



**Let's Get Ready to Rumble!
Jesus and His Opponents: The Devil and His Kids
John 8:12 – 30**

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When we stopped last week, Jesus was teaching on the 8th day, the special sabbath holiday provided for by the Torah at the very end of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Jesus was teaching in the court of the women and had been confronted by a group of conniving pharisees who wanted to stage a kangaroo court. Their attempts horribly backfired on them publicly embarrassing them as well as some of the scribes in the process. Then Jesus went back to teaching. We ended with His statement of being the I Am.

John 8:12

“Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; the one who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.” (NASB 2020)

Jesus is the I am, He is God. When He says I am the Light, we lose a lot in the English translation. As we unpack this, we see the following:



- I am – the same one who was in the burning bush, God
- The Light – This is singular. There is no other source of light possible. GO dis it, He alone and no one else is the source of light for the one who is seeking the truth. Jesus says I am the light.
- Of the world – in Greek the word used is cosmos. When Jesus says I am the light of the cosmos, He is 1)claiming to be God 2)asserting there is only one God and there is no other source of light anywhere and 3)as such He is the only source of light for all of creation. He is the source of light for all created life. We are told this up front by John.

When Jesus makes this statement, His listeners know what He is saying and claiming.

- He is the Servant of Isaiah 49:6 and 60:6 who will be a light to the Gentile nations providing salvation for the entire planet.
- He is the Word (John 1:1) and as such, He is also light to guide the path of those who follow (Psalm 119:105).
- He is the source of light at the end of the age (Zechariah 14:6 – 7).
- He is claiming to be God with His people, the source of protection, and the one who guides.

Not all of the Pharisees disappeared, just those who were involved in the plot involving the woman caught in adultery. As always, the spies are there ready to pounce at the first sign of opportunity.

That statement, to them, constitutes opportunity.

I personally find this to be rather provocative. Jesus is following the Father, providing the requisite signs to validate who He is, insisting on adherence to the law, yet as He teaches, it is the religious “professionals” who continue to get in His face and work to hinder or end His ministry. This is no difference than what we see in the church today.

On February 8th, at a regularly scheduled chapel service revival broke out at Asbury University. For 16 days, the service continued as the Holy Spirit was poured out on the gathering. What the Holy Spirit started at Asbury spread to Samford University, Baylor University, Cedarville University, Texas A&M, Oklahoma Baptist University, Louisiana State University, Regent University, Indiana Wesleyan, and over 30 other college campuses. That the Lord would do that here in South Florida is my prayer. But something happened as a result. Numerous religious “professionals” who front “discernment” ministries which I will not name, accused this revival of being false.

Yes, we have Pharisees among us, and they have websites, twitter accounts and large followings as they are prepared to attack anything that does not meet “their” very specific definitions. They seem to live only to spread strife among brothers and sisters in Christ; in other words, they have become Pharisees.

This is a huge temptation in this day of social media. I love working with new Christians, but I have found that many are fearful of asking questions because it appears that there are those on social media who will flame them for it. These online “spiritual” advisors live to destroy the faith of new believers or those stepping out in faith for the very first time.

None of us have it right, especially when we are stepping out in faith the first time or the 100th time or the 1000th time. We are not God.

There is a list in Proverbs of seven things God holds as an abomination, in other words He hates these things.



Proverbs 6:16–19

“There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.” (ESV)

The Pharisee List

- Haughty eyes – Pride, arrogance – I know better than you do
- A lying tongue – Slander, defamation, gas lighting
- Hands that shed innocent blood – Murder
- A heart that devises wicked plans – Plans to destroy others because they do not meet their standards
- Feet that make haste to run to evil – Putting those plans into action
- A false witness who breathes out lies – See slander
- And one who sows discord among brothers

Consider these as a list of sins at the top of the hit list. Those things the Holy Spirit wants to wipe from the life of every believer.

I’ve also noticed something strange about this sin that God hates most. It’s usually found among people who think they love God most. Spiritual arrogance is not a back-of-the-line sin; it’s a front-of-the-line sin. So much so that sometimes I think of it as an occupational hazard of zealous faith, serious discipleship, and biblical scholarship. (Osborne 2012, 46)

I have had to write and deliver hundreds of job evaluations over the years. I love it when I get to say good things about great people who are doing the best they can, even if they have blown it here or there. Because they have never failed to take to heart what is said and then correct the situation.

But I despised having to evaluate those who go through life as an arrogant know it all. They were always the ones who began the evaluation telling me how they brought this person down over here or destroyed that faulty program over there. They would never take what I had to say to them well, and many of them resigned shortly after or I invited them to seek employment elsewhere.

I always found myself asking, because they would seriously point out my flaws to me too, was that true. Was I doing what they said I was doing?

The temptation for all of us is that as we grow in Christ, we tend to learn some things or get some things better than others. Usually because we have been gifted by the Holy Spirit in an area that others have not been gifted in. Discernment can be that way. One with that gift can stay humble and be usable or go arrogant and have a social media following and become totally useless to the Kingdom. As many demonstrated post-Asbury Revival.

This is the group that Jesus is now engaging with. They all know better than He does, even though He is God. Jesus is going to have a rather pointed conversation with men who are so in the control of the devil and his minions, that they act like his kids. Jesus will alter accuse them of being in league with the Devil.

And remember this, they are the religious “professionals”.

Jesus is anti-religion and pro-relationship. The best complement I ever received at work was when it was announced I was a lay pastor. The complement, “how can that be, you don’t act religious.” Exactly.



John 8:13–20

“So the Pharisees said to Him, “You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true.” Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I am testifying about Myself, My testimony is true, because I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me. Even in your Law it has been written that the testimony of two people is true. I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.” So they were saying to Him, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also.” These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple area; and no one arrested Him, because His hour had not yet come.” (NASB 2020)

Notice that they do not address the main question, that Jesus is the light. They are avoiding the real question at hand as that might actually make them consider His claims in the light of scripture, instead, as always, they go for a technicality. They accuse Him of being His own witness.

Jesus has consistently stated that He was simply repeating what the Father had already said. But they are trying to complain that He praises Himself and does not stick to the Jewish standard of two or three witnesses. Jesus though has already stated He is the I am, so He provides evidence from that perspective. “...in saying “I and the One who sent me,” Jesus is using a form of the divine name and implying his solidarity with his Father.” (Brown 2008, 341) He witnesses as the Son of God. He has been consistent with that and they have ignored it.

What the Pharisees have done is they have taken a legal principle, intended for the court room only, and now applied it to Jesus placing a higher standard on Him and Him alone needing to have two or more witnesses. But He does, He is God. “Harsh and unjust as this principle sometimes was, it evidently applied only in judicial cases, and hence implied that these Pharisees sat in judgment on Him as one suspected, and charged with guilt.” (Edersheim 1896, 169)

This is why Jesus moves to His comment in verse 15 about their judging Him according to the flesh. Ironic in that another group of Pharisees had just deferred to Jesus as the judge with the woman caught in adultery. Jesus exercised righteous judgement per the law. But now the remaining Pharisees want to push Him back into the courtroom and judge Him and His claims of being Messiah.

Jesus has been consistent in His statements about following the lead of the Father and His testimony. His unique identity as the Messiah validates His testimony. And earlier, when He healed the lame man, He validated who He was, but they focused on it being the Sabbath.

Ever talk with someone who is convinced of their opinion, and they do not understand why you do not see the validity of it? Conversations with dogmatic people can be tiring because they want you to agree on some topic that is unreasonable, ignorant, or something you already examined in the past in depth and found to be bogus.

Their tactic is a never-ending line of questions trying to find something to accuse you of. I have, more than once, chatted with folks like this and it is incredibly frustrating.

The last time I had a conversation like this was with a gentleman who was seriously antisemitic. He hated the Jews and Israel and could not understand why we, as the church loved them. I showed Him scripture (Genesis 12:3, Romans 11) and none of it was good enough.

He kept trying to twist the conversation while avoiding the topic of His own sin. I finally had to simply walk away, and of course, got yelled at as I did so. This is the type of conversation Jesus is in.



We run into them because we live in the last days and much of our nation has become what Paul warned of in Romans 1:22-32. Paul also warned Timothy of this too.

2 Timothy 3:1–5

“You can be certain that in the last days there will be some very hard times. People will love only themselves and money. They will be proud, stuck-up, rude, and disobedient to their parents. They will also be ungrateful, godless, heartless, and hateful. Their words will be cruel, and they will have no self-control or pity. These people will hate everything that is good. They will be sneaky, reckless, and puffed up with pride. Instead of loving God, they will love pleasure. Even though they will make a show of being religious, their religion won’t be real. Don’t have anything to do with such people.” (CEV)

And Jesus is dealing with folks just like that.

The point of the argument concerning Jesus’ witness is that his relationship with the Father gives his witness validity quite apart from the legal requirements for admissible testimony. John’s message is simply that the words and the acts of Jesus are a manifestation of God. Furthermore, the evangelist extends the category of witness to encompass the concept of revelation. (Kysar 1986, 136-137)

When you are losing the argument, then use some of your research to embarrass or demean who you are talking to. Or at least try to.

John 8:19–20

“So they were saying to Him, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also.” These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple area; and no one arrested Him, because His hour had not yet come.” (NASB 2020)

Yes, they knew about His virgin birth which they did not accept or believe, so instead, just like we see in our culture today, go for a vicious personal attack instead. They think they know who Jesus is, but He strikes back with the obvious, they have no idea who He is. They also have no idea who God is either.

We need to remember this as we go about sharing our faith with those around us. There will be those who think they know all about Jesus, they don’t. They will make wild claims and accusations about Him in an attempt to throw us off and argue with them. Just remember what Jesus is saying here. They don’t know who He is, and they don’t know who God is. We are there for a reason and leave it up to the Holy Spirit to carry the water on along for us.

Just be faithful, plant the seed, and leave it to Him for the outcome.

As angry as the Pharisees are with Jesus, remember, they are still in the court of the women and still surrounded by people listening in.

For the Pharisees, optics are everything, so they do not move to arrest Jesus. It isn’t His time yet either. But they made a feeble attempt to judge Him and it backfired. Now they know what they want to do, needs to happen at some other time and on the QT as well.

They would like to end the conversation, but Jesus is not done with them yet.

John 8:21–24

“Then He said again to them, “I am going away, and you will look for Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come.” So the Jews were saying, “Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’ ?” And He was saying to them, “You are from below, I am



from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins.” (NASB 2020)

What Jesus tells them here, they entirely miss. Jesus knows that He will return to the Father in heaven. They have rejected that He is Messiah.

Since they have rejected Him, they think He is talking about something entirely different than what He is saying. Ever have that happen in a conversation? You answer a question or make a statement and the person or persons you are talking just don't get what you said. I tend to do that to my bride more frequently than I should. We will be talking about one thing and suddenly I remember a conversation from yesterday and comment on that. Right out of left field, and she is looking at me like I have frogs jumping out of my ears.

Jesus did not change the subject; He is still talking from the square that He is Messiah.

He will return to heaven, but they do not know Him, they do not know the Father, they are not believers, and the answer is simple; they are unable to follow since they are headed in a different direction.

These religious professionals did not follow Him on earth, so, contrary to their beliefs, they cannot and will not be following Him to heaven. This is a fact we must grab ahold of here because Jesus will not let it drop.

John 14:6

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.” (NASB 2020)

Here on this planet, we have been given the opportunity to follow Jesus. If we agree with His assessment of us that we are sinners that He died on the cross for; and believe that He was buried and that He then rose from the dead as well. And then make Him Lord of our life, we then have aligned ourselves with Him and are His followers. If we follow Him here on this planet, He will take us home to be with Him in heaven either through the rapture or through death.

But here is the other side to that equation, if you decide you want nothing to do with Him and refuse to follow Him on this planet, you will not be following Him to heaven. Why do you think heaven is even an option if we can't even follow Him here?

The Pharisees have missed that point. They are religious, but not saved. They take His statement and because of a false belief they have, they come to the conclusion He is the one going the wrong way. Yes, there was false teaching going on even then.

“In Jewish teaching, the lowest levels of Hades were for those who committed suicide. Now, the Pharisees try to twist Jesus' words to imply that He will commit suicide and therefore be damned.” (Guzik 2013, Jn 8:21-24) By the way, the Bible does not teach that at all.

Jesus picked up on this line of thought from them. He wants them to repent and become believers, and because of that, He adds to His previous comments.

John 8:23–24

“And He was saying to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins.” (NASB 2020)



That should make it exceptionally clear for the Pharisees. No nuanced language here, just plain talk. He just told them that unless you believe that “I am,” in other words, the Messiah, God in the flesh. Then they will indeed die in their sins and have no opportunity to follow Him at all. They heard Him. We do too.

Something to remember as we go about our day to day serving Him in whatever it is He has called us to do. When it comes to the gospel, keep it simple. The temptation is to not do so. It seems just too simple unless we add some zest to it.

But here is the thing, the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, is incredibly simple. Paul outlined it for us.

1 Corinthians 15:1–4

“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,” (ESV)

That is it.

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

That is simple. But many think it is too simple and reject it, or want to add to it.

When challenged by the Pharisees, Jesus simply repeats what He has said.

John 8:25–30

“Then they were saying to Him, “Who are You?” Jesus said to them, “What have I even been saying to you from the beginning? I have many things to say and to judge regarding you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I say to the world.” They did not realize that He was speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am, and I do nothing on My own, but I say these things as the Father instructed Me. And He who



sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.” As He said these things, many came to believe in Him.” (NASB 2020)

The problem with the Pharisees at this point is willful blindness arising for their contempt of Jesus. They believe Him to be an uneducated hick from up north but then there are those miracles they have seen and hear about.

By this time, there have been numerous folks showing up in the Temple, per the law, healed of leprosy by Jesus. I suspect that the priests had to go back and reread that section of the Torah (Leviticus 14:1-32) because that was something that just did not happen frequently. Jesus shows up and now there is this stream of healed lepers passing through the Temple. That alone should have said something.

They are not interested in doing anything except obtaining a phrase that they can then use against Him and have Him put to death, and Jesus knows it.

Jesus was asked the same question that is asked of Him even today, “Who are you?” He did not vary from the answer given earlier and they still did not get it that Jesus was speaking of the Father. He also hinted that all of them will, at some point in the future, face Him as judge. For now, though, He is simply repeating what it is the Father has for Him to say.

Getting to the question of “who are you” though, He explains when and how they will know who He is.

John 8:28.

“So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am, and I do nothing on My own, but I say these things as the Father instructed Me.” (NASB 2020)

We are at the 8th day, the day after the conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles, it is fall, the cross is just months away. Jesus points to the cross in this statement. This has nothing to do with the exaltation of Jesus but has everything to do with Him being lifted up on the cross.

For the second time in this conversation, Jesus tells them He is God. It isn’t even veiled. “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am.” It is at that point that they will understand the intimate relationship that He has with the Father, “it is the lifting up on the cross that will be the means by which the divine identity and glory of Jesus, who is also the servant-witness, will be revealed. The key moment of the divine verdict in the trial, the vindication of Jesus’ claim, is to be the same moment at which the opposition appear to have had their way, namely, their crucifixion of Jesus. So far from such a death being Jesus’ humiliation, it is to be seen as his exaltation. So far from it involving his abandonment by the Father, it is to be seen as confirmation that the Father has not left me alone.” (Lincoln 2005, 269)

It will be crystal clear that He is saying what it is the Father has instructed Him to say. And about the cross, He again points to the Father and His always do the things that are pleasing to Him.

John 8:29–30

“And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.” As He said these things, many came to believe in Him.” (NASB 2020)

Now, some get it. There are those in the crowd, and some among the Pharisees, that now understand what it is Jesus has just said. He is the Son of God, He is the Messiah, He is the I am. And they believe. Not all, but many have now come to faith in Jesus. They believe what He says about Himself, and their final destination has changed.



Jesus will take this moment to do some more teaching to those who believe, which we will get to next time we are together.

How about you? Who is He? He has just explained it to us and shown us how to follow Him. Now is your opportunity to side with those who came to believe in Him. Let's pray.

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