

John 8:48-59

The people retorted, “You Samaritan devil! Didn’t we say all along that you were possessed by a demon?”

⁴⁹ “No,” Jesus said, “I have no demon in me. For I honor my Father—and you dishonor me. ⁵⁰ And though I have no wish to glorify myself, God is going to glorify me. He is the true judge. ⁵¹ I tell you the truth, anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!”

⁵² The people said, “Now we know you are possessed by a demon. Even Abraham and the prophets died, but you say, ‘Anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!’ ⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?”

⁵⁴ Jesus answered, “If I want glory for myself, it doesn’t count. But it is my Father who will glorify me. You say, ‘He is our God,’ ⁵⁵ but you don’t even know him. I know him. If I said otherwise, I would be as great a liar as you! But I do know him and obey him. ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming. He saw it and was glad.”

⁵⁷ The people said, “You aren’t even fifty years old. How can you say you have seen Abraham?”

⁵⁸ Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I AM!” ⁵⁹ At that point they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus was hidden from them and left the Temple.

Background

In verse 48, the people called Jesus a “Samaritan,” using the term as an insult to imply He was a heretic. They also said He was possessed by a demon, essentially calling Him insane. Jesus was accused of being demon-possessed once before in John 7:20, and will be again in John 10:20. Jesus clearly denied these charges, but didn’t defend Himself at length. When falsely accused, Jesus set an example: deny the charges, state the facts, and allow the Lord to take care of the situation.

In verse 57, the Jews mention that Jesus isn’t fifty years old yet. This wasn’t about His actual age, which was around thirty, but rather just a convenient number they used in their misguided argument. In verse 59, they picked up stones to throw at Him. This was a clear indication that the Lord Jesus had claimed to be God. The Jewish people wouldn’t stone someone for minor theological differences.

Teaching Points

1. The Lord Jesus is incredibly gracious.

In verse 51, Jesus promises that anyone who obeys His word will never experience spiritual death but will have eternal life. This invitation follows harsh accusations against Him, yet He

responds with incredible grace. Despite their insults, Jesus offers salvation to all. This teaches us that no one is beyond forgiveness.

2. The Lord Jesus claimed full deity.

In verse 56, Jesus said Abraham “*rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming,*” referring to Abraham’s faith in the Messianic promise that through his descendants all nations would be blessed (Genesis 12:3). Old Testament saints, like Abraham, foresaw God’s plan (Hebrews 11:13). When challenged about seeing Abraham, Jesus replied, “*Before Abraham was even born, I AM*” (v58), using the divine name God revealed to Moses (Exodus 3:14). By claiming “I AM,” Jesus declared His full deity.

Application

1. Getting glory for ourselves is not our responsibility.

Jesus said He didn’t seek His own glory but left that to God the Father, who judges righteously (v50, 54). We often claim not to seek glory, yet can feel jealous when others receive more attention. Even good desires can tempt us toward self-glorification. The key is humility and trust that God will exalt us in His time (1 Peter 5:6). Seeking glory for ourselves is not our responsibility; let others praise us (Proverbs 27:2).

2. Getting to know Him is our responsibility.

In verse 55, Jesus contrasts two kinds of knowing. He uses the Greek words *ginosko* (to know by experience) for their lack of knowledge, and *oida* (to know inherently) for His own complete awareness of God. Essentially, He’s saying, *You haven’t truly experienced God, but I have full, intimate knowledge of Him.*

At the end of verse 55, Jesus adds, “*But I do know him and obey him,*” emphasizing that knowing God is linked to obedience. This is the key to truly knowing God. It starts with receiving Christ and obeying the Word, and continues as we grow in obedience and fellowship with Him. It’s our responsibility to pursue that.