

An Exposition of the  
**GOSPEL OF JOHN**



## “Blame It on the Relatives”

**John 8:37-47**

**Theme:** The children of God receive His Word as truth and live by it.

**Introduction:** When my mother was a little girl, her father, my grandfather, while enroute to visit my grandmother's family, would sing a most irreverent song. The children would giggle while my grandmother would swat him playfully. As they walked into the house, my grandfather would whistle the tune to the delight of the kids. The song was written in 1924 by Billy Jones. It went like this:

“Of all my wife’s relations, there’s one I love the best,  
    Oh how I hate the rest, her father is a pest.  
    I eat with all the rest, they treat me like a guest  
    And then I must confess, I’d like to shoot the rest  
    Of all my wife’s relations, I love myself the best!

But tension with in-laws isn’t the only difficulty with family relationships. While people often explain who they are by pointing to where they came from. They credit their family name, heritage, ancestry, and pedigree, and offer it as proof of identity and legitimacy. Yet many look to their ancestry and blame it for mistakes, abuses, and excesses, seeking a pass from personal responsibility because of others' failures. Yet Scripture repeatedly confronts this shallow confidence. Spiritual life is not inherited through bloodlines, culture, or religious association. A man may claim Abraham as his forefather, belong to the right nation, and practice the outward forms of religion—and still be utterly estranged from God. Jesus exposes this deadly self-deception in John 8:37–47, where the religious leaders attempt to ground their standing with God in their ancestry rather than in their response to the truth.

### [Read text]

Our Lord cuts through their claims with piercing clarity. He acknowledges their physical descent— “**I know that you are Abraham’s descendants**” (John 8:37)—yet immediately reveals the contradiction: they seek to kill the very One who speaks God’s truth. Their lineage cannot hide their rebellion. Their words, desires, and actions betray a different spiritual father. In one of the most sobering confrontations in all of Scripture, Jesus declares that true sonship is not proven by genealogy but by reception of God’s Word, love for God’s Son, and obedience to the truth. Where God is truly Father, His Word is welcomed, believed, and obeyed.

This passage compels each of us to abandon false assurances and confront the decisive question: **Whose child am I?** The children of God receive His Word as truth and live in obedience to Christ; the children of the devil resist the truth and reject the Son. As we walk through this text, we will

1. **Evaluate the Claim of Paternity – vv. 37-40**
2. **Expose a Corrupt Pedigree – vv. 41-45,**
3. **Explain the Characteristics of True Posterity – vv. 46-47**

By the time we are finished, may no one rest in heritage, but all find life in hearing, believing, and obeying the Word of God. So, the theme of this text is: “**The children of God receive His**

*Word as truth and live by it.”*

## **II. Evaluating the Claim of Paternity – 8:37-40**

### **A. The Difference between a Physical & Spiritual Lineage – vv. 37-38**

1. Having established the fact that being the physical descendants of Abraham does not prevent them from spiritual bondage – vv. 33-36.
2. Jesus acknowledges that their claim to paternity in a physical sense is correct – they are indeed the descendants of Abraham – ***“I know that you are Abraham’s descendants; ...”***
3. However, there is no correlation or similarity demonstrated between them and Abraham – they are completely inconsistent with Abraham’s character and conduct: ***“yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.”***
4. Essentially, whatever congruity they claimed physically is destroyed in the spiritual realm because of their response to the Word of God.
5. These people who are spiritually alienated from Abraham and his God are contrasted to the purity of Jesus’ relationship with God –
  - a) ***“I speak the things which I have seen with My Father”*** – there is perfect fellowship between the Father and Son that results in a clear display of intimacy between them.
  - b) ***“... therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.”*** – there is clear display that in the hatred of their hearts displayed in their desire to kill Jesus, as well as in their complete rejection of the teaching that comes directly from the Father, that their father must be other than God.

### **B. The Discrepancy with a Spiritual Heritage – vv. 39-40**

1. They immediately protest such a censure – ***“They answered and said to Him, ‘Abraham is our father’.”***
2. They are still clinging to a presupposition that their spiritual condition is based on something other than the effectual grace of God that reconciles each individual to Him by faith.
3. Jesus’ response to their claim to a spiritual heritage is ***“If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham.”***
4. If these people were truly the children of Abraham, they would:
  - a) *gladly receive the commands of God and obey them completely;*
  - b) *they would fully trust God to perform His will perfectly;*
  - c) *they would welcome the messengers of God;*
  - d) *and finally, they would rejoice to see the day of the Messiah – cp. John*

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8:56.

5. However, instead of these things, *“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.”*
6. Thus, Jesus clarifies the total spiritual genetic discrepancy, proving that Abraham is the father of only those who believe – cp. [Romans 4:11; 9:6-9](#).

### **III. Exposing a Corrupt Pedigree – 8:41-45**

#### **A. Their Penchmark for Falsehood – vv. 41-43**

1. Instead of doing the deeds of Abraham, their “professed” father, they were portraying the characteristics and conduct of the great enemy of God – *“You are doing the deeds of your father.”*
2. Their complete focus on the flesh, their religious identity and reputation, and their own self-righteous attitudes compel them to argue with the Lord and become harsh.
3. They respond to Him with an *“ad hominem”* attack – *“They said to Him, ‘We were not born of fornication’; ...”*
4. At first, this may seem somewhat defensive, but it is quite offensive – they were attacking Jesus of Nazareth and the “suspect” circumstances surrounding His birth.
5. They then profess themselves to be the paragon of virtue with a clearly established relationship with God – *“we have one Father, even God.”*
6. A person’s assertion regarding a relationship with God does not necessarily mean that actual have a relationship with God.
7. Jesus immediately contests their assertion: *“If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.”*
8. Since He came from the Father, every true child of God will be disposed to love the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son – cp. [1 John 5:1](#).
9. Jesus then diagnoses the reason they cannot love Him – *“Why do you not understand what I am saying?”* – and gives the answer in the demonstration of this entire context: *“It is because you cannot hear My word.”*
10. The lack of capacity to accept God’s Word is the clearest indication that they were not believers and were indeed enslaved to sin – [1 Corinthians 2:14](#).



## B. The Progenitor of Falsehood – *vv. 44-45*

1. Jesus goes directly to the issue – these people were far from children of God; they were nothing more than children of Satan.
2. Jesus no longer shrouds His points through tact – He directly confronts their delusion and identifies to whom they really belonged: ***You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.***
3. He not only alleges their origin, but He also proves it by identifying two clear similarities:
  - a) First, He states, ***“He was a murderer from the beginning”*** – a characteristic that corresponded directly with their “seek[ing] to kill Me” - cp. v. 40.
  - b) Second, He states that another feature of similarity is that Satan ***“does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in Him.”*** – a characteristic that corresponds directly to their assertions concerning Jesus’ illegitimacy
4. He then states that everything that Satan declares is false – ***“Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”***
5. It is as if Jesus were cross-matching spiritual blood types for a DNA test – when a person possesses a penchant for lying, he is demonstrating the nature generated in Hell.
6. When you attempt to cross-match such a person with Jesus, there is no congruity – ***“But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.”***

## IV. Explaining Characteristics of Posterity – *8:46-47*

### A. The Request for Impartiality – *v. 46*

1. Jesus challenges these people to look at the situation with impartiality – ***“Which one of you convicts Me of sin?”***

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2. He recognizes that there would be no accusation because He was aware of His perfect conformity to the Law of God – He is without sin – cp. ***Hebrews 4:15***.
3. However, He truly desires for sinful men to take stock of their own lives – so He asks, ***“If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?”***
4. Every person must come to a place where they evaluate their response to the Son of God – if one does not believe the Word of Christ, why not?

**B. The Reasons for Incongruity – v. 47**

1. We are told here exactly why there is diversity in responses to the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - a) *First is the truth governing those who are truly disciples of Jesus and therefore reconciled to God: “He who is of God hears the words of God.”*
  - b) *Second is the truth governing those who are not the followers of God through His Son Jesus Christ – they do not accept the Word of God as truth: “...for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.”*
2. To those who believe, the Word of God is as bread – the very words of life – ***Philippians 2:15***.

So What?

1. **In what ways might I be depending on religious background, family heritage, or outward morality instead of a living faith that truly receives and obeys the Word of Christ?**
2. **How does my response to the truthfulness of Jesus Christ expose the true condition of my heart before God?**
3. **In what ways am I treating God’s Word as the necessary sustenance of spiritual life rather than optional religious information?**

**Theme: The children of God receive His Word as truth and live by it.**