

## I. John 8:33-59 – Words to Challengers

## A. John 8:33-38 – A word of incentive to doubters

1. 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?’”* The religious leaders interrupted Jesus words to His disciples with an **arrogant** statement that denied the reality He spoke about. Matthew 3:9
  - a. We can see a change of audience here and forward. These **scoffers** jumped in on Jesus teaching with a sarcastic remark. (See verse 37 to confirm this change in audience.)
  - b. Jesus stopped talking to the new believers about discipleship in order to address these arrogant antagonists. These were those who prided themselves in their **ethnic** identity of belonging to Abraham. There was a sharp challenge in their voice.
  - c. The fact is, Jews were in bondage at that very moment. Rome ruled Israel. But these antagonists conveniently skipped over that detail. Jesus was about to unveil to them, however, that they were also in bondage to something else. They were slaves to **sin** due to the fact they were sinners.
2. John 8:34 – *Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin .* Jesus made this statement using the double declaration of truly, truly. This was Jesus’ way of emphatically assuring them that what He was about to say was absolutely true. Every person who sins is a slave to **sin**. Romans 6:16, Galatians 5:16
  - a. These people had just said they were free. Jesus wanted them to understand the truth that they were indeed slaves. Jesus’ reasoning was simple. The fact that they **sinned** revealed that they were slaves to sin. This is a profound truth.
  - b. Jesus was not a slave to sin, but they were. This had to be understood in order to see their need to believe in Him and be set **free**. But they were proud, so Jesus had to be straightforward and clear.
3. John 8:35 – “ *The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever .”* Jesus contrasted the slave (those who sin) with the son (Jesus and those who have believed and become born again). To be a child in a family is far superior to slavery. Children are a part of a **family**, and household forever, slaves of course are not.
  - a. In John 8:33 we see that the Jews considered themselves **free** because they descended from Abraham.
  - b. In John 8:34 Jesus taught that being **natural** sons of Abraham didn’t matter since everyone who sins is actually a slave and not a son.
  - c. Even though these people were biological sons of Abraham, they were slaves due to sin. As slaves they could not remain in the house. They were not part of the family. They needed to **hear** this harsh truth.
4. John 8:36 – “ *So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.*” The truly wonderful news was that Jesus could give them freedom. And if He did, they would truly be free indeed. Jesus invited His enemies to **believe** in Him. They could be freed forever and have a permanent place in God’s eternal family. This certainly was and is good news.
5. 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 .”* Ironically, these religious leaders ignorantly wanted to **murder** the very one through whom God fulfilled His promises to Abraham. Jesus said it clearly. Tragically, their hearts had no place for Christ’s words and teaching. John 7:1, 8:40
6. John 8:38 – Jesus emphasized the intimate **fellowship** He enjoyed with His Father. He contrasted it with the fellowship they had with their father (the devil).
  - a. John 8:38a – “ *I speak the things which I have seen with My Father...*” In contrast to their claims, Jesus spoke the truth about the Father. They claimed loyalty to Abraham, but neither Abraham nor God was their true **father**. They could not speak of things they had personally seen God the Father accomplish, but Jesus could.
  - b. John 8:38b – “ *... therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father .”* Jesus identified these Jewish religious leaders with their father, but He did not yet say it was the **devil**. They knew and did Satan’s evil deeds. The religious leaders demonstrated Satan’s evil nature in several ways.
    - 1) Like Satan, they **lied**. Genesis 3:4, John 8:33
    - 2) Like Satan, they devised **cunning** schemes. Genesis 3:1, John 8:6
    - 3) Like Satan, they maligned **God’s** holy character. Genesis 3:5, Matthew 12:24, John 7:49
    - 4) Like Satan, they **lived** for making trouble. Genesis 6:1-6, John 7:11

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- 5) Like Satan, they gave **false** witness. Job 1:9-11, John 8:4
- 6) Like Satan, they sought to **murder** the innocent. Genesis 4:8; John 5:18
- 7) Like Satan, they were **arrogant**. Isaiah 14:13-14; John 8:25, 33
- 8) For an interesting study, compare the **list** of sins God hates in Proverbs 6:16-18 with the sinful activities of the religious leaders and the Pharisees.

## B. John 8:39-47 – A word to religious opponents

1. John 8:39 – In an attempt to contradict Jesus’ insinuations, the religious leaders emphatically claimed Abraham as their **father**. They were not about to allow Jesus to align them with anyone else.
  - a. John 8:39a – *They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.”* These religious antagonists immediately told Jesus He was wrong. Because Abraham was their father, they were sure they were legitimately **acceptable** to God.
  - b. John 8:39b – *Jesus said to them, “If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham .* Jesus challenged them to prove their relationship with Abraham by **acting** like Abraham. Abraham was clearly a man of faith. He not only believed the Lord and was justified, he also learned to walk by faith. Genesis 15:6, Galatians 3:6
2. John 8:40a – “ *But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God...*” Sadly, these religious leaders wanted to murder Jesus, God’s ambassador. He came preaching to them a message from God the Father. Instead of receiving him with joy and **embracing** His words by faith, they sought to kill him.
3. John 8:40b – “ *...this Abraham did not do.*” Sadly, these religious leaders wanted to murder Jesus, God’s messenger. Long ago when Jesus, as the Angel of the Lord, went to visit Abraham and give Him good news, Abraham gladly welcomed Him and hurried to prepare him an excellent meal. What a **contrast** to their reception of the Lord. Genesis 18:1-15
4. John 8:41a – “ *You are doing the deeds of your father.*” Jesus was setting the stage to tell them that their father was **Satan**. Their murderous intentions did not come from the God of Abraham. They were following their god and it was terrifyingly obvious.
5. John 8:41b – ... *They said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God.”* The religious leaders’ underhanded **retort** was aimed at shaming Jesus by insinuating His birth was illegitimate. In a vain attempt to wiggle out of the light Jesus’ shone on them, they resorted to devious slander.
6. John 8:42a – *Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me...”* Jesus responded that if they were of God, they would **love** Him. In Greek, this “if” statement is a 2<sup>nd</sup> class condition, which means it is a contrary-to-fact statement. Jesus assumed they were not children of God.
7. John 8:42b – “ *...for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me .* Jesus claimed to have come directly from God with His full authority. He was not here doing His own will or **agenda**. He was accomplishing God’s work in God’s way. Hebrews 13:20
8. John 8:43 – “ *Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word .*” Jesus asked these religious authorities why they could not understand His **statements**. He then answered for them. He told them they could not understand because of their spiritual deafness toward His message. Matthew 13:15
  - a. In John 7:15 Jesus told his hearers that if they really wanted to do God’s will they would easily **discern** whether His words and teaching were from God or if they were merely human thoughts. Psalm 25:9-14
  - b. These religious leaders had built a **wall** around their minds because they did not want the light of Jesus Christ to enter and expose their false beliefs and their hypocrisy. They were hardened to the Lord. Isaiah 6:9, Jeremiah 6:10, John 8:55
9. John 8:44 – Jesus had already told these religious officials that by rejecting His words they were rejecting the truth. In the process of their rebellion they had been seeking to murder Jesus. Because of this fact, Jesus told these religious leaders that they were following their father **Satan**.
  - a. John 8:44a – “ *You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father ....*” Jesus dared to say what others did not acknowledge. He told them the truth. They may not have known it, but the truth was they belonged to the devil. From **birth** they belonged to Satan and therefore they needed to be born again.
  - b. John 8:44b – “ *He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him.* Jesus said that from the very beginning Satan has always been a **murderer** and a liar. There is

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not even a speck of truth in him. Every person on earth should know this fact. 2 Corinthians 11:3, 1 Peter 5:8-9

- c. John 8:44c – “*Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies*.” When Satan speaks, he is lying, because that is his native tongue. Lies are a manifestation of Satan’s depraved **nature**. By not walking in truth, the religious establishment was unconsciously following Satan. 1 John 3:8
10. John 8:45 – “*But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.*” Due to being so in tune with Satan and his lies, the establishment rejected the truth. Jesus told them the truth, but just like Satan, they preferred **lies**, and so they blatantly rejected anything He said.
11. John 8:46a – “*Which one of you convicts Me of sin?*” Jesus asked for anyone to step forward with **evidence** that He had ever sinned. Could anyone bring forth credible witness against the Son of God? The truth was they had nothing they could legitimately bring against Him. Therefore, they should have stopped rejecting His message. Matthew 7:3-4
12. John 8:46b – “*If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?*” If no one could bring a judgment or **charge** against Jesus, then naturally they should have trusted His words. He had never done any sin. He had never broken the Mosaic Law. He had only ever spoken the truth. Therefore, they should have believed His statements. 1 Peter 2:22
13. 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.*” What Jesus was saying here is challenging. He claimed His words to be the words of God. This is a deity claim. Jesus claimed **equality** with God.
- Jesus said the religious establishment could not understand for one simple reason: they did not belong to God. This was a sharp **blow** and something that was sure to yield a negative response.
  - Jesus not only told them the positive truth about God, He also told them the negative truth about themselves. They needed **both** messages. They needed to know that He was the light of the world and the bread of life. They equally needed to understand that they were sons and daughters of God’s enemy, Satan.

## C. John 8:48-59 – Fighting words

- John 8:48 – *The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”* Being unable to refute Christ’s argument, they resorted to false accusations. They dreamed up the vilest **insults** they could imagine and hurled them at Him with fury. Matthew 11:19
  - The day before they had called Him a **Galilean** (John 7:52). Now they were calling Him a Samaritan. This was a harsh insult and exposed their sin of intolerant racism.
  - In the next verse Jesus answered only the charge of **demon** possession, not the insult of calling Him a Samaritan. Sometimes no answer is the best answer. Proverbs 26:4-5
- John 8:49 – *Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me .* Without hesitation Jesus told them the truth: He had no demon. When they insulted Jesus Christ, God’s Son, in this way, they also vilified and **scorned** the Father, since that’s who Jesus honored. He honored God, but they claimed He had a demon. Matthew 12:24,30-32
- John 8:50 – “*But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges.*” Jesus was not searching for His own honor. He was not looking for praise. His sole desire was to give glory to God. Jesus said there is only one who seeks **glory** (i.e., true worshippers) and that is God the Father. God the Father is the one who judges. John 4:23-24
- John 8:51 – “*Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word, he will never see death .*” Once again this is a “truly, truly” statement made by the God who cannot lie, so you can be 110% sure it is true! Believers are the ones who guard, or keep, the words of Christ. No unsaved person could ever do that. Believers are the only ones who will **never** face death.
  - Jesus was not speaking of **physical** death. Even people who keep His words die physically. Jesus himself died physically.
  - Jesus spoke here of escaping eternal death. The believer, the one who keeps Christ’s word, will not face **eternal** separation from God. John 3:16, 11:25
- John 8:52 – Again these Jewish leaders accused Jesus of demon possession, and again they were so focused on the **natural** realm they could not understand Jesus. Jesus spoke of spiritual death, not physical death.
  - John 8:52a – *The Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon...”* A blatant accusation, even if not true, is a great **tactic** for shutting down an adversary before they can even speak. These leaders were only trying to shut Jesus up.

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- b. John 8:52b – “...*Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.’*” The religious Jews **failed** to understand that Jesus was not talking about physical death. He was talking about eternal death.
- 1) The Bible says that the only way to please God is to have faith in Him, but the religious leaders did not **believe** Jesus or the Father. Hebrews 11:6
  - 2) The religious establishment boasted of their great understanding and knowledge. Jesus, on the other hand, had taught them **truth** from God’s viewpoint. Jesus had shown incredible sign miracles that only God could do. They did not believe in Him. Unbelief is ultimately why they did not embrace Jesus. 2 Corinthians 3:14-16
  - 3) The religious leaders refused to let in the light; therefore, they lived in darkness. They believed the lie that being a descendant of Abraham made them acceptable to God and assured them of eternal life. But the truth was, they were going to **die** in their sins. John 1:5, 1 Corinthians 2:14-15
6. 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?*” Since Abraham eventually died, they believed Jesus was trying to make Himself **greater** than him and the prophets. They thought He was some arrogant fool claiming He could somehow defy death.
7. John 8:54a – *Jesus answered, ‘If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing...’* Although Jesus was greater than Abraham, and could have said so, He did not. Though equal with the Father, Jesus was not on a mission to glorify Himself. His **objective** was to bring glory to the Father. Philippians 2:8-11
8. John 8:54b – “...*it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’*” They said the Father was their God and Jesus said that the Father glorified Him. The God that they claimed to worship wanted Jesus Christ to have preeminence. This was a daring statement they would either accept or **deny**. They denied it and would soon be ready to fight.
9. John 8:55 – Jesus was bringing this confrontation to a head. He would make them **decide** to either accept the fact that He was from God or reject Him altogether. He was purposely escalating the conflict.
- a. John 8:55a – “...*and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him...*” Jesus alleged that they were ignorant of the very **God** they claimed to worship. They had never come into a relationship with God. But Jesus did know God.
  - b. John 8:55b – “...*and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you...*” Jesus said that if He denied knowing God, He would be a liar, just like the religious leaders. Those were **fighting** words for the proud throng.
  - c. John 8:55c – “...*but I do know Him and keep His word.*” Jesus again adamantly claimed to know the Father and keep (guard, protect and treasure) His word. Jesus knew His heavenly Father. He had come forth from heaven. He was God’s only begotten **Son**. John 1:1, 3:16
10. John 8:56 – “*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.*” If they were so attached to Abraham, they should have been **eagerly** anticipating the Messiah’s arrival the way Abraham did. Abraham was living for that coming day and he saw it beforehand, by faith. Hebrews 11:9-10, 13
11. John 8:57 – *So the Jews said to Him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?’* The people made fun of Jesus’ words. How could He claim to know anything at all about Abraham? At this point, Jesus gave one of the clearest and strongest **claims** to deity in the book of John.
12. John 8:58 – *Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.’* Jesus said that He had existed **eternally** before Abraham was even born. This “I am” statement may sound vague to us today, but that religious crowd understood exactly what Jesus said. He had plainly and openly claimed to be God. Exodus 3:14; John 17:5, 24
13. John 8:59a – *Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him....* The crowd’s immediate violent reaction proved they understood Christ’ claim to deity. It equally showed their dismissal of His claim. To them, Jesus had just made a blatantly blasphemous statement deserving of **death**. But Jesus’ time to die had not yet come.
14. John 8:59b – ...*but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.* Inexplicably, Jesus disappeared from the temple complex. Miraculously He avoided their attempts to stone Him. Jesus was in charge of His own **destiny**. No man could take His life. He gave it up willingly, at the appropriate time. John 10:17-18