

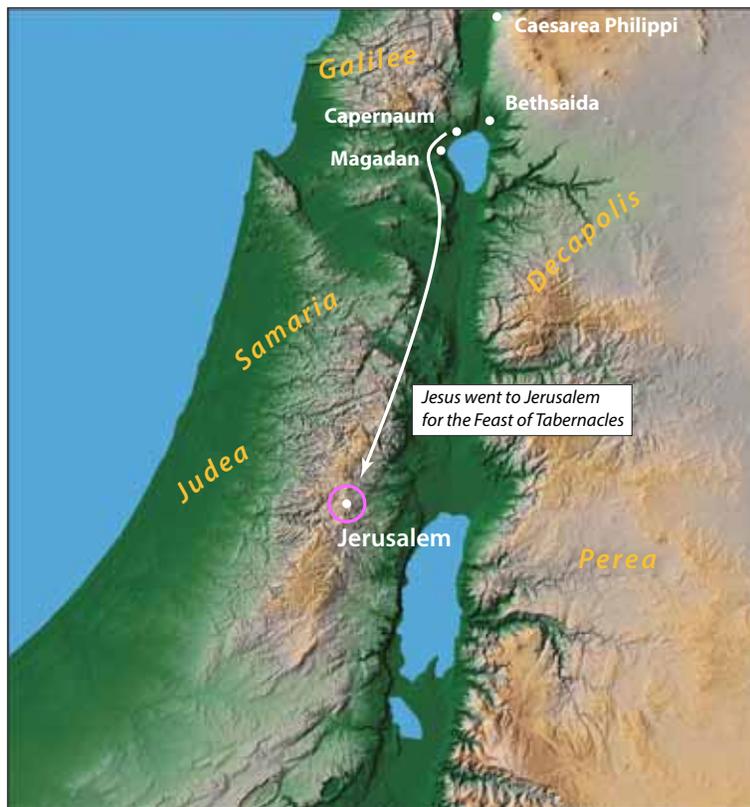
Signs That Your Father Is The Devil

In the middle of A.D. 32 the religious leaders of Israel accused Jesus of performing miracles, signs and wonders by the power of Satan or the Devil (Matthew 12:22-31). They had watched and heard Jesus for about two to three years and concluded that the only way He could do those things was by demonic power. After having received full knowledge they had concluded that Jesus performed His ministry through the power of the devil. Unbelief seeks reasons to reject what it cannot accept. Some today do not believe that Jesus really did those things either. Many today would be surprised to discover that the sons of the Pharisees claimed that they cast out demons (Matthew 12:27). They were trying to cast out demons. An archaeological discovery called the *Graece Magicae Papyri* reveals that Jewish priests were using the name of Jesus to cast out demons. The command that they used was, "I adjure you by Jesus, the God of the Hebrews" (F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1988, p. 368.). The statement reveals that Jesus was doing something so incredible that even the Jewish priests tried to cast demons using Jesus' name. Jesus was doing incredible feats!

THE CONTEST. The hatred of the religious leaders of Israel against Jesus began sometime after He started His ministry. They did not believe that Jesus really performed healings (John 5:10-16) nor did they believe that He had any power within Himself to do the things He did. They rejected His claims to be God (John 5:18) and to have come down from heaven (John 6:38-41). Jesus had been ministering for close to three years. That is, they had watched Jesus do many things. They just could not accept that He was doing these things. They concluded He had to be empowered by the devil. So, it is not surprising that in the later part of the year A.D. 32 the religious leaders were seeking Jesus in order to murder Him. Now in our study which is John 8:37-47, Jesus tells them the truth, that is, their father is the devil. Watch what happens when Jesus unloads this bombshell of reality

on them.

I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. John 8:37 (NASB)



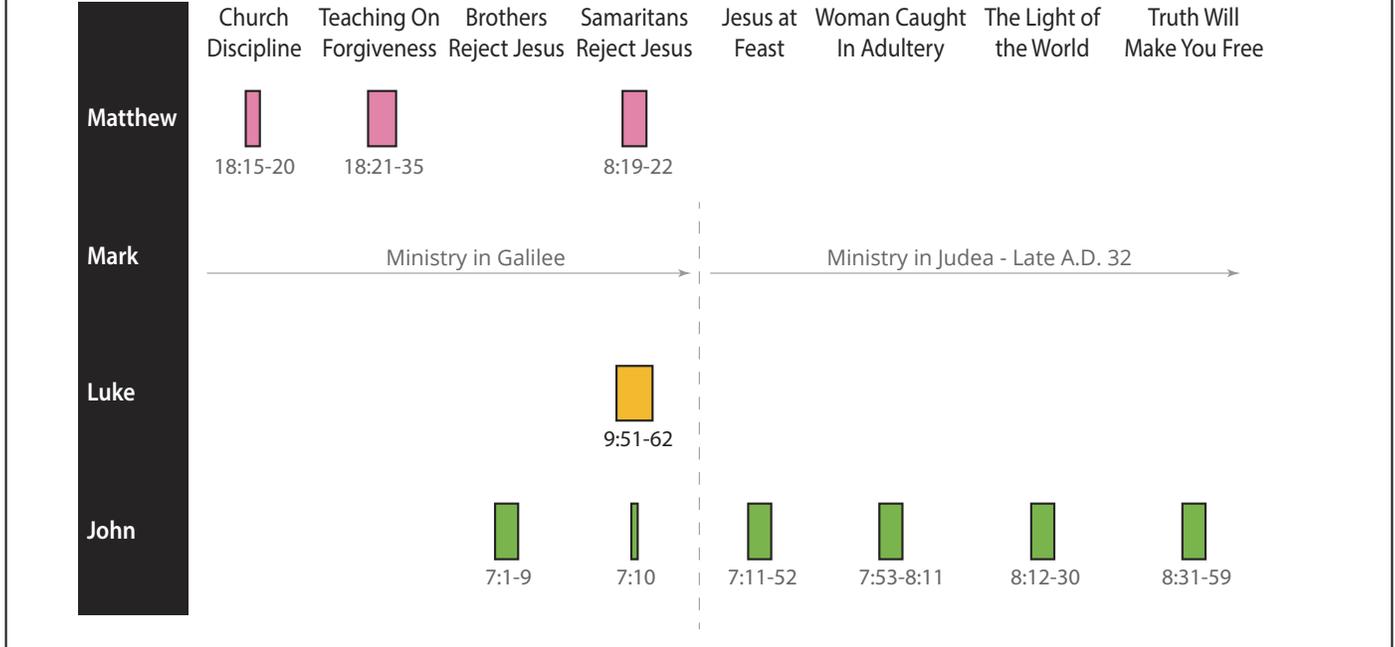
Initially, Jesus tells the religious leaders that He knows they are flesh and blood descendants of Abraham. That is, their lineage could be traced from Abraham, through Isaac to Jacob and then to the twelve sons of Jacob (Matthew 1:2). He acknowledged that they were flesh and blood descendants of Abraham and He was also a descendant of Abraham. They were all related. His next statement reveals that even though they had the same ancestral

father they wanted to kill Him. Even though He had done nothing wrong they wanted to murder a family member, "Yet, you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in

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Life and Heart of Jesus

Ministry In Galilee - Late A.D. 32



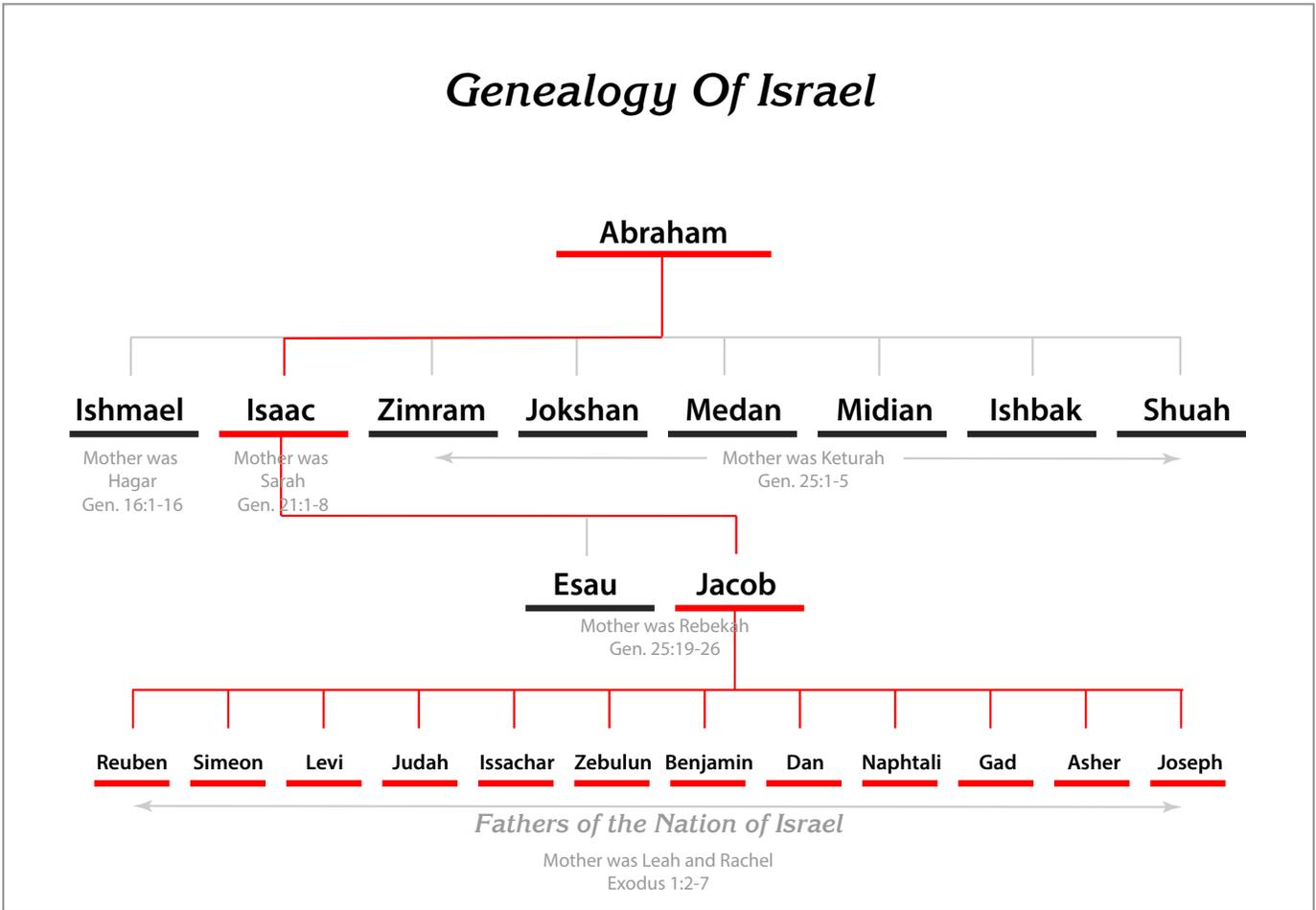
you.” Jesus’ statement reveals that since the religious leaders did not agree with His comments they took offense. Jesus’ comment may also implied that they did not have the godly character of Abraham.

Such behavior occurs in our times too! Some years ago I know a man, call him Gable, who disagreed with another man’s opinion. In reaction, Gable made very negative comments about the “offending” man publicly. Later I spoke with Gable about his abusive comments and I commented that the “offending” man who had given his opinion was not being personal. He was just stating his view. Gable objected with, “If you disagree with me, it is personal.” Such men like Gable have serious pride and control issues. The religious leaders of Jesus’ day could have just ignored Jesus since they disagreed but they didn’t. Their solution was to kill Him. They could not tolerate someone disagreeing with them. Increasingly we are experiencing such wicked, self-centered controlling attitudes today. Day after day, we are watching a wave of “I have the right to not be offend by you” sweep around the world. As a result people riot, murder, swear and

protest. The message - men and women are not any different today. They are just as wicked as the Pharisees and that evil heart resulted in the physical death of Jesus Christ, our God.

NO PLACE IN YOU. The religious leaders did not realize that they were actually angry with God the Father since Jesus did what God the Father wanted Him to do (John 5:19; 7:16). That means they rejected Jehovah God - God the Father. It is dangerous to hate someone who is God and speaks for God the Father. Jesus was communicating divine truth and they did not want to hear that truth. The Pharisees were in spiritual darkness and, yet, they thought they were in the light. Unfortunately, most people are not aware they are in spiritual darkness. Consequently, they are easily offended by the truth. Light and darkness are opposites. John 3:20 says that evil hates the light. The Pharisees did not want to hear that they were sinners, that they would die in their sins if they did not believe Jesus was God and that Jesus could set them free from their slavery to sin. Instead they were in a contest with Jesus and they wanted to win. Spiritual darkness does not understand the Light (John 1:5).

Genealogy Of Israel



Then Jesus tried to help them understand why they were rejecting Him.

I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father. John 8:38 (NASB)

That is, Jesus obeys His Father and they obey their father. They do not understand that Jesus is building toward a conclusion that they need to take to heart. Later in John 10:16 Jesus will state that those who are His disciples, will hear His voice and follow Him. Those who hear and follow are those who have been already chosen and predestined to believe in Jesus Christ (John 6:37, 44, and 65; Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:3-5). That is, the sheep of Christ’s spiritual flock had already been identified before the foundation of the world. Later in John 12:37-43 Jesus will further reveal that religious leaders were not part of His flock because they had rejected

His statements and, consequently, wanted to kill Him. In Matthew 12:27 we are told that the Pharisees had already concluded that Jesus did His miracles, including the casting our demons, by demonic power. That is, they had already completely rejected Christ. Therefore, Jesus quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 which reveals that God the Father had solidified their rejection. The Father finalized their decision by hardening their heart.

They have rejected Christ and were in spiritual darkness. They continued following their father. One wonders what each Pharisee was thinking when Jesus said, “My father” and “Your father”? Did they think that Jesus’ father was Joseph (Matthew 1:16, 18-21; John 6:42) or did they understand that Jesus was referring to God the Father? The next verse will reveal that apparently they did not understand He was implying that their real father was not Abraham.

THEIR FATHER. At this point the internal tension between Jesus and the religious leaders must have increased

dramatically because the religious leaders were disturbed with His comment.

They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." John 8:39a (NASB)

One wonders if they heard Jesus' words when He said, "I know that you are Abraham's descendants . . ."? Did they need modern day hearing aides? Most likely they heard but they needed spiritual hearing aides! Jesus was not talking about their great ancestral father Abraham when He said "you also do the things which you heard from your father." Therefore, Jesus replied that they did not act like their ancestral father.

Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. You are doing the deeds of your father." John 8:39b-41a (NASB)

In the Greek language there are four types of "if" statements. The "if" statement that Jesus uses here is a first class "if". A first class "if" condition in the Greek means "if and, yes, it is true." That means Jesus was not suggesting that maybe they weren't descendants of Abraham, instead He affirms that they were his descendants and therefore they should do what Abraham did.

Instead they wanted to murder Him and then He emphasized His innocence. He told them the truth. As we have already discovered the gospel of John reveals that the religious leaders did want to murder Jesus in chapter five. But that was only the beginning. John 7:1, 19 reveals that Jesus

knew the religious leaders wanted to murder Him. John 7: 25 reveals that some of the people also knew they wanted to murder Him. Therefore, Jesus had stated the obvious. Even then they did not understand what He was saying but Jesus will make this clear in verse 43. Here is their reply.

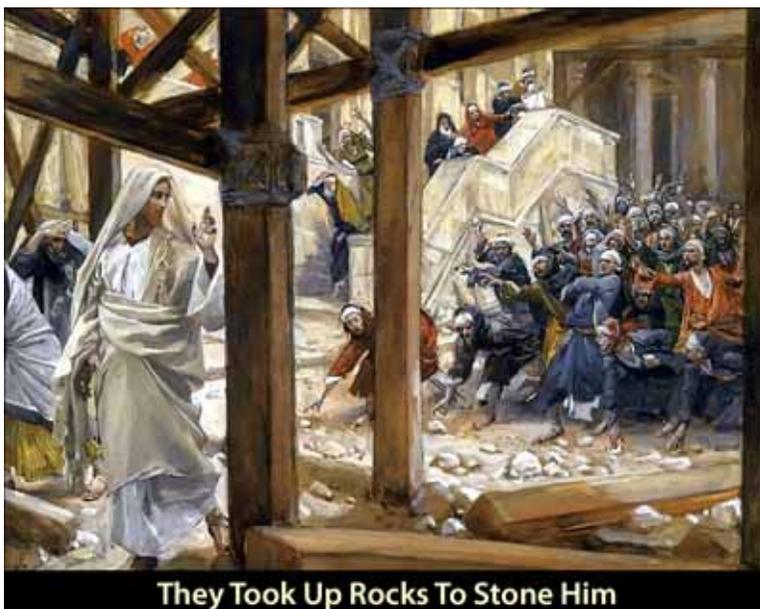
They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." John 8:41b (NASB)

NOT BORN OF FORNICATION. What motivated this response of the Pharisees to Jesus' statement? There are three views to consider. First, they may have understood that Jesus' statement "You are doing the deeds of your father" referred to a non-god other than the Jehovah God. That is,

they may have understood that Jesus had implied they were influenced by a foreign god and as a result had committed spiritual adultery. That is, they were spiritually fornicating. So, they responded with "we have one Father: God."

The second view to consider is that it is highly doubtful that they thought Jesus had referred to some other human ancestor since

He had just told the Pharisees they were descendants of Abraham (John 8:37). It could be that their response was designed to be negative and demeaning - like an arrow aimed at Jesus Christ. Therefore, they threw an insulting comment at Jesus by accusing Him of being born to an unmarried couple. That is, He was an illegitimate child, a bastard or a child conceived by sin. The Jewish Mishnah (completed about A.D. 200) contained a statement that some people have claimed is a reference to Jesus being born as the result of sexual sin. The name of the father was either Plony or



They Took Up Rocks To Stone Him

unknown according to the Mishnah.¹ Others claim that Jesus was the offspring of illicit sex between a Roman soldier called Panthera and Mary. The story was created by an anti-Christian Greek philosopher writer Celsus. Celsus had a strong bias against Christianity which makes his statements highly suspect.² Celsus work *The True Word* tries to explain why Jesus was able to perform the miracles and wonders. In the process he actually and indirectly gives support to the gospel accounts of Jesus miracles and wonders. The Mishnah and Celsus conflict with one another since they give different names for Jesus' father. It is important to remember that both the Mishnah and Celsus documents *The True Word* were anti-Christ. The statements contained in both the Mishnah and Celsus *The True Word* could have been motivated by a familiarity of the Pharisee's insulting comment in the gospel of John or an oral tradition.

The third view to consider about the Pharisees comment that, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God" is a combination of the first and second views. That is, they wanted to insult Jesus by accusing Him of being born of sexual sin while honoring themselves by saying they worshipped one Father: God. Either the first or third views seem to be the best views since they explain Jesus' next reply.

1. Jacob Neusner. Mishnah Yebamot 4,13. Yale University Press. 1988. pp. 348-349. (It should be noted that while some claim that Mishnah Yebamot 4,13 refers to Jesus Christ, but the translation never uses Jesus name. Here is a portion of the statement in Mishnah Yebamot 4,13, Said R. Simon B. Azzai, "I found a family register in Jerusalem, in which it was recorded: 'So-and-so is a mamzer, because he is the offspring of a married woman,' which confirms the words of R. Joshua." Another less common translation of this passage is given by <http://talmud.faithweb.com/articles/jesus.html#bastard> and it gives the name "Plony." The name of Jesus does not appear. How would anyone know that it should refer to Jesus Christ? It must be remembered that the Mishnah was written about 200 hundred years after the death of Jesus. It should also be noted that the Mishnah is actually a list of rules of conduct for faithful Jews rather a historical document. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that Mishnah Yebamot 4,13 is a reference to Jesus, although non-Christians would like us to believe that. Most likely it is a statement of correct behavior.)

2. Daniel C. Harlow. Born of Fornication. In this PDF the author concludes with, "We do not know how the story of Jesus' virgin birth reached Matthew and Luke, only that they inherited early tradition and then developed it independently of one another. The Fourth Evangelist shows no clear indication of having known the tradition, and that is one reason why John 8:41 does not seem to imply a charge of Jesus' biological illegitimacy. By the mid-second century, though, it was widely enough known for Jews to begin refuting it by taking details of Matthew's account and using them to concoct a counter story of Jesus' origins and career. In the late second century Celsus exploited this trend in Jewish circles in his treatise against Christians; in True Doctrine, he put the story of Jesus being born of an adulterous union between Mary and a Roman soldier named Panthera and learning magic in Egypt into the mouth of an imaginary Jewish interlocutor who accuses Jesus and accuses him of fabricating the story of his birth from a virgin. Church fathers and rabbis of the third and fourth century were familiar with this polemical recasting of the Matthean infancy narrative. In the mid-third century Origen interpreted John 8:41 with the same Jewish attack in mind as he wrote his Commentary on John, and then a few years later refuted Celsus's version of it in Contra Celsum." (www.calvin.edu/academic/religion/faculty/harlow/Born%20of%20Fornication.pdf)

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. John 8:42-43 (NASB)

IF GOD WERE YOUR FATHER. When Jesus challenges them with, "If God were your Father . . ." Jesus uses a second class if statement in the Greek language. A second class Greek conditional if statement means that Jesus said if God were you Father, and, oh by the way, He is *not* your Father and that is the reason you do not love Me. Why do not they not love Jesus? They do not love Him because He was and is God. The Greek word that is translated as "came from" means "to move out of an enclosed or well defined two or three-dimensional area."³ It is more than the idea that Jesus came down to earth. Jesus resided in heaven before He came down to earth. Then Jesus says that it was not His idea that He come to earth. God the Father sent Him. Wow, the Pharisees claimed that their Father was God. Jesus replies with I am your God and God sent Me. Now they cannot claim that for themselves.

Consequently, Jesus asks a rhetorical question, "Why do you not understand what I am saying?" Immediately Jesus gives the answer that they are not listening to His words. Obviously, they had heard His voice but they could not understand the message because they were spiritually hardened. As we have stated earlier the reason that they had rejected Him was given by Jesus in Matthew 12:25-32. They had committed the unpardonable sin. That is, they had observed Jesus' miracles and wonders. They had heard His teachings and after all of that concluded the work of the Holy Spirit that had performed through Jesus was the work of Satan. They had hardened hearts. That is why they wanted to kill Him now. They were not seekers after truth. They were rejecters of truth. That explains why they could not hear the words of Jesus. They could not tolerate Him.

LIKE YOUR FATHER THE DEVIL. This helps us understand Jesus' next statement.

3. Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., vol. 1, p. 186). New York: United Bible Societies.

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

His message was simple. They were living under the control of the devil, the evil one. Unknowingly they were his servants because they were sons of disobedience. Ephesians 2:1-2 and 1 John 5:19 reveals that there are only two types of people. There are those who are of God and everyone else in the world is under the control or power of the evil one, Satan or the prince of the power of the air and as a result are sons of disobedience.

We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. 1 John 5:19 (NASB)

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Ephesians 2:1-2 (NASB)

The religious leaders were of the control of the evil one and consequently behaved liked the evil one - liars and murderers in their heart and in reality.

Jesus highlighted two characteristics of the devil that they possessed. The two characteristics were that the devil was a murderer and a liar. The devil lied to Eve, who was deceived, and consequently Adam sinned resulting in the spiritual and physical death of the human race. God had warned Adam to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good or evil or he would die (Genesis 2:17), and Romans 5:12 teaches that Adam and the entire human race became subject to spiritual

death. Physical death is obviously occurring every day! It happens every day. Later in Genesis 4:7-9 Cain murdered his brother when he became angry and 1 John 3:12 says,

... not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous. 1 John 3:12 (NASB)

The Pharisees were just like the devil. They were not like Jesus Christ. Christ's next statement was and is shocking.

But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason

you do not hear them, because you are not of God. John 8:45-47 (NASB)



He reveals that they rejected His words because His words were in fact truthful words. If Jesus had been speaking lies they would have responded differently.

When He asks, "Which one of you convicts Me of sin?" He challenges them to prove that He is a liar. What an impossible challenge. How could they prove that He did not come down from heaven? How could they ignore His miracles, signs and wonders?

CONCLUSION. The truth was that the religious leaders had already rejected Him because they hated Him and wanted to kill Him. So, they would not accept any statements of truth. This fact alone proved that they were not of God. In 1 John 4:5-6 we are told the sad truth that the world not only rejects the words of Christ but also of Christians because they are not of God.

They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world,

and the world listens to them. We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. 1 John 4:5-6 (NASB)

The practical application for Christians today is that we should not be surprised when the world does not believe us. It is an indication that they are blind and some have already rejected God totally. Therefore, they are not open to the truth. But those whom the Holy Spirit indwells or has prepared will listen and respond.