

56. Spiritual paternity test

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I am sure that you've seen many TV commercials from Ancestry.com. Their slogan says, "Discover what makes you uniquely you. After all, your family story is the story that leads to you." Our parents' DNA carries into our DNA so that we have similarities between parents and their children. Thus, when some people want to find out who their parents are or their children, they use a DNA test, also known as 'paternity test.'

But what about our spiritual DNA? Is there any test we can take to find out who our spiritual father is? Yes, there is.

Before we go any further, we must set a premise regarding the identity of the devil. Throughout the Bible, the devil is a very real spiritual being and is described in many places. He has many alias names: satan, the destroyer, the accuser of the brethren, the dragon, the old serpent, the deceiver, and many other descriptive names. However, the devil is NOT the arch enemy of God; he is not all powerful, all knowing; nor can he be everywhere like our Lord. He is nothing more than a mere creature which went against the Lord. He knows that his time is limited and on the way down to eternal death. In the meanwhile, he is doing everything he can to hurt the heart of God because the devil knows how much our Lord loves humanity. But the vast majority of self-described Christians in America do not know the true identity of the devil. And the devil likes it that way.

The devil wants you to think that he is nothing more than a little harmless guy in the tight red jump suit who runs around with a goatee, little horns on his head, with a pitchfork, and sits on someone's shoulder and whispers into one's ear to do mischief.

This morning, Jesus is going to teach us about the devil and his followers who thought they were the children of God through their pedigree of Abraham, but in reality, they were nothing more than the children of the devil. I believe that it is a sobering and rude awakening for them as well as many people in the community of Christians in this world. Some of them might be here right now.

A. THE APPLE DOES NOT FALL FAR FROM THE TREE

John 8:37-41 "I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. 38 I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father." 39 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. 40 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. 41 You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father-God."

The Jews claimed Abraham as their father, but Jesus made a careful distinction between "Abraham's descendants", that is physical descendants, and "Abraham's children", that is spiritual descendants through Abraham's personal faith.

There is a saying, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." If God is your Father, then you share His divine nature; but if satan is your father, then you share in his evil nature.

2 Peter 1:3-4 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Our Lord did not say that every lost sinner is a “child of the devil,” though every lost sinner is certainly a child of wrath and disobedience. One of the greatest skills of the devil is the subtle deception that makes unbelievers think that they are the masters of their own destinies and the captains of their own ships. But if the truth is known, the unbelievers are completely controlled by the devil without them realizing.

Ephesians 2:3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

In protest, some of the unbelievers would say, “No way. I believe in God. I am almost saved.” Wow, really? Can you say to a pregnant woman, “You are almost pregnant?” Either she is pregnant or not at all. Either you are saved by the grace of God or not at all.

These Jewish religious rulers who were arguing with Jesus majored in religion. They were professional religious people. Even though they were genetically related to Abraham, they were miles apart spiritually. As I taught you before, pedigree, proximity, or credentials from other men do not make a person a true follower of God.

John 1:12-13 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

B. THE SPIRITUAL PATERNITY TEST

John 8:42-47 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 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. 45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? 47 He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”

I talked about paternity tests at the beginning of this study. So let’s do a paternity test to see who our spiritual father is – God or the devil.

We need to set up the premises by what they do, then we can compare what we do with them:

1) God

- God speaks the truth. – v40

2) The devil

- He is the murderer from the beginning. – v44
- He does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. – v44
- The devil is a liar and the father of it. – v44

3) The children of God

- They do and speak what God the Father wants according to the Word, the Bible. – v38
- They love Jesus. – v42
- They hear God's Word and obey it. – v47

4) The children of the devil

- They sought to kill Jesus literally. – v37

Their spiritual descendants here in America still do the same thing socially by the ACLU attorneys as well as religiously by the liberal religious people. By the way, they now call themselves "Progressive Christians". The same old deceptive demonic contents with a new wrapping.

- They have no place for Jesus' Word in their hearts – v37
- They do what the devil wants them to do. – v38
- They do not listen to God's Word, nor do they obey it. – v43, v47

Our obedience and disobedience to the Word of God only proves our true relationship with Jesus. I am not talking about occasional lapses due to our sinful nature, rather consistent and willful defiance to the Lord by ignoring His Word.

C. I HONOR MY FATHER, AND YOU DISHONOR ME

John 8:48-50 Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" 49 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. 50 And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges.

These religious leaders had their spiritual security on two things. First, they knew of God, they had all His laws, they thought that they obeyed Him by following their own religious traditions which often actually went against God's truth and intentions. Secondly, they were the children of Abraham which they thought had secured their instant get-out-of-hell card no matter what.

Jesus destroys both of those securities to lay bare their naked sinfulness that He might give them the garment of His own righteousness. But they would not accept His.

These religious leaders called Jesus a Samaritan which was one of the most despised races to the Jews and demon possessed. They could not make name calling any worse than that. The Jewish people hated the Samaritans because they were mixed-breeds between the Jews and Assyrians. The Jews didn't like the Gentiles, but the Jews considered the Samaritans less than the Gentiles. They probably had worse racial problems between them than the KKKs and the Black Panthers which is the radical black militant racial group.

D. KEEP MY WORD YOU SHALL NEVER TASTE DEATH

John 8:51-55 Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death." 52 Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.' 53 Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom do You make Yourself out to be?" 54 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. 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; but I do know Him and keep His word.

They call Jesus names mercilessly, but He extends His mercy to them and shows them the way of salvation to heaven. This is a great thing to practice, folks, especially as Christians. When someone behind your car blares his horn and yells something at you and you are not quite sure what he means, then he waves at you with one finger only. Now you have a choice – you can wave at him in the same way by lowering yourself to his level or smile at him and wave back at him with all five fingers.

With the solemn affirmation “*Most assuredly, I say to you,*” Jesus declared that any man who received His message would not experience death. It is the summary of His mission, because He came to destroy the devil’s work and to undo the penalty for sin pronounced in the Garden of Eden:

Genesis 2:17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

Jesus says, “*if anyone keeps My Word he shall never see death.*” This is a tremendous statement. Let me tell you this way, Christian. If you’re already a born-again believer, you’re already experiencing eternal life on earth, and continuing in heaven later. It will happen in less than one millionth second that you won’t even know it. It will be like the Rapture is, in the twinkling of an eye, absent from the body, present with the Lord.

There’s no lingering state in between. One moment you are on earth, next moment you are in heaven and worshipping our God and Savior Jesus Christ with the millions and millions of saints who went before us. What a day it will be! Do you know what the better part of that is? It is your first day in heaven and you have eternity to go. Do you know what the best part of that is? Jesus is there.

E. BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM

John 8:56-59 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” 57 Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” 58 Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” 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.

God did not give Abraham any special vision of our Lord Jesus’ life and ministry, but He did give Abraham the spiritual perception to “see” these future events. By faith, Abraham saw the birth of the Messiah in the miraculous birth of his own son, Isaac. He certainly saw Calvary when he offered Isaac to God in Genesis 22. In the priestly ministry of Melchizedek in Genesis 14, Abraham could see the heavenly priesthood of the Lord Jesus. In the marriage of Isaac in Genesis 24, Abraham could see a picture of the marriage of the Lamb of God and the church.

Jesus’ statement in v58 can be translated, “Before Abraham was born, I AM.” This is one of the most definite proclamations of Jesus’ divinity in the whole New Testament. This is the third time Jesus claims His divinity in this chapter 8 – v24 and v28.

The most difficult people to win to the Savior are those who do not realize that they have a need. They are under the condemnation of God, yet they trust their religion and their traditions to save them. They are walking in the darkness and not following the Light of life. They are sharing a “living death” because of their bondage to sin; and, in spite of their religious deeds, they are dishonoring the Father and the Son. These are the people who crucified Jesus Christ, and Jesus called them the children of the devil.

If God is your Father through Jesus, then heaven is your home. If He is not your Father through Jesus, then hell is your destiny.

F. APPLICATIONS

- 1) Pedigree, proximity or credentials from other men do not make a person a true follower of God.
- 2) Our obedience and disobedience to the Word of God only proves our true relationship with Jesus.
- 3) True Christian love can only be seen through what we do to others, not by what we say.