

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

### **Children of Abraham or Satan?**

Scripture: John 8:37-47

Code: 1523

Our Father, we thank You, this morning, as we approach Your Word for the fact that the Spirit of God is our teacher. And as we examine the truths that You teach us today, we pray that our hearts and minds might be open, we might be sensitive, and that we might learn, and, Lord, that it might not just be academic but it might be life-changing, it might be living truth to our hearts that we might leave this place better understanding ourselves, Thee and Thy will for us. So open unto us Thy book, teach us, transform us, renew our minds. We commit this time of study into Thy hands for Thy glory, in Jesus name we pray. Amen.

If you have your Bibles, this morning, turn with me please to the eighth chapter of John. We are going to consider verses 37 to 47 in our continuing study of John's gospel, this morning. And as we come to chapter 8, you are aware if you've been here at all in the past of what is happening. Jesus is in direct confrontation with the Jewish leaders again and they have completely rejected His claims to be Messiah and Son of God. Christ has been making these claims since He first arrived and they have continued to reject them. And you're well aware of that, we've said it many, many times.

But one thing that is very, very important to understand as we approach these verses is the fact that as the antagonism of the Jewish leaders has grown, so has the directness of the statements of Christ. Whereas initially He rather presented Himself at a positive way. As their rejection became more obvious, He turns on them in a very negative way. And so the stronger the rejection, the stronger His invectives against them. The more they show Him hatred, the more He strikes piercing blows into their hypocrisy. The harder they are on Him, the harder He is on them. He never backs off. He never slows up. He never tries to patronize them. He never gets the idea that He's losing His audience so He has to cajole them or patronize them at all. He came to condemn sin and the more open sin becomes the more open condemnation becomes. The more directly and devastatingly they blasted Him, the more He does at them. The more clearly they reject, the more fiery He condemns because the only way that He's ever going to communicate with them in terms of their sin is to be honest and straightforward about it. And the more blatant the sin is, the more obvious the condemnation must be. And He has never been any more devastating, and He has never been anymore direct than He is in this passage.

This passage comes to the real nitty gritty and He really hits them where they are. They have come to the epitome of their rejection and are ready to murder Him, and so He reaches the climax of His condemnation of their sin. In fact, He hits them so hard with this condemnation that they react by completely losing their cool, in the vernacular, they react in an intense kind of emotional hate that allows Him to lose the whole subtlety of the murder plot that's brewing and they find themselves picking up rocks to throw at Him. Only He disappears out of their midst. They are so incensed at what He says that they completely lose their cool, they completely depart from the idea of a secret plot to murder Him and they start grabbing the nearest stone to throw at Him. Rejection is a serious thing and it must be dealt with by serious measures, and so the more obvious the rejection becomes, the more direct becomes the condemnation of that rejection from the mouth of Jesus Christ.

And you know, that's really love in action because it is only the stern, harsh, decisive statement against sin that is going to reveal the character of sin. You can't talk softly about sin. You can't patronize sin. You must deal as harshly as the sin is and Jesus always does.

Now it's very obvious, if you know anything about the Bible, if you know anything about God at all, that God hates sin. And man has always tried to hide his sin. He may deny its existence. He may try to hide it from his mind by escaping through some psychological avenue. But whether man denies it or not, it is there and God hates it. And God is in the business of destroying man's false security that he throws up to cover his sin. And man always does this. When Adam was first confronted with his sin, he had kind of the standard remark, "The woman Thou gavest me." And since then everybody's been passing the buck, hiding behind some kind of a security. It wasn't my fault, I didn't understand, I didn't know the law, it was his fault, it was her fault, I didn't really sin, that was just this or that or the other thing, there's no such thing as sin, and there's always this denial. But God has always dealt harshly with sin.

And these Jews never even conceived of the fact that they were sinners. They had covered over their sin with a giant security blanket and the security blanket they had was their Abrahamic ancestry. They felt that because they were the children of Abraham, that meant they were automatically guaranteed a gilt-edged promise that they were going to be the sons of the Kingdom and they would have salvation just by birth into the line of Abraham. That is, because they were Jewish they automatically received all the promises of God and sin was no problem to them. They had their security in that. Of course, if there's anything that Jesus has to do, it's shoot down a false security. If a man has a false security, it's got to be eliminated before that man is going to see his need of Jesus Christ. Nobody is going to come to Jesus Christ, as I've said many times, until he knows he needs Him. And so Christ must destroy their false security and their security is in Abraham.

Now you remember over in Romans, and you might look at it for just a moment, the first chapter, we have here the words of Paul in dealing with man's false security. In chapter 1 he deals with the security of the Gentile. The Gentile comes along and says, "Well how can God punish me? I mean, how can God condemn me for my sin, I didn't know anything? I mean, I'm not like a Jew, I didn't get the law and the promises and all that stuff, the Bible, the Old Testament, how can God hold me responsible? So my security is ignorance," the Gentile says. So in answer to the security of ignorance, Paul says in Romans 1:18, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...here comes the key...who hold the truth in unrighteousness because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shown it unto them, for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are...what?...without excuse." To the Gentile He says your ignorance is inexcusable. You have enough knowledge of God within you and around you to be responsible.

And then the Gentile says, "Well, maybe my cop-out isn't my ignorance, it's my I-couldn't-help-it deal. I'm sorry, what do you expect out of me? I couldn't help it or I would have done different, I couldn't help it." Verse 32 of chapter 1 deals with that. "Who knowing the judgment of God that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but have...what?...pleasure in them that do them." Don't tell me you would have done different, you loved it. That's what Jesus said in John 3 when He said, "Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil."

So the Gentile can't plead ignorance. He's inexcusable. He can't plead that he would have done differently but he didn't have any ability to do it because God says through the Apostle Paul you did it and you loved it. So the Gentile has no sin shelter. No man is ever going to come before God and say, "Well I'm sorry, God, I didn't know." God's knowledge has been given to every man. And no man is going to come before God and say, "I'm sorry, God, I couldn't help it." God's going to say, "Yes you could, and you loved it when you did it." So He deals with the Gentile.

Then you come to chapter 2 in Romans and he deals with the security of the Jew. The Jew comes along and says, "Well, I'm certainly secure because we were given the Law," verse 17 of chapter 2, "But if thou art called a Jew and restest in the Law and makest thy boast of God and knowest His will and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law." In other words, the Jew was resting in the fact that he had the Law. But Paul quickly adds to the Jew this fact, "Having the Law doesn't make you secure, it only makes you infinitely more responsible." All the Law does is make you absolutely responsible. And that's really the key. You go down to verse 12, "For as many as have sinned without law shall perish without law." That's the Gentile. "But as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." The law is no guarantee of security. Just because the Jew happened to be in the line of those to whom God gave His Law does not secure them at all. That only brings infinitely greater responsibility.

Then the Jew says, "Well, okay it's not my connection with the Law, it's my connection with Abraham, circumcision." And you remember circumcising a baby on the eighth day was the sign that he was a descendant of Abraham. And they felt that this was a guarantee that nothing could ever happen to them, nothing could ever go wrong. God had them right on the top on all of His promises, they were the first ones to get everything. They were secure. They were right on the inside. Down in verse 25 the Jew that's arguing with Paul, the hypothetical antagonist here, in verse 25 Paul answers him by saying, "For circumcision verily profiteth," it's a great thing, "if you keep the law. But if you be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." You call yourself a child of Abraham, that's good if you keep the law. If you don't keep the law, it doesn't mean a thing. Verse 26, "Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law," that is if an uncircumcised non-physical child of Abraham obeys God, then spiritually it counts for him as if he was a circumcised child of God.

What he is saying is simply this. Being the children of Abraham and having the circumcision, the sign of the fact that you're a child of Abraham, a true Jew as was the sign originally, does not secure you unless you're a true Jew before God in your heart. That comes in verse 28 and 29 and that's the key. "For he is not a Jew who is one...what?...outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. But he's a Jew who is one inwardly and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, not in the letter whose praise is not of men but of God."

So, you see, there he explodes the basis of Jewish secure security. The Jew says, "Well, how can I miss out on God's promises because I received the law?" Paul says, "The law doesn't do you any good unless you obey it, it only makes you infinitely more responsible."

Then he says, "Well, it's my lineage to Abraham, the circumcision, the sign of my Abrahamic ancestry." Paul says, "That doesn't do you a bit of good unless your heart's right before God."

So Paul in this chapter in Romans 1 and 2, these two chapters, has exploded those securities as well. Now when you go back to John chapter 8, you will find that that's exactly what Jesus is doing here. He is demolishing the Jewish security of being related to Abraham. And they felt that automatically just because they were the seed of Abraham they would have the blessings whether they sinned or whether they didn't sin. And Jesus says that's not how it is. There is no security in religion. There's no security in race. There's no security in good works. Only in Christ is sin forgiven and a man placed righteous before God. It has nothing to do with his ancestry. And Jesus has told them they need forgiveness, and they deny it. And Jesus told them that they need to repent, and they refuse. And Jesus told them they don't know God, and they don't believe that. And Jesus told them they'll die in their sins and they laughed. "We are Abraham's seed. What could happen to us?" And so Jesus gets right down to the real issue. You see, the Jews had all their eggs in one basket, the seed of

Abraham. That was their guilt-edged guarantee that they were in forever. And when Jesus said to them in the last portion that we studied last week, He said, "I can give you truth, and I can make you free," they said, "Us? We know the truth, we're already free. We're Abraham's seed, what do we need?" See, they never recognized their need ever. That's so common for people to think they are secure when in fact they are damned by the very thing they hold on to is their security.

Everybody has a security, no man can live without a security. You have to have it. And if you're not so infantile as to suck your thumb and rub your nose with a blanket, your security is something else. Everybody has to have a psychological security. You can't live without it. And tragically most people's securities are going to be that which damns them to hell forever because they're false securities. And we're in the business of trying to explode those false ones and give to a man the only real security, faith in Jesus Christ.

So Jesus knows that He must take direct method and attack those securities because only when that security is shattered can the true security of Christ be presented to them and received. And they always considered themselves privileged. I have picked up some quotes from some of the old rabbis. One of them says this, quote: "Abraham sits beside the gates of hell and does not permit any wicked Israelite to go through," end quote. When Justin Martyr was arguing with the Jew in the dialogue of Tripho[[?]], the Jew said this, quote: "They who are the seed of Abraham according to the flesh shall in any case, even if they be sinners and unbelieving and disobedient toward God share in the eternal Kingdom," end quote. Now they actually believed this because of the lineage of Abraham they were guaranteed all the promises of God. And so Jesus has to deal a death blow to that idea and He does it in this passage. You say, "Well how does that apply to us?" Just this, check your own life to see where your securities are because if they're not in Jesus Christ, they're false securities.

Now in this passage as we take it apart here, we'll find the Jew makes three claims. Now these are the Jewish leaders primarily and they make three claims that they hold on to as their security. And they're all really the same claim in different words. But each time they make a claim, Jesus destroys it. He shatters it, stripping them of their security.

The first claim is in verse 33, "We are Abraham's seed." The second claim is in verse 39, "Abraham is our father." The third claim is in verse 41, "We have one Father, even God." Those are the three claims they make. We'll consider each claim and how Christ dealt with it. And you'll notice that they get progressively greater. First they say in a general way, "We're Abraham's seed." Then they get specific and say, "Abraham is our father." Then they really get specific and say, "God is our Father. And to each claim Christ replies finally saying, "You really want to know who your father is? Your father's the devil."

All right, notice claim number one, and we back up to verse 33 for claim number one. "We are Abraham's seed." Now this claim they made earlier in the dialogue about truth and freedom that we talked about last Sunday. But Jesus picks up on this one in verse 37, and the first claim is answered in verses 37 and 38. And Jesus picks up on the claim from verse 33. Verse 37, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed," Jesus says. We'll stop there for a minute.

Now they had said, "We are Abraham's seed." Jesus says, "I know that physically in a physical sense you are the offspring of Abraham." That is true. There's no question here. These are genuine Jews. They certainly couldn't be called children of Abraham by faith because they don't believe. They're out to murder Christ. The only sense at all in which they are Abraham's children is the sense of physical birth. But this shows us that the seed of Abraham still existed in the land of Israel at the time of Christ, they're still the same people. He says, "Yes, you are, I know," and the word for "know" there is not *ginosko*, to come to know, it's the word *gnosis*, I know it innately because of My omniscience. It's just to know apart from learning. I know, He says, not I've learned that you are, I know it innately, *gnosis*. You are Abraham's physical descendants. But He's implying that's not all there is to the thing of security. There has to be more. Look at the rest of verse 37, "But ye seek to kill Me because My word hath no place in you." You are physical descendants of Abraham, but you are anything but spiritual descendants of Abraham because you're trying to kill Me and My word has no place in you.

Now just to be a physical child of Abraham is no guarantee of anything. There's no security in that, only responsibility. Over in chapter 9 of Romans, listen to this. Paul talks about the Israelites and he says they have the adoption, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, the promises, whose are the fathers of whom is concerning the flesh, Christ came, etc., etc. Now listen, "Not as though the Word of God hath taken no effect, for they are not all Israel who are of Israel." Now listen to this, "Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, physically, are they all children, spiritually," see? Just being a descendant of Abraham guarantees nothing but responsibility unless that man is also a child of Abraham inwardly by faith.

And so, these are the half converts who sort of believed back in verse 30 and they're beginning to show their true colors by rejecting Christ's words. They are physical Jews descended from Abraham, but Christ doesn't stop there. He proceeds to show them that this is not enough and He shatters their guarantee of salvation that they would have in their lineage.

Over in Galatians 3 verse 6 Paul says, "Even as Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness, know ye therefore...here it comes...that they who are of faith, the same are the sons of Abraham." Very important. Verse 9, "So then, those who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." So it is not just physical, it must be spiritual. Now these Jewish leaders couldn't possibly

be true children of Abraham, they couldn't possibly be heirs of salvation, they couldn't possibly be inheritors of the Kingdom because they had completely rejected Christ's words and were trying to murder the Messiah that Abraham had hoped for.

Look at verse 56 in the eighth chapter of John. Here's this contrast. John 8:56, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see...what?...My day and he saw it and was glad." How could you be children of Abraham and want to murder Me, the One that Abraham rejoiced to see? You say, "Well wait a minute now, in what way did Abraham see Christ's day?" Well it's explained for us in Hebrews 11:13, I'll just read it, listen. "These all died in faith," and he's talking about Abraham and Sarah, "not having received the promises." In other words, all the promises to Abraham weren't fulfilled in his lifetime, but listen, "But having seen them afar off and were persuaded of them and embraced them," see? Abraham literally understood a fore-view of the coming of Messiah who would fulfill the promise to him. And Abraham rejoiced in that fore-view. And so Jesus is saying, "How could you possibly be children of Abraham when Abraham rejoiced to see My day and you want to kill Me?"

Spiritually they were not the sons of Abraham. They were going to kill Abraham's messianic seed. They were going to kill the One who could bring about the full blessing of Abraham's promise. They couldn't be Abraham's sons also because of one other thing, they couldn't recognize God's messengers. Remember back in Genesis 18 when those messengers came from God and Abraham recognized them? And he got Sarah to whip up a little food for them and they invited them in. Abraham recognized God's messengers. Abraham welcomed them. These Jews tried to kill the messenger of God.

So Jesus says there's no way that you could possibly be the children of Abraham spiritually. You want to destroy the One that Abraham rejoiced to see. You do not recognize messengers from God. And My Word has no place in you. And certainly God's Word had all the place in Abraham. So there's no way they stack up with Abraham.

Then Jesus explains their inability to recognize Him in verse 38. He says the reason you don't recognize Me is because, "I speak that which I've seen with My Father and ye do that which you've seen with your father." You know, it's a principle that the child speaks the language of his father. And the problem with the Jews was they had a different father than Jesus did and they couldn't understand His language. That's a pretty devastating statement. He says, "I came from God, I know God's mind, I speak God's language, I talk God's truth, I do God's will, I represent God, therefore you don't get it because your father speaks a different language." It's a pretty devastating statement. And He's implying something without really saying it yet.

But Christ spoke from God, Christ wasn't talking on His own. Back in chapter 5 verse 17, I think it is, "Jesus answered them, 'My Father works hitherto and I work.' Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him because He not only had broken the Sabbath but said God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Then Jesus said, 'Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do for whatever things He doeth these also doeth the Son in the same manner. For the Father loves the Son and shows all things that He Himself doeth.'" In other words, Christ does not act independently. He says, "I do what God wants me to do, I speak God's language and because you are not children of God you cannot understand the language of God." A child speaks the language of his father, they are not children of God. You can't recognize Me...Jesus says in effect...because you don't know God and you don't understand His language.

This is again illustrated down in verse 45. "Because I tell you truth, you believe Me not." Verse 47, "He that is of God hears God's words, you don't hear them because you're not of God." And so He is saying to them, you can't recognize Me because you don't know God. Back in verse 19 of chapter 8, "Then said they unto Him, 'Where is Thy Father?' Jesus answered, 'Ye neither know Me, nor My Father.'" You don't know God. If you don't know God you can't speak God's language. They don't understand. And so He says there's a vast gulf between the two of us, we have two different fathers who speak two different languages.

Without really delivering the knockout punch, He has implied that they cannot be the true spiritual children of Abraham and He has implied that the true spiritual children of God know God's language and they don't and so they couldn't be the children of God either. And then He adds, "You must have another father. Spiritually you are neither the children of Abraham, or the children of God because you don't act like Abraham, you don't do the things Abraham did and you don't understand the language of God. You must be somebody else's children."

So Jesus is really saying, "I speak what My Father shows Me and you do what your father tells you." Notice it in verse 38, "You do that which you have seen with your father." And what did their father teach them to do? Murder...murder, that's what He's implying. You can't have the same father as I have for My Father says, "Thou shalt not murder." Your father says "Murder." You've got to have a different father than I do.

I want to add a critical footnote in this place right here. Backing up to verse 37 there's a tremendous truth. The whole passage hinges on it. The last part of verse 37 says, "Because My Word hath no place in you." And the word "hath no place" is *choreo* and *choreo* means to make an advance, or to progress. It means literally to depart from somewhere or to leave there. And what He's saying is this, "It is obvious that you are not true spiritual children of Abraham because My Word makes no advances in you." See? It makes no progress.



You say, "Why is that important?" Go back to verse 31 and I'll show you. It says in verse 30 that many believed, but watch in verse 31, "Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on Him, 'If ye...what?...continue in My Word then are you My disciples truthfully, really.'" In other words, it's not simply the planting of the seed, it's the progress of it, isn't it? It has to be a continuing thing. When the seed is planted on rocky soil, it just withers away. On the dry ground, it withers away. On the fertile soil of Luke 8, it grabs hold and its roots go down and it continues. And so He says your problem, in verse 37, is that the Word makes no progress in you, it does not advance. It stays right where it was when it started...no advance.

That's a tremendous truth. Many people hear the Word of God and a little sparkle of faith arises in their hearts but the Word makes no advance, no progress. And thus their faith is not genuine. Contrast with that, would you please, genuine faith in 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 verse 5. First Thessalonians 1:5 says this, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance." Now verse 6, "And ye became followers of us," *mimetes*, mimics, "of us and of the Lord." Verse 7, "So that you were an example..." Verse 8, "For from you sounded out the Word of the Lord." Then in verse 13 of chapter 2, "For this cause also we...thank we, God, without ceasing because when ye received the Word of God which you heard of us you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth...watch this...the Word of God which effectually worketh in you that believe." You see, there is the Word that goes in and begins to produce something. It made them mimics of Paul and of Christ. It made them examples. It made them evangelists. It was obvious that it was effectually working within them. And Jesus is saying in verse 37 of John 8, "You heard it but it made no progress, it made no advance."

So here's the test. Proof positive that you cannot possibly be genuine spiritual seed of Abraham. Why? Because you hate Me, the Son of God, the One that Abraham looked for and you want to murder Me. Number two, because the Word makes no advance in you. Number three, verse 38, because I speak a language from God and you don't understand it, that means you've got a different father.

Well, you ask yourself, did they get the message? It's pretty clear. And the answer is no. They never got the message. Verse 39, their second claim comes right after it, and their second claim is the same claim only this time it's with its spiritual implication that Christ has been implying. Verse 39, "They answered and said unto Him, 'Abraham is our father.'" And I can almost read into this the idea that they're saying...Jesus is saying, "Abraham is your physical father, but not your spiritual Father." And they're saying, "Oh yes he is. Abraham is so our spiritual father." In other words, they're moving the step that Christ took them to, to the spiritual concepts and they're saying, "Abraham IS our spiritual father." And again they're holding to their Abrahamic security. You see, they had all their

eggs in that basket, that's all they had...that's all they had to hold on to. So they say, "Abraham IS our father." And Jesus has agreed that Abraham is their physical father, but not their spiritual Father and they say yes he is. And they were angry. The implication of the statement is anger.

And so, having made their statement Jesus replies by giving another acid test and saying, "Well, if you're the spiritual children of Abraham, let's check it out." And the answer is almost identical to what it was to the first claim. Verse 39, "They answered and said unto Him, 'Abraham is our father.' Jesus saith unto them...here comes the test..., 'If ye were Abraham's children ye would do the works of Abraham.'" And, you know, the works of Abraham were works of faith, did you know that? Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. All through the Bible Abraham and his faith are connected, a man of faith. These were not people of faith but people of works. They were self-righteous workers trying to earn favor with God. And He says to them, "You've got it all backwards, if you were the children of Abraham you would operate on faith, you operate on works." Abraham's children obey God's commands, they don't plot murders. Abraham's children fully trust God's will. Abraham's children know God's messengers, they recognize them. And most of all, Abraham's children rejoice to see the day of Messiah. And you're not qualified in any one of those counts. It's obvious you're not true spiritual children of Abraham.

This is a very sobering thought and I hope the Lord lays it on our hearts to see that there are a lot of people who are counting on some kind of a spiritual heritage for their salvation. There are a lot of young people, there are a lot of children, maybe some of you who are figuring just because you were raised in a Christian family you're secure, or just because you've been in church all your life, you're secure. That's not so. There must be a personal faith in Jesus Christ, there's no such thing as racial...there's no such thing as family, or church, or religious security. And so He says this is the decisive test, if you are Abraham's children you would do the works of Abraham and they were works of faith.

You see, just to be the physical child of Abraham is nothing. Over in chapter 6 verse 63 it says this, "It is the spirit that gives life...listen to this...the flesh profits...what?...nothing." I mean, to be the fleshly child of Abraham, what's that mean? Oh certainly there are some wonderful promises that the Jews have received over the years and the guarantee yet of their restoration and the Kingdom of Israel, and all these things that are coming to pass in the future. But in terms of spiritual blessing, the flesh profits nothing and a physical tie to Abraham is only a fleshly tie and it means nothing. The works of Abraham were faith and obedience, a recognition of God's messengers and submission to God.

They were just the opposite and Jesus gets real specific in verse 40. Notice the progression. "Now you seek to kill Me," that's bad enough, "a man that has told you the truth," that's worse, "which I've

heard of God," that's infinitely worse. Notice the progression? It's bad enough to want to murder, but to kill One who tells the truth and then to kill One who tells the truth and speaks for God is the absolute ultimate blasphemy. And so you see in verse 40 a progressive indictment. Obvious you're not the children of Abraham, you seek to kill Me. Abraham didn't murder. Not only that, Abraham loved the truth and you want to kill a man who is a messenger of the truth, not only that Abraham served and loved God and you want to destroy the very truth that came from God. No way that you are the children of Abraham, you're blaspheming Abraham's God.

Then Jesus adds a provoking reminder in verse 41. "Ye do the deeds of your father..." Stop right there. And here again He says this and He doesn't say who it is yet, but they must be getting the message by now. It is...it's obvious that their father's not God. He's just told them they're deaf to God's truth and deaf to God's message and they don't give any signs of being true children of Abraham. They have another father. "Ye do the deeds of your father."

Well that provokes their third claim and the third reply of Christ and that's in verse 41, second part. "Then said they to Him," and here they get to the climax of their claim, "We are not born of fornication." And that means illicit or illegal sexual intercourse, "We are not illegitimate. We have one Father, even God." And they're not talking about physical illegitimacy, they're talking about spiritual. If they were talking about physical, they would have said, "We are not born of fornication, we have the true father Abraham," and they would have used the physical. But since they are identifying with God, they are talking about spiritual fornication.

You say, "Well what does it mean?" It means just this, their point is very simple, they are saying this, "We are spiritually children of God, we are unmixed with idols, we are not offspring of an illicit union between God and some pagan system." In other words, "Our religion is pure, there's no false gods, there's no idols in our temple, there's no mixture with Baal, there's none of that going on here." You see. For what they're saying is, "Wait a minute, don't tell us our Father is Satan," and I'm sure they got the message by now. We are unmixed, following in the promises of God. There are no idols here. And, of course, you realize that the Jews believed that Satan was the father of the heathen, they believed that Satan was the father of the heathen spiritually. And what they're saying is, we are not the children of Satan for we are unmixed with heathen religion, we are undefiled, there's no idolatry among us, we are purely the offspring of a union between God and His people and our spiritual descent is just as pure as our physical is, not mixed with any heathen religion. And so they're saying we are so the sons of God, we've never mixed ourselves with pagans. And that to them was the only way you could ever be a son of Satan was to be involved in a pagan religion.

But this introduced to me, as I began to think about it, a tremendously tragic note and a note that can scare us, I hope, into some real thinking. They had no idolatry, now mark this, they had no false

heathen religion, they had all the right religion but they were damned. Sobering thought. They were doomed right in the middle of the right religion. You say, "What happened?" Very simple, it was an institutional ritual and not a personal relationship, and so much of religion is institutional, all of it. And what God demands is a personal relationship with Him. And theirs was purely ritualistic. They went through the religious motions and even though they were sitting in the middle of the truth, they were damned by their false securities and their inability to see the personal relationship they needed with God rather than an institutional ritual.

Well then Jesus begins to give full vent to His thoughts in verse 42. "Jesus said unto them, 'If God were your Father you'd love Me.'" Oh, that's so important. "For I proceeded forth and came from God, neither came I of Myself but He sent Me." He says, "If you were really the children of God, you would love Me." And that's true. That's true. Your action and your attitude belies your claims. If God was really your spiritual Father, you'd love Me, said Jesus. Well they don't love Jesus, they hate Him...they hate Him with a passion. They are so infuriated with Jesus, as I said, that they're ready to stone Him. Jesus says, "You couldn't be the children of God and hate what came from God."

John 5:1, listen to this. Here's John 5:1, 1 John 5:1, listen, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Did you get that? That's a true child of God, the true one believes Jesus is the Christ, Messiah, the Anointed One. Listen to this, "And everyone that loveth Him that begot, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him." See it? You can't come and say, "Well, I love God but I hate Jesus." No. Anybody who honestly loves God will recognize in Jesus Christ without a shadow of a doubt God again reproduced in Christ and will find Him as irresistible as God is. Anybody who loves Him that begot, will also love Him that is begotten of Him. And, you know, just because people around this world have some kind of a love for God, at least they call it that, if they do not love Jesus Christ, that is not so. You cannot love God and not love Christ.

I can get more specific with the words of Paul that are one of the most shattering statements ever in the Bible. First Corinthians 16:22, listen to this. This is as shattering a statement as will ever be uttered. Paul said this, 1 Corinthians 16:22, here it comes, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." You know what anathema means? It means accursed. God said through the Apostle Paul, "If any man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed." Well you don't get anymore specific than that. Impossible. And again we add the recurring truth in John's gospel that nobody knows and loves God unless he knows and loves Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father...what?...but by Me." And God says, "Yu cannot love Me without loving My Son, Jesus Christ."

I was at Poly High School this week speaking in a couple of classes over there about what Christianity is, giving my testimony and talking about the basis of Christianity. And there were a group of students that had gathered up around the front of the class after we were done and they said, "Do you mean to say that if you don't believe in Jesus Christ you go to hell?"

I said, "That's what the Bible says."

And this one guy kept saying, "Well I can't buy that. I mean, I can't buy that. There's people all over the world that believe lots of things and all that matters is you just believe."

I said, "In other words, there's no truth, you could just believe. I mean, you could be Chicken Little and believe the sky was falling and you'd make it, just believe."

"Well no, it's not that...not like that, I mean...just believe in some religion, just any ole...there's just any ole God up there or any ole thing you want to believe."

Well finally after the whole conversation was over and I had presented Christ and tried to do it in love, they got done and this one girl said to me, "I can't believe it, I just can't believe it. Jesus is the only way? I can't believe it."

And I said, "Well," I said, "I'm going to pray for you because for your own sake you better believe it."

So Jesus gives the test of their claim. They flunk, incidentally. And He proceeds to a full exposure of their spiritual ancestry in verse 43. He says, "You can't be from God, you don't love Me." Then verse 43, "Why do you not understand My speech? It's obvious, because you can't hear My Word." And this is an interesting verse and the key is the difference between speech and word. "Why do you not understand My speech?" Now the speech is *laleo*, it's all the phrases and terms and particulars of a language. Then He says, "Because you cannot hear My Word," that's *logos*, that's the content, that's the inner substance.

Let me show you what He means. He's saying this, "You don't understand the language so you can't interpret the sentences, right?" If a man doesn't understand German and somebody says to him, something to him in German, he cannot understand the sentence, the particulars because he does not know the language. And that's what Jesus is saying to them. "You don't understand My illustrations, you don't understand My claims, you don't understand the things I say because you don't know God's language." It's a foreign language and they didn't understand basic, divine revelation so they couldn't understand when Christ spoke basically divine truth. He might as well have been talking to deaf people. And I know you've all had the experience of standing somewhere and hearing people talk a language you didn't know. You can't understand the words in particular because you don't understand the basic nature of the language. And so Christ says to them, "You don't understand My speech, My *laleo*, My *lalia*, My words, My phrases because you don't understand the *logos*, the inner substance and content. You don't have the right language." And implied here, of course, is this...the reason you don't know My language is because you speak the language of your father who's

different, see. A child speaks the language of his father. And Jesus is saying here, "I speak a language that you don't know because you're not God's children, you speak the language of your father."

Then He gets real specific, and we'll hurry, verse 44. This is direct. "Ye are of your father," now He names their father, "the devil and the lusts of your father ye will do." See, they couldn't understand Christ cause they had a different father and their father spoke a different language and they couldn't figure out what Christ was saying. It was a language they didn't understand. And then Jesus gives them a direct indictment, it's dynamic. Finally He comes to the full fore and says, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

Physically these Jews were the children of Abraham, spiritually and morally they're the children of the devil and they follow his lusts and his passions. You say, "Well what are the devil's lusts and passions?" Well they're all over the place. But I'll give you the two key ones that Christ gives here...murder and lying...those are the two primary lusts of Satan. Here they are. "He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth because there's no truth in him." And He goes on to say, "When he speaks a lie he speaks of his own." It's original. Whenever Satan lies, that's original stuff for he's a liar and the father of it.

And so He says, "What are Satan's lusts? Lying and murder, he hates men and he hates truth." Did you know that Satan hates men? Did you know that? Fantastic thought. It's amazing how many people in our world are Satan's dupes and the Bible says that he cares nothing about them, he's after God. Satan wants to destroy God and tear Christ away from the throne that He's going to have on this earth some day. Satan wants to arrest power from God. Satan could care less about men. He goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may...what?...devour. All he wants to do is destroy men. He wants to murder men. Who do you think is responsible for slaughter all over the world? Satan loves nothing better than to destroy men. He's a murderer. His passion is murder. He implants that passion in the hearts of men who kill. Why do you think there are wars in our world? Because Satan is a murderer and we have children of Satan in this world who want to murder with him. And you remember in Revelation, we've been studying, that in the ninth chapter, you know, when all hell is open and the demons are loosed that God has to restrain the demons and prevent them from killing people and He allows them only to sting them, that is to injure them but not kill them. Why? Because it would be Satan's design to destroy them. Satan is a murderer. And you know if you've been with us on Sunday nights how many he's going to murder of the saints in the Tribulation, don't you? He's going to slaughter them. He's a murderer. He hates men. And the sad, tragic thing is many men are serving him. They're children of Satan and they're dupes, tragically to be devoured. The devil is a killer of men.

Look at the wars and the murders around our world and just tell us that Satan's not a killer of men. Just in America, six hundred and thirty-seven thousand of our own men have died in wars since 1900, eight hundred thousand we've killed with our own private guns in America. Far more we kill with our own private guns than die in wars. Satan's a murderer. And that's a direct indictment of those Jews, if you haven't figured it out. Because they're plotting to murder Him and that settles whose children they are.

Satan's not only a murderer but he's a liar. Verse 44 says, "There's no truth in him. He abode not in the truth and when he speaks a lie, that's original stuff right from him." He's the creator of falsehood and the wellspring of lies. And that's for sure. The great counterfeiter, the great liar. In fact, he made a beautiful combination with Adam and Eve. He brought about their death by lying to them, didn't he? And so the murderous hearts of these Christ-hating Jewish leaders and their inveterate opposition to truth proved that they were children of Satan, not children of God. They are acting out Satan's passion. They are lusting Satan's lusts. And this is behind their hatred of Jesus Christ. You see, Christ was the perfect man and He was truth incarnate. That combination is the most antagonizing possible combination to Satan. If he wants to kill men and destroy truth, you've got in Christ the perfect man and truth incarnate, Christ becomes Satan's greatest antagonist. No wonder he wanted to destroy Him, right?

You say, "Well is this only the Jews who are the children of Satan?" No, not at all. Let me read you something. First John 3:8, just listen, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." Did you get that? Child of God, or child of Satan is this whole passage here. "For the devil sinneth from the beginning. Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin but in this are the children of the devil manifest that they commit sin," is what he goes on to say...not in exactly those words but in the same reference. Children of the devil are any people who serve him, any people who don't know God through Christ are children of Satan. And his two passions are murder and lies.

Then verse 45, He adds, of course if Satan is a liar, "Then because I tell you the truth you believe Me not." If you told people lies, they'll believe you. Isn't that interesting? You just tune in to the lies going on in our world today. I mean, a guy can get up and lie himself...just lie right to the beginning to the end...oh, terrific stuff. People believe lies. Just try to tell the truth some time and watch if you can get a reaction. People have built careers on lying. It's a pattern of living. Speak lies to the children of Satan and they enjoy it. Speak truth and you'll manifest who they are and they'll reject it. And it's so tragic and so sad that the unsaved, the children of Satan are committed to a blind, damning, obedience to the lusts of the devil. They are his dupes. They're carrying out his passions and they're doomed to occupy his hell.

Then verse 46, a question, almost pensively does Jesus say, "Why would you reject Me? Why would you remain children of Satan? Why would you not come with Me? Why would you not love Me? Why would you not receive Me? Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I say the truth, why don't you believe Me? I mean, have I done something wrong or have I said some lies?" You notice those two rhetorical questions? Have I proven sinful and unworthy of your faith? And you better believe that if they knew of a sin they would have said something, but it's silence. Boy, if they had known anything...I know...I know one...see? Nothing. "Which of you convicts Me of sin?" And nobody can say a word. And He says, "Well if I tell you the truth, why don't you believe Me?" And nobody says anything there either. If they had anything, brother, they would have said it.

Why do men refuse Christ? I've asked that question a thousand times, a Christ who is sinless and lovely and totally truthful and never convicted of a wrong or an untruth, Christ who died for them, why would people refuse Him? Jesus gives the answer in verse 47, and closes off this discourse. Well He says, "He that is...and here's the key...of God hears God's words. Ye therefore hear them not because you are not of God." And there's the distinction. The one who is of God hears and understands. He says you're not of God.

What does it mean to be of God? Does it mean to be a believer? Not necessarily because a person must hear before he becomes a believer, right? What does it mean to be of God? It means this, the one who willingly, hopefully, genuinely puts himself under the influence of sovereign grace and puts himself in the place of openness and says, "Speak to me, Lord, I want to know what You have to say and I want to do what You want me to do." This is the willing heart, the one who wants the truth and wants to believe. He's the one of God, his heart's been prepared by God. They are the willing and eager hearts. They become God's children. So Jesus says you don't believe because you don't have that willing, open, eager heart prepared by God.

Well a lot of claims were made here and a lot of securities were shot down. But the ultimate question is very simple and I ask it to you and we close, who's child are you?

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