

# **“Before Abraham Was Born, I Am”**

## **John 8:37-59**

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**Teaching Aim:** To examine the confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem. To recognize Abraham’s true children will do the works of Abraham (the father of the faithful) and not act like the despicable Pharisees. To understand true believers are not to love the things of this world but rather the things of God. To recognize the clear declaration from Jesus in **John 8:58** that He is the eternal “*I AM*”; the Self-Existent One who reveals Himself!

### **DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)**

#### **Part I: The words of Jesus will take root in the heart of true believers (John 8:37-41)**

1. The Jewish religious leaders based their spiritual hope on being physical descendants of Abraham. This was a false hope. There is only one way to be free from sin and that is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. In **verse 36** Jesus told the religious leaders, “*If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*” What did Jesus mean? (See Commentaries)
  
2. In **verse 37**, Jesus acknowledged that the Jews were Abraham’s physical descendants, but also said how those objecting to His word differed from Abraham. How did they differ? Is someone a true believer if the Word of God has no place in their hearts? Why or why not?
  
3. In **verse 38**, Jesus spoke of two very different fathers, who are they? Who do the Jews identify their father as in **verse 39**? How did Jesus respond to them (**vs. 39b**)? Note: The conduct of the unbelieving Jews was very different from that of faithful Abraham.
  
4. According to **verse 40**, on what basis were the Jews trying to kill Jesus? Do people still get angry at biblical truth today? How? How did the unbelieving Jews respond to Jesus when He told them, “*You do the deeds of your father*” (**vs. 41b**)? Even today we see people going after someone’s character when they dislike them. What did these men accuse Jesus of in **verse 41**? Have you ever had somebody slander you publicly? How did it feel?

## Part II: In reality, the Jewish religious leaders were following their father, the devil (John 8:42-51)

1. If the Jewish religious leaders really loved God, who else would they love (**vs. 42**)? Love should be the mark of every true believer. According to Jesus, how can we demonstrate that love today? (See **John 14:15**) What did Jesus mean when He said that He “*proceeded forth and came from God?*” What other truth can we learn from **verse 42b**?
2. Not only did the Jewish religious leaders not understand that Jesus was their long-awaited Messiah, but they wouldn’t even listen to His words (**vs. 43**). As a result, Jesus told them whom their father really was (**vs. 44**). Who was he? What did Jesus mean when He said that their father the devil was a murderer from the beginning? (See **Gen 3:4; 4:1-15**) Is Satan still a murderer today? If so, how? What else is Satan called in **verse 44b**?
3. R.C. Sproul writes, “*By nature we are Satan’s willing slaves, volunteers in the kingdom of darkness.*” It is important to understand there are only two kinds of people in the world, those who are saved and those who are not. The Bible describes the need for regeneration from cover to cover. Why is it so important for us to be born again? (See **John 3:3, 5**) Is there any other way to salvation than through Jesus? (See **John 14:6; Acts 4:12**)
4. “*Jesus is the truth*” and because of this He spoke nothing else. Did the religious leaders believe what Jesus said (**vs. 45**)? By contrast, Satan’s speech is filled with lies and half-truths. The Bible tells us that he is the father of lies. Did the religious leaders realize that they were being used by Satan? Have you ever been used by Satan in a time of anger or extreme fatigue to discourage someone or to promote his unholy agenda? If so, when?
5. In **verse 46**, Jesus asked the question, “*Which of you convicts Me of sin?*” Would you dare to ask this question to your family members or friends? What important truth do we learn from **1 John 1:8**? What is the solution when we have sinned? (See **1 John 1:9**)

6. Martin Luther pondered the question, “If **Matthew 22:36-40** is the Great Commandment, then what is the great transgression?” Can anyone say that they have honestly loved God with all of their heart? (Hint: Really think about your answer.)
  
7. What do we learn about Jesus from the following four passages? (See **2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5**) Note: It was with a clear conscience that Jesus asked his opponents in **verse 46**, “Which of you convicts Me of sin?” What was the obvious answer?
  
8. Why did Jesus say that His opponents would not hear His words (**vs. 47**)? Have you ever tried to talk to an unbelieving family member or friend about Jesus? Did they hear?
  
9. When they couldn’t identify a single sin that Jesus had committed, they begin to attack Him personally (**vs. 48**). Why do people do this? Would being called a Samaritan be an insult to a Jew? Why? It is ironic that Jesus told His opponents their father was the devil in **verse 44**, and here the religious leaders tell Jesus that He is demon possessed. What makes this accusation toward Jesus so appalling?
  
10. The Jewish religious leaders were the ones who were not true Jews. Who is “the true Jew” according to **Rom. 2:28-29**?
  
11. How did Jesus respond to their accusation that He was demon possessed (**vs. 19**)? Were the things Jesus did a surprise to His Father? Why or why not? What was Jesus doing through His actions? What can we learn about fallen man from **Romans 8:6-8**?

12. Did Jesus come to earth to seek His own glory or the glory of the One who sent Him? What can we learn about Jesus from **Phil. 2:1-9**? Today it seems everyone wants to be in the limelight, but as Christians, we are to humble ourselves, pick up our crosses and follow Christ. In your own words, what does this mean?

13. What kind of death is Jesus talking about in **verse 51**? Who will not see this kind of death? Jesus had a similar message in **John 6:39-40, 54-55**. What was the essence of His message? What truth do we learn from **John 11:25-26**? Do you believe this?

### **Part III: "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." (John 8:52-59)**

1. What conclusion had the Jewish religious leaders come to in **verse 52**? Why? (See **John 8:51**) The religious leaders were angry and offended at the words of Jesus. What argument did they use in verses **52b & 53** against Him? What made Abraham so important to the Jews? Note: In essence, the Jews said to Jesus, "*Who do you think you are?*" Note: He would answer them in **verse 58**.

2. The theme of the Book of Hebrews is the superiority of Jesus Christ. Use an outline in the Book of Hebrews from a good study Bible to find eight Old Testament people or things that Jesus is superior to. What do we learn from **Heb. 1:3-4**?

3. According to **verse 54**, who will honor Jesus? How will we see this glory manifested in the last days? (See **Matt. 24:30-31**) In **verse 55**, we find that Jesus not only knows the Father, but Jesus declares He would be a liar if He didn't say so. What do we learn about Christ in **John 5:21-23**? Note: The Jews were in dangerous territory by rejecting Jesus. The same can be said for the majority of people in the world today.

4. Abraham lived 2,000 years before Christ. What are some ways that he saw Jesus' day and was glad? (See **Gen. 22:1-4; Heb. 11:12-13**) How did the Jews respond to Jesus' statement in **verse 56 (vs. 57)**? How old was Jesus at the time? (See **Luke 3:23**)

5. What statement angered the Jews in **verse 58**? Why? (See **Exod. 3:14**) Who was Jesus claiming to be? How would you explain the word “*eternal*” to a child? Today we often refer to our own eternal life, how is our eternal life different from that of Jesus?
  
6. Did the Jews understand what Jesus meant in **verse 58**? (See **Lev. 24:16**) What did the Jews attempt to do because of their interpretation of the law of God? Did they succeed?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. R.C. Sproul writes, “*If we reject Christ, we reject the Father. We cannot have the Father and not have the Son, and we cannot have the Son and not have the Father, because the Father sent the Son.*” Today we live in “*the age of grace*” and the arms of Jesus are open wide. Have you received Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord? If not, why not do so right now in prayer?

**MINER’S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!***

- Abraham’s true children will do the works of Abraham (the father of the faithful).
- Jesus proceeded forth and came from the Father.
- The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. (See **1 John 4:14**)
- Those who refuse to follow God are following their father the devil.
- Satan was a murderer from the beginning and is the father of lies.
- He who is of God hears God’s words; he who is not of God will not.
- Most assuredly, if anyone keeps the words of Jesus, he shall never see (spiritual) death.
- Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Jesus, even though it was 2,000 years in the future.
- Jesus revealed that He is the eternal “*I AM,*” the Self-Existent One who reveals Himself.