

## **John (Part Fifteen)**

**John 8:30-9:7 Liberation from Bondage to Sin through God's Spirit**

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**Given 13-Jan-87; Sermon #BS-JO15**

A quick review of where we have come to in chapter 8 of John: this has the very famous incident of the woman taken in adultery, and the Pharisees trying so hard to put Jesus into a Catch-22 situation, from which He would be unable to back out of. But He did get out of it, in a very wise way, by actually turning the dilemma on them, by making them aware that He was aware that they were guilty of sins that were certainly of equal value to what this lady had done.

He was able to get off the horns of that dilemma, and to preserve His reputation before the people as a man who would uphold the law, and at the same time, would not bring Himself into conflict with Roman law, which is what their hope was—one way or the other, He would either be brought into conflict with the law in the Old Testament, or He would be brought into conflict with the civil law.

Jesus did render a sentence against the lady, and that needs to be understood. He did not back away from what God's Word says. He just did not condemn her at that moment. But He made it very clear that He was going to expect from her a change of life. He said: "Go and sin no more." So all that He did was defer sentence until later, which is really what He does for us.

When we repent, when we have our sins forgiven, He in effect says to us, "You've been a bad boy or girl up until this time, and you know that you deserve death. But go and sin no more. We're going to give you an opportunity to make something out of your life; we're going to give you an opportunity, that now that you recognized the seriousness of the way that you've lived, and it is surely, just as sure as anything, going to bring death upon you. If you continue in this way, we'll be unable to use you in the Kingdom of God because your mind, your heart, your character, your way of life, will simply not fit. You'll be untrustworthy; you'll be a troublemaker. You would be condemning yourself to misery, for all eternity. God is too

merciful to do that, so in order to be in the Kingdom of God, you've got to go and sin no more! You've got to change your way of life to a way that's going to produce peace and happiness, not only for you, but for everyone concerned."

That is basically what occurs to us as well. When we are brought to Christ for judgment, He defers sentence, saying "OK, this is the way it is, and this is what I expect you to do." If we turn that way, the sentence is lifted off, because God is able to see that we have indeed amended what was previously not a very good life at all.

The Jews again accused Jesus of bearing witness of Himself. That is a running argument that goes through the entire book of John. Jesus again defends Himself, by saying that indeed, there are witnesses. Besides that, He says "My life is a good enough witness as it is." But He did not just rely on that, He said that He had the witness of the Father as well.

That brings us up to John 8:30, where it begins one of the more interesting sections in the book of John, and something that we need to have very firmly entrenched in our minds.

**John 8:30** As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.

We cannot see it there in the English, but the word *belief* is used in such a way, connected with the preposition *ice*, which according to the translators, weakens the belief, to something that is very general. It is not specific. The best to put it is "belief without commitment." It is belief that is intellectual; they accepted the truth that Jesus gave them as being true, but they were not willing to accept or make use of the implications of it in their own lives.

So they say, "Yeah, we agree with you, we think that's right." There are a lot of people that agree that someone ought to keep the Sabbath; they can see the argument. They can see that there is no other day appointed in the Bible. If we are going to use the Bible as authority, the Sabbath is the day to be kept. They can agree with that. They can agree that we ought to tithe, and indeed that is a true Bible doctrine. But they would never tithe, and they would never keep the Sabbath. So it is belief without commitment.

This is important, because it is the answer to the things that preceded it. Is there an answer to the problems that the world has? The answer to that is yes, a person has to believe Christ. It cannot be belief without commitment. It has to be belief that understands and applies the implications of what that belief says. It is the kind of belief that James says that carries with it works, that prove that one really does believe.

**John 8:31** Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in [or if you live in] My word, you are My disciples indeed.

Which proves what the translators say about verse 30 about the word *belief*. The kind of belief that Christ is talking about is one that changes a person’s life; it is something that you live with; it is something that you have experience with; it is something that you come to know by experience. It means that a person has to go from the initial belief, to one that includes learning more, applying more deeply, doing a penetrating study on the Word of God, not just looking at it on its surface, but trying to get underneath to find out what the implications are for oneself. “What do I need from this that will be good for my life?”

He said a result of this will be that if you really do live, if you abide in His Word,

**John 8:32** And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

That will be the end result. This has implications to what follows, because it starts the group that is listening to Him off on a new tangent regarding liberty and freedom.

As you know, the things that we have studied in the book of John show that His listeners invariably took what He said with a crass literalism. They applied what He said first and foremost to now being in bondage in a literal sense to another nation.

**John 8:33** They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, ‘You will be made free’?”

There are two ways that they could have taken what Jesus said. The Jews at this time were in bondage to Rome, yet they considered themselves to be free. On the one hand, you might say that they ignored the facts in order to believe a fable. They literally were in bondage to Rome: Rome had the power, and they had to do the bidding of Rome.

But Jesus had another kind of bondage in mind, and they did pick up on it. That was spiritual bondage. They picked up on it, but they really did not understand it. It is one thing to “catch the drift” of what a person is saying, but because of the way in which they believed, the implications of their bondage never sank in. They could agree that yes, there is a spiritual bondage, but it never sank into them that *they* were in spiritual bondage.

I want to make this clear, because the dialog that was between Jesus and His listeners is going to lead up to some very interesting answers regarding why people can hear and believe, yet it means nothing.

**John 8:33** They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, ‘You will be made free’?”

**Romans 6:17** But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

Paul is talking to a Christian people. They were slaves to sin, but they had been delivered from their bondage. Because they were delivered, they have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that they had been delivered to. They made a change in their lives.

**Romans 6:18-19** And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

**I Corinthians 6:9** Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Righteousness is described in Psalm 119:172 as “keeping the commandments of God.” All the commandments are righteousness. Those who do not keep the commandments of God will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

**I Corinthians 6:9-11** ...Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

**I Corinthians 6:12** All things are lawful for me . . .

Obviously, not everything is lawful; what Paul means is, all lawful things are lawful. It is not lawful to be a fornicator, it is not lawful to be an adulterer, it is not lawful to be a thief. It is not lawful for Paul or you or anybody to do those things. He means that all lawful things are lawful.

**I Corinthians 6:12** . . . but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. [“I will not be brought into bondage to any.”]

Now let us go back to John:

**John 8:34** Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.”

The kind of bondage that Jesus had in mind was a spiritual bondage. Notice that He did not say, “whoever commits *a* sin is a slave of sin.” Sometimes we worry because every once in a while, we commit a sin, and we wonder if we are a slave. We go on a guilt trip about having committed a sin.

I want to be careful, because I do not want to weaken what He says here. What He is talking about is a person who *habitually* sins, who sins as a way of life—not a person who in a moment of weakness does something that is a breaking of God’s law, and is of course sin, and should not be done. But He is more concerned about a person who is a slave of sin, that is, someone who is under its power.

A man may say, “Why, I can do whatever I want with my life! I’m a free moral agent! God gave me the right to do whatever I want with my life.” That sounds good—but is that true? The apostle Paul said that if you are a thief, you are not going to inherit the Kingdom of God; if you are a fornicator, if you are an adulterer, a sodomite, a homosexual, you are not going to be in the Kingdom of God. Does that mean that you are free to do anything that you want?

It sounds good to someone of a libertine nature. But is God’s free moral agency given to us so that we can put ourselves into the Lake of Fire? Certainly, He has given us that choice. But that is certainly not what He desires.

The liberty that God has given to us is so that we might be free to obey God! Why should that be such a concern? It is a concern of God because a person who sins is not doing what He likes; a person who sins is doing what *sin* likes. That person is a slave to sin. He is not doing what he likes; he is doing what sin likes.

In Romans 7, Paul shows the process that he went through in coming to understand the correct application of the law of God, which is really

amazing, because Paul was a doctor of the law. He had studied under Gamaliel; he was a member of the Sanhedrin. He was a man who “understood” the Old Testament. No, he did not!

**Romans 7:7-9** What shall we say then? Is the law sin? On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.” But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment [Listen! Sin, taking opportunity by the commandment—who is in control of the sinner? Is it the man who is in control? No, it is sin that is in control!], produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, [or apart from the law], but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

What Paul is saying there is “When I understood what the law was saying to me, sin revived.” He suddenly became aware of sin inside of himself, and he died. Not literally, but he died in the waters of baptism.

**Romans 7:12-13** Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! [Is the law death? Certainly not!] But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, [that is, the law] so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

That is, that because God was opening his mind, and beginning to show Paul that he was guilty of breaking the law—the Ten Commandments, the spiritual law of God—suddenly he became aware that there was sin in his life that he was not even aware of before.

**Romans 7:14-17** For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. [Now look at this next verse.] But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

Who is in control of the sinner? Who is sin's slave? The man is. God is saying, in effect, that a person who sins in the way that Christ is talking about in John the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter is not in control of his life. Sin is in control of his life. The man is not really making choices; sin is forcing that on the person. It is like the person is addicted. Do you ever wonder why God uses the illustration about alcohol, and people being drunk with the wine of the wrath of the whore's fornication? A drunk thinks he is in control, and he is not. The drug is in control, and the man does what the drug wants him to do.

Have you seen this really effective television advertisement about addiction? A female voice comes on, and it is kind of appealing, and she says, "Would you kill for me? Would you die for me? Would you leave your wife for me?" Every time a question is asked, a person says "Yes." One time, it is a man's voice, another time it is a woman's voice, another time it is a young person's voice. Who is in control? The person who wrote that advertisement understands what happens to a person who is addicted.

That is what God is saying about people who habitually sin: they are addicted to that sin, they are not doing what they want to do, they are doing what *sin* wants to do. That has to be broken. Perhaps you will understand the children of Israel going out of Egypt a lot better when you understand the process that God put those people through so that we could understand. While they were slaves in Egypt, they were slaves to sin. They were slaves to Pharaoh. A slave is a person who has no control over his destiny. He does what somebody else wants him to do. He does what the master wants him to do.

When Moses went to Pharaoh, he said to Pharaoh, "Let us go, that we may go out into the desert and worship our God." Pharaoh would not let him go, but God broke the power of the Pharaoh and of Egypt, that is, of sin over the people, and He got them out of sin. He took them out into a wilderness, into a free land, where they were—what? They were *at liberty* to obey Him!

That is what God does to us spiritually. He breaks Satan's power over us, the one that Mr. Armstrong said has kidnapped us, and we have bought the way of the kidnapper, and we have made the kidnapper's way of life our way of life. But we cannot break away from it on our own. It takes the power of God



to break the yoke that Satan has on us, and then He gives us liberty—spiritual liberty—in order that we might be free to obey God. For the first time in our lives, we really have free moral agency. As long as we are slaves to sin, as Paul was saying in Romans 7, we do not have free moral agency. We only have a shadow of it.

In John 8:34, the slave of sin is a person who habitually asserts his own will. He may pride himself on his independence. He follows his own inclinations. He is primarily concerned with pleasing himself. A person who is leading a self-centered life is a slave to his own desire to sin. That person's life is limited to his own self-interest. That person will never be in the Kingdom of God. His life is too limited; it is limited with what he wants to do, or we might say, what sin wants him to do.

**John 8:35-36** “And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”

That is what Christ does for us. He sets us free.

Verse 35 is a warning, and that is that there is a difference between a slave and a son. A slave can be ejected from a house. A house may literally mean a house, but it also may mean a dynasty, a family, like the “house of David,” or the “house of Israel,” or the “house of Jacob.” Jesus is saying that a slave does not abide, that he does not live in. He is showing that there is a difference between a slave and a son, who is free. The slave does the bidding of the master. Jesus is warning these people that they were slaves, and that they better not trade on God's mercy.

That is also a warning for you and me. A slave to sin, though he was once part of the house, can be ejected from the house. The warning is to strive to stay in the house—*do not leave the church*. Believe it or not, that warning appears in Exodus 12. God warned the people that once the blood was on the doorpost, do not go out of the house. Once the blood of the lamb is covering you, do not go out of the house. Do everything you possibly can to stay in the church, because that is where your protection is. If you leave the house, you become a slave to the world again, that is the warning. What happened to the people who were outside the house? They died (the firstborn).

**John 8:36-41** “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.” They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the deeds of your father.” Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.”

An overview of this section will show that spiritually they considered themselves safe because of Abraham. I will prove that to you from a couple of other portions in the Bible. I will show you that even from the Old Testament, this is not true. They should have known it, but they did not know it.

We will look at an account in Matthew 3, which is also repeated in Luke 3. John the Baptist knew this, and they should have known it too.

**Matthew 3:9** “and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’”

John the Baptist is saying, “You can’t trust in a pedigree! You can’t trust in the righteousness of another individual. What does that have to do with your salvation?”

**Matthew 3:9-10** “...For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

That is the warning. If they trusted in Abraham, they were dead men.

In the book of Ezekiel, he really develops this individual responsibility; he makes it very plain that each man stands on his own before God.

**Ezekiel 18:1-2** The word of the Lord came to me again, saying, “What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’?”

It is a proverb that means that a generation suffers because the generation before them suffered. In other words, the children suffer because of what the fathers did.

**Ezekiel 18:3-4** “As I live,” says the Lord God, “you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine; the soul who sins shall die.”

You cannot depend upon Abraham—it is the soul who sins that is going to die. You can read that whole chapter and understand it, because he examines it from several different angles. Is the father held responsible for the son’s sins? God says no. Is the son held responsible for the father’s sins? God says no. The soul that sins, it shall die. He goes on to say that the soul that repents shall live. So if the father sins, but the son repents, the son lives and the father dies. If the father repents and the son sins, the father lives and the son dies.

**Ezekiel 14:12-14** The word of the Lord came again to me, saying, “Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, [three of the most righteous men who have ever lived] they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,” says the Lord God.

Righteousness cannot be transferred. In John 8, Jesus is warning those people that they cannot trust in their pedigree; that they are from Abraham. God is judging without respect to persons. He is developing within us holy and righteous spiritual character. That character cannot be transferred from

one person to another. We may inspire one another, exhort one another, encourage one another, and that is all well and good. But we cannot live our lives for one another. Each person has to do that himself.

The weight of responsibility falls on the person and on Christ. It is Christ's job to save us, and He will do everything in His power to do so, as long as we will yield, and as long as we are in a good attitude, and as long as we are striving to have a good relationship with Him, and as long as we are growing, even if it is ever so slowly—we are slowly but surely overcoming. And if your attitude is right, He will continue to lead us on.

**Romans 9:6-8** But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” [Isaac was the son of promise.] That is, those who are the children of the flesh, [those to whom Jesus was speaking in John 8; those to whom John the Baptist was speaking to in Matthew 3 and in Luke 3] these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. [That is the church.]

Even within the church, the responsibility is ours and Christ's.

**Galatians 6:15-16** For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. [That is what is important.] And as many as walk [that is, live, abide] according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

There is a natural, physical Israel, the descendants of Abraham, of which many of us are—physically descendants of Abraham. But there is an Israel of God, and that is the church. God makes a differentiation between the two; again, another reason why you should not leave the house. You do not leave the church of God, and you work out your problems within it, because the Israel of God is the one that God has His eye on. We are the apple of His eye.

But even within the church, we cannot depend upon pedigree, that is, that we are from Abraham. Closer to home, we cannot depend upon church

membership, either. Just “warming a seat” is not accomplishing God’s will in our life. We cannot depend upon ritual observance to traditions or customs, or even the commandments. It is our heart that God wants to capture. He wants to capture our loyalty, our thinking, our attitudes. He wants His way to be a way of life.

Jesus uses, as evidence against them, their attitude towards Him. That is how He is judging that they are not of Abraham, but rather, they have a different spiritual father. He said, “If you were like Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham.” What He is referring to is the episode that took place in Genesis 18, where Abraham had the three visitors to his home. What did he do? Those people were described as being angels; an angel is a messenger from God. They came bearing a message for Abraham, one part of which was that Sodom and Gomorrah were about to be destroyed. Abraham was hospitable: he received the messengers, he was hospitable to them, he listened to what they had to say.

The people in John 8 were not acting like that. Here was another messenger from God, perhaps one of the three that was there visiting Abraham, and they were rejecting what He had to say. They were rejecting the messenger of God. They did not have the same mind, the same attitude, as Abraham. They were not doing the works of Abraham. Since Abraham welcomed the messenger, and they did not, since they had the works of Satan, he was their spiritual father.

**John 8:41** ...Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.”

There are two ways that can be applied. One way was that it was a personal attack on Him, in that they were implying that He was born of fornication. We understand that accusation was not true, but they were possibly accusing Him of being a child of a union between Mary and somebody apparently called Panthera, a Roman, and that He was the offspring of that union, an illicit union.

But I do think that is really what they meant; if it was, it was secondary, because they mentioned God as being their father. I think they were implying that they looked to God as being their spiritual father. They were catching

the drift of what He said. They were not applying it to themselves, but they were catching the drift of what He was talking about, that is a spiritual bondage, a spiritual obedience, a spiritual father.

Jesus mentioned, in reference to Abraham, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham [implying that they did not do the deeds of Abraham], then they said to Him, ‘We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.’”

The Old Testament is very clear on that. Here are some scriptures:

**Exodus 4:22** Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Israel is My son, My firstborn.”’

**Deuteronomy 32:6** Do you thus deal with the Lord, O foolish and unwise people? Is He not your Father, who bought you? Has He not made you and established you?

**Isaiah 63:16** Doubtless You are our Father, though Abraham was ignorant of us, and Israel does not acknowledge us. You, O Lord, are our Father; our Redeemer from Everlasting is Your name.

**Isaiah 64:8** But now, O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and all we are the work of Your hand.

**Malachi 2:10** Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously with one another by profaning the covenant of the fathers?

In all of those places, the Lord of the Old Testament calls Himself the Father of Israel. He was the father of those people. Those people in John 8 were speaking to the One who was the Father of Old Testament Israel! They did not know that yet, they never did recognize it.

It is likely that they were picking up on Hosea 2, where God, through Hosea, shows very clearly that Israel had gone a-whoring, and that those children born of those unions were children of harlotry.

What were the people in John 8 saying? In verse 41, when they said “We have one Father—God,” they were claiming that they were not guilty of spiritual idolatry. That fits right into the context.

**John 8:42-43** Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father [your spiritual Father], you would love Me [He is looking for evidence, spiritual evidence.], for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.”

That does not quite get across what He said. What He said is, “You have no ear for it.” Does that make it more plain? What He was saying was very similar to a color-blind person being unable to appreciate art. If you cannot distinguish the colors, and they do not appear to you in the shades in which they were painted, then you cannot appreciate the painting.

It is like a tone-deaf person trying to appreciate good music. It is very difficult for them to do so, maybe impossible. A person who has not been trained to appreciate good music cannot appreciate good music, because there is nothing inside him to appreciate it. The training is just not there. There is nothing inside him that would appreciate the genius of putting all of those various harmonies together in the arrangement that they are in.

I know the way it was with our children when they were growing up. Our Sharon, for example, just does not appreciate the kind of music that I appreciate. She does not appreciate Beethoven’s Fifth. She does not appreciate Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, or hardly any of Tchaikovsky’s music. She does not appreciate Dvorak’s New World Symphony. I love it!

Why does she not appreciate it? She does not have an ear for it yet. It takes an education to appreciate the quality, the so-far superior quality, to rock music—there is just no comparison. By comparison, with rock music, you can turn the handle on the grinder, and it just pops right out. There is nothing inside that would lend itself to the appreciation of the genius of those people who wrote those melodies.

That is what Jesus said here. “Why do you not understand My speech?” It is because you have no ear for it. Now why did they not have an ear for it? There is a real simple answer to that.

On the surface, we could say it is because they were hung up on their traditions, and that is true. The Bible makes that very clear. They were hung up on their way of life; they were hung up on their religion. They were a religious people. There is no doubt about that, Paul admits it in Romans 10, that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

But they were hung up because they did not have the Spirit of God. Jesus knew that, but they did not know it. They rejected what He said out-of-hand, in fact, they did it quite vociferously. They did not have an ear for it because there was nothing inside of them to lead them to the real truth.

You can prove that very easily in I Corinthians 2: it is the spirit of God that reveals to us spiritual truth. There has to be something inside besides man’s spirit to enable us to be able to understand the things of the Spirit of God.

**I Corinthians 2:7-9** But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom [The Pharisees that Jesus was speaking to, it was hidden from them.] which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

Paul is saying that these things of the Spirit of God are not physically discerned. You cannot discern them with the five senses.

**I Corinthians 2:10-11** But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.



So they had no ear for it, because the Spirit of God was not there. Later on, Jesus goes into this in more detail.

**John 14:15-17** “If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”

**John 14:26** “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

Unless one has the Spirit of God, the mind just does not make the right connections. That does not mean that the person cannot see some part of it; understand some part of it; grasp it. But it will not make enough connections for it to have an impact on the person’s life, no more than the people in John 8. They believed, but there was no belief for commitment. There was no belief with the understanding of the implications for what Jesus was saying.

The spirit of man was able to discern enough to realize the drift that Jesus was headed in, but not enough to commit or apply the implications to the self.

**John 8:44** You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

He really nailed them there. Where Jesus says, “He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth,” a more literal rendering of “does not stand in the truth” would be “he has nothing to do with it.” Satan has nothing to do with truth at all. “When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources” is more literally translated as “When he speaks a lie, he speaks what is natural to him.” It is Satan’s first nature to lie; he cannot restrain himself.

Incidentally, that is probably as good of a way as any to detect either demon possession or very strong influence. A person cannot help themselves, they will lie. It is compulsive, because demons cannot tell the truth, not for very long periods anyway, because their father Satan is the father of lies, and it is not natural for him to tell the truth. Even when he does tell the truth, he puts a twist on it. Just like he did with Jesus in Matthew 4 and Luke 4: he twists it so that it does not come out as the truth of God, it comes out as a perversion of it.

**John 8:45-46** “But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?”

It might be interesting to reconstruct that. One thing that the Bible does not fit in is the emphasis that Jesus put on the words, because we do not have the sound to hear, and it does not say how rapidly He said anything, or if there were any pauses.

It may very well be that what He said was this: “Which of you convicts Me of truth?” Or another way of saying it would be, “Is there anyone here who can point to any evil in My life?” And maybe there was a long, pregnant pause while He looked all around at the group, for anybody to come up with an accusation. And nobody did.

The next question is, “And if I tell you the truth, why do you not believe Me? Why do you not accept what I say?” And then another long, pregnant pause. He answers it this way: “He who is of God hears God’s words.” That ought to be a good benchmark for whether or not you are a Christian. It ought to reassure you. Do you hear God’s Word; do you understand what He is saying? Do you grasp the implications for your life? Does it change your life?

That is what He is saying. It did not change these people’s lives; that was evidence to Him that these people were not of God. Instead, it infuriated them. And these were people that believed!

He understood, as early as verse 44, that they were seeking to murder Him. God’s Word was not lodging in their minds; it was not changing their lives

for the good; it was not producing good fruit. So there is a benchmark for you: “He who is of God hears God’s words.” Why? Because he has an ear for it! And the reason he has an ear for it is because the Spirit of God is in him.

There is that ingredient that is necessary to understand the implications. God says in Isaiah that when He sends His Word forth, it does not come back to Him empty. It will produce fruit.

**John 8:47** “He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore [He reaches a conclusion] you do not hear, because you are not of God.”

Jesus is not practicing Dale Carnegie’s *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. He is influencing them, alright, but He is not going to win very many friends. But do you know what? He could not tell them any less, or He might have been lying. I am sure that He did what He did as discreetly as He could, under the circumstances. He did not want to die; He did not want to get hurt by somebody throwing rocks at Him. He was not a masochist; He did not have a death-wish. But he could not lie, either.

**John 8:48** Then the Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”

That was the worst thing that a Jew could call anybody, a Samaritan. An enemy of Israel, an enemy of the truth. Hypocrites, heretics, all wrapped up in one, called a Samaritan. Besides that, you have a demon.

**John 8:49-51** Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges. Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.”

Here we go again. They are going to misunderstand: “Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.” The Jews were on a different wavelength, because they took what He said literally, and He did not intend it to be taken literally. He was speaking here, as usual, on a spiritual level. What He intended that they understand was that physical

death was no longer final. If a person keeps His Word, then physical death is not final; it is not more than a pause between the death and the resurrection into the Kingdom of God.

**John 8:52** Then the Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets [That was their proof, that Abraham was dead, and the prophets.]; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.’”

What they were saying was, “Are you saying that you’re greater than Abraham? Are you greater than the prophets?” Remember, they had on their mind that this was the carpenter’s son. They knew that He was from Nazareth, they knew that He was about 30 years old. They are thinking of this entirely physically.

**John 8: 53-54** Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?” Jesus answered, “If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God.”

The reason He is using this comparison is this: one of the easiest things in the world to do is to think well of ourselves, to give honor to ourselves. We like to think of ourselves in good terms: that we are brilliant, that we are good-looking, handsome, pretty, kind, generous. We can think of ourselves in all kinds of good terms. It is not hard to do that, it comes naturally.

Even the honor that the world gives—though it may be better than the honor that we give to ourselves—that is not good, either. It is misleading and it is fickle. They can love you one minute and hate you the next.

He says, “It is My Father who honors Me.” We have to learn something from that. What Jesus is leading to is that He knew that regardless of what these people thought of Him, it really did not matter whether they liked Him or did not. Because the only honor that is worth anything to anybody is the honor that comes from God.

That honor is primarily going to be in the resurrection. So what He in effect is saying is “The only honor that is any good is that which is eternal, because it is the only honor that lasts.” The honor that we give to ourselves can change very quickly if our opinion of ourselves changes quickly. The honor that the world gives is also the same; it is very fickle. But the honor that comes from God will be eternal. That is the only honor that is worthwhile.

That is His response to their saying, “Who do you make yourself out to be?” He says, “I don’t make Myself out to be anything. The only honor that is of any use is the honor that God gives to Me.”

**John 8:55** Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, ‘I do not know Him,’ I shall be a liar like you; . . .”

You see what He is claiming here, really putting things in a right perspective. You have to understand that these were the descendants of Abraham, these were the people of the book. These were the people that had settled the land of Israel; they were the descendants of the people who had taken over the land of Israel. These were the people of the prophets; these were the descendants of David and every other great figure of the past in Hebrew history. And Jesus says, “You do not know God.” That would be almost like going to the Pope and telling him, “You are not a Christian.”

That really stung. But Jesus says, “And if I say, ‘I do not know Him’”—if I lower what I have just said, “I will be a liar like you.”

**John 8:55-57** “. . . but I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?”

They understood what He meant. They were “getting the drift.” The implications never sunk in personally. They could see where He was headed, but everything that He said made them angry. The Word of God should convict a person of his relationship with truth. The Word of God was not

convicting these people in their relationship with truth at all; it was making them fight truth, which shows that they were not on the same wavelength at all.

I am saying these things so that you will understand your own conversion. If the Word of God has the same effect on you that it had on these people, you are in trouble.

**John 8:56-58** Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad. Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

That was the greatest thunderbolt of all, because they understood that He was claiming to be the Lord of the Old Testament. He was claiming to be the Messiah. He was saying, in effect, “I am the Messiah Abraham saw when Abraham was alive.” What He was saying is, “I am timeless.” He was saying, “I have no beginning of days or end of life. I am God in the flesh.” That is quite a claim! What would you think if somebody walked up to you on the street, and after conversing with you for half an hour, said, “I am God.” If you were a student of the Bible, the chances are very great that you would have reacted just like these Jews did—and I would do the same thing. We would fall back on some cliché.

We may not pick up stones, but we would say, “Man, you’re out of your tree,” or “The lights are on, but nobody’s home.” Or, “Tell me, when was the last time you saw Elijah?” We would come up with some flippant thing, but these people took religion seriously.

**John 8:59** Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

**John 9:1-4** Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the

works of God should be revealed in him. I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.”

This is a unique story in one way, in that of all of the people that Jesus healed in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, this is the only one that apparently was afflicted from birth. It was pointed out that neither his sin nor his parents' sin was involved in him being that way. I do not know whether the disciples knew him. As the story continues, it seems to indicate that he was fairly well known in the area. The Pharisees did not seem to recognize who he was, but others apparently did. So it is entirely possible that the disciples were aware of him, because some of the townspeople seemed to be aware of him.

The question is, who sinned, this man or his parents? The disciples obviously understood that sin results in disease. It became a question to them, who is at fault? If he was blind from birth, was he somehow guilty of prenatal sin? That sounds strange to us, but it is written in some Jewish writing that they believed that a baby was capable of sinning from the time of conception. That sounds strange to our ears, and I do not believe that we even need to consider it. But since he was blind from birth, they apparently considered it, because it was a part of their traditional thinking, and that was a possibility.

Jesus cut right through it, and He said that neither the man nor his parents were guilty. The next question is, how did He know? The commandment obviously says that the sins of the fathers will be passed to the children to the third and the fourth generation of them that hate Me. Jesus said that the parents had not sinned either.

Was it the grandparents? Was Satan guilty? I do not know. Job 2:7 shows very clearly that Satan is able to inflict disease upon a person. In Luke 13:11-16, Jesus referred to a woman who had been bound by Satan. And there is the commandment, Exodus 20:5.

It is entirely possible that what Jesus did is just brush it aside as being irrelevant. In this case, it did not matter who had sinned. It would be irrelevant only because of what He was about to do. He already had it in mind that He was going to heal this person, so the fact of sin was of no

consequence. It was there, but it was not going to be of any consequence because He was going to heal the person.

Is it possible, then, that God afflicts certain people? Could we accuse God of sin? If there was no sin involved, did God then create this person this way, for His glory, knowing that 30 years later He was going to heal this person through His Son? I do not know; it is entirely possible, and we may not know until the Kingdom, and then we can ask, and get a good answer.

**John 9:4** “I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; . . .”

That is just another way of saying, “Don’t procrastinate; I can’t procrastinate. The time is short. I don’t want to wait until it’s too late to do something that should have been done.” So He is going to do this.

**John 9:5** “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

As long as He was there, it was His responsibility of God to give guidance to mankind, to show the right way.

**John 9:6-7** When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And He said to him, “Go wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

Why did He make a clay out of His spittle? Surely, Jesus did not believe that was going to make any difference. He knew (we know) that He did not need anything like that to do what He did. The centurion that came to Him said, “All you have to do is speak the word,” and He did, from many miles away—just prayed to God, and the servant was healed.



There was also the child of the nobleman, who said, “I don’t need you to come to my house.” So Jesus said, “Go your way; your faith has made your daughter whole.” He did not need anything. When He told the man in Mark 2 to pick up his bed and walk, He did not need spittle there.

There was no superstition involved in it, and because of the way God is, He is always thinking of the well-being of others. What He did must have been for the well-being of the blind man. Remember, he could not see anything. Jesus could have just commanded for his eyes to be opened, but there is a lot more to the story than just that. So what He did, is He used spit, and a bit of clay, and anointed the man’s eyes.

There may have been a physical reason for that. It had no curative power at all, but ancient writing tell us that the physicians of that day were accustomed to believing that spit had curative powers, especially the spit of somebody who was fasting (which sounds pretty yucky). So it is quite possible that what Jesus did, He did in order to create a confidence in the man, doing something that the man would expect to have done; the placebo effect. There was no curative power at all, but rather, simply to build confidence in the man. Remember, he could not even see yet, somebody who he did not know. There is no indication that this man had any prior knowledge of Christ (that is important to the story).

The next thing He did was tell the man to do something: to go to the pool of Siloam and wash himself in the water. He did not receive his sight until he carried out the command that Christ gave him to do.

I will digress for a bit. There is an interesting background on the pool of Siloam. It existed because of Hezekiah’s fear of Sennacherib’s invasion. The water that came into the city of Jerusalem came primarily from the pool of Gihon, which was outside of the city. If that pool was ever captured, then the water supply for the city of Jerusalem was cut off. There was no other water in the city.

So when Hezekiah began to hear of Sennacherib conquering one city-state after another, he devised a way with his engineers to get water into the city. They tunneled through the rock underneath Jerusalem to the spring at Gihon,

then piped the water from Gihon into the city to what became the pool of Siloam. That is why it is named “Sent.” The water was sent into the city by way of the tunnel that they dug.

The reason why it is so interesting is because it was quite an engineering feat. If they had followed a straight line, the distance between the pool of Siloam to the spring of Gihon was 366 yards, or 1098 feet, roughly 2/10ths of a mile. That is, if they had gone in a straight line. But they did not go in a straight line; instead, the tunnel zigzags underneath the city, and actually goes for a distance of 583 yards, or 1749 feet. In most places, the tunnel is six feet deep; it is high enough so that a person can walk through it. In most places, it is about three feet wide, in some places only two feet wide. It still exists today, and you can walk through it.

The interesting thing about it is this: the Jews began digging from both ends, and despite zigzagging all over the place, they hit one another right in the middle. How did they do it, in the days of Hezekiah? No one has completely figured that out yet. What kind of engineering expertise did they have, that they could build tunnels with turns in it, start at both ends, and as the story goes, hit dead-on right in the middle. Using the equipment of that day, they did it. At its deepest point, it is about 100 feet underground.

It did save the water supply. You know the story; Hezekiah was saved by an act of God, when God intervened and killed all of the troops of Sennacherib. Sennacherib was disgraced, and he went back to Assyria, where he was killed by his sons.

There is a very interesting analogy that involves the blind man. If you would like to read through, you can try to discover the analogy.