

He Loved Me...

He Loves Me Lots

The Gospel of John

Text

8:28-47

Topic

Jesus stuns the religious authorities of Israel telling them, "You are of your father, the devil"

Title

***"Father Lucifer Has Many Sons,
and Many Sons Has Father Lucifer"***



Bumpers and rear windows in all 50 states proudly hosted that sticker in the late 1990s. Charlton Heston was a five term president of the National Rifle Association from 1998-2003.

To support his Second Amendment activism, Heston moonlighted as an actor. He was in a few feature films - almost 100 over 60 years, to be exact.

Charlton Heston was the man. *The Ten Commandments*, *Planet of the Apes*, *Soylent Green*, *Midway*, *The Omega Man*, *Tombstone*. Who else could such utter iconic lines as,

- "Those who will not live by the law shall die by the law!"
- "Take your stinking paws off me, you dirty ape!"
- "Soylent Green... *is people!*"

He headlined the greatest movie of all time.

Released in 1959, *Ben Hur* has everything you could ask for in a film. It has something more: Jesus.

The full title of the book from which the film was made is, *Ben Hur - A Tale of the Christ*. Published in 1880, it is considered "the most influential book of the 19th century."

The story recounts the persecution of Judah Ben-Hur, a wealthy Jew from Jerusalem. He is wrongfully convicted by the Romans and sentenced to row in the Roman galleys for life. Judah survives his ordeal as a galley slave by saving the life of Arrius, the commander of his ship. Arrius adopts Judah.

When he was adopted, Judah Ben-Hur went from *slave* to having the status of a *son*.

The Jewish authorities thought they were sons but Jesus said they were slaves.

- When the Lord promised that those who believe in Him will be made "free" (v32), the Pharisees understood Jesus considered them "slaves."
- The Jews claimed that being descended from Abraham gave them status as sons. Jesus would tell them that their dad was the devil.

In contrast, Jesus tells those who believe in Him they have been "set free." They are no longer slaves, but sons. Jesus said, "a slave does not abide in the house forever, *but* a son abides forever."

Jesus used adoption as a metaphor of what it means to believe in Him.

The adoption metaphor carries on into the New Testament. The apostle Paul is the New Testament's adoption specialist:

- He said Jesus came, "that we might receive adoption to sonship" (Galatians 4:5).
- He said, "having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself" (Ephesians 1:5).
- He said, "You received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children" (Romans 8:15 NLT).

The adoption was first offered to Israel. Romans 9:4, "Theirs is the adoption to sonship." When Israel rejected Jesus Christ, their adoption was put on hold.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 Believer, Believe You Are Adopted**, and **#2 Nonbeliever, Believe You Are A Slave**.

#1 - Believer, Believe You Are Adopted (v28-32)

Only 210 shopping days until Christmas.

You might think twice about gifting someone with a DNA test.

"I have seen a substantial increase in paternity cases over the past few years," said Adam B. Wolf, a lawyer specializing in fertility lawsuits. "Our clients typically call in February after receiving the results of the at-home DNA tests they receive for the holidays."

The Creator of DNA was about to announce to the Jews who their father was.

Metaphors are one way our gracious Heavenly Father communicates aspects of His love and grace. Christians are compared to a household, the servants in the household, the steward over the household, and sons in the household. They are not meant to compete. Each teaches different truths about God.

The Doctrine of Adoption doesn't get much press among Christians. It should. It encourages us that, as sons, all the privileges and blessings of the Christian life, both present and future, belong to us.

J.I. Packer writes, *"Our understanding of Christianity cannot be better than our grasp of adoption. Of all the gifts of grace, adoption is the highest."*

Joh 8:28 Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.

Jesus had been teaching in the Temple. Some Scribes and Pharisees confronted Him.

"Son of Man" was the primary title by which Jesus identified Himself. It pointed the Jews to a specific prophecy in the Book of Daniel in which the promised Messiah is called the Son of Man. Jesus was claiming to be that guy.

“Lifted up” is how Jesus described His death on the Cross. It, too, pointed back - to the twenty-first chapter of the Old Testament Book of Numbers. Israel was suffering judgment for sin. Serpents were in the camp, and their bite was fatal. Moses was commanded to make a bronze serpent on a pole. Any Israelite who merely looked at the pole was spared from death.

It was a type of the future's Cross. Jesus lifted up on the Cross draws all men to Himself. **Any** who believe are saved. “He is the Savior of all men, especially those who believe” (First Timothy 4:10).

His death on the Cross was accompanied with things by which they would know He was their Messiah:

- The veil in the Temple was torn from top to bottom.
- “The Earth quaked, and the rocks were split.”
- Many deceased saints were simultaneously raised from the dead and seen in Jerusalem.
- The stone of His tomb was rolled away revealing it empty.
- There was a “great earthquake” when an angel rolled away the stone.

Joh 8:29 And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.”

“Always” is quite a claim. Can you imagine anyone, other than Jesus, saying this?

Jesus claimed to be the Son of Man. The higher you aspire to some position, the deeper the dive that is taken into your background. Think of the worst of the hearings to approve a justice to the Supreme Court. The religious authorities would go all the way back to Jesus’ conception and suggest He was illegitimate, immediately disqualifying Him.

His conception was miraculous. The virgin birth was necessary to *qualify*, not *disqualify*. No one with a sinful human nature could die for the sins of the world. Conceived as He was by God the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary, Jesus was born without a sinful human nature. He was a second Adam, sent to redeem and restore what Adam had ruined.

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

- We are not among those who believe that the Bible teaches there is a second chance for salvation after death.
- Nor do we see any kind of universalism in the Bible, that everyone will somehow be saved.
- Nor do we see annihilationism, by which non-believers will simply cease to exist.

There is the Lake of Fire into which all nonbelievers, and all the wicked angels, will be confined for an eternity of conscious torment.

Nevertheless, "Many believed."

I think we will be wonderfully surprised by some of the faces we see in Heaven.

Imagine Old Testament saints arriving in Paradise and seeing Abraham's carnal, compromising nephew, Lot. **"You** made it?! No way!!"

Joh 8:31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

Joh 8:32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

The freedom promised in the Bible is freedom from sin and it's penalty, death, revealed in God's Law. Our friends at gotquestions.org define our freedom in Christ, saying,

Before Jesus died on the Cross, God's people lived under a detailed system of laws. The Law was powerless to grant salvation or produce true freedom. It pointed the way to Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:19-24). Through His sacrificial death, Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law, setting believers free from sin and death. God's laws are now written in our hearts through the Spirit of God, and we are free to follow and serve Christ in ways that please and glorify Him.

A born-again, baptized-into-the-body, Spirit-filled, transformed, new creation in Jesus, can abide and not attempt life in their own strength. Adopted as a son, you have everything you need to live godly.

Jesus did not use the word "adoption." *He didn't need to.* It was understood. Adoption was the way you were elevated from slave to son.

Paul loved the metaphor:

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Galatians 4:4-7).

“No longer slaves but sons” is the promise Jesus made to those who believe. There is no need to over explain this. We immediately understand it.

When a couple is going through an adoption, they are anxious until they hear four words: “The adoption is final.” The child is legally theirs, a son or a daughter.

If you are a believer, your adoption is final. It was finalized the instant you were saved.

Let’s make one application of this before moving on. Whereas a slave might beg for resources, a son has full access to them. Apply that to the presence and power of God the Holy Spirit. Do we beg for Him, or simply believe?

#2 - Nonbeliever, Believe You Are A Slave (v33-47)

Your father’s not your father: when DNA tests reveal more than you bargained for.

There are many articles like that. It could be the headline for our remaining verses.

Joh 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’?”

The Jews understood by His use of the word “free” that Jesus was suggesting they were slaves. They objected, claiming they had never been slaves.

Israel was subjected by Egypt, Babylon, Persia, and Rome. The Northern Kingdom was destroyed by Assyria. The Jews were not thinking in mere political terms. They were giving what might be described as an *internal* definition of freedom. In spite of political oppression they thought of themselves as free sons of Abraham, who had never *inwardly* bowed to foreign rule.

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

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

“Sin” here refers to a habit of sinning. A person habitually sinning is a slave, not a son. Were they sinning? Big time!

Joh 8:37 “I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

Their desire to murder Him was a pretty good indicator that they were sinning and, therefore, slaves, not sons. The “word” of God was not penetrating their hardened hearts.

Joh 8:38 I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.’

“Like father, like son.” Jesus is about to give them their spiritual DNA results.

Joh 8:39 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.

Joh 8:40 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.

They in no way resembled Abraham. The “works of Abraham” are declared in Genesis 15:6, “Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness.” The apostle Paul quotes this, saying, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” (Romans 4:3).

It can be hard to believe that all a person must do to be saved is believe. It’s all you *can* do that isn’t a work.

Joh 8:41 You do the deeds of your father.” Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father - God.”

They believed their physical descent guaranteed their sonship. They not subtly pointed to the suspicious birth of Jesus.

Joh 8:42 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.

Joh 8:43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.

The Lord was no illegitimate son. Jesus was sent by His Father. If the Jews did not love Him, they did not love the Father, no matter their protests. Their values, biases, and prejudices overruled the Word of God.

We most definitely bring values, biases, and prejudices as we read or hear God's Word. Ask the Lord to help you identify yours, so that you might go deeper into the Word.

Joh 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.

The Jews were like the devil:

- The devil is a "murderer from the beginning." By the success of his temptation, he robbed Adam of spiritual life, and through him brought death to the entire race.
- The devil is a liar. He told the first lie, that Adam and Eve would be like God if they disobeyed Him.

Joh 8:45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.

D.A. Carson writes, *"The children of God will so love the truth that they will believe in Jesus; the children of the devil will be so characterized by lies that they will not be able to accept the truth, precisely because it is the truth."*

Joh 8:46 Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?

The Jews had accused Jesus of breaking the laws of the Sabbath, and of blaspheming, because He made Himself equal with God. Later in this chapter they will say He was demon possessed. They could not, however, prove any of their charges, because their accusations were all false.

Joh 8:47 He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

Edward Klink writes, "Since they belong to the devil, they do not belong to God. They are, quite simply, illegitimate children. The spiritual heritage they claim for themselves is a lie from the devil."

For all its unfathomable depth, the Bible can be simple. You are either a *slave* or a *son*:

- Everyone starts life as a slave to sin, the devil, and death. We are born spiritually dead, into a world system that is described as darkness.
- We can only be saved from slavery, and the final destination of the Lake of Fire, by adoption.

Adoption is included in the salvation 'package.'

When you see Jesus lifted up for your sins, and believe Him, you are born-again, baptized into the body of Jesus, God the Holy Spirit comes to reside in you, **and** *you're adoption is final.*

Tim Keller writes, "The image of "adoption" tells us that our relationship with God is based completely on a legal act by the Father. You don't "win" a father, and you don't "negotiate" for a parent. Adoption is a legal act on the part of the father - it is very expensive and costly only for him. There is nothing the son does to win or earn the status. It is simply received."

Abba.

Not the *Dancing Queen* Swedish pop band. It is an Aramaic word used for the relationship between a father and son. It is like calling your father, "Papa."

The word is found three times in the New Testament:

1. Jesus addresses His Father as "Abba, Father" in His prayer in Gethsemane.
2. In Romans 8:15, "Abba, Father" is mentioned in relation to the Spirit's work of adoption that makes us God's children and heirs with Christ.
3. In Galatians 4:6, again in the context of adoption, the Spirit in our hearts cries out, "Abba, Father."

Some think it's irreverent to approach God as Papa. Let me ask you fathers. Do you want your kids to keep their distance and always call you "mister" and "sir?"

If you are a Christian, you are adopted. You know who your Father is. He is your Almighty Papa.