

JOHN 8:21-59 | DEBATES WITH THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

- Verses 21-33 – see session 37
- Verses 34-39 - Topic #6
  - In response to the Jews saying they had never been enslaved (v. 34), Jesus speaks of their slavery to sin.
    - Startlingly, He says that **Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.**
    - While many use the Greek grammar to make this a focus on continual practice of sin, the grammar has a continuing action as a present active participle, but only implies they are *doing it right now*.
    - Grammar cannot tell us whether they have done it in the past or will do it in the future.
      - See John 5:18 and John 19:12 where the writer uses the same word in the same format to see that the only conclusion that can be made is that the sin is *being done at the moment*, not whether there is anything habitual.
    - In truth, when you and I *do sin*, we are, at that moment, the **servant of sin**.
      - How or when we became the servant is not answered.
      - Many preachers have attempted grammatical gymnastics with this verse because they cannot handle it saying what it says.
      - To solve the problem, one doesn't need to move beyond the *plain sense* of the sentence, but instead needs to avoid making the sentence to be about *salvation*.
  - Verses 35-36 present a contrast between **servant** and **Son**.
    - While KJV capitalizes **Son**, the analogy is general, pointing to the Son.
    - A servant must always *come and go* from **the house**, but the **Son abideth ever**.
    - It is the One who abides in the house that can make you **free indeed**. Thus anyone (**Whosoever** in v. 34) who sins can be servant to sin or can be set free in the Son.
  - But Jesus is speaking to those who are **Abraham's seed** (v. 37), even if they do act as if they are servants of sin. These people are recipients of the promises to Abraham. This is why it is *out of place* for the Jews to **seek to kill** Jesus (v. 37).
  - Verse 38 is difficult to understand, but likely implies that Jesus speaks from what He hears from God, but the Jewish people speak from what they have heard from their own father (i.e.: traditions).
  - Verse 38 is contrasted in verse 39, where the Jews claim **Abraham is our father**, and Jesus contests, **If ye were Abraham's children...**
    - How can Jesus say this when He has just said, **ye are Abraham's seed** in verse 37?
    - Likely **seed** is a reference to inheritance while **children** implies a closer relationship.
    - Thus, to paraphrase, "Yes, you are legal heirs of Abraham, but if you were *children* in relationship to father Abraham, **ye would do the works of Abraham.**"
  - In short, verses 34-39 allow Jesus to contest the claim that the Jews have never been enslaved (v. 33), by telling them they were currently enslaved to sin and tradition.
- Verses 40-41 - Topic #7

- Rather than **do the works of Abraham** (v. 39) these heirs of Abraham **seek to kill me** (v. 40) for telling the truth. They were therefore not doing the works of Abraham, but **the deeds of your father** (v. 41).
- While the identity of **your father** is not mentioned, the implication is they must be children of a different father, and thus **born of fornication**. The people insist that they are children of **one Father, even God**.
- Verses 42-48 - Topic #8
  - Jesus brings up the incongruity between claiming to be children of the Father and not loving the One who **proceeded forth and came from God** (v. 42). In other words: *one of us is a liar*.
  - While the implication had been previously given, now Jesus removes speculation, saying, **Ye are of your father the devil**, and doing the works of the devil (v. 44).
  - In verse 44, we learn a few interesting things about **the devil**.
    - First, **He was a murderer from the beginning**. We must make an interpretation of the beginning point. Likely this is, *from the beginning of humanity*. We do know that Cain **was of that wicked one** when he killed Abel (1 Jn. 3:12).
    - Second, the devil **abode not in the truth**. The word **abode** is *to remain*, giving us a reminder that the devil was once **in the truth** but did not remain there. His fall from the truth must have been prior to the deception of Genesis 3:1, thus somewhere between **In the beginning and the serpent was more subtil...**(Gen. 1:1 and 3:1).
  - In verse 46 Jesus asked, **Which of you convinceth me of sin?** That is, Jesus encourages the people to make formal charges against Him. A now antiquated definition of *convince* is to produce a moral conviction of sinfulness" (Oxford English Dictionary). They would neither convict Him of sin nor believe Him. Jesus was calling them to do one or the other.
  - In verse 47 Jesus made charges clear against them: **ye are not of God**. With this, the Jews took Jesus up on his challenge to convict Him and said clearly that He **hast a devil** (v. 48).
- Verses 49-53 - Topic #9
  - The Lord denies the accusation and makes a declaration: **I seek not mine own glory** (v. 50). However, He claims that **there is one that seeketh and judgeth**.
    - Presumably this speaks of the Father, who seeks the glory of the Son (Jn. 5:23). In seeking the glory of the son, the father **judgeth** the Son to be worthy.
    - Even if the **one that seeketh** is more general (as implied by the lower-case **one** in KJV), the truth remains: *the one who seeks the glory of the Son has judged the Son to be worthy of that glory*.
  - Verse 51 requires a dispensational change, as it is clearly a *works-based requirement* for eternal life. We absolutely cannot use it in sharing the Gospel today, even though it talks about eternal life.
  - The Jews respond to this declaration by charging Jesus, once again, that he **hast a devil** (v. 52). The evidence: *even Abraham and the prophets died*. They asked, **art thou greater than our father Abraham?** Of course, the answer is...YES!