources we can. We need particularly to search the scriptures, for in them are the words which, if accepted and lived, will lead us to eternal life." ("Ye Shall Know the Truth," *Ensign*, May 1978, 14)

John 8:34 Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin

Neal A. Maxwell

"It is so easy to become imprisoned in the single well-lit cell of one impulse and one appetite." (*Notwithstanding My Weakness* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981], 100.)

Marion D. Hanks

"This freedom, this freedom which he taught as being most important to mankind, comes to those who in righteousness have faith in God, learn his law, and seek to understand it, and who, obedient to it, and with responsibility, seek to do his will.

"There are many among us, and throughout the world, young and old (though perhaps we too often confine the lesson to the young) who have the idea that freedom, the freedom of which we speak, can be found in unlicensed liberty. But this freedom which Jesus taught is not the freedom of irresponsibility or unrighteousness, but the freedom which accompanies obedience.

"Is that husband free, for instance, who with disloyalty to his wife and family and with lust in heart, entangles himself in alliances outside his own home? Is that father free who, neglecting his children, turns them away, [who] does not love them and teach them? Is that man free who hates his neighbor, and who will not forgive the trespasses his neighbor has committed against him?

"Is that wife and mother free who will not perform the duties of her home with joy in her heart, realizing this to be her great calling? Is that woman free who gives her time to selfish social pursuits of doubtful worth instead of to her neighbor, her community, her Church, her God, in honest service, when there is so much to do?

"Is that boy free who trifles with good habits, who cheats a little in school, who will not accept sound counsel and loving parental advice, but who, making his own stubborn way (for he is of the age when he thinks he knows better than they) chooses companions who are on the wrong path, goes about his activities with them, perhaps even stealing from some others the most precious things they enjoy? Is the young girl free who thinks so little of herself that she allows herself to be handled as if she were

worth nothing, or who talks with evil tongue about her friends or acquaintances; who will not be counseled, who will not be helpful or humble in the home?

"The obvious answer is that these people are not free. True, they have the right to choose, but they violate their agency in choosing that which denies them the very freedom which God would have his children enjoy."
(*Conference Report, October 1954, Morning Session 102.*)

John 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed

Elder John P. Lillywhite

"...that is the freedom that the Latter-day Saints enjoy today. It is not the freedom of riches, of wealth, it is the freedom of the truth, knowing that God lives, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, knowing that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, has made them free, free in the expression of the hope and the faith that they have in their existence here and hereafter." (*Conference Report, October 1925, Afternoon Session 65 - 66.*)

John 8:39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our Father

"...according to the common notion of the time, the vials of wrath were to be poured out only on the Gentiles, while they, as Abraham's children, were sure of escape-in the words of the Talmud, that 'the night' (Isa. 21:12) was 'only to the nations of the world, but the morning to Israel'? (Jer. Taan. 64a).

"For, no principle was more fully established in the popular conviction, than that all Israel had part in the world to come (Sanh. 10.1), and this, specifically, because of their connection with Abraham...'The merits of the Fathers,' is one of the commonest phrases in the mouth of the Rabbis. Abraham was represented as sitting at the gate of Gehenna (hell), to deliver any Israelite who otherwise might have been consigned to its terrors. In fact, by their descent from Abraham, all the children of Israel were nobles, infinitely higher than any proselytes. 'What,' exclaims the Talmud, 'shall the born Israelite stand upon the earth, and the proselyte be in heaven?' (Jer. Chag. 76a)." (Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, p. 187-88)

James E. Talmage

"Judaism held that the posterity of Abraham had an assured place in the kingdom of the expected Messiah, and that no proselyte from among the Gentiles could possibly attain the rank and distinction of which the 'children' were sure." (*Jesus the Christ*, 115)

John 8:39 If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham

The self-righteousness of these Jews can't be overemphasized. They were the Zoramites of their time, declaring 'we believe that thou hast elected us to be thy holy children...that we shall be saved, whilst all around us are elected to be cast by thy wrath down to hell' (Alma 31:16-17). Such pride completely drives away the Spirit. It deludes one into thinking there is no reason to strive for righteousness. As Paul taught, 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness' (Rom. 4:3). In this respect, these Jews showed no resemblance to Father Abraham. 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed' (Jn 20:29). Abraham believed in Jehovah long before he had ever seen Him or had the privilege of communing with Him. The Jews had the privilege of seeing the Lord and hearing his message. Yet, they rejected the Jehovah that stood in their very presence.

John 8:42 I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me

"One way Jesus witnessed of His identity was to teach of the unique Father-Son relationship He had with God. He frequently referred to Himself as 'the Son of God' and spoke of God as 'my Father.' He emphasized that only God was His Father and that He was God's Only Begotten Son on earth.

"When teaching in the temple (see John 8:12-59). While visiting Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus again openly declared His divine sonship. The Pharisees debated Him, questioning His right to bear record of Himself. As the debate turned to a discussion of fathers, Jesus said, 'If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; ... I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. ... It is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God' (John 8:42, 49, 54; emphasis added). The Pharisees were extremely upset and angry, for they knew Jesus had claimed a divine Sonship, and therefore felt He had blasphemed, a crime punishable by death under Jewish law. Accordingly, they attempted to kill Him but failed (see John 8:59)." (Jonathan H. Stephenson, "I Am He," *Ensign*, Apr. 1999, 8-9)

John 8:56 father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it

"Nephi, the son of Helaman, in teaching about the Son of God, said:

'Moses did not only testify of these things, but also all the holy prophets, from his days even to the days of Abraham.

Yea, and behold, Abraham saw of his coming, and was filled with gladness and did rejoice.' (Hel. 8:16-17.)

"Though the Bible recounts episodes in which Abraham heard the voice of the Lord and received revelations, it does not contain any record of Abraham beholding the Savior in vision. Yet the Savior, in the New Testament, referred to such an instance: 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.' (John 8:56.)

"It would appear that Abraham had such a vision but that the episode has been lost from the present biblical collection. The Joseph Smith translation of the Bible, however, contains such an account. After Jehovah had explained the inheritance of the promised land to Abraham, 'Abram looked forth and saw the days of the Son of Man, and was glad, and his soul found rest.' (JST Gen. 15:12.)" (Robert L. Millet, "The Plates of Brass: A Witness of Christ," *Ensign*, Jan. 1988, 29)

John 8:58 Before Abraham was, I am

See also Commentary for John 8:25.

"*I AM* is a divine descriptive title that refers to the preearthly Jehovah, who was known on the earth as Jesus Christ. This name-title emphasizes the eternal nature of the power, authority, might, mission, and calling of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, the translators of the Bible have not understood the nature and significance of these words. The King James Version of the Bible punctuates "John 8:58John 8:58 as follows:

"'Before Abraham was, I am.' This is confusing in syntax as well as in meaning. The verse would more correctly be punctuated: 'Before Abraham, was I AM,' indicating that Jesus Christ was the great Jehovah, the preexistent One, who was a God before Abraham was even born on the earth." (Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the New Testament: The Four Gospels* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982], 137.)

"There is no question that the message came through, for the Pharisees asked, 'Art thou greater than our father Abraham?' (John 8:53.) Jesus replied, 'Abraham rejoiced to see my day.... Before Abraham was, I am. [Or in other words, 'Yes, I am greater than Abraham; I am the Lord Jehovah.'] Then they took up stones to cast at him.' (John 8:56-59.) That they intended to stone him indicates they got the message that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God, the great Jehovah. This was further certified at the cross when passersby 'reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross' (Matt. 27:39-40). And the chief priests, scribes, and elders said, 'He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God' (Matt. 27:41-43).

"There can be no doubt that Jesus was successful in putting his point across to both Saint and sinner. They didn't always believe him, but they knew what he said about himself." (Robert J. Matthews, *Behold the Messiah* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994], 229.)

John 8:59 Then took they up stones to cast at him

Christ's day in the temple begins with attempts to stone the adulterous woman. Yet, as the day closes, it turns out that Jesus is in more danger of being stoned than the woman he protected. It seems the scribes and Pharisees were in the mood to throw stones after all. Their thirst for blood had not yet been quenched, and it would not be until Jesus' blood dripped-one precious drop at a time-from the cross of Golgotha.

Spencer W. Kimball

"They would have stoned him in Jerusalem, 'but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple' (John 8:59).

"And after another discourse, 'they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand' (John 10:39).

"A price was on his head. Physical violence confronted him always. People were enjoined to reveal his whereabouts so he could be put to death. The specter of death preceded him, sat with him, walked with him, followed him.

"How difficult it must have been for him who could wither a fig tree with a single command to restrain himself from cursing his enemies. Rather, did he pray for them. To retaliate and fight back is human, but to accept

indignities as did the Lord, is divine." ("Jesus of Nazareth," *Ensign*, Dec. 1980, 6)