

Children of The Devil

John 8:37-45

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Introduction: Perhaps you have heard someone say, speaking of the world's population, "we are all children of God." While it is true that God made all men from that first man in the Garden of Eden, many come to very flawed conclusions about the fate of humanity and its relationship to God.

Acts 17:24-30 ²⁴ "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; ²⁵ nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things; ²⁶ and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, ²⁷ that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.' ²⁹ "Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. ³⁰ "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent,

While on earth Jesus was in constant conflict with men who believed they were children of God and enjoyed favored status with God. They resisted Christ at every turn and hated Him for His assertions to be the actual Son of the Living God. Most of all they hated Him for showing grace to sinners. It is hard to tell for which one they hated him more.

Why am I preaching this sermon: We have all heard the saying "like father, like son." Our text today is intended to teach us about Satan and how he operates among us. Being in a church offers no protection. Outward appearances are likewise no protection from his scheming and lying. Jesus was born into, and lived His entire life in, the midst of the most religious society that ever existed. John records the following interaction that Jesus had with some of its most respected leaders. It should serve to open our eyes to how easily Satan can influence us and our church family as well. Here it is....

John 8:37-45 ³⁷ "I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. ³⁸ "I speak the things which I have seen with *My* Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from *your* father." 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. 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. ⁴¹ "You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." 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. ⁴³ "Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is* because you cannot hear My word. 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. ⁴⁵ "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.

The Jewish response to Jesus' offer of liberating truth was.....

John 8:33 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 '?"

No one should have to guess what I plan to talk about: What Christ speaks of is the freedom of the inner man to love God and to increase in our likeness of Him. All religion makes this fundamental error. It is not what you do that makes you godly. It is being godly that makes you do what you do. Jesus calls attention to this truth in four ways here:

It is our spiritual heritage not our physical [37-38]
Deeds flow from that nature [39-40]
Only God can change our nature [41-42]
Men are deaf until God speaks to us [43-45]

It is our spiritual heritage not our physical [37-38]

John 8:37-38 ³⁷ "I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. ³⁸ "I speak the things which I have seen with *My* Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from *your* father."

"I know that you are Abraham's descendants: Jesus continues the theme He began immediately after the feeding of the 5,000. **"Life is not just what it appears to be!"** There is a spiritual side to life that can only be revealed and fulfilled by God. Physical food cannot satisfy spiritual hunger. Physical water cannot satisfy spiritual thirst. Physical light cannot overcome spiritual darkness and now....Physically being a follower of God does not make you a spiritual follower of God.

So Jesus acknowledges that they have inherited Abraham's DNA. They are the literal descendents of Abraham and they had a valid physical claim to it. The disconnect continues to this day in the minds of many people. Just tell us what to do to be in good standing with God!!! Many will say, "pray the sinners prayer." I am entirely in favor of prayers of repentance and confession.....but they do not save. They come after trusting submission to our Savior and can never take the place of that faith.

Yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you: This is the opening salvo in the battle for the soul. The world that Satan rules suppresses all spiritual realities

in favor of physical ones. "It is what you see that is true! It is this world that will satisfy the longings you have!" In this case it was being descendents of Abraham that mattered to them. Everyone in the world has a category for themselves that settles all other questions in their life. I am a Catholic! I am an Evangelical! I am a Muslim! I am sincere! I am a good person! This is the default position of all humanity. SO much so that the Scripture calls it the A, B, C principle of the entire world.

Colossians 2:8-9 ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. ⁹ For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

God is speaking to believers here. To people like you and me who have come to trust in Christ alone for our salvation. We would never dream of trying to work our way to heaven, but we are not done with this battle. We live in the middle of the world. Philosophy is not a college course that if you avoid taking it... you are okay. It permeates our lives and it is empty and deceptive and it is driven by Satan's agenda. Just look at this verse for a moment with me.

"See to it" means, "make it a constant priority!" It can captivate your mind. It is what everyone thinks! **[the traditions of men]** It is based on the basic, a,b,c's of the way the world thinks....AND it is directly opposite of how God thinks. What God thinks and says and does is embodied in Christ. Being worldly has nothing to do with the length of your skirt, shirt or hair. It has everything to do with how important Jesus is to you. God explains how being religious and moral are no guarantee of freedom from the world.

Colossians 2:20-23 ²⁰ If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, ²¹ "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" ²² (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)-- in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? ²³ These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, *but are* of no value against fleshly indulgence.

"I speak the things which I have seen with My Father: Jesus again asserts that He has been with God and seen God and is telling us things by first hand testimony. The contrast here is actually very precise. Jesus is saying.....I am telling you what I have seen with my own eyes while in the presence of my Father.....but you

.....**You do the things which you heard from your father.":** Jesus saw firsthand while the Jews heard the voice of their father telling them what to do and how to think. This is extreme contrast. I bring life you want to kill me. I came from directly from the presence of God and you are doing what Satan is telling you to do.

Deeds flow from that nature [39-41a]

John 8:39-40 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. 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.

They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father": Like all men, they are staking out their claim to "BE OKAY!" Abraham is our father!!! And this would be good if they were like Abraham.

Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham: The problem with human descendance is that it is flawed by nature. A man to whom God has given spiritual life still passes physical death on to his own children because spiritual life cannot come from the physical. This is just one more in a long string of points Jesus is making. The physical cannot meet the needs of the spiritual. The earthly cannot satisfy the heavenly need.

1 Corinthians 15:50 ⁵⁰ Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

"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. ⁴¹ "You are doing the deeds of your father.": Jesus is just reiterating the point. You cannot receive spiritual life through physical means. IT CANNOT BE DONE!!! You are physical children of Abraham but that does not save you like he was saved. You must come to God in submission and faith. Something they could....for the most part....not bring themselves to do.

John 5:38-40 ³⁸ "You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent. ³⁹ "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ⁴⁰ and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.

Only God can change our nature [41b-42]

John 8:41-42 ⁴¹They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." 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.

They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication": This is intended as slander. Translation? "Well at least we are not illegitimate children!"

We have one Father: God.": This is upping the stakes now. In their minds...being children of Abraham made them children of God. They are so full of hatred for God's pure compassionate and gracious Son that they cannot or will not hear a thing He says. Jesus ignores the charge of being illegitimate but does answer their claim to be children of God.

"If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God: Since they have shifted the argument from the physical to the spiritual, Jesus goes there with them. It is common to recognize and love your own siblings. Yes...we have our differences growing up, but we at least recognize one another when we meet. The rule is that we "love our brothers and sisters." AND...."we do not try to KILL them." Jesus says...."alright then! I am your brother."

I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me: This is important. Jesus is claiming that The Father sent Him into the world. He did not leave heaven on an independent mission. Redemption was and is a Father and Son project.

John 17:18 ¹⁸ "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

John 17:6-7 ⁶ "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. ⁷ "Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You;

Men are deaf until God speaks to us [43-45]

John 8:43-45 ⁴³ "Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is* because you cannot hear My word. 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. ⁴⁵ "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.

"Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is* because you cannot hear My word: Jesus answers His own question here. We would be wise to notice. It will stir up more compassion and grace in your heart for the lost. Why do they not understand? Because the gospel is from God and they are only able to hear what is from the world! Jesus says this in one way or another many times.

John 6:43-44 ⁴³ Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. ⁴⁴ "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

Matthew 11:27 ²⁷ "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.

I know what the common objection is to these truths. You may be thinking of them now. “Then why bother to tell the gospel?” “Does this mean that I cannot come if I really want to?” Here are the answers:

“Then why bother to tell the gospel?” Because this is who you are in the world. You are a witness of Christ’s grace to hopeless sinners and the chosen means to draw lost men to the Cross.

“Does this mean that I cannot come if I really want to?” Absolutely not. No one who wants to come is ever turned away. If you want to come you may come. When you witness and one wants to come be sure you know that they are able to come and welcome to come to Christ freely. You can stake your life on this truth...Everyone is welcome to come.

John 6:37 ³⁷ "All that the Father gives Me **will come to Me**, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.

"You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father!: I believe this is a third category of human being. We often say that the world is divided into two categories. Those who are saved and those who are lost. But the lost group has a subset. They are described here as “children of Satan or The Devil.” While all lost men are dead to God, only certain ones wish to kill God. To dethrone God and receive all glory to themselves. We are a perverse race but we are not all Children of Satan. We are more appropriately described by C.S. Lewis as “sons of Adam and daughters of Eve.”

He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him: “The beginning” in Scripture describes the creation. “In the beginning God!” “In the beginning was the Word!”

He was a murderer! Who did he kill? Everyone! The entire human race was killed by Satan when He destroyed the lives of Adam and Eve. Romans explains this precisely:

Romans 5:12-15 ¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned--

We are accustomed to blaming Adam, but Christ and the Father blame Satan.

He does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him: Satan used lies to kill the human race. He uses them today to enslave it in misery and grief and to destroy the eternal souls of millions. Even after we are saved we called, as we have seen, to be constantly vigilant of his lies, schemes and wisdom. We are not immune!

Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies: It is Satan’s nature to lie. If God is the truth then Satan is the lie. God does not just tell the truth. He is the truth. What that means is simple...It is true because

God said it. Again....It is not true because it matches up with what the world tells you is true. God defines truth and not the physical world. It is fallen, broken, corrupted, dying and worst of all....It is under the control and spell of "The Liar."

"Ever since the fall, Satan's hatred for mankind has driven him to prowl "around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" [I Peter 5:8]. He cares nothing for even the most evil men, those most devoted to his service. They are merely pawns whom he attempts to use in his war against God. Their attempt to murder Him proved who Jesus' enemies true spiritual father was." *John MacArthur Jr.*

He hates the lost every bit as much as the saved. Have you ever wondered why?

Because they are all image bearers of God. Every man and woman descended from Adam and Eve reminds Satan of God. And Satan despises God and the image bearer to whom He gave dominion of the world. His heart's hatred toward God are expressed against nations, but are ultimately reserved for God.

Isaiah 14:12-14 ¹² "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! ¹³ "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. ¹⁴ 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

CONCLUSION

Give a sense of finality: Jesus is teaching us about Satan and his character. He is dangerous and is made more so by silly characterizations of him sitting on your shoulder and telling you to do the wrong thing. Far from being red with horns....the Bible actually describes him this way:

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 ¹⁴ Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

He is perfectly at home in the most moral of men. He inhabits and breathes life into countless religions and Christian churches. He disguises his servants as righteous ones.

Why do you need to know this? Because the battle is still on. Satan is waging it even now for the destruction of your love, your spouse, your children and your church. He roams the earth looking to destroy and the last time I checked that is where we live.

Ask for a verdict: I want you to know your enemy! I want you to recognize when he is meddling in your life and in our church. BUT.....and this is vital.....Satan is not Sovereign. He is under the ultimate authority of God. "the devil is God's devil." Luther once remarked. You need to be vigilant. Commit today to begin to see your struggles for what they are. The troubles in your family are not just random. They are Satan's attempt

to hurt and destroy. He is an alienator. You from God. Your family from God. You from your family. You from your brothers and sisters in the church. Your church from God.

Purpose to forgive one another. Do not wait to be asked....do it now and purpose to do it in the future. Unforgiveness is how God destroys the family and the church.

2 Corinthians 2:10-11 ¹⁰ But one whom you forgive anything, I *forgive* also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *I did it* for your sakes in the presence of Christ, ¹¹ so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not **ignorant** of his schemes.

Have you ever wondered how church people can be so cruel...so estranged from and hateful toward one another. It is our enemy....your enemy. Recognize him in your life and resist him. YES!!! You can resist him because

James 4:6-12 ⁶ He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." ⁷ Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. ¹¹ Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge *of it*. ¹² There is *only* one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

Philippians 2:14-15 ¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing; ¹⁵ so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,