

John 8:48–59 (NKJV)  
The Escalation of Hostility toward Jesus

<sup>48</sup> Then the Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”

<sup>49</sup> Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. <sup>50</sup> And I do not seek My *own* glory; there is One who seeks and judges. <sup>51</sup> Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.”

<sup>52</sup> 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.’ <sup>53</sup> Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?”

<sup>54</sup> 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. <sup>55</sup> 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. <sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.”

<sup>57</sup> Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?”

<sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

<sup>59</sup> 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.

## Introduction

Most people in the world, throughout the ages of history, have believed in some concept of a Supreme Being. They may have had a perverted sense of Who that Being is, but they were convinced that there is a Personal Power greater than man. Given the evidence available, faith is reasonable. That is why the psalmist declared: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Psalm 14:1). The Hebrew word for “fool” suggests one who is not thinking rationally.

Since unbelief is neither reasonable nor the norm, one cannot but wonder why some people become atheists. I am convinced, after reflecting upon the matter for many years, that religious disbelief *does not result from logical conclusions based on well-researched data*. Rather, generally speaking, emotional motivation of some sort is a primary causative factor.

Consider the following case.

In 1996, Judith Hayes, a senior writer for **The American Rationalist**, authored a caustic, atheistic tirade titled: **In God We Trust: But Which One?** In this treatise, Mrs. Hayes revealed two clues as to why she left the Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) and became an atheist.

As a youngster, she had a friend who was a Buddhist. Judith was very close to “Susan,” and she simply could not tolerate the idea that her friend, who did not accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God, might be lost apart from the biblical redemptive system.

In one of his books, Aldous Huxley acknowledged that he had reasons for “not wanting the world to have a meaning.” He contended that the “philosophy of meaninglessness” was liberating. He confessed that the morality of theism interfered “with our sexual freedom” (1966, p. 19). This is hardly a valid argument for rejecting the vast array of evidence that testifies to the existence of a Supreme Being!

BY WAYNE JACKSON

## Review

John 8:40–47 (NKJV)

<sup>40</sup> **But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this.**

<sup>41</sup> **You do the deeds of your father.”**

Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.”

<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. <sup>43</sup> Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. <sup>44</sup> You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not* stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. <sup>45</sup> But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. <sup>46</sup> Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? <sup>47</sup> He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”

## Lesson

**I. The Accusation**

**II. The Answer**

**III. The Acceleration**

**IV. The Amplification**

**V. The Argumentation**

## VI. The Affirmation

## VII. The Aggression

### I. The Accusation

<sup>48</sup> Then the Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”

ἀπεκρίθησαν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ Οὐ καλῶς λέγομεν ἡμεῖς ὅτι Σαμαρείτης εἶ σὺ καὶ δαιμόνιον ἔχεις;

Outraged by Jesus’ pronouncement that they were children of Satan (v. 44), the **Jews** lashed out **and said to Him**, “**Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?**” They probably called Jesus a Samaritan in part because He, like the Samaritans, questioned their claim to be the true children of Abraham. They may have also been repeating their insult from verse 41, where they questioned the legitimacy of Jesus’ birth as a full-blooded Jew. (For more on both of those points, see the exposition of 8:37–47 in the previous chapter of this volume.)

In either case, the Jews were obviously unable to counter the content of Jesus' keen wisdom. Therefore they resorted to an *ad hominem* attack, calling Jesus names rather than refuting His arguments. In this case, they mockingly denounced Him as a **Samaritan**, which was the most cutting insult one Jew could hurl at another. Jesus' words (in vv. 37–47) had clearly hit a nerve. But instead of responding with repentance, these Jews ridiculed Him.

The Jews despised the Samaritans as physical and spiritual half-breeds. To review, the Samaritans were the descendants of Jews who had remained in the northern kingdom after its fall and intermarried with pagans transplanted there by the Assyrians (2 Kings 17:23–24). When the Samaritans offered to help rebuild the temple after the exile, the Jews refused and the Samaritans were insulted (Ezra 4:1–3). The bitter rivalry between the two groups only intensified throughout the intertestamental period. By Jesus' day the mutual animosity was so great that the Jews avoided dealing with the Samaritans altogether (John 4:9), and some refused even to travel through Samaria. Some of the Samaritans reciprocated by denying any hospitality to the Jews who did travel through their region (Luke 9:51–53). Jesus, however, was no respecter of racial barriers. He first revealed Himself as Messiah to a Samaritan woman (John 4:25–26), and also used a Samaritan to illustrate a good neighbor

(Luke 10:33–35). (For a further discussion of the Samaritans, see the exposition of 4:9 in chapter 11 of this volume.)

By calling Jesus a Samaritan, the Jewish leaders were in effect labeling Him a false teacher (because He obviously did not agree with their interpretation of the Law), and a traitor to Israel (since He allegedly sided with Israel's bitter enemies the Samaritans). In their blindness, they were confident that He must be an enemy of God.

In their anger, the Jews took their blasphemous accusations one step further by claiming that Jesus was also possessed by **a demon**—the same slanderous charge they had earlier hurled at John the Baptist (Matt. 11:18). This was not the first time they had made that outrageous allegation about Him. In Mark 3:22, “The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, ‘He is possessed by Beelzebul’ (Satan), and ‘He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons’ ” (cf. 3:30; Matt. 10:25). John 7:20 records that “the crowd answered [Jesus], ‘You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You?’ ” Later in John's gospel, the charge would be made again: “Many of [the Jews] were saying, ‘He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?’ ” (10:20). To say someone was demon-possessed was tantamount to saying that he was insane, since demon-possessed people often acted irrationally (e.g., Luke 8:27, 29, 35; 9:38–39). In a clear

demonstration of their spiritual blindness, they processed all Jesus said and did into the conclusion that a demon had driven Him mad. It is this kind of decision, in the face of full revelation, that is described in Hebrews 6:4–8:

<sup>4</sup> For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, <sup>5</sup> and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, <sup>6</sup> if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame.

<sup>7</sup> For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; <sup>8</sup> but if it bears thorns and briers, *it is* rejected and near to being cursed, whose end *is* to be burned.

<sup>9</sup> But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.



## II. The Answer

<sup>49</sup> Jesus answered, “**I** do not have a demon; **but I honor** My Father, and you **dishonor** Me. <sup>50</sup> And **I** do not **seek** My *own* glory; there is One who **seeks** and **judges**. <sup>51</sup> **Most assuredly**, I say to you, if anyone **keeps** My word he **shall never see** death.”

49 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς Ἐγὼ δαιμόνιον οὐκ ἔχω, ἀλλὰ τιμῶ τὸν πατέρα μου, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀτιμάζετέ με.

50 ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ ζητῶ τὴν δόξαν μου· ἔστιν ὁ ζητῶν καὶ κρίνων.

51 Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐάν τις τὸν ἐμὸν λόγον τηρήσῃ, θάνατον οὐ μὴ θεωρήσῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

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

“**I**

Emphatic

**but**

235 *allá* (typically a strong adversative conjunction) – but (but instead), nevertheless, on the contrary.

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

**honor**

Cognate: 5091 timáō – properly, assign value (give honor), as it reflects the personal esteem (value, preciousness) attached to it by the beholder. See 5092 (timē).

But Jesus did not reply in kind to their malicious charges; “while being reviled, He did not revile in return” (1 Peter 2:23; cf. Prov. 15:1). Instead, He calmly **answered, “I do not have a demon.”**

In fact, the opposite was true. **“I honor My Father”** (cf. v. 29; 4:34; 5:19, 30; 6:38; 14:31; 15:10; 17:4; Matt. 3:17; 17:5), He told them.

Obviously, then, He could not have been demon-possessed, since no demon-possessed person could possibly honor God.

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

Cognate: 818 atimázō – treat dishonorably (shamefully, with indignity) because perceived as having no value (honor, worth). See 820 (atimos).

Ironically, by their **dishonor** of Jesus, the Jews were dishonoring the very God whom they claimed as their Father.

Earlier Jesus had told them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me” (v. 42).

“He who does not honor the Son,” Jesus warned, “does not honor the Father who sent Him” (5:23; cf. 15:23; 1 John 2:23). Thus, it is only those who honor the Son whom the Father honors in return (12:26; cf. 1 Cor. 12:3).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). [John 1-11](#) (p. 380). Chicago: Moody Press.

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

I do not seek —Emphatic  
And I do not seek My own glory

Unlike His opponents, who exalted themselves (5:44; cf. 7:18; 12:43; Matt. 23:5; Luke 16:15), Jesus did **not seek** His own glory.

Had that been His desire, He could have remained in heaven and continued in the divine glory that had been His from all eternity (John 17:5, 24). Christ, however, did not come to earth seeking His own accolades, but “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10); to “bear the sins of many” (Heb.

9:28; cf. Isa. 53:11–12); and to “save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21).

The omnipotent Creator (John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2) and sustainer (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3) of the universe

Left His Father’s throne above,  
So free, so infinite His grace;  
Emptied Himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam’s helpless race.

(Charles Wesley, “And Can It Be That I Should Gain”)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (p. 380). Chicago: Moody Press.

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

### seeks

2212 zētéō – properly, to seek by inquiring; to investigate to reach a binding (terminal) resolution; to search, "getting to the bottom of a matter."

Tense: Present

Mood: Participle

Voice: Active

### judges.

2919 krínō – properly, to separate (distinguish), i.e. judge; come to a choice (decision, judgment) by making a

judgment – either positive (a verdict in favor of) or negative (which rejects or condemns).

Tense: Present

Mood: Participle

Voice: Active

Though Jesus did not seek His own glory, **there is One who seeks** honor for the Son—the Father. Unlike sinful men, He **judges** rightly, and has determined that His Son is worthy of glory. Both at Christ’s baptism (Matt. 3:17) and at His transfiguration (Matt. 17:5) the Father said of the Son, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.” Because the Son obediently humbled Himself even to the point of death on the cross,

God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:9–11)

In an Old Testament counterpart to that passage, the psalmist described the Father’s glorifying of the Son:

But as for Me, I have installed My King  
Upon Zion, My holy mountain.  
I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord:  
He said to Me, “You are My Son,

Today I have begotten You.  
 Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your  
 inheritance,  
 And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.  
 You shall break them with a rod of iron,  
 You shall shatter them like earthenware.”  
 Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;  
 Take warning, O judges of the earth.  
 Worship the Lord with reverence  
 And rejoice with trembling.  
 Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry,  
 and you perish in the way,  
 For His wrath may soon be kindled.  
 How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! (Ps.  
 2:6–12)

Along those same lines,

**Psalm 110:1** says, “The Lord says to my Lord: ‘Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.’ ”

And in **Isaiah 52:13** the Father declared of the Son, “Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.”

After His death and resurrection, Christ ascended to the place of supreme honor at the Father’s right hand (Matt. 26:64; Acts 2:33–35; 5:31; 7:55–56; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:21–22.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (pp. 380–381). Chicago: Moody Press.

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

**Most assuredly**, *Amēn, amēn (truly, truly)*, as it always does in John’s gospel introduces a statement of major significance. (cf. vv. 34, 58; 1:51; 3:3, 5, 11; 5:19, 24–25; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; 10:1, 7; 12:24; 13:16, 20–21, 38; 14:12; 16:20, 23; 21:18), MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (p. 381). Chicago: Moody Press.

if anyone **keeps** My word he **shall never see** death.”

**keeps**

5083 tērēō (from tēros, "a guard") – properly, maintain (preserve); (figuratively) spiritually guard (watch), keep intact.

Tense: Aorist

Mood: Subjunctive

Voice: Active

The one who **keeps** His **word** is a true child of God (John 1:12), in His kingdom (3:3–5), and is His true disciple (8:31)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (pp. 381–382). Chicago: Moody Press.

**John 14:15 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> **“If you love Me, keep My commandments.**

**John 14:21 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup> He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

**John 14:23–24 (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

<sup>24</sup> He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.

**John 15:10 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup> If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.

if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.”

shall never

οὐ μὴ

see death.”

Definition: I look at, gaze, behold; I see, experience, discern; I partake of.

HELPS Word-studies



2334 theōréō (from 2300 /theáomai, "to gaze, contemplate") – gaze on for the purpose of analyzing (discriminating).

[2334 (theōréō) is the root of the English term "theatre," i.e. where people concentrate on the meaning of an action (performance).]

if anyone **keeps** My word **he shall never see death.**"

Hebrews 2:14-15

describes the effect of Jesus's death in our place. Listen how he puts it:  
Since therefore the children [that's us] share in flesh and blood [since we are human], he himself likewise partook of the same things [he became human], so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

The writer to the Hebrews says that the whole human race is "subject to lifelong slavery through the fear of death."

**In 1973, Ernest Becker wrote a Pulitzer Prize winning book called *The Denial of Death*.** His thesis agreed with Hebrews:

The main thesis of this book is that the fear of death haunts the human animal like nothing else; it is a mainspring of human activity — activity designed largely to

avoid the fatality of death, to overcome it by denying in some way that it is the final destiny for man. (xvii)

Hebrews and Becker both say that the fear of death produces a pervasive, lifelong bondage — even when we don't realize it, fear is haunting our choices, making us cautious, wary, restrained, confined, narrow, tight, robbing us of risk and adventure and dreams for the sake of Christ and his kingdom and the cause of love in the world.

Without our even knowing it, fear of death is a slave master binding us with invisible ropes, confining us to small, safe, innocuous, self-centered ways of life.

Becker has no solution for this bondage, but Jesus does. “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” Or as he says in John 8:32, “You will know the truth [about death], and the truth will set you free.” The world desperately needs the courage and the Christ of fearless Christians who know they will never taste death.

He will never experience eternal separation from God (Rev. 2:11; 20:6; cf. 20:14; 21:8).

He is not talking about physical death even though some will and have escaped physical death. (ie. Enoch, Elijah and The future Raptured Saints I Thess 4:13-18)

But here he is talking about spiritual Death, the second death, the eternal death.

**Revelation 2:11 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” ’

**Revelation 20:6 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

**Revelation 20:14 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

**Revelation 21:8 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup> But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

To Nicodemus Jesus declared, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” **(John 3:16)**.

In **5:24** He reiterated that truth: “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

Jesus is **(6:50)**“the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die”.

Comforting

Martha after the death of her brother Lazarus, the Lord declared, **(11:25–26)**.

“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die”

Jesus’ statement here is merely another way of expressing the truth that eternal life results from humbly and obediently believing in His Word and following Him (Matt. 19:29; 25:46; John 3:15–16, 36; 4:14; 5:24; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 63, 68; 10:10, 28; 17:2–3; Rom. 5:21; 6:23; 1 Tim. 1:16; 1 John 5:11–12).

Even to these who scornfully rejected His gospel and dishonored Him, Jesus still graciously offered eternal life—another offer that intensified the severity of their eternal judgment if they rejected it (Luke 12:47–48).

### III. The Acceleration

<sup>52</sup> 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.**’ <sup>53</sup> Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?”

52 εἶπαν αὐτῷ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι Νῦν **ἐγνώκαμεν** ὅτι δαιμόνιον ἔχεις. Ἀβραὰμ ἀπέθανεν καὶ οἱ προφήται, καὶ σὺ λέγεις Ἐάν τις τὸν λόγον μου τηρήσῃ, οὐ μὴ γεύσῃται θανάτου εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα·

53 μὴ σὺ μείζων εἶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ, ὅστις ἀπέθανεν; καὶ οἱ προφήται ἀπέθανον· τίνα σεαυτὸν ποιεῖς;

Neither the revered patriarch **Abraham** nor any of **the prophets** had the power to defeat death, since they had all **died**.

Flinging Jesus’ own words back at Him, **If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death**, the Jewish leaders indignantly demanded, “**Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham or the prophets who died; whom do You make Yourself out to be?**”

Or, “Just who do You think You are?” The tone of their questioning is obviously abusive; they were sure that only a demon-possessed person could make such an outlandish claim.

## IV. The Amplification

<sup>54</sup> 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. <sup>55</sup> 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. <sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham **rejoiced** to see My day, and he saw *it* and was **glad.**”

54 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς Ἐὰν ἐγὼ δοξάσω ἑμαυτόν, ἡ δόξα μου οὐδέν ἐστιν· ἔστιν ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ **δοξάζων** με, ὃν ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι θεὸς ὑμῶν ἐστίν,

55 καὶ οὐκ ἐγνώκατε αὐτόν, ἐγὼ δὲ οἶδα αὐτόν· κὰν εἶπω ὅτι οὐκ οἶδα αὐτόν, ἔσομαι ὅμοιος ὑμῖν ψεύστης· ἀλλὰ οἶδα αὐτόν καὶ τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ τηρῶ.

56 Ἀβραὰμ ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ἠγαλλιάσατο ἵνα ἴδῃ τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἐμήν, καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐχάρη.

**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.

**honors**

Tense: Present

Mood: Participle

Voice: Active

He was not seeking His own glory, but was secure in the knowledge that the **Father ... glorifies** Him. Jesus' claims were not those of a demoniac or a maniac, because the glory

He possesses was not evil or satanic, but divine. It was His by His eternal relation to His Father (17:24)—the very One **of whom** the Jewish leaders said, "**He is our God.**"

For them to piously claim to know God while blaspheming and rejecting His Son was ludicrous. Therefore Jesus, pointing out the obvious again, plainly told them, **You have not come to know Him.**

Despite their outward pretense, they did not know God; they were children of Satan (v. 44). Their delusion was that they were God's children and that Jesus was in league with the Devil (cf. Matt. 12:24).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (p. 383). Chicago: Moody Press.

**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.

**known**

1097 ginóskō – properly, to know, especially through personal experience (first-hand acquaintance). 1097 /ginóskō ("experientially know")

Tense: Perfect

Mood: Indicative

Voice: Active

## **know**

Definition: I know, remember, appreciate.

1492 εἶδō (oida) – properly, to see with physical eyes (cf. Ro 1:11), as it naturally bridges to the metaphorical sense: perceiving ("mentally seeing")

Tense: Perfect

Mood: Indicative

Voice: Active

The New Testament writers, in contrast, employ **eight different** words, all of which traditional translators have rendered simply as “know.”`

The difference between *oida* and *ginosko* is most easily seen in passages where both are used. For example, look at Jesus’ upper room conversation with Peter in Jn.13:7. To Peter’s protest at the apparent impropriety of a master washing the feet of disciples, Jesus replies, “You don’t know (*ouk oidas*) what I’m doing now, but you will understand/know (*gnose*) later.” And Peter did learn the lesson – by experience – quite well

Two of the most prominent Greek words used for ‘to know’ in the New Testament – *ginosko* and *oida*. The former signifies objective knowledge, what a man has



learned or acquired. The English expression ‘being acquainted with’ perhaps conveys the meaning. Oida conveys the thought of what is inward, the inward consciousness in the mind, intuitive knowledge not immediately derived from what is external. The difference between the two words is illustrated in [John 8:55](#), ‘ye know (ginosko) him not, but I know (oida) him,’ in [John 13:7](#), ‘What I do thou dost not know (oida) now, but thou shalt know (ginosko) hereafter,’ and in [Heb. 8:11](#), ‘they shall not teach . . . saying, Know (ginosko) the Lord; because all shall know (oida) me.’

**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.

Despite the fierce opposition of His opponents and the impending outcome, Jesus steadfastly refused to back down or deny that He knew the Father. **“I know Him,”** He affirmed, **“and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.”**

**They were liars because they claimed to know God when they actually did not;** Jesus would have been a liar if He had denied knowing God, whom He

did know in a profound and eternal oneness (cf. 1:18; 7:29; 10:15; Matt. 11:27).

The Lord maintained the truth of His divine knowledge of His Father as one in nature with Him, though it became the issue for which they sought to murder Him (cf. John 19:6–7).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (p. 383). Chicago: Moody Press.

## V. The Argumentation

<sup>57</sup> Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?”

57 εἶπαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι πρὸς αὐτόν Πεντήκοντα ἔτη οὐπω ἔχεις καὶ Ἀβραὰμ ἑώρακας;

Hebrews 11:13 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Hebrews 11:13 records that Abraham saw and welcomed Christ’s day. He saw in his son Isaac the beginning of God’s fulfillment of His covenant with him (Gen. 12:1–3; 15:1–21; 17:1–8), which would culminate in the coming of the Messiah. Once again (cf. vv. 39–40), Jesus contrasted His opponents’ behavior with that

of their patriarch, proving that they were not Abraham's spiritual children. They wanted to murder the very One in whose coming Abraham rejoiced (cf. v. 37).

Stubbornly persisting in their misunderstanding of Jesus' words, the **Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"** Abraham had lived more than two millennia earlier; Jesus could not possibly have seen him. They also twisted His words; the Lord had not said that He had seen Abraham, but that Abraham had (prophetically) seen Him. It should be noted that the Jews' statement that Jesus was **not yet fifty years old** does not specify Jesus' exact age, but rather places an upper limit on it. The Lord would have been only in His early thirties, since He was about thirty when He began His ministry (Luke 3:23).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1-11* (pp. 383-384). Chicago: Moody Press.

## VI. The Affirmation

<sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, **"Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."**

εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Ἰησοῦς **Ἀμὲν ἀμὲν** λέγω ὑμῖν, πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι **ἐγὼ εἰμί.**

**was, —**

Definition: I come into being, am born, become, come about, happen.

HELPS Word-studies

1096 gínomai – properly, to emerge, become, transitioning from one point (realm, condition) to another. 1096 (gínomai) fundamentally means "become" (becoming, became) so it is not an exact equivalent to the ordinary equative verb "to be"

Jesus' climactic reply, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am,”** was nothing less than a claim to full deity.

The Lord once again took for Himself the sacred name of God (see the discussion of 8:24 in chapter 29 of this volume).

Obviously, as the eternal God (John 1:1–2), He existed before Abraham's time.

### **John 1:1–2 (NKJV)**

**1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God.

### **John 5:18 (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup> Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

### **John 10:33 (NKJV)**

<sup>33</sup> The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.”

**John 20:27–28** (NKJV)

<sup>27</sup> Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.”

<sup>28</sup> And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

**Romans 9:5** (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> of whom *are* the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen.

**Colossians 1:15–17** (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

**Titus 2:13** (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

Homer Kent explains, “By using the timeless ‘I am’ rather than ‘I was,’ Jesus conveyed not only the idea of existence prior to Abraham, but timelessness—the very nature of God himself (Exod. 3:14)” (*Light in the Darkness* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974], 128–29).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (p. 384). Chicago: Moody Press.

## VII. The Aggression

<sup>59</sup> **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 Jewish leaders understood Jesus’ claim perfectly. In response, their hatred flamed into violence. Infuriated by what they perceived as blasphemy (cf. 10:33), they took the law into their own hands and **picked up stones to throw at Him** (cf. Lev. 24:16).

Here is the grip of unbelief so powerful that in the face of irrefutable evidence they were unwilling to accept that as God in human flesh, Jesus was incapable of committing blasphemy; rather all of His claims, no matter how astonishing, were absolutely true. How ironic that the Jewish religious leaders, seemingly so passionate for God’s honor that they were ready to cast stones at a blasphemer, were, in fact, accusing God Himself of blaspheming God.

**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.**

**hid**

Original Word: κρύπτω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: kruptó

Phonetic Spelling: (kroop'-to)

Definition: I hide, conceal, lay up.

Literally, the sense in the oldest poetic sources is “to conceal protectively.”

Οερκε, Α., & Μeyer, R. (1964–). κρύπτω, ἀποκρύπτω, κρυπτός, κρυφαῖος, κρυφή, κρύπτη, ἀπόκρυφος. G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), Theological dictionary of the New Testament (electronic ed., Vol. 3, p. 958). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Significantly, the Lord did not protest that He had been misunderstood. Clearly, He was claiming to be God. Since His hour to die had not yet come (John 7:30; 8:20; 13:1), **Jesus** would not allow Himself to be killed, but supernaturally **hid Himself and went out of the temple** (cf. Luke 4:30). (John’s brief and straightforward description of this miraculous escape is reminiscent of how he records other supernatural events in his gospel—cf. John 6:11, 19.) Thus ends this tragic dialogue between Jesus and the doomed Jewish religious leaders.

As on this occasion, so it always is that there are only two possible responses to Jesus' claims. One is to accept them as true, and bow before Him in humble, repentant faith, confessing Him as Savior and Lord. The other response, illustrated by Jesus' opponents in this passage, is that of hardened, bitter rejection. The tragic, fearful result of that response will be eternal damnation in hell. As Jesus soberly warned, "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (8:24).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). [John 1-11](#) (pp. 384-385). Chicago: Moody Press.