

The Gospel of John - #34 - 09/12/2021 - "Fatal Flaws and Satan's Claws!" 8: 39-47

Introduction: IL- Open Doors in Santa Ana, California ministers to persecuted Christians all over the world, seeking to strengthen Christians wherever they are threatened for their faith. They have claimed that Afghanistan does not permit Christians to exist. Converting to Biblical Christianity is considered an act of treason since it is viewed as "a betrayal of family, tribe and country." Overall, persecution is at its highest level in recorded history!

Sin and Satan have brought threats and death to many around the world! This morning we will examine four identifiable marks of Christ-rejectors at any point in history...

Self-righteousness, alive and well- verses 39-41 The discussion between Jesus and the Jews here in chapter eight is lengthy and goes back and forth repeatedly. I counted 30 times in this chapter that one can see the words, "said" or "answered" and indicates that the subject at hand is of critical concern! What stands out here in this paragraph is the self-generated pride these Jews feel and express while they communicate with the Savior. While they talk to Jesus, what comes out in their words is the claim- "We are okay the way we are- we don't need or want your input about our ancestry or our actions!" James 2: 23 describes such an individual- "For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror and goes away, and at once forgets what he was like!" These Jews in John 8 are religiously consistent but spiritually rebellious. They may not have been grossly immoral, but they were still sinners and would not face up to that fact. Jesus had them pegged. For them, connection with the great man of faith, Abraham, was sufficient. To be from his gene pool meant everything to them, while Jesus meant nothing- worse than nothing- they wanted to see Him dead! They would not admit that if Abraham showed up to attest to the divine character of Jesus, they still would have rebelled against the Savior! They were not willing to consider themselves as sinners in need of God's grace. They don't say it in so many words, but they act as though this is true of them- "We have never allowed anyone to tell us how to worship or connect with God through our ancestor Abraham!" Conversely, the Apostle Paul puts it this way in Romans 9: 6 and 7- "Not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are the children of Abraham because they are his offspring!" Abraham, the "friend of God" worshiped and obeyed God out of a heart of faith most of his adult life. Take Genesis 12 as an example. God called him to leave Ur of the Chaldees and go to wherever God said. And verse 4 makes it plain- "So Abraham went!" That was clearly not the mark of these Jews. They saw Jesus as a madman, not as the Son of God! They didn't take His words seriously nor the written words in the Old Testament about the Messiah. Jesus, in verse 37, had stated already that He knew they were related to Abraham by blood, but also that they wanted nothing to do with Jesus' teachings! Jesus said, "My word finds no place in you!" His teachings did not find a home in them- they were not willing to open the door of faith to His words that alone can save. Most unsaved people today, if they were totally honest, would have to admit that they have been relying on self-righteousness to get them to Heaven! But God's people know Ephesians 2: 8 and 9 are the reality- "By grace are you saved through faith- it is the gift of God, NOT OF WORKS so that no one, (in any age), can boast." **IL-** Vance Havner- "The Devil is not fighting religion- he's too smart for that! He is producing a counterfeit Christianity so much like the real one that good

Christians are afraid to speak out against it!" Children of the flesh and not the Spirit always rely on works- and Satan loves it! Prideful works are his strong suit!

Scorching hatred of anything godly- verses 42, 43 Secondly, many Christ-rejectors fiercely attack those who lovingly share their faith and point out a person's sin of unbelief. The Christian seeking to win them to Christ reminds them of Romans 10: 13- "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!" The point of that? Salvation is simple, not complex. Turn to Christ today and humbly believe and accept that His work on the Cross is the payment for your sins and you will be saved, transformed by God's grace! Jesus told them, in verse 42- "I came from God, and I am here!" Jesus wanted them to know He was on earth for a purpose and wasn't going anywhere except to the Cross! These Jews didn't want to hear that or anything from Him for that matter, unless it was a hasty, "I guess I'll leave then, since I am not wanted!" Jesus is making the point that their sins were not minor flaws. It is as if Satan were an accomplished ventriloquist, and the Jews were his puppets! These Jews couldn't endure truth- it had "no place in them"! The Jews in this discussion were claiming spiritual credentials due to blood ties, but Jesus exposed that approach as one coming from the Devil himself. He longs to keep his followers in his grasp or in his lion-like claws. He is accurately described in 1 Peter 5: 8- "For your adversary, the Devil, like a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour." Peter, in that context, urges us to be both sober-minded (level-headed) and watchful! Satan's followers can't endure truth, true believers love the truth- Jesus Himself IS the Truth! **IL-** Charles Spurgeon used to teach that Satan attacks either by force or by fraud. He entices people away from God by false religion and through sinful pride. **IL-** Ed West- "We see so often why human beings are obsessed with status! Our lust for status is insatiable!" How did Satan get these devout Jews to be his errand boys?

Sinister plots of the Devil- verse 44 Jesus is abundantly clear about His enemy, Satan, and his sinister plots to keep him from being removed as "prince of the power of the air." (Ephesians 2: 1). Ephesians 6: 11- "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the Devil!" What does Paul mean in that text with the word, "schemes"? The word refers to a plan of action, an elaborate, systematic course of action- simply put- a strategy or a plot. As the Master deceiver he draws people away from the truth to something close but so far away! Satan causes these religionists to reject Jesus and His words of truth and instead to embrace Satan's lies. I found, in my concordance, 224 references to truth in the Bible. The truth about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, and the truth about the plan of salvation that God put into effect from before the days of Adam's and Eve's sin in the Garden, are the most important things we can read about, study and apply! Jesus referred to Satan's murderous character. Cain killed Abel as the earliest example of pre-meditated murder, but Satan's lies to Eve and the failure of both Adam and Eve to trust God and reject Satan's lies were the backdrop to death brought upon the whole human race throughout history. Lies, outright or otherwise, are Satan's invention and part of his plan to keep Christ-rejectors rejecting! Without us realizing it perhaps, Satan is the one who stirs the pot of defeat, discouragement and depression. These Jews in this chapter, sadly allowed their desires to match Satan's- get rid of Jesus! None of this is a fairy tale

or a video game! Satan uses devious methods to keep people enslaved to him without even knowing that they are his slaves and his promoters!

Straight-forward examples of Satanic control- verses 45, 46 One more thing to consider- claiming to know more than God about the history of Satan as Lucifer and his sin of wanting to be greater than God and being expelled from Heaven- is to play right into Satan's own kind of self-promotion! Jesus asked them- "Which of you convicts Me of sin?" The answer is clear- Satan surely sins again and again, and these religious Jesus-haters sinned repeatedly, but Jesus is the perfect, sinless Son of God- God in the flesh! The perfect and just wrath of God awaits Satan and those he controls. John 3: 36- "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him." **IL-** David Jeremiah- "Sneak into Satan's office, go through his files, and you'll find one with your name on it!" But if I have given my heart and mind and my life to Jesus, my file is gone, and my name is written somewhere else now- in the Book of Life in Heaven! Satan's doom is unchanging, he cannot apologize for all he has done to ruin this world, no matter how many tears he sheds! His fate is settled, as is the judgment that awaits all Christ-rejectors who do not turn to Jesus but continue to turn away!

by **contrast...**

True believers can focus on the Savior's praise for all He's done for us! verse 47 If we know Jesus as our Savior from sin and we stand strong in Him so that we need not fall prey to Satan's evil schemes, we have God's word to claim that our once fatal flaws of sin and unbelief are forever removed by faith in God's Son! Satan has no more dominion over us! Defeating Satan is God's job, while ours is to resist and stand strong- all the while on our knees in prayer! Praise Him this morning that ANYONE can know new life in Christ and a day-to-day victory over sin and Satan through Christ' blood shed for ALL sin- past, present and future! The Apostle Paul, after listing many sins that mark the Christ-rejector in 1 Corinthians 6, tells us in verse 11- "And such WERE some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God!" Satan loves to weigh people down with the guilt of a load of sin, but God loves to pick us up, be our strength and shield and focus our minds on Him since He deserves all the praise! Let me read, and urge you to follow along and to re-read often, these powerful words of praise from Ephesians 2: 1-7- "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body^{le} and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

And you know what verses 8 to 10 tell us!