

Who's Your Father?

John 8:37-51

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In John 8:37, we find that Jesus is giving a discourse, or one of His long teachings. He's debating in this discourse with what is called believing Jews. I want to give you the background leading up to verse 36 by starting in verse 31. Forgive me. If you'll back up a few verses, we'll get a running start. Verse 31 says, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him," those are the individuals that He's addressing. I pointed out last week that this statement, "believed on him" doesn't mean that they are saved. There are times in the Bible where people followed Jesus or were called disciples of Jesus, but they weren't genuine, authentic, or real. Not everyone that comes to church and with their lips claims to be a Christian is a Christian. Not everyone that goes to church that claims they are a Christian is a Christian. It's one thing to profess a relationship with God, it's another thing to possess a genuine and authentic relationship with God. As we go through this passage tonight, we're going to see that the Scriptures indicate this belief was not genuine, it wasn't authentic, and it wasn't real. It was shallow and superficial. When Jesus began to talk about, "I am the light of the world, I am the truth that sets men free, I am the Great, ego eimi, I AM, that these Jews were offended, turned away from Him, and did not truly believe.

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." One of the indications that you are authentic or genuine is you continue in His Word. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? 34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. 35 And the servant," or slave, "abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever." We saw the contrast between being a slave or a son. Tonight we're going to be seeing the contrast of either God is your Father or Satan is your father. You're either a servant or a son, "the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever." Verse 36 is what kind of gets them really going, and they really get antagonistic with the Lord, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," not just free but free indeed.

Everything Jesus says is in the context of spiritual things and our relationship to God. They think in terms of the material, so they get upset with the idea—they didn't like the idea of verse 33—that Jesus said that they would be free if they believed in Him. Their response was (verse 33), "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" Jesus makes it clear He's talking about freedom from sin. The Jews believed simply because they were Jewish they would go to heaven. They believed that Abraham had all these merits built up that he kind of could pass onto his descendants.

Do you know there's a lot of people today that think that they're going to go to heaven because they were born in a Christian family or they were born in America or their parents were believers? Do you know that God has no grandchildren only children? God doesn't have any

great grandchildren, only children. You don't go to heaven because your mom and dad were Christian or believed in God or raised you in church. You could be raised in a Christian home, go to Sunday school, know the Bible, even get baptized, take communion, go to church your whole life and still never be born again and go to heaven. I know that might freak some of you out, but I'm glad. I want to freak you out. God needs to get your attention because it's a very dangerous thought to think, Well, I go to church. I'm going to get to heaven, or I was born in a Christian home, or My parents believed in God, or I went to Sunday school, or I've been baptized, or I've been confirmed, or I live a good life. That's probably the most common, "Well, I'm a good person. I live a good life. I'll go to heaven."

The Jews thought that by not only their race but by their religion, and that's very common today. A lot of people think because of their race they'll get to go to heaven, but especially they think they're going to go to heaven because of their religion. They missed the point. Jesus was speaking of spiritual freedom. They were slaves to sin but were blind to that reality. They were blind to the reality that they're slaves to sin, and they're not really the children of God. Like so many today who have a false hope, as many people put their hope in their works, their religion, their righteousness, or a creed, a code of conduct, they forget that Christianity is Christ. It's the finished work of Jesus for us who have sinned—believing, receiving, and trusting in that.

Jesus responds to these Jews by showing them the inconsistencies between—listen carefully—their lips and their lives. This is a classic passage where they proclaimed with their lips, "We be Abraham's seed. We were never in bondage to any man. We know we're going to go to heaven because we're the chosen race." Jesus points out that there's a big discrepancy and a big inconsistency between their lips and their lives. Do you know people like that today? "I'm a Christian. I believe in God. I'm going to heaven," but when you look at their life you think, I don't know about that. It's one thing to say with your lips, it's another thing to testify with your life. You don't go to heaven because you live a good life. The Bible says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." No one gets to heaven by being good, but if you have been born of God's Spirit and you are a child of God, then your life will surely show it. We used to sing, If you're saved and you know it, then your life will surely show it, right? If you're proclaiming to be a Christian, then are you living the Christian life? Has the Spirit of God changed your life? Is it evident that God is real in your heart, life, and you have a relationship with Him?

It's one thing to be Abraham's seed by physical descent and another thing altogether to be Abraham's children by spiritual rebirth and personal faith. Read Romans 2. Paul is preaching the gospel in Romans. Presenting the gospel, he says, "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly," in the flesh, "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly...of the heart." Circumcision isn't just outward in the flesh, but it's a thing of the heart. It takes a real heart relationship knowing God in a personal way.

Basically, what Jesus is going to do in these first few verses (verses 37-43) is point out the inconsistencies between their lips and their lives. There's an amazing application for those today who have a false hope in religion or self-righteousness or good works where they profess

with their mouth but their lives are not consistent with what they profess. Let's follow this, verses 37-43. Jesus said, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed," they just finished saying, "We're Abraham's seed, and we were never in bondage to anyone." Jesus said, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed," but here's the inconsistency, "but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. 38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father." Notice He makes reference to "your father," but we don't find out who the father is of these individuals until we get down to about verse 44, and it's pretty powerful! Don't peek. No peeking. We'll get there together, okay? It's going to be a surprise. "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham," you claim to be Abraham's children, but you don't live like Abraham, "But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham." He's developing the inconsistency here of what they say and what they do.

Verse 41, "Ye do the deeds of your father," there again is a reference to their father. "Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. 42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word," you don't have ears to hear My words. Jesus is talking with them, dialoguing with them. He's talked to them about, "I am the Great I AM, I'm the light of the world, I'm the One who comes to set men free," and they're finally realizing, "I don't think we want to follow this Man Jesus." He wants to point out to them some inconsistencies between their lips and lives. Let me give them to you.

There are three basic ones in this passage. First, they were trying to kill Jesus. Notice it in verse 37, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed," here it is, "but ye seek to kill me," you claim to be children of Abraham, but you're going about trying to kill me. Notice also the reference there in verse 40, "But now ye seek to kill me." In the Old Testament Abraham encountered, I believe, Jesus. When Abraham was in his tent and the angels came from heaven to tell Abraham that God was going to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, I believe that one of those angels was very likely, I can't be dogmatic but pretty confident, what's called a Christophany. That's an appearance of Christ in the Old Testament. That's not an incarnation, which is what happened at Christmas through the womb of the virgin where He took on humanity for all eternity, it was a manifestation. Whenever God appeared in the Old Testament, God the Father, we would call it a Theophany, God appearing; but when it seemed to be specifically the second Person of the Godhead, then we would call it a Christophany, Christ appearing.

When the strangers approached Abraham, he got up and ran to greet them. He welcomed them and brought them into his tent. In that part of the world at that time, if you saw anybody, you were just happy to see somebody. Today we live so close to people and we're surrounded by so many people, we want to avoid people when we see them, "Oh no. Here's somebody coming to our house. Shut the door, pull the drapes, and hide," you know. Abraham ran out to greet them and very warmly welcomed them into his tent. Sarah went out and killed the calf, cooked the food, and prepared the meal. Then, the angels began to disclose to Abraham what

was going to happen on the plains of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham ran out, welcomed them in, and showed them hospitality. There could be other episodes, we'll come to that in just a moment, when Abraham saw Christ. He certainly didn't try to kill or reject Him. Abraham in the Bible is called the "friend of God."

Jesus said, "You're not living like Abraham. You're not acting like Abraham. You're not conducting yourselves like Abraham. Abraham never tried to kill Me, but you're trying to kill me." That's an inconsistency. You say, "Well, how does that relate to us today?" Many people today say they are Christians, but they reject the Jesus of the Bible. "Well, I'm a Christian, but I don't believe Jesus was God," or "I don't believe Jesus was born of a virgin. I don't believe that He was a sinless human being. I don't believe that He died a substitutionary death on the cross." "I'm a Christian but I don't really believe in a resurrection of Jesus, you know, I think that's just kind of a theory that people have. It's not real." Basically, they're killing Jesus by rejecting Jesus as revealed in the Bible. How can you become a follower of Christ if you don't submit to what the Bible teaches about Jesus? It kind of never ceases to amaze me, people who claim to be Christ's follower but they're not following the Christ of the Bible. If you reject the Christ revealed in Scripture, you do not have Jesus Christ. You do not have God. If you're wrong about Jesus, you're wrong about God. The only way to be right about God is to be right about Jesus. He came to reveal the Father, and He is the way, the truth, the life to the Father; so we need to be right about Christ. There are those who profess today to be believers, but they don't submit doctrinally to the scriptural teaching of the Person and even the work of who Jesus Christ is and why He came to die for our sins. They were basically trying to kill Jesus.

Why were these Jews trying to kill Jesus? Let me give you the answer in verse 37, because His Word had no place in them. First of all He says, "This is inconsistent. You say you're Abraham's children, but Abraham never tried to kill Me, and you're trying to kill Me." He tells us why, "because my word hath no place in you," notice verse 37, "...ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you." It's almost as though that's a description of a true Christian. A true Christian has God's Word in their heart. They are submitted to the authority of God's Word by living in obedience to God's Word. You can't live the Christian life apart from God's Word, and you have to receive God's Word into your heart.

Now, contrast that with Abraham who believed God's Word. One of the key characteristics of Abraham's life was God made a promise—one of the greatest in all the Bible, Genesis 15—and Abraham believed the promise. God said, "You're going to have a son, and through his lineage, Messiah, the Savior of the world, will come." What did Abraham do? He didn't say, "Aw, I don't believe it." He said, "I believe You, God." That set the tone for all of salvation throughout all the Bible.

How are we saved? By believing in the promises of God, by believing in the Word of God. "Abraham, you see those stars? That's how many kids you're going to have." Abraham believed God, and God said, "Guess what? You're righteous." This is one of the greatest episodes in all the Bible. God makes a promise, Abraham believes, and God tells Abraham, "You're righteous." God's sends His Son who dies on the cross, buried, rose from the dead,

ascends back into heaven, and says, "Whoever believes on Him will not perish but have everlasting life," and you say, "God, I believe," and God says, "You are righteous." That's the basis of salvation. This is how we are justified by faith, and Abraham is an example of believing God's Word and being declared righteous. He also obeyed God's Word. How important is that.

In verse 31, as we saw just a moment ago, Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." The problem was they weren't submitted to God's Word and weren't continuing in God's Word. Is there a gap between your life and your lips? Are you obedient to God's Word? Are you a doer of God's Word? If you're a Christian, you believe in Jesus and you obey His Word. In Colossians 3:16 Paul said, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another," you've got to let God's Word have its way in your life.

Notice the second inconsistency between their lips and their life. It's in verse 39. They weren't doing the works of Abraham. They didn't have the faith of Abraham, and they didn't have the works of Abraham. Look at verse 39. He says, "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." They didn't have God's Word in their heart, and they didn't have works coming forth from their life like Abraham's works. Abraham was marked by faith, Genesis 15:6. He believed God, and God imputed righteousness to him.

In Genesis 22, Abraham was also obedient to God, and it stood as an example that his faith was genuine. The story is that of God coming to Abraham and saying, "Abraham, take now your son, your only son, Isaac, who you love and offer him on a mountain that I will show you." God asked Abraham to offer his son. God knew all the time that it wasn't going to happen, but God wanted to know where Abraham's heart was: Will he obey Me? Will he obey Me completely? Can you imagine that? He rose in the morning and saddled the donkey. He took the wood and Isaac and journeyed to the land of Moriah. He saw Mount Moriah and they journey up the hill. They build the altar, Isaac lies on the altar, Abraham pulls out the knife, and he was literally going to plunge it into his son.

Now, the book of Hebrews tells us that in Abraham's mind God made a promise that through his son Messiah would come, so Abraham believed God so much so that if God had him kill his son, he knew that God would raise him from the dead. He knew that God had to keep His promises, so he raises the knife—and I love the story—God stopped Abraham and said, "I see now that you will not withhold even your son from Me," and He said, "Look over in the bushes. There's a ram caught. Take that ram and offer it instead of your son." He took Isaac off the altar and put the ram on the altar. It's a picture of substitution. Isaac is taken off and the ram is put on the altar even as Jesus took our place on the cross to die for our sins. What great faith and obedience did Abraham have as he offered up Isaac on that altar.

Here's the point: You come to Jesus, you believe on Him as He is revealed in the Bible. You can't make up your own Jesus. You can't concoct your own ideas about who He is. You can't reject His incarnation, His substitutionary death, and His resurrection. You can't reject the

Jesus of the Bible and be saved. You have to trust in the real Jesus, and then you have to be obedient to His Word as His Word comes into your life and then produces works. Your life will tell you're saved by the fruit of your life.

How do we know that Abraham was justified in Genesis 15? The answer, Genesis 22. We know that Abraham was declared righteous in Genesis 15. He demonstrated his righteousness by his works. This is why in the book of James it says, "You show me your faith by your works. Faith without works is dead." In other words, if you have faith but you don't have works, it's not real, it's not genuine, it's not authentic. There's a gap between your lips and your life. Genuine faith will manifest itself in good works.

What about you tonight? Have you come to Jesus of the Bible? Have you come to Jesus by faith? Does His Word have its place in your heart? Are you a doer of the Word and not a hearer only? It's not just your lips, it also has to be manifested in your life. Jesus said that a tree is known by its fruit. Do you know how to tell an orange tree? It'll have oranges on it. Isn't that awesome? Do you know how to tell a pear tree? It'll have pears on it. Whatever that fruit is, that's the kind of tree that it is. What's the fruit of your life? What is it manifesting? Jesus also said, "Not everyone who says, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that does the will of My Father who is in heaven." Again, you're not working to be saved, you're working because you are genuinely saved.

Let me give you the third discrepancy with these Jews; that is, they did not love Jesus (verses 41-43). He says, "Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication," I don't believe, I could be wrong, but I don't think that they are alluding to His virgin birth that was kind of clouded by maybe some people thinking that Mary got pregnant out of wedlock. I think they're talking about the fact that He is kind of preaching some other god, that He's not a real Jew in reality, and that He's maybe committing spiritual fornication. They're going to call Him a Samaritan in just a moment, and the idea is that you have a false religious system. They say, "We be not born of fornication," it was the slur that they brought against Him, "we have one Father, even God." In other words, "You're not really a child of Abraham."

Verse 42, "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father," here's the mark, if you were truly children of God, "ye would love me." If you're really a Christian, you will love Jesus. Amen? You will love Jesus. He will be the preeminent One, the center of your heart and of your life. "... for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word." I wanted to drive home that point in verse 42 that if you are truly a child of God—not a child of the devil but a child of God—you will love Jesus with all your heart, your soul, your strength, your mind, and Jesus will be first in your life.

There are three marks of a believer. First, God's Word has its place in their hearts (verse 37). His Word will have its place in your heart. One of the best indications that you have truly been born again is that you have a hunger, you have a thirst, you have a desire, and you have a delight for God's Word. If you have no hunger for the Word of God, then you need to get on

your knees and pray and say, "Lord, revive my heart. Forgive my heart. Stir up my heart." Something's wrong. Nature determines appetite. If you're a child of God, you're going to want the Word of God. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone." As I've shared before, I love baked goods. I love bread. I love toast. I love muffins. I love donuts. I love all that stuff, but I love God's Word more than my necessary food. You can go without food, but you can't go without God's Word. Ask yourself, "Am I really born again? Do I love God's Word? Do I delight in God's Word? Do I love Jesus? Do I love the Bible? Do I want to study the Word of God and grow in my knowledge of the Word of God? God's Word has its place in their hearts.

The second mark of a believer, before we move to the next section, is God's works are produced in their lives. God's Word has its place in their hearts, and then God's works are produced in their lives. As we read in verse 39, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." You would live by faith and you would be obedient to God's Word.

The third mark of a true child of God is a love for Jesus is paramount in their soul (verse 42). "If God were your Father, ye would love me," so you have God's Word in your heart, you have God's works produced in your life, and you have a love for Jesus Christ in your soul. One of the things that should mark a true Christian is a love for Jesus. You're not ashamed of Jesus. Amen? If someone asks you if you're a Christian, "Yeah, I'm a Christian." "Do you love Jesus?" "Yeah, I love Jesus." If some are like, "Shh! It's broad daylight. Let's not talk about Jesus and God right now. Someone might hear us." Who cares? You know, when you love somebody, you're glad to talk about them, "They're good friends, I love them." Well, why should we be ashamed of Jesus? And you know that we love Him because He first loved us? Isn't that awesome? He chose us by His grace. Do you know that there should be no one higher in your heart than Jesus—not your husband, not your wife, not your best friend, not your kids. Sometimes people will let other people get in the way of Jesus in their life—maybe a boyfriend, maybe a girlfriend, maybe your children—or you'll let some other sport or hobby or other love or activity or thing come its place. Jesus should actually have preeminence in your heart. He should reign there without a rival. There should be no one closer than Jesus.

The book of Colossians tells us that Christ should have preeminence in our hearts. Do you know what that means? It means that He should be number one—nothing above Him. When nothing is above Jesus, then you love Him, you worship Him, you obey and serve Him, you follow Him. He's your very life. Amen? That's the mark of a true believer—God's Word in their heart, the fruit coming forth from their life, and then marked by their love for Jesus Christ.

The second division (from verses 44-51) is Jesus then declares to the Jews that their father is the devil. This is pretty powerful stuff. Jesus definitely didn't practice politically correct speech. Notice in verse 44, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it," that word "father" means the generator, the source of all lies, "And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. 46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? 47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye

are not of God.” At this point I kind of stop and thought, Get down, Lord Jesus! He’s not pulling any punches.

Verse 48, “Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?” or a demon. They said, “Didn’t we say you are a Samaritan and you have a demon?” These are these believing Jews back in the earlier verse 31 that supposedly believed in Jesus. Now, they’re saying, “You’re a Samaritan and you have a devil,” no worse thing you can say to a Jew than to call them a Samaritan and add to that you have a demon. “Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me,” I like that concept of He honored His Father, and we should honor Him and not dishonor Him. “And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. 51 Verily, verily,” or truly, truly. You can actually translate this, “Amen, amen,” “I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.” That’s a radical statement.

Next Wednesday night we’re going to close up the chapter. I’m not wrapping up yet, but we’re going to be looking at the most powerful statement Jesus ever made with this great I AM statement in talking about the deity of Christ. I’m going to share verses with you to support the doctrine of the deity of Christ. Now, go back with me to verse 44. Jesus says, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do,” describing the devil. This is interesting because the devil is not mentioned or talked a lot about in the gospel of John. There’s only a couple of places in John’s gospel where satan is mentioned, and here’s one of them. It’s a very enlightening passage from the lips of Jesus. “He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

The Bible does not teach what is called the universal fatherhood of God. The Bible does not teach that we are all the children of God. It doesn’t teach the universal fatherhood of God or the brotherhood of man. You might say, “Hey, bro, how you doing?” But if you’re a Christian and they’re not a Christian, you’re not really a bro. Maybe you’re part of the human race, but you’re not part of the family of God. In the hippie era we called each other brother and sister, and we weren’t even saved, we weren’t even Christians; so we weren’t part of the family of God. The Bible doesn’t teach that all people are God’s children.

Jesus spoke the truth here in love (verse 44), “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.” We can learn a lot of important truth about the devil from the lips of Jesus here. I want to point out that in the Bible it’s consistent with the rest of Scripture that when you are born, you are born separated from God. You are born in the kingdom of darkness. You are born unsaved, unregenerated, you’re not a child of God. The most precious, innocent, seemingly, little child does inherit from Adam a sinful nature. This is why they throw temper tantrums and know how to disobey and rebel and go their own selfish way. This is why we need to be born again into God’s Kingdom. Don’t ever get the idea that because you were born in a Christian family or you’re a little child growing up in Sunday school that you’re going to heaven. You must be born again. Nicodemus was a very religious Jew, and Jesus told him (remember John 3), “Nic, you must be born again. That which is flesh is flesh, but that which is

Spirit is spirit.”

Jesus says some amazing things about the devil. I want to give you a few in this passage. First, Jesus tells us that the devil is a real person, a real personal being. About four times Jesus used the personal pronoun “he,” and it’s consistent with the rest of Scripture. Satan is not a force or an invention of somebody’s own mind, he is a real spiritual personal being. Now, his origin is that he was created as an angel by God, and the two classic passages that you want to check are Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. You’ll get a lot of information and background about the origin of the devil.

One of the greatest mysteries in all of the Bible and all of the universe is the evil that started and originated in the heart of satan. If there’s nothing but God, and God created all things, and God is good, where did evil come from? It’s a mystery. We don’t know. The first time we find it is in the heart of satan when he says, “I will be like God. I will exalt myself above the throne of God. I will be like the Most High,” and he wanted to exalt himself above God. It was his rebellion toward God, so God had to kick him out of heaven. It’s called the satanic rebellion, and when he fell—the fall of satan—he took other angels with him. They rebelled with him, and those angels, which satan was one, became what we know as demons. In the spirit realm there’s only God and there are angels. In the angelic realm, there are two classes of angels. There are good angels and bad angels. In the bad angels, there is satan and demons, but they’re all angels—powerful spirit beings.

The other day in the Psalm on Sunday morning, I talked about one angel wiped out 185 thousand of the Assyrian soldiers. That’s power. Don’t mess with the devil. He is a powerful being. But if you are a child of God, God is greater than the devil. Amen? And, “Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world,” so you don’t go around freaked out and worried that the devil is going to get you because God is taking care of you, protecting you, and you have the Holy Spirit living inside of you.

Satan fell and took demons with him, and he has been doing all he can to deceive, lie, and to lead people to hell. One of his greatest deceptions is that God’s Word is not true, that you can go to heaven by being good, religion will get you to heaven, and that’s one of satan’s greatest ripoffs. A lot of times people ask me, “Why are there so many religions in the world?” My answer is because there’s a devil. You say, “Religions because of a devil?” Yeah. Satan wants people to think that if you are good enough and you do this rite, this ritual, have this ceremony, you’re going to go to heaven when you are deceived. He’s lied to you. He is a liar. He’s a real person, but he is an evil person. Jesus, in the Lord’s prayer, said to pray, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” One of his tactics is to get you not to believe that he is real.

The second thing we learn about the devil is he is a fallen being. He’s a real personal being, and secondly, he is a fallen being. He fell from heaven. Notice in our text (verse 44), Jesus said, “...and abode not in the truth.” It’s just alluding to the fact that he fell. He didn’t stay in the truth. It’s alluding to the concept, to the doctrine of the fall of satan, and when he fell he

became a liar and the father of lies. He's the source of all lies. It's something you should never forget.

One of the first words out of the mouth of the devil recorded in the Bible were to Eve in the Garden of Eden. Do you know what he said? "Did God really tell you that you can't eat of all of the fruit of the Garden? Did God really say that?" He attacked God's Word. "God's not really good. God's not really fair. God didn't really say that. You can't trust God. God is just holding back from you." That's where he's attacked ever since. He's attacked God's Word. He wants you to deny that the Bible is God's Word, that you can't trust the Bible, that God isn't good. That's where satan will try to attack you, "You can't trust the Bible. You can't believe the Bible. God's really not good. God's holding out," and she started listening to the devil's lies and took of the forbidden fruit and plunged the world into sin and despair.

Notice in verse 44, "He was a murderer from the beginning," talk about satan falling—he fell from the truth, he is the father of lies, he is the source of all lying. It started in Genesis 3, and it hasn't stopped; and he's a murderer from the beginning. He comes to kill, steal, and to destroy.

Here's the third truth about the devil: The devil is a limited being. Now, this is not directly referred to in our text. It's kind of alluded to in a roundabout sense, but the devil is not all-knowing, he's not omniscient. The devil is not all-powerful, he's not omnipotent. The devil is not all present, he's not omnipresent. Sometimes people say, "Pastor John, the devil's after me." Well, it's possible, but it's probably not the devil. It's probably one of his demons. You know how Santa Claus has helpers? Sorry about this Santa Claus lovers. The devil has his little helpers, his little imps to do his bidding. It's probably not the actual devil that's bothering you; but I tell you, demons are very powerful, too, and there's enough of them out there to visit your house and attack your mind, your thoughts, to try to lead you astray, and he is so subtle.

I believe from the Scriptures and from experience that the longer you walk with the Lord the more subtle his attacks become, and he never stops. I believe that it will continue right up—if the Lord tarries—to the last moment when you go to heaven. It could happen on your deathbed. Satan will come to you and get you to want to doubt God's Word. It never stops, so you must be vigilant, you must be sober, because the Bible says, "Your adversary the devil walks about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour," and you're on the top of his list. Remember satan tried to get Peter and sift him like wheat? Jesus said, "But I prayed for you." The devil will tempt you in so many different ways. He knows your weaknesses and how to attack you, so you hide God's Word in your heart that you might not sin against Him. So, he's a personal being, a fallen being, a limited being, and he will be judged and sent to hell.

Now, let's close in verses 45-51. Jesus says, "Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. 46 Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Jesus is claiming sinlessness here. "And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? 47 He that is of God heareth God's words," again, an indication you're a true child of God, "ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." Children of God hear God's Word, respond to God's Word; children of the devil do not hear God's Word. Verse 48, "Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou

art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? 49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. 50 I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. 51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death."

In closing, verse 51, this amazing statement that Jesus makes, has three parts. First of all, it has a promise, "...shall never see death." If you are a child of God, Jesus makes a promise. Now, this is not physical death because even God's people die, but they do not die spiritually. If you are born twice, you only die once physically—if you die physically, you won't die spiritually. If you're only born once, you will die twice—you die physically, and then you die spiritually, separated from God.

Years ago, I discovered something that has always fascinated me; that is, the etymology of the word "death." In the etymology of the word "death," understanding the word "death" indicates what death is. The word "death" means separation. It means separation. Physical death is the separation of your soul and spirit—the immaterial part of you—from your body. You basically move out of the tent; and if you're a Christian, no problem. The more this tent leans and flaps in the wind, leaks, and the tent stakes are pulling up...I couldn't hardly get up the stairs today, you know, it's like, "Lord, take me home." No problem. I've been born twice, I'm only going to die once—physically. Even that, one day, will be conquered. Do you know that every believer's body will be resurrected and transformed and you will be reunited with your soul and spirit in a glorified eternal body where there'll be no sickness, no sin, no sorrow, no death, no cancer, no blood clots, no aging, no strokes, no heart problems. Amen? What a glorious hope that is! And, Jesus, in this closing verse, says, "Look, if you receive My Word, if you trust in Me, you will never die." That's a radical statement, and these Jews didn't like that.

Jesus gives the assurance as well. He makes a promise, "...shall never see death," and then He makes the assurance, "Verily, verily," truly, truly, or amen, amen, so be it, so be it. I believe that as Christians we can have absolute assurance that when we die we'll go to heaven.

Thirdly, this verse has a condition, "If a man keep my saying," it means that His Word is abiding in us, that we are believing His Word, we're keeping His Word, we're obeying His Word.

In closing, the question still stands: Who's your father? Every one of us here today are either a child of God or a child of the devil. You're either living in darkness or you're living in the light. You're either saved or you're not saved. You're either going to heaven or you're going to hell. That's very clear in the Bible. Which is it? If you don't know, then you can be assured tonight, "Truly, truly," that if you believe and receive His Word, you will never die. Jesus said, "Whoever lives and believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Amen?