

### The Lord Refutes Jews Who Claim to be Children Of Abraham

#### John 8:31-47

John 8:31-47 – *“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.*

<sup>32</sup> *And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*

<sup>33</sup> *They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, ‘You will be made free’?”*

<sup>34</sup> *Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. <sup>35</sup> And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. <sup>36</sup> Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*

<sup>37</sup> *“I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. <sup>38</sup> I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.”*

<sup>39</sup> *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. <sup>40</sup> 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. <sup>41</sup> You do the deeds of your father.” Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.”*

<sup>42</sup> *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. <sup>43</sup> Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. <sup>44</sup> 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. <sup>45</sup> But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. <sup>46</sup> Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? <sup>47</sup> He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”*

#### Background Notes

The setting for this discussion was the Temple area in Jerusalem, shortly after the weeklong Feast of Tabernacles ended. The Lord was addressing a group of people in the Temple courts who wanted to hear His teaching. The religious leaders who didn’t believe in Jesus, and wanted to discredit Him, were also part of this group.

Verse 30: *“As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.”* Were these people true believers? I think that some of them were, just as we saw back in verse 31, where many of the people believed in Him. But of course, there would be some people who only professed to believe, such as those mentioned in John 2:23-25: *“Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.”*

In verses 31-32 it appears that the Lord was addressing the true believers in the group, and urging them to abide in His word to prove their discipleship. If they would abide in His word, they would come to know the truth: *“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* What great promises for the believer!

From verse 34 on, the Lord addressed those who falsely professed to believe in Him, including the Pharisees and the self-righteous Jews. The Pharisees not only didn't believe in Him – they were out to get rid of the Lord. It's hard to miss the point that the Lord made here. These religious Jews were not true believers in the God of the Bible. Verse 47: *“He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”* And verse 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 lies.”*

These religious Jews to whom the Lord was talking were not pagans - they were strictly observant, orthodox Jews! What does that say about the destiny of Jews today who will not accept Jesus as Messiah? Orthodox Jews need to accept Jesus as their Messiah and as their Savior, just as much as any other unbeliever does.

## Doctrinal / Teaching Points

### 1. Perseverance is the sign of a believer.

Verse 31: *“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.”* Abiding in the Word is more than just reading and memorizing the Word. **Abiding in the Word means consistently obeying the Word.**

Abiding in the Word and perseverance go together. “Persevere” means to remain constant to a purpose, belief or task. Perseverance is characteristic of the believer.

The Lord said to the unbelieving Jews, *“I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you”* (v37). Also, *“Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word”* (v43). Not being able to listen to the Word is characteristic of an unbeliever, and it is exactly the opposite of abiding in the Word.

Abiding in the Word and perseverance are signs of a believer. Look again at verse 47: *“He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”* To “hear” God's Word is not just to hear it audibly, but also to **do** it, to **obey** it, to **consistently** do what it says, to **abide** in it. Perseverance is to abide in the Word. Perseverance is the sign of a believer.

### 2. Practicing sin is the sign of an unbeliever.

*“Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin”* (v34). The word “commits” here is in the Greek present tense, so the meaning is “to **continually** commit” sin. The idea is not occasionally committing a sin – it means to **continue to practice** sin. That's the idea. Continuing to practice sin is a sign of an unbeliever.

The Lord went on to teach that if you practice sin, you are a slave to sin, and a slave to sin is not a son. *“And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed”* (v35-36). You see, a son is a member of the family - but a slave is not. Unbelievers are not in the family of God. They

may *appear* to be in God's family. They may *say* they're in God's family. The religious Jews professed to be in God's family. They made people think that they were in God's family - but they were not.

Unbelievers are still in bondage or slavery to sin, whether they realize it or not. They are still in their sins.

1 John 3:6 says, "*Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.*" Again, the idea is to practice sin, commit sin continually, to **habitually** sin. Does this verse mean that a Christian is sinless ("*does not sin*")? No. 1 John 1:8-10, which is addressed to Christians, says, "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*" The Lord Jesus was sinless: "*Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?*" (v46). But we are not sinless – but we should sin *less*.

As Christians we do sin, but the important point here is a true Christian does not **live continually** in sin! We don't **practice** sin. Abiding in the Word and perseverance - those are signs of a true believer. But practicing sin is the sign of an unbeliever.

### 3. The truth will make a sinner free.

"*And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*" (v32). "*Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed*" (v36). Is there a contradiction between these two verses? Of course not! The Son **is** the Truth! The Lord Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*" (John 14:6).

Now the idea of freedom here is not the idea of freedom from sickness, or freedom from problems - but **freedom from sin**! The unbelieving Jews were claiming that they had never been in bondage: "*We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?*" (v33). Well, that statement was certainly not true, was it? What about the bondage in Egypt? What about the Babylonian captivity? What about the present Roman occupation? But the Lord showed them that He was talking about bondage to sin.

Are you in bondage to sin – entangled in sin? You don't have to be. Freedom is available! Freedom comes when you commit your life to Jesus Christ, and let Him take control of your life. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and He will set you free. If you commit your life to the Lord Jesus, you will come to know Him as the Truth - and the truth will set you free! Jesus Christ, the Truth, will make a sinner free.

Verses 31-32 appear to be addressed to believers. This is the key to overcoming sin in the believer's life. Abide in the Word, and you will increasingly come to know the truth. You will increasingly come to know Jesus Christ as the source of all truth. You can experience freedom from besetting sin. The truth will make a sinner free.

### 4. Sincerity will not make a sinner free.

If ever you had a test case for "religious sincerity," here it is! The people to whom the Lord was speaking were not pagans, and they were not hedonists. For the most part, they were sincere and good-living religious Jews. They **sincerely** thought that not only were they physical descendants of Abraham, but that they were spiritual sons of Abraham

as well. The Lord told them that He knew that they were physical descendants of Abraham: *“I know that you are Abraham’s descendants...”*(v37). However, they were not spiritual sons of Abraham. There was no moral kinship.

If they had been spiritual sons of Abraham, they wouldn’t have been seeking to kill Jesus. They would have been doing Abraham’s works of faith (v39). They would be receiving the Lord’s word, and loving Him (v42). There would have been a family resemblance. That’s the point.

But these religious Jews sincerely believed that the Lord was wrong, and that they were right - so right, that the Lord must go! They were sincere, but they were sincerely mistaken. The Lord said that they were following their father the devil (v44). The Lord said that they could not go to Heaven, and that they would die in their sin (v21). *These sincere, religious people were sincerely wrong.* Sincerity will not make a sinner free.

## Practical Application

### Who is *your* father?

The religious Jews in John 8 thought that the God of the Bible was their Father - but they were wrong! The Lord 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”* (v42).

And then Jesus said, *“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do”* (v44). Notice that the Lord had no problem believing in a personal devil. Satan is not an imaginary being. No, Satan is a real live spiritual being.

The Lord said that Satan was a murderer from the beginning. Satan brought death to Adam and Eve, and thus to the whole human race. And Satan is the father of lies. *“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”* (v44). Like father, like children.

Who is **your** father? There are only two possibilities: either God is your Father, or Satan is your father. Nothing in the Bible teaches the *“universal fatherhood”* of God. There is no idea in the Bible that *“everyone makes it in the end, because God is the Father of all.”* That is **not** taught in the Bible!

The Bible clearly teaches that you are either a believer, and God is your Father, or you are an unbeliever, and Satan is your father.

### Who is *your* father?