

John 8:21-24
Space?"

“Jesus Christ: Alien from Outer

JOH 8:21-24 Once more Jesus said to them, "I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come." 22 This made the Jews ask, "Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, 'Where I go, you cannot come'?" 23 But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."

As we come to our text this morning we need to keep the context in mind. Up to this point Jesus has been spiritually jousting with the Pharisees and teachers of Israel as they try and undermine the claims of Jesus to be the One sent from the Father to redeem sinful men.

Previous to this event the Jewish leaders sent the temple guard to arrest Jesus as He was teaching in the temple courts. But as they approached our Lord and began to listen to His teaching regarding the kingdom of God and His Messiah, they would not arrest Him and instead they return to the Pharisees who ask why they were coming back empty handed.

Their response was, "No one ever spoke the way this man does..." (JOH 7:46)

And so, you've got these irate and jealous Jewish leaders who are trying their best to catch Jesus in some sort of falsehood as a way to demonstrate to the crowds that He is an impostor and should not be followed.

But of course, though they make all sorts of false claims about Him, they can't find any fault in Christ who always turns the tables on them as they're made to look foolish in front of the crowds.

They seem to be gluttons for this and so as we come to our text Jesus once again teaches the crowds and the Pharisees those things which the Father wants them all to hear, which the Pharisees will once again challenge.

JOH 8:21 Once more Jesus said to them, "I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come."

This line of teaching is similar to what Jesus already shared with the Jews on that earlier occasion when the Pharisees sent the temple guard to arrest Him.

JOH 7:33-34 Jesus said, "I am with you for only a short time, and then I go to the one who sent me. 34 You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come."

Of course, what He meant by this was that He was going back to the Father who sent Him, which meant that His mission was about over as He would shortly die on the cross for the penalty of the sins of His people, and then rise bodily from the dead and ultimately ascend back to the Father.

As for the phrase, "Where I go, you cannot come," Jesus will explain this in the next couple of verses as we'll see. But as we look at our text Jesus adds something here which should have alarmed the Jews who were listening to Him. "You will die in your sin."

Now again, we need to remember that the Jews understood themselves to be chosen of God. In their minds, since they were chosen, they felt that the rest of the world, not them, would die in their sins.

And yet Jesus, a Jew, makes this bold claim about them. "You will die in your sin."

What is instructive here is that the word for sin is in the singular whereas when Jesus addresses their sin in verse 24, He uses the plural form. Some commentators believe that the singular form in this verse is used to speak of the overarching, or one main sin of unbelief which keeps these people from seeking the solution to their sin problem, which is found only in Christ.

But when Jesus makes this statement that they will die in their sin He means much more than simply taking their last breath as their physical bodies die. He is inferring that there will be a judicial sense in which they will die which speaks of separation from their God.

The phrase, "in your sin," carries with it the idea that one's sin must come before the judgment seat of God to be judged. And the clear implication is that if you die in your sin then your guilt remains and the judgment from God will be everlasting punishment.

We'll look more into this as Jesus continues this theme, but let's look next at verse twenty two.

JOH 8:22 This made the Jews ask, "Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, 'Where I go, you cannot come'?"

What I find fascinating here is that the one statement which should have made these Jews irate is the one statement which they seem not to have heard. Jesus has essentially said to them that they are all going to hell, but they concentrate on the other statement which in their minds only addresses Jesus' future.

"Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, 'Where I go, you cannot come'?"

They thought that since Jesus was going to a place where none of these people would go they assumed that that eliminated any other place in Israel and therefore must mean that He's going to commit suicide, which according to Jewish custom was unlawful for any Jew.

And so, in their minds, for a man, who for all intents and purposes seems to be quite sane and eloquent in the way He speaks to these people, to consider taking His life, He must actually be quite insane.

And this is in keeping with the way many of these same Jews responded to Jesus, who was making statements that these people found offensive.

JOH 7:19-20 Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?" 20 "You are demon-possessed," the crowd answered. "Who is trying to kill you?"

This phrase, "you are demon-possessed" was another way of saying that Jesus was mad, or insane. They would use the same phrase later in chapter eight and add a word which makes it clear that this was a phrase of mockery.

JOH 8:47-48 He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God." 48 The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?"

When they use the word Samaritan and demon-possessed in the same breath most of them don't actually believe that Jesus has a demon, but like the Samaritans they presume He is not to be

believed since all Samaritans are liars and cheats and crazy half-breeds who can tell the enlightened Jews nothing.

This statement was meant to place Jesus in a light which demonstrated that whatever He said was not to be believed. In other words they were trying to whittle away at His credibility, which is the height of true insanity when you think that they are trying to discredit God Himself.

But instead of Christ addressing their insults He continues to give them the truth. And by the way, there is something to be learned here for all of us as it pertains to the world and their rejection of the gospel.

When we share the gospel with people and they reject it there is the temptation to take their ridicule and turn it around on them in a way that is less than godly. Here the Son of God Himself who has all power and authority could easily have squashed these rebellious Jews like bugs, but He doesn't. He continues to extend grace and mercy in the truth.

JOH 8:23-24 But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."

Jesus could not make have made it clearer. The first thing He points out is that He is above all men, though He is truly man. "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."

This is not meant to be a derogatory statement. Jesus is literally saying that He is from heaven, whereas men are from earth. He is eternal, while men have a beginning.

Jesus is placing Himself above the creation by inferring that the world He comes from is not connected to their physical world. Now, as we study this passage in light of the resurrection of Christ and the reality that He is God in the flesh, it's quite apparent what He's talking about.

But if you were a Jew in the crowd listening to these words it would have carried a sense much closer to the indictment some of these Jews laid at the feet of Jesus, and that is that He was crazy.

Think about it. What if someone today said to you, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."

Now, in our society this very phrase has been used by people in this country. And in the 50's and 60's these people were also considered to be crazy. Does the UFO craze of those days come to mind?

There were people who actually believed they were from places like Mars and Venus. They had given themselves new names that were other-worldly sounding. They've written books about their place of origin and their role in bringing peace to the world through their advanced knowledge and wisdom as a result of having a personal connection with aliens.

If Jesus were around today, making some of the statements now, as He did to the Jews of His day, He might be thought of as an alien-wanna-be as he claimed to be from some other world. By the way, as nutty as this sounds, this is exactly what the Mormons believe.

Their basic tenet of faith is that mortal men can become gods who will ultimately be given their own planet to rule over as the god of that planet who has the responsibility to populate and protect the inhabitants of that new world.

This is one of the reasons why Mormonism taught, and in many places today, continues to teach polygamy. They believe the wives they have in this world are producing children for their planet in the next. The more wives the better because with more wives the faster one can populate a new world.

But the world Jesus talks about is not a planet out in some far away solar system. The world Jesus talks about is a world which is spiritual in nature; a world where the God of the universe exists, and from which Jesus left to come into our physical world to redeem sinful men. A physical world by the way, which our Lord created by speaking it into existence.

This is why Jesus, who is called the Word, is also the very one who spoke and the universe leaped into existence.

JOH 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Because Jesus is not of this world, in other words, because Jesus is God and Creator, He is also judge of all men. But instead of judgment Jesus is offering life to these Jews who hate Him. He is offering mercy and compassion to the very Pharisees who want to take His life.

But you'll notice how Jesus does this. He offers this life by creating the need for life. And the need for life is created by pointing out the consequences of sin.

JOH 8:24 "I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."

As I pointed out earlier Jesus uses the singular word for sin in verse 21. Here in verse 24 Jesus uses the plural which is to suggest that the personal sins of men hold them accountable to God. And though these Jews, and specifically the Pharisees, would consider themselves as doers of the law and therefore righteous, Jesus calls them sinners.

But He doesn't stop at calling them what they are because He continues to tell them what they can be, but only as they believe on Him. And what they can be is righteous or justified before a holy God.

Now again, this would not have sat well with the Pharisees because they already assumed themselves righteous. And as we saw a couple of weeks ago in our study of this gospel the Pharisees essentially even saw the common Jew as a sinner.

To the man who was born blind and was given sight by Christ the Pharisees interrogated him only to have the former blind man illumine these Pharisees to the truth.

JOH 9:31-34 We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. 32 Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." 34 To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.

And so, the Pharisees certainly didn't see their need for a Savior found in Jesus Christ. And yet, Jesus makes it clear that all men, including the Pharisees, are still sinners in need of what He has to offer.

The problem is that despite how people are shown to be in need of a Savior, unless you accept that truth you will never seek the solution to that need of being delivered from sin, as Jesus points out to the Pharisees.

MAT 9:10-13 While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" 12 On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

And what Jesus meant by that was that if someone was already righteous there would be no need for justification. And since the Pharisees saw themselves as righteous they didn't see themselves as sick, in one sense, needing the doctor.

Jesus is pointing out in Matthew chapter nine that though the Pharisees need the doctor, like everyone else they won't seek the doctor because they refuse to see their spiritual malady.

And it's the same today. I can't tell you how many times I've shared the gospel with people who say they don't need a crutch like I do. Of course, I don't need a crutch, I need someone to carry me. I threw away the crutches long ago when I climbed up on the righteousness of Christ by faith.

But here's the temptation with so many Christians today. Christians are like any other people in the sense that if given the choice they would prefer that people like them, as opposed to hating them. And so, the temptation is not to give people the truth about their spiritual condition, which is sin.

It seems that few Christians are willing to identify the problem with all people which is sin. After all, they don't want to be accused of calling someone a sinner, which could alienate them from the world as it makes them look like they're judging people.

And I fully understand this reasoning. And I would agree that the last thing we want to do is to judge people in such a way that makes us look like some self-righteous person as we make them look like the scum of the world.

But again, notice the way Jesus phrases the truth. "You will die in your sin." He isn't calling them dirty rotten stinking sinners. He is

simply stating what is true. And there are ways of stating the truth without coming across in a condemning way, because it is not my job to condemn, but to alert; to be a witness to the truth.

This Friday I had an opportunity to share the gospel with some people that I work with at the end of the workday. And it just goes to show how you can take almost any conversation and lead into spiritual things with it.

We were talking about extra-terrestrials, or aliens and where they come from. And one guy wanted to know what the church thought about such things. My response was, it depends on what part of the church you're talking about; the biblical one or the other one.

He said, your church. And so, I shared with him what the Scriptures teach about God's creation of man and angels, and that there is no evidence in the Scriptures about any other people living anywhere else but planet earth.

But then I told him that I do believe in these extra-terrestrials or aliens that people claim to see or be abducted by. And his eyes got wide and he asked what I thought they were. And so, I went into a biblical explanation of how angels can appear to be things they're not.

For example, we know that angels can appear as human beings, though they are not human beings. And so, angels can take on physical characteristics. This is why the writer of Hebrews can write this.

HEB 13:2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.

I then went on to explain how fallen angels can do the same. If an angel can appear as a person, why couldn't a fallen angel appear as a gray,? as some ufologists like to describe these aliens.

If Satan can appear as an angel of light why can't he or his ilk appear as metallic objects in the sky that you can actually capture with your camcorder? And of course the question came up, why would Satan and his demons want to masquerade as aliens? My answer is to distract and deceive.

If people are busy looking up into the sky hoping to make contact with beings from another solar system who might bring peace to the world, why would they be interested in looking up to find the God who desires to deliver them from the penalty of their sin?

And that's when I took the conversation in an entirely different direction as I pointed out that this is what Satan is trying to do in keeping people from the truth while Christ is the truth who came into this world to deliver sinners.

I then went on to essentially call all three of those people listening to me in that room, sinners. Did I point out how their mouths belong in the gutters, or how their crude jokes are not fit for public consumption, or how their pin ups could offend some? No. I don't need to.

They know what they are and what they do. But did I explain that because all men are sinners that we all stand before God as guilty? Absolutely. And here's how I did it. I pointed out to them, not their sin, but mine. I explained how I finally came to grips with the penalty I would suffer if I decided to pay for my own sin as opposed to letting Christ pay for it.

I went on to show them why Christ came into this world as He, very God, now became very man, who then died on the cross so that we can let Him pay our debt instead of we having to pay it for eternity in hell.

I explained how I was on a road to hell and that since all men are in the same boat all men need this Savior. I didn't have to call them dirty rotten sinners, because all men know that they sin. But when you point out the one who can be their Savior, they're doctor if you will, then you allow them to see their sin in a new light, because in explaining the Savior you automatically expose their sin.

What is a Savior? He is someone who delivers. Delivers from what? In Christ's case, sin and its penalty of eternal condemnation. God gave me the opportunity this last Friday to spend about a half hour explaining my need for a Savior, and by extension, their need for a Savior.

And for the first time since I've worked where I do, as I've been able to simply let my light shine for Christ, I saw one of my co-workers actually admit that he needs to consider this information in a new way. I intend to follow up.

But the point is, what is so loving about holding back on the truth that sin will destroy people? What is so loving about not giving people the whole truth about salvation? As I've said so many

times, the reason the good news is so good is because the bad news is so bad.

And there are ways to explain the bad news so that when we share the good news of Christ people can now deal with all the facts and make an informed decision.

This approach to the gospel where we won't share anything negative, like the Robert Schuller's of the world, is not only diabolical, it's cruel because you don't give the patient the chance to see his spiritual sickness and then turn to the only Doctor who can cure him; Christ Jesus.

JOH 8:24 I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."

Someone might accuse Jesus of being harsh with these people, but the truth of the matter is that He is loving them with the truth. He doesn't want them to die in their sins, which is why He continues to point to Himself as God's only solution.

But notice that He is calling them to faith. "If you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."

He places the responsibility for these people to believe the truth back in their laps. Jesus can't believe for them, though His Spirit must give them the gift of faith. They are commanded to make the choice. And the same is true today.

One of the things I told my co-workers this last Friday is that unless they come to grips with the fact that a man who claimed to be God in the flesh and the Savior of the world, and who proved it by rising from the dead, then they would have to be willing to pay for their own sin.

I said, it's your choice. You can certainly pay your own debt, but why wouldn't you let someone else pay it for you as it is offered freely by faith? I gave them something to chew on instead of pretending that it doesn't make any difference what one believes as long as we're all sincere.

It does make a difference, an eternal difference. And what Jesus is explaining to these people is that He knows what eternity is all about because that is where He's from and that's where He's going back to. And if they want to spend eternity separated from Him then by all means choose death and reject the only Savior.

But as we know, and what we're told in the Scriptures, He desires that none would perish. And yet the very word perish is used because it describes the penalty for sin from which we all need to flee and turn around to the one who can save.

There is nothing sadder than a human being who chooses to spend eternity away from the God who created him. The message of hope is a message not to perish. But we should never be afraid of explaining what that means in light of the solution to our sin problem found in Christ.

JOH 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Take this hope home today and give it away.

JOH 10:28-29 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.