

***“Astonishing Claims”***

**John 8:56-59**

**Sermon Date: November 17th, 2019**

**Reflections on Sunday’s Sermon**

**Prayer**

As you begin your study this week, spend time praising the Lord for being eternal, unchanging, and infinitely great. Ask that He would help us to see the day of Christ and be glad as Abraham was long ago (v. 56). Pray that the Holy Spirit would help you to delight in the truth that Jesus is the great I AM (v. 58). As you pray, consider the following words of this puritan prayer taken from The Valley of Vision.

*“O God all sufficient,*

 *Thou hast made and upholds all things by the word of thy power;*

 *all nations are nothing before thee;*

 *one generation succeeds another, and we hasten back to the dust;*

 *the heavens we behold will vanish away like the clouds that cover them,*

 *the earth we tread on will dissolve as a morning dream;*

 *But thou, unchangeable and incorruptible,*

 *are for ever and ever, God over all, blessed eternally.*

 *Infinitely great and glorious are you.*

 *We are thy offspring and thy care.*

 *Thy hands have made and fashioned us.*

 *Thou hast watched over us with more than parental love, more than maternal tenderness.*

 *Thou hast held our soul in life, and not suffered our feet to be moved.*

 *Thy divine power has given us all things necessary for life and godliness.*

 *Let us bless thee at all times and forget not how thou hast forgiven our iniquities,*

 *healed our diseases, redeemed our lives from destruction,*

 *crowned us with lovingkindness and tender mercies,*

*satisfied our mouths with good things, renewed our youth like the eagle’s.*

 *May thy Holy Scriptures govern every part of our lives,*

 *and regulate the discharge of all our duties,*

 *so that we may adorn thy doctrine in all things.”*

**Scripture**

**John 8:56–59 – (English Standard Version)**

***56*** *“Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.”* ***57*** *So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?”* ***58*** *Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”* ***59*** *So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.*

**Handling the Word**

1. Now that we have come to the end of chapter 8, make a list of some of the things this chapter has taught us about who Jesus and how He relates to mankind.
2. Similar to the last few weeks, this passage builds upon what was said in the verses immediately before it. Take a moment to re-read verses 31-55, then summarize what was said there and how it relates to this week’s text.

**Understanding and Applying**

1. As Jesus continues his discussion with the Jewish leaders, He makes an astonishing claim about Himself when He says that “Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad” (v. 56). In these words, Jesus claims to be the central figure in all of human history—the promised Messiah and King to which the entire Old Testament pointed and to which Abraham himself looked forward with faith and rejoicing. Why is Jesus’ claim to be the central figure in all of human history so astonishing? How can we know that Jesus’ claim was true?
2. Notice in verse 56 that Abraham “rejoiced” at the thought of the day when the Messiah would come to save His people. Regarding Abraham’s rejoicing, C.H. Spurgeon wrote, *“if there is anything that deserves the flashing eye, and the leaping foot, and the bounding heart, it is the great truth that Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners.”* Do you, like Abraham, rejoice in that truth? If so, what does your rejoicing look like? If not, why do you think you struggle to rejoice in that truth?
3. The people who had Jesus in their very presence did not appreciate, nor understand, what they had in Him and His teachings (see 8:13, 48, 52, 57, 59). Their forefather Abraham, on the other hand, who saw Jesus foreshadowed in various people and events, looked forward to His day in faith and was gladdened by what he saw (v. 56, Hebrews 11:13). Despite having the promised Messiah and Redeemer before their very eyes, many of the Jewish people did not believe in Him and appreciate Him the way their revered father (Abraham) did some 2000 years prior. Although we do not have Jesus before our very eyes physically, we have Him fully displayed before our eyes in the pages of the completed Bible. Do you truly appreciate the full display of Jesus Christ available to you throughout the entirety of His Word? Why or why not? In what ways is your appreciation, or lack thereof, evident
4. In addition to his stunning claim in verse 56, Jesus adds an even more astonishing claim in verse 58 when He states, “before Abraham was, I am.” To refer to Himself as “I am” is nothing less than a claim to be God, the always existing, eternal, and timeless One (see Exodus 3:13-14, Isaiah 41:4, 43:13, John 1:1-2, Colossians 2:9). Why is this a claim that we must reckon with and respond to? What impact does believing that Jesus is who He claimed to be have on the way you live your life?
5. Could Jesus still be considered good if the claim He makes in verse 58 is not true and, therefore, He is not really God? Explain your answer. Why would we do well to completely ignore Jesus if this claim could indeed be proven to be false?

1. One of the great truths to be drawn from Jesus’ claim to be the great “I am” (v. 58) is that He is eternal, or timeless. He always is, He always has been, and He always will be (Hebrews 13:8). As such, He is not subject to the confines and limitations of time that we experience. How would you describe your experience of time with its confines and limitations? Why is it such good news, and so comforting, to know that Jesus is eternal and holds all time in His hands?
2. The people did not respond well to Jesus’ claim in verse 58, but it wasn’t because they didn’t understand what He was saying. What does the crowd’s response in verse 59 suggest that they understood about Jesus’ words? Why did Jesus' claims evoke such a response from the people (see Leviticus 24:16 and Deuteronomy 13:6-10)?
3. While people cannot physically stone Jesus today, how are people still trying to figuratively stone Him, or remove any sense of His presence from their lives? Are there any claims or commands of Jesus that you have found yourself responding to negatively? If so, what are they and why?
4. As you finish your study, spend a few minutes simply rejoicing that you have seen the day of the Salvation in Jesus and that you have the immense privilege of knowing Him, the great I am, through faith.

*“Before there was any Abraham, there was this glorious Christ of ours existing as the Eternal I AM, in all the infinity of his glory…When Jesus said, ‘before Abraham was, I am,’ he claimed the Godhead, he declared that he was certainly God, self-existent from all eternity.”*

*C.H. Spurgeon*