



John 8:47-59

Jesus is Lord BECAUSE Jesus is God

47 "He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

48 Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

49 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.

50 "And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges.

51 "Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."

52 Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.'

53 "Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom do You make Yourself out to be?"

54 Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God.

55 "Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word.

56 "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

57 Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

59 Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

The Puritans used to say of the preaching of the gospel "The same sun that melts the ice hardens the clay." To those who are being saved, the Gospel is good news, it convicts, it compels, and it comforts. But for those who are perishing it is foolishness, and even as the hearts of the elect are being softened the hearts of the reprobate are made even harder. And we've seen that here in chapter 8. We have one group of listeners who believed in Him, and another group who whereas initially they were happy to hear his words, the "believed Him" as it says in verse 30. Found the preaching of Jesus harder and harder to stomach. Now that he has exposed to them their true spiritual condition, telling them they don't like what he is saying because they are not of God. They become furious and exasperated.

I love Gordon Keddie's masterful understatement, "***People do not take kindly to being informed they are 'not of God.' That is why the world is never a very healthy place for prophets and preachers.***"

Interesting how this group started out in verse 30 believing what Jesus said, now as the conversation has turned increasingly to their actual spiritual state, they can't stand Jesus, and although they are very bitter and hostile we should still be grateful to God for this exchange, because there is so much that *We*

can learn and profit from in it. So what I want to do is follow the flow of exchange and dwell on Christ's incredible answers.

They are running out of answers, so they answer him by calling him names, Samaritan! Demon! And as Ryle puts it, "To lose temper, and call names, is a common sign of a defeated cause."

How could you say we, who are Jews, the true Sons of Abraham aren't of God and why do you say the things you do? You're a heretic. A Samaritan! They said that, because the Samaritans had the Pentateuch, but what they taught from it was false, and of course the Samaritans said that they and not the Jews were God's people.

Worse they call him Demon possessed. And that seems to have been a frequent allegation – Mark 3:22 *"And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons."* So that allegation provided Jesus' enemies both with a way of explaining the miraculous things He did and allowing them to say to the people "Don't even listen to Him! He has a demon!"

Clearly, Jesus did not have a demon, and this is seen in the fact that he spent his entire ministry doing the will of the Father, honoring the Father, and what demon does that? He points out to them, I honor the Father, but you don't honor me. As we shall see, Jesus is telling them although you claim to honor the Father, you don't. That is made clear in verse 54.

No Jesus concedes that all self-praise is empty, and worthless. Even the praise of men is of dubious value. So whose praise, whose honor should we desire? Who should we want to hear a "well done" from? **God!** And we will only have God's honor if we will submit our wills to His and make glorifying and enjoying Him our chief objective or end **"for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."** (1 Sam. 2:30)

Now Jesus did the will of the Father, and He did it perfectly, sinlessly (he hammers that point home here and earlier when he asked which of you convicts me of sin?) and so the Father honored Him: for instance in Matthew 3:17 we read that at the Baptism of Christ the Father spoke from heaven saying, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

How foolish they are to expect that the Father will overlook their hatred and contempt for His Beloved Son? The Father had already warned in *Psalm 2:10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth.*

11 Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

But even as he is reproofing them from their sin, and warning them, Jesus doesn't neglect to preach the gospel saying to them in verse 51 *"Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."* That is lesson to us - even as we warn men and chasten them for sin, we must also preach the gospel. Remember that, when you reprove your children. Heaven forbid that we should condemn men and leave them no where to flee for forgiveness.

IF a man keeps my word, that is really believes in Him and the Gospel He brings - says Jesus, he shall not see death. Now there is a strong warning there too, because the obvious corollary of that statement

is that if a man DOES not keep his word he *shall* see death. Jesus again and again makes the point that those who believe in HIM have escaped judgment, they are acquitted because Christ himself bears the judgment for their sins on the cross. Those who do not believe, on the other hand, will see death because they are *condemned already* as Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:16. They will be judged for their sins and pay the penalty in Hell. Friends either Christ pays for your sins, or you will pay for them, but be assured that the accounting in the kingdom of heaven is perfect, and your sin debt is a bill that must be paid.

Now Jesus is not saying that true Christians will never physically die as the Jews twist his words to mean. No they too have to cross the river of death. But for them the *sting* of death is gone.

***1 Cor. 15:51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed --
52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."
55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"
56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.
57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

For the believer, physical death is the beginning of eternal life, he enters into the joy of His master, can you imagine the joy believers must feel at entering into the heavenly city and the knowledge that for them all pain and sorrow and sin is over forever, and that in a short while even death will be destroyed and they will be raised with bodies made perfect. But for the unbeliever death is his final ruin, for him there is no heaven, no eternal joy, no hope. They experience exactly the reverse, for them there will never again be joy from that point on is pain and sorrow and regret.

But sadly, again, the same gospel hardens their hearts of clay. And they twist or misunderstand Christ's words and assume he must be speaking of the death of the body. Because for the carnal man, that is what most concerns him. This life is all he has, and he is desperate to hold on to it. I cannot tell you how saddened I am when I visit unbelievers who are dying and you see the fear in their eyes. They have no hope.

Here Christ's listeners point out, that the greatest of the prophets and even Abraham have physically died, are you greater than Abraham? Their question "***Are you greater than our Father Abraham***" is asked in a way that presumes Jesus must answer NO. But the irony is they are asking it of the one person who if he answered YES would be a liar.

Jesus then points out who spiritually unlike faithful Abraham they are. Here is the one that Abraham looked forward to before them, and they despise him. But how did Abraham "see Christ's Day?"

Abraham not only saw the pre-incarnate Christ in a theophany in Gen. 18:1 he also could look forward to the day when the promised seed who was the redeemer, the one who would crush the head of the serpent and be the true blessing to the nations would come, and he rejoiced.

Brothers and Sisters, The plain truth is, that we are too apt to forget that there never was but one way of salvation, one Savior, and one hope for sinners, and that Abraham and all the Old Testaments saints looked to the same Christ that we look to ourselves

Gal. 3:6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."

9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Job. 19:25 For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth;

26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God,

27 Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

Now the crowd is incredulous, the only way that Abraham could have seen the day of Jesus was if Jesus IS that long hoped for Messiah, and that is something they WILL NOT BELIEVE. So they put it down to a merely physical statement. You saw Abraham? Abraham saw you? Abraham died 2000 years ago and they saw that Jesus was physically, obviously less than 50, Luke says in Luke 3:23 that Jesus was 30 when he began his three year public ministry.

This is when Jesus makes the most amazing claim of the entire exchange. Truly, Truly - Before Abraham was *Ego Eimi* – I AM. Jesus uses the same words of Himself that God used in speaking to Moses:

Ex. 3:13 Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?"

14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

And not that Jesus isn't saying I WAS, I was created before Abraham. .e. as some cults like the Jehovah's Witness maintain he was merely God's first creation. He says I AM – I always have been, there never was a time before me. As the author of Hebrews puts it: ***8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.***

Jesus uses words that only God can use, and says unambiguously that He Himself is God, the Son. And the Jews understand, they know He isn't merely claiming to be an angel, because they immediately pick up rocks to stone Him because stoning was the penalty for blasphemy. At this point we see another evidence of his divinity, a man in this situation would have been done for. But Jesus again is able to pass by them. He withdrew because it was not yet time for His crucifixion. Literally was hidden. I am reminded of God's action in protecting Lot and his family from the men of Sodom.

So some applications - ***Jesus is Lord, because He is God.*** Either we Embrace Him and Honor Him as such or failing to kiss the Son we will perish on the way.

Now brothers and sisters if you acknowledge that to be true, if you know that Jesus, and He alone is the way, the truth and the life, and that no man comes to the father except by Him. Then the one thing

you will not do is coddle falsehoods, it is not loving to let men remain in a false belief that there are many ways to heaven, neither does it honor Christ and His awesome sacrifice. It is asking God to share his glory with false idols.

Now in the days of the early church, the subjects of Rome were called upon to burn a pinch of incense as an act of worship to Caesar and say that “Caesar is Lord.” Now for the most part everyone did it, they understood they weren’t being asked to deny that the gods they worshipped were also gods along with Caesar, so they didn’t have a problem with it. The Christians did though, because they knew that Jesus ALONE is Lord and God. So they didn’t burn the incense, and they frequently paid the price for their refusal with their lives. Today, no one is going to ask you to worship Caesar. What they will ask you to do is to be willing to welcome, accept, and tolerate all gods, all faiths. All you need do, is simply say no that Jesus is **THE** way, but that he is merely **MY** way.

Now I stress this because if we are honest with ourselves we will have to admit that in a pluralistic society it is *so* tempting to make that concession and consequently many evangelicals are falling prey to the belief that they while they believe in Jesus and that He is the way to heaven, we shouldn’t imply that belief in other faiths, other ways, isn’t ok as well. I’ll give you an example of what I mean. Joel Hunter, a man who identifies himself as evangelical, was asked to give the closing benediction at a political convention (it doesn’t matter which one).

After giving a social gospel prayer in which he asked “*would those of you who are people of faith join me in asking for God’s help?*”:

He closed this way “*Now I interrupt this prayer for a closing instruction. I want to personalize this. I want this to be a participatory prayer. And so therefore, because we are in a country that is still welcoming all faiths, I would like all of us to close this prayer in the way your faith tradition would close your prayer.*

So on the count of three, I want all of you to end this prayer, your prayer, the way you usually end prayer. You ready? One, two, three.

In Jesus’ name, Amen. Let’s go change the world for good.”

Brothers and Sisters, if we acknowledge what Christ has said here, we will know that we cannot join in prayer with those who deny Christ’s Messiahship, and Deity, who do not Honor Him as **THE WAY**, nor should we let them think that it ok to offer up prayers in any other name. And we do them no good by allowing them to remain in their lost condition. Evangelicals are in danger of forgetting that Universal Healthcare, Clean Energy, Warm Clothing, and a Low Mortgage are of **NO VALUE** to someone in Hell. Do you think for a moment that anyone spending eternity in hell would thank a preacher who knew the Gospel truth, but did not share it with them?

So if I ever close a prayer that way, boot me out of this church as quickly as you can, because it means I’m not putting the care of souls and the honor of Christ first, and do not waver on this point of the exclusivity of Christ’s claims. Jesus didn’t.

2) If you do follow Christ, then like Him you will suffer:

The true Christian in the present day must never be surprised to find that he has constant trials to endure from this quarter. Sinful human nature never changes. So long as he serves the world, and

walks in the broad way, little perhaps will be said against him. Once let him take up the cross and follow Christ, and there is no lie too monstrous, and no story too absurd, for some to tell against him, and for others to believe. But let him take comfort in the thought that he is only drinking the cup which his blessed Master drank before him. The lies of his enemies do him no injury in heaven, whatever they may on earth. Let him bear them patiently, and not fret, or lose his temper. When Christ was reviled, "He reviled not again." (1 Peter 2:23.) Let the Christian do likewise.

But know this your afflictions will be light and as Paul puts it, Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.