

WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY

The Glory of the Advent of Christ

INTRODUCTION

What a wonderful Christmas performance from our Sunday School staff and students last week. It was a great presentation of the story of redemption from Genesis through to the birth of Christ. Today, the sermon is not far from that same storyline. If I were asked for a tag line, a catch phrase that would invite your interest it would be this:

Abraham was looking forward to Christmas

Let's look together at God's Word to see how we get that.

TEXT: [John 8:48–59 \(ESV\)](#)

THE STORY

I have broken this argument between Jesus and the Pharisees into several messages just to be able to grasp the details. We must remember that in reality it is all one debate; and as we enter this final act we remember that Jesus told these men that their father was neither God, nor Abraham, but in fact the Devil. That prompted an equally ruthless attack on Christ. "You are a Samaritan and demon-possessed," they replied.

In their little world there was only two groups of people, too. There were Jews and there were Samaritans. If you were against the Jewish nation, then you were a Samaritan. And for a Jew to question the integrity of the Jewish nation could only mean that he would be demon-possessed. Three times Jesus affirms that He represents the honor and the glory of God.

- "I honor my Father, and you dishonor me."¹
- "I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it."²
- "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me."³

Jesus stays on message, He says, "If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death."⁴ This launches the argument into another issue. Obviously, Abraham and the prophets kept the

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 8:49). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 8:50). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 8:54). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 8:52). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

word of God and they died. This is true. Of course, we know that Jesus was talking about spiritual things and they earthly things. He was talking about spiritual death; they were thinking about physical death. Yes, they did die physically, but not spiritually. In fact, Jesus says, *"Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad."* (John 8:56, ESV).

Now Christ makes the strongest statement in the entire dialogue: *"Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.'"* (John 8:58, ESV). He not only claims the Christocentric worldview of Abraham; He claims that He existed before Abraham, indeed He claims to be eternal. Of course, there is only one eternal being, that is God. That was heresy to them, and they sought to stone him.

WHAT DAY DID ABRAHAM SEE?

What 'day' did Abraham see and rejoice in? To arrive at that answer, we have to understand what Abraham's worldview was. I hope you have it firmly in your minds that the back of the Book interprets the front of the Book. The New reveals the Old. If we turn to Hebrews 11, we get a glimpse of Abraham's worldview.

Turn to [Hebrews 11:8-19](#). Let me make a statement and see if this is an accurate interpretation of the text: Abraham's worldview was to apply physical reality of God's promises, spiritually. Although Abraham had other children, the eternal promises are realized only through Isaac. Notice the emphasis in v17: *"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering **up his only son**."* Spiritually, Abraham had only one son. So again, Abraham's worldview was to see spiritual certainties in the physical realities.

John MacArthur writes, "Abraham particularly saw in the continuing seed of Isaac the beginning of God's fulfilling the covenant (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-8; cf. 22:8) that would culminate in Christ."⁵ And in the same note Drs. Ed Hinson and Woodrow Kroll write, "The joy of Abraham refers to the birth of Isaac. Abraham saw in Isaac the hope of mankind and the promise of a Messiah. He saw the promise afar off (Heb 11:13)."⁶

The theological point is this: The birth of Isaac was a *typological* promise of Jesus' incarnation."⁷ And because Abraham received eternal life, he actually witnessed the birth of Christ and was glad. Thus the words of Jesus make sense: *"Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad."* (John 8:56, ESV). Abraham was looking forward to Christmas and HE SAW IT!

⁵ MacArthur, J., Jr. (Ed.). (1997). *The MacArthur Study Bible* (electronic ed., p. 1600). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

⁶ Hindson, E. E., & Kroll, W. M. (Eds.). (1994). *KJV Bible Commentary* (p. 2098). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁷ Osborne, G. R. (2018). *John: Verse by Verse*. (J. Reimer, E. Ritzema, D. Thevenaz, & R. Brant, Eds.) (p. 231). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

THE MAIN POINT

Abraham found his ultimate fulfillment and joy in the person of Jesus Christ. Or stated otherwise: Abraham was dreaming of Christmas and when it came, he saw it and was glad!

APPLICATION

Through the Scriptures we too who are of faith stand with Abraham and look, not forward, but back, to the advent of Christ. The question for all of us today as it has been in many Christmas sermons of the past is, do we have the worldview of Abraham? Can we look past the physical, the earthy, the temporary and find our ultimate joy and happiness in Christ alone?