



## PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

# JOHN 8:31-38, 48-56, 58-59

## LESSON: JESUS' CLAIM TO DEITY —March 3, 2024

### INTRODUCTION:

According to **verse 1**, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. The Scribes and Pharisees bring a woman caught in the act of adultery. Jesus settles that trap. But in **verse 12**, He tells them that He is the Light of the World, and following Him you will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. The Pharisees disagree. **Verse 18**, Jesus says I and the Father bear witness of the truth. The Pharisees asks "Where is the Father?"

Jesus had many things to say to them, and to judge, but they had to get over the first hump or the first hurdle of who Jesus was or even who sent Him. Jesus lets them know that He's not speaking on His own. He came to speak to the world those things which He heard of His Father. And they still misunderstood that He was speaking the things He heard from His Father (**8:26-27**). Jesus then gives the illustration of being lifted up on the cross, for that's when they will know that He's who He say He is. And that He's not doing this of Himself, but as His Father has taught Him to speak of. And the One who sent Him is with Him, meaning the Father has not left Him alone. He's the One that's doing the things to please the Father. And many listening to Him speak believed on Him! (**8:28-30**)

### LESSON

#### I. JOHN 8:31-38

**8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;**—Jesus is speaking to the Jews who believed on Him. *"If they continued in His Word."* There is an "IF", meaning if you turn away from believing in His Word, you are not his disciples. Disbelief is a problem! You have to stay with; don't do part-time. *"Continue in His Word, then you are His disciples indeed."*

**8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.** Freedom comes from knowing the truth! *"You will know the truth (of who Jesus is), and the truth will make you free."* Who is Jesus? The Son of God! Truth is and what Jesus' Word says you are, and it frees you to become who God made you to be. The process of change is from the inside out; Him abiding, and extending beyond what you used to do; how you used to think. Now your actions and your thoughts look like the One who made you!. **Set free** is instantly—I open the cage and let you out and there is no change. **Make free** is an inward process of abiding, and the truth of Jesus stays with you throughout the process!

**8:33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?**—But they said that they were Abraham's seed, and were never slaves to any man, so, what did He mean about being made free? They're thinking that they're already free because they are Abraham's seed..

**8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.** Jesus proceeded to clarify what He meant that everyone who commits acts of sin becomes sin's slave. These Jews thought of themselves as occupying a privileged and secure position as sons within God's household, because they were Abraham's descendants. Jesus now informs them that they were not sons, but slaves. The freedom to believe who Jesus is, is not there yet. Jesus is the only One who can break sin's power! But they don't know that yet. We come into this world with sinful natures.

**8:35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.** In the story of Isaac and Ishmael, the son of the freewoman abideth in the house, but the son of the bondmaid is cast out. The slave does not stay with a family forever, but a son belongs to the family forever and it's privileges. The slave could be sold at any time, but the son can never be replaced no matter how far he goes. He is a part of the household. If you are a slave to sin, you are not a part of the truth of what the Son of God gives.

# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

**8:36** **If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.** This means that Man is unable to keep himself from sinning no matter how hard he tries, because truth is not operating in him. It has to be the power of the Son abiding within! So, there is a way that the slave of sin can't abide forever. The Son can free the slave of sin and ask the Father to adopt him, and if the Son makes the slave of sin free, the slave of sin is free indeed; you're delivered from the bondage and dominion of sin.

**8:37** **I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.** Jesus acknowledges that the Jews listening to Him were Abraham's descendants, but only on the physical level. Abraham was a man of faith! They desired to kill Jesus because His Word had no place in them, meaning they're rejecting His teaching. Being the kinship of Abraham would also mean they would know and do the works of Abraham, which Jesus also sees that they are reacting in the flesh, and not in the spirit of Abraham, for they rejected truth! Jesus claimed to be God's Son while the Jews claimed to be Abraham's children.

**8:38** **I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.** Jesus is speaking just what His Father has shown Him, but they are doing what their father has shown them. Their **conduct** showed that they were not Abraham's true children, but, Jesus' words proved that He was God's true Son!

## NOT APART OF THE LESSON JOHN 8:39-47

**8:39** The Jews reiterates that Abraham is their father. Jesus proceeded to repeat the difference between them and Abraham. *"If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham; you would do what Abraham did."* These Jews were having difficulty believing what Jesus was saying specifically about Himself. They wouldn't acknowledge that God had sent Him. **8:40** So, Jesus tells them again: *"you are trying to kill me. I'm telling you the truth. I've heard from God: Abraham hasn't done anything like this."* **8:41** You are doing the deeds of your father. They said, "We are not like children who never knew who their father was; we have one Father, even God." They're being prideful. **8:42** Jesus told them, "If God were really your Father, you would love me. I came from God, and now I am here. I didn't come by My own authority. God sent Me." **8:43** *"Why don't you understand the things I say? It is because you are prevented from doing so (accepting my teaching)."* *They could have understood if they had the same Father, but the deliberately refused to accept Jesus' teaching!"* **8:44** Their attitudes and actions pointed to the devil as their father for two reasons. (1) They wanted to kill Jesus, and (2) Satan was a murderer from the beginning of his career as a fallen angel. Liars not only speak untruth, but they also reject the truth. These Jews rejected Jesus partially because **8:45** He spoke the truth. Obviously many of Jesus' critics thought He was guilty of committing sin. **8:46** Jesus asked if any of them could prove Him guilty. This was one of Jesus' clearest claims to being God. Not one of His critics could prove Him guilty because He was not guilty. **8:47** Jesus again claimed that His hearers did not accept His words because they did not belong to God.

## II. JOHN 8:48-53

**8:48** **Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?—** Since the Jews could not refute Jesus' challenge they resorted to verbal abuse—name calling.

- They called Him a Samaritan because He had questioned their ties to Abraham, knowing that the Jews despised the Samaritans. Samaritans believed that they were descendants of the Northern tribes, not technically being Jews, but nevertheless Israelites. Their claim alone made the Jews uneasy for the Israelites didn't want to have anything to do with the Samaritans (4:9). So, calling Jesus a Samaritan was showing that Jesus was not who He claimed to be either; a wanna-be—appearing to be what He was not. Now, they've dishonored the Father!
- Then they claimed that Jesus was demon possessed—a devil. Perhaps these superficial believers concluded that only a demon-possessed heretic would accuse them as Jesus did. And maybe for the simple reason that Jesus had just claimed that their father was the devil (8:44), and now they accused Him of being the devil's agent. They're really in hot water now!

**8:49** **Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.**

# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

Jesus soberly denied their charges. His actions resulted from His faithfulness to His Father, not from demonic influences. In dishonoring Jesus, they were dishonoring God! The real demon-possessed evil spirit was seen in those who dishonored Him.

**8:50 And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.** Jesus aimed to honor His Father by faithfully carrying out His Will. The Jews' goal was to disgrace Jesus. They tried to do this by rejecting His testimony that the Father sent Him. Jesus did not try to justify Himself. He sought the Father's glory, not His own. The central purpose of Jesus' mission was not glory for Himself, but glory for His Father through salvation for humankind. Jesus added that there is One (that is God) who seeks it for Jesus, and He is the judge.

**8:51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.** Now, Jesus has made another claim, and yet it is a promise for believers. And it's a spiritual claim that has just went over their heads. They heard the word "death" and the word "If." The claim/promise has a condition "If" you Keep Jesus' Word! The word "keep" means to watch over, to obey with diligence; to fix and set one's heart upon the Word of Christ. This is synonymous with believing and trusting Him. Jesus didn't go to the cross for nothing. He died, but got up that we may be free. Abraham nor the prophets could do this! **John 5:24** says *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."*

When a man is truly saved, he is never condemned to die, but he is declared righteous and given eternal life.

**NOTE:** Man is presently in a state of death, that is, man is in the process of dying. Man "must" die and "will" die. He cannot stop the process. But in a flash quicker than lighting or in the blink of an eye, the follower of Christ passes from this world into the next. He never ceases to experience life and never loses consciousness. One moment he is in this world— the next moment he is in the presence of God Himself! There's nothing too hard for God!

**8:52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.** They believe they finally have Jesus cornered. They judged that only a demoniac would claim that His words were more powerful than the revelations that Abraham and the prophets had received and passed on. "Tasting death" meant experiencing death. **Heb.2:9b** says Jesus was *"crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone."* This is the very reason we would not see nor taste death. Jesus paid the ultimate price for sin. He experienced our death. The Jews knew that Abraham and the prophets had died, so Jesus must have been claiming to be greater than anyone who had died. Yes, they died, and Abraham and the prophets' words came from God! The Words that Jesus' is speaking to them now are very powerful to prevent spiritual death, but they just couldn't understand because they are stuck on the physical. Yes, we are stuck on what we see. We are stuck in tradition. We are stuck on self. Change comes to change us; not to make us ashamed or go backwards but to go forward.

**8:53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?—** The Samaritan woman asked a similar question—*"Art thou greater than our father Jacob...?"* **Jh.4:12.** Now, the Jews are asking whom He claim to be according to father Abraham who is dead, and the prophets who are dead. Was He greater than those named? *"Whom do You make Yourself out to be?"*

## III. JOHN 8:54-56, 58-59

**8:54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:—** They missed the whole point of what He had been stressing throughout this discourse and throughout His ministry, namely, that He did not exalt Himself at all. He simply did the deeds and said the words that His Father had given Him. Jesus rarely asserted His deity. He did not promote Himself. So, He contested His critics' accusation that He was glorifying Himself. Any glory apart from glory that

# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

God bestows amounts to nothing. Rather Jesus said that it was the Father (the one they claimed to be their Father) who was glorifying Him.

**8:55 Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I**

**shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.** Jesus flatly tells them that they don't know the Father, but He does. He lets them know that He's not lying like them because He knows the Father, and obeys Him. Point blank, Jesus refused to lie! For us listen carefully- Luke 9:26: *"For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."* Jesus is identifying these superficial believers as unbelievers.

We can see that today. What was done in the dark is coming to the light. We have to ask ourselves, do we really know Jesus or do we know of Him? They had not yet come to believe that He was the sent One. They probably saw Him as a mere man. They had called Him many names even to the point of lying, but not the right name.

**8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.** Jesus said that Abraham anticipated His coming day. Jesus was claiming that He fulfilled what Abraham looked forward to. If God could speak and tell Abraham to leave his home and friends, and tell him of his Promised Seed, then clearly God could reveal to Abraham Jesus' day: and he saw it and was glad. **Heb.11:13** says *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them."* Can you see when Jesus was born, Abraham was alive in heaven, living in the very presence of God Himself. He saw the Messiah's coming to earth and rejoiced with all of heaven. A great cloud of witnesses!

## NOT APART OF THE LESSON: VERSE 57

**8:57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?—** The Jews did not understand Jesus' meaning because they disregarded the possibility of His deity. To them it seemed ludicrous that Abraham could have seen Jesus' day in any sense, since millennia separated the two men. Jesus was obviously not that old since He began His public ministry when He was about 30yr.old. (Lk.3:23), and it only lasted about three and a half years. This is what they thought in their minds— Abraham died hundreds and hundreds of years ago, and Jesus wasn't even 50yrs old yet

## BACK TO THE LESSON:

**8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.** This only claims one thing: By saying, "I am," He's claiming pre-existence (always existing), and deity. The Jews understood that Jesus was claiming to be God and He existed before Abraham, and could not come to terms with His deity! They considered this a blasphemous claim.

**8:59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.** They began to pick up stones to throw at Jesus for making such a blasphemous claim. However, Jesus hid Himself from them, going through the midst of them and departing from the temple because His hour had not yet come. His existence was completely hidden from them as He passed by. Or like the movie (Matrix): Time stopped and they couldn't see Him as He walked pass them. He did not protest or retaliate, which shows another indication of His submission to the Father.

## SUMMARY:

# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

<sup>1</sup>Jesus is in direct confrontation with the Jewish leaders again and they have completely rejected His claims to be Messiah and Son of God. Christ has been making these claims since He first arrived and they have continued to reject them. They have three different claims.

The first claim is in verse 33, "**We are Abraham's seed.**"

The second claim is in verse 39, "**Abraham is our father.**"

The third claim is in verse 41, "**We have one Father, even God.**"

**31** Jesus is speaking to the Jews telling them to believe on Him:—"If they continued in His Word, then they are His disciples indeed", **32** "and they will know the truth, the truth will make them free." **33** But they answered that they were Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man. **34** Jesus proceeded to clarify what He meant. Everyone who commits acts of sin becomes sin's slave **35** for a slave does not stay with a family forever, but a son belongs to the family forever. **36** If the "Son" therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed; that is, deliver you from the bondage and dominion of sin. **37** Jesus acknowledged that the Jews listening to Him were Abraham's descendants, but only on the physical level. They desired to kill Him because His Word had no place in them, and they rejected His teaching. **38** Jesus is speaking just what His Father has shown Him, but they're doing what their father has told them. Their conduct showed, they were not Abraham's true children, but Jesus' words proved that He was God's true Son (**8:31-38**).

The Jews began to say that Jesus was a Samaritan and had a devil; an evil spirit. However, Jesus disclaimed that idea, but told them that He honors His Father, and they were dishonoring Him. In dishonoring Jesus, they were dishonoring God! The real demon-possessed evil spirit was seen in those who dishonored Him. Jesus aimed to honor His Father by faithfully carrying out His Will, and not by demonic influence. He sought not His own glory, but there is One that seeks and judges. Jesus truly states a sure thing: "*if a man keep (obey) His (Jesus') saying, he shall never see death.*" Now, the Jews are saying to themselves that they know that Jesus is possessed with a devil now, and they ask Jesus if He's greater than Abraham because Abraham is dead, and the prophets are dead. So, "*Whom do You make Yourself out to be?*" (**8:48-53**).

They missed the whole point that He had been stressing throughout this discourse and throughout His ministry, namely, that He did not exalt Himself at all. It is His Father who honors Him, the same One whom the Jews are saying is their God. Jesus points out that they (the Jews) didn't know Him; but He did. So, if Jesus said that He didn't know the Father, then He would be lying like them. But Jesus knows Him, and keeps (obeys) His saying. He identified these superficial believers as unbelievers. They had not yet come to believe that He was the sent One. They probably saw Him as a mere man; even lying. Jesus said that Abraham anticipated His day. Jesus was claiming that He fulfilled what Abraham looked forward to. The Jews then said to Him, "*Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?*" (**8:54-57**). Jesus said unto them, "*Truly,*" I tell you a truth that "*Before Abraham was, I am.*" He's claiming that He "*existed*" before Abraham. So, they could not come to terms with His deity! And the Jews considered this a blasphemous claim. They began to pick up stones to throw at Jesus for making such a claim. Jesus hid Himself going through the midst of them and departing from the temple (**8:58-59**).

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/1523>  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>