

John 7:40- 8:30 – Jesus, “I am”, demonstrates Love and forgiveness is greater than sin that deserves death

Division Among the People

Joh 7:40-42 Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"

Many who listened were now convinced that the Lord Jesus was the Prophet of whom Moses spoke in Deu_18:15, Deu_18:18. Others were even willing to acknowledge that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah. But some thought this was impossible. They believed that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and there was no prophecy in the OT that the Christ would come out of Galilee.

These Jews were right in believing that the Christ would come from the town of Bethlehem and be descended from David. If they had just taken the trouble to inquire, they would have found that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and that He was a direct descendant of David through Mary.

Are you also studying enough to verify if what people say is true?

Joh 7:43-44 So there was a division among the people because of Him. Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

Because of these differing opinions and because of their general ignorance, there was a division among the people because of Christ. It is still the same. Men and women are divided on the subject of Jesus Christ. Some say He was simply a Man like the rest of us. Others are willing to admit that He was the greatest Man who ever lived. But those who believe the Word of God know that “Christ ... is over all, the eternally blessed God” (Rom_9:5).

Efforts were still being made to arrest the Lord Jesus, but no one was successful in taking Him. As long as a person is walking in the will of God, there is no power on earth that can hinder him. “We are immortal until our work is done.” The Lord's time had not yet come, and so men were unable to harm Him in any way.

Joh 7:45-46 Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

Now the Pharisees and chief priests had sent officers to take Jesus. The officers had returned but did not have the Lord with them. The chief priests and Pharisees were annoyed and asked the officers why they had not brought Him.

7:46 Here was an instance where sinful men were compelled to speak well of the Savior, even if they did not themselves accept Him. Their memorable words were, “No man ever spoke like this Man!” Doubtless these officers had listened to a good many men in their day, but they had never heard anyone speak with such authority, grace, and wisdom. – Believers’ Bible Commentary

Joh 7:47-48 Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?"

In an effort to intimidate the officers, the Pharisees accused them of being deceived by Jesus. They reminded them that none of the rulers of the Jewish nation believed in Him. What a terrible argument this was! It was very much to their shame that leading men in the Jewish nation had failed to recognize the Messiah when He came.

These Pharisees were not only unwilling to believe on the Lord Jesus themselves, but it is clear that they did not want others to believe on Him either. So, it is today. Many who do not want to be saved themselves do everything in their power to prevent their relatives and friends from being saved also. – Believers’ Bible Commentary

Joh 7:49 But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

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Here the Pharisees spoke of the mass of the Jewish people as ignorant and accursed. Their argument was that if the common people knew anything at all about the Scriptures, they would know that Jesus was not the Messiah. The Pharisees could not have been more wrong! – Believers’ Bible Commentary

Be careful, Life and death is in the tongue. Speaking curses is generally not wise.

Joh 7:50-53 Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee." And everyone went to his own house.

At this point Nicodemus spoke to them. It was he who came to Jesus by night and who learned that he must be born again. It would appear that Nicodemus had actually trusted the Lord Jesus Christ and been saved. Here he stepped forward, among the rulers of the Jews, to say a word for his Lord.

Nicodemus' point was that the Jews had not given Jesus a fair chance. The Jewish law did not judge a man before it heard his case. And yet that was what the Jewish leaders were doing at this very point. Were they afraid of the facts? The answer was obviously that they were.

Now the rulers turn on one of their own company, that is, on Nicodemus. They asked him with a sneer if he was also one of Jesus' followers from Galilee? Did he not know that the OT spoke of no prophet as coming out of Galilee? Here, of course, the rulers showed their own ignorance. Had they never read of the prophet Jonah? He had come from Galilee.

The Feast of Tabernacles was now over. The men returned to their own homes. Some had met the Savior face to face and trusted in Him. But the majority had rejected Him, and the leaders of the Jewish people were more determined than ever to do away with Him. They considered Him a threat to their religion and way of life.

CHAPTER 8

THEME: Jesus in temple forgives woman taken in adultery (sixth word).

The chapter opens with the episode of the woman taken in adultery. John uses his customary method of following an incident with a discourse. There was a sharp conflict between our Lord and the religious rulers relative to this woman and what should be done with her. Arising from this came the marvelous discourse on Jesus the Light of the World.

The episode of the woman, covering the first eleven verses, is not found in some of the better manuscripts. As I am sure you know, our English Bibles are translated from the original languages. The New Testament was first written in the Greek language. Extant manuscripts were used to compile a Greek New Testament; then our English translations were made from that. The Greek text of Westcott and Hort omits the incident of the woman taken in adultery from its position in the eighth chapter of John but inserts it at the end of that Gospel. Nestle's Greek text includes it but encloses it in brackets. Augustine writes that it was omitted because of a prudish fear that it would encourage adultery. However, if we read the account carefully, we will see that it does not condone sin. Rather, it condemns sin. We have both a scholarly and moral basis for considering it part of the inspired Word of God.

Joh 8:1-2 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Now, early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them.

Remember that the night before there had been a meeting of the Sanhedrin and that people were divided in their opinion as to whether or not Jesus was the Messiah. Nicodemus defended Him. Everyone had gone home, and not one had invited Jesus to his house. Early in the morning, He came back into Jerusalem, went back to the temple, and sat down to teach. - McGee

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Joh 8:3-4 Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act.

What could be more crude and rude and brutal than this act of these religious rulers? As our Lord was sitting in the temple area teaching the people, there was a hullabaloo outside. Then here come these religious rulers dragging a woman with her clothes in disarray, her hair all disheveled, defiant, and resisting them. The crowd would naturally turn and look to see what in the world was happening. The religious rulers bring her right into the midst of the group that the Lord Jesus is teaching! They fling her down on the ground there and make their crude charge. “This woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.”

She is guilty, there is no doubt about that. And what she did was sin. Our Lord called it sin—He finally said to her, “Go, and sin no more.” They knew the Law perfectly well: “And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death” (Lev_20:10). Where was the man? The very fact that they did not produce the man also makes it apparent that they were not interested in enforcing the Law. They had another motive. - McGee

Joh 8:5-6 Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear.

They are right about the Law of Moses; there is no way of toning it down. She should be stoned. They are putting Him on the horns of a dilemma. Will He contradict Moses? Will he say something else, offer some other explanation? They did this to trap Him so that they might accuse Him. They didn't really want to stone the woman. They wanted to stone Him. Our Lord knew that, of course—He “needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man” (Joh_2:25).

This scene is very interesting. The defiant woman is flung before Him. The crowd has no respect for her embarrassment, her feelings, and they leer at her and crane their necks to see her, adding to her humiliation.

Jesus stoops and writes on the ground. In effect, He dismisses the case. He will not join with her accusers. He will not so much as look at her to add to her embarrassment. He stoops down and writes as though He doesn't even hear them.

This is the only record that we have of His writing anything. He is the One about whom more books have been written, pro and con, than about any other person who has ever lived; yet He never wrote anything except this in the sands of the temple floor, which the wind or the feet of the crowd erased.

What did He write? Of course we don't know, but I can make a suggestion. Turning back to the prophets, we pick up something quite interesting: “O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters” (Jer_17:13). Now, who had forsaken the Lord? This woman? Yes, she had. The religious rulers? Yes, they had. Their names shall be written in the earth. This is what I think He wrote, linking their names with sins of their past. Perhaps He wrote the name of a woman living in Rome. One old pious Pharisee had had an affair in Rome when he was a young fellow. His wife didn't know about it; no one in Jerusalem knew about it; but our Lord knew that old rascal. As He just wrote the name of the woman, the old Pharisee came over and saw it—and suddenly remembered that he had another appointment. Perhaps one of the scribes made regular trips to Ephesus, a great sinning place, to a certain address over there which Jesus wrote in the sand. The scribe looked at it and said, “Oh, my gracious!” He left hurriedly. Another scribe may have left a girl in Galilee who was pregnant. He didn't marry her, and he didn't think anyone knew. Our Lord wrote the name of the girl and the scribe's name with it.

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“Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance” (Psa_90:8). Secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven. – McGee

The trick was now clear. They wanted the Lord to contradict the Law of Moses. If they could succeed in doing that, then they could turn the common people against Jesus. They reminded the Lord that Moses, in the law commanded that a person taken in the act of adultery should be stoned to death. For their own wicked purposes, the Pharisees hoped the Lord would disagree, and so they asked Him what He had to say on the subject. They thought that justice and the Law of Moses demanded that she should be made an example. As Darby says:

It comforts and quiets the depraved heart of man if he can only find a person worse than himself: he thinks the greater sin of another excuses himself; and while accusing and vehemently blaming another, he forgets his own evil. He thus rejoices in iniquity. – Believers’ Bible Commentary

Joh 8:7-9 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." And again, He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

Jesus gives the requirements for being a judge, which is something for all of us to hear. We have the right to be the judge of others provided we meet the requirement. That requirement is sinlessness. May I say to you, my friend, I don't know about you, but that takes me out of the stone-throwing business.

An old Scottish commentator says that the elder ones left first because they had more sense than the younger ones. The younger ones hung around until they saw their own names come up, and then they finally caught on and left also. So, there was not a person left there who could throw a stone at her except One. Only Jesus could have thrown the stone at her. All the others had slinked away. What hypocrites they were! - McGee

Joh 8:10-11 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

This woman was guilty of sin, and according to the Law of Moses an adulteress was to be put to death. Is Jesus reversing the Mosaic system? No. He is placing His Cross between that woman and her sin. This One who is the Son of the virgin, who Himself was under a cloud all of His life, is going to the Cross to pay the penalty for even the sin of this woman. He did not come into the world to condemn the world. He did not come to judge this woman. He came into the world to be a Savior!

A great many people think they are lost because they have committed a certain sin. I have news for you. One is not lost because he is a murderer, or a liar, or a thief, or an adulterer, or because he has borne false witness or committed other sins. A person does these things because he is lost and does not believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ forgives sins. He is the Savior. He died for the sins of the whole world. Any person who comes to the Lord Jesus Christ is forgiven. - McGee

I Am the Light of the World

Joh 8:12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life."

Notice He says, “I am”—this “I am” occurs again and again. In the Old Testament, Jehovah is the “... I AM THAT I AM ...” (Exo_3:14). Very frankly, we are told very little about God. We know He is the self-existing One, that He has all wisdom and all power. The Lord Jesus came to this earth not only to redeem man but also to reveal God to man. Jesus greatly

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expands our understanding by using the commonplace things like bread, light, and water to symbolize Himself. He uses the ordinary to speak of the extraordinary, the physical to speak of the spiritual, the temporal to speak of the eternal, the here-and-now to speak of the hereafter, the earthly to speak of the heavenly, the limited to speak of the unlimited, and the finite to speak of the infinite. Jesus gives us a revelation of God when He tells us that He is Bread, He is Water, He is Life. Then we understand that not only is God self-existing, but that He also meets our every need. Jesus said, “I am the bread of life” (Joh_6:35), “I am the light of the world” (Joh_8:12), “I am the door” (Joh_10:9), “I am the good shepherd” (Joh_10:11), “I am the resurrection, and the life” (Joh_11:25), “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (Joh_14:6), and “I am the vine, ye are the branches” (Joh_15:5).

Here Jesus is saying, “I am the light of the world.” He has just exposed the sin of the scribes and the Pharisees who brought the woman guilty of adultery. Because they were just as guilty as she, they had to flee. When one turns on the light, all the rats, the bats, and the bedbugs crawl away. Light exposes sin, which is the reason the scribes and the Pharisees had to leave.

“I am the light of the world” is the highest claim that He has made so far in the Gospel of John. One of the definitions of God is that He is Light (see 1Jn_1:5). He is absolute in His holiness and in His justice. Even physical light is one of the most complicated things as well as one of the most essential things for us. Who really knows what it is? In some ways it acts like waves, and in some ways, it acts like particles of matter. The startling thing is that men, acting on both of these definitions or principles, have been able to make remarkable inventions and discoveries. Some say that both are true and yet others say both can't be true. Is light the absence of darkness? Is darkness the absence of light? We say a room is filled with light. What do we mean? Does it weigh any more when it is filled with light? There could be no such thing as color without light. The red rose is red because it has absorbed every other part of light except red. That is the reason we see red in the red rose.

We don't understand light, and certainly a child doesn't understand light, but he does know enough about it to turn on the light switch when he enters a dark room. Jesus Christ is the Light of the World. Just as the sun is the physical light of this world, He is spiritual Light. Just as a little child can have enough sense to come into the presence of light, so any sinner today, though he be “a fool and a wayfaring man” (see Isa_35:8), can come into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are those who deny that Christ is the Light of the World. They are walking in a lesser light. As the moon has no light of its own but reflects light from the sun, so this civilization that we live in today owes everything to Christ. We have hospitals, charities, orphans' homes, consideration for the poor, rights of labor because the Lord Jesus came to this earth. The reason we have problems in these areas today is that we have wandered too far from the Light. The world is just walking in moonlight, as it were. How this poor old world needs to get back to the Light which is Christ.

“He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.” There are those who have attempted to liken Jesus the Light to the headlights of a car. Friend, the headlights of a car do not lead anywhere. Who does the leading?—The fellow at the steering wheel. Unfortunately, this is the way many Christians try to live their lives. I don't consider this an apt illustration of Christ.

During this Feast of Tabernacles, Israel was remembering the deliverance when the pillar of fire led the children of Israel through the wilderness. They were celebrating this with a torch parade. When Jesus said, “I am the light of the world,” this is what He was referring to. Whenever and wherever the pillar of fire led, the children of Israel followed. We are to follow Him in a like manner, looking to Him as the Light of the World. - McGee

John 8:13-14 The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true." Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going.

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There is now a sharp conflict between the religious rulers and Christ. They are really accusing Him of boasting when He claimed to be the Light. Jesus gives them a threefold reason why His testimony is true.

First, He says, “I know whence I came.” He says He knows where He came from and, hence, He knows Himself. By the way, folk on this earth can't tell you where they came from. Scientists try to tell us what happened millions of years ago; yet none of them were here even one hundred years ago. They don't know where they came from; they can only speculate. But the Lord Jesus knew from where He came. - McGee

Joh 8:15-16 You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.

The Pharisees judged others by outward appearances and according to merely human standards. They looked upon Jesus as the Carpenter of Nazareth and never stopped to think that He was different from any other man who ever lived. The Lord Jesus said that He judged no one. This may mean that He did not judge men according to worldly standards, like the Pharisees did. Or more probably it means that His purpose in coming into the world was not to judge people but to save them.

If the Lord were to judge, His judgment would be righteous and true. He is God and everything He does is done in partnership with the Father who sent Him. Over and over again, the Lord Jesus emphasized to the Pharisees His unity with God the Father. It was this that stirred up in their hearts the bitterest antagonism toward Him. – Believers' Bible Commentary

Joh 8:17-18 It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.

Here is the third reason that His testimony is true. The Father had borne witness to Him. They had heard the Father's voice out of heaven. - McGee

Joh 8:19 Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."

The Pharisees' next question was doubtless spoken in scorn. Perhaps they looked around the crowd as they said, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered by telling them that they neither recognized who He truly was, nor did they know His Father. Of course, they would have denied vigorously any such ignorance of God. But it was true, nonetheless. If they had received the Lord Jesus, they would have known His Father also. But no one can know God the Father except through Jesus Christ. Thus, their rejection of the Savior made it impossible for them to honestly claim that they knew and loved God. – Believers' Bible Commentary

They are reflecting on His birth again. Notice that Jesus calls God “my Father” in a different relationship from what you and I have with Him through faith in Christ. Remember, He said to Mary after His resurrection, “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father” (Joh_20:17). We become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, but Jesus is His Son because of His position in the Trinity. He is God the Son, and He addresses God the Father. This has nothing to do with generation or regeneration, but it has everything to do with His position in the Trinity.

“If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.” Here is the cleavage. Here is the real issue. There is no middle ground. If you are going to know God the Father, you must come through Jesus Christ. There is no other way. - McGee

Joh 8:20-22 These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come. Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your

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sin. Where I go you cannot come." So, the Jews said, "Will He kill Himself, because He says, 'Where I go you cannot come'?"

The treasury was in the women's court. This was where they had brought the woman taken in adultery. You will notice how much these Jews were in the dark. First, they ask, “Where is thy Father?” Now they ask, “Will he kill himself?” They know nothing about the fact that He has been instructing His own that He is going to Jerusalem to die at the hands of the Gentiles, that He will be delivered up to die by these very same religious rulers, and that He will die a redemptive death for the sins of the world. Will He kill Himself? No! He will give Himself a ransom for many. – McGee

Again, Jesus showed perfect knowledge of the future. He told His critics He was going away—referring not only to His death and burial, but to His resurrection and ascension back into heaven. The Jewish people would continue to seek for the Messiah, not realizing that He had already visited them and that they had rejected Him. Because of their rejection, they would die in their sin (“sin” is singular in Greek and in NKJV). This would mean that they would be forever prevented from entering heaven, where the Lord was going. It is a solemn truth! Those who refuse to accept the Lord Jesus have no hope of heaven. How dreadful to die in one's sins, without God, without Christ, without hope forever! – Believers’ Bible Commentary

Joh 8:23 And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

We find this same thought in 1Co_2:14. Human knowledge can be understood by any other man who has a human nature—if his IQ is high enough. But divine knowledge is different. Only the Spirit of God can take the things of Christ and show them to us. That's what He is saying here. - McGee

Joh 8:24 Therefore, I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

People die because they are sinners. That is the natural consequence of sin. “If ye believe not that I, am he, ye shall die in your sins.” Can a person be saved on his deathbed? Yes, if he accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. But a person can reject Christ too long, just as these Jews did. There comes a time when one has rejected Christ too long and then will not ever want to accept Him. – McGee

Note: Jesus says it for a second time that they will die in their sins. He will get more direct as he gets closer to the cross and predicts the judgment in 70 AD.

Joh 8:25 Then they said to Him, "Who are You?" And Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning.

These Jews did not know what His mission was, His work was, nor did they know Him. “Where is thy Father?” “Will He kill Himself?” “Who art Thou?” Jesus answers that His statement concerning Himself is always the same. He consistently claims that He is the Messiah, the Savior of the world. - McGee

Joh 8:26 I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."

Our Lord always maintained that what He was doing and saying was what the Father wanted Him to do and say. He claimed that God the Father had sent Him and that He was doing the Father's will. He never appealed to His own mind or His own intellect. This is an example for us who are preachers. It is God's Word that we are to be giving out rather than messages that are the product of our own intellects. - McGee

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Joh 8:27-28 They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father. Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.

When Jesus calls Himself the Son of Man, He is referring to Dan_7:13-14. The Son of Man comes to the Ancient of Days to be made ruler of this universe. So, the Lord Jesus is referring here to His crucifixion and also to His crowning that is yet to come.

After the death and resurrection of Christ, many of these religious rulers believed. We are told in the Book of Acts that many of the priests in Jerusalem believed. This is what He is saying to them now. Afterwards they would know that He is the One He claims to be. It is the redemptive death of Christ that explains Him, why He came and who He is. One cannot really know who He is until one knows what He has done. – McGee

Again, Jesus prophesied what was going to happen. First of all, the Jews would lift up the Son of Man. This refers to His death by crucifixion. After they had done that, they would know that He was the Messiah. They would know it by the earthquake and by the darkness, but, most of all, by His bodily resurrection from the dead. Notice carefully the words of the Lord, “Then you will know that I am.” Here, again, the word He is not in the original. The deeper meaning is, “Then you will know that I am God.” Then they would understand He did nothing from Himself, that is, by His own authority. Rather, He came into the world as the dependent One, speaking only those things which the Father had taught Him to say. – Believers’ Bible Commentary

Joh 8:29-30 And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.

The Lord's relationship with God the Father was very intimate. Each of these expressions was a claim to equality with God. Throughout all of His earthly ministry, the Father was with Him. At no time was Jesus left alone. At all times He did the things that were pleasing to God. These words could only be spoken by a sinless Being. No one born of human parents could ever truthfully utter those words, “I always do those things that please Him.” Too often we do the things that please ourselves. Sometimes we are prompted to please our fellow men. Only the Lord Jesus was completely taken up with the desire to do the things that were well-pleasing to God.

As He spoke these wonderful words, Jesus found that many professed to believe on Him. Doubtless some were genuine in their faith. Others might only have been prompted to give lip service to the Lord. – Believers Bible Commentary