

The Gospel of John: that you might believe...and LIVE

Jesus is the Eternal God

John 8:37-59

Intro: Jonathan Edwards was a preacher, theologian and philosopher. He is widely considered to be one of America's greatest intellectuals. He enrolled at Yale University at the age of 12 and graduated at the age of 16. As a pastor in Northampton, Massachusetts he would study 13 hours a day, everyday. Before his death in 1758, he would become the president of the College of New Jersey (Princeton) & wrote one of the most famous sermons of all time: *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*. But, probably the most exceptional thing about Jonathan Edwards is his family.

In 1900, A.E. Winship studied Jonathan & Sarah Edwards' descendants to find 13 college presidents, 65 professors, 100 lawyers and the dean of a law school. He also found 30 judges, 66 doctors and a dean of a medical school. In addition to that, Jonathan & Sarah Edwards produced 80 holders of public office including, 3 US Senators, mayors of 3 large cities, governors of 3 states, a Secretary of the US Treasury and a VP of the United States.

"There is scarcely any great American industry that has not had one of this family among its chief promoters...The family has cost the country nothing in pauperism, in crime, in hospital or asylum service; on the contrary, it represents the highest usefulness." **Historian A.E. Winship on the Edwards' Family**

Conclusion: Having a godly, supportive ancestry is to our advantage.

Back into the Gospel of John & find Jesus in deep into a heated conversation with the Jewish leadership about the value of where someone comes from. As you know, the Gospel of John records for us the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus for one simple reason:

"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." **John 20:30-31**

Read Text & Prop: Two Facts about the Eternal God in John 8:37-59

I. Spiritual Heritage is More Important than Biological Ancestry to the Eternal God – vs. 37-47

Major Question: Where do we get our security? What are we depending on to get us right with God? The Jews were depending on their biological connection to Abraham to secure their destiny with God in heaven.

Abraham: About ¼ of the book of Genesis is devoted to his story. In fact, Genesis 10-11 records the overall wickedness of the world. It's beginning to look like God will destroy the world again, but instead he calls out Abraham

to bless the earth! God blesses Abram to bless the whole world & generations! How? By sending a Messiah through Abram's descendants.

Few Problems with this Plan:

- The required Abram to **leave everything** to receive it. He had to take his hands off of everything he owned and loved, leave all he knew in order to become God's child & vessel.

"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going." **Hebrews 11:8**

- He had to **Believe** God for the impossible (Abraham is 75, Sarah is in her 60's with no children...it's not gonna happen) & act on it!

"By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised." **Hebrews 11:11**

That's Abraham: Biblical Hero! Even though he was born and raised a pagan idolater, when God's word came to him, he obeyed. HE turned his back on his old way of life and became a pilgrim and stranger on earth – and a citizen of heaven. He learned to trust and obey.

"His spiritual pilgrimage began with a great demand on his faith, that he give up his father, and it climaxed with an even greater demand on his faith, that he give up his son. Abraham staked everything on the dependability of God and the reliability of His word." **John Phillips**

Spiritual Heritage vs. Biological Ancestry: Jesus was not denying that the Jewish leaders were the biological ancestors of Abraham & Sarah. They were. Jesus was saying that they had betrayed the faith of their biological Father by Spiritually submitting to another father: Satan. Their lies, unbelief and treachery against the Son of God prove that they are not of God!

"So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham," **Galatians 3:9**

Abraham was a great man of God, and you may have a godly heritage too. But, as great as a godly biological ancestry is, spiritual security and peace with God has nothing to do with the faith of your family! Jesus draws a line in the sand...it's not about biological ancestry, it's about spiritual heritage. And spiritually speaking, we are either of God or of the world.

"Friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes him an enemy of God." **James 4:4**

"Jesus demolished the false hope of security that the Jews sought in being Abraham's descendants. Though they claimed to be children of Abraham (both in lineage and in faith), Jesus made it clear to them that, spiritually speaking, they were actually Children of Satan." **Dr. John MacArthur**

Trans: Sp Heritage is More Important than Bio Ancestry to the Eternal God.

II. Jesus is the Eternal God who can Change Your Spiritual Heritage vs. 48-59

Note: The Jewish leaders were seriously angry by now. They called Jesus a Samaritan (worst insult possible) and said He was demon possessed. But Jesus, refusing to stoop to name-calling, steers the conversation to the **Most Important Question:** How does someone change their spiritual heritage?
Answer: By being saved and receiving eternal life.

Illustration: An evangelist was holding a crusade on the island of Jamaica (75 miles from Haiti) when a severe storm arose, stranding a ship off the coast. It sent out the SOS signal and just before sundown a lifeboat took off from shore, braving the waves in a desperate race against time to see if the sailors could be saved. Darkness fell & all night long, villagers waited and watched for any news of the fate of the crew. The next morning, the evangelist set off to town to find out what happened when he came across a teenagers selling newspapers. There was a banner headline, right across the front page of the newspaper, in bold letters it read **SAVED**. The evangelist pointed to the headline, and asked the boy what the word meant & the boy replied, *“Why, mister, it means those people never died!”* **This is what can be said of those who leave this life, for the shores of eternity, trusting in Christ for salvation. “Those people never died!”**

“If anyone keeps my word he shall never see death.” **John 8:51**

???: What happens when a believer comes to the end of life’s journey & faces the inevitable exodus through the dark portals of death that await us all?

“We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” **2 Cor 5:8 // Those People Never Die!**

Note: As a follower of Jesus, when we lie on our deathbed, we look into the eyes of our family and friends gathered around. We close our eyes. Then we open our eyes to gaze into the face of Jesus. **Followers of Jesus won’t see death, We’ll See JESUS!!!**

What a Claim: The Jews were infuriated beyond belief by this claim & asked Jesus, *“Who do you make yourself out to be?”* **That’s a Great Question!!!** If you can settle that question in your heart and mind, all other questions will fade away.

“Before Abraham was, I AM.” **John 8:58**

“By using the timeless ‘I am’ rather than ‘I was’, Jesus conveyed not only the idea of existence prior to Abraham, but timelessness – the very nature of God himself.” **Homer Kent // Jesus is the Eternal God**

When it Comes to the Identity of Jesus, There’s Only Two Options:

- **He is Not the Eternal God** – Then everything is up for discussion. Miracles, vicarious death, resurrection, saving power, returning?
- **He is the Eternal God** – Everything makes sense. Of course He performed miracles, paid for our sins, rose from the dead, has the power to save us, is coming again!

Invitation: What are you depending on to make you right with God? Biological Ancestry? That certainly has its limits...remember how stellar the descendants to Jonathan & Sarah Edwards were? Well, few people know that their daughter, Esther Burr, gave birth to a son that she described as *“very sly and mischievous...not so good tempered...very resolute and requires a good governor to bring him to terms.”* Esther Burr named that child Aaron. Yes, Aaron Burr, the man who took the life of Alexander Hamilton and was arrested for treason was the grandson of Jonathan Edwards.

“Those splendid genetic qualities and heritage in the line of Jonathan Edwards seemed to have been demonically reversed in Aaron Burr.” **Kent Hughes**

What are you depending on to make you right with God? Hopefully not a good family name, solid upbringing, good behavior, church attendance or anything like that. The only thing worth trusting your future to is the eternal God, Jesus Christ! You can trust Him with your future because He is the future! You can trust Him with your life because He is life!

Regardless if you have a great family name or you don’t, Jesus Christ is the Eternal God who will Change Your Spiritual Heritage if you’ll let Him!

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” **Romans 3:23**

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” **Romans 6:23**

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” **Romans 5:8**

“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation....for ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’” **Romans 10:9-10, 13**

Conclusion: Spend time this week in the Word with the Reading List

Gospel of John **Reading List**

Monday: John 1:1-14

Tuesday: Hebrews 1:1-4

Wednesday: Genesis 1:26-28

Thursday: Colossians 1:15-20

Friday: Isaiah 9:6-7

Saturday: Revelation 21:1-8

Sunday: John 3:36