

## John 8

Written by K B Napier  
Monday, 09 February 2015 11:46

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Here we see Jesus being consistent. He said He did not come to earth to judge, but to proclaim the Gospel to the Jews. Here He confirms that aim. He did not come to preach to the Gentiles, but to the Jews, God's chosen people. This was His only aim on earth. The Apostles had the task to continue this aim, but Paul, and even Peter, had the task of preaching to the Gentiles, because the Jews refused to listen.

### Verses 1-8

1.

Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

2.

And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

3.

And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

4.

They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5.

Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

6.

This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

7.

So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without

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sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8.

And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

Jesus liked to climb the slopes of the mount of Olives, to enjoy a quiet time speaking with the Father. After doing this, and following the hectic time He had in the Temple the day before, Jesus again walked the short distance back to Jerusalem and entered the Temple. It seems that this time the crowd that gathered around Him was quieter, willing to hear His words. It must have been quiet, because He sat down to teach. This implies that the crowd, too, sat down.

During His teaching, the scribes and Pharisees wickedly thought up a way to trick Jesus. They brought a woman to Him who had been caught in the act of adultery. Note how Jesus once again did not jump to their every whim, but remained silent until it was time for Him to respond. And when He did, it was not to do with their line of reasoning! He took control of the situation. Thus, again, I urge everyone who witnesses or who preaches not to take their cue from unbelievers or critics, but to stay aloof and then take control of the situation. Start from your own, God-given stance, and not from their sinful agenda.

Full of wicked bile, the scribes and Pharisees placed the woman in the middle of the crowd and called Jesus 'Master' (teacher). Like all hypocrites and the godless, they set out to find errors in Jesus' words, using fake humility. The 'case' they wanted Him to try was solid – the woman HAD been caught in an adulterous act. That was without question. What lacked truth was their reason for bringing her to Jesus.

And, also like hypocrites, they began by quoting what was true: Moses said that a person caught in adultery should be stoned. But, they asked, "what sayest thou?" They were not interested in His answer, but only in the possibility that He would contradict Moses and therefore cause His own demise. All they wanted from Him was some kind of statement that was illegal in Judaism. Perhaps they should have moved into our era and questioned the thousands who follow some kind of cultic or fake Christianity, such as charismatics, Catholics, etc!

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As verse six explains, they asked their question to tempt Him (to speak against Moses and their own laws). Instead of answering, Jesus made the situation His own, by stooping down, possibly on His haunches. Silently, He doodled in the sand. The scribes and Pharisees asked Him again. They had their quarry in their eyesight and did not want to let go of the possibility of arresting Him!

Jesus stood up and delivered a devastating demand: 'Let the man who has not sinned throw the first stone at this woman!'. Then, again ignoring the Pharisees, He stooped down again to doodle in the sand. Without doubt this must have antagonised His wicked visitors! This is what truth does. The one who speaks it will be hated, and the truth will literally bring out the worst, not because the haters hear it, but because they hate truth that highlights their sin. They were themselves caught in a conundrum – if they threw a stone, they risked boasting that they were sinless; if they did not throw a stone, then their accusations against Jesus would be null and void!

In my own mind, adultery by both partners is a combined evil, but adultery by one, against the partner who trusts in his or her fidelity, is, to me, akin to murder. It destroys the other person for the sake of a cheap sexual thrill, which is sin. This murder is not just of the existing partner's soul and spirit, but of the children and friends, all of whom are betrayed. It can even drive some betrayed partners to suicide. The one committing the act also finds his or her mind altered and made less spiritually willing, and more 'loose'. The 'hard-wiring' has become rewired!

Jesus was aware of all this, but His way of dealing with the situation had little to do with the sin of the adulteress and more to do with the sin of the Pharisees, whose duplicity was just as evil in His sight.

### Verses 9-11

1.

And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

2.

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When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

3.

She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Do not suppose that the scribes and Pharisees were without conscience. These men were the theologians of their time, and they wanted to serve God truly – but on their own terms... just like so many Christians today. This same conscience struck them dumb and they sidled away behind the crowd, one by one, starting with the eldest. They could not answer Jesus, for what He said was truth. What they hated was the fact that Jesus escaped their clutches yet again - He was just too smart for them! So, Jesus did not allow them to carry on with their 'angle'; instead, He turned the question around so that it struck them between their eyes. He answered them, but in a way they did not expect.

The critics left, and only Jesus and the woman were left. (The crowd was still present, as verse 12 signifies). Jesus stood up and looked directly at the woman. He asked where all her accusers were and if anyone was there to accuse her. She replied that none of them were there, calling Him 'Lord', *kyrios*. To refer to a man as 'lord' was commonplace at that time; it was a courtesy. However, the KJAV translators began the word with a capital, thus raising the status of Jesus in the woman's speech. Several possible meanings can be applied, but here it seems that either the woman recognised Jesus to be the Messiah, or, she understood that He had authority to condemn her.

Jesus then replied, saying that if no man was there to condemn her, then neither did He. Then, He commanded her to return home and to "sin no more". How should we understand this? We may not say that Jesus did not condemn adultery, because He did! What did He mean? He had already said that He did not come to judge anyone, but that His Father would do so. It is my view, in this text, that Jesus was speaking legally – that He had not witnessed the sin of the woman, and no-one was present to give their evidence. Therefore, legally, she was free to go. Repentance was up to her, or she would certainly face God's anger at the end of time.

But, there was a proviso – she must not sin again; that is, she must not commit further adultery,

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whether physically or in her mind and heart. I think it would be too much to say that Jesus thereby forgave her. This is not made apparent in the text. He simply said that He did not find her guilty in an earthly legal sense. The emphasis was, then, put on her future conduct – she would remain free if she did not sin again, in the same way.

She already knew, as a Jewess, that adultery was a sin worthy of punishment, so she stood condemned by her own actions. Jesus did not need to accuse her or condemn her, for she already knew the answer to her sin. It is a fact of Christian life that if one commits a sin – any sin – that God will forgive it if he repents. The crux of the matter is that he must not commit the same sin again. In essence, to do so is to attract the wrath of God for being so frivolous with His mercy.

What Jesus was drawing attention to was the hypocrisy of His enemies, rather than to the sin in question. Jesus was not, then, ignoring the sin of adultery, but questioning the motives of the accusers. Adultery is a foul sin that destroys the lives of those around the adulterer, and also the soul of the one who commits adultery, but scripture warns that if we judge others we must not be guilty of the same sins we are judging. This warning applies even if the sin is committed in our minds and hearts, because to God our thoughts are just as damning as our actions.

### Verses 12-20

1.

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

2.

The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

3.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

4.

Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.

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5.

And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

6.

It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

7.

I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

8.

Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

9.

These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

“I am the light of the world” said Jesus to the crowd, who had been quiet throughout the incident. They had witnessed Jesus completely trouncing their religious leaders and were now willing to hear more. ‘Light’ is here used metaphorically for the pure light of God that illuminates truth and holiness. To have this light means to be enabled to know truth from lies, sin from holiness. To have this light is to have spiritual power to discern.

Jesus was pointing out that the whole world was in darkness because of sin. He came into the world to bring light to disperse the darkness of sin. If anyone followed Him (in this context meaning to be saved) they would not again walk in darkness, stumbling like blind men, but would walk upright in holy resolve, with dignity and power. This is because he would have the very light of God within, and eternal life. (Note: This is NOT the Quaker idea of the ‘inner light’, which is false and heresy. See book on the subject).

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It was obvious to His Jewish hearers that Jesus was saying He was God. By this time the Pharisees had returned. He was their prey and they just could not help their sinful, evil desires to capture Him, for any reason at any cost. They countered Jesus, saying that as He made these claims of Himself by Himself, He was a liar. This was, of course, nonsense, for Jesus had proved Who He was many times, with His preaching and His miracles. Most of the crowds who accompanied Him recognised this fact. The Pharisees, though, were not interested in facts, but in destroying this man Who they thought had come to topple their meagre, finite earthly lives. What Jesus said was true and they knew it.

Jesus said that though He Himself spoke of His own deity, what He said was true. He knew the Father and knew that He came from the Father and would soon return to Him. They, by contrast, would NOT go to meet the Father (because of their evil natures and unbelief)... and they could not understand what He was talking about because of their sin.

With withering accuracy, Jesus warned that whilst He judged no man, the Pharisees were quite content to judge others in a human sense, following self-made human laws. (So, what made THEIR laws greater than those of Jesus?). Today, governments invent rules and laws that are not founded on God's laws. This makes their laws relative, arbitrary, and not absolute. And with this relativity they are able to accuse others, especially Christians. To put it in human terms, they 'move the goalposts' to suit themselves.

Even so, said Jesus, if I DO judge, my judgment will be pure and correct. He said He was not alone in saying this, for He and His Father said the same things. The phrase "but I and the Father" indicate oneness in deity. As Jesus was on earth expressly to speak the words of the Father, what He said was absolute. His miracles and verbal powers proved it anyway.

Jesus then referred to "your law". In this text 'your', *hymeteros*, means 'proceeding from you' rather than proceeding from God. Even so, some human-based laws can be legitimate. Jesus said that in the laws written by the Pharisees, if two men said something then it must be true. (We could vigorously debate that one! What if the two men were common liars? What if their statements were founded on sin?). Jesus said that while He spoke of Himself, the Father also bore witness to what He said and agreed with it. Thus, the Father and Son

*were*

the two witnesses. In our day we can say the same for a teacher or preacher whose words are those of scripture – they MUST be true and so hearers MUST obey them.

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We have to understand at this juncture that 'talk is cheap' and ANY man can make sweeping claims for himself. To prove what he says is true, he would need to show what he claims in actuality. And this is exactly what Jesus had done to this point by miracles and powerful teaching.

Defiantly, the Pharisees asked where His Father was, even though Jesus had repeatedly said His Father was in Heaven, God. Jesus must have been exasperated by this and said that if they were of God they would recognise both Father and Son. Very clearly, again, he said that those who saw Him have already seen the Father, for both are One. In this way Jesus indicted the Pharisees as guilty of unbelief.

Jesus was talking while in the Temple Treasury. This was an area accessible by the public, away from the holiest parts. It consisted of a variety of rooms, large and small, where the holy things of the Temple and offerings were kept. They also housed the priests' living quarters. Many other things were kept there, but under lock and key. There were also 13 chests, trumpet-shaped receptacles used for contributions given by the public. Jesus, then, was in this outer court area, the *gazophylakion*.

Though Jesus' words once again stirred up anger and unrest, nobody touched Him. We may not doubt why this was so – God caused them to be impotent and to leave Jesus alone.

### Verses 21-24

1.

Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

2.

Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

3.

And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

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4.

I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

Jesus again repeated His warning, which was really a solemn judgment upon them – that His accusers would not enter Heaven. They would die in their sins. This is another way of saying they would not repent and so would go to hell.

The crowd wondered what He was talking about. Until now, they thought that all God's chosen people entered a special place of rest in Hades. But, they knew that God condemned suicide, and so they thought perhaps Jesus was saying He would kill Himself, and so would not enter into holy rest.

Knowing their whispers, Jesus told them why they did not understand – He was from above, Heaven, and they were of this world. The unsaved human heart and mind cannot understand what He is talking about, because it is living in the darkness of sin, which warps the ability to think.

'This is why,' Jesus told them, 'I said you will die in your sins. If you continue not to believe in me, you WILL die in your sins.' It does not matter if such unbelief is expressed with immense anger and continually, or just with a dismissal of the eyes and a snort of the nose! Unbelief is unbelief, and it will send the unbeliever to hell for eternity. Time and again Jesus uttered these warnings, so the people had no excuse.

### Verses 25-30

1.

Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.

2.

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I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

3.

They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

4.

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

5.

And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

6.

As he spake these words, many believed on him.

After all that the Pharisees dared to ask Him who He was! They simply did not listen! Jesus, possibly with a sigh, said that He was Who He said He was when He first started to preach. He added that because of their sin, he could easily judge them over many things. The One Who sent Him was true, so whatever He, Jesus, said was also true. But, because of their sin they did not realise He was referring to the Father. Sadly, sin causes a man to be stupid.

When you kill me you will see that I am God and that I am completing the task set for me by the Father. I bring you nothing but His words. The Father is with me and has not left me alone. This is because I please Him.

The power of what He said (which may have contained many more words than are recorded in John) was sufficient to cause many in the crowd to believe on Him. I take this to mean they were saved.

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### Verses 31-33

1.

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

2.

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

3.

They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

Jesus was not One to soften His approach for the sake of peace. On occasions I am sent rebuke by Christians who do not understand their Bibles. They say that honey attracts more people than vinegar! Friends, more often than not, using honey where vinegar is needed, merely extends the time of sin, and causes the sinful hearer to think that your words do not apply to him at all! Those who have counselled for years understand this. But armchair critics do not. Nor do they understand that both approaches can be used at the same time.

Jesus NEVER used honey to placate. His words, rather, were appropriate to His hearers. He did not use funny stories or honeyed words to draw people in, as so many modern preachers do. No, He punched them between the eyes with hard facts and genuine truth. And, when alone with an individual He was softer... so long as they applied what He said to their own souls. Read everything He said for yourself!

Jesus would not use soft words with the very people who misled God's chosen people! In my home town, there was once a man, just over five feet tall, who was known for his karate skills. One day, a much taller man approached him with a sneer, wanting to fight him. The shorter man jumped in the air, and kicked the bigger man from head to toe, in one fluid movement, bringing him down unconscious in a second! It was so fast, no-one saw what really happened... but the man on the floor felt it!

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Now, that incident is not really all that nice, and speaks of sin, but it points to the fact that when Jesus spoke, He did not fool about with fancy words or beating about the bush! He aimed at the hearer's heart and mind, unerringly hitting the target and bringing about the desired effect. Today, many think the effect should be to reconcile or to 'rehabilitate', etc. Not so. Where rebuke is needed for sin, then it must be made. The aim is not to reconcile or to make one feel good. If the hearer feels shocked or hurt, then so be it. There is no formula to this. Each Christian who counsels is given the words to use and the approach, by the Holy Spirit. At one time he will use soft words, at others hard words. Or, even both. With Jesus, most of His words were in rebuke, because that is what the Pharisees badly needed.

With this in mind, Jesus spoke kindly to the Jews in the crowd who believed in Him. 'You,' said Jesus, 'are truly my disciples'. A disciple does not just follow, like a fan... he learns from the Master and becomes a pupil – something modern Christians hate, because it puts them in subjection to one who knows better! To be a learner as an adult one has to submit, and accept that he does not yet have genuine knowledge. Oh that present day Christians understood and accepted this with humility!

Jesus continued, telling them that by listening to Him and following, they would know what truth was, and when they had the truth, it would make them free. Free from what? Free from the rule of sin over them. A Christian is not sin-free, but neither is he subject to sin as he once was. Before salvation he was totally ruled by sin and could not do anything but sin. After salvation, he can actually choose to be holy or to sin. A choice to sin was itself another sin, and God does not look kindly upon the choice. But, the person is saved and will eventually enter Heaven.

Daily, the saved man or woman examines their heart and motives. If sin exists, they will usually shun it and do what is holy. Unfortunately, there are times they might submit to their sinful desires because of the 'old man'. Yet, they are not pinned-down helplessly by their sin; they can shake it off any time they wish. That is the difference.

The true disciple will, then, shake off sin more and more, and live in holiness more and more. He is free to do so, whereas before, he was shackled to Satan and sin. Jesus' hearers did not understand, and boasted that as Abraham's children/ descendants, they were bound to no man as slaves. If they are never bound to another as a slave, then they were, by definition, in no need to be freed! Though Jesus had only just referred to hearing His word and obeying it, the crowd completely misunderstood what He was saying! In my ministry I get this odd blind response almost every day! I can be as open and simple as I can be, but there seems to be no

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ability to understand, even from many Christians (who want to be right!). It was as if Jesus was addressing a brick wall!

### Verses 34-38

1.

Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

2.

And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

3.

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

4.

I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

5.

I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

See how blinded they are to their own wickedness! And how unable they are to comprehend Jesus' very plain and simple words! And see how the situation becomes more intense. In this kind of atmosphere no amount of truth will do, and those who hate will increase in hatred. This is another response I come across almost daily; the more I explain, the greater becomes the anger and hatred. The fabled 'red mist' descends (courtesy of Satan) and they see and hear nothing else but their own sin and feeble reactions.

So, Jesus simply carried on: 'Truthfully, those who commit sin are servants of sin'. Even

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Christians whose hearts are usually centred on God, are servants to sin at the point of sinning. But, servants come and go, so are not always 'at home'. Christ, however, lives forever. Even in the Christian, though he sins occasionally, God is still in their hearts. For this reason, they know that when they repent, Jesus is right back there in their minds and forefront of their hearts. He makes us free from subjection to Satan, who, frustrated, will always try to cause us to sin again... hopefully with less and less success as we mature spiritually.

Jesus was blunt: 'You claim to be the sons of Abraham, living holy lives – yet you want to kill me! My words make you angry. This puts your claim at odds with holiness. Yet, I only tell you what I have been told by the Father. You, on the other hand, only do what you see in YOUR father, the devil.' Many today follow their 'father' – denominational rules and teachings, the sermons of their favourite preachers, passages from errant books and magazines, and even modern songs.

Note how tough Jesus was! I shrink back whenever I hear of Him being depicted as 'the baby meek and mild'! No, He was a real man in every sense. The 'limp wristed' preachers of today, who cannot sustain even a firm handshake at the chapel doors, are no comparison; they are shameful shadows. They use soft words and rarely come to a sound decision, preferring 'peace' with those whose minds and hearts are foreign to the Lord and to His ways.

### Verses 39-41

1.

They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

2.

But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

3.

Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

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Like spoilt children they insisted “Abraham IS our father!” Jesus pointed out a painful truth: ‘if you truly are of Abraham you would act as he did! Instead, you want to kill me, just because I tell you the truth, a truth that comes direct from the Father – not even Abraham had the privilege of knowing the Father face-to-face!’

‘Instead,’ said Jesus, ‘you do what your ancestors did to the prophets, and what Satan demands.’ The crowd (mainly Pharisees) rejected what Jesus said, objecting to the idea that they were fornicators with Satan and evil ancestors. They insisted they had only one Father – God. Even though they did the deeds of evil. How many who claim to be modern Christians fornicate with Satan? Very many. Yet, they still say they follow the Lord.

### Verses 42-47

1.

Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

2.

Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

3.

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

4.

And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

5.

Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

6.

He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

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Jesus' reply is universal. It applies to everyone, whether they are grossly wicked or simply 'nice' unbelievers. There are no exemptions! You are either God's or you belong to Satan. There is nothing half-way. Beautiful girl, or wrinkled whore, handsome man or battered alcoholic, person of wise words, or one whose mouth fills with curses and swear words. EVERYONE is born in sin and EVERYONE is commanded to love God. No exemptions and no exceptions.

Thus, Jesus told the people that if they claimed to love God, then they must also love Him. He came from the Father with words for their redemption. Jesus was not alone in this – He did what the Father said, the same Father the Jews said they followed.

There are times when I want to shake the shoulders of those who argue stupidly with me. I want to shout at them "What's wrong with you! I am speaking plainly and what I say is true!" Jesus evidently felt the same way. After all, He had proved His origin and His power over all creation, time and time again.

"Why do you not understand my speech?" Jesus answered for them – it was because they could not hear Him. Have you ever listened to two old ladies who are speaking to each other? One says something, then the other says something in reply, but about a topic totally unrelated to what the first one said! And so they continue, neither listening and neither actually responding. This is what so many unbelievers are like. It is as if they were not even listening. At other times a second person cannot wait for the first one to finish, before coming in with what THEY want to say. They show no interest, but only want to show off their own thoughts. We can all hear background noise – but do we strain to actually *listen*? Jesus, then, was condemning them for their refusal to listen AND act.

Because of their intransigence, Jesus was blunt. "Ye are of your father, the devil"! For this reason they reject what God says, in favour of doing whatever Satan lusts to do. Sparing no feelings, Jesus said more: "He (Satan) was a murderer from the beginning and did not live by truth. This is because there is no truth in him at all. When he accuses people of lying, he is really referring to his own heart and mind. He is a liar and the originator of lies.'

You see, to dupe men into sin, and to stop them hearing, is part of his wicked plan. He hates

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God and so tries to stop men from obeying. They then go to hell. In every way, then, Satan 'murders' mankind. (He was also guilty of urging the very first physical murder).

Make no mistake – if you are an unbeliever, you are alongside your father, the devil. What you think, say and do, is whatever he wants you to think, say and do. Perhaps superficially you are a kind, loving, honest person. But, in God's eyes, your life is like a dirty rag, good for nothing. This is because only those who belong to God are clean enough in His eyes.

Jesus summed up – because Jesus told them the truth, they did not believe. It is a fallacy spread by lies, that if someone hears the truth they will accept it. They do not. If they are unbelievers, they do not WANT the truth, because it would stop them sinning. They love their life, and do not want interference from God!

The fact that their lives will end very soon, and then they will be judged to enter hell forever makes no difference. They prefer the sin of their present life. This again proves the point – that God elects, God predestines to salvation, God gives the new birth, God then saves them, as a seal on what He has already chosen in eternity. Nothing comes from Man, because his life is as a filthy rag!

Jesus again said that if someone belonged to God, they would hear Him and listen to what He, Jesus, was saying. The Messiah was in prophecy and in their own teachings, yet they were now not listening to the Messiah's words. They "hear them not". Why? Because "ye are not of God". Simple. A soldier of a king is not of that king if he is a turncoat who fights for the enemy.

### Verses 48-51

1.

Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

2.

Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.

3.

## John 8

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And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

4.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

In remonstrance, the enraged Jews threw out a slur, saying that he must 'obviously' be a Samaritan with a demon! I get this kind of slur all the time: I 'must be' a 'closet homosexual' if I speak against homosexuality! (They do not stop to think that maybe I am genuinely disgusted by what they do). 'Obviously', I MUST 'hate' people who disagree with me! (That is, I tell them what scripture says, so what they object to is the fact that I stand on firm and unequivocal ground). 'Obviously', I MUST be unchristian to oppose unbelievers. (To put it another way, I tell them what God says, not my own words). And so the merry-go-round keeps turning, with sinners squirming this way and that to try and turn the spotlight off themselves. Jesus had the same kind of treatment well before I did, so I am in good company.

Jesus simply shook the accusations off. 'I haven't got a demon. Rather, I honour my Father, whereas *you* dishonour *me*.' Jesus pointed out that He did not try to bring glory to His own Name, but to the Father Who sent Him. It was He Who judged them. Jesus then repeated His promise, that if anyone followed Him and put His words into practice, he would be saved from eternal hell. ("never see death" refers to the 'second death'; everyone dies physically, but the second death is when God judges a man to hell).

### Verses 52-56

1.

Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

2.

Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

3.

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Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:

4.

Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

5.

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

The blind Jews took this to be sure proof that Jesus was filled with a demon! They did not understand what Jesus told them about death. They blurted out that Abraham and the prophets, holy though they were, are dead – so how can Jesus say that His followers would not die? ‘Who do you think you are?’ they queried (again). Not accepting that He was the Messiah, Lord God made human, they accused Him of trying to be greater than Abraham *et al.* Well, yes, He *was* saying that!

Jesus rightly said that if all He did was to honour Himself, then they could rightly accuse Him. But, He argued it was His Father Who honoured *Him*... the same Father they claimed to be their God. The logic is simple; the Father and I are One. The Father sent me to deliver you from sin. Because I am God, you must hear Me and obey. He had already proved Himself to be divine by what He said and did.

Charismatic preachers are very good at honouring themselves. They give themselves titles and honours they do not deserve or need – ‘apostle’, ‘chief apostle’, ‘prophet’, and so on. And, more pertinently, followers accept it.

As blunt as ever, not playing to their feelings, Jesus told them they have not known God at all, though they played at it with their rites and sacrifices. On the other hand, Jesus knew the Father, and if He said He did not, it would make Him just as much a liar as the Jews were. No, said Jesus, I KNOW the Father and I keep His commands.

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He then told the Jews that while they were faking their beliefs, in *his* day Abraham looked forward to the coming of the Messiah – Jesus. And when He saw Him He was glad. Apart from sheer faith, Abraham did see Jesus, when He came to his tent with two angels, the same angels who went into Sodom to find Lot. The Jews of Jesus' time believed in an academic sense, not with their minds and hearts. They were blinded by Satan, who worked through the unrighteous demands of the Pharisees.

### Verses 57-59

1.

Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

2.

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

3.

Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

Once again, the assembled Jews got it wrong and threw out a stupid query made stupid by the fact that Jesus had been telling them *Who He was* for months, and proving it by His miracles. They retorted that Jesus was under fifty years of age, so how could He have seen Abraham! Logic should have told them that if Jesus was God, He could have seen whomever He wished to see!

Jesus then spoke words that are deep and sublime: "Before Abraham was, I am". This is a spectacular saying that included the phenomenal title "I AM". Abraham WAS, but Christ IS. Abraham lived in time, but Jesus is from eternity: He always 'is', self-existing, whereas Abraham and mere men 'were'. Once more, then, Jesus told the Jews HE was God. Their anger began to bubble up and they picked up stones to kill Him. But, Jesus took Himself away so they could not find Him. He managed to walk through the crowds for anonymity until He got out of the Temple precincts, and left the area safely. As scripture said before – it was not yet His time to face the ultimate end of His earthly life.

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For reasons I cannot really fathom, there are Christians who say they are willing to put their lives on the line for their faith. This sounds very odd. If we are in a situation where we must recant or die, then to accept death would be reasonable and good. But, to say we are willing to deliberately put our lives in jeopardy seems rather mindless and pointless. I have met folks who speak as they do and they appear to me to be genuine at the time, but also they are emotional. They speak with their emotions rather than from truth and necessity.

I knew a pastor who told us as a family that he would willingly die for us. Within a month or two, he was cursing us because we questioned some of his ethics. So much for love! Then there was a definitely emotional deacon who, during a prayer meeting, walked to the front, lay prostrate on his face with arms and legs outstretched, and cried out that he loved us all and would die for us. Hm, okay. But WHY? There was no situational reason to say it, so why the drama? I am always dubious when Christians say that kind of thing, because I know people! One day they love you, the next they cannot wait for you to leave them. Thus, they disprove their own claims.

God said He would die for the sins of the world. All through Jesus' ministry this was His open declaration. And He finally did what He came to do. He proved Himself and was never shaken from His task. Can we, as believers honestly make claims we stick to? Some do. And they are the honest, genuine ones.

Recently, our ministry was contacted by a woman in the Czech Republic. She listed a number of quite serious physical problems she supposedly had, before asking us to pray for her. I replied that I would never pray for an unknown person, and told her that we had been duped before by similar requests. Could she please give us a biography and information on her salvation, etc? She never replied.

Yet, I was completely honest with her – I would not pray for someone I did not know. She might even have 'hooked' us with prayer, only to seek money, or perhaps free travel to the UK, or some other benefit. But, many ministries and Christians promise to pray for strangers. Do they continue in prayer? How can they pray intelligently when they know nothing about the object of their prayer? Is it prayer at all? Jesus could do it, because He is God. But, I will never make empty promises just to seem super-Christian! (They are empty because they are not God-given).

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