

### 31. Jesus Warned that the Devil Is the Father of Many

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others what it means to be set free. We saw that true believers are those who receive Jesus and place their faith in Him. Such individuals are now sons of God, instead of slaves of sin. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus warned the religious leaders that many of them were still serving their father, the devil.

Jesus knew that many of the Jewish leaders were depending on the fact that they were descendants of Abraham for spiritual life. In John 8:37-39, we read, “I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.” They answered and said to Him, ‘Abraham is our father.’” Jesus understood the fact that all of the Jews were physical descendants of Abraham. However, the Jewish religious leaders did not understand the fact that they had to be spiritual descendants as well as physical descendants in order to have spiritual life.

Jesus also knew the hearts of the religious leaders. Jesus told them, “You seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.” Here, we see that Jesus told the Jewish religious leaders that their plan and goal was to kill Him. John 5:16 says, “For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.” Then, John 5:18 says, “Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” John 7:19-20 says, “Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?” The people answered and said, ‘You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?’” The leaders denied that they wanted to kill Jesus but John 7:30 says, “Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.” We will see many more places in the book of John that the religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus.

Jesus said that the real problem of the religious leaders was the fact that His Word did not have any place in them. The word translated “place” means *to make room or to leave space*. The word is used in Mark 2:2 where we read, “Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive *them*, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them.” In Mark, there was no room to receive the four men who carried their friend to Jesus. Here, in John, Jesus told the religious leaders that they had no room in their hearts to receive the Word of God. Jesus gave the parable of the sower sowing the seed. Then, He explained to His disciples in Mark 4:14-15, “The sower sows the word. And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.” The religious leaders had hard hearts like the hard dirt on the roadside.

The religious leaders immediately answered, “Abraham is our father.” They thought that since they were physical descendants of Abraham, they would surely have a place in heaven. Jesus then told them that they were not spiritual children of Abraham. John 8:39b-43 says, “Jesus said to them, ‘If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. 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.

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You do the deeds of your father.’ Then they said to Him, ‘We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.’ 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. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.’” In Genesis 15:6, we read, “And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” Here, we see that the work that Abraham did was to believe God.

Jesus said the religious leaders were not spiritual children of Abraham because they did not believe God. Instead, they wanted to kill Jesus. Then, Jesus explained why they wanted to kill Him. They wanted to kill Him because He had told them the truth. Jesus told the religious leaders that Abraham would not have tried to kill Him. Jesus then told the religious leaders that they were doing the work of their father. The religious leaders understood that Jesus had said that God was not their father but that they were doing the works of their father. As a result, they thought that Jesus was saying that they were born of fornication or they had heard about the birth of Jesus. The word translated “fornication” means *any form of sexual activity outside of marriage*. Spiritual fornication would be the worship of idols. The religious leaders did not want to be accused of either physical or spiritual fornication so they said that they had one Father and that was God.

Jesus explained to them that they showed by their actions that God was not their Father. Jesus said, “If God were your Father, you would love Me.” Here, we see that Jesus was speaking about issues of the heart to these religious leaders. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” The words and actions of the religious leaders showed the condition of their hearts. Their hearts were in total rebellion against both the Father and the Son. 1 John 4:8 says, “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” They did not know God and they did not understand His character.

Jesus said again that He came from God. He did not act on the basis of His own will because Jesus always did the will of the Father. Jesus had said in John 5:30, “I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.” Jesus always spoke and worked in perfect agreement with the Father. He came to this earth to pay the penalty for sin because that was the plan of the Father and the Son before the creation. As a result, Jesus came to this earth because the Father sent Him to pay the penalty for our sin.

Jesus asked the religious leaders why they did not understand His speech. Then, Jesus explained why they did not understand. Jesus said that the reason that they did not understand was due to the fact that they were not able to listen to His word. The word translated “to listen” means *to hear so that there is understanding*. Jesus said that they were not able to hear with understanding. As 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” The religious leaders lacked spiritual discernment. Then, Jesus explained why they lacked spiritual discernment.

John 8:44-47 says, “You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to

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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. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.” The religious leaders lacked spiritual discernment because the devil was the one who was their father. In addition, they carried out the desires of their father.

We see that Jesus then described two aspects of the character of the devil. First, Satan is a murderer. In John 10:10 Jesus said, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” The goal of Satan is always to destroy. He destroyed the spiritual life of Adam and Eve in the garden. As a result, Adam and Eve experienced separation from God, fear, guilt and shame within, and began to blame others. Second, Satan is a liar. Satan cannot stand in the truth and he cannot speak the truth because there is no truth in him. Instead, he speaks from his own resources. This verse also tells us that Satan is both a liar and the father of lies. He lied to Adam and Eve in the garden when he told Eve in Genesis 3:4, “...You will not surely die.”

The religious leaders did not want to hear the truth and so they refused to believe Him. Then, Jesus asked the religious leaders a question, “Which of you convicts Me of sin?” John 5:18 says, “Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” In that verse, the Jews had accused Jesus of two sins. However, the first was breaking the traditions of the Pharisees and that is not a violation of the commandment of God. The perfect sinless life that Jesus had lived was evidence of the fact that Jesus was the Son of God and equal with the Father. As a result, the religious leaders had no evidence that would show that Jesus was guilty of any sin.

Then, Jesus pointed out that they were the ones who needed to examine their own lives when He said, “And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?” Jesus pointed out the fact that those who are followers of God will hear the Word of God. The word translated “hear” means *to hear so that there is understanding*. The religious leaders had no understanding of the things that the Word of God taught about Jesus. Jesus made it clear that, if they were true followers of God, they would understand the Word of God. The fact that they had no understanding was evidence of the fact that they did not belong to God. The very fact that they were planning to kill Jesus when He was not guilty of any sin was evidence of the fact that they were the children of Satan rather than the children of God. Their evil plans showed the condition of their hearts. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to recognize the fact that people will be controlled by what is in their hearts. If their hearts are controlled by the love of Christ, they will love others. Hearts controlled by sin will commit evil actions. May the Lord richly bless you as you help them to understand that people will be controlled by what is in their hearts.