

The Gospel of John

Chapter 8:37-47

June 1, 1997

- **The Gospel of John Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Our Lord is the Word, the Light and the Life
- Chapter 2 The Lord of the Wedding Feast; Zeal for the purity of the temple
- Chapter 3 Spiritual Birth, Belief and Salvation vs. Unbelief and Condemnation
- Chapter 4 The Ministry in Samaria, The Harvest, The Faith of the Nobleman
- Chapter 5 Paralytic man healed on the Sabbath, Unity of The Father and Son
- Chapter 6 The Bread of Life
- Chapter 7 The public debates about Jesus during the Feast of Tabernacles
- Chapter 8 Public debates: Woman caught in adultery; The Son makes you free; Abraham's true children

- **Review and Introduction**

In this section, Jesus is still teaching in the treasury of the temple in Jerusalem. Many have believed in Him and others still argue with Him about who He is. There are clearly those who had ears to hear and those who could not hear the words of our Lord. In this and the remaining section of this chapter Jesus is debating with the Jews who attempt to stand before God with nothing other than their lineage.

- **Exposition of John 8:37-47**

37 "I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.³⁸ "I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."

- Jesus acknowledges that His audience was of the line of Abraham but He points out the sharp distinction between these people and the patriarch—the people wanted to kill Him. He states that the reason why they want to kill Him is because they cannot admit the truth of His words due to the hardness of their hearts. There are those who claim to be followers of Jesus but it is obvious that His words cannot abide in their hearts.
- He also points out the second contrast which is that they have a different father than Jesus has. The implication of this comment is that Jesus is doing that which pleases His father and that they are doing that which pleases their father.

39 They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham."⁴⁰ "But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this."⁴¹ "You do the deeds of your father."

- We see the tremendous arrogance that these people had who claim to have Abraham as their father. Clearly they were not denying their physical fathers but were declaring that they were faithful to the things that would please Abraham.
- It was on this basis of lineage that the Jews believed they were the true chosen people. However we come to learn in the New Testament that although ethnic Israel was the people chosen by God to deliver His message to the world, those who are the true descendants of Abraham are those who share his faith. But here we see that they do not resemble Abraham in that they are wanting to kill Jesus and Abraham would certainly never do that.
- Paul teaches that those who are of the faith of Abraham are the true Israel. (Romans 9:1-9) Here we see Paul declaring that just because someone is of the line of Abraham does not mean that they are children of the promise. We see also that there are two meanings of the word "seed"; first it refers to those who are of the line of Abraham and secondly we can see that the "Seed" refers to Christ.
- Later in Galatians 3:1-18, we can see further that the promise made to Abraham was made to his "seed" (Genesis 22:18) and that the form of the word being singular declares that the promise was really to Christ. Therefore, those who have ever been, or who are, or who ever will be the children of the promise are those who are in Christ.

" Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God."

- Here we can see the fullness of their delusion in that they equated being physical descendants of Abraham with being true children of God. Although our world today wants to claim that all people are children of God, only those who are of the faith of Abraham (with the faith being in Christ) are glorified through adoption as sons into the house of God with Jesus our brother.

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me."⁴³ "Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word."

- It is as if Christ declares "whoever is a true child of God will gratefully acknowledge His firstborn Son—Jesus." But because these Jews hated Jesus, it is a clear indication that they are not children of God at all.

- Again, Jesus claims that hating Him is the same as hating the Father because Jesus did nothing on His own but rather, He did all of those things which the Father wanted Him to do.

44 "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

- Jesus finally declares to these Jews that their Father is not His Father; their father is Satan. Remembering that Satan is not God's evil twin nor that he in any way is as powerful as God, we understand that those who are children of Satan are those who are members of the kingdom of darkness. Satan is not omniscient, nor is he all powerful or omnipresent. He is a created being who is very powerful and no truth resides in Him as Jesus teaches here. But we cannot be tempted to be dualists for there is an infinite chasm between God and Satan.

45 "But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me."⁴⁶ "Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?"⁴⁷ "He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God." NKJV

- Given that there is no truth in Satan and that those who are his children will bear this resemblance, the Jews were unable to receive Jesus' truth because there was no truth in them.
- Only those who have been made alive by being in Christ by grace through faith, can understand the words of our Lord. There are those who will attempt to smuggle their way into His family but they only declare by their actions that they are not children at all.