

John 8

- Our study on the Feast of Tabernacles experience of Jesus continues
 - This feast account began in John 7 when Jesus and His brothers were discussing His attendance at the feast
 - Then it moved into Jesus' secret arrival in Jerusalem that week
 - Then to His teaching in the temple during the later part of the week
 - On the seventh day of the Feast, Jesus is standing in the temple when the time comes for the water drawing festival
 - And as the water is poured out at the altar as part of the Feast celebration, Jesus interrupted the ceremony to declare that those who thirst should come to Him
 - And He would give living water
 - Then in the beginning of chapter 8, we saw Jesus confronted by the Pharisees and the adulterous woman
 - That story was our opportunity to see Jesus get the better of the hypocrites
 - He showed that they were unqualified to judge the woman
 - And when they gave up their game, Jesus refrained from judging the woman as well
 - Now in the rest of chapter 8 and into chapter 9 and the beginning of chapter 10, the setting remains the Feast of Tabernacles
 - First, in chapter 8 John recounts another moment on the seventh day of the feast with Jesus teaching in the temple
 - Once again, He makes a comparison between Himself and the feast
 - Later in chapter 9, John recounts a healing Jesus performed as He exited the temple
 - The healing in chapter 9 serves as a powerful illustration of the truth of Jesus' teaching in the temple

- Finally in chapter 10 John records one last encounter between Jesus and the crowd, where we see still more division

- First, we must finish chapter 8

John 8:12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “ I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”

John 8:13 So the Pharisees said to Him, “ You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true.”

John 8:14 Jesus answered and said to them, “ Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.

John 8:15 “ You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone.

John 8:16 “But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me.

John 8:17 “Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true.

John 8:18 “I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.”

- Jesus declares to the crowd gathered in the temple for the greatest day of the Feast of Tabernacle that He is the Light of the world
 - Obviously, this sounds a lot like the declaration that Jesus made in chapter 7 when He said He was a source of living water
 - When Jesus made the comment about living water, He chose the moment when the water ceremony was taking place in the temple
 - And as He speaks these words, another part of the seventh day ceremony was taking place
 - There was a ceremony each evening of the feast called the kindling of the lights
 - There was huge lampstand set up in the temple courtyard
 - This lampstands was similar to the menorah used inside the Holy Place except that only four cups were lit
 - At sundown, the cups were lit
 - Following the lighting, the men in the temple would light smaller torches from the fire of the large lamps engage in dancing and even juggling of fire touches

- This symbolized the Shechinah Glory of God
- However, on the final night of the feast, the lamps were not lit, since the feast had come to an end
 - John said this was the last day of the feast week
 - Which means the lamps were not being lit on this evening
- And so it with the menorah dark, Jesus declares that He is the Light and he who follows Jesus will not walk in the darkness but will have the Light of life
 - By this point in John's Gospel, the meaning of these symbols are familiar to us
 - Light is a picture of eternal glory, righteousness and the truth of God's word
 - And conversely, darkness is a metaphor for evil, the unbelieving heart, and a life of sin and deception
 - Throughout the Bible, light has been associated with God's presence and life-giving power
 - And in this moment, the true Light of the world stood before them
 - But in the darkness of their hearts, they didn't see Jesus for Who He was
 - They didn't embrace Him as the Messiah
 - As with the water, Jesus came to fulfill in reality what the symbol of light was intended to represent
 - But the most of the people are missing this truth
- In response to Jesus' provocative words, the Pharisees say Jesus' words are not true because Jesus is testifying about Himself
 - The Pharisees are applying a basic principle of the Mosaic Law
 - Under the Law, no matter could be settled on the basis of only one witness
 - Important matters required the testimony of at least two witnesses to protect against the bias and deception of a single opinion

- So these men claim that Jesus' words concerning Himself can't be accepted because Jesus is alone in testifying to Himself as Messiah
 - Notice they realize Jesus is claiming to be Messiah
 - They just aren't willing to accept Jesus' testimony
 - And because they think Jesus is speaking without a corroborating voice, they accuse Jesus of speaking without proof
- Jesus contends with their wrong assumption with two arguments
 - First, He refutes their faulty logical
 - Yes, the Mosaic Law didn't accept the testimony of a single witness
 - But that didn't mean the one witness was automatically untrustworthy
 - So in v.14 Jesus says even if Jesus were testifying about Himself, His testimony isn't automatically false
 - In fact, Jesus says His testimony is true because He knew things that no other man could know
 - He's explaining why there can't be another person to testify to the truth of Christ
 - Because no man has been where Jesus has been and seen what Jesus has seen
 - Jesus knows the whole story of history from beginning to end, and so He must be alone among humanity in this testimony
 - Nevertheless it's true
 - These men are capable only of judging matters of the flesh, that is matters of the physical world
 - It's this world that the Law of Moses was intending to regulate when it told Israel to require two witnesses
 - But it was never intended to be used to judge the testimony of God Himself
 - Furthermore, the men of Israel simply couldn't make such a judgment

- In contrast to this men, Jesus wasn't judging anyone with His witness
 - Remember, we said last week that Jesus was sent into the world at His first coming with a mission that precluded judging
 - We see that clearly here as Jesus states plainly that He is not judging anyone
 - In this situation, He means that His witness is not for the purpose of bringing judgment upon anyone
 - But even if Jesus were to pass judgment upon a man on the basis of just His own testimony, it would still be a true judgment
 - In other words, Jesus' judgment is true despite the fact that He judges alone
 - Simply put, Jesus' testimony is always true and His judgments are always righteous because He is uniquely qualified
 - He is God and therefore, there is no need for another human witness to join with Christ
- Nevertheless, Jesus wasn't alone in His testimony
 - In v.16 Jesus says He was sent by the Father, and the Father is at work testifying as well that Jesus is the Messiah
 - How was the Father testifying to Jesus' identity?
 - First and foremost, by the Law and the Prophets
 - The word of God foretold specifically details of the Messiah's arrival, and Jesus met every one of those tests
 - Including details that were impossible to fake or contrive, like the timing and location of His birth
 - Like His family associations
 - Secondly, the Father testified to Jesus through John the Baptist
 - We heard earlier in this Gospel how John's testimony was a part of how the Father substantiated Jesus' claims
 - And John stated plainly that Jesus was the Messiah, the Lamb of God sent to take away sin

- Finally, the Father is testifying through His Spirit Who empowered Jesus to perform His miracles
 - Every time Jesus performed a miraculous work, the crowds immediately recognized it was a work of God
 - Many would declare it to be so
 - Therefore, if Jesus is performing works that only God can perform, than it's proof that the Father endorses the claims of Jesus
 - Clearly, the Father wouldn't empower Jesus to perform miracles if the Father disagreed with Jesus' claims concerning Himself!
- So Jesus says in vs.17-18, that the Law itself says that the testimony of two in agreement is to be taken as fact in deciding any matter
 - Therefore, to see Jesus and the Father testifying in agreement concerning His identity should be enough for this men
 - They have no legal grounds to refute Jesus' claims in this case
- Now as the crowd heard Jesus' response to the Pharisees, many became intrigued by His claims and His defense to the Pharisees
 - So the crowd itself begins to pick up the interrogation at this point

John 8:19 So they were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also."

John 8:20 These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.

John 8:21 Then He said again to them, "I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come."

John 8:22 So the Jews were saying, "Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come?'"

John 8:23 And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.

John 8:24 "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

John 8:25 So they were saying to Him, "Who are You?" Jesus said to them, "What have I been saying to you from the beginning?"

John 8:26 "I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world."

John 8:27 They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father.

- The crowd heard Jesus say that His Father joined Jesus in testifying to His identity as the Messiah
 - So naturally, the crowd asks Jesus where is His father?
 - That question all by itself tells us that the crowd didn't understand Who Jesus truly was
 - Because if you believed Jesus was the Messiah, then you would also have understood that His Father was God in Heaven
 - Because they aren't believing in Him, the crowd assumes He's speaking about an earthly father and asks to see this father
 - So naturally, Jesus declares this obvious truth
 - He says to the crowd you know neither me nor my Father
 - They don't know Jesus in the sense that they aren't believing in Him as Messiah
 - And they don't know the Father in Heaven in the sense that in their unbelief they are not children of God
 - This is an important but often overlooked truth of scripture: only those who believe in Jesus Christ are considered God's children in the Bible
 - As Paul says:

[Rom. 8:14](#) For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

[Gal. 3:26](#) For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

- By faith in Jesus Christ, we are born again into the family of God
- And through our relationship with Jesus Christ, we come to know the Father
- So when these people rejected Jesus, they were showing evidence that they were not children of the Father in Heaven
- Jesus will have more to say about this topic later in the chapter

- John interrupts the narrative briefly to remind us where Jesus was saying these increasingly provocative statements
 - He was in the treasury of the temple, which is another name for the Court of Women
 - The court of women was the outer most area surrounding the temple proper
 - It was also called the treasury because in this courtyard were 13 stations or receptacles for depositing monetary offerings
 - Since every Jew could enter the court of the women, it was logical for the priests to place offering boxes in this area
 - But John's point is that this is also the most public, most trafficked part of the temple
 - Which means that as Jesus said these words, He was almost certainly speaking before a huge crowd, especially on a feast day
 - And nevertheless, Jesus wasn't being arrested for what He said
 - His words were cutting, derogatory and embarrassing to the religious leaders
 - But they could do nothing to stop Jesus because the Father's sovereign will was preventing them from acting against Jesus
 - Remember this verse the next time you hear someone throw out that over used and theologically inaccurate statement that, "God loves us so much that He gives us free will."
 - Besides contradicting the teaching of the Bible, that thinking conveniently ignores examples like this one
 - The leaders of Israel most certainly wanted to seize Jesus
 - And in the temple they had little standing in their way
 - Not even the Romans were allowed to enter the temple ground
 - And yet they did nothing to stop Jesus
 - And John explains it was because Jesus' time hadn't arrived
 - In other words, the Father wasn't allowing these evil men to do what their wills desired to do

- Far from being free, they were constrained entirely by the Father's will
- There are many, many other examples like this throughout the Bible, disabusing us of the notion that God respects man's will
- Now in v.21 John picks up the narrative again at a later point in Jesus' discourse
 - He tells the crowd that He's going away
 - Though they will seek for Him, they will die in their sin
 - Where Jesus is going, these people cannot come
 - To which the crowd asks if Jesus intended to kill Himself
 - This is a very important exchange we need to understand
 - First, we know that Jesus is speaking about His coming death and ascension into Heaven following His resurrection
 - More importantly, the crowd knew Jesus was talking about dying and entering into Heaven
 - We know this because they ask if He intends to commit suicide
 - The point is that this crowd is not and has not been ignorant of what's happening in their midst
 - They know Jesus is claiming to be the Messiah
 - They know He is calling Himself a Son of the Father God
 - And they know He's predicting His death and entry into Heaven
 - So we can't give this crowd the benefit of the doubt
 - They have all the facts but haven't believed in what they've heard
- Therefore, Jesus says they cannot go where Jesus is going
 - Think about that statement for a moment
 - Why can't they follow Jesus?
 - Paul says in 1 Cor 5 that when we die, we enter into the presence of the Lord

- Yet Jesus says there is no possibility of these people of following Him...why?
 - The natural answer is because they do not believe in Him
 - Failure to belief in Jesus in Messiah means never following Him
 - You won't follow Jesus as His disciple while living on this earth
 - But more importantly, you won't follow Jesus into Heaven either
 - And Jesus says that though the nation of Israel would continue to seek for their Messiah after Jesus' departure, they won't find Him
 - Because Jesus is that Messiah
 - And once they rejected Jesus as Messiah, then they will always be looking for the wrong thing and never finding it
 - And so they will die in their sins
 - This is a clear refutation of those who claim all Jews will saved despite their unbelief merely because they are Jewish
 - Here we see Jesus plainly telling a crowd of Jews that they will die in their sins
 - And they will receive that eternal outcome because they failed to believe in Jesus as the Messiah
- At hearing they were destined for hell, the people grow concerned and begin to act more interested in Jesus' identity
 - They ask Him Who He is?
 - Their question obviously suggests they don't understand Jesus' claims or teaching
 - But we've already seen that they are following just fine
 - They just won't believe in what they hear Jesus saying
 - And notice Jesus calls them out for this hypocrisy
 - He asks them at the end of v.25 what have I been telling you from the beginning?
 - It's a rhetorical question intended to highlight that they have heard all they need to hear

- So He's not buying their feigned ignorance
- And neither will He be persuaded by their ignorance when He passes judgment on them at the Second Resurrection
 - Notice in v.26 Jesus says He has many things to speak and judge concerning these people
 - What a scary thought, at least for these people
 - God looks at them and says He has a lot to share with them at their judgment
 - It's like when you're in a public place and you make your mother upset at you
 - So she leans over and says "We'll talk about this when we get home."
 - You just know that isn't a conversation you're going to enjoy
- For now, Jesus is sent to speak the truth that the Father has given Him to share with the world
 - But in their unbelief, John says in v.27 that the crowd just didn't get what Jesus was telling them
 - There was a barrier to their understanding
 - That barrier was their own sin
 - And only by the work of God's Spirit can that veil be lifted
 - Nevertheless, there is and always will be a remnant of believers in Israel
 - And this moment is no exception

[John 8:28](#) So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.

[John 8:29](#) "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."

[John 8:30](#) As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.

[John 8:31](#) So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;

[John 8:32](#) and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

- At this point, Jesus turns His attention to His sheep, those in the crowd who hear and understand the truth
 - Jesus tells them when you lift up the Son of Man, you know that I am the Messiah you've been waiting for
 - He meant when Israel lifted Jesus up in their rejection of Him, they would be fulfilling prophecy
 - And they would be setting in motion God's plan to put His own Son to death on behalf of men
 - And as Jesus is crucified, there will be amazing displays of God's power all around
 - From the sky going dark
 - To earthquakes and the renting of the temple veil
 - And most importantly, the resurrection of Jesus' body on the third day
 - All these signs will become compelling evidence of Jesus' deity and claims as Messiah, and for many it will be convincing evidence
 - The Holy Spirit will use these signs to bring many in Israel to faith after the death of Christ
 - Though most of Israel will fail to see the truth
- Even now, John says many in the crowd were believing in Jesus as the Messiah, and now Jesus begins to address these
 - The key message for anyone who believes in Jesus is to continue in His word
 - Those who continue in the word of Christ are showing themselves to truly be His disciple
 - The word disciple means pupil or student
 - And you become a disciple by faith in Christ's word
 - As Paul says

Rom. 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

- But in v.31 Jesus emphasizes the need to truly be His disciple
 - The word truly in Greek is alethos, which means for sure or indeed
 - It's a word emphasizing the degree of something
 - And so the disciple of the greatest degree is the one that continues in the word of Christ
- Continuing means to think, live and rely entirely on the word of God
 - Jesus says that pleasing Him depends on continuing or abiding in His word
 - If a Christian doesn't make studying and living out the word of God a priority, they cannot be said to be a disciple to the fullest extent
 - Certainly not the extent Christ expects according to John 8:31
- Our reward for that pursuit is that we will come to know the truth in all respects
 - Not merely the truth of what's written in the pages of scripture
 - Though that would be more than enough by itself
 - But also our general knowledge of God's mind and heart
 - We not only learn what the Master wrote, but we also come to know the Master Himself
 - This is the reason VBVM exists
 - We believe that there is simply nothing else a believer can do or even should do to truly be a disciple of Christ
 - We must make study and application of His word a priority
- Now the conversation returns to the unbelievers in the crowd, who proceed to attack Jesus' teaching and try to pick it apart

John 8:33 They answered Him, " We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?"

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.

[John 8:35](#) “The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever.

[John 8:36](#) “So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

[John 8:37](#) “I know that you are Abraham’s descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

[John 8:38](#) “I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.”

- The unbelievers pick up on Jesus saying that His truth will set them free, and they challenge Him to explain how they are enslaved
 - Ironically, they say they are Abraham’s descendants, and therefore they have never been enslaved
 - It’s ironic because Israel had been enslaved to one degree or another almost continuously for hundreds of years
 - Even as they spoke those words, this generation was under Roman occupation
 - They might not be slaves in the harshest sense of the word, but they were certainly not free either
 - They were prideful and self-deluded even in this fact
 - But of course, Jesus wasn’t talking about slavery to another man
 - He was talking about slavery to your own nature
 - The sin nature of every person enslaves that person
 - It’s a slavery because we aren’t the master over our sin
 - It is the master over us
 - It blinds us and drives us, leading us into destruction
 - The truth of Who Christ is has the power to free us from that slavery
 - That truth grants us a new spirit capable of resisting the sin of our flesh
 - And resisting the temptations of the devil
 - Ultimately, knowing Christ sets us free from the penalty of sin, which is what Jesus means when He says we are free indeed

- These people claimed to be exempt from worry because they were descendants of Abraham
 - Being physically descended from Abraham, being called a Jew, was their insurance policy, or so they thought
 - Jesus points out the ironic flaw in their thinking
 - They say they were sons of Abraham
 - Yet here they are trying to kill Abraham's Seed, the Messiah
 - Therefore, the word of God has no place in their hearts
 - Now Jesus takes the gloves off, saying they have a father who different than Jesus' Father in Heaven
 - Obviously, we know Jesus is speaking of the devil, but He will say this specifically in a moment
 - Every unbeliever is an agent of Satan, though he or she doesn't realize this
 - Ironically, those unbelievers who openly declare themselves to be Satan worshippers are the closest to understanding their true identity
 - Jesus speaks concerning the things He has seen, the same things the Father has seen
 - With each of these statements Jesus is continuing to emphasize His oneness with the Father
 - How could a mere man see everything God the Father sees?
 - Jesus is obviously saying He's God as well
 - But this crowd is only able to speak what has been revealed to them by their father
 - If they can't hear from the Father in Heaven, then they have only the devil feeding them knowledge
 - Jesus goes on to explain

[John 8:39](#) They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham.

[John 8:40](#) "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do.

[John 8:41](#) "You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God."

[John 8:42](#) Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.

[John 8:43](#) "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word.

[John 8:44](#) "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

[John 8:45](#) "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.

[John 8:46](#) "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?"

[John 8:47](#) "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

- Now the argument heats up...sensing that they've just been insulted, they protest that Abraham is their father
 - By associating themselves with Abraham, they were claiming to be just like him
 - And in doing so, they fall right into Jesus' trap set earlier
 - If they are truly of Abraham, then they would have followed Abraham faith
 - They would have done the deeds that Abraham did
 - Specifically, the notable deed that Abraham did was to believe in the word of Christ

[Gen. 15:6](#) Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

- By His faith in God's word, he was deemed righteous
- But this crowd was anything like Abraham in that regard

- Instead, they were seeking to kill the God who has spoken to them
 - Clearly, this is something that Abraham never dared to do
 - I detect a certain dry sense of humor creeping into Jesus words, don't you?
- Again, Jesus provokes His audience in v.41 saying they are doing the deeds of "their" father, which by now they clearly understood to be the enemy
 - So they respond – and we can safely assume they are growing more agitated with each response
 - They say that God is their Father
 - But Jesus counters that those who are sons of God will love Christ
 - Here again, we see the definition of a son or daughter of God: someone who know Christ as Lord
 - And the reason we equate loving Christ with begin "of the Father" is that these two are truly One
 - You can't separate the trinity; you can't divide the three members of the Godhead
 - So it is spiritually impossible for the same heart to love one while despising another
 - So as Jesus stood before the crowd, He became a test for their hearts
 - If they responded positively to His words, they were also giving evidence that they were loved by the Father
- Now we're back to the essential topic of the nature of saving faith
 - As Jesus says in v.43, the unbelieving crowd can't understand what He's saying because they can't hear His word
 - Obviously, they weren't deaf, so they are capable of hearing the sound of Jesus' voice
 - But spiritually speaking, they can't hear or receive the words Jesus is speaking

- The ability to hear the word of God and receive it as truth depends on the ministry of the Holy Spirit to enable that understanding
 - And as we learned in John 6, that ability is entirely dependent on the Father having granted us ears to hear
 - Essentially, Jesus is telling the crowd that they can't understand Him because they aren't in the family of God
 - And they aren't in the family, because the Father hasn't opened their ears
- To settle the paternity question, Jesus then names names
 - He says the unbelieving crowd's father is the devil
 - To say that someone has the Father as the devil means that they have not been born again
 - Each person is born once in the fallen nature of Adam
 - And that fallen nature owes its existence to the enemy, who authored the fall in the Garden
 - In that sense, every unbeliever is a child of the devil and under the devil's authority
 - And the principle the crowd was trying to apply earlier concerning their association with Abraham still holds here
 - You are like the one you descend from
 - Earlier, they wanted to claim Abraham as their father, so they could claim to share in his attributes
 - Well, now Jesus uses that principle against them
 - They are like their father, the devil
- All unbelievers share the devil's character attributes to one degree or another - just as we did prior to faith
 - The devil was a murderer from the beginning
 - Jesus is referring to Satan's effort to murder the Messiah when he orchestrated Abel death
 - Remember, it was Cain who killed Abel, and yet Jesus is crediting Satan with that murder

- That illustrates that the evil heart of unbelieving men is a reflection of the corrupting influence of Satan, who is the author of that corruption
- So it's fair to say that Satan was murdering Abel because he transferred His murderous heart to Cain
- And here again Satan is working through the evil hearts of his children to murder the Messiah in the flesh
- Furthermore, Satan is a liar, and there is no truth in him
 - Satan is 100% aligned against God
 - So whatever God says or advocates, Satan will reliably speak or act in the opposite direction
 - His primary tactic is to distort and pervert whatever God says is good and holy
 - And likewise, so will those who are under his authority and molded in his pattern
- Therefore, this crowd was molded in the likeness of the devil
 - So the devils words resonate with them
 - While God's word spoken from the lips of Christ fell on deaf ears
- Before we go any further, let's also acknowledge that this rule isn't without exceptions, at least on a small scale
 - For example, we can find unbelievers doing kind and caring things for others
 - We can find unbelievers acting generously at times
 - Showing kindness and consideration for others from time to time
 - We know unbelievers who are generally trustworthy and truthful
 - And by that same token, we know believers who act in very ungodly ways, including ourselves
 - Believers who lie, cheat and scheme others
 - Believers who are unkind and uncaring to others

- Believers who even act violently against others
- But these exceptions simply serve to prove the rule
 - It's relatively rare and refreshing to find unbelievers who consistently act with genuine kindness, selflessness and generosity
 - And it's equally rare to find true believers who show no fruit of the Spirit in their relationships
 - That rarity reminds us that there is an undeniable pattern that differentiates those who are sons of God from those who are sons of the enemy
- Now the argument comes to its climactic end on this important feast day

John 8:46 "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?"

John 8:47 "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

John 8:48 The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

John 8:49 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.

John 8:50 "But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges.

John 8:51 "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death."

- In v.46 Jesus lays out another reason to consider Him to be God
 - He claims to have no sin
 - He asks the crowd to show evidence that Jesus has ever sinned
 - Can you imagine making a similar statement to a huge crowd, including people who had followed you for months and even years?
 - Wouldn't you fear the answer that might come back from such a question?
 - Of course, we would fear the answers we might hear from at crowd, but Jesus didn't

- In fact, there is no record that anyone could offer a single example of sin in Jesus' life
- Once again, what kind of man can safely claim to be without sin?
- Only God Himself can make such a claim
- Then again, if no one could convict Jesus of any sin, then why aren't they believing what He says?
 - Isn't the word of a sinless man trustworthy by definition?
 - And yet here they were rejecting the word of a man they couldn't convict of even one sin
- Even more clearly, Jesus says His words are the words of God in v.47
 - He says that those who are of God will hear the words of God, referring to the words He's been speaking
 - Naturally, they are unable to hear and understand His words since they aren't of God
 - And of course, the crowd has clearly got this point as well
 - Since they now resort to personal attacks, calling Jesus a Samaritan and demon possessed
 - These are some of the worst accusations they could direct at Jesus
 - They call Him Samaritan because Jesus came from the Galilee, which bordered Samaria
 - And they call Him demon possessed to explain His miraculous powers
- Notice in v.49 Jesus denies their accusation and says they are dishonoring Him in what they say
 - Attributing the power of the Holy Spirit to Satan is something Jesus encountered more than once
 - And every time it happened, the crowd was repeating the unforgivable sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit, as Jesus explained in Matthew 12

- They were standing in the living presence of the Messiah in the flesh and saw His works done by the power of the Holy Spirit
- And still they declared Him to be Satan
- That sin dishonored Jesus and was unforgivable to anyone in that generation who committed it
- Ultimately, it was this entire generation of Israel that fell to this judgment
- I like the way Jesus quickly turns His response away from defending His own honor and back to preaching the Gospel to the crowd
 - He says He is not seeking for His own glory in this time on earth
 - Jesus is working for the One Who seeks and judges
 - In other words, while Jesus is not a threat to them in this moment, they can be sure that they are in jeopardy
 - And one day, they will be judged and will pay the price for dishonoring God's only Son
- Still, He returns to making knowing the escape that exists for those who believe in Him
 - The Gospel is never far from Jesus' mind or words
 - He says if they keep His word, they won't see death, meaning the Second Death in the Lake of Fire
- This is the model we've been handed and we should follow as well
 - We should be prepared to defend our faith and to an extent our own testimony
 - But that's not the emphasis in our testimony
 - If we're attacked for what we believe, we can't take those attacks personally
 - The world may dishonor us and Christ Himself, but we push that aside and leave room for the Lord to seek vengeance on our behalf
 - Meanwhile, we return to offering them the grace of God in Christ

[John 8:52](#) The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.'

[John 8:53](#) "Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?"

[John 8:54](#) Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God';

[John 8:55](#) and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.

[John 8:56](#) "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

[John 8:57](#) So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

[John 8:58](#) Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

- Finally, to end the chapter, the exchange is becoming increasingly acrimonious
 - In fact, given their obvious hard hearts, you have to wonder why Jesus pursued the conversation this far anyway
 - The Jews says they know Jesus must have a demon if He says that those who keep His word can't die
 - They take Jesus' words too literally, asking if Jesus was greater than the great men who preceded Him
 - Yet those great men died, so is Jesus saying He was greater?
 - There is so much irony here we hardly know where to start in listing it all out
 - First, the crowd sets forth the standard that all men die, even the great men of history
 - But they never go to the next step and ask why men must die?
 - The answer Paul gives in Romans 5 is that all men sin, and therefore all men must die
 - And that death doesn't end with the body but extends to the soul as well, which goes to the Lake of Fire
 - But Jesus has declared that those who heed His word won't experience death, at least in the sense of eternal death

- So yes, He was saying He was greater than any other man
- But yet Jesus is going to die at least for a time
- But that death is for the sake of you and I, so that we don't have to die
- So the chief irony was that the Man without sin Who should never die was prepared to die for those who deserved to die for sin
- And meanwhile, those He was offering to save were mocking Jesus for claiming to be better than men died in their sin
 - Men who died knowing that a Christ would one day die in their place
- As Jesus says, Abraham rejoiced to see Jesus day
 - He means that Abraham understood the Gospel enough to know that a savior would one day be sent
 - And that savior would be the sacrifice God provided to save men from their sin
 - Abraham knew he wasn't going to live long enough to see that day in the flesh
 - But he rejoiced to see that day arrive nonetheless
 - Jesus has repeatedly said He is working to glorify the Father, Who Jesus knows but this crowd has never known
 - Jesus says He can't deny knowing the Father as He does, otherwise Jesus would be a liar like them
 - He knows the Father and keeps the Father's word
 - Jesus hasn't pulled any punches nor softened the language
 - Notice that Jesus is speaking to a crowd of unbelievers, yet He's not working to win them over
 - Why not? Why is Jesus speaking so harshly to them?
 - Because, these are not His sheep, not appointed by the Father, and therefore He isn't spending time trying to persuade people who can't be persuaded

- He isn't casting pearls of truth before swine to be trampled under in the mud
- In the final moments of this discussion, the crowd reacts to Jesus' mention that Abraham rejoiced to see Jesus' day
 - They ask sarcastically if Jesus, being less than 50 years old, could have been old enough to know Abraham personally
 - Of course, this comment is just further proof that they couldn't see what Jesus was saying with spirit eyes
 - Everything Jesus said was going over their heads because He was speaking with spiritual truth
 - But they were hearing it with unbelieving ears
 - So they assume Jesus is just a man, as so if Jesus says Abraham knew of Jesus' day, it must require that these two men have met at some point
 - Which was clearly impossible to the crowd
 - I imagine some were snickering when they heard Jesus say this
 - Of course, they miss Jesus' main point
- So Jesus gives them the point plainly: before Abraham was, I am
 - Clearly, Jesus is stating clearly He is God
 - You couldn't select a better phrase to more clearly make that point
 - This is another of the "I am" statements in John's Gospel
 - And this one is particularly powerful, because it echoes the statement Christ made to Moses in the burning bush
 - And that connection wasn't lost on this crowd
 - Here's a man standing in the temple intended to serve as God's home on earth, and the One intended to inhabit it is standing in the courtyard declaring the unforgettable words given to Moses
 - I am
 - Jesus says He is the great I AM
 - He is God, the eternal, almighty awesome and holy God

- And the fact that He's standing before them in a humble human form was beyond human comprehension
- And it still is
- If you accept the truth of this claim, then your agreement is proof in itself that you are a child of God, made so by the will and power of the Father
 - If you can't accept this statement, then you are of your father the devil
 - But if you humble yourself, accept the truth of your Savior sent to die in your place, then you too can be born again
 - But if you can't, you will die in your sin
- We'll cover the last verse as part of next week's teaching in John 9, my favorite miracle healing in all the Gospels...