

Jesus Answers His Critics (and they try to kill Him)

John 8.48-59

When Jesus was on earth, Jewish leaders who could've checked out His claims, refused to consider that He might be the Christ. Critics today are no different, declaring that there is no God – or if there is, He's not the God of the Bible, and Jesus isn't His Son. It's their word against His...

- “You're a demon-possessed Samaritan!” (48-51)

Jesus: “Whoever keeps My word will never die!”

- “Now we know you have a demon!” (52-56)

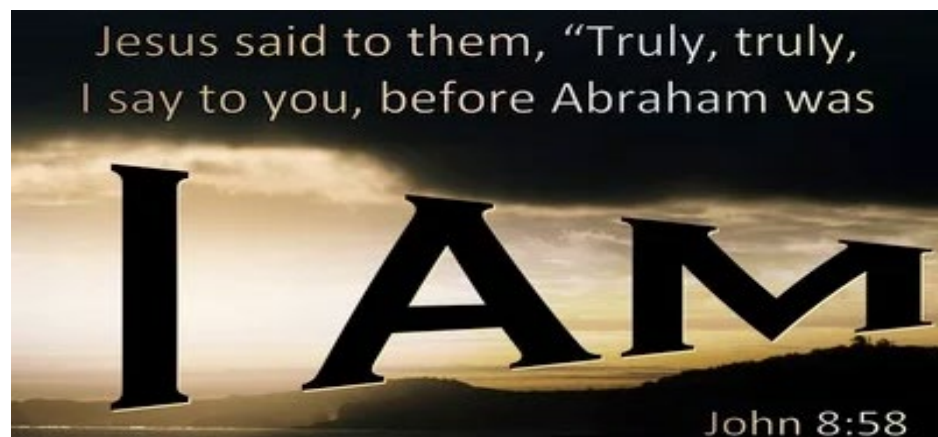
Jesus: “Abraham rejoiced to see My day!”

- “How can you have seen Abraham?!” (57-58)

Jesus: “Before Abraham existed, I AM!”

- They picked up stones to stone Him... (59)

Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.



1. Having failed to defeat Jesus, and many Jews continuing to believe in Him (8.30), Jewish leaders are desperate. In v48, they suggest He is a demon-possessed Samaritan. While Jesus was not a Samaritan, the term was abusive, like calling someone a “heretic” or a “racist” today. The Jews charged Jesus with being demon-possessed before (John 7.20), but the most revealing example is in Matthew 12.22-24. Can you see the desperation of the Jews in making this charge? Now read Jesus’ response in John 8.49-51. After denying He has a demon (49-50), how does He end up (v51)? He is redirecting the dialogue away from their *ad hominem* charges. What is He focusing on?
2. The Jews take the bait! Jesus’ claim that those who “keep My word” (accept what He says about Himself) will never die (51) causes them to react: *Even Abraham died! You’re not greater than Him, are you? Who are You?* This is *exactly* what Jesus wanted them to be thinking about! In His response (54-56), notice how Jesus contrasts the Jews’ relationship to God with His own. What would His mention of being “a liar like you” (55) remind them of (see 8.44-45)? Jesus uses their mention of Abraham to again ‘force the issue’ on who He is in v56. What is Jesus referring to when He says “Abraham rejoiced to see My day”? What is “My day”? What promise to Abraham had Jesus come to fulfill (see Gen. 12.1-3)? What event in Abraham’s life was central to the fulfillment of that promise (see Gen. 21.1-7)? Did God reveal more to Abraham about the coming Messiah? We don’t know!
3. Jesus’ words about Abraham seeing “My day” evokes a question: *You’re not even 50 years old!* (How old was Jesus? See Luke 3.23.) *Have you seen Abraham?!* Their mocking question sets the stage for one of the most famous sayings of Jesus: *Before Abraham was, I AM.* Jesus *purposely* used bad grammar here, claiming the title “I AM”! For the significance of this title, see Exodus 3.14! (Note also Jesus’ somewhat veiled use of this title in John 8.24, 28.). Jesus’ eternal existence as God is where John starts his Gospel (see 1.1)!
4. Did the Jews get Jesus’ message? See v59! Even though their own prophet said Messiah would be God (Isa. 9.6), they rejected Him!