

Teaching Points

Tonight we're going to finish our look at this conversation in John 8. We're going to wrap up this discourse by highlighting 3 questions from the Jews and then examining Christ's response to each.

Question #1: ***“Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”***

Jesus just got done telling them that they couldn't receive His words because they were children of the devil. They immediately try to turn it around on Christ - as if to say, “We aren't children of the devil - You're the one who has a demon!”

See how they refer to Him as a demon possessed Samaritan. Both of these labels were meant to deride Christ's character and claims.

The Jews of Christ's day viewed Samaritans with contempt. (See chapter 4 where Christ talks to the woman at the well.) They thought of the Samaritans as “half-breed” Jews with impure bloodlines and corrupt worship practices.

Their suggestion that Christ was demon possessed is even worse. This is not far from the blasphemous accusation of the Pharisees in Matthew 12:24, ***“This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub the ruler of the demons.”***

Christ's response: Jesus doesn't budge an inch. He doubles down on His claims regarding the power of His word. He said in verse 31 that abiding in His word was the means to knowing the truth and being made free. In verse 40 He said that His words were truth that He heard from God the Father. And now in verse 51 He tells them that anyone who keeps His word will never see death. Put this all together and it's clear that Christ's words are the source of truth, freedom, life, and salvation - because Christ's words are the very words of God!

Question #2: ***“Are you greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? Who do You make Yourself out to be?”***

This question is born out of their indignation. How in the world could this man standing before them be greater than their father Abraham? Jesus just said that anyone who keeps His words will never see death - and yet Abraham died. Is Jesus saying that His words are greater than Abraham and his legacy?

They basically ask, “Who do you think you are, anyway?” Good question! Who does Jesus think He is?

Christ's response: Jesus affirms His superiority over Abraham. They ask, “Are you greater than Abraham?” His answer is: Yes, yes I AM.

But see how Christ affirms His identity by referring to the honor bestowed on Him by God the Father. ***“It is My Father who honors Me...”*** His claims are not merely the opinion of a very

self-confident man. Rather, Christ's claims are BOTH self-attesting AND confirmed by the witness of His heavenly Father.

Furthermore, Jesus affirms His superiority over Abraham by referring to Abraham's own anticipation of His ministry. **"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."** (verse 56)

Discussion Question: How did Abraham see Christ's day? Why did he rejoice when he saw it?

Thoughts: *Jesus seems to be referring to the prophetic nature of Abraham's experience with God. The promises God made to Abraham looked far beyond land, family, and material blessings. All of God's promises and blessings find their fulfillment in Christ Himself. Abraham saw Christ's day in the sense that he was able to look beyond the immediate physical realities of the promises and see that God had something far greater and eternal in mind. Hebrews 11:10 says that Abraham **"waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."** He may have lived long before Christ's earthly ministry but Abraham possessed a forward looking faith. The amazing realities of Christ and His ministry were visible to Abraham by faith. It's also not hard to see how such an inheritance and such blessings would illicit great rejoicing on Abraham's part.*

Question #3: **"You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"**

Again, these Jews are offended at Christ's amazing claims. He already said that He's greater than Abraham - now He's claiming to be older than Abraham! How could this Jesus of Nazareth, who's not even fifty years old, have any personal relationship with Abraham, a man who died about two thousand years prior?

Christ's response: "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

This is the straw that breaks the camel's back. It's one thing to claim supremacy over father Abraham - but now Jesus just said that He's equal with Yahweh. This sounded like pure blasphemy to this Jewish audience. That's why they pick up stones to kill Him.

It's important to note how Christ's original audience clearly understood that He was claiming to be divine. By assuming the title **"I AM"** Jesus is telling them that He is in fact Yahweh in the flesh.

Lastly, it's interesting to observe the structure of the grammar in this sentence. **"...before Abraham was** (past tense) **I AM** (present tense)." Abraham is a creature. As such, his existence had a beginning. His life on earth lasted for 175 years and then he died. When referring to him, it's proper to talk about who he **was** and what he **did** when he was alive.

But no so with Christ. He is the eternal I AM. He is always God at all times. He is also not bound by the limitations of time like we are. In Abraham's day, Christ is the I AM, at the time of

this conversation in John 8, Christ is the I AM, and forevermore Christ is the I AM. This is a truly overwhelming thought - but it's part of the glory of Jesus. All we can do is bow down and worship such an amazing Person!

Hebrews 13:8, ***“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”***

Prayer Focus

Worship Christ as the great I AM. Find ways to exalt Him and magnify Him based on His self-sufficient nature. He's the God who has no needs. He is never at a lack regarding how to handle any situation. These are all aspects of His absolute sovereign rule over all creation. That should provide plenty of things to pray about!