

JOHN 8:12-59: "NO MAN EVER SPOKE LIKE THIS MAN!"

INTRO: Context: John 7, Jews seeking to kill him; brothers urging Feast of Tabernacle attendance in October; Jesus' answer? "My time has not yet come."; He would go up, but not to die; he would go secretly mid-week, not to do miracles, but to teach and confront the opposition; living water; officers sent to take him; "no man ever spoke like this man!" (vs. 46); adulterous woman incident; labeled "The Later Judean Ministry" (through John 10:39 at the winter Feast of Dedication [December Festival of Lights - Hanukkah] where the Jews tried to stone Him); then "Later Perea" beyond the Jordan; then "Last Week" in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 11:1-4 - Barnes: "His word would be so just, impartial, and authoritative, that the effect would be to overwhelm the wicked."

See Revelation 1:16 "out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword."

See Isaiah 49:2 "He has made my mouth like a sharp sword."

I. TRUE WITNESS - vv. 12-18

- A. vs.12: "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.'"

- One of the seven "I am" declarations - Johan will be opening this verse for us. But let's note: Jesus' ability to make metaphorical and powerful statements about His true nature, many in fulfillment of O.T. references or prophecies (Isaiah 42:6; Psalm 64:9). Here, I want to emphasize Jesus' complete authority to make such an announcement — one that would be completely false if said by anyone else. But there are others who make a similar claim:

India's Sikh Gurus defined: "He is love, pure, sinless and Divine. Guru is the messenger of God in whom His light shines visibly and completely. Guru though in human form, is godly and divine in spirit. God speaks to humanity through him."

One of Satan's deceptions is to make counterfeit Christs. 25 listed in Wikipedia. Alvaro Theiss, Brazilian - When 21, he believed God told him he was the reincarnated Christ. Now has a cult following, including 12 disciples (9 are women). Now 73 years old. List also includes Charles Manson and David Koresh. But Jesus alone is "the way, the truth, and the life." He is the true witness of Himself.

- B. vv. 13-18: "The Pharisees therefore said to Him, 'You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I *am* with the Father who sent Me. It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.'"

1. vs. 13: “Your witness is not true.” Why? Here, the Pharisees and scribes are referring to Deut. 17:6; 19:15 (overarching principle). Here they argue from a legal technicality, hoping to trip Jesus up. But they’re setting themselves up for failure. They will do the stumbling, not Him.
2. vv. 14-18 As the epitome of Truth itself, Jesus doesn’t need to give them an answer. But He condescends to their level and explains the facts to them:

vs. 14b: “I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going.”

In your earthly reasoning (full of presuppositions), you think you know who I am - that I was born of a carpenter — that I was born in Nazareth — that I am self-deceived and a deceiver.
Questions: Why didn’t they ever question him or his mother about His birthplace? Did His disciples know all the facts?

vs. 15: “You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.” You rulers and scribes are willingly ignorant of spiritual truth. John bore witness of me, but you rejected that witness. I don’t judge anyone in earthly matters; that’s not my mission.

vv. 16-18: “And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me. It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.”

Merrill Tenny, “Jesus’ knowledge of Himself was strong at the precise point where man’s is weak. Humanity knows nothing of its origin and spiritual destiny beyond what has been revealed. Jesus possessed intuitive knowledge of these things, and so was qualified to speak with finality concerning Himself.”

- Let’s remember the witness of the Father during John’s baptism of Jesus, the many fulfilled prophecies about Him, and His many miracles that validated who He said He was. All were witnesses to the truth of His Messiahship and Sonship.

- Let’s learn from this that we need the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth (John 16:13). In and of ourselves, we cannot discern spiritual truth. We need God’s living Word to direct us. We need to “trust in the Lord with all heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.” Prov. 3:5,6.

Just how good are you at judging others? Truth telling?

Do you have trouble not exaggerating?

How many are biased in our “truths?”

Yet Jesus spoke ONLY truth.

II. TRUE BLINDNESS - vv. 19-27 (and to end of chap.)

A. vs. 19a: "Then they said to Him, 'Where is Your Father?'"

The Pharisees were given to scorning and they don't miss this opportunity to ridicule Jesus. Galilee and Nazareth equated to Hickville in their eyes. A witness, even a close relative wouldn't be listened to. They were blind to the fact that Jesus is speaking of His heavenly Father, not earthly. On the other hand, Jesus had repeatedly spoken of "Him who sent Me." They had heard this and could have been mocking Him for not being able to produce Him in front of their eyes. They had made God into an image of their own imaginations and were blinded to the true God and true Father.

The Pharisees, scribes, and rulers were much like politicians who consider certain people "a basket of deplorables." We are all guilty of looking down on certain groups of people with prejudice - the homeless, the less educated, the poor. It's part of our fallen nature, and we must fight against it.

vv. 19b, 20: "Jesus answered, 'You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.' These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come."

Your spiritual blindness and willing ignorance keeps a veil over your eyes. John MacArthur says: "These verses reveal 4 ways that ensure someone will die in their sins . . . 1) being self-righteous; 2) being earthbound; 3) being unbelieving, and 4) being willfully ignorant."

Remember the day before, the rulers sent officers to take Jesus so they could kill Him. It was a futile attempt to thwart the timing of God. They will try to kill him again today, but won't succeed (John 8:59). Barnes: "This proves that God has power over wicked men to control them, and to make them accomplish His own purposes."

Do we really believe this? Is God orchestrating His will in the world?

Compare Joseph and his brothers. "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good."

B. vv. 21-24: "Then Jesus said to them again, 'I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.' So the Jews said, 'Will He kill Himself, because He says, "Where I go you cannot come?" And He said to them, 'You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.'"

Note the power of this pronouncement: "Where I go you cannot come . . . you will die in your sins." Jesus knows that almost all of them will reject Him as the Messiah and Savior, the true Son of God. He's not afraid to tell

them. He doesn't water down His message. He speaks the truth and nothing but the truth. But there is compassion and love in His words, "if you do not believe." Conversely, If you believe Me and My words, you won't die in your sins!" Note: the "He" is added to the text. Reference to Yahweh.
Is the 21st century gospel watered down? To whom would Jesus be preaching these same words today?

NOTE: His **compassion** and **patience**. The opposition deserved judgment.

NOTE: **Power, strength, and boldness**. Modern movies give us a false view. Much of modern preaching does the same, relegating Jesus to the realm of a soft-spoken wimp who wouldn't harm a fly or say a harsh word.

NOTE: **Religion alone saves no one**. The Pharisees and scribes may have had their doctrinal ducks in a row, but they were still "blind guides." The oracles of God had been given to them, and they had a great zeal for God, but what did Paul say in Romans 10:2? They have a zeal without knowledge. They may have led strict moral lives, but morality doesn't merit forgiveness. They had a great pedigree as Abraham's descendants, but lineage doesn't erase the sin problem.

God is looking for changed hearts that see their sin, want forgiveness, and humbly receive Him, not proud do-gooders who think they deserve first place at the table in the Kingdom of God.

- C. vv. 24-27: "Then they said to Him, 'Who are You?' And Jesus said to them, 'Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard from Him.' They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father."

At this point we just want Jesus to throw His hands up and leave! They just don't get it. They are spiritually blind and continuing to argue and convince them is an exercise in futility. But Jesus doesn't do that. He continues to reason with them - so they will be without excuse when judgment comes. . . . "from the beginning." From the beginning of my ministry, or from the beginning of time. I am the Alpha. Mine are the words of Jehovah in the OT. . . . "they did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father."
Matthew Henry: "Thus the plainest things are riddles and parables to those who are resolved to hold fast their prejudices; day and night are alike to the blind."

Has God opened your eyes to His truth? Has He given you a hunger for Him and His word? Has He shown you your need for a Savior? Has He put a new song in your heart? Then you above all have reason to praise and thank Him for His undeserved mercy and grace.

III. TRUE UNION WITH THE FATHER

- A. vs. 28: “Then Jesus said to them, ‘When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.’”

What will be the proofs that Jesus is the true Messiah when He is lifted up?
Fulfilled prophecy: Isaiah 53; Psalm 22 and 69, et al. His miracles, the obedience, the suffering, the resurrection, His appearing to many and His ascension, the growth of the church. And finally, the predicted destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

- B. vv. 29, 30: “And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.’ As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.”

“I always do those things that please Him.” How far we fall short of these words. Try as we may, our best efforts are tainted with our fallen nature. Our union with the perfect Savior and substitute is our only hope, and therefore our only reason for boasting. Am I pleasing my heavenly Father?

“many believed in Him.” But not the Pharisees; not the scribes; not the Jewish leaders. Their hearts were willingly hardened as Pharaoh’s. Those who believed received the truth and wouldn’t let it go. Those who believed weren’t self-righteous hypocrites who wanted to see the Lord Jesus killed and forgotten. There were two kinds of people here: those who heard and had a superficial, intellectual belief (that He had worked miracles and was sent of God and a great prophet), and those whose hearts had been opened to receive the Lord fully. John 1:11-13, “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

IV. TRUE FATHERHOOD - vv. 31-59

- A. vs. 31: “Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed in Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.’”

Is the Lord saying you can lose your salvation after first believing on Him?

What Church doctrine is Jesus declaring here? Perseverance of the Saints. Jesus is saying there must be a vital connection to Me through loving me and keeping My word. I John 2:19 says “Those who went out from us were never really with us.”

C.H.S. “The proof of your discipleship will be your persevering in your faith. If we say that we believe in Jesus, we must prove it by abiding in believing, and by still further believing. The Word of Jesus must be the object of our faith; into that Word we must enter, and in that Word we must continue. Beginning to believe is nothing unless we continue to believe.”

It is misleading to think it is something that we struggle and strive for on our own, as Paul says in Philippians 1:6, “He who began a good work in you will perfect it to the end.”

vs. 32: “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

ON BOARD: “Veritas vos Liberabit” A motto seen on many universities and even on the original CIA building. Our country’s motto currently echoes the words of Pontius Pilate: “Quid est Veritas?”

The Lord is opening a can of worms here. This is the last thing the Pharisees want to hear (that they are in bondage).

vs. 33: “They answered Him, ‘We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, “You will be made free?”””

What is the reasoning behind their claim? They had been in bondage to the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Syrians, and now the Romans. The possible reasons: 1.) They were always the Chosen people, under God’s rule. 2.) They felt they had a good measure of freedom under the Romans. 3.) As elitist Pharisees, they weren’t slaves personally. 4.) They may have been so self-blinded, that they had forgotten their history.

Do we see parallels in the Church today?

vv. 34-36: “Jesus answered them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave to sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.’”

Sin is the great slave master since Adam’s fall in the Garden. We have lost that original, sinless relationship with a holy Creator. The unadulterated fellowship and communication we enjoyed has been ruined and destroyed by sin. We are now born under its curse of spiritual and physical death — and of eternal separation and just judgment of the Almighty.

Jesus came to restore us to that perfect relationship. This is the Gospel — we can be set free from the practice of sin in this life, and the penalty of sin in the next. We will experience true and complete righteousness in heaven. This is our clear and present hope.

Paul comments on this in Romans 7:18-25.

- B. vv. 37-41: “I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.” They answered and said to Him, ‘Abraham is our father.’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing what Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the deeds of your father.’”

Just what did Abraham do? He acted in faith and obedience to God’s word. Jesus is the Logos — the living Word of God. The Pharisees rejected that

truth in their blindness. Abraham may have been their physical father, but certainly not their spiritual father.

NOTE: They have no clue as to what they're going to hear next! Jesus must speak truth. But they "can't handle the truth."

vv. 42-47: "Then they said to Him, 'We were not born of fornication; we have on Father — God.' Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell you the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.'"

Here Jesus reveals the religious ruler's true fatherhood — Satan himself. The Lord is far from the wimpy wimp past and present liberals have painted Him to be. Being meek and mild doesn't exclude being bold and fearless in the face of the enemy. Jesus is our dauntless hero — our valiant conqueror. He has won not only the battle, but the war. He sits as the crowned King of the Universe. Let's never be ashamed of Him or give Him less glory than He deserves.

The Pharisees are being spanked here. Their faces are turning red. Their eyes are wild. They are ready to explode! All because of what? The TRUTH. They have been His accusers all along. Here Jesus accuses them — of UNBELIEF.

- C. vv. 48-51: "Then the Jews answered and said to Him, 'Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?' Jesus answered, 'I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. And I do not seek My *own* glory; there is One who seeks and judges. Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.'"

The Pharisees fire back: "You are the scum of the earth, a half breed — and worse than that, a demon-possessed half breed!" NOTE: Anger gives birth to the most inane and stupid words that can come out of your mouth. Proverbs 14:29, 33.

Jesus drops another bombshell: "If anyone keeps My word he shall never see death." But the Pharisees think they've caught Him in His words here.

vv. 52, 53: "Then the Jews said to Him, 'Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, "If anyone keeps My word he shall never see death." Are You greater than our father Abraham who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?'"

They're saying, "Abraham and the prophets are dead and buried." Their perspective was totally physical. "Who are YOU, who never even went to Hebrew University in Jerusalem, are from a hick town in Galilee, and friend of sinners — who are YOU to tell us anything?" "Who do You make Yourself out to be?" Jesus will answer that in verse 58.

vv. 54-56: "Jesus answered, 'If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, "I do not know Him," I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.'"

How had the Jewish rulers not known God? Not as the Father of Christ, not by a spiritual knowledge of Him or communion with Him. They didn't know His will nor how to worship in spirit or in truth.

Have you ever called anyone a liar to their face?

"Abraham rejoiced to see My day . . ." Abraham's faith in a saving Messiah was not disappointed. What he saw by faith came to pass in the Incarnation, ministry, life, death, and resurrection of the Promised Seed - Jesus.

vv. 57, 58: "Then the Jews said to Him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?' Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.'"

The pot is really boiling now. Jesus has just told them He was Jehovah of the Old Testament - the eternal Son of God - One worthy of worship. R.C. Sproul comments here: "This is one of the purest, unvarnished declarations of deity that Jesus ever makes during His ministry, and it was not missed by His audience."

vs 59: "Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by."

Where did the stones come from? Herod's temple was still under construction - it was ongoing even when Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70.

Jesus' hour had not yet come - again. In a few months it would come on Passover Week. On that night in the Garden, He wouldn't walk away. There wouldn't be a miraculous exit like there was here. Jesus would pray for the third time, come to His disciples who were sleeping, and say, "Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. Behold, My betrayer is at hand." It was time to walk toward his enemies who would kill Him, not away from them.

Jesus would willingly honor and obey His Father to the end. Let's agree with David's point from last week: Jesus was in complete control of events.

John 17:1-5 sums up the whole - what a mighty and worthy God we serve!