

## Trinity Sunday

FIRST READING – Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

*The Blessings of Wisdom*

**Does not wisdom call? Does not understanding raise her voice? 2 On the heights beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; 3 beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries aloud: 4 “To you, O men, I call, and my cry is to the children of man.**

Second poem about wisdom. The first poem was 1:20–33. (TLSB)

**8:1–36** Wisdom is personified (see note on 1:20) as she addresses mankind in preparation for the final plea from both “Wisdom” and “Folly” in ch. 9. (CSB)

*hokmah* – The most frequently used word for wisdom and refers to practical wisdom. Practical wisdom is the chief concept in Proverbs. Unlike the harlot who “lurks” at every street corner (7:12), wisdom loudly calls out. Wisdom’s purpose is also different. It’s not to deceive and destroy, but to enlighten and give life. (PBC)

**8:1** *wisdom* – Opening rhetorical question assumes that everyone reading is aware of wisdom’s invitation. (TLSB)

*her* – Wisdom is personified as a good woman, in stark contrast to the adulterous woman of ch 7. (TLSB)

**8:2–3** If we are not lose our way, we need to listen to wisdom. (PBC)

**8:2** *crossroads she takes her stand* – Here and in vv 3–4, wisdom stations herself to be heard in the midst of life. She calls out for travelers on their way in and out of the town. (TLSB)

**8:4** *children of man.* – This is for everybody. (PBC)

Wisdom’s invitation is for all; her call is universal. (TLSB)

**22 “The LORD possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. 23 Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. 24 When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. 25 Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth, 26 before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world. 27 When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, 28 when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, 29 when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, 30 then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, 31 rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.**

**8:22** *possessed me at the beginning.* The Hebrew for this verb is also used in Ge 4:1; 14:19, 22 (“Creator”). (CSB)

Here wisdom is much more than a gift given by God. In this chapter Wisdom is the One in whom the Lord delighted from eternity and with whom God created the universe. That is, the Wisdom of Proverbs 8 is none other than the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God before His incarnation. (LL)

nawthan - To bring, cause to change.

*me.* Wisdom. (CSB)

Here wisdom takes on the nature of God himself and plays a role in the creation of the world. Closely connected to Christ who was also from the beginning.

*the first of his acts of old.* Cf. Job's statement about the behemoth (Job 40:19). (CSB)

Just as Solomon's students are encouraged to acquire or possess Wisdom (1:5; 4:5, 7), so the Lord possesses Wisdom in eternity, even before His act of creation. This personification of wisdom points to the eternal nature of the pre-incarnate Christ, present at creation (Jn 1:1–3). Just: "The Word of Wisdom, who is Himself this God begotten of the Father of all things, and Word, and Wisdom, and Power, and the Glory of the Begetter, will bear evidence to me, when He speaks by Solomon" (ANF 1:227). (TLSB)

**8:23** *was set up* – Hebrew word here is used elsewhere in the Bible only for God's coronation of a king (Ps 2:6). Variant of the word can also mean "to weave," as woven or knit in the womb (Ps 139:13), here then referring to Wisdom begotten of God. For Christ as appointed Messiah before creation, cf Mi 5:2; Jn 17:5. (TLSB)

### **Christ as Wisdom**

According to Proverbs, Wisdom was present already in eternity, before the creation of the world and, consequently, before there even was such a thing as time. Along the same lines, Jesus said, "And now, Father, glorify Me in Your own presence with the glory that I had with You before the world existed" (Jn 17:5). In Pr 8, Wisdom is given birth by God, even though Wisdom was present from eternity. Likewise, Jesus is God's only-begotten Son; that is, "His only Son" (Jn 3:16). (TLSB)

John's Gospel begins with a description of Jesus as "the Word." This description connects Jesus with the Wisdom of Proverbs, which calls out and makes its appeals. John declares, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God" (Jn 1:1–2). Wisdom was also present with God in the beginning (Pr 8:22). (TLSB)

### **An Ancient Yet Modern Controversy**

In the fourth century after Christ, a controversy broke out in the Christian churches. Focusing on this portion of Proverbs, the followers of the priest Arius argued that the Son of God was a created being and not eternal God. They argued that there was a time when the Son of God did not exist. Much of their argument rested on a faulty Greek translation of Pr 8:22: "The LORD *created* Me," instead of "The LORD possessed Me." (TLSB)

In our day, the Jehovah's Witnesses have taken up this ancient heresy and contend that Jesus, the Son of God, is not true God. To support their false doctrine, they even mistranslate Scripture, such as Jn 1:1. Their *New World Translation* says, "The Word was a *god*," instead of, "The Word was God." Their false

translation makes Jesus a second-level god alongside the heavenly Father. Clearly, this teaching does not fit with Holy Scripture, which teaches that there is only one God! (Cf Is 45:18–21; see p 1815.) (TLSB)

At the time of creation, Wisdom said, “I was beside [God], like a master workman” (Pr 8:30). Passages in the NT attribute this to Christ, e.g., Col 1:15–17; *firstborn* in this passage is used in a specific sense. It does not mean the first child born into a family. Rather, it refers to the inheritance rights of the one who held the honors of a firstborn son. (E.g., King David is called “firstborn” in Ps 89:27, even though he was the youngest son in his family [1Sm 16:11–13]. In view of this, when Paul calls Jesus “the firstborn of all creation,” he means that Jesus rules all creation, not that He was created, for “all things were created through Him and for Him.”) (TLSB)

Faithful Christians in the Early Church, led by the great Church Father Athanasius, carefully studied Pr 8 and other passages of Holy Scripture. They recognized that while the Son of God is begotten, He is also co-eternal with God the Father. Out of this research into God’s Word came the Nicene Creed, by which Christians still confess faith in Jesus Christ as “the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.” (TLSB)

When we come face-to-face with the eternally begotten Son and other mysteries concerning the triune God, we are in realms beyond human comprehension. We can no more capture the eternal, omnipotent God within our minds than we can hold the ocean in a bucket. The wonder of it all is that the almighty Creator has come to us to save us. Jesus is God. He is also our Brother (Heb 2:11) who has suffered, died, and risen for us. (TLSB)

### **Clear through Christ**

It is often said that the OT is revealed in the NT, while the NT is concealed in the OT. In other words, what is not entirely clear in the OT becomes clear in the light of the coming of Jesus the Christ. That is what has happened with Pr 8. (TLSB)

The NT explicitly states that Jesus is the one “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3). Or, as St Paul puts it in 1Co 1:24, Christ is “the wisdom of God.” As you read Proverbs, hear the voice of your Redeemer. As the “Word of God,” these are His words for you. (TLSB)

*before the beginning of the earth.* Descriptive also of Christ (see Jn 1:1; cf. Mic 5:2) (CSB)

Although present from eternity, wisdom is “given birth” by God (verses 24-26). Likewise, Jesus is God’s only begotten Son. (PBC)

Wisdom was already there before God began to create the world (cf. Christ’s statement in Jn 17:5). (CSB)

**8:24-26** Special form of Hbr verb *chul*. Term can describe various forms of movement, such as dancing or writhing in pain (as in giving birth). This anticipates the NT language describing Jesus as “begotten,” the eternal generation of the Son from the Father, before time and space were created. *Before ... before ... before*. Threefold repetition shows Wisdom to be eternal (cf “before all things” [Col 1:17], clearly not a part of creation). (TLSB)

**8:24** *I was brought forth.* Elsewhere it is the sea (job 38:8-9) and the mountains and earth that are “brought forth” (Ps 90:2; Job 15:7). (CSB)

Although present from eternity, wisdom is “given birth by God. Likewise, Jesus is God’s only begotten Son (John 3:16). (CSB)

**8:26** *dust* – Plural in Hbr. The countless particles that make up the world. (TLSB)

**8:27-29** Provides a picture of the first three days of creation (Gn 1:3–10), placing Wisdom there from the creation of the heavens to the creation of the earth’s foundations. Wisdom saw it all, from the heights to the depths of creation. (TLSB)

**8:27** *established the heavens in place*. John’s Gospel begins with a description of Jesus as “the Word.” This connects Him intimately with the wisdom of Proverbs, which calls out and makes it appeals. John declares, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning” (John 1:1,2). Already in Genesis 1, the mystery of the Trinity is hinted at. “God created the heavens and the earth...the Spirit of God was hovering...And God said [repeated each day of creation, indicating the presence of the Word]...God said, ‘Let us make man in our image.’” (PBC)

**8:28** *fountains of the deep*. Earth’s springs and streams. (CSB)

**8:29** *the sea its llimits*. See Ge 1:9; Job 38:10–11; Ps 104:9. (CSB)

**8:30-31** *delight ... rejoicing ... rejoicing ... delighting*. Chiastic arrangement links the joy between the Lord and Wisdom to the joy between the Lord and humanity at creation. Athanasius: “In whom does the Father rejoice, except as seeing Himself in His own Image, which is His Word?” (NPNF 2 4:393). (TLSB)

**8:30** *master workman*. A craftsman was sometimes called a wise man. See, e.g., Bezalel, who designed and built the tabernacle (Ex 31:3). Here the term stresses the skill demonstrated in creation. (CSB)

More than just an observer, Wisdom crafted creation. Earlier, wisdom is depicted as a woman. However, in this poem (vv 22–31), the feminine imagery is replaced by a first-person address (“Me,” “I”) and depiction of wisdom as a “workman.” This points forward to the description of the man Jesus as God’s Wisdom in the NT. (TLSB)

John 1:3 says, “Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made” (PBC)

*before him always* – The universe was created by God’s Word, a powerful companion to His presence. God said, “Let there be,” and there was (Gn 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26). God spoke (wisdom), and things that never were came to be (Heb 11:3). (TLSB)

*his delight*. Cf. the joyful shouts of the angels at the time of creation (Job 38:7). (CSB)

Wisdom, Christ, the Son of God, was and is an object of delight and pleasure for the Father (Mt 3:17) (TLSB)

As the Father finds pleasure in the Son, the Son delights in His Father. The reciprocity within the Trinity is evident here as the close mutual relationship between Father and Son is clear (Mt 11:27; Lk 10:22; Jn 5:19–21). This could also refer to the Son’s daily pleasure in creation, which His Father declared good (Gn 1:31). (TLSB)

God’s delight in His creation is also seen in His assessment at the end of the sixth day, “God saw all that He had made, and it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). (PBC)

**8:31** *rejoicing in his inhabited world.* Cf. v. 4. Man, made in the image of God, represented the climax of creation (see Ge 1:26–28). (CSB)

As the creation account ends with the creation of mankind (Gn 1:26–28), so this poetic presentation of creation recalls Wisdom’s pleasure in seeing human beings created in God’s image (Gn 1:31; Ps 8:3–5). (TLSB)

## SECOND READING – Acts 2:14a, 22-36

### *Peter's Sermon at Pentecost*

**14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. 22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. 25 For David says concerning him, “‘I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; 26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. 27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’ 29 “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, “‘The Lord said to my Lord, “‘Sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies your footstool.’” 36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”**

**2:14–40** The pattern and themes of the message that follows became common in the early church: (1) an explanation of events (vv. 14–21); (2) the gospel of Jesus Christ—his death, resurrection and exaltation (vv. 22–36); (3) an exhortation to repentance and baptism (vv. 37–40). The outline of this sermon is similar to those in chs. 3; 10; 13. (CSB)

**2:14** *with the Eleven.* The apostles had been baptized with the Holy Spirit and had spoken in other languages to various groups. Now they stood with Peter, who served as their spokesman. (CSB)

*sun tois hendeka*, “with the eleven.” This may imply that it is the apostles (as opposed to the entire 120, 1:15) who alone are consecrated to the public preaching of the Word as their office in the Church. We are told in v 43 of this same chapter that “many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

Peter is always named first in lists of the apostles. His work is the focus of chapters 1-12. (TLSB)

*give ear* – Literally “let it be put in your ears.” (Sacra)

*enōtisasthe*, “give ear,” means to give full attention, more than just *akouō*, “listen.” A noteworthy problem in society today is that people do not exercise themselves in careful listening. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

**2:22-32** The setting is Pentecost, the middle of Peter’s sermon. The crowd “came together in bewilderment,” having heard the sound and the preaching in the language of each person (v 6). The crowd is mixed by language and geography, composed of “God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven” (v 5). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Since Luke and Acts were conceived as one work and meant to be read sequentially, Luke’s prelude about writing a systematic and ordered account for the purpose of teaching (catechizing) is important (Luke 1:1-4). Luke was not one of the eyewitnesses spoken of in our text (2:32). Yet the Holy Spirit inspired him to research and order the account of the Acts of the Apostles. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

The events of our text occurred 50 days after the resurrection and 10 days after Jesus ascended to be with His Church more than ever. While His visible bodily presence had governed the first 40 days, the Holy Spirit now centers the church’s life on His invisible bodily presence. Jesus is still teaching and feeding His Church. What He began before His ascension (1:1), He now continues through His apostles. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

The text is a continuation of Peter’s sermon from Pentecost morning (Acts 2:1–21), but it stops just short of the burning question of the crowd, “Brothers, what shall we do?” (v 37) and the staggering response of 3,000 Baptisms. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

The Holy Spirit was poured out as tongues of fire on the apostles on the Day of Pentecost, making it possible for them to address the international assembly gathered for the Feast of Pentecost in the native languages of those who heard them, and to announce to them what God had accomplished for them and for the redemption of Israel. The crowds were amazed to hear the apostles speaking in their own tongues and wondered how this could happen (Acts 2:1–12). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Speaking in the name of all the apostles, Peter announced that what they were proclaiming was the fulfillment of the prophecy given through Joel (Joel 2:28–32), and that, just as Joel had promised, those who took this proclamation to heart and called on the name of the Lord would be saved (Acts 2:14–21). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

The words of Peter included in vv 22–36 have within them hard words, a strong articulation of Law, spoken clearly and boldly, without fear or hesitation: “This [Jesus] was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross” (v 23). For those who will receive these words and take them to heart, God offers hope through the proclamation of the Gospel and the Sacraments, as we learn in the verses that immediately follow this text (2:37–39). It is perhaps unfortunate that they are not included in this preaching text, for the convicted sinner must not be left without the invitation to faith and new life, which faith in the Gospel brings. In our preaching we must proclaim that Gospel. However, we are not to attempt to turn the Law itself into Gospel, so as to deprive it of its power, or to preach from the assumption that the Law contains the heart of the Gospel within it. Let the Law retain its right, theological purpose, but do not slight the Gospel. The Law works death; the Gospel alone works saving faith and life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

**2:22** Verses 17–21 prepare for the “miracles, wonders and signs” done by God through Jesus Christ, since these are the last days. The three terms for Jesus’ work do not distinguish the acts of Jesus into specific categories, since they are synonyms (cf. v 19). The signs, for example, are also miracles. The theological import of *sēmeion* is especially significant in John’s gospel (2:11; 4:48; 6:2, 14, 26, 30; 12:37). The evidence of the signs become Peter’s point of entry for the introduction of Jesus into the sermon. The tongues are a continuation of the work God performed during Jesus’ earthly life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

*men of Israel* - Pentecost is a miracle of speaking and hearing. Just a few weeks earlier Peter had cursed and denied Jesus by saying, “I do not know the man.” Now he proclaims the crucified and risen Christ with courage and clarity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

Theological critics may have trouble with the miracles of Jesus, but Peter had none. The reality of Jesus’ miracles wasn’t the issue, for Peter says, “as you yourselves know.” In fact, the wide knowledge of his life-giving miracles (Jn 11:45–48) was a major factor behind the efforts of religious leaders to crucify him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

Not ethnic or geographical (v. 14) but a strictly religious form of address. (TLSB)

*hear these words* - *akousate* Peter calls on his hearers to “listen carefully,” as you would to evidence in a trial (Barclay Newman, Jr., *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* [London: United Bible Societies, 1971]) and know that Jesus was “approved” (proven, proclaimed) *apodeidegmenon* by God with *dunamesi* “miracles” (such as restoring sight to the blind and raising the dead), *teras* “wonders” (changes in the natural order of the universe, cf. Acts 2:19, “wonders in the heaven above”), and *sēmeiois* “signs” (a special indicator). The three terms are used together in 2 Cor 12:12 to indicate the presence and power of an apostle. Peter sought to remind the crowd how unique Jesus was when he ministered among them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

*attested..mighty works and wonders and signs*. The mighty works done by Jesus were signs that the Messiah had come. (CSB)

God richly supplied Jesus’ credentials in His works. (TLSB)

*apodeidegmenon*, from *apodeiknumi*, to show, to prove by arguments, to demonstrate. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

To demonstrate or exhibit (Strong’s). To be approved by a higher power.

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**2:23** *lawless men*. The Gentiles were acting in an evil way. (CSB)

Men without the law (Romans) bloodied their hands, but “you” are the real doers of the deed. The priestly leaders and the excited mob of Good Friday, the men of Israel are indicted for murder in the first degree. Yet, Peter proclaims that it was all according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

*you crucified* – Not every Israelite had rejected or would reject the Messiah, but as a nation the Jews had done so. Yet not of this could have happened if it had not been in accord with “God’s set purpose and foreknowledge.” The men who crucified Jesus were responsible for what they did. They were not helpless robots. But their actions served God’s purpose, which was to offer his Son for the sins of the world. (PBC)

Jesus’ crucifixion occurred not only because of the will of sinful people and their corrupt leaders, *anomōn* (lawless, outside the law of Moses) but also because it was part of God’s “plan” (*boulēi* and “foreknowledge” *prognōsei* (the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, (R. C. H. Lenski, *The Acts of the Apostles* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1934] 83). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

*definite plan and foreknowledge* - Paradoxically, God uses man’s free work for His purposes. (TLSB)

The “set purpose” (*hōrismenē boulē*) and “foreknowledge” (*prognōsis*) indicate that God doesn’t abandon his Messiah, but enacts the design which had been in place from eternity. *Prognōsis* is also used of the election/predestination of Christians in 1 Pet 1:2. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

*lawless men* - Jesus was handed over to the Romans, who were not under the yoke of Moses’ Law. (TLSB)

*crucified and killed* - Distinction between mere death and accursed crucifixion. (TLSB)

**2:24** *loosing the pangs of death* - lxx TRANSLATION OF Hebrew is “cord of Sheol” (cf. 2 Sm.22:6), which implies to death an image usually associated with giving birth. Because death’s pangs are terminal, not temporary, only God can overcome them. Luther: “(Christ) came back to life, and this became an opportunity for life, which before had been an opportunity for death. In this way death has become the door to life for us; disgrace has become the elevation to glory; condemnation and hell, the door to salvation. And this happened through Christ, who was sinless, etc.” (AE 19:31). (TLSB)

By means of the resurrection, *anestēsen* (to raise up, come back to life), God reversed the sentence that human judges passed on Jesus and which his executioners carried out (F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970] 70). If God ordained Jesus’ death, he also ordained his rising to new life. *The Pulpit Commentary* (A. C. Hervey, editor, *The Acts of the Apostles* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.] 52) notes that it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Jesus (1) because of the union of his two natures, (2) because the character of God will not allow anyone who trusts in God to ever be forsaken, and (3) because “Scripture cannot be broken.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

*pangs of death* – The word translated “agony” here is literally “birth pains.” Death was “in labor” while Jesus lay in the grave. It could not hold the Lord of life indefinitely and had to give him up. This, of course, is picture language. Death did not give life to Jesus as a mother gives life to her newborn. Rather, God raised him from the dead, and thus death could not hold him. (PBC)

“It was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.” When Good Friday ended in the bloody death and hurried burial of Jesus of Nazareth, there was no panic and no uncertainty in heaven. There was no question that Jesus would live again, for Jesus is life itself! When Jesus on the cross cried out, “It is finished,” he didn’t mean that the battle and the victory were half-finished. The crucifixion and



resurrection of our Lord are really one event. When one is pitted against the other as if one is greater, serious harm is done to the Gospel. When an empty cross is seen as more fully heralding the Gospel than a crucifix, serious harm is done to the Gospel. Already on Good Friday death gave way to life as many came from their tombs (Mt 27:52, 53). The Lord of life tasted death fully for us sinners, including the punishment of the second death, the lake of fire. But make no mistake, “It was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.” So also it is impossible for death to keep its hold on those clothed (baptized) in Christ (Gal

3:27). See also Rom 6:3–4. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

*krateisthai*, from *krateō*, to become master, to hold fast. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

**2:25-28** Quoting Ps 16:8–11, Peter states that the words cannot refer to David, for his flesh did undergo decay. This psalm rather refers to King Messiah, “great David’s greater Son,” whom David himself prefigured. The flesh of Jesus, wounded for our transgressions, is not dead but rather living and life-giving (Jn 20:27). We cannot see it as did Thomas, and Jesus does not instruct us to touch it with our hand. We can, however, receive it to eat in blest reality. As Jesus promised, “This is my body given for you” (Lk 22:19). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

The teaching of the risen Christ in the first 40 days had opened Peter’s mind to understand the Scriptures (Lk 24:45) and to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus’ name. The Holy Spirit’s inspiration continued Jesus’ instruction that all the Old Testament Scriptures (Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms) testify of him (Lk 24:27, 44). As Peter strung Old Testament texts together like pearls (Joel 2:28–32/Ps 16:8–11/Ps 110:1), he gave radical application to his present day in Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

The lengthy quote from Psalm 16:8-11 is Peter’s *apologia* (“apology,” as in that of the Augsburg Confession) for the concept of the resurrection. Not only is the promise of a resurrection present in the OT, it is provided by none other than David. The quote is identical with the LXX except for the inversion of *mou kardia* in v 26. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

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David (“I”) speaks in two dimensions. First, the king rejoices that God will not allow death to cut of David’s or God’s covenant people. Second, through David, Christ speaks prophetically of His own soul’s deliverance and His body’s escape from corruption. (TLSB)

**2:25** *David say concerning him* – Now Peter quotes Psalm 16:8-11 in order to show his hearers that what happened to Jesus was in accord with their own Scriptures. (PBC)

David speaks for Jesus, his descendant. (TLSB)

*I saw the Lord* – Christ has always beheld God, His heavenly Father. (TLSB)

*at my right hand* – Helper from all distress. (TLSB)

**2:27** *not abandon my soul to Hades*. David referred ultimately to the Messiah (v. 31). God would not allow his physical body to decompose. (CSB)

*egkataleipseis*, from *egkataleipō*, to leave helpless, to totally abandon and forsake. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Though David himself hopes for bodily resurrection, v. 27 is about Christ. (TLSB)

*Holy One see corruption* – Every Jew knew that that “descendant” was the promised Messiah and Peter was inviting them to conclude that the “Holy One” whose body would not see decay was the Messiah. (PBC)

*diaphthoran*, from *diaphthora*, the corruption that ensues when a dead body decays. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

**2:29-32** Peter explains that David was obviously not writing about himself because David died, was buried, and his body remains in his grave “to this day” (Neh 3:16 mentions David’s tomb as a matter of public record as well). Instead, David wrote as a prophet about the Messiah God would send who would die but also be resurrected. To underscore his claim, Peter declares of himself and the others who preached by inspiration of the Spirit: “we are all witnesses of the fact” (v 32). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

**2:29** *with confidence* - Regarding “confidently,” “in all instances [in Acts] then, *parrēsia* might be rendered ‘candor,’ . . . the meaning is basically controlled by the situation of confession” (*TDNT* 5:882). Thus, KJV translates “let me freely speak unto you,” and the ASV “I may say unto you freely.” The NIV, on the other hand, emphasizes certainty: “I can tell you confidently.” “Courage” or “boldness” are the preferred translations in Acts 4:13, where the Jewish authorities are surprised by the *parrēsia* of the apostles, who were unschooled men. It is also the petition of Peter and John in their prayer within the fellowship (Act 4:29). (See Acts 9:27; 13:46; 14:3; 28:31 for uses of the verb form). “This power of bold and open speech, which is given by God and confirmed by the Lord, is in the situation of confession made possible for the servants of God, the apostles, only by the Spirit” (*TDNT* 5:882). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

*parrēσίας*, from *parrēsia*, to speak frankly, openly, and with confidence. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

*his tomb is with us*. The tomb of David could be seen in Jerusalem. It still contained the remains of David’s body. The words of Ps 16:8–11 did not fully apply to him. (CSB)

David’s tomb, like all tombs except Christ’s encloses a corpse. Only one tomb is remembered with joy because it was empty. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

David, the head of his dynasty, lasted in Judah for 422 years. Ranked with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (TLSB)

**2:30-31** The first component of Peter’s confident telling is David’s death and entombment. Peter uses that fact to speak confidently of the resurrection of Jesus. As certain as the first is, so much more certain is the second, based on the very words of David. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

What a wondrous office the pastor of Jesus Christ possesses today. Even angels longed to look into the sufferings and glories of Christ that pastors are called to proclaim. David and other Old Testament prophets searched intently and with greatest care concerning the time and circumstances of what they predicted (1 Pet 1:10–12). This is the first sermon flowing from the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. Through Peter, the Spirit unveils the Gospel in Psalm 16 and moves Peter to proclaim the fully revealed time and circumstances of the Gospel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

A theological debate has arisen regarding the hermeneutics of Peter's use of Psalm 16. Is Peter saying that David's words apply only to Christ's resurrection, and not at all to David or other believers? Some interpreters say yes. Others, however, contend that the resurrection promise in the psalm applies first of all to Christ, then secondarily and in a future sense to all who are in Christ, that is, to all believers, including David. In Acts 2 Peter is arguing that the primary (but not exclusive) referent of the psalm must be Christ. In the psalm itself David appears to be rejoicing in God's promise not to abandon him or any holy or faithful one (*chāsīd*), and in fact some Hebrew texts (such as the Snaith edition) have in v 10 *chāsīdeyka*, "your holy/faithful ones (plural)," applying the promise to all believers. The preacher can make use of this by stressing that Christ's resurrection is the promise of our own. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

**2:31** *The Christ* - First use of the term in Acts. (TLSB)

**2:32** *God raised up* – This was the heart of the message which the apostles preached in all the world and which they recorded in the pages of the NT. It is the foundation of our faith. (PBC)

*witness* - The role of the witness is critical as the pericope concludes. Two witnesses are required to establish the facts of the case (Dent 17:6; Mt 18:16; 1 Tim 5:19). This legal principle is addressed by Jesus as he points to his work and the testimony of the Father as his witnesses (in 8:13–18; 15:36–37). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

"We are all witnesses of the fact," is the acceptance on the part of Peter and the other disciples of the role given to them in the upper room on Easter. "You are witnesses of these things" (Lk 24:48; the "things" are defined in vv 46–57). The term *martus*, "witness," ties Luke and Acts together. Acts 1:8 puts the thought into the future tense. Throughout Acts appeals are made to the eyewitness role assigned to the disciples. Acts 3:15, 5:32, 10:39 all have variations of the wording. "Telling confidently" on the part of the disciples is done because they have seen the risen Lord with their own eyes. One of the criterion by which Matthias was chosen was his presence with them from Jesus' Baptism to his Ascension (Acts 1:22). The witnesses are specially fitted for the task "They discharge the task by proclaiming both the facts and their significance as they have grasped this in faith" (*TDNT* 4:492). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

If the witnesses are restricted to include only the eyewitnesses of the resurrection, then in what sense are believers today able to consider themselves witnesses? To apply passages such as Luke 24:48, Acts 1:8, and 2:32 to all believers as witnesses isn't appropriate, since the force of the confident telling done in these passages is rooted in the eyewitness nature of their testimony. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

This distinction can be noted in Acts 13:30–31, where Paul preaches in Pisidian Antioch. He refers to those who had seen Jesus alive after the resurrection. "They are now his witnesses to our people." While here Paul doesn't include Barnabas and himself among such witnesses, we do find him describing the commission he receives from Ananias in terms of being a witness (Acts 22:15, literally "witness to him," since *autōi* is dative, not genitive). Strathmann explains: "Paul is not a factual witness in the same sense

as the older apostles . . . He is, however, a witness to truth who seeks to propagate the Christian faith by confession. The result is that, when the term *martus* is applied to Paul, the second aspect begins to predominate over the first” (ID) VT 4:494). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

“God has raised this Jesus to life.” Modern theology may question the bodily resurrection of Christ, but not Peter and not the early church. In simple words he states its certainty: “We are all witnesses [eyewitnesses] of the fact.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

**2:33** *right hand of God* – That is, Christ exercises the power of God and enjoys the honor of God. What he had from eternity according to his divine nature he now has and uses according to his human nature as well. He has the authority to send the Spirit whom he promised to send and he sent him. (PBC)

Jesus has equality with God the Father. (TLSB)

If Jesus is not in the tomb, where is he? Peter answers that he has been “exalted.” Lenski points out that the exaltation included both the glorification of Jesus’ body at the time it was resurrected and the ascension of his body into heaven (97). V 33 is an irrefutable reference to the Trinity (Father, Son, Spirit). Peter makes clear that the triune God is working together for the salvation of all. At his Baptism, Jesus received the Spirit in a public inauguration of his ministry and, again, at the right hand of the Father in heaven so that he could impart (“pour out”) the Spirit on those he left behind to continue his ministry (Bruce, 72). Evidence of the Spirit could be easily verified by the things the crowd could “now see and hear” (cf. Acts 2:1–4). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

*has poured out.* See v. 17; Joel 2:28. (CSB)

*execheen* presents a common image related to the Holy Spirit, one that provides an entrance into an understanding of how God works in and through us. In a variety of settings, the Holy Spirit is spoken of in terms of a fluid that can be “poured” out and “fill up” a container, the believer. Acts 2:4 says the disciples were “filled with the Holy Spirit” (emphasis added). Peter quotes a passage from Joel in which God twice promises, “I will *pour out* my Spirit” (Acts 2:17–18, emphasis added). See not only Joel 2:28–29 but also Acts 10:45 and Titus 3:6 for other examples of the Holy Spirit being “poured.” The water image of pouring and filling is also related to Jesus’ promise in Jn 7:38 about “rivers of living water” flowing from the heart of those who believe in him. John explicitly makes the connection between this overflowing water and the Spirit (Jn 7:39). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

Implicit in the imagery of pouring are several important dynamics. We are never the ones who pour; we are the passive vessels who receive the gift. Filling up also implies a purpose or an intended result. In Acts 2, the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is the preaching of the Gospel and about three thousand new baptized believers. Though the text itself does not develop it further, the image of pouring and filling for a purpose can help us proclaim the work of the Trinity to save us and those around us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

**2:34-35** David reverses conventional speech by addressing one of his descendants as his superior. Christ, David’s son, is David’s Lord. (TLSB)

Peter again quotes David, Ps 110:1, to show that the words of exaltation were written about Jesus, not David. Jesus used the words of Psalm 110 to identify himself and his mission and ministry (Mk 12:35–37; Mt 22:41–45; Lk 20:41–44). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

**2:34** *David did not ascend* – Nowhere in the tradition is David believed to have ascended to God’s presence. Therefore, the text must apply to his messianic successor, who has ascended to the right hand of God. (Sacra)

*The Lord said to my Lord.* The Lord (God) said to my Lord (the Son of David, the Messiah). According to Peter, David addressed his descendant with uncommon respect because he, through the inspiration of the Spirit, recognized how great and divine he would be (Mt 22:41–45). Not only was he to be resurrected (vv. 31–32) but he was to be exalted to God’s right hand (vv. 33–35). And his presence there was now being demonstrated by the sending of the Holy Spirit (v. 33; Jn 16:7). (CSB)

**2:36** *all the house of Israel* - Devout Israelites gathered for Israel’s third great feast (Pentecost) commemorating the completion of the grain harvest (Lev. 23:15-21). They were fully taught (catechized) from Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms. What they hadn’t believed is the identity of the Christ whom they were expecting. The Spirit’s Christ-centered emphasis is clear in Peter’s preaching. “God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

*know for certain - asphalōs*, from *asphalēs*, safely, assuredly; here “inescapably.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

*made* - Appointed to office. Through the resurrection, God clearly reveals Jesus’ status as Son, Lord, and Messiah. (TLSB)

*you crucified* - Though only some people were directly responsible for Jesus’ trial and murder. His death was required to remove the guilt of all people’ sin. (TLSB)

*Lord and Christ* - The Church has always confessed that Jesus is God. (TLSB)

Bruce (73) says of this summary verse: “The gospel message has been proclaimed: the witness of the apostles and the testimony of prophecy have combined to give assurance of the truth of the proclamation. The attested facts point to one conclusion: ‘Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.’” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

*kai kurion . . . kai Christon*, “both Lord and Christ.” Jesus’ death not only makes him Savior, but also exalts him to the highest place and gives him authority over all as Lord. There is power in the blood of Jesus. Having his blood on you—being literally, metaphorically, and theologically implicated in his death—is the only way to life and salvation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

## GOSPEL – John 8:48-59

*Before Abraham Was, I Am*

**48** The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” **49** Jesus answered, “**I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. 50 Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. 51 Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.**” **52** The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘**If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.**’” **53** Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?” **54** Jesus answered, “**If I glorify**

**myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God. 55 But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. 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.**

**8:48-59** St. John states the principally evangelistic purpose of his Gospel, that the reader “may believe that Jesus is the Christ,” and that in the name of Jesus we may have life (20:31). In John 7–8, the evangelist especially highlights the growing confusion, hostility, and opposition to the person of Christ. Jesus traveled to Jerusalem for the Feast of Booths (or Tabernacles), celebrated in the fall as a harvest festival, first in secret (7:1, 10). The crowds were abuzz over the news of Jesus, some speaking out for him and others against, although in whispers because all were afraid of the Jewish leadership (7:12–13). Finally, Jesus begins to teach openly in the temple courts (7:14), addressing questions and issues pertaining to the source of his teaching, who he is and where he comes from. Apparently many believed in him (7:31, 40–41; 8:30–31), although their faith seemed to be superficial and vacillating, as demonstrated in the exchange between Jesus and the Jews in today’s Gospel. The scene for the assigned Gospel is still the temple courts in Jerusalem, specifically in the treasury where offerings were collected. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 3)

This Gospel pericope is couched in Jesus’ “I am” statements, here Jesus calling himself the light of the world (Jn 8:12; 9:5). Jesus connects light with life: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (8:12). Immediately after our pericope, Jesus again says he is the light of the world as he heals a man born blind (9:1–7). Those who reject Jesus walk in darkness and death, whereas Jesus brings light and life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 3)

**8:48** *The Jews*. The phrase occurs about 70 times in this Gospel. Here it refers to the delegation sent by the Sanhedrin to look into the activities of an unauthorized teacher. (CSB)

*a Samaritan*. Probably to suggest that he was lax in Jewish observances—“No better than a Samaritan.” Or it may be a reflection on the birth of Jesus—perhaps claiming that his father was a Samaritan. (CSB)

This pericope is the continuation of the very public debate Jesus was having with the Jews in Jerusalem. He had just pointed out to them that they were not of God but of the devil (8:39–47). Naturally they respond harshly, using some of the strongest insults they could muster up. Samaritans were considered ethnic and religious half-breeds, unclean, to be avoided at all costs. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 3)

To a Jew this was one of the most opprobrious epithets that could be used. The Samaritans were greatly hated and despised as heretics and schismatics. (CB)

This was a countercharge that Jesus, not they, operated under demonic influence. Cf Mt 12:24. (TLSB)

The frank argument of Jesus struck deeply, it cut the proud Jews to the quick. And they could not gainsay His words, their conscience was forced to admit their truth. And so they took recourse to jeering and abuse. They called Him a Samaritan, an adherent of the people that had retained only a part of the truth, whose members were considered heretics by the Jews and therefore believed to be possessed of evil spirits. That is the manner and style of the unbelievers of all times; when they find that they have no arguments against the truth, then they resort to calumny and blasphemy. (Kretzmann)

“Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” In Middle Eastern cultures of this era, honor played a great role. The Jewish leaders publicly attack the honor of Jesus in this verse. Unknowingly, they also dishonor the Father, since they dishonor Christ (cf. 5:22–23). Thus they reject the Trinity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 3)

*have a demon* – Stung by the unveiled truth from Jesus’ lips, the Jews resorted to name-calling. Undoubtedly, to their way thinking, they were simply answering Him in kind. “You say the devil is our father? We say you’re a half-breed and you have a demon inside you.” (PBC)

**8:49** *I honor my Father* – Jesus simply denied their charge and pointed to the real problem. He was glorifying His heavenly Father, but the Jews were dishonoring Him. (PBC)

But Jesus does not permit the manner of the enemies to disturb Him. He most emphatically, but altogether quietly, spurns the charge, declaring that He was honoring His Father in all His works and words. In speaking as He did, He gave all honor to His Father. But the Jews, by their blasphemy, dishonored Him, and therefore also, by implication, His Father. Their foolish manner of acting does not stir Him to resentment, for the idea of seeking and furthering His own glory was absolutely foreign to Him. But from this they should not infer that their abuse of Him was a matter of indifference, which would not find its punishment. (Kretzmann)

Our Lord does not even honor the insult with a response; he loved the Samaritan people just as he loves all people (4:1–42; Lk 10:25–37; note in Luke Jesus’ use of *esplagchnisthē*, “compassion” [v 33], a messianic characteristic in the Gospels used only of Jesus or of parabolic characters representing Christ or the Father). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 3)

The two words “honor” (*timaō*) and “dishonor” (*atimazō*) are of significance in the culture of Palestine. As Jerome Neyrey has pointed out (*Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998]), the idea of honor is powerful because it has to do with one’s value or worth in a social setting, in the public eye. Jesus honored the Father in that all he did and said was to be for the Father’s glory; the Jews were soiling not only Jesus’ reputation but also that of the Father, whom Jesus honored. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 3)

**8:50** *he is the judge* – A mighty Vindicator stands behind Jesus, whom He describes only most briefly. He justifies Jesus, who upholds His Father’s honor; He condemns those who drag down His honor by reviling His Son and messenger. (Lenski)

By attacking Jesus, they were attacking God and bringing eternal condemnation upon themselves. (TLSB)

Jesus expands upon the thought here by pointing out that he (*egō* is emphatic) does not seek his own glory (*tēn doxan*), but that of the Father. Jesus commends himself to the One who will defend his honor because “there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 3)

“Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” In Middle Eastern cultures of this era, honor played a great role. The Jewish leaders publicly attack the honor of Jesus in this verse. Unknowingly, they also dishonor the Father, since they dishonor Christ (cf. 5:22–23). Thus they reject the Trinity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 3)

There is One above, who is very much concerned about His Son's glory and honor; He seeks it, and He will pass judgment upon those that esteem the abuse of the Lord lightly. The sentence of condemnation which the blasphemers of Christ will bring down upon themselves is terrible beyond human comprehension. (Kretzmann)

**8:51** *truly, truly I say too you* - The glorious announcement of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is introduced by *amēn amēn legō humin*. What follows is a future more vivid condition. If what is stated in the protasis (the “if clause”) is true, then the apodosis (the “then clause”) most certainly will be the case. “Whoever keeps my word (that is, confesses my true identity as YHWH), he will surely not see death unto eternity” (for these insights the author is indebted to his colleague Dr. Charles Gieschen). The word *tēreō* has the meaning of “to keep,” “to pay attention to,” or “to observe” (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957], 822). Sometimes the word has been translated legalistically (cf. the NIV rendering of Mt 28:20), however, “to obey” is not listed in *A Greek-English Lexicon*. This verse is clear Gospel—faith in Jesus will certainly bring life eternal with the Father. Jesus is, of course, talking about eternal, spiritual death, something the Jews fail to realize, as shown in the next verse. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 3)

*my word*. The whole of Jesus’ message, which when accepted brings deliverance from death. (CSB)

To remain in the word is that of keeping an eye on the word, so that it is not tampered with but is kept inviolate. (Lenski)

He underscored His Word (Logos) again. The way to know the Word, who is God, who is Jesus, is to keep His Word. Believe the message of Jesus and you will never see death. (PBC)

The Jews should therefore remember, as Jesus solemnly declares to them, that a man that keeps His saying, that diligently attends to His words, His Gospel, and accepts them for use in His life without remonstrance and unbelief, shall not see death unto all eternity. Temporal death will have no terrors for Him, being merely the gate and entrance to eternal life. Here was the sweetest, the most wonderful Gospel-news, calculated to strengthen and comfort all believers of that and the present time. (Kretzmann)

*never see death* – Experience everlasting death. (TLSB)

“Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” In Middle Eastern cultures of this era, honor played a great role. The Jewish leaders publicly attack the honor of Jesus in this verse. Unknowingly, they also dishonor the Father, since they dishonor Christ (cf. 5:22–23). Thus they reject the Trinity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 3)

**8:52** *now we know* – Far from seeing the truth, the Jews now were sure that Jesus had a demon. Even Abraham and the prophets died. How could Jesus be sane and say that anyone who kept His Word would never taste death? Where faith is denied and human reason takes over, people must conclude that Jesus is making preposterous claims. Only through faith do we see that He is in truth the Son of God. (PBC)

This is not only intellectual acceptance of Jesus’ teaching but also faith in and obedience to it (cf v 55; Mt 28:20). (TLSB)

Jesus’ statement makes no sense to the Jews’ worldly minds. Abraham and the prophets obviously died! Their only recourse is to repeat the charge that they now know (*egnōkamen*—the perfect emphasizes how sure they are of it) that he has a demon. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 3)



*taste death* – Reference to physical death here, in contrast to spiritual

Death in v 51. (TLSB)

The saying of Jesus that the believer in Him was sure of obtaining eternal life was beyond the comprehension of the Jews. And it increased their anger and resentment to note that Jesus ascribed such power to Himself. They concluded rightly that the Lord here claimed to possess supernatural attributes. And so they repeat their Blander and blasphemy that He is possessed of an evil spirit. They understood the saying of temporal death, and since they supposed Jesus to be a mere man and surely of smaller importance than Abraham and the prophets, they felt that He was arrogating to Himself powers which were altogether out of His reach. If those men had died, He surely could not speak of granting safety and deliverance from death. (Kretzmann)

**8:53** *Are you greater ... ?* The question was framed to expect the answer “No.” This is ironic, since Jesus was indeed far greater than Abraham, even as he was greater than Moses. (CSB)

The answer to the Jews’ question, “Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And [are you greater than] the prophets who died?” (author’s translation), is, of course, yes, something that was impossible for the Jews to believe in their spiritual blindness. “Who do you make yourself out to be?” One can easily see the anger of the Jews coming to a boil. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 3)

“Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died?” The Jewish leaders introduce their question with *mē*, which anticipates a negative response. In this way they again reject Jesus’ divinity and the Trinity. Additionally, they are working with a different Old Testament hermeneutic that lacks focus on the resurrection and eternal life (cf. Mt 22:23–33). In contrast, Jesus emphasizes life in this context. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 3)

Their conclusion was a bit of sound arguing. Jesus did indeed place Himself upon a much higher level than the prophets. But the question of the Jews was impudent in spite of all: What do You expect us to take You for? Their words plainly showed their contempt of Him and of the fact that they believed Him to be extolling Himself at the expense of truth. (Kretzmann)

**8:54** *my glory is nothing* – That would prove worthless. Many before Him and many since have claimed to be messiah’s for their own glory and did no good. (PBC)

The answer to the Jews’ question, “Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And [are you greater than] the prophets who died?” (author’s translation), is, of course, yes, something that was impossible for the Jews to believe in their spiritual blindness. “Who do you make yourself out to be?” One can easily see the anger of the Jews coming to a boil. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 3)

But Jesus insists that He has His honor from His Father. If He were guilty of exalting Himself at the expense of truth, His glory would suffer at once and come to naught. God never permits an unworthy person to arrogate to himself privileges which properly belong to Him alone. But in this case God Himself was giving evidence on every hand that He stood behind His Son, in His preaching and in His miracles. Now the Jews made the boastful statement that God was their Father. If that were true, then they must be conscious of the fact that God is zealous and jealous of the honor of the Son, whom He has sent. But their proud boast cannot be true, they cannot have a correct idea and knowledge of Him. Their entire life and manner of acting shows that. (Kretzmann)

**8:55** *you...do not know him* – They didn't glorify Jesus because they didn't really know their own God anymore. For them to say they knew God but then to reject Jesus made them liars. (PBC)

Jesus states that if he were to deny that he knows the Father (*oida*), he would be a liar like them. The future more vivid condition of this statement adds weight to his declaration. The Jews are liars because they say that God is their Father, yet they dishonor (*atimazete*, v 49) the one the Father has sent. Adding further contrast to the unbelief of the Jews, Jesus adds that he does know the Father and he keeps (*tērō*) his word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 3)

In the context, Jesus distinguishes the manner in which he, compared to the Jewish leaders, knows the Father. The verb choice may contribute to this distinction, since *ginōskō* (used of the Jews) can refer to a beginning knowledge, whereas *oida* (used of Jesus) can refer to an innate knowledge. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 3)

The Jews had lost sight of the Word of God that promised Christ's coming. They had kept God's Word only selectively and added to it. Jesus spoke the truth, but the Jew followed their father, the devil. (PBC)

They have not acquired knowledge of the Father, either by observation or by teaching, but the knowledge of Christ is of such a nature as to exclude all possibility of a mistake as to the essence and qualities of God. He has a direct and essential knowledge of His Father. Were He to deny that He has such a direct knowledge of God, then He would be a liar and on a level with the Jews. But He is the possessor of the right knowledge, out of which grows and follows a glad and joyful keeping of His Word. Note: This close connection between the actual knowledge of God by faith and the doing of His will is indispensable in the Christian life; the keeping of God's Word must follow the acceptance of this Word in faith. And with Jesus this keeping was of a peculiarly wonderful character, since He was carrying out the will of God for the salvation of the world. And now Jesus offers a bit of proof for the fact that He is greater than Abraham. For this patriarch, who was their ancestor according to the flesh, was filled with exultant joy over the fact that he should see the day of Christ. The wonderful promises which were given him with regard to the Messiah filled his heart with joy ineffable. (Kretzmann)

**8:56** *Your father Abraham*. Physically they descended from Abraham. (TLSB)

*my day*. All that was involved in the incarnation. Jesus probably was not referring to any one occasion but to Abraham's general joy in the fulfilling of the purposes of God in Christ, by which all nations on earth would receive blessing (Ge 18:18). (CSB)

To demonstrate that his honor/glory is not self-given, Jesus declares that their father Abraham had indeed rejoiced at seeing the day of Jesus and was glad in it. Abraham saw it when his son, Isaac, was born (Heb 11:11–13), and thus the promise to make of his descendants a great nation (Gen 12:2–3) was being fulfilled. The promised coming Savior brought joy to the life of Abraham, just as the fulfilled promise of the Savior brings joy and gladness to the Christian today. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 3)

*he saw it*. In faith, from afar. (CSB)

By faith, Abraham saw God's plan of salvation fulfilled (Heb 11:8–10). Bernard of Clairvaux: "So are we to think of all the saints of that time, that they were born just as ourselves under the power of darkness, because of original sin, but rescued before they died, and that by nothing else but the blood of Christ" (SLSB, p 285 (TLSB))

“Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.” Christ’s “day” is parallel to the Old Testament “Day of the Lord,” which includes rescue for God’s people but condemnation for those who reject him (e.g., Zeph 1:14–15; Zech 13:1–2; 14:7–9; Mal 4:5–6). Abraham received a preview of Christ’s gracious “Day,” particularly in two events. In the birth of Isaac, whose name means “he laughs,” Abraham rejoiced at this miraculous birth that previewed the greater miraculous birth of Christ, the ultimate source of blessing to many nations. Second, in the near sacrifice of Isaac, Abraham received a preview of the sacrifice of God’s own Son. Additionally, since Abraham still lives at the time of Christ (v 51; Mt 22:23–33), he joyfully views the day of Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 3)

In this way Abraham did see the Lord, His Savior, by faith, and died in happy trust in Him. But this last saying the Jews completely misunderstood. (Kretzmann)

**8:57** *not yet fifty years old.* A generous allowance for Jesus’ maximum possible age. Jesus was about 30 when he began his ministry (Lk 3:23). (CSB)

Again we see the stubborn worldly perspective of the Jews. In their rage and disbelief they are unable to understand what Jesus is saying. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 3)

Perhaps a reference to the priests’ ineligibility for service when they passed age 50 (Num 4:3); or just a round number indicating that Jesus, in His 30’s (Lk 3:23), was not even close to Abraham’s era. In any case, Jesus’ claim sounded preposterous to them. (TLSB)

They had the idea that the life of Jesus and that of Abraham on earth had been contemporaneous. Full of indignation they cried out to Him: Fifty years Thou art not yet, and Abraham Thou hast seen! The very idea was preposterous. (Kretzmann)

**8:58** *I am!* A solemnly emphatic declaration echoing God’s great affirmation in Ex 3:14. Jesus did not say “I was” but “I am,” expressing the eternity of his being and his oneness with the Father (see 1:1). With this climactic statement Jesus concludes his speech that began with the related claim, “I am the light of the world” (v. 12). (CSB)

Another crucial statement is introduced with *amēn, amēn, legō humin.* Jesus clearly declares his divinity by stating that even before the time of Abraham (*prin Abraam genesthai*), he is. *genesthai* being in the aorist highlights the single event of the period in time of Abraham. *egō eimi* is in the present tense, which underscores the eternal nature of Christ. It is the same name God applies to himself in Ex 3:14. We do not know precisely what Hebrew or Aramaic word Jesus would have used, but it is quite likely, from the reaction of the Jews, that it was the Tetragrammaton. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 3)

“Before Abraham was, I am.” Jesus reveals himself as divine, eternal, the center of the Old Testament (Ex 3:14). John frequently includes these “I am” statements with a discourse or miracle (e.g., 6:35; 10:14; 11:25). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 3)

Declaration of Jesus’ eternal preexistence (1:1; cf Is 41:4). (TLSB)

As Jesus Christ is truly and eternally divine, his kindness, compassion, and grace, in coming into the world, taking upon him human nature, and dying upon the cross, surpass all finite comprehension, and lay upon all to whom he is revealed and unspeakable obligations to love and obey him. (CB)

But Jesus repeats the thought with an unusually strong affirmation, that before Abraham came into being, He was, He is, thus asserting His eternity. Our Savior, the humble and despised Jesus of Nazareth, is the eternal God. That is our comfort, to know that in our redemption the suffering and death of the eternal God is lying in the balance. It is the eternal God that delivered us from eternal damnation. That the eternal God suffered for some hours on the cross, that has taken away the power of hell and damnation. (Kretzmann)

**8:59** *stones to throw*. The Jews could not interpret Jesus' claim as other than blasphemy, for which stoning was the proper penalty (Lev 24:16). (CSB)

Presumably on the grounds that Jesus was guilty of blasphemy (Lev. 24:16). (TLSB)

The reaction of the Jews was immediate, and it was fierce. No doubt there were many large stones lying around, as the temple was undergoing repairs. However, Jesus "was hidden" (*ekrubē*, author's translation; from *kruptō*). His time had not yet come. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 3)

In their stubbornness and blindness, the Jews refuse to recognize Jesus in spite of all the evidence—both his miracles (usually *sēmeia*, "signs," in John) and his teaching—that points to him as the long-awaited Messiah. Having rejected Christ, their only recourse is to be rid of him, for if they were to admit that he is who he says, they would have found themselves guilty of the deepest shame and dishonor, the disastrous transgression of blasphemy. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 3)

*hid himself* – Or, "was hidden," that is by divine concealment. (TLSB)

But this was too much for the Jews. They could no longer contain themselves; they picked up stones to put Him to death for what they considered blasphemy. But their murderous intention was not carried out. Jesus did not merely hide Himself, to slip out unobserved, but He made Himself in visible. by His almighty power: Through their very midst He went out, unhindered, while His enemies were struck with temporary blindness and vainly endeavored to harm Him. That same almighty Jesus is the Protector of His own at all times, and may well make use of His power in their interest, whenever He deems it necessary. There must be no lack of trust in Him. (Kretzmann)

**8:48–59** The confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees reaches a climax when the Pharisees attempt to stone Him for claiming to be the preexistent Son of God. The Bible's witness that Jesus is true God and the only way to heaven receives intense and sometimes virulent opposition today. Pray for those confused or offended by the truth about Jesus, for "God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rm 5:8). • O God, grant true repentance to those whose hearts are turned against You. Amen. (TLSB)