



## PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

# JOHN 8:48-59

## LESSON: JESUS' CLAIM TO DEITY — February 7, 2021

### INTRODUCTION:

<sup>1</sup>Jesus is in direct confrontation with the Jewish leaders again and they have completely rejected His claims to be Messiah and Son of God. Christ has been making these claims since He first arrived and they have continued to reject them. So, the Jews have three different claims. Their first claim is in verse 33, *"We are Abraham's seed."* Their second claim is in verse 39, *"Abraham is our father."* And their third claim is in verse 41, *"We have one Father, even God."*

**Chapter 8:31-43** —<sup>31</sup> Jesus is speaking to the Jews telling them to believe on Him. *"If they continued in His Word, then they are His disciples indeed"*, <sup>32</sup> *"they will know the truth, the truth will make them free."* <sup>33</sup> But they said that they were Abraham's seed, and were never slaves to any man, so, what did He mean about being made free? <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered *"Truly, truly, I say unto you, Whosoever commits sin is the servant/slave to sin."* Jesus proceeded to clarify what He meant. Everyone who commits acts of sin becomes sin's slave. These Jews thought of themselves as occupying a privileged and secure position as sons within God's household because they were Abraham's descendants. Jesus now informed them that they were not sons, but slaves. <sup>35</sup> for a slave does not stay with a family forever. But a son belongs to the family forever. <sup>36</sup> However, if the "Son" therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed; that is, deliver you from the bondage and dominion of sin. Man is unable to keep from sinning no matter how hard he tries. However, there is a way that the slave can become a member of the house. The Son can free the slave and ask the Father to adopt him, and if the Son makes the slave free, the slave is free indeed. <sup>37</sup> Jesus acknowledged that the Jews listening to Him were Abraham's descendants, but only on the physical level. They desired to kill Him because His Word had no place in them, meaning they're rejecting His teaching. Jesus' Word did not reveal true spiritual kinship with Abraham within them. Jesus claimed to be God's Son as the Jews claimed to be Abraham's children. <sup>38</sup> Jesus is speaking just what His Father has shown Him, but they are doing what their father has told them. Their conduct showed, they were not Abraham's true children, but, Jesus' words proved that He was God's true Son. <sup>39</sup> But the Jews reiterates that Abraham is their father. Jesus proceeded to repeat the difference between them and Abraham. *"If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham; you would do what Abraham did."* These Jews were having difficulty believing what Jesus was saying specifically about Himself. They wouldn't acknowledge that God had sent Him. <sup>40</sup> So, Jesus tells them again: *"you are trying to kill me. I'm telling you the truth. I've heard from God: Abraham hasn't done anything like this."* <sup>41</sup> You are doing the deeds of your father. They said, *"We are not like children who never knew who their father was; we have one Father, even God."* <sup>42</sup> Jesus told them, *"If God were really your Father, you would love me. I came from God, and now I am here. I didn't come by My own authority. God sent Me."* <sup>43</sup> *Why don't you understand the things I say? Even because you cannot accept my teaching.* "they could have understood if they had the same Father, but the deliberately refused to accept Jesus' teaching!

**Chapter 8:44-47** — Finally Jesus identified the father of these Jews to whom He had been alluding (vv.38, 41). <sup>44</sup> Their attitudes and actions pointed to the devil as their father for two reasons. 1.) They

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/1523>  
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wanted to kill Jesus, and Satan was a murderer from the beginning of his career as a fallen angel. 2.) Liars not only speak untruth, but they also reject the truth. These Jews rejected Jesus partially because 45 He spoke the truth. Obviously many of Jesus' critics thought He was guilty of committing sin. 46 Jesus asked if any of them could prove Him guilty. This was one of Jesus' clearest claims to being God. Not one of His critics could prove Him guilty because He was not guilty. 47 Jesus again claimed that His hearers did not accept His words because they did not belong to God.

## **LESSON: I. ACCUSED OF DEMONIC INFLUENCE JOHN 8:48-53**

**8:48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?—** Since the Jews could not refute Jesus' challenge they resorted to verbal abuse—name calling.

- They called Him a Samaritan because He had questioned their ties to Abraham, knowing that the Jews despised the Samaritans. Samaritans believed that they were descendants of the Northern tribes, not technically being Jews, but nevertheless Israelites. Their claim alone made the Jews uneasy for the Israelites didn't want to have anything to do with the Samaritans (4:9). So, calling Jesus a Samaritan was showing that Jesus was not who He claimed to be either; a wanna-be—appearing to be what He was not.
- Then they claimed that Jesus was demon possessed—a devil. Perhaps these superficial believers concluded that only a demon-possessed heretic would accuse them as Jesus did. And maybe for the simple reason that Jesus had just claimed that their father was the devil (8:44), and now they accused Him of being the devil's agent.

**8:49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.** Jesus soberly denied their charges. His actions resulted from His faithfulness to His Father, not from demonic influence. In dishonoring Jesus, they were dishonoring God! The real demon-possessed evil spirit was seen in those who dishonored Him.

**8:50 And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.** Jesus aimed to honor His Father by faithfully carrying out His Will. The Jews' goal was to disgrace Jesus. They tried to do this by rejecting His testimony that the Father sent Him. Jesus did not try to justify Himself. He sought the Father's glory, not His own. The central purpose of Jesus' mission was not glory for Himself, but glory for His Father through salvation for humankind. Jesus added that there is One who seeks glory for Him, and judges those who dishonor Him (Jesus).

**8:51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.** Now, Jesus has made another claim, and yet it is a promise for believers. And it's a spiritual claim that has just went over their heads. They heard the word "death" and the word "If." The claim/promise has a condition "If" you Keep Jesus' Word! The word "*keep*" means to watch over, to keep, to obey with diligence; to fix and set one's heart upon the Word of Christ. This is synonymous with believing and trusting Him. Jesus didn't go to the cross for nothing. He died, but got up that we may be free. Abraham nor the prophets could do this! John 5:24 says "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*"

When a man is truly saved, he is never condemned to die, but he is declared righteous and given eternal life.

Man is presently in a state of death, that is, man is in the process of dying. Man "*must*" die and "*will*" die. He cannot stop the process. But in a flash quicker than lighting or in the blink of an eye, the follower of Christ passes from this world into the next. He never ceases to experience life and never loses consciousness. One moment he

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is in this world— the next moment he is in the presence of God Himself!

8:52

**Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.** They believe they finally have Jesus cornered. They judged that only a demoniac would claim that His words were more powerful than the revelations that Abraham and the prophets had received and passed on. *"Tasting death"* meant experiencing death. Heb.2:9b says Jesus was *"crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone"*. This is the very reason we would not see nor taste death. By the grace of God, He tasted death for every man! Jesus paid our price for sin. He experienced our death. The Jews knew that Abraham and the prophets had died, so Jesus must have been claiming to be greater than anyone who had died. Yes, they died, and Abraham and the prophets' words came from God! The Words that Jesus' is speaking to them now are very powerful to prevent spiritual death, but they just couldn't understand because they are stuck on the physical. Yes, we are stuck on what we see. We are stuck in tradition. We are stuck on self. Change comes to change us; not to make us ashamed or go backwards but to go forward.

**8:53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?—** The Samaritan woman asked a similar question (4:12). Now, the Jews are asking whom He claim to be according to father Abraham who is dead, and the prophets who are dead. So, who did Jesus think He was? Was He greater than those named? *"Whom do You make Yourself out to be?"*

## II. ACCUSED OF LYING JOHN 8:54-59

**8:54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:—** They missed the point that He had been stressing throughout this discourse and throughout His ministry, namely, that Jesus did not exalt Himself at all. He simply did the deeds and said the words that His Father had given Him. Jesus rarely asserted His deity. He did not promote Himself. So, He contested His critics' accusation that He was glorifying Himself. Any glory apart from the glory that God bestows, amounts to nothing. Rather Jesus said that it was the Father (the one they claimed was their Father) who was glorifying Him.

**8:55 Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.** Jesus flatly tells them that they don't know the Father, but He does. He lets them know that He's not lying like them because He knows the Father and obeys Him. Point blank, Jesus refused to lie! For us listen carefully- Luke 9:26: *"For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."* Jesus is identifying these superficial believers as unbelievers. We can see that today. What was done in the dark is coming to the light. We have to ask ourselves, do we really know Jesus or do we know of Him? They had not yet come to believe that Jesus was the sent One. They probably saw Him as a mere man. They had called Him many names even to the point of lying, but not the right name.

**8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.** Jesus said that Abraham anticipated His coming day. Jesus was claiming that He fulfilled what Abraham looked forward to. If God could speak and tell Abraham to leave his home and friends, and tell him of his Promised Seed, then clearly God could reveal to Abraham Jesus' day: and he saw it and was glad. Heb.11:13 says *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them."* When Jesus was born, Abraham was alive in heaven, living in the very presence of God

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Himself. He saw the Messiah's coming to earth and rejoiced with all of heaven (with that great cloud of witnesses)!

**8:57** **Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?—**

The Jews did not understand Jesus' meaning because they disregarded the possibility of His deity. To them it seemed ludicrous that Abraham could have seen Jesus' day in any sense since millennia separated the two. Jesus was obviously not that old since He began His public ministry when He was about 30 (Lk.3:23), and it only lasted about three and a half years. He wasn't even 50yrs old yet, how could He possibly see Abraham a man who had died hundreds and hundreds of years before?

**8:58** **Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.** If Jesus had only wanted to claim that He existed before Abraham, He's saying I Am. By saying, "*I am*," He's claiming pre-existence (always existing), and deity. The Jews understood that Jesus was claiming to be God and He existed before Abraham. They could not come to terms with His deity! And considered this a blasphemous claim.

**8:59** **Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.** They began to pick up stones to throw at Him for making what they considered a blasphemous claim. However, Jesus hid Himself from them, going through the midst of them and departing from the temple because His hour had not yet come. His existence was completely hidden from them as He passed by. Or like the movie (Matrix): Time stopped and they couldn't see Him as He walked pass them. Anyway Jesus did not protest or retaliate, which shows another indication of His submission to the Father.

## SUMMARY:

The Jews began to say that Jesus was a Samaritan and had a devil; an evil spirit. However, Jesus answered that He didn't have a devil in Him, but that He honors His Father, and the people are dishonoring Him (Jesus). Jesus aimed to honor His Father by faithfully carrying out His Will, and not by demonic influence. He sought not His own glory, but there is One that seeks and judges. Jesus truly states a sure thing: "*if a man keep (obey) His (Jesus') saying, he shall never see death.*" Now, the Jews are saying to themselves that they know that Jesus is possessed with a devil now, and they ask Jesus if He's greater than Abraham because Abraham is dead, and the prophets are dead. So, "*Whom do You make Yourself out to be?*" (**8:48-53**).

They missed the point that He had been stressing throughout this discourse and throughout His ministry, namely, that He did not exalt Himself at all. It is His Father who honors Him, the same One whom the Jews are saying is their God. Jesus points out that they didn't know Him; but He did. So, if Jesus said that He didn't know Him, then He would be lying like them. But Jesus knows Him, and keeps (obeys) His saying. He identified these superficial believers as unbelievers. They had not yet come to believe that Jesus was the sent One. They probably saw Him as a mere man; even lying. Jesus said that Abraham anticipated His day. Jesus was claiming that He fulfilled what Abraham looked forward to. The Jews then said to Him, "*Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?*" Jesus said unto them, "*Truly*," I tell you a truth that "*Before Abraham was, I am.*" He's claiming that He "*existed*" before Abraham. So, they could not come to terms with His deity! and considered this a blasphemous claim. They began to pick up stones to throw at Jesus for making such a claim. Jesus hid Himself, going through the midst of them and departing from the temple (**8:54-59**).

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