

JOH 8:45-51 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!  
46 Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth,  
why don't you believe me? 47 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?" 49 "I am not  
possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you  
dishonor me. 50 I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is  
one who seeks it, and he is the judge. 51 I tell you the truth, if  
anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

This section of Scripture is in the context of Jesus Christ making the bold claim that these Jews, despite belonging to the nation of Israel which was chosen of God, did not belong to the Father who had called Abraham out and promised him and his descendants the land flowing with milk and honey.

JOH 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

And so, despite being part of the nation of Israel, they were not Israelites in the true sense of the word. In fact, the name Israel, which was given to Jacob, essentially means, governed by God.

These Jews, and most of Israel at this time in our text, were not governed by God, which is to say, their hearts were governed by their desires and appetites, not seeking after God’s will according to His word.

And essentially this is what Jesus says when he calls them children of the devil, which intimates that they were governed or were in bondage to the enemy of their own choosing. And so, despite the name of Israelite, they were not Israel’s children in the spiritual sense.

ROM 9:6 It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.

We could take the last part of this verse and say, not all who are descended from the one whose heart was governed by God, do in fact have hearts governed by God.

And the only way one can have a heart governed by God is if God takes the heart of stone and miraculously transforms it into a heart of flesh, as the Lord explained to Ezekiel.

**Ezekiel 11:19-20** <sup>19</sup> "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, <sup>20</sup> that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.

This is precisely what happened with Abraham as the Lord called him out of the land of Ur and caused him to walk in His statutes as Abraham's heart was enabled by the Spirit to trust in the promises of God given to Abraham.

**GAL 3:6-7** Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." <sup>7</sup> Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham.

And so, despite the fact that we as Gentile believers do not replace the nation of Israel, we are considered to be the Israel of God as we are those chosen of God in Christ and brought into a new and vibrant relationship with the Father.

**GAL 6:16** Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.

And so, as part of the Israel of God, you and I in Christ are most certainly spiritual Jews.

**ROM 2:28-29** A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. <sup>29</sup> No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code.

Now, having said all of this, we as believers need to consider our position with God as that of Jacob or Israel. If Israel's heart was governed by God, then it stands to reason as the spiritual Israel of God you and I must be governed by God.

If this is our name then we must reflect the One who has given us life and demonstrate that we do in fact belong to Him. This is what we mean when we talk about submitting to the Lordship of Christ

as we come under His dominion and love and ownership because He has purchased us with His precious blood.

1CO 6:19-20 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

We honor God as we are governed or ruled by our Master and Lord, as we love Him with all of our hearts, souls and minds.

But these Jews in our text were not willing to be governed by God since they were not willing to love the Lord their God with all their hearts, souls and minds because they refused to love the Son who was sent from the Father, despite the fact that Jesus was telling them the truth concerning their salvation.

JOH 8:45 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!

F.F. Bruce in his commentary of John notes that Jesus does not say that, “although I speak the truth, but because I speak the truth you do not believe Me.”

In other words, if Jesus were willing to tickle their ears with what they wanted to hear they would have been more than willing to listen and follow Him. They didn't want to hear about their sin. They didn't want to hear about their lack of faith. They didn't want to hear about their status with God which was guilty.

And so, it is precisely because of the truth that they will not believe. We have a tendency to think that when people are given the truth that they will make the right choice; that they will logically conclude that believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is the reasonable direction in which they must move.

The problem with this reasoning is that it assumes that the only part of the equation, when it comes to the gospel, is the intellect. As important as that it is, it is only a small part. The reason for this is because it is the Spirit of God who must take that word of God and make it come alive as He opens our hearts and minds to receive this truth by faith.

Rejecting God's salvation is a heart problem, a spiritual problem and therefore it must be solved by the Spirit in conjunction with His word as He opens our hearts to Christ to receive Him by faith.

Now, the last thing we want people to do is to reject Christ as they reject His gospel. But this should never discourage us from giving

people the truth of who Christ is and why He came into this world, which of course was to save sinners.

But as we come back to our text Jesus says something very interesting.

JOH 8:46 Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?

The first part of verse 46 can be more literally translated, "which one of you convicts Me of sin?" (NASB)

Now keep in mind that Jesus is speaking to what has proved to be His enemies. I don't know about you but I couldn't ask that question of my friends and expect to get a favorable answer.

But in asking this question our Lord has put the ball back into their courts. Now, it's not as though they couldn't or wouldn't falsely accuse Jesus, but that is different from proving Him to be a sinner, or proving Him to have come up short of the truth.

And in the context He is basically asking them to take the Scriptures and prove that what He has been saying about Himself as being the Messiah is false, and prove that they are in fact not guilty before a holy God despite their association with Abraham.

The truth is they couldn't. But first Jesus continues in verse 46 to give them something to think about before allowing them to respond.

"If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?"

Now at this point Jesus is not looking for an answer to this question. He is still in the instructing mode. He is teaching them spiritual truths about themselves which they were obviously not aware of. But on a logical level one could ask this question in all fairness.

"If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?"

This is obviously a rhetorical question because Jesus wasn't seeking information, He was stating the obvious and He answers that question in the next statement He makes.

JOH 8:47 He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

This is quite an indictment, and this is in keeping with the earlier statement in verse 44 when Jesus called them children of the devil.

Again, in the minds of these Jews, if anyone belonged to God it would be them. If anyone could claim God as their Father, it would be them. And yet, Jesus denies them any spiritual association with God as Father by stating that they do not belong to God.

This is ownership language. And as I said last week in the spiritual world we are either under the dominion of Satan through our sin and unbelief, or we are under the reign of Christ through faith in His finished work on the cross and resurrection from the dead.

The one that we belong to is the one we primarily listen to which is obviously being played out here in our text. They are not listening to Jesus and thus they prove themselves belonging to the one who opposes Christ and that is Satan.

This is why Jesus continues in verse 47, "The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

Belonging to God and hearing from God go hand in hand. Everyone who has placed their faith in Jesus Christ has the Spirit of Christ. And it is this reason that each of us can not only hear the word of God but can actually walk in the truth.

Those who have not believed on the Lord Jesus Christ do not have the spiritual faculties to hear what God has to say and thus they continue to reject the Lord until God gives them ears to hear as He did with all of us.

I mean, Jesus was doing and saying everything these people needed to know regarding the Messiah and still they couldn't hear the spiritual truths Jesus was giving them which is made obvious later in this gospel.

JOH 10:24-26 The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, 26 but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. 27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

If we belong to the flock of Christ, which is the church, through faith in our Lord Jesus, then when our Shepherd calls out to us we recognize His voice and we follow Him.

I once did a study on sheep and shepherds in light of the psalms and one of the things I discovered with sheep is that they're not a

very bright animal, but they are loyal and will follow wherever their shepherd leads them, even if that shepherd theoretically led them over a cliff.

But they are an animal that has to learn to trust their shepherd before they will listen to the shepherd's voice and then follow him. But once they learn the voice of their shepherd and trust him they will follow anywhere.

When a hired shepherd comes in for whatever reason to substitute for the regular shepherd that shepherd has a hard time getting those sheep to do anything. In fact, Jesus uses this imagery when referring to Himself as the Great Shepherd.

JOH 10:3-5 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."

As far as these Jews in our text are concerned Jesus is a strange shepherd whom they are not willing to follow after because the only voice they are used to listening to is the voice of sin and Satan.

And this is the beauty of being a child of God in Christ. You and I can hear the voice of our Lord and the most common way to hear His voice is to listen to what the Holy Spirit has already said to us in the written word of God.

If you want to hear from God open His word. If you want to learn from God ask His Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind and receive from Him as you go to His word or listen to His word being taught, like this morning.

This is one of the reasons I always start these messages with prayer asking the Holy Spirit to illumine our hearts, to teach us and instruct us according to His word. This is why I get so excited when someone comes up to me after the service and tells me that the Lord really used that message to speak to them.

That's the reason for this time of coming to His word. If this were just an exercise in studying the bible for simply gaining knowledge then we've missed the beauty of what it means to listen to our Great Shepherd during these times.

We come together each Sunday morning for essentially two reasons. The first is for you and me to come together to worship our God and give Him thanks. It's during this time that God gets to hear from us, His sheep.

But the second reason is then to hear from God. As we diligently go through His word and ask Him to speak to us, He will be faithful to meet us where we are and encourage us, build us up, strengthen us and equip us for the service of going out into this world to faithfully represent Him in the power of His Spirit.

This is why these are special times. But if we come to church for reasons other than to meet God then our ability to hear from God is limited, because in one sense we're not seeking the things above which are truly important. We're sheep who are distracted and find that when Jesus says follow Me, we're like that cell phone commercial where we think He said, marshmallow treats.

These Jews in our text however, didn't even get that. They weren't even speaking the same language, spiritually speaking. And so, it's not a surprise they respond the way they do.

JOH 8:48 The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?"

Notice what they do here. They've been challenged by Jesus to come up with a thoughtful answer to the question, "Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?"

Well, they don't have an answer for that and instead of finding one they do what most people in their position do. They call you names. There is a phrase for this. Ad hominem.

It's a Latin phrase that we use in the English language which essentially means verbally attacking the person instead of dealing intellectually with the argument. It's an emotional response when there is nothing else to be said which can state your own case.

We hear it all the time in politics. The one that stands out in my mind was when the Republicans were trying to revamp Social Security during the Clinton years, since the White House budget committees discovered that unless we start doing something now, many people will never see Social Security, which in my mind has always been Social Insecurity.

But, be that as it may, the Republicans actually came up with what they thought was a viable plan of attack that would help to solve the problem. The Democrats didn't have a strategy and so instead of getting one they all came out and accused the Republicans of wanting to starve senior citizens. In other words, the Republicans were being accused of murdering seniors. Ad hominem.

The Jews respond to Jesus, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?"

To call a Jew a Samaritan was the equivalent of calling that person a half breed, someone who was not a pure part of their race or group. By the way, there's nothing wrong with half breeds, but if you're a bigot and prejudiced you can use such language to belittle people you don't like.

I'm not a half breed, I'm actually tri-breed. Irish, English and German. My grandmother always thought that we might have some native American in us as well, so maybe I'm quarter breed.

But these Jews, in calling Jesus a Samaritan, were not trying to get into the family tree of Jesus, they were essentially calling Him an outcast of their own race and people. And if that were not enough they threw in that He was demon-possessed.

And that's always a good one to throw in because it addresses so many problems you might have with someone. It covers them all.

But of course, as we saw earlier in this gospel, the same indictment was made against Jesus and when we looked at it in John 7:20 we discovered that using this language was another way of calling someone crazy, as many demoniacs demonstrated strange behavior.

And so, today we might not call someone demon-possessed but we might say that their elevator doesn't go all the way to the top. They're one brick shy of a load. Whatever the expression, it's all the same. We are accusing someone of being nuts. And this is what Jesus is being accused of.

JOH 8:49 "I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me.

Our Lord doesn't directly address the issue of Him being a Samaritan, but He does address the issue of Him being demon-possessed. Essentially by addressing the more egregious charge of demon-possession He puts to rest the other.



But in responding Jesus rebukes these Jews by saying that they dishonor Him with these charges, and by extension they dishonor the Father whom they say they belong to. In today's vernacular they've dissed Jesus.

But the point here is that since Jesus and the Father are one in essence, (that is both persons are God), when they dishonor Jesus they automatically dishonor the Father.

JOH 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

They can't say they love the Father and hate the Son. And this is what Jesus is pointing out for them. But as they are dishonoring Jesus our Lord tells them that He is honoring the Father. And the way that He is honoring the Father is being obedient to the Father's will.

And in the same way, you and I in Christ can honor the Father. We do this first by embracing His Son as Lord and Savior by faith, and then by agreeing that He is worthy of our love and obedience as we walk in that reality for the rest of our lives as we depend on His grace and strength.

Of course the flip side to this is that when we choose not to walk in love and obedience according to God's word we end up dissing our Lord and that's not something we want to do in light of the fact that He loved us so much that He sent His Son to die for our sin.

All that Christ did was to honor the Father. He wasn't seeking His own glory which is what the next verse states.

JOH 8:50 I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge.

If anybody was worthy of seeking glory it was the Son of God and yet He laid that glory aside for His time on this earth so that He might bring glory to the Father who sent Him.

PHI 2:5-11 ..... Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and

under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Even in Jesus being exalted He still brings glory to the Father and so should we. All that we do should be done to the glory of our heavenly Father as we exalt Christ with our lives knowing that in Him we have eternal life.

JOH 8:51 I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

Even in the midst of these people calling Him a Samaritan and being demon-possessed our Lord Jesus continues to extend grace and life as He once again offers the solution to their sin problem which if rejected will result in death.

Notice that if anyone keeps His word they will never see death. This doesn't mean that by doing the works of the word that someone can earn salvation. Rather what Jesus intimates by keeping His word is that if one obeys the command to embrace Christ by faith they will never see death.

JOH 5:24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

This is our hope. While the rest of the world is trying to figure out how to prolong their lives hoping that one day they'll come up with the fountain of youth, we have the promise that the real fountain of youth, if you will, is Christ Himself.

JOH 4:14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

If you have trusted Christ as Lord and Savior you will never die. And what Jesus means by this is that despite how your physical body will die your spirit will continue to live with our Lord until we are finally reunited to our glorified resurrected bodies.

The death which our Lord is speaking of in our text is what is known as the second death where the one who has rejected Christ will die in the ultimate sense as they are eternally separated from God in the lake of fire.

REV 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

In Christ we escape this second death.

REV 2:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

Praise God we will never taste the second death. In Christ we taste only eternal life in the presence of our Creator. May we rejoice forever more in this hope and may we live this life out as we honor our God and Father and bring glory to our Lord Jesus Christ in the hope of that resurrection life on the new earth amidst the new heavens.