

JESUS AND ABRAHAM

John 8:45-59 Lesson # 23

Key Verse: 58

Jesus is the truth. The devil is a liar. Jesus gives life. The devil is a murderer. The Jewish religious leaders had been drawn to Jesus (9, 12, 30). They opened their hearts to him for a moment, but when he touched on their sin problem, they closed their hearts completely (33). Jesus rebuked them for calling themselves Abraham's children, when they did not do what Abraham did. They did not receive God's word or obey God's word. They did not live by faith. They did not care about the truth. They were really children of the devil. Jesus rebuked them because he loved them and wanted them to hear and follow the word of God. He wanted them to be free from the shackles of the devil and live by God's truth as free men. So he told them the truth. They did not believe him or listen to him because they had decided to remain as the possession of the devil. They did not belong to God.

Next, the Jewish leaders attacked Jesus' character. (Those who cannot bear to be confronted by the truth often stoop to this.) They raised a question about Jesus' parentage. Perhaps there was some gossip floating around about his mother Mary who gave birth to him before she married Joseph. And some of the Pharisees questioned the source of his power to drive out demons and heal the sick. They had said, "He casts out demons by the power of Satan." So these Jews said, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed? Jesus did not argue; he said plainly, "I am not possessed by a demon." "I honor my Father but you dishonor me." (God is his Father) (49) They sought his death; he offered them the gift of eternal life. "If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

They laughed at him, for they did not know that he was the eternal God, the Creator of all things and the source of life. They laughed at his offer of life. How could he escape death? Everyone dies. Even Abraham died. But Jesus conquers death. They killed him, but God raised him from the dead. Whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. (3:16) These men who rejected him would die in their sins.

How could they and how can we know that Jesus is who he claims to be? How can we know that he is not a liar but one who speaks the truth? This Gospel of John is a book of testimonies to Jesus. John 20:31 says, "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name." In this passage Jesus tells us that his roots are in God's redemptive history. He makes the remarkable statement, "Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." They laughed again. "You are not yet 50 years old and you claim to have seen Abraham? You're crazy." But Abraham was a man who believed God's promises. God told him, "Through your offspring all people on earth will be blessed." Abraham believed God. By faith he looked down the corridors of history and saw his true offspring, Jesus, the one who blessed people of all nations by opening the door of salvation and life for fallen, dying mankind. Jesus answered, "Before Abraham was born, I am." Jesus acknowledged that he is the eternal God, the God who met Moses in the desert and said, "I AM Who I Am" (Ex 3) He was in the beginning with God. He was God. He is the Creator and Owner of all things. He was indeed before Abraham. Jesus is the climax of God's redemptive history. He is the fulfillment of God's promises. He is the one who opens the door of life to all who have the faith and courage to seek and follow the truth. The Jewish leaders revealed that they fully understood what he was claiming, so they took stones and tried to kill him. They were children of their father the devil. It was not yet the time for him to leave this world, so he eluded them.