

"Are we not right in saying..." (48)

*Could indicate that this was a frequent accusation

*The Samaritans held many beliefs in common with the Jews: they saw the Pentateuch as the authority for their faith.

*They differed in their interpretation of the law and were more lenient in their attitude toward other religious influences.

*Jesus had just told them that they were sons of the devil (44)

* In John's gospel, demon-possession was attributed to Jesus on three occasions (7:20; 8:52; 10:20)

"my day" (56)

*This may refer to the promise God gave Abraham that him God would bless all nations (Gen 12:1-3; Gal 3:7-9)

"He saw it..."

*Option 1 - He witnessed the birth of Isaac, who represented to Abraham the "seed" through which God would fulfill his promise (Gen 22:1-18; Heb 11:17-19).

*Option 2 - God revealed His plan to Abraham before his death (see Testament of Abraham).

*Option 3 - Abraham had a conversation with Jesus just as Moses and Elijah did (Mt 17:3).

John 8:48-59 (ESV)

48The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

49Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me."

50Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge.

51Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

52The 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.'

53Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?"

54Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.' <- See v. 41

55But 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. <- see vv. 19, 42-47

56Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad." <- These Jews were physical descendants of Abraham but not spiritual (31-41; Gal 3:7-9)

57So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"

58Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."

59So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

They interpreted Jesus' words as blasphemy, they attempted to stone him. Their error was that of not believing Jesus' words, but it was not a misunderstanding of what his words meant. (Lev 24:16; John 7:30; Luke 4:30)

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"I do not..." (49-50)

* Jesus' aim was to honor the Father; their aim was to bring Jesus into disgrace.

*Jesus disclaimed all selfish desire for prestige and left the final evaluation of His works to the judgment of God.

"never see death."

*This is not a promise of escape from mortality but of eternal life.

* Compare to Jn 10:10 - "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly"

*It is the summary of his mission, "to destroy the works of the devil" (1Jn 3:8) and to undo the penalty for sin in the garden: "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Gen 2:17).

*A fuller statement of this principle appears later in Jesus' promise to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me...shall never die" (Jn 11:25)

"I am" (58)

*The Jews recognized "I AM" as the title of a deity (Ex 3:14)

*"I am" implies continual existence

*There can be no denial that Jesus was claiming equality with God (Jn 1:1-5)

*Compare Mk 14:61-63

*See vv. 24, 28

Teacher's Notes

Context

John 8:12–47 (ESV)

¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." ¹³ So the Pharisees said to him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true." ¹⁴ Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶ Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. ¹⁷ In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. ¹⁸ I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me." ¹⁹ They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." ²⁰ These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

²¹ So he said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come." ²² So the Jews said, "Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?" ²³ He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." ²⁵ So they said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. ²⁶ I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him." ²⁷ They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. ²⁸ So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. ²⁹ And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him." ³⁰ As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." ³³ They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?"

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷ I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. ³⁸ I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father."

³⁹ They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, ⁴⁰ 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. ⁴¹ You are

doing the works your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God." ⁴² 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. ⁴³ Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. ⁴⁴ 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 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. ⁴⁵ But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. ⁴⁶ Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? ⁴⁷ Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."

"Are we not right in saying..." (48)

John 7:20 (ESV)

²⁰ The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?"

John 8:52 (ESV)

⁵² 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.'

John 10:20 (ESV)

²⁰ Many of them said, "He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?"

"never see death."

John 10:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

1 John 3:8 (ESV)

⁸ Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

Genesis 2:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

John 11:25 (ESV)

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

"my day" (56)

Genesis 12:1–3 (ESV)

¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Galatians 3:7–9 (ESV)

⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

"He saw it..."

Genesis 22:1–18 (ESV)

¹ After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

² He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." ³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴ On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. ⁵ Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." ⁶ And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. ⁷ And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" ⁸ Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

⁹ When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ¹² He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." ¹³ And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

¹⁵ And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven ¹⁶ and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, ¹⁸ and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

Hebrews 11:17–19 (ESV)

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." ¹⁹ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

Matthew 17:3 (ESV)

³ And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

My Day

This story is attested in the pseudepigraphical Testament of Abraham. God sends the archangel Michael to inform Abraham of his approaching death, and Abraham requests a tour of the inhabited world. With God's permission, Michael leads Abraham on the tour and shows him the place of final judgment for all souls. However, this late tradition may not be in view here since the rabbis conclude Jesus was talking about having met Abraham (John 8:57). Additionally, Jesus affirms this interpretation in v. 58. In view of John's characterization of Jesus as the embodied Word (1:1, 14)—language drawn in part from Gen 15:1, where Abraham encountered the word of God—Gen 15 may be the point of reference. Paul expressed a similar notion in Gal 3:8.¹

"I am" (58)

Exodus 3:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

John 1:1–5 (ESV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any

¹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Jn 8:56). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Mark 14:61–63 (ESV)

⁶¹ But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" ⁶² And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." ⁶³ And the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further witnesses do we need?"

"picked up stones"

Leviticus 24:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.

John 7:30 (ESV)

³⁰ So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.

Luke 4:30 (ESV)

³⁰ But passing through their midst, he went away.