

John: 8:51–59

From Catena Aurea:

48. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

49. Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.

50. And I seek not mine own glory; there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

51. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lv. 1) Whenever our Lord said any thing of lofty meaning, the Jews in their insensibility set it down madness: Then answered the Jews and said unto Him, Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

ORIGEN. (tom. xx. 28.) But how, we may ask, when the Samaritans denied a future life, and the immortality of the soul, could they dare to call our Saviour, Who had preached so much on the resurrection and the judgment, a Samaritan? Perhaps they only mean a general rebuke to Him for teaching, what they did not approve of.

ORIGEN. (tom. xx. 28.) It is not unlikely too, some may have thought that He held the Samaritan opinion of there being no future state really, and only put forth the doctrine of a resurrection and eternal life, in order gain to the favour of the Jews. They said that He had a devil, because His discourses were above human capacity, those, viz. in which He asserted that God was His Father, and that He had come down from heaven, and others of a like kind: or perhaps from a suspicion, which many had, that He cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.

THEOPHYLACT. Or they called Him a Samaritan, because He transgressed the Hebrew ordinances, as that of the sabbath: the Samaritans not being correct observers of the law. And they suspected Him of having a devil, because He could disclose what was in their thoughts. When it was that they called Him a Samaritan, the Evangelist no where says: a proof that the Evangelists left out many things.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lv. 1) And observe, when He had to teach them, and pull down their pride, He used roughness; but now that He has to suffer rebuke, He treats them with the utmost mildness: a lesson to us to be severe in what concerns God, but careless of ourselves.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xlv. 1. 2) And to imitate His patience first, if we would attain to His power. But though being reviled, He reviled not again, it was incumbent on Him to deny the charge. Two charges had been made against Him: Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil. In reply He does not say, I am not a Samaritan: for Samaritan means keeper; and He knew He was a keeper: He could not redeem us, without at the same time preserving us. Lastly, He is the Samaritan, who went up to the wounded, and had compassion on him.

ORIGEN. (tom. xx. s. 28.) Our Lord, even more than Paul, wished to become all things to all men, that He might gain some: and therefore He did not deny being a Samaritan. (s. 29.). I have not a devil, is what Jesus alone can say; as He alone can say, The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me. (c. 14:30). None of us are quite free from having a devil. For even lesser faults come from him.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xliii. 3) Then after being so reviled, all that He says to vindicate His glory, is, But I honour My Father: as if to say, That you may not think Me arrogant, I tell you, I have One, Whom I honour.

THEOPHYLACT. He honoured the Father, by revenging Him, and not suffering murderers or liars to call themselves the true sons of God.

ORIGEN. (tom. xx. 29.) Christ alone honoured the Father perfectly. No one, who honours any thing which is not honoured by God, honours God.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xliii. 3) As if to say, I do my duty: ye do not do yours.

ORIGEN. (tom. xx. 29.) And this was not addressed to them only, but to all who by unrighteous deeds inflict injury upon Christ, who is righteousness; or by scoffing at wisdom wrong Him who is wisdom: and the like.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lv. 1) As if to say, I have told you this on account of the honour which I have for My Father; and for this ye dishonour Me. But I concern not myself for your reviling: ye are accountable to Him, for whose sake I undergo it.

ORIGEN. (tom. xx. s. 30.) God seeks Christ's glory, in every one of those who receive Him: which glory He finds in those who cultivate the seeds of virtue implanted in them. And those in whom He finds not His Son's glory, He punishes: There is one that seeketh and judgeth.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xliii. 4) Meaning of course the Father. But how is it then that He says in another place, The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. (c. 5:22) Judgment is sometimes put for condemnation, whereas here it only stands for trial: as if to say, There is one, even My Father, who distinguishes My glory from yours; ye glory after this world, I not after this world. The Father distinguishes the glory of the Son, from that of all men: for that He has been made man, does not bring us to a comparison with Him. We men have sin: He was without sin, even when He was in the form of a servant; for, as the Word which was in the beginning, who can speak worthily of Him?

ORIGEN. (tom. xx. 31.[Nic.]) Or thus; If that is true which our Saviour says below, All men are thine, (c. 17:10) it is manifest that the judgment itself of the Son, is the Father's.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xliii. 10, 11) See is put for experience. But since, about to die Himself, He spoke with those about to die, what means this, If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death? What, but that He saw another death from which He came to free us, death eternal, the death of the damned, which is shared with the devil and his angels! That is the true death: the other is a passage only.

ORIGEN. (tom. xx. s. 31.) We must understand Him, as it were, to say, If a man keep My light, he shall not see darkness for ever; for ever being taken as common to both clauses, as if the sentence were, If a man keep My saying for ever, He shall not see death for ever: meaning that a man does not see death, so long as he keeps Christ's word. But when a man, by becoming sluggish in the observance of His words, and negligent in the keeping of his own heart, ceases to keep them, he then sees death; he brings it upon himself. Thus taught then by our Saviour, to the prophet who asks, What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? (Ps. 88) we are able to answer, He who keepeth Christ's word.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lv. 1) He says, keep, i. e. not by faith, but by purity of life. And at the same time too He means it as a tacit intimation that they can do nothing to Him. For if whoever keepeth His word, shall never die, much less is it possible that He Himself should die.

8:52–56

52. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

53. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead; whom makest thou thyself?

54. Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing; it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:

55. Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

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

ORIGEN. (tom. xx. 32, 33.) Those who believe the Holy Scriptures, understand that what men do contrary to right reason, is not done without the operation of devils. Thus the Jews thought that Jesus had spoken by the influence of the devil, when He said, If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death. And this idea they laboured under, because they did not know the power of God. For here He was speaking of that death of enmity to reason (ἐχθρόν τῷ λόγῳ), by which sinners perish: whereas they understand Him of that death which is common to all; and therefore blame Him for so speaking, when it was certain that Abraham and the Prophets were dead: Abraham is dead, and the Prophets; and Thou sayest, If a man keep My saying, he shall never taste of death. Shall never taste of death, they say, instead of, shall not see death; though between tasting and seeing death there is a difference. Like careless hearers, they mistake what our Lord said. For as our Lord, in that He is the true bread, is good to taste; in that He is wisdom, is beautiful to behold; in like manner His adversary death is both to be tasted and seen. When then a man stands by Christ's help in the spiritual place pointed out to him, (ἐν τῷ δεικνυμένῳ νοητῷ τόπῳ) he shall not taste of death if he preserves that state: according to Matthew, There he those standing HERE. which shall not taste of death. (Matt. 16:28) But when a man hears Christ's words and keeps them, he shall not see death.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lv. 1) Again, they have recourse to the vainglorious argument of their descent: Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? They might have said, Art Thou greater than God, whose words they are dead who heard? But they do not say this, because they thought Him inferior even to Abraham.

ORIGEN. (tom. xx. 33.) For they do not see that not Abraham only, but every one born of woman, is less than He who was born of a Virgin. Now were the Jews right in saying that Abraham was dead? for he heard the word of Christ, and kept it, as did also the Prophets, who, they say, were dead. For they kept

the word of the Son of God, when the word of the Lord came to Hosea, Isaiah, or Jeremiah; if any one else kept the word, surely those Prophets did. They utter a lie then when they say, We know that Thou hast a devil; and when they say, Abraham is dead, and the Prophets.

THEOPHYLACT. As if to say, Thou a person of no account, a carpenter's son of Galilee, to take glory to Thyself!

ORIGEN. (tom. xx. 33.) This was the speech of persons spiritually blind. For Jesus did not make Himself what He was, but received it from the Father: Jesus answered and said, If I honour Myself, My honour is nothing.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. liv. 1, 2. c. 5) This is to answer their suspicions; as above, If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xliii. 14) This is to answer those who said, Whom makest Thou Thyself? He refers His glory to the Father, from Whom is: It is My Father that honoureth Me. The Arians take occasion from those words to calumniate our faith, and say, Lo, the Father is greater, for He glorifieth the Son. Heretics, have ye not read that the Son also glorifieth the Father?

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lv. 2) He adds, Of whom ye say that He is your God; meaning to tell them that they were not only ignorant of the Father, but even of God.

THEOPHYLACT. For had they known the Father really, they would have revered the Son. But they even despise God, who in the Law forbade murder, by their clamours against Christ. Wherefore He says, Ye have not known Him.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xliii. 15) Some heretics say that the God proclaimed in the Old Testament is not the Father of Christ, but a kind of prince of bad angels. These He contradicts when He calls Him His Father, whom the Jews called their God, and knew not. For had they known Him, they would have received His Son. Of Himself however He adds, But I know Him. And here too, to men judging after the flesh, He might appear arrogant. But let not arrogance be so guarded against, as that truth be deserted. Therefore our Lord says, And if I should say I know Him not, I should be a liar like unto you.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lv. 2) As if to say, As ye, saying that ye know Him, lie; so were I a liar, did I say I knew Him not. It follows, however, (which is the greatest proof of all that He was sent from God,) But I know Him.

THEOPHYLACT. Having that knowledge by nature; for as I am, so is the Father also; I know Myself, and therefore I know Him. And He gives the proof that He knows Him: And I keep His saying, i. e. His commandments. Some understand, I keep His saying, to mean, I keep the nature of His substance unchanged; for the substance of the Father and the Son is the same, as their nature is the same; and therefore I know the Father. And here has the force of because: I know Him because I keep His saying.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xliii. 15) He spoke the saying of the Father too, as being the Son; and He was Himself that Word of the Father, which He spoke to men.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lv. 2) In answer then to their question, Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, He shews them that He is greater than Abraham; Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: he saw it, and was glad; he must have rejoiced, because My day would benefit him, which is to acknowledge Me greater than himself.

THEOPHYLACT. As if to say, He regarded My day, as a day to be desired, and full of joy; not as if I was an unimportant or common person.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xliii. 16) He did not fear, but rejoiced to see: he rejoiced in hope, believing, and so by faith saw. It admits of doubt whether He is speaking here of the temporal day of the Lord, that, viz. of His coming in the flesh, or of that day which knows neither rising or setting. I doubt not however that our father Abraham knew the whole: as he says to his servant whom he sent, Put thy hand under my thigh, and swear to me by the God of heaven. (Gen. 24:2) What did that oath signify, but that the God of heaven was to come in the flesh, out of the stock of Abraham.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. liv. 2) They are aliens from Abraham if they grieve over what he rejoiced in. By this day perhaps He means the day of the cross, which Abraham prefigured by the offering up of Isaac and the ram: intimating hereby that He did not come to His passion unwillingly.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xliii. 16) If they rejoiced to whom the Word appeared in the flesh, what was his joy, who beheld in spiritual vision the light ineffable, the abiding Word, the bright illumination of pious souls, the indefectible wisdom, still abiding with God the Father, and sometime to come in the flesh, but not to leave the Father's bosom.

8:57–59

57. Then said the Jews unto him. Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

58. Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

59. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

THEOPHYLACT. Christ was then thirty-three years old. Why then do they not say, Thou art not yet forty years old, instead of fifty? A needless question this: they simply spoke as chance led them at the time. Some however say that they mentioned the fiftieth year on account of its sacred character, as being the year of jubilee, in which they redeemed their captives, and gave up the possessions they had bought.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xliii. 18) Abraham being a creature, He did not say before Abraham was, but, before Abraham was made. Nor does He say, I am made; because that, in the beginning WAS. the Word.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xliii. 18) Such hardness of heart, whither was it to run, but to its truest likeness, even the stones? But now that He had done all that He could do as a teacher, and they in return wished to stone Him, since they could not bear correction, He leaves them: Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple. He did not hide Himself in a corner of the temple, as if He was afraid, or take refuge in a house, or run behind a wall, or a pillar; but by His heavenly power, making Himself invisible to His enemies, went through the midst of them: Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xliii. 18) For His part was more to exhibit patience than exercise power.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xliii. 18) So then, as a man, He flies from the stones; but woe to them, from whose stony hearts God flies.

From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:

8:51 Those Who Keep His Word Will Not See Death

Death, the Last Enemy.

Origen: For what is that death that has come into the world through sin if it is not the last enemy of Christ that will be destroyed? And what is that death that passed to all people because all have sinned if it is not this very death that also reigned from Adam to Moses? Now Moses, that is, the law, continued until the sojourn of our Lord Jesus and ruled by one man's transgression through that one man, until those who

have received the abundance of grace and righteousness should reign in life through the one Christ Jesus. Whoever, then, has kept the word of the Only Begotten and Firstborn of creation will never see this death, since it is the nature of the Word to prevent death from being seen. And this is how we must understand the words “If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” It is as if he who speaks these words had given those who hear them light as a gift and said, If anyone keeps this light of mine, he will never see darkness. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.365–68.

Freed from Eternal Death.

Augustine: “See” and “taste” here are used in the sense of what is really the case, that is, what someone will know by experience. And since Jesus was about to die himself, this is how he spoke with those about to die. ... But what does this mean, “If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death”? It means nothing less than he saw another death from which he came to free us—the second death, eternal death, the death of hell, the death of the damned, which is shared with the devil and his angels! This is real death; the other kind of death is only a passage. Tractates on the Gospel of John 43.10–11.

They Can Do Nothing to Christ.

Chrysostom: Here he speaks not only of faith but also of a pure life. Above he said “shall have everlasting life,” but here he says “shall not see death.” At the same time he intimates that they could do nothing against him, for if the one who keeps his word does not die, much less is it possible that he himself should die. At least this is how they understood what he said. Homilies on the Gospel of John 55.1.

8:52 Now We Know That You Have a Demon

Contrary to Reason.

Origen: The majority, even of the wise, think that every kind of sin, of which one form is also the sin against reason, has no other source than mistaken judgments. But those who have believed in the holy Scriptures as divine think that the things people do contrary to right reason are not accomplished apart from demons or some such hostile powers. The Jews, too, therefore, assumed that it was the result of the activity of a demon that Jesus said, “Truly, truly I say to you, if anyone shall keep my word, he will not see death forever.” And they had this impression because they had neither kept the word nor perceived the meaning of what was said. For here he was speaking of the death of those who are at enmity with the Word [or

reason] who die forever because they do not keep his word. But they think he is talking about that death which is common to all, and so when he says that everyone who has kept his word will not die forever, [they think that he] has lost his wits, since Abraham and the prophets died. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.378–80.

The Difference between Tasting and Seeing Death.

Origen: There is a difference between tasting death and seeing death. The Jews, as unintelligent hearers, confused the saying of the Lord and instead of “he will not see death” said “He will not taste death.” Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.413.

8:53 Greater Than Abraham and the Prophets?

Inferior to Abraham.

Chrysostom: Again, they have recourse to the empty argument of their descent. They could have just as easily have said, “Are you greater than God?” or “Are those who have heard you greater than Abraham?” But they do not say this, because they thought he was inferior even to Abraham. Homilies on the Gospel of John 55.1.

Abraham and the Prophets Were Alive.

Origen: They reflected on the death of Abraham and the prophets... They had not, however, comprehended the life of Abraham and the prophets or that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was not their God as men who were dead but as men who were alive. ... Therefore, although Abraham died, nevertheless he was alive and no longer saw death since he had seen the day of Jesus and rejoiced and was glad...

This is why our Savior said that “Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day, and he saw it and was glad”—to teach that Abraham was alive. But if someone prefers that the words about Abraham do not have this meaning, let him tell us whether he who once saw the day of our Savior ... can see death after such a sight ... or that one who was worthy of such a sight was later deprived of what he had seen.

Each of these assertions is absurd. For when Abraham saw the day of Jesus, at the same time he saw it he also heard his word and kept it; therefore he no longer sees death. And so, the Jews were also incorrect

when they said, “Abraham died,” as if he were still among the dead.... The same is also true of the prophets.... They too kept the word of the Son of God when the word of the Lord came to Hosea, or Jeremiah or Isaiah; for no other Word of God came to any of these than he who was in the beginning with God, his Son, God the Word. Now if anyone has kept this word, the prophets certainly have.... Therefore, just as the Jews’ statement “Now we know that you have a demon” is false, so also is their statement “Abraham is dead, and the prophets.” Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.393–400.

8:54 The Father Glorifies the Son

He Refers His Glory to the Father.

Augustine: He said this because they said, “Who do you make yourself out to be?” For he refers his glory to the Father.... It is my Father that glorifies me, who you say is your God: and you have not known him.” See, my brothers, how he shows that God himself is the Father of the Christ who was announced also to the Jews.... Christ the Lord called him his Father whom they called their God and did not know. For had they known [God] himself they would have received his Son. Tractates on the Gospel of John 43.14–15.

The Glory Was Always His.

Gregory of Nazianzus: Let it be alleged that it is said of him that he receives glory.... This all belongs to his humanity; and yet if you were to ascribe it to the Godhead, it would be no absurdity either. For you would not ascribe it as if it were newly acquired but as belonging to him from the beginning by reason of nature, and not as a gift. On the Son, Theological Oration 4(30).9.

8:55 Knowing the Father and Keeping His Word

The God of the Old Testament Is Father of Christ.

Augustine: Some heretics say that the God proclaimed in the Old Testament is not the Father of Christ but a kind of prince of evil angels. ... [Jesus] contradicts the heretics when he calls him his Father whom the Jews called their God but did not know. For had they known him, they would have received his Son. However, he adds about himself, “But I know him.” And here too, if people simply judge by outward appearances he might appear arrogant.... But do not guard against arrogance so much so that the truth gets left behind. Tractates on the Gospel of John 43.15.

The Son Even Knows the Trinity.

Ammonius: For the Son not only knows the Father fully and by nature but indeed even knows the Trinity. Fragments on John 309.

8:56 Abraham Rejoiced to See My Day

Abraham Recognized Christ.

Irenaeus: Christ himself ... together with the Father is the God of the living who spoke to Moses and who was also manifested to the patriarchs. In teaching this very thing he said to the Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad." What did he intend when he said this? "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." In the first place, [Abraham believed] that he was the maker of heaven and earth, the only God. Second, he believed that God would make his seed as the stars of heaven. This is what is meant by Paul, [when he says], "as lights in the world." Righteously, therefore, having left his earthly family, he followed the Word of God walking as a pilgrim with the Word so that he might [afterwards] make his home with the Word. Against Heresies 4.5.2–3.

Abraham Saw the Lord's Coming in the Spirit.

Irenaeus: Abraham was a prophet and saw in the Spirit the day of the Lord's coming and the dispensation of his suffering through whom both he himself and all who trust in God would be saved, following the example of his faith. Since he saw this, he rejoiced exceedingly. The Lord, therefore, was not unknown to Abraham whose day he desired to see. The Lord's Father also was not unknown. For Abraham had learned from the Word of the Lord and believed him. Therefore it was accounted to him by the Lord for righteousness. Against Heresies 4.5.5.

The Day of the Lord Is the Cross. Chrysostom: "He saw my day and was glad." Jesus shows that he willingly came to his passion since he praises [Abraham], who was gladdened at the cross. For this was the salvation of the world. Homilies on the Gospel of John 55.2.

Christ Was One of Abraham's Descendants.

Irenaeus: Abraham also, knowing the Father through the Word who made heaven and earth, confessed that he was God. Having learned by an announcement [made to him] that the Son of God would be a man

among men—by whose advent his seed should be as the stars of heaven—he desired to see that day so that he might himself also embrace Christ. Seeing it through the spirit of prophecy, he rejoiced. Against Heresies 4.7.1.

Abraham Saw the Day of the Lord's Slaughter in Isaac.

Cyril of Alexandria: Or, we shall truly grant that he saw the day of the Lord's slaughter ... when, as a type of Christ, he was enjoined to offer up for a sacrifice his only begotten and firstborn, Isaac. For [Abraham] was similarly executing the priest's office at that time, making clear the exact force of the Mystery in a type in what happened. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.

Abraham Saw Christ in the Lamb.

Ephrem the Syrian: "Abraham was hoping to see my day." He is the one about whom it was said, "The nations will be blessed by your seed." "He indeed saw and rejoiced," because he saw in the symbol of the lamb the salvation of all the nations. "You are not fifty years old, but Abraham saw you?" He said to them, "Before Abraham was, I am," because he existed but he was concealed when Isaac was redeemed; his sign was seen in the lamb. When, moreover, there descended into Egypt the seed of the one who was saved by a lamb, and they were there for quite some time—this was shown beforehand in a type by Isaac—they were also delivered by a type, by a lamb. And from that time onwards they would sacrifice a lamb until the time that the true lamb came. When he drew near to John, he [John] announced him by saying, "See, the Lamb of God!" And when the true lamb had come, these others, which were types, ceased. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 16.27.

The Gentiles Are Fulfillment of God's Promise to Abraham.

Cyril of Alexandria: Abraham saw three men at the oak in Mamre and received the promise from God that he would be a father of many nations. The only way this could be fulfilled would be for the Gentiles to be called to faith in Christ, inscribing Abraham as their father and sitting down with him in the kingdom of heaven and sharing with him in all good things through the generosity of our Savior. Therefore, Christ says, "Blessed Abraham saw, and seeing, he rejoiced at my day." Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.

8:57 Not Yet Fifty Years Old

Was Christ Fifty Years Old?

Irenaeus: They answered him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” Now, such language is fittingly applied to one who has already passed the age of forty without having as yet reached his fiftieth year, although not far from it. But to one who is only thirty years old it would unquestionably be said, “You are not yet forty years old.” For those who wanted to convict him of lying would certainly not extend the number of his years far beyond the age that they saw he had attained. Rather, they would mention a period closer to his real age—whether they had truly ascertained this out of the entry in the public register or simply made a conjecture from what they observed, that is, that he was above forty years old and that he certainly was not only thirty years of age. For it is altogether unreasonable to suppose that they were mistaken by twenty years when they wanted to prove that he was too young to exist at the time of Abraham. For what they saw they also expressed. And the person they saw was not a mere phantasm but an actual being of flesh and blood. He did not then look much less than fifty years old, and because of this they said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” Against Heresies 2.22.6.

8:58 Before Abraham Was, I Am

8:59 They Took Up Stones to Throw

Would They Ever Stop Throwing Stones?

Chrysostom: They were so ready for murder that they threw stones at him. And they did this on their own without asking anyone. But why didn't Jesus say, “Before Abraham was, I was,” instead of “I am”? In other words, he uses the same expression, “I am,” that his Father does, because it signifies continuous being irrespective of all time. This is why the expression seemed so blasphemous to them. Now, if they could not bear the comparison with Abraham (although this was only a minor comparison), just imagine if he had continually made [statements about making] himself equal to the Father. Would they have ever stopped throwing stones at him? Homilies on the Gospel of John 55.2.