

Who Does Jesus Claim to Be? (John 8:48-59)

I. Jesus Is Our Freedom From Death (48-51)

A. Jesus' Opponents are Close to the Point of no Return (48-50)

1. They continue to Reject His Word (48)

- a. Jesus just told them they cannot hear His words because they are not "of God." He plainly told them they were serving their father, the devil.
- b. At this, the Jews began throwing insults at Jesus.
- c. The Jews hated Samaritans because they were considered to be half-breeds. This was a great insult for a Jewish man to be called a Samaritan.
- d. The Jews also attributed Jesus' words to a demon. They basically called him crazy because he was speaking words from an evil spirit.

2. They Continue to Dishonor God's Messiah (49)

- a. Jesus answers their accusations and name-calling by reaffirming the truth that He is speaking for the Father.
 - i. He says – I don't have a demon, I am honoring my Father
 - ii. He tells them once again that He is speaking for God
 - iii. He has told them repeatedly now and they continue to reject his words – yet they still view themselves as religious men and "right" in the eyes of God
- b. Jesus brings his own accusation against them
 - i. He warns them that they are dishonoring him
 - ii. If Jesus truly speaks for God the Father, then by dishonoring His word, the Jews are dishonoring their God.
 - iii. To reject Jesus and His teachings is to reject God the Father. There is no relationship with the Father that does not pass through the Son. The Jews here are in danger of closing the door on their own eternity.

3. They Continue Down the Path to Destruction (50)

- a. Jesus once again tells them He has not come to seek glory for Himself
 - i. He has come to save the lost
 - ii. He has come to bring righteousness and reconciliation
 - iii. He has also come to demonstrate God's holy judgment at the cross
- b. Jesus warns them emphatically
 - i. God the Father does seek Jesus' glory
 - By this Jesus is giving them what seems like a very stern warning.

- He is saying, “you guys are defying God Himself”
- They have continued in their rejection, and it seems that Jesus is telling them to be careful how far they push it.
- ii. The God who seeks Jesus’ Glory is the Judge
 - By this Jesus is warning them that the final Judgment is in the hands of the one who sent Jesus
 - These men will stand before the Judge of the universe and that Judge seeks Jesus’ Glory
 - They will give account for what they did with Jesus and his teachings
 - The judge himself honors the Son, so if they refuse to do so – their judgment will be sealed
 - It seems that Jesus is warning them that they are close to the point of no return. When the judgment of the Father is rendered, there is no turning back.
 - They have refused everything Jesus has said, and the conversation is coming to a close – if they do not change, they will be judged.

B. Jesus Still Offers His Opponents Grace (51)

1. Even in the midst of Jesus’ severe warning that the ultimate judge seeks his glory, Jesus extends the promise of grace to these men.

a. Even in the midst of their rebellion – “If a man keep my sayings, he will never see death.”

i. These rebellious and disrespectful men have an offer of eternal life on the table.

ii. If any man keep his sayings – he will have life

2. The Grace of God is Freedom from Death

a. What does it mean to “never see death?”

i. When we are saved we are given eternal life (John 3:36) – Eternal life is not something we are waiting to obtain after we die. It is something we possess right now.

ii. The Spirit of God lives within believers and it has made us “alive” to God.

iii. Though our bodies may become frail and die in this life – We do not! We live on.

Jesus spoke of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still living in heaven with God long after they had passed from this life. As he was questioned regarding the resurrection of the dead he says that God proclaimed to Moses saying, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of

Jacob. He is not God of the dead, but of the living..." (Mark 12:26-27; Matt. 22:32; Luke 20:38). Jesus' point was quite clear. Those who have passed from this life have not passed from existence. They live on in heaven with the Father and their personalities as well as individualities are in tact.

b. Death is a defeated enemy – we need not fear it

2 Timothy 1:10 - But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel

John 11:25-26 - Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

II. Jesus is the Fulfillment of God's Promises (52-56)

A. Who Does Jesus Think He is? (52-53)

1. The Jews Object to Jesus statement about death

a. Jesus told them those who follow Him will not see death, they mock Him

b. They object that the greatest men among them, the most godly men, have died. – Abraham died, and all the prophets died. How could Jesus say that His followers wouldn't see death?

2. The Jews Challenge Jesus' Claim

a. They ask if he thinks he is greater than Abraham, the father of Israel? – No good Israelite could ever say that he was greater than Abraham.

b. They ask if he thinks he is greater than the prophets? – No Israelite would say this either. The prophets were God's spokesmen. God spoke through them and they called people back to God.

c. Both Abraham and the Prophets died. How could Jesus say his followers wouldn't die?

d. Who does this guy think he is?

B. He is the Father's Messiah (54-55)

1. The Father is the One who Glorifies Jesus (54)

a. The Jews believe they are worshiping God

b. The God they worship is Jesus' Father

c. Jesus' Father glorifies him.

d. The Father Himself sent Jesus to deliver this message

2. Jesus Knows the Father and Keeps His Word (55)

a. Jesus says they do not know the Father

b. Jesus knows the Father

- He is so emphatic that he says he would be lying if he said otherwise.

- He calls them liars for saying they knew God

c. Jesus keeps God's Word

- This is why He is the fulfillment of God's promises to mankind
- Jesus alone has perfectly obeyed God's Law
- This is why he is the perfect sacrifice for sin
- His perfect obedience to God is transferred to the account of those who trust in Him.

C. Jesus Fulfills God's Promise (56)

1. Abraham looked forward to Christ's coming

a. God promised to send a deliverer to destroy Satan's work in Genesis 3:15 - *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*

- Here God promises to send forth a "seed from the woman" that will crush Satan's head
- Jesus is that seed of the woman (i.e. he had no earthly father)

b. God made a promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3

- 1 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

- NOTICE: the "seed" would come through Abraham's line and it would bless every family on earth
- Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise
- Jesus crushed Satan's head at the cross
- Jesus (Abraham's descendant) is how all the earth is blessed through Abraham

2. Abraham Rejoiced in Christ's coming

a. Abraham believed God – He believed God would fulfill His promise

b. Abraham knew God would accomplish what He promised
Galatians 3:7-9 - Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham

III. Jesus Himself is God (57-59)

A. Jesus is Rejected Again (57)

1. Jesus was not yet 50 years old – He could not have seen Abraham
2. They simply would not trust Jesus' Word

B. Jesus is the "I AM" (58)

1. Jesus claims to be the "I AM"
2. God revealed His name as "I AM" to Moses at the burning bush
3. God is known as "Yahweh" (I AM) throughout the Old Testament
4. By saying this Jesus is claiming to be God

C. Jesus is Finally Rejected (59)

1. They understood exactly what He meant
2. They picked up stones to kill him
 - a. Blasphemy was a capital crime
 - b. He claimed to be God which was blasphemy