

Paternity Test

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[0:00] Amen. Amen. You may be seated. Kiddos, you are excused to your King's Kids class, and as they are going, would you please open up your Bibles to John chapter 8.

I'm going to be preaching on verses 39 through 59 this morning. And as you're turning there, I want you to imagine, imagine an incredibly wealthy man.

He's a billionaire. And he's as promiscuous as he is wealthy. Sleeps around. And he finds himself to be the regular recipient of letters from law firms.

He's a woman. Representing women whom he has slept with. And these women are filing some kind of paternity suit. And they wanted to get money, financial support, for the children they claim that he has conceived.

So this wealthy man gets his own law firm. And there are so many paternity suits that the law firm has to get their own paternity rights specialist to handle the load.

[1:24] Do you know what this paternity rights specialist is going to do? As these claims come in, this paternity rights specialist is going to have these moms and their children do what's called a paternity test.

Where they'll take a DNA sample of the child and a DNA sample of the parent father. And they will see if there's a DNA match.

Because if there's a match, that child is set for the rest of their life. Because they have legal standing. But if that DNA doesn't match, well, that child's got another father.

This morning we return to a dialogue between Jesus and some Jews in Jerusalem. This is all taking place in a conversation in the temple.

And these Jews have claimed to be believers in Jesus. But Jesus has shown them to be impostors. Just pseudo-believers. And in chapter 8, verse 37, or excuse me, 38, Jesus essentially says, hey, there are two ways to live.

[2:39] Either you are a slave to sin, or you are a child of God. And if you are a slave to sin, you have another father other than the God of the Bible. And what we're going to see this morning is if God of the Bible is not your father, then your father is none other than the devil.

So in this morning, here's how we're going to approach this dialogue between Jesus and these Jews. Think of it as a spiritual paternity test.

And if you were to take this spiritual paternity test, whose father is yours? God or the devil?

This dialogue consists of three exchanges, and I'm going to read through each one at a time. So let's first take a look at exchange one between Jesus and these pseudo-believers.

And it's in verses 39 through 47. Hear the word of God. They answered him. These Jews answered him. Abraham is our father. Jesus said to them, if you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did.

[3:58] But now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your father did. They said to him, we were not born of sexual immorality.

We're not illegitimate children. We're not bastards. We have one father, even God. Jesus said to them, if God were your father, you would love me, for I came from God, and I am here.

I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father, the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.

He was a murderer from the beginning, and he does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

But because I tell the truth, do you not believe me? You do not believe me. Which one of you convicts me of sin? I tell the truth. Why do you not believe me? Whoever is of God, hears the words of God.

[5:01] The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God. So here, in verses 39 through 47, this first exchange between Jesus and these Jews, these Jews make two paternity claims.

They claim that Abraham is their father, and then claim that God is their father. And what Jesus does, is he denies them both, like a big fat stamp, denied.

Let's look at verse 39, with the first claim. The first claim, they say, is Abraham is our father.

Remember, in verse 38, Jesus has just said, I speak of what I have seen with my father, and you do what you have heard from your father.

And then the Jews stomp their foot. They're like this, Abraham is our father. How dare you suggest otherwise? Jesus has already acknowledged that they are, in fact, physical descendants of Abraham, verse 37, but they're not true spiritual children of Abraham.

We see why, in verses 39 through 41, there's this if-then argument. In verse 39, Jesus responds to their claim, and he says, if you were Abraham's children, then, you would be doing the works Abraham did.

[6:24] But now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. If you were truly Abraham's children, then you would be doing what Abraham did.

And what is that? By faith, acting in obedience to God. We see that in Genesis chapter 12, one through three, where God shows up to Abraham, and he says, leave the land that you were raised in, and go to the land that I will show you.

And Abraham does just that. And so what's going on here is, Jesus is saying, sorry guys, you are not Abraham's children, not spiritually, because you're not obeying God by faith.

The second claim comes in verse 41. They say, we were not born of sexual immorality.

We have one father, even God. It's like, okay, you can deny us Abraham, but we're going to play the God card. We are Israel. God is our father.

[7:40] In Exodus chapter 4, in verses 22 through 23, God sends Moses to Pharaoh, and he says, through Moses, Israel is my firstborn son.

Let him go. So this is what they're thinking, these Jews, that God is our father. I mean, we're Exodus 4, children of God.

And when they say, we're not born of sexual immorality, they're saying, we're not illegitimate children. We're purebreds.

We have the bloodline. And what we see happening here is that their identity is wrapped up in their genetics, their lineage, their bloodline.

And so they're like, yeah, we're descendant of him. He is our father. Now, one commentator this past week made a very interesting comment that not only is this, these Jews claiming their paternity right to God the Father, but it could very well be a little bit of a zing on Jesus.

[8:53] Because they know that Jesus, his own paternity is in question. Oh, but Jesus, yeah, we know that Mary was pregnant before she got married to Joseph.

We're not bastards. Jesus denies them. And he again uses an if-then argument.

Look at verse 42. If God were your father, then you would love me. For I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.

Why do you not understand what I say? And so the if-then argument goes like this. If God were truly your father, then you would love me. You would totally accept me.

You would enter into a relationship with me. You would see me for who I am. You would take my words to be true, and you would be welcomed into the family.

[10:00] But they don't. Jesus' point is that they're not God's children because they don't believe in Jesus.

They're not born of God. And then in verse 44, Jesus lowers the boom. You are of your father, the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.

Now, this is not the way to make friends, is it? Here's what Jesus goes on to say. You can imagine them like, what? And then look what Jesus says about the devil, about the devil's desires.

He was a murderer from the beginning. He does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him.

When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and a father of lies. Here's what he's saying. Your father is a murderer and a liar. And you know what he's saying about them?

[11:05] Like father, like son? You're murderers too, and you're liars as well. Just right at him. In the temple.

Your father was a liar and you are liars. My truth is not abiding in you and you're murderers. You're seeking to kill me. And so what Jesus does is he denies their claim that they are God's children. Maybe you've come into the room claiming that God is your father. Have you denied Jesus? Because if you've denied Jesus, God is not your father.

You've got another father. In verses 45 through 47, Jesus peppers them with some more questions. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me, which of you, which one of you convicts me of sin?

If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? These are rhetorical questions. He's making the point that you don't understand because you're not born of God. But what I want to point you to is in verse 46, which one of you convicts me of sin?

[12:27] Do you know what Jesus is saying here? Which one of you has any grounds to accuse me of any sin for my entire life?

What this is happening, what he's saying is that I am without sin. You can't put any claim on me. Any charge will not stick. And the only way that Jesus can be sinless for the 33 years he lived is because he's God in the flesh. So this first exchange, we have these claims, paternity claims, the Jews saying, Abraham is our father and God is our father and Jesus denies them both.

And in the midst of that, we learn that Jesus is without sin. Did you notice that Jesus is judging them? He knows their hearts and he knows ours as well.

This all takes place in the temple. Exchange number two in verses 48 through 56. Let me read it.

The Jews answered him, Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?

[13:47] Jesus answered, I do not have a demon, but I honor my father and you dishonor me. Yet I do not seek my own glory. There is one who seeks it and he is the judge. Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.

Then the Jews said to him, Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, as did the prophets. Yet you say, If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham who died and the prophets died?

Who do you make yourself out to be? Jesus answered, If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my father who glorifies me, of whom you say he is our God, but you have not known him.

I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. Your father, Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day.

He saw it and was glad. In the second exchange, the Jews make two more claims.

[14:55] They claim that Jesus has a demon twice, and Jesus is going to deny them twice. Let's look at the first claim in verse 48.

Are we not right in saying you are a Samaritan, have a demon? So when these Jews called Jesus a Samaritan, it is not a nice thing to say. Samaritans were seen by Jews as religious half-breeds, kind of the scum of the earth.

Samaritans questioned Jewish kind of heritage, lineage, whether they were to the true people of God. And so these Jews are saying, why are you questioning our legitimacy, Samaritan?

What's even more striking is like, is it not true that you have a demon? What are you, nuts? Yes. That would be the only way that they can understand why Jesus would make such a claim.

The only reason why you would think that we're not God's sons and daughters is if you had a demon. And what you need to understand there is they are actually blaspheming.

[16:14] They're attributing to Jesus God in the flesh demonic activity. In verse 49, Jesus denies them outright.

I do not have a demon. And then he says, I honor my father and you dishonor me. So Jesus was sent by his father to earth.

He knows where he's from. He knows where he's going. He knows why he came. And he's seeking to honor his father by obeying him, by doing what he was sent to do. But the Jews, by not believing Jesus, dishonor Jesus.

And they show that God is not their father. And in fact, in verse 50, we read, they will be judged for it. And the judgment of dishonoring Jesus is eternal death.

It's being cast out into outer darkness for an eternity of weeping and gnashing of teeth. It's talking about hell. In verse 51, we read, this, truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.

[17:24] death. What Jesus is doing here is like, you know what? There is something you can do so as not to taste death, not to be judged.

If only you would keep these words that I'm telling you. If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death. These Jews, by not believing in Jesus is, they are dishonoring him by rejecting his words of truth and are attributing to him demonic activity.

What's striking about this is here they are accusing him of these things and yet Jesus continues to offer out lifelines to them. Opportunities to believe.

Opportunities to live. Claim two, they say, now we know that you have a demon. Is that not clear, verse 52?

They're like saying, now that you've said that, you've just made our case. You definitely are demon-possessed. And what they're actually doing is persisting in their blasphemy.

[18:44] What they are convinced of is that Jesus, by saying, that whoever keeps his word will never taste death, what they're convinced of is that he is making himself out to be greater than Abraham and the prophets.

And they think that's absolutely ridiculous. Their point is, hey, even Abraham and the prophets died. They seem to be misunderstanding what Jesus is saying when he says, never taste death.

Jesus is speaking about eternal life, that once you believe, it comes, you are given eternal life, and then after you physically die, you continue to live.

These Jews seem to be thinking, he's talking literally that you will never die again, physically die. And then the point is, Abraham and the prophets died. Are your words able to do something that their words couldn't?

Are you greater than Abraham? Are you greater than the prophets? Who do you make yourself out to be? You've definitely got a demon. They're unable to believe who Jesus truly is.

[19:55] Who do you think you are, Jesus? And in verses 54 through 56, Jesus responds, he denies them with another if-then argument.

Look at verse 54, if I glorify myself, then my glory is nothing. It's my father who glorifies me, of whom you say, he is our God.

But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him, and I keep his word. Jesus' response is, hey, I'm not here to promote myself.

My father is going to glorify me. He's going to do that. I am just obeying him. I'm here to speak the truth. I'm here to be glorified at the right time because he sent me.

I know where I come from. I know where I'm going. I know why I'm here. And even though you call my father your God, you do not know him.

[21:00] God. And what he's talking about is not an intellectual knowledge. He's not talking about do you know the omnis of God or not. The knowledge is a knowing as in being in a relationship with.

A saving, life-giving relationship with. Jesus is like, I know you know of God, but you don't know my father.

You're not in a relationship with him. You're not his children. Jesus does know him. Jesus is in a relationship with his father.

God the father, God the son. And he demonstrates this by keeping his word, by doing what God the father has told him, sent him to do.

He's not a liar. Not like them. He's a legitimate son. In fact, what they share in common, God the father and God the son, is God-ness.

[22:12] In 56, Jesus circles back to Abraham in verse, what they asked in verse 53. Remember this, are you greater than our father Abraham who died?

And look at verse 56. Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad. Does anybody else in the room think that this is a rather kind of strange way of speaking? Let me read it again.

Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad. Do you know how Jesus is speaking of Abraham? Like he knows him. Like they've talked about this.

Like they've interacted over this. Like Jesus was somehow with Abraham when God promised Abraham that he would bless all the nations of the earth through one of his offspring.

And from that point on, Abraham started to anticipate with gladness how God would fulfill that promise. promise. And God fulfilled that promise by sending Jesus.

[23 : 24] Paul in Galatians makes the argument that Jesus is through whom God would bless all the nations with salvation. Abraham was looking forward to my day.

That is a remarkable statement. Abraham was looking, rejoiced that he would see my day. Jesus wasn't looking forward to Abraham's day.

Abraham was looking forward to Jesus' day. The day when the offspring of Abraham, the Messiah, the Son of God, Son of Man, totally God, totally man, would come and usher into our world salvation, eternal life.

That's my day. It's a huge claim. Abraham looked forward to my day, and he saw it, and was glad. Jesus knows Abraham. He's not demon-possessed. God bless God. He's the offspring of Abraham, through whom God would bless all the nations of the earth, through the death and resurrection of this offspring, Jesus.

[25 : 01] This is all taking place at the temple. people. And so Jesus denies these claims of demon possession. He's in fact, the Son of God.

In exchange three, in verses 57 through 59, we now have a claim of Jesus that's denied by the Jews. This, verse 58, is the climactic moment of this whole dialogue in chapter 8.

So the Jews said to him, you're not yet 50 years old, and have you seen Abraham? Abraham lived 2,000 years earlier to Jesus.

Jesus said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. So they picked up stones to throw him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

In verse 57, we see how the words of Jesus, in terms of how he was talking about Abraham, how they struck his audience, these Jews.

[26 : 19] You're not yet 50 years old, and have you seen Abraham? They heard him right, but they couldn't believe it. The word of Christ was not dwelling in them.

They're asking a question, but there's no question to what they're asking. There's no way, there's no way you know Abraham like that.

There's no way you knew this man who lived 2,000 years before. There's no way that he was looking forward to your day. No way.

They are denying his claim that he knows Abraham personally. And so, in verse 58, Jesus drops another truly, truly. The truth, the truth.

Not a lie, not a lie. Let me set the record straight, listen carefully to what I'm about to say. And in one sentence, he answers three of their questions.

[27 : 31] He's going to answer, are you greater than our father Abraham and the prophets? He's going to answer, who do you make yourself out to be? And he's going to answer, you're not even 50 years old, and have you seen Abraham?

This one sentence answers all of them. Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. Before Abraham was, I am.

I existed before Abraham. We saw something similar back in John 1, verse 30, with JTB, John the Baptist. He said, he who comes after me, speaking of Jesus, he who comes after me, ranks before me because he was before me.

And what John the Baptist was saying there is that the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God, Jesus had existed before him.

Though physically born after him, he had a greater rank than he was greater than John the Baptist. The second person of the Trinity has eternally existed. And so when he says, before Abraham was, I am, what he's saying is, I'm greater than Abraham.

[28 : 44] I existed before Abraham. And so he's answering the question, yes, I am greater than Abraham. I was before him. But the wording is weird.

This isn't good grammar, Jesus. Before Abraham was, I am. Shouldn't he be saying, before Abraham was, I was?

What's up with that? Jesus very intentionally doesn't say, I was. He's purposely saying, before Abraham was, I am.

God goes to the question, who do you make yourself out to be? Remember, this is happening at the temple. Who do you make yourself out to be?

And the one that Jesus is making himself out to be is the great I am. Of Exodus 3, burning bush, Moses, who do I tell Israel is sending me?

[29:47] And God says, tell them I am is sending you. The ever existent one. The present present. The eternal present.

I am. Self-sufficient. God of all. The Greek word is ego amy. Before Abraham was, ego amy.

And that little phrase shows up in Isaiah 41.4, 43.10, 48.12. I am.

There is no other. There is no other savior. Jesus is grabbing onto that and broadcasting it. He's making a paternity claim.

He's saying, the same godness in me is the same godness of my father. father. Who do you make yourself out to be?

[30:44] I am. So yes, he has seen Abraham who lived 2,000 years earlier.

And he also saw him the moment before he was conceived in Mary when Abraham saw his death as he's claiming to be God.

There's no question to what Jesus is claiming about himself. He's claiming to be God in the flesh. The Jews hear this audacious claim.

In verse 59, they pick up stones to stone him because they think that he's blaspheming, which is really rich. rich. It's doubly ironic because Jesus is not blaspheming.

He is God. And they just accused him of being demon possessed. Now that's rich. rich. And what I don't want you to miss is the last little phrase in verse 59.

[32:05] Jesus hid himself and God is now leaving the building. He leaves the temple. He came to his own and his own did not receive him.

He has given them countless opportunities to believe and now he's leaving the building. Just like the glory of the Lord departed the temple in Ezekiel.

So we've seen three exchanges. Jesus denies the Jews claim of paternity to Abraham and God the Father.

Jesus denies their double claim that he is demon possessed and that Jesus is denied when he claims to be God. What's the point?

Very simple. Three words. Jesus is God. Jesus is God. And what that means is it's either true or false.

[33:12] If it's false don't waste your time with Jesus. If it's true it puts him in a category all by himself. And if it's true that makes what Jesus has done it's called effectual powerful.

He lived a sinless life. None of us in the room can live a sinless life. My guess is a few of us have sinned once or twice already today. Jesus because he's God in the flesh is sinless.

He did what none of us could do. And not only is he sinless sinless Jesus the incarnate God died in the place for sinners. He bore all of God's wrath for all of our sin and then when we believe God in his mercy and his grace not only forgives us those sins he gives us the righteousness of Christ and by right he brings us into his family you see not only is this claim true not only is it effectual it is transformative you were delivered from one family when the devil was your daddy into another family and now you have a heavenly father and it's all through this one who claimed to be God if he wasn't God none of it could happen so let me ask you a question of spiritual paternity who is your father is your life marked more and more by trusting in

God's word by keeping Christ's word by by his word abiding in you are you living in the truth are you walking in the light are you loving Jesus more and loving others more if you are that's an indicator that you've been brought into the family that you put your faith in Christ and he's brought about this transformation and he's bringing about more and more transformation but if you are murderous if you hate people if you go after people if you're regularly lying you're spinning the truth even denying that Jesus is God you are in darkness and what that shows is that your daddy is the devil there are just two ways to live you're either a slave to sin and your daddy's the devil or you are a child of God and the blood of Jesus has set you free to live as a child and live for God now if you're in the room and you're kind of like well how can

God truly become my father if I'm a sinner under his wrath how do I how do I get into the family it's by believing in his son trusting in Jesus and this morning you're given an opportunity to believe in Jesus don't let this opportunity leave the building without trusting Christ did you know none of us in this room is promised tomorrow none of us in this room is promised tomorrow so trust Christ today if you're not a Christian in the room you can't bank on tomorrow but you can bank on the salvation that God provides through Jesus forgiveness eternal life being welcomed into the family of God because

[37 : 16] Jesus is God there's one last encouragement I want to give to you for those of us who who have been brought into the family of faith by the blood of Jesus because he's God in the flesh I can't get over this little sentence before Abraham was I am can't get over it thinking about it all week before John was I am before Mary was I am before Isaiah was Ezra was Jeremiah was Amos Jonah was I am before Solomon was before David was I am before Ruth was before Deborah was before Samson was

I am before Joshua was before Moses was before Jacob Isaac Abraham was I am before Noah was before Adam and Eve was I am before the scriptures was I am all the scriptures are about him before I was before you was I am if we're to do some Jesus math greater less than or equal to in light of all these I am that he is the I am before you was is Jesus greater than less than or equal to you is greater than before I was I am which means today is his day my day and

I hope your heart rises like Abraham to see that his day has come and that he is bringing salvation to the nations because he is the offspring of Abraham and he's gathering together a people for himself and he's transferring them from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of his beloved son and making them worshipers and uniting together in his name imagine an incredibly holy God who is as loving as he is holy and out of his holy love for you he sent his one of a kind son totally God totally man the great I am and this great incarnate I am not only lived a sinless life he died in your place so that you could be adopted into the family of

God so that you could legitimately call your God your heavenly father the paternity test of knowing whether you belong to God and his family as a son or daughter is twofold do you believe the truth about Jesus he's the great I am and are you becoming like your holy and loving father let's pray thank you God thank you God for sending Jesus for us Lord Jesus thank you for willingly dying on the cross for sin our sins but thank you Lord Jesus for living a life that we could not father thank you for adopting us as our sons and daughters and that we no longer fear but we walk in the freedom that

Christ has achieved for us in Jesus name Amen Thank you.