

Welcome, fellow disciples. These 29 verses (**John 8:31-59**) record some of the most powerful truths in Scripture. They record those who are real disciples of Jesus, who one's spiritual father is, and who Jesus is. In the midst of His sharing such truths with them, Jesus encounters opposition, and, at last there is even an attempt to stone Him because of apparent blasphemy.

In these verses, Jesus says, "**The truth will make you free!**", given by the One who is the truth (**14:6, Eph. 4:21**), characteristic of the God who is true (**7:28, 8:26**), and whose Spirit is the Spirit of truth (**15:26, 16:13**). We need the truth!

"Endless philosophies, worldviews, & religious systems have arisen over the centuries, each purporting to teach absolute truth, and each in turn canceling out the 'absolute' truths of those that came before it... People imagine that by denying the existence of absolute truth and by throwing off the shackles of biblical morality they will finally be set free... Postmodernists reject the notion that ultimate truth is knowable or even exists. They contend that the truths people believe are merely societal norms created by the culture in which they live." They are deliberately rejecting the One who is truth & speaks truth.

In **8:30** it says, "**As Jesus spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.**" Was their belief saving faith, or merely a first step toward it? Let's see.

Read :31-36. :31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue (abide, remain) in My word (3056 logos), then you are truly (certainly/surely) disciples (learners) of Mine." :31-32 is a pivotal passage in the Bible. These people had recognized who Jesus was declaring to be, and they had believed in Him. And, like He always does, Jesus took them where they were & led them to further truth, saving truth. He does the same with us!

:31 True disciples are Word (Jesus and the Bible)-oriented. You choose to believe Jesus and His words are true, and, by faith, you choose to begin to act on them; you 'do' His will (**7:17**). Are you such a believer, Jesus' disciple?

If so, **:32 you will know (1097 come to know) the truth (reality, fact), & the truth will make you free (liberated).** Jesus is the truth, and His Word is truth. The truth that brings true spiritual freedom begins by believing in Jesus, then continuing in His Word, learning and 'doing' His truth. "**Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth**" (**17:17**). True freedom! Freedom from being a slave of sin; freedom from spiritual death; freedom from the Law; freedom from trying to live by the flesh. His truth will liberate you to live in line with who He is and who He's made you. To know Jesus' truth is radical.

:33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?" "We are descendants of Abraham," they said. "We've never been slaves to anyone on earth. What do you mean, 'set free'?" Their statement can't mean physical slavery, because the Jews had been slaves to nations such as Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, Syria, and currently Rome. They probably mean, "We've always been Abraham's children, not anyone else's."

God had established a forever covenant with them, the Abrahamic covenant (**Gen. 12:1-3, 15:1-21, 17:1-14, 19, 22:15-18**). "Because of our ancestry, we

might be slaves in body but never in soul. We're free before God!" Yet they were so mastered by sin they didn't understand when the Truth gave the Truth to them.

:34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you [What I'm about to say to you is of great importance!], everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin." A slave of sin, whether in attitude/action/motivation/power source, you are a slave of that wrong. **See Rom. 6:16, 11:32, 2 Pet. 2:19.** 'Commits sin' means to practice sin habitually, constantly doing sin; the present tense views sin as a way of life, not merely as individual acts. **1 Jn. 3:4-6.** As **Rom. 3:23** makes clear, everyone without Jesus is constantly missing the target of God's glory. You see even their leaders' sin in **8:7-9**; they reluctantly admitted their sin!

If freedom is being able to be all God meant you to be, then slavery is to lose all possibility of that. When you think you can handle sin and finally decide to quit and change, you find you can't, whether a hot temper, drunkenness, sexual lust, pornography, pride, lovelessness, prejudice, jealousy, anger, malice, revenge, greed, lack of self-control. **See Rom. 1:18-32, 2 Tim. 3:1-7.**

All are born sinners and all have sinned; therefore, all are slaves of sin. One finds him/herself under the control of the devil and the lusts of the flesh and the pressures of the world. The only way for sinners to be released from sin's grip and penalty is to repent of their sins and be united by faith with Jesus, who in His death and resurrection provided deliverance. It would take His death for us so the old man (a sinner by nature and in Adam) could become a new man in Christ and our sins could be forgiven. **Rom. 5:11-6:23** is helpful. Plus...

:35 "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever." A slave isn't a permanent member of a family, but a son is part of the family forever (**see Gal. 4:1-7**). "It's true you're in Abraham's house, but you are not there as sons; you are there as slaves of sin." It is only those who receive Jesus who are truly sons of God (**1:12, Rom. 8:14, Gal. 3:26, 4:6, 1 Jn. 3:1-2**).

:36 "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. He's just been mentioning His Father in **8:16, 18, 19, 27, 28**. Jesus is His Father's Son. And by faith in the Person and work of Jesus, we'll become sons also! "The truth will set you free and so will I!" The hope for real freedom does not lie in the ancestry of Abraham, but in the Person & action of Jesus, the I AM (**:24, 28, 58**). And if Jesus adopts you into the Father's household and you become a son too, He sets you free to live as all humans are intended (**1:12**), taking you from a position of slavery to one of sonship (**Rom. 8:17, Gal. 4:1-6**).

Freedom—being able to be all you were meant to be. Freedom from fear, slavery to sin, the penalty of sin, being separated forever from God. Your life of trust and obedience will begin revealing outwardly who God has made you inwardly. One is free when sin no longer rules over you and when the Word (Jesus 1:1, the Bible 17:17) dominates your heart and mind and choices.

Read :37-47. Religion apart from Jesus and the Word deceives people into thinking they are right with God when in reality they are not.

:37-38 “I (fully) know that you are Abraham’s descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word (3056 logos) has no place in you. :38 I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father. Yes, I realize you are descendants of Abraham, and yet some of you are trying to kill Me because My logos doesn’t find a place in you. You aren’t doing the deeds of Abraham (:39).” Notice, He doesn’t make their slavery to sin the issue; rejection of Him and His Word are the issue. Unlike Abraham, who believed God and His Word (**read Gen. 15:1-6, Rom. 4:3-17**), Jesus and the Word had no place in them. National descent from Abraham and physical circumcision or even possession of the Law counted for nothing. Who then are the real children of Abraham? All true believers in Jesus and His truth. **Jn. 10:5, Rom. 4:11-12; Gal. 3:7,29.**

:38 What was the problem with the physical descendants of Abraham? They had a different father, which was proved by their murderous hatred of Jesus. “I am telling you what I saw when I was with My Father. But you are following the advice of your father.” Jesus had heard the truth from His Father. In the same way that Jesus’ conduct proved His Father was God, the conduct of Jesus’ enemies proved that their father was not the God of the Bible—but was actually the devil (:44)! Because they did not know Jesus, they did not know His Father either (**8:19**). All of the apostle Paul’s lineage did not save him (**read Phil. 3:1-9**). Also see Abraham’s faith in **Gal. 3:1-29, Rom. 4:17**.

:39 They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” The question became “Who is your spiritual father?” It’s a matter of relationship. The father of all unbelievers is the devil (:44). **See Eph. 2:2-3, 1 Jn. 3:8-10.** **Jesus said to them, “If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham.** “Our father is Abraham,” they declared. “No,” Jesus replied, “for if you were children of Abraham you would ‘do’ His deeds.” What was Abraham’s example? By faith He acted on God’s word: remember **:31-32, Gen. 15:6**. The NT repeatedly emphasizes Abraham’s faith (**Rom. 4:17, Gal. 3:6-14, Heb. 11:8-12,17-19**). Abraham is the supreme example of a man who took God at His word and ‘did’ it! Salvation is not based on legalistic effort, religious affiliation, or ethnic background. It is based on faith in Jesus and His truth!

:40 “But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. You have a murderer for a father, and you’re seeking to follow His example. I told you the truth (:32). I heard from God but you are trying to kill Me [because of making Himself equal with the Father]. Abraham would never do a thing like that.”

:41a “You are doing the deeds of your father. Your father is the kind of father who encourages people to kill God’s only Son! You are obeying your real father when you act that way.” If not Abraham or God the Father, who is their father?

:41b They said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, God.” Perhaps implying that Jesus’ birth was illegitimate, but probably referring to their claim of Abraham and God being their father—no one else.

Perhaps the words are a disclaimer of the suggestion that they had been guilty of an idolatrous relationship with God. Yahweh had said, “Israel is my firstborn son” (**Ex. 4:22, Dt. 32:6, Is. 63:16, Is. 64:8, Jer. 31:9**). Spiritually speaking, God was the Father only of those who had truly come to saving faith in His Son. They insisted their true Father was God Himself! Who would Jesus say is our father?

:42-43 Jesus said to them, “If God were your father, you would love (agapē) Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. :43 Why do you not (progress in) understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word (logos).” The real test is how people react to Jesus; do they/we love Him? Earlier, **5:23**, later **15:23**. “If God were your father, you would agapē Me [as He loves Me! **10:17, 15:9, 17:23-24**] because I have come to you from God. I’m not here on My own; He sent Me. I’m not defending Myself or seeking My own glory or speaking My own words. He sent Me and I’m only doing and saying what He wants Me to do and say.” His works; His words. May we do the same!

:43 Then Jesus asks 3 questions of them (**:43,46**), and (I believe) pauses for an answer after each question. He awaits their response. There is none, so He answers His own questions. (1) “Why do you not understand what I am saying? (2) Which one of you convicts Me of sin? (3) If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?”

(1) “Why haven’t you come to know what I’m saying? (Pause for answer) It’s because you’re unable to hear My logos.” They are spiritually deaf. The Jews were unable—literally unable—to hear His logos, the word which He Himself is and spoke. Yet, because of their chosen unbelief, Jesus holds them accountable for this inability. “And, you don’t have God as your father” (**:42**). Also remember, they’re slaves of sin. They are misled by their father (**:44**).

:44 “You are of your father the devil (slanderer, false accuser), and you want to [continually] do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is liar and the father of lies.” Some today say the devil doesn’t exist. Jesus believes that the devil actually exists and that he exerts a tremendous influence on earth (the invisible kingdom under which all of us live until/unless we come into God’s family). A child manifests his father’s characteristics. Sinners are constantly desiring to carry out the wishes (desires, yearnings) of their father, the devil.

“Ever since his initial rebellion (**Is. 14:12-14, Ezek. 28:12-16, Lk. 10:18**), Satan has tirelessly waged war against God and His servants. The conflict, which began in the angelic realm (**Dan. 10:13,20; Eph. 6:12, Rev. 12:4,7-9**), was brought to earth when Satan tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (**Gen. 3:1-19**). His goal is to hinder God’s purposes and obscure God’s message.” “Your father was a murderer from the beginning, wanting to put people to death spiritually! This slanderer is your father, and you want to do his desires! He does NOT stand in the truth because there is no truth in him! Do you get that? No truth!! He is by nature a liar, so whenever he speaks, he lies! A murderer and a liar, a destroyer and a deceiver. Not a giver of life but a taker of life. Not a speaker of truth but a lover of lies. He’s only doing who

he is. He hates everything I stand for—truth and life. The devil is your father!”

Satan’s temptation of Adam and Eve brought about their spiritual death and that of the entire human race (**Gen. 2:17, Rom. 5:12, 1 Cor. 15:21-22**). His convincing lie to Eve was, “You surely will not die!” (**Gen. 3:4**). He continues to deceive people (**2 Cor. 4:4**), cleverly disguising himself as an angel of light (**2 Cor. 11:14**). Between the devil and life/truth there is absolutely no connection. On the other hand, Jesus is the truth & speaks truth, straight from His Father. Whenever He speaks, He is telling us what we need to know and understand. “You aren’t hearing/understanding My words! Because of your unbelief, you’re not capable” (:43). Remember, it’s those who ‘do’ who discern Jesus’ truth (**7:17**).

:45 “But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.” As children of a murderer and the father of lies, they were unable and unwilling to believe and receive Him. Anyone who continually practices sin is of the devil (**1 Jn. 3:8**). They will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires (**2 Tim. 4:3-4**). “Because of your father and who he is, when I tell the truth, you choose not to believe Me!” Jesus had come not to judge the world but to save it, and for this it was necessary that He cast out the prince of this world (**12:31**) and destroy the works of the devil (**1 Jn. 3:8**).

:46 2nd and 3rd questions. (2) **“Which one of you convicts Me of sin? (3) If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?** Is there anyone here who can point the finger at any evil in My life, just one sin, where I’m missing My Father’s target?” (pause!) To convict means to charge and then prove that charge. No one says anything. If any of His enemies had had one shred of evidence against Him, they obviously would have used it. “If not, then why don’t you accept what I say?” (pause!) One must either conclude Jesus is a madman, absolutely out of His head to make such claims, or, you have to believe who He is & what He says.

2 Cor. 5:21 says He knew no sin (also see **Heb. 4:15, 7:26, 1 Pet. 2:22**). No sin. They could not prove Him guilty of anything (**18:23**). He was only speaking truth! If no sin can be legitimately charged and He was only speaking truth, why didn’t they believe Him? He answers His own questions in **:47**.

:47 “He who is of God hears the words (rhēma, definite sayings) of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.” Anyone whose Father is the Biblical God listens attentively to the definite sayings of God. “Jesus’ logic is irrefutable”: He who is of God hears the words (rhēma) of God. “Since you don’t choose to listen, it proves God is not your Father, and that you are not of God.” He has revealed them, not as free-before-God people, but as slaves, slaves to sin, desperately needing the work of a Redeemer.

This brings us back to **:31-32**. Jesus and His truth are the only way out. Who are you in relationship to Jesus and His truth? We are in the presence of the ultimate conflict between light and darkness, between the kingdom of God, which is life and light and truth, and the kingdom of the devil, which is death, darkness, and falsehood! Man does not stand at some midpoint, half-good and half-bad. You’re either of God or not of God. You either hear Jesus’ words or don’t. Which are you? Of God or not of God, hearing Jesus’ words or not hearing them!

Read :48-59. :48 The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?” When they have no logical answer, they resort to ridicule. Calling Jesus names rather than refuting His arguments. “You are a Samaritan!” That was about the cruelest thing the Jews could think of. There was deadly hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans. A Samaritan—a product of illegitimate union between Israel and paganism. The Samaritans were the descendants of Jews who had remained in the northern kingdom after its fall and intermarried with pagans transplanted there by the Assyrians (**2 Kings 17:23-24**). They were considered physical and spiritual half-breeds. Hatred was so great that the Jews avoided dealing with the Samaritans altogether (**4:9**), and some refused even to travel through Samaria. Interesting: Jesus first revealed Himself as Messiah to a Samaritan woman (**4:25-26**) & used a Samaritan to illustrate a good neighbor (**Lk. 10:33-35**).

The people responded, “Didn’t we say all along that you were possessed by a demon? You’re demon-possessed.” This was their conclusion. According to John, demon-possession was attributed to Jesus on 3 occasions (**7:20, 8:52, 10:20; also see Mt. 12:24**). After this verbal abuse, next they’ll attempt to stone Him.

In our day, the spiritual battle continues to rage (**2 Cor. 4:3-4, Eph. 6:12-18**). **1 Jn. 3:8 “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.”** The Synoptic Gospels are filled with confrontations between Jesus and Satan’s forces (both demonic and human).

:49 Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. No demon-possessed person could possibly honor God the Father. Jesus’ one aim was to honor God; He sought only the glory of the Father. And by their dishonor of Jesus, the Jews were dishonoring the very God whom they claimed as their father.

:50 “But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks & judges (decides). There is One who seeks honor for the Son; that’s the Father: at Jesus’ baptism (**Mt. 3:17**) and at His transfiguration (**Mt. 17:5**). After His redeeming death and resurrection, God highly exalted Him (**Phil. 2:9-11**). **Ps. 2:6-12, 110:1, Is. 52:13**. It’s God the Father who is seeking and judging/deciding. Even when wrongly treated, Jesus committed Himself to Him who judges righteously (**1 Pet. 2:23**). Paul tells us to put any revenge into God’s hand (**Rom. 12:14-21**). Jesus became flesh and dwelt among us to reveal His Father’s glory, to seek and to save that which was lost (**Lk. 19:10**), to bear the sins of many (**Heb. 9:28**), and to save His people from their sins (**Mt. 1:21**).

:51 “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone ‘keeps’ My word he will never see death.” This is a statement of major significance. A double negative to emphasize His claim: “He/She will never, ever see death.” The Jews have murder in their hearts, and He has nothing but love in His. They are thinking of death for Him, but He is offering them life. “Death as here used is separation from being with God for all eternity and experiencing the crushing weight of His wrath and condemnation forever.” Obedient believers have entered into a relationship with God which neither time nor eternity can sever. They will never experience spiritual death, the second death (**Rev. 2:11, 20:14, 21:8**).

Though the believer will die physically, that's not who he/she is spiritually. We have eternal life (**6:63,68, 17:3**), beginning the moment we come to know Jesus as Lord. We'll receive new resurrection bodies. Here is the One who in 6 months would conquer the devil and death (**Heb. 2:14-15**).

:52-53 The Jews said to Him, "Now we know (1097) that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also, and You say, "If anyone keeps My word (logos) he will never taste of death." "Now we know You are demon-possessed!" Like their father, they were liars, murderers, and enemies of God. "It is obvious that Abraham and the prophets died." **Read Gen. 5.** "Who do You make Yourself out to be?" Jesus is the source of eternal life for all who believe. He will Himself taste death for every person (**Heb. 2:9**).

:53 "Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?" A negative answer is assumed. The Jews are confident that, as descendants of Abraham, they are within the covenant which God made with Abraham and his seed. "You're not greater than our father Abraham, are You? Who are You?"

:54-55 Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God'; :55 and you have not come to know (1097 progress in knowledge of) Him, but I (fully) know Him; and if I say that I do not (fully) know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do (fully) know Him and keep His Word. :54 "If I bestow honor—ascribe weight by recognizing real value, praise; (we may say "That's heavy!)—**on Myself, My glory is nothing** (empty, no substance/merit)." All true honor must come from God. "For them to piously claim to know God [as their Father] while blaspheming and rejecting His Son was ludicrous."

:55 Jesus calls these men liars right to their face. Jesus would have been a liar if He had denied fully knowing God (**1:18, 7:29, 10:15, Mt. 11:27**). By the way, the Lord's judgment and condemnation of the false religious leaders' practices would reach its peak during Passion Week (see **Mt. 23**).

:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced [past tense] to see (3708 perceive) My day, and he saw it and was glad." Abraham was able to enter into the joy of Jesus' coming to earth. Abraham and Moses and the prophets died in faith, not having received what was promised but having seen it and greeted it from afar (**Heb. 11:13**). Abraham's security was in the faithfulness of the One who promised. They wanted to murder the very One in whose coming Abraham rejoiced.

:57 So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen (3708) Abraham?" Jesus was about 30 when He began His ministry (**Lk. 3:23**). "How can You possibly have seen Abraham?"

:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM (:24,28)!" Jesus had seen Abraham! "Listen carefully to what I'm going to share with you." This was the most stunning and incredible claim of all that Jesus had said. Jesus was forcing this issue upon these men. He drove them to a decision concerning Him. Jesus did not say: "Before Abraham was, I was," but, "Before Abraham was, I AM." Jesus is timeless; He had no beginning; He has no end. I AM denotes eternal existence, not simply

existence prior to Abraham. Jesus was declaring Himself to be YaHWeH, the LORD of the OT (**Ex. 3:14, 34:6, Is. 41:4, 43:10**), where God declared Himself to be the eternally existing God who revealed Himself in the OT to the Jews. "Abraham became, but I was already there." "YaHWeH, the name too sacred to be uttered by the Jews. These are either the words of the most impudent blasphemer that ever spoke, or, the words of God incarnate." Before creation and all time, the Word was in the beginning with God (**1:1**). "It's not only the idea of existence prior to Abraham, but timelessness—God's very nature!"

:59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple. They knew exactly what He was claiming. The Jews understood Jesus' claim and followed **Lev. 24:16**. Men loved the darkness rather than the Light (**3:19**). **Jesus hid Himself** (perhaps amid a crowd of friends). He knows no one can touch Him until His hour comes.

There are only 2 possible responses to Jesus' claims for His listeners: they could fall down and worship Him, as the former blind man does in **9:38**, but, if they chose not to believe "that I AM," they would die in their sins (**8:24**). Either He is the Truth or He is a liar. Either He is God and Lord and Christ, or He is not. Either you accept Him or you reject Him. Either we believe Him and worship Him as Who He is, or, we reject Him. Remember that your decision does not in any way change who He is. When we see Him as **:48-59** sets Him forth, there is only one choice we have.

How do you see Him in action? In dealing with Nicodemus, with the woman at the well, with the royal official, with the without-strength man, with the hungry crowd, with the religious leaders, with you? How do you 'hear' Him in speech, declaring: "I am the Light of the world, the Bread of life, the good Shepherd, the Door of the sheepfold, the Resurrection and the Life, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the true Vine? Before Abraham was born, I AM. I and MY Father are one. I am from above." **And we saw His glory, full of grace and full of truth (1:14). Read 1:18.** Together we say, "We believe You and we believe in You!" How do you respond to this chapter's truths? Joel

NOTES There was a Messianic expectation clearly taught in Scripture (**Heb. 11:13; Gen. 3:15; Dt. 18:15-18; 2 Sam. 7:12-13; Ps. 2:8, 118:26; Is. 7:14, 9:6, 42:1-25, 53:1-12; Dan. 7:13-15; Mic. 5:2; Zech. 6:12-13; Mal 3:1; Mt. 11:1-3,10; Lk. 2:25-26,38; 3:15; Jn. 1:19-28,41, 4:25,29,42, 6:14, 11:27; Acts 7:52, 10:43; Heb. 10:37; 1 Pet. 1:10-12**).

Welcome, fellow disciples. These 29 verses (**John 8:31-59**) record some of the most powerful truths in Scripture. They record those who are real disciples of Jesus, who one's spiritual father is, and who Jesus is. In the midst of His sharing such truths with them, Jesus encounters opposition, and, at last there is even an attempt to stone Him because of apparent blasphemy.

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:31 True disciples are Word (Jesus and the Bible)-oriented. You choose to believe Jesus and His words are true, and, by faith, you choose to begin to act on them; you 'do' His will (**7:17**). Are you such a believer, Jesus' disciple?

If so, **:32 you will know (1097 come to know) the truth (reality, fact), & the truth will make you free (liberated).** Jesus is the truth, and His Word is truth. The truth that brings true spiritual freedom begins by believing in Jesus, then continuing in His Word, learning and 'doing' His truth. "**Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth**" (**17:17**). True freedom! Freedom from being a slave of sin; freedom from spiritual death; freedom from the Law; freedom from trying to live by the flesh. His truth will liberate you to live in line with who He is and who He's made you. To know Jesus' truth is radical.

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might be slaves in body but never in soul. We're free before God!" Yet they were so mastered by sin they didn't understand when the Truth gave the Truth to them.

:34 **Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you [What I'm about to say to you is of great importance!], everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin."** A slave of sin, whether in attitude/action/motivation/power source, you are a slave of that wrong. **See Rom. 6:16, 11:32, 2 Pet. 2:19.** 'Commits sin' means to practice sin habitually, constantly doing sin; the present tense views sin as a way of life, not merely as individual acts. **1 Jn. 3:4-6.** As **Rom. 3:23** makes clear, everyone without Jesus is constantly missing the target of God's glory. You see even their leaders' sin in **8:7-9**; they reluctantly admitted their sin!

If freedom is being able to be all God meant you to be, then slavery is to lose all possibility of that. When you think you can handle sin and finally decide to quit and change, you find you can't, whether a hot temper, drunkenness, sexual lust, pornography, pride, lovelessness, prejudice, jealousy, anger, malice, revenge, greed, lack of self-control. **See Rom. 1:18-32, 2 Tim. 3:1-7.**

All are born sinners and all have sinned; therefore, all are slaves of sin. One finds him/herself under the control of the devil and the lusts of the flesh and the pressures of the world. The only way for sinners to be released from sin's grip and penalty is to repent of their sins and be united by faith with Jesus, who in His death and resurrection provided deliverance. It would take His death for us so the old man (a sinner by nature and in Adam) could become a new man in Christ and our sins could be forgiven. **Rom. 5:11-6:23** is helpful. Plus...

:35 **"The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever."** A slave isn't a permanent member of a family, but a son is part of the family forever (see **Gal. 4:1-7**). "It's true you're in Abraham's house, but you are not there as sons; you are there as slaves of sin." It is only those who receive Jesus who are truly sons of God (**1:12, Rom. 8:14, Gal. 3:26, 4:6, 1 Jn. 3:1-2**).

:36 **"So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.** He's just been mentioning His Father in **8:16,18,19,27,28**. Jesus is His Father's Son. And by faith in the Person and work of Jesus, we'll become sons also! "The truth will set you free and so will I!" The hope for real freedom does not lie in the ancestry of Abraham, but in the Person & action of Jesus, the I AM (**:24,28,58**). And if Jesus adopts you into the Father's household and you become a son too, He sets you free to live as all humans are intended (**1:12**), taking you from a position of slavery to one of sonship (**Rom. 8:17, Gal. 4:1-6**).

Freedom—being able to be all you were meant to be. Freedom from fear, slavery to sin, the penalty of sin, being separated forever from God. Your life of trust and obedience will begin revealing outwardly who God has made you inwardly. One is free when sin no longer rules over you and when the Word (Jesus 1:1, the Bible 17:17) dominates your heart and mind and choices.

Read :37-47. Religion apart from Jesus and the Word deceives people into thinking they are right with God when in reality they are not.

:37-38 “I (fully) know that you are Abraham’s descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word (3056 logos) has no place in you. :38 I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father. Yes, I realize you are descendants of Abraham, and yet some of you are trying to kill Me because My logos doesn’t find a place in you. You aren’t doing the deeds of Abraham (:39).” Notice, He doesn’t make their slavery to sin the issue; rejection of Him and His Word are the issue. Unlike Abraham, who believed God and His Word (**read Gen. 15:1-6, Rom. 4:3-17**), Jesus and the Word had no place in them. National descent from Abraham and physical circumcision or even possession of the Law counted for nothing. Who then are the real children of Abraham? All true believers in Jesus and His truth. **Jn. 10:5, Rom. 4:11-12; Gal. 3:7,29.**

:38 What was the problem with the physical descendants of Abraham? They had a different father, which was proved by their murderous hatred of Jesus. “I am telling you what I saw when I was with My Father. But you are following the advice of your father.” Jesus had heard the truth from His Father. In the same way that Jesus’ conduct proved His Father was God, the conduct of Jesus’ enemies proved that their father was not the God of the Bible—but was actually the devil (:44)! Because they did not know Jesus, they did not know His Father either (**8:19**). All of the apostle Paul’s lineage did not save him (**read Phil. 3:1-9**). Also see Abraham’s faith in **Gal. 3:1-29, Rom. 4:17.**

:39 They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” The question became “Who is your spiritual father?” It’s a matter of relationship. The father of all unbelievers is the devil (:44). **See Eph. 2:2-3, 1 Jn. 3:8-10. Jesus said to them, “If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham.** “Our father is Abraham,” they declared. “No,” Jesus replied, “for if you were children of Abraham you would ‘do’ His deeds.” What was Abraham’s example? By faith He acted on God’s word: remember **:31-32, Gen. 15:6.** The NT repeatedly emphasizes Abraham’s faith (**Rom. 4:17, Gal. 3:6-14, Heb. 11:8-12,17-19**). Abraham is the supreme example of a man who took God at His word and ‘did’ it! Salvation is not based on legalistic effort, religious affiliation, or ethnic background. It is based on faith in Jesus and His truth!

:40 “But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. You have a murderer for a father, and you’re seeking to follow His example. I told you the truth (:32). I heard from God but you are trying to kill Me [because of making Himself equal with the Father]. Abraham would never do a thing like that.”

:41a “You are doing the deeds of your father. Your father is the kind of father who encourages people to kill God’s only Son! You are obeying your real father when you act that way.” If not Abraham or God the Father, who is their father?

:41b They said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, God.” Perhaps implying that Jesus’ birth was illegitimate, but probably referring to their claim of Abraham and God being their father—no one else.

Perhaps the words are a disclaimer of the suggestion that they had been guilty of an idolatrous relationship with God. Yahweh had said, “Israel is my firstborn son” (Ex. 4:22, Dt. 32:6, Is. 63:16, Is. 64:8, Jer. 31:9). Spiritually speaking, God was the Father only of those who had truly come to saving faith in His Son. They insisted their true Father was God Himself! Who would Jesus say is our father?

:42-43 Jesus said to them, “If God were your father, you would love (agapē) Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. :43 Why do you not (progress in) understand what I am saying? *It is because you cannot hear My word (logos).*” The real test is how people react to Jesus; do they/we love Him? Earlier, **5:23**, later **15:23**. “If God were your father, you would agapē Me [as He loves Me! **10:17, 15:9, 17:23-24**] because I have come to you from God. I’m not here on My own; He sent Me. I’m not defending Myself or seeking My own glory or speaking My own words. He sent Me and I’m only doing and saying what He wants Me to do and say.” His works; His words. May we do the same!

:43 Then Jesus asks 3 questions of them (**:43,46**), and (I believe) pauses for an answer after each question. He awaits their response. There is none, so He answers His own questions. (1) “Why do you not understand what I am saying? (2) Which one of you convicts Me of sin? (3) If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?”

(1) “Why haven’t you come to know what I’m saying? (Pause for answer) It’s because you’re unable to hear My logos.” They are spiritually deaf. The Jews were unable—literally unable—to hear His logos, the word which He Himself is and spoke. Yet, because of their chosen unbelief, Jesus holds them accountable for this inability. “And, you don’t have God as your father” (**:42**). Also remember, they’re slaves of sin. They are misled by their father (**:44**).

:44 “You are of *your* father the devil (slanderer, false accuser), and you want to [continually] do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is liar and the father of lies.” Some today say the devil doesn’t exist. Jesus believes that the devil actually exists and that he exerts a tremendous influence on earth (the invisible kingdom under which all of us live until/unless we come into God’s family). A child manifests his father’s characteristics. Sinners are constantly desiring to carry out the wishes (desires, yearnings) of their father, the devil.

“Ever since his initial rebellion (**Is. 14:12-14, Ezek. 28:12-16, Lk. 10:18**), Satan has tirelessly waged war against God and His servants. The conflict, which began in the angelic realm (**Dan. 10:13,20; Eph. 6:12, Rev. 12:4,7-9**), was brought to earth when Satan tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (**Gen. 3:1-19**). His goal is to hinder God’s purposes and obscure God’s message.” “Your father was a murderer from the beginning, wanting to put people to death spiritually! This slanderer is your father, and you want to do his desires! He does NOT stand in the truth because there is no truth in him! Do you get that? No truth!! He is by nature a liar, so whenever he speaks, he lies! A murderer and a liar, a destroyer and a deceiver. Not a giver of life but a taker of life. Not a speaker of truth but a lover of lies. He’s only doing who

he is. He hates everything I stand for—truth and life. The devil is your father!”

Satan’s temptation of Adam and Eve brought about their spiritual death and that of the entire human race (**Gen. 2:17, Rom. 5:12, 1 Cor. 15:21-22**). His convincing lie to Eve was, “You surely will not die!” (**Gen. 3:4**). He continues to deceive people (**2 Cor. 4:4**), cleverly disguising himself as an angel of light (**2 Cor. 11:14**). Between the devil and life/truth there is absolutely no connection. On the other hand, Jesus is the truth & speaks truth, straight from His Father. Whenever He speaks, He is telling us what we need to know and understand. “You aren’t hearing/understanding My words! Because of your unbelief, you’re not capable” (:43). Remember, it’s those who ‘do’ who discern Jesus’ truth (**7:17**).

:45 “But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.” As children of a murderer and the father of lies, they were unable and unwilling to believe and receive Him. Anyone who continually practices sin is of the devil (**1 Jn. 3:8**). They will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires (**2 Tim. 4:3-4**). “Because of your father and who he is, when I tell the truth, you choose not to believe Me!” Jesus had come not to judge the world but to save it, and for this it was necessary that He cast out the prince of this world (**12:31**) and destroy the works of the devil (**1 Jn. 3:8**).

:46 2nd and 3rd questions. (2) **“Which one of you convicts Me of sin? (3) If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?** Is there anyone here who can point the finger at any evil in My life, just one sin, where I’m missing My Father’s target?” (pause!) To convict means to charge and then prove that charge. No one says anything. If any of His enemies had had one shred of evidence against Him, they obviously would have used it. “If not, then why don’t you accept what I say?” (pause!) One must either conclude Jesus is a madman, absolutely out of His head to make such claims, or, you have to believe who He is & what He says.

2 Cor. 5:21 says He knew no sin (also see **Heb. 4:15, 7:26, 1 Pet. 2:22**). No sin. They could not prove Him guilty of anything (**18:23**). He was only speaking truth! If no sin can be legitimately charged and He was only speaking truth, why didn’t they believe Him? He answers His own questions in **:47**.

:47 “He who is of God hears the words (rhēma, definite sayings) of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.” Anyone whose Father is the Biblical God listens attentively to the definite sayings of God. “Jesus’ logic is irrefutable”: He who is of God hears the words (rhēma) of God. “Since you don’t choose to listen, it proves God is not your Father, and that you are not of God.” He has revealed them, not as free-before-God people, but as slaves, slaves to sin, desperately needing the work of a Redeemer.

This brings us back to **:31-32**. Jesus and His truth are the only way out. Who are you in relationship to Jesus and His truth? We are in the presence of the ultimate conflict between light and darkness, between the kingdom of God, which is life and light and truth, and the kingdom of the devil, which is death, darkness, and falsehood! Man does not stand at some midpoint, half-good and half-bad. You’re either of God or not of God. You either hear Jesus’ words or don’t. Which are you? Of God or not of God, hearing Jesus’ words or not hearing them!

Read :48-59. :48 The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?” When they have no logical answer, they resort to ridicule. Calling Jesus names rather than refuting His arguments. “You are a Samaritan!” That was about the cruelest thing the Jews could think of. There was deadly hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans. A Samaritan—a product of illegitimate union between Israel and paganism. The Samaritans were the descendants of Jews who had remained in the northern kingdom after its fall and intermarried with pagans transplanted there by the Assyrians (**2 Kings 17:23-24**). They were considered physical and spiritual half-breeds. Hatred was so great that the Jews avoided dealing with the Samaritans altogether (**4:9**), and some refused even to travel through Samaria. Interesting: Jesus first revealed Himself as Messiah to a Samaritan woman (**4:25-26**) & used a Samaritan to illustrate a good neighbor (**Lk. 10:33-35**).

The people responded, “Didn’t we say all along that you were possessed by a demon? You’re demon-possessed.” This was their conclusion. According to John, demon-possession was attributed to Jesus on 3 occasions (**7:20, 8:52, 10:20**; also see **Mt. 12:24**). After this verbal abuse, next they’ll attempt to stone Him.

In our day, the spiritual battle continues to rage (**2 Cor. 4:3-4, Eph. 6:12-18**). **1 Jn. 3:8** “**The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.**” The Synoptic Gospels are filled with confrontations between Jesus and Satan’s forces (both demonic and human).

:49 Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. No demon-possessed person could possibly honor God the Father. Jesus’ one aim was to honor God; He sought only the glory of the Father. And by their dishonor of Jesus, the Jews were dishonoring the very God whom they claimed as their father.

:50 “But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks & judges (decides). There is One who seeks honor for the Son; that’s the Father: at Jesus’ baptism (**Mt. 3:17**) and at His transfiguration (**Mt. 17:5**). After His redeeming death and resurrection, God highly exalted Him (**Phil. 2:9-11**). **Ps. 2:6-12, 110:1, Is. 52:13**. It’s God the Father who is seeking and judging/deciding. Even when wrongly treated, Jesus committed Himself to Him who judges righteously (**1 Pet. 2:23**). Paul tells us to put any revenge into God’s hand (**Rom. 12:14-21**). Jesus became flesh and dwelt among us to reveal His Father’s glory, to seek and to save that which was lost (**Lk. 19:10**), to bear the sins of many (**Heb. 9:28**), and to save His people from their sins (**Mt. 1:21**).

:51 “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone ‘keeps’ My word he will never see death.” This is a statement of major significance. A double negative to emphasize His claim: “He/She will never, ever see death.” The Jews have murder in their hearts, and He has nothing but love in His. They are thinking of death for Him, but He is offering them life. “Death as here used is separation from being with God for all eternity and experiencing the crushing weight of His wrath and condemnation forever.” Obedient believers have entered into a relationship with God which neither time nor eternity can sever. They will never experience spiritual death, the second death (**Rev. 2:11, 20:14, 21:8**).

Though the believer will die physically, that's not who he/she is spiritually. We have eternal life (**6:63,68, 17:3**), beginning the moment we come to know Jesus as Lord. We'll receive new resurrection bodies. Here is the One who in 6 months would conquer the devil and death (**Heb. 2:14-15**).

:52-53 The Jews said to Him, "Now we know (1097) that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets *also*, and You say, "If anyone keeps My word (logos) he will never taste of death." "Now we know You are demon-possessed!" Like their father, they were liars, murderers, and enemies of God. "It is obvious that Abraham and the prophets died." **Read Gen. 5.** "Who do You make Yourself out to be?" Jesus is the source of eternal life for all who believe. He will Himself taste death for every person (**Heb. 2:9**).

:53 "Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?" A negative answer is assumed. The Jews are confident that, as descendants of Abraham, they are within the covenant which God made with Abraham and his seed. "You're not greater than our father Abraham, are You? Who are You?"

:54-55 Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God'; :55 and you have not come to know (1097 progress in knowledge of) Him, but I (fully) know Him; and if I say that I do not (fully) know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do (fully) know Him and keep His Word. :54 "If I bestow honor—ascribe weight by recognizing real value, praise; (we may say "That's heavy!)—**on Myself, My glory is nothing** (empty, no substance/merit)." All true honor must come from God. "For them to piously claim to know God [as their Father] while blaspheming and rejecting His Son was ludicrous."

:55 Jesus calls these men liars right to their face. Jesus would have been a liar if He had denied fully knowing God (**1:18, 7:29, 10:15, Mt. 11:27**). By the way, the Lord's judgment and condemnation of the false religious leaders' practices would reach its peak during Passion Week (see **Mt. 23**).

:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced [past tense] to see (3708 perceive) My day, and he saw *it* and was glad." Abraham was able to enter into the joy of Jesus' coming to earth. Abraham and Moses and the prophets died in faith, not having received what was promised but having seen it and greeted it from afar (**Heb. 11:13**). Abraham's security was in the faithfulness of the One who promised. They wanted to murder the very One in whose coming Abraham rejoiced.

:57 So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen (3708) Abraham?" Jesus was about 30 when He began His ministry (**Lk. 3:23**). "How can You possibly have seen Abraham?"

:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM (:24,28)!" Jesus had seen Abraham! "Listen carefully to what I'm going to share with you." This was the most stunning and incredible claim of all that Jesus had said. Jesus was forcing this issue upon these men. He drove them to a decision concerning Him. Jesus did not say: "Before Abraham was, I was," but, "Before Abraham was, I AM." Jesus is timeless; He had no beginning; He has no end. I AM denotes eternal existence, not simply

existence prior to Abraham. Jesus was declaring Himself to be YaHWeH, the LORD of the OT (**Ex. 3:14, 34:6, Is. 41:4, 43:10**), where God declared Himself to be the eternally existing God who revealed Himself in the OT to the Jews. “Abraham became, but I was already there.” “YaHWeH, the name too sacred to be uttered by the Jews. These are either the words of the most impudent blasphemer that ever spoke, or, the words of God incarnate.” Before creation and all time, the Word was in the beginning with God (**1:1**). “It’s not only the idea of existence prior to Abraham, but timelessness—God’s very nature!”

:59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple. They knew exactly what He was claiming. The Jews understood Jesus’ claim and followed **Lev. 24:16**. Men loved the darkness rather than the Light (**3:19**). **Jesus hid Himself** (perhaps amid a crowd of friends). He knows no one can touch Him until His hour comes.

There are only 2 possible responses to Jesus’ claims for His listeners: they could fall down and worship Him, as the former blind man does in **9:38**, but, if they chose not to believe “that I AM,” they would die in their sins (**8:24**). Either He is the Truth or He is a liar. Either He is God and Lord and Christ, or He is not. Either you accept Him or you reject Him. Either we believe Him and worship Him as Who He is, or, we reject Him. Remember that your decision does not in any way change who He is. When we see Him as **:48-59** sets Him forth, there is only one choice we have.

How do you see Him in action? In dealing with Nicodemus, with the woman at the well, with the royal official, with the without-strength man, with the hungry crowd, with the religious leaders, with you? How do you ‘hear’ Him in speech, declaring: “I am the Light of the world, the Bread of life, the good Shepherd, the Door of the sheepfold, the Resurrection and the Life, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the true Vine? Before Abraham was born, I AM. I and MY Father are one. I am from above.” **And we saw His glory, full of grace and full of truth (1:14). Read 1:18.** Together we say, “We believe You and we believe in You!” How do you respond to this chapter’s truths? Joel

NOTES There was a Messianic expectation clearly taught in Scripture (**Heb. 11:13; Gen. 3:15; Dt. 18:15-18; 2 Sam. 7:12-13; Ps. 2:8, 118:26; Is. 7:14, 9:6, 42:1-25, 53:1-12; Dan. 7:13-15; Mic. 5:2; Zech. 6:12-13; Mal 3:1; Mt. 11:1-3,10; Lk. 2:25-26,38; 3:15; Jn. 1:19-28,41, 4:25,29,42, 6:14, 11:27; Acts 7:52, 10:43; Heb. 10:37; 1 Pet. 1:10-12**).

Welcome, fellow disciples. These 29 verses (**John 8:31-59**) record some of the most powerful truths in Scripture. They record those who are real disciples of Jesus, who one's spiritual father is, and who Jesus is. In the midst of His sharing such truths with them, Jesus encounters opposition, and, at last there is even an attempt to stone Him because of apparent blasphemy.

In these verses, Jesus says, "**The truth will make you free!**", given by the One who is the truth (**14:6, Eph. 4:21**), characteristic of the God who is true (**7:28, 8:26**), and whose Spirit is the Spirit of truth (**15:26, 16:13**). We need the truth!

"Endless philosophies, worldviews, & religious systems have arisen over the centuries, each purporting to teach absolute truth, and each in turn canceling out the 'absolute' truths of those that came before it... People imagine that by denying the existence of absolute truth and by throwing off the shackles of biblical morality they will finally be set free... Postmodernists reject the notion that ultimate truth is knowable or even exists. They contend that the truths people believe are merely societal norms created by the culture in which they live." They are deliberately rejecting the One who is truth & speaks truth.

In **8:30** it says, "**As Jesus spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.**" Was their belief saving faith, or merely a first step toward it? Let's see.

Read :31-36. :31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue (abide, remain) in My word (3056 logos), then you are truly (certainly/surely) disciples (learners) of Mine." :31-32 is a pivotal passage in the Bible. These people had recognized who Jesus was declaring to be, and they had believed in Him. And, like He always does, Jesus took them where they were & led them to further truth, saving truth. He does the same with us!

:31 True disciples are Word (Jesus and the Bible)-oriented. You choose to believe Jesus and His words are true, and, by faith, you choose to begin to act on them; you 'do' His will (**7:17**). Are you such a believer, Jesus' disciple?

If so, **:32 you will know (1097 come to know) the truth (reality, fact), & the truth will make you free (liberated).** Jesus is the truth, and His Word is truth. The truth that brings true spiritual freedom begins by believing in Jesus, then continuing in His Word, learning and 'doing' His truth. "**Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth**" (**17:17**). True freedom! Freedom from being a slave of sin; freedom from spiritual death; freedom from the Law; freedom from trying to live by the flesh. His truth will liberate you to live in line with who He is and who He's made you. To know Jesus' truth is radical.

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God had established a forever covenant with them, the Abrahamic covenant (**Gen. 12:1-3, 15:1-21, 17:1-14, 19, 22:15-18**). "Because of our ancestry, we

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might be slaves in body but never in soul. We're free before God!" Yet they were so mastered by sin they didn't understand when the Truth gave the Truth to them.

:34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you [What I'm about to say to you is of great importance!], everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin." A slave of sin, whether in attitude/action/motivation/power source, you are a slave of that wrong. **See Rom. 6:16, 11:32, 2 Pet. 2:19.** 'Commits sin' means to practice sin habitually, constantly doing sin; the present tense views sin as a way of life, not merely as individual acts. **1 Jn. 3:4-6.** As **Rom. 3:23** makes clear, everyone without Jesus is constantly missing the target of God's glory. You see even their leaders' sin in **8:7-9**; they reluctantly admitted their sin!

If freedom is being able to be all God meant you to be, then slavery is to lose all possibility of that. When you think you can handle sin and finally decide to quit and change, you find you can't, whether a hot temper, drunkenness, sexual lust, pornography, pride, lovelessness, prejudice, jealousy, anger, malice, revenge, greed, lack of self-control. **See Rom. 1:18-32, 2 Tim. 3:1-7.**

All are born sinners and all have sinned; therefore, all are slaves of sin. One finds him/herself under the control of the devil and the lusts of the flesh and the pressures of the world. The only way for sinners to be released from sin's grip and penalty is to repent of their sins and be united by faith with Jesus, who in His death and resurrection provided deliverance. It would take His death for us so the old man (a sinner by nature and in Adam) could become a new man in Christ and our sins could be forgiven. **Rom. 5:11-6:23** is helpful. Plus...

:35 "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever." A slave isn't a permanent member of a family, but a son is part of the family forever (see **Gal. 4:1-7**). "It's true you're in Abraham's house, but you are not there as sons; you are there as slaves of sin." It is only those who receive Jesus who are truly sons of God (**1:12, Rom. 8:14, Gal. 3:26, 4:6, 1 Jn. 3:1-2**).

:36 "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. He's just been mentioning His Father in **8:16,18,19,27,28**. Jesus is His Father's Son. And by faith in the Person and work of Jesus, we'll become sons also! "The truth will set you free and so will I!" The hope for real freedom does not lie in the ancestry of Abraham, but in the Person & action of Jesus, the I AM (**:24,28,58**). And if Jesus adopts you into the Father's household and you become a son too, He sets you free to live as all humans are intended (**1:12**), taking you from a position of slavery to one of sonship (**Rom. 8:17, Gal. 4:1-6**).

Freedom—being able to be all you were meant to be. Freedom from fear, slavery to sin, the penalty of sin, being separated forever from God. Your life of trust and obedience will begin revealing outwardly who God has made you inwardly. One is free when sin no longer rules over you and when the Word (Jesus 1:1, the Bible 17:17) dominates your heart and mind and choices.

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Read :37-47. Religion apart from Jesus and the Word deceives people into thinking they are right with God when in reality they are not.

:37-38 “I (fully) know that you are Abraham’s descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word (3056 logos) has no place in you. :38 I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father. Yes, I realize you are descendants of Abraham, and yet some of you are trying to kill Me because My logos doesn’t find a place in you. You aren’t doing the deeds of Abraham (:39).” Notice, He doesn’t make their slavery to sin the issue; rejection of Him and His Word are the issue. Unlike Abraham, who believed God and His Word (**read Gen. 15:1-6, Rom. 4:3-17**), Jesus and the Word had no place in them. National descent from Abraham and physical circumcision or even possession of the Law counted for nothing. Who then are the real children of Abraham? All true believers in Jesus and His truth. **Jn. 10:5, Rom. 4:11-12; Gal. 3:7,29.**

:38 What was the problem with the physical descendants of Abraham? They had a different father, which was proved by their murderous hatred of Jesus. “I am telling you what I saw when I was with My Father. But you are following the advice of your father.” Jesus had heard the truth from His Father. In the same way that Jesus’ conduct proved His Father was God, the conduct of Jesus’ enemies proved that their father was not the God of the Bible—but was actually the devil (:44)! Because they did not know Jesus, they did not know His Father either (**8:19**). All of the apostle Paul’s lineage did not save him (**read Phil. 3:1-9**). Also see Abraham’s faith in **Gal. 3:1-29, Rom. 4:17**.

:39 They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” The question became “Who is your spiritual father?” It’s a matter of relationship. The father of all unbelievers is the devil (:44). See **Eph. 2:2-3, 1 Jn. 3:8-10**. Jesus said to them, “If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham. “Our father is Abraham,” they declared. “No,” Jesus replied, “for if you were children of Abraham you would ‘do’ His deeds.” What was Abraham’s example? By faith He acted on God’s word: remember **:31-32, Gen. 15:6**. The NT repeatedly emphasizes Abraham’s faith (**Rom. 4:17, Gal. 3:6-14, Heb. 11:8-12,17-19**). Abraham is the supreme example of a man who took God at His word and ‘did’ it! Salvation is not based on legalistic effort, religious affiliation, or ethnic background. It is based on faith in Jesus and His truth!

:40 “But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. You have a murderer for a father, and you’re seeking to follow His example. I told you the truth (:32). I heard from God but you are trying to kill Me [because of making Himself equal with the Father]. Abraham would never do a thing like that.”

:41a “You are doing the deeds of your father. Your father is the kind of father who encourages people to kill God’s only Son! You are obeying your real father when you act that way.” If not Abraham or God the Father, who is their father?

:41b They said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, God.” Perhaps implying that Jesus’ birth was illegitimate, but probably referring to their claim of Abraham and God being their father—no one else.

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Perhaps the words are a disclaimer of the suggestion that they had been guilty of an idolatrous relationship with God. Yahweh had said, “Israel is my firstborn son” (Ex. 4:22, Dt. 32:6, Is. 63:16, Is. 64:8, Jer. 31:9). Spiritually speaking, God was the Father only of those who had truly come to saving faith in His Son. They insisted their true Father was God Himself! Who would Jesus say is our father?

:42-43 Jesus said to them, “If God were your father, you would love (agapē) Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. :43 Why do you not (progress in) understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word (logos).” The real test is how people react to Jesus; do they/we love Him? Earlier, **5:23**, later **15:23**. “If God were your father, you would agapē Me [as He loves Me! **10:17, 15:9, 17:23-24**] because I have come to you from God. I’m not here on My own; He sent Me. I’m not defending Myself or seeking My own glory or speaking My own words. He sent Me and I’m only doing and saying what He wants Me to do and say.” His works; His words. May we do the same!

:43 Then Jesus asks 3 questions of them (**:43,46**), and (I believe) pauses for an answer after each question. He awaits their response. There is none, so He answers His own questions. (1) “Why do you not understand what I am saying? (2) Which one of you convicts Me of sin? (3) If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?”

(1) “Why haven’t you come to know what I’m saying? (Pause for answer) It’s because you’re unable to hear My logos.” They are spiritually deaf. The Jews were unable—literally unable—to hear His logos, the word which He Himself is and spoke. Yet, because of their chosen unbelief, Jesus holds them accountable for this inability. “And, you don’t have God as your father” (**:42**). Also remember, they’re slaves of sin. They are misled by their father (**:44**).

:44 “You are of *your* father the devil (slanderer, false accuser), and you want to [continually] do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is liar and the father of lies.” Some today say the devil doesn’t exist. Jesus believes that the devil actually exists and that he exerts a tremendous influence on earth (the invisible kingdom under which all of us live until/unless we come into God’s family). A child manifests his father’s characteristics. Sinners are constantly desiring to carry out the wishes (desires, yearnings) of their father, the devil.

“Ever since his initial rebellion (**Is. 14:12-14, Ezek. 28:12-16, Lk. 10:18**), Satan has tirelessly waged war against God and His servants. The conflict, which began in the angelic realm (**Dan. 10:13,20; Eph. 6:12, Rev. 12:4,7-9**), was brought to earth when Satan tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (**Gen. 3:1-19**). His goal is to hinder God’s purposes and obscure God’s message.” “Your father was a murderer from the beginning, wanting to put people to death spiritually! This slanderer is your father, and you want to do his desires! He does NOT stand in the truth because there is no truth in him! Do you get that? No truth!! He is by nature a liar, so whenever he speaks, he lies! A murderer and a liar, a destroyer and a deceiver. Not a giver of life but a taker of life. Not a speaker of truth but a lover of lies. He’s only doing who

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Satan’s temptation of Adam and Eve brought about their spiritual death and that of the entire human race (**Gen. 2:17, Rom. 5:12, 1 Cor. 15:21-22**). His convincing lie to Eve was, “You surely will not die!” (**Gen. 3:4**). He continues to deceive people (**2 Cor. 4:4**), cleverly disguising himself as an angel of light (**2 Cor. 11:14**). Between the devil and life/truth there is absolutely no connection. On the other hand, Jesus is the truth & speaks truth, straight from His Father. Whenever He speaks, He is telling us what we need to know and understand. “You aren’t hearing/understanding My words! Because of your unbelief, you’re not capable” (:43). Remember, it’s those who ‘do’ who discern Jesus’ truth (7:17).

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This brings us back to **:31-32**. Jesus and His truth are the only way out. Who are you in relationship to Jesus and His truth? We are in the presence of the ultimate conflict between light and darkness, between the kingdom of God, which is life and light and truth, and the kingdom of the devil, which is death, darkness, and falsehood! Man does not stand at some midpoint, half-good and half-bad. You’re either of God or not of God. You either hear Jesus’ words or don’t. Which are you? Of God or not of God, hearing Jesus’ words or not hearing them!

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Read :48-59. :48 The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?” When they have no logical answer, they resort to ridicule. Calling Jesus names rather than refuting His arguments. “You are a Samaritan!” That was about the cruelest thing the Jews could think of. There was deadly hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans. A Samaritan—a product of illegitimate union between Israel and paganism. The Samaritans were the descendants of Jews who had remained in the northern kingdom after its fall and intermarried with pagans transplanted there by the Assyrians (**2 Kings 17:23-24**). They were considered physical and spiritual half-breeds. Hatred was so great that the Jews avoided dealing with the Samaritans altogether (**4:9**), and some refused even to travel through Samaria. Interesting: Jesus first revealed Himself as Messiah to a Samaritan woman (**4:25-26**) & used a Samaritan to illustrate a good neighbor (**Lk. 10:33-35**).

The people responded, “Didn’t we say all along that you were possessed by a demon? You’re demon-possessed.” This was their conclusion. According to John, demon-possession was attributed to Jesus on 3 occasions (**7:20, 8:52, 10:20**; also see **Mt. 12:24**). After this verbal abuse, next they’ll attempt to stone Him.

In our day, the spiritual battle continues to rage (**2 Cor. 4:3-4, Eph. 6:12-18**). **1 Jn. 3:8** “**The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.**” The Synoptic Gospels are filled with confrontations between Jesus and Satan’s forces (both demonic and human).

:49 Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. No demon-possessed person could possibly honor God the Father. Jesus’ one aim was to honor God; He sought only the glory of the Father. And by their dishonor of Jesus, the Jews were dishonoring the very God whom they claimed as their father.

:50 “But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks & judges (decides). There is One who seeks honor for the Son; that’s the Father: at Jesus’ baptism (**Mt. 3:17**) and at His transfiguration (**Mt. 17:5**). After His redeeming death and resurrection, God highly exalted Him (**Phil. 2:9-11**). **Ps. 2:6-12, 110:1, Is. 52:13**. It’s God the Father who is seeking and judging/deciding. Even when wrongly treated, Jesus committed Himself to Him who judges righteously (**1 Pet. 2:23**). Paul tells us to put any revenge into God’s hand (**Rom. 12:14-21**). Jesus became flesh and dwelt among us to reveal His Father’s glory, to seek and to save that which was lost (**Lk. 19:10**), to bear the sins of many (**Heb. 9:28**), and to save His people from their sins (**Mt. 1:21**).

:51 “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone ‘keeps’ My word he will never see death.” This is a statement of major significance. A double negative to emphasize His claim: “He/She will never, ever see death.” The Jews have murder in their hearts, and He has nothing but love in His. They are thinking of death for Him, but He is offering them life. “Death as here used is separation from being with God for all eternity and experiencing the crushing weight of His wrath and condemnation forever.” Obedient believers have entered into a relationship with God which neither time nor eternity can sever. They will never experience spiritual death, the second death (**Rev. 2:11, 20:14, 21:8**).

Read :48-59. :48 The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?” When they have no logical answer, they resort to ridicule. Calling Jesus names rather than refuting His arguments. “You are a Samaritan!” That was about the cruelest thing the Jews could think of. There was deadly hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans. A Samaritan—a product of illegitimate union between Israel and paganism. The Samaritans were the descendants of Jews who had remained in the northern kingdom after its fall and intermarried with pagans transplanted there by the Assyrians (**2 Kings 17:23-24**). They were considered physical and spiritual half-breeds. Hatred was so great that the Jews avoided dealing with the Samaritans altogether (**4:9**), and some refused even to travel through Samaria. Interesting: Jesus first revealed Himself as Messiah to a Samaritan woman (**4:25-26**) & used a Samaritan to illustrate a good neighbor (**Lk. 10:33-35**).

The people responded, “Didn’t we say all along that you were possessed by a demon? You’re demon-possessed.” This was their conclusion. According to John, demon-possession was attributed to Jesus on 3 occasions (**7:20, 8:52, 10:20**; also see **Mt. 12:24**). After this verbal abuse, next they’ll attempt to stone Him.

In our day, the spiritual battle continues to rage (**2 Cor. 4:3-4, Eph. 6:12-18**). **1 Jn. 3:8** “**The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.**” The Synoptic Gospels are filled with confrontations between Jesus and Satan’s forces (both demonic and human).

:49 Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. No demon-possessed person could possibly honor God the Father. Jesus’ one aim was to honor God; He sought only the glory of the Father. And by their dishonor of Jesus, the Jews were dishonoring the very God whom they claimed as their father.

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Though the believer will die physically, that's not who he/she is spiritually. We have eternal life (**6:63,68, 17:3**), beginning the moment we come to know Jesus as Lord. We'll receive new resurrection bodies. Here is the One who in 6 months would conquer the devil and death (**Heb. 2:14-15**).

:52-53 The Jews said to Him, "Now we know (1097) that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets *also*, and You say, "If anyone keeps My word (logos) he will never taste of death." "Now we know You are demon-possessed!" Like their father, they were liars, murderers, and enemies of God. "It is obvious that Abraham and the prophets died." **Read Gen. 5.** "Who do You make Yourself out to be?" Jesus is the source of eternal life for all who believe. He will Himself taste death for every person (**Heb. 2:9**).

:53 "Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?" A negative answer is assumed. The Jews are confident that, as descendants of Abraham, they are within the covenant which God made with Abraham and his seed. "You're not greater than our father Abraham, are You? Who are You?"

:54-55 Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God'; :55 and you have not come to know (1097 progress in knowledge of) Him, but I (fully) know Him; and if I say that I do not (fully) know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do (fully) know Him and keep His Word. :54 "If I bestow honor—ascribe weight by recognizing real value, praise; (we may say "That's heavy!)—**on Myself, My glory is nothing** (empty, no substance/merit)." All true honor must come from God. "For them to piously claim to know God [as their Father] while blaspheming and rejecting His Son was ludicrous."

:55 Jesus calls these men liars right to their face. Jesus would have been a liar if He had denied fully knowing God (**1:18, 7:29, 10:15, Mt. 11:27**). By the way, the Lord's judgment and condemnation of the false religious leaders' practices would reach its peak during Passion Week (see **Mt. 23**).

:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced [past tense] to see (3708 perceive) My day, and he saw *it* and was glad." Abraham was able to enter into the joy of Jesus' coming to earth. Abraham and Moses and the prophets died in faith, not having received what was promised but having seen it and greeted it from afar (**Heb. 11:13**). Abraham's security was in the faithfulness of the One who promised. They wanted to murder the very One in whose coming Abraham rejoiced.

:57 So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen (3708) Abraham?" Jesus was about 30 when He began His ministry (**Lk. 3:23**). "How can You possibly have seen Abraham?"

:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM (:24,28)!" Jesus had seen Abraham! "Listen carefully to what I'm going to share with you." This was the most stunning and incredible claim of all that Jesus had said. Jesus was forcing this issue upon these men. He drove them to a decision concerning Him. Jesus did not say: "Before Abraham was, I was," but, "Before Abraham was, I AM." Jesus is timeless; He had no beginning; He has no end. I AM denotes eternal existence, not simply

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existence prior to Abraham. Jesus was declaring Himself to be YaHWeH, the LORD of the OT (**Ex. 3:14, 34:6, Is. 41:4, 43:10**), where God declared Himself to be the eternally existing God who revealed Himself in the OT to the Jews. “Abraham became, but I was already there.” “YaHWeH, the name too sacred to be uttered by the Jews. These are either the words of the most impudent blasphemer that ever spoke, or, the words of God incarnate.” Before creation and all time, the Word was in the beginning with God (**1:1**). “It’s not only the idea of existence prior to Abraham, but timelessness—God’s very nature!”

:59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple. They knew exactly what He was claiming. The Jews understood Jesus’ claim and followed **Lev. 24:16**. Men loved the darkness rather than the Light (**3:19**). **Jesus hid Himself** (perhaps amid a crowd of friends). He knows no one can touch Him until His hour comes.

There are only 2 possible responses to Jesus’ claims for His listeners: they could fall down and worship Him, as the former blind man does in **9:38**, but, if they chose not to believe “that I AM,” they would die in their sins (**8:24**). Either He is the Truth or He is a liar. Either He is God and Lord and Christ, or He is not. Either you accept Him or you reject Him. Either we believe Him and worship Him as Who He is, or, we reject Him. Remember that your decision does not in any way change who He is. When we see Him as **:48-59** sets Him forth, there is only one choice we have.

How do you see Him in action? In dealing with Nicodemus, with the woman at the well, with the royal official, with the without-strength man, with the hungry crowd, with the religious leaders, with you? How do you ‘hear’ Him in speech, declaring: “I am the Light of the world, the Bread of life, the good Shepherd, the Door of the sheepfold, the Resurrection and the Life, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the true Vine? Before Abraham was born, I AM. I and MY Father are one. I am from above.” **And we saw His glory, full of grace and full of truth (1:14). Read 1:18.** Together we say, “We believe You and we believe in You!” How do you respond to this chapter’s truths? Joel

NOTES There was a Messianic expectation clearly taught in Scripture (**Heb. 11:13; Gen. 3:15; Dt. 18:15-18; 2 Sam. 7:12-13; Ps. 2:8, 118:26; Is. 7:14, 9:6, 42:1-25, 53:1-12; Dan. 7:13-15; Mic. 5:2; Zech. 6:12-13; Mal 3:1; Mt. 11:1-3,10; Lk. 2:25-26,38; 3:15; Jn. 1:19-28,41, 4:25,29,42, 6:14, 11:27; Acts 7:52, 10:43; Heb. 10:37; 1 Pet. 1:10-12**).

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