

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 136 – May 16th – John 8:31-59

Works frequently referenced in these notes on John

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|--------------------|---|
| Barrett, CK | <i>The Gospel According to John</i> , London, SPCK, 1967 |
| Beasley-Murray, GR | <i>John</i> , <i>Word Bible Commentary</i> , vol 36, Word Books, 1987 |
| Carson, DA | <i>The Gospel According to John</i> , Leicester, IVP (Apollos), 1991 |

Verse 31

Ἔλεγεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς πρὸς τοὺς πεπιστευκότας αὐτῷ Ἰουδαίους· Ἐὰν ὑμεῖς μείνητε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ, ἀληθῶς μαθηταὶ μου ἔστε,

πεπιστευκότας Verb, perf act ptc, m acc pl
πιστευω

It is clear from what follows that the faith of these people is deficient (see vv. 34, 37, 44, 55, 59).

ἐὰν if
μείνητε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl μένω
remain, stay, abide

"Μείνητε signifies a settled determination to *live* in the word of Christ and by it, and so entails a perpetual listening to it, reflection on it, holding fast to it, carrying out its bidding. In 15:7 it is represented as letting the word abide in us, which puts the same thing in another figure, and it leads to living (abiding) in Christ and Christ in us." Beasley-Murray.

ἐμός, ἡ, ον Is possessive adj my, mine
ἀληθῶς adv truly, in truth
μαθητής, ος m disciple, pupil, follower

Verse 32

καὶ γνώσεσθε τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐλευθερώσει ὑμᾶς.

γνώσεσθε Verb, fut midd dep indic, 2 pl
γινωσκω

ἀλήθεια, ας f truth, reality
ἐλευθερω free, set free

Beasley-Murray comments, "As the Exodus under 'the first Redeemer' was a release from the slavery of Egypt's land for the freedom of the people of God in the promised land, so the great Exodus under 'the second Redeemer' is for the emancipation of a new people of God, drawn from all nations of the earth, for the freedom of the kingdom of God."

In John, ἐλευθερος and ἐλευθερω are used to express freedom *from sin*, i.e. used synonymously with salvation. Carson comments, "The nature of that freedom depends on the nature of the slavery Jesus has in mind, and that point is what is next clarified by the turn of the discussion."

Verse 33

ἀπεκρίθησαν πρὸς αὐτόν· Σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ ἔσμεν καὶ οὐδενὶ δεδουλεύκαμεν πώποτε· πῶς σὺ λέγεις ὅτι Ἐλεύθεροι γενήσεσθε;

σπέρμα, τος n seed, offspring
οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδεν no one, nothing
δεδουλεύκαμεν Verb, perf act indic, 1 pl
δουλωω enslave, make (someone) a
slave

πώποτε adv ever, at any time
ἐλευθερος, α, ον free, free person
γενήσεσθε Verb, fut midd dep indic, 2 pl
γίνομαι

"The true 'seed of Abraham' was reckoned through Isaac 'the son of the free woman', not through Ishmael 'the son of the bondwoman' (cf. Gal. 4:22-31). It is probable that the claim John puts into the mouth of the Jewish objectors is not that they had never been in political subjection (which would have been absurd), but that they had never lost their inward freedom of soul; but this very claim, uttered in human pride over against the representative of God himself, is an instance of the bondage referred to in v.34. Baur ... aptly compares Mark 2:17 where the Jews are confident that they are well and have no need of a physician. Here they are confident that they are free men and have no need of a liberator; cf. also 9:40f." Barrett.
Carson comments, "These 'believers' are already demonstrating their unwillingness to hold to Jesus' teaching (v. 31), for their sense of inherited privilege is so strong that they can neither acknowledge their own need nor recognise the divine Word incarnate before them. Their very words demonstrate their slavery in the categories of the next verse."

Verse 34

Ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν δοῦλός ἐστιν τῆς ἁμαρτίας·

Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν cf. 1:51.

ἁμαρτία, ας f sin
δουλος, ου m slave, servant

"He who actually commits sin demonstrates thereby that he is already a slave of sin; also, by the very sin he commits he makes himself still further a slave." Barrett.

Cf. Rom 6:12, 13, 17.

τῆς ἁμαρτίας is omitted by some Western MSS (D etc); the omission is adopted by various exegetes, but it may be a stylistic improvement (so UBS committee).

Verse 35

ὁ δὲ δοῦλος οὐ μένει ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα· ὁ υἱὸς μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

μενω see v.31

οἰκία, ας f house, household
αἰων, αἰωνος m age, eternity

I.e. 'for ever.'

"The connection of this verse with its context is not immediately apparent. It must be remembered that in verse 33 there began a discussion, which continues to the end of the chapter, of the true descendants of Abraham. This recalls Gen. 21:9; Gal 4:30. The free son, Isaac, remains in the household, while the slave-born son, Ishmael, is driven out. The Jews now claim to be the free sons of Abraham, but in truth they are not, being slaves (not of Abraham but of sin). Hence their status is lost; cf. Mark 12:9; Matt 3:9; 8:11f., and many other passages. Who then is the son, who abides for ever? Not the Christian, it seems, but Christ himself, who in John is regularly υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, while Christians are τέκνα. Jesus is both the true σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ (cf. Gal 3:16) and the Son of God. He abides for ever." Barrett.

Verse 36

ἐὰν οὖν ὁ υἱὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλευθερώσῃ, ὄντως ἐλεύθεροι ἔσεσθε.

ἐλευθερωσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s

ἐλευθεροω see v.33

ὄντως really, certainly, indeed

ἔσεσθε Verb, fut indic, 2 pl εἶμι

The only true freedom is to share in the freedom of Christ – the true Son.

Carson comments, "True freedom is not the liberty to do anything we please, but the liberty to do what we ought; and it is genuine liberty because doing what we ought now pleases us."

Verse 37

οἶδα ὅτι σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ ἐστε· ἀλλὰ ζητεῖτέ με ἀποκτεῖναι, ὅτι ὁ λόγος ὁ ἐμὸς οὐ χωρεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν.

σπέρμα, τος n see v.33

ζητεω seek

ἀποκτεῖναι Verb, aor act infin ἀποκτενω
kill, put to death

χωρεω make room for, accept

Verse 38

ἄ ἐγὼ ἐώρακα παρὰ τῷ πατρὶ λαλῶ· καὶ ὑμεῖς οὖν ἄ ἠκούσατε παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ποιεῖτε.

ὄραω see, observe

Cf. v.44. Their father is the devil. Carson comments, "Jesus' conduct displays his true paternity. Sadly, the same is true of the Jews."

"The statement without personal pronouns (μου after τῷ πατρὶ, ὑμῶν after τοῦ πατρὸς) is commonly felt to be the best attested in the MS tradition, but it is ambiguous. The affirmation may be understood as referring to God the Father in both clauses, and ποιεῖτε be viewed as an imperative (so Moulton, *Grammar of NT Greek* 1:85; *Brown*, 356; *Metzger*, 225); but v 41 seems to demand that ποιεῖτε be viewed as indicative, in which case the pronouns μου and ὑμῶν, though not original, rightly interpret the saying." Beasley-Murray.

Instead of ἠκούσατε many authorities, including P⁶⁶ & D, read ἐωπάκατε. This however appears to be due to the notion that the same term should appear in both clauses.

Verse 39

Ἀπεκρίθησαν καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· Ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ ἐστιν. λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Εἰ τέκνα τοῦ Ἀβραάμ ἐστε, τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Ἀβραάμ ἐποιεῖτε·

τέκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

Cf. Rom 2:28f.; 9:6f., also Matt 3:9 and Jer 9:25-26. True descent from Abraham is marked by character not lineage.

The text as read is a mixed conditional sentence, ἔστε (instead of ἦτε) perhaps giving a stronger sense: 'If you really are Abraham's children, you will be doing the works of Abraham' (so Metzger, 225). Some MSS correct ἔστε to ἦτε, and others (including P⁶⁶ B*) read ποιεῖτε, an imperative, 'If you are children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham'; while this latter reading is quite possible, the conditional sentence perhaps suits the context better.

Verse 40

νῦν δὲ ζητεῖτέ με ἀποκτεῖναι, ἄνθρωπον ὃς τὴν ἀλήθειαν ὑμῖν λελάληκα ἢν ἤκουσα παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ· τοῦτο Ἀβραὰμ οὐκ ἐποίησεν.

ζητεω see v.37.

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

λελάληκα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s λαλεω
speak, talk

τοῦτο Ἀβραὰμ οὐκ ἐποίησεν Their conduct "is totally opposed to everything known about Abraham, whose life was marked by faith in and obedience to God's word (cf. Gen 12:1-4; 22:15-18)." Beasley-Murray.

Verse 41

ὁμοίως ποιεῖτε τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν. εἶπαν αὐτῷ· Ἡμεῖς ἐκ πορνείας οὐ γεγενήμεθα· ἕνα πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν θεόν.

πορνεια, ας f sexual immorality

Carson comments, "It is not at all impossible that the Jews are alluding to the irregularities connected with Jesus' birth. From their perspective, he displays considerable cheek to talk about paternity: *they* were not born of fornication (wink, wink). If this is a correct reading, then it is a further instance of Johannine irony, irony which extends beyond the virginal conception of Christ (cf. notes on 6:42) to the question of his ultimate origin in the Father (1:1-18; 3:17)."

Beasley-Murray, however, argues, "Their language echoes that of Hosea, who had likened Israel's idolatry to spiritual harlotry and described the individual Israelites as 'children of fornication' (τέκνα πορνείας) [Hosea 1:2]. These Jews dissociate themselves from that judgment." He considers that "The context and OT background ... sufficiently account for the language."

γεγενήμεθα Verb, perf pass indic, 1 pl

γενναω be father of, give birth to; pass
be born

εἷς, μια, ἓν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

The Jews' claim that *they* have God as their Father is another touch of Johannine irony: it is Jesus who was born of God and is the Son of God.

Verse 42

εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Εἰ ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ ὑμῶν ἦν ἠγαπᾶτε ἂν ἐμέ, ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξῆλθον καὶ ἦκω· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ ἐλήλυθα, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνός με ἀπέστειλεν.

ἀγαπαω love, show love for

ἂν particle indicating contingency

"ἐξῆλθον denotes the departure of Jesus ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἦκω his arrival in the world." Barrett.

ἦκω come, have come

"Knowing with absolute certainty that he himself has come from God and has been sent by him (this recurring emphasis on Jesus' functional subordination harks back to 5:19ff.), Jesus can only conclude that if the Jews do not enthusiastically embrace him and love him, it must be because they themselves do not know the Father (cf. 1 Jn 5:1)." Carson.

ἐλήλυθα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s ἐρχομαι
ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that [one],
he

ἀπέστειλεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

ἀποστελλω send

"Once more the mission of Jesus is emptied of every suggestion of self-will or self-seeking. This is a very common and essential Johannine emphasis; see especially 5:19-30 and the notes. Jesus did not come into the world of his own accord; he came because he was sent." Barrett.

Verse 43

διὰ τί τὴν λαλίαν τὴν ἐμὴν οὐ γινώσκετε; ὅτι οὐ δύνασθε ἀκούειν τὸν λόγον τὸν ἐμόν.

λαλια, ας f what is said

ἐμος, η, ον 1st pers possessive adj my, mine
δυναμαι can, be able to

Barrett says that the meanings of the two words λαλια and λογος must here be distinguished if this verse is to make sense. "λαλια is audible speech, the spoken word ...; the Jews fail to understand the sayings they hear... This is because they cannot grasp and obey (for this use of ἀκουειν see on 5:24) Jesus' message, the divine Word which he bears (and indeed is)."

Verse 44

ὕμεις ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστὲ καὶ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν θέλετε ποιεῖν. ἐκεῖνος ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ οὐκ ἔστηκεν, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλήθεια ἐν αὐτῷ. ὅταν λαλῇ τὸ ψεῦδος, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων λαλεῖ, ὅτι ψεύστης ἐστὶν καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ.

διαβολος, ου m the devil

Cf. 1 Jn 3:8.

ἐπιθυμία, ας f desire, longing, lust

θελω wish, will

ἀνθρωποκτονος, ου m murderer

ἀρχη, ης f beginning

Because he robbed Adam of immortality. The devil brought death into the world but Jesus brings life (cf. Rom 5:12). These Jews, however, will not embrace Jesus. Hence they show which side they are on.

ἀληθεια, ας f see v.40.

ἔστηκεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s στήκω stand

οὐκ ἔστηκεν, read by P⁶⁶ & B* c D etc, is the imperfect of στήκω, lit. 'was not standing,' describing a perpetual condition. οὐκ ἔστηκεν, read by P⁷⁵ B³ K P etc, is the perfect of ἵστημι with a present meaning, 'does not stand.' Beasley-Murray comments, "The former is not to be interpreted as referring to a fall of Satan, which would be more fitly expressed through an aorist; such a thought lies outside the scope of the saying."

ὅταν when, whenever, as often as

λαλεω see v.40

ψευδος, ους n lie, untruth

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

He acts in character.

λαλεω speak, talk

ψευστης, ου m liar

"The construction is very harsh but it seems that there is no acceptable alternative to the rendering 'he is a liar and the father of it [that is, of the lie, or falsehood]!'." Barrett.

Verse 45

ἐγὼ δὲ ὅτι τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγω, οὐ πιστεύετε μοι.

They cannot believe Jesus because he speaks the truth and they, like their father the devil, are lovers of lies.

Carson comments, "This explains unbelief.

What is *not* explained in this verse is belief. If even the genuine disciples were once members of the fallen and rebellious world, until 'chosen out of the world' by Jesus (15:19), how did *they* come to believe the truth at a time in their lives when the truth itself would have evoked unbelief? The passage does not say; the answer has in fact been provided in John 6, and will be repeated in 8:47. What was necessary was that the Father draw them (6:44), that they can be given to the Son (6:37), that they be taught by God (6:45) and chosen by Jesus (6:70). The need for the strong divine initiative emphasised in John 6 is powerfully explained in John 8. From an evangelistic point of view, this combination of themes strips away any ground of boasting or arrogance from those who do believe, while it challenges and threatens unbelievers at the very core of their being, insistently demanding that they reconsider the direction and entire array of values that have stamped their life to this point."

Verse 46

τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐλέγχει με περὶ ἁμαρτίας; εἰ ἀλήθειαν λέγω, διὰ τί ὑμεῖς οὐ πιστεύετε μοι;

ἐλεγχω show (someone his) fault, prove guilty, condemn

For ἐλεγχειν περὶ cf. 16:8. For the question Jesus asks, cf. 18:23.

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

"His life and his teaching are one – he embodies in life the truth he proclaims from God." Beasley-Murray.

Verse 47

ὁ ὢν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ ῥήματα τοῦ θεοῦ ἀκούει· διὰ τοῦτο ὑμεῖς οὐκ ἀκούετε ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἐστέ.

ῥημα, ατος n word, thing, matter

"Only he who is from God (cf. v.42) hears the words of God. The Jews do not hear the word of Jesus (v.43) because they are not from God but from the devil." Barrett.

Beasley-Murray comments, "They who surrender themselves to the father of lies render themselves insensible to the truth, and so manifest their real paternity (cf. 1 John 4:5–6)."

Verse 48

Ἀπεκρίθησαν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· Οὐ καλῶς λέγομεν ἡμεῖς ὅτι Σαμαρίτης εἶ σὺ καὶ δαιμόνιον ἔχεις;

Σαμαρίτης, ου m Samaritan

"The charge that Jesus is a Samaritan is unique to this passage, and its precise significance uncertain... It is clear that the charges of being a Samaritan and of being possessed were linked, and were prompted by the denials of Jesus that these Jews were children of Abraham and of God as well as his own claim to being the One Sent by God." Beasley-Murray.

δαιμονιον, ου n demon, evil spirit

In John, the charge seems to mean little more than madness (cf. Jn 7:20; 8:48,52; 10:20).

Verse 49

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

τιμαω honour, regard, reverence
ἀτιμαζω treat shamefully, dishonour

Verse 50

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

ζητεω see v.37

δοξα, ης f glory; praise, honour
κρινω judge

The father seeks the glory of Christ and judges those who do not give proper honour to him. Beasley-Murray comments, "Jesus depicts a court scene in which he and his adversaries appear before God; since God even now 'honours' him, he will certainly vindicate the truth of his testimony and condemn his accusers for rejecting it. The picture receives a universal setting in 16:9–11, after the world has given its judgment upon Jesus through the cross and he has ascended to the Father."

Verse 51

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

ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν cf. 1:51.

ἐάν if

τις, τί acc τινά, τί gen τινός dat τινί enclitic pronoun and adj anyone, anything
ἐμος, η, ου 1st pers possessive adj my, mine
τηρεω keep, observe, maintain

τις τὸν ἐμὸν λόγον τηρήσῃ cf. v. 31.

θανατος, ου m death

θεωρήσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s θεωρεω
see

I.e. experience (see v.52).

αἶων, αἰωνος m age, eternity

"Those who keep Jesus' word (14:23f.; 17:6) will escape judgement because they have already passed from death to life." Barrett. Beasley-Murray comments, "The assurance relates to life which physical death cannot extinguish, and so to the death of the spirit; the believer receives eternal life, i.e., the life of the kingdom of God, over which death has no power and which is destined for resurrection. The thought is exactly that of 11:26 and is otherwise expressed in 5:24; 6:47, and assumed in 6:63, 68."

Verse 52

εἶπον 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·

εἶπον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl λεγω

Beasley-Murray writes, "νῦν here has the force of 'now really'; so Bauer, *Lexicon* (2nd ed), 545–46, section 2."

ἐγνώκαμεν Verb, perf act indic, 1 pl

γινωσκω

ἀπέθανεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s ἀποθνησκω
die, face death

γεύσῃται Verb, aor midd dep subj, 3 s

γευομαι taste, experience

θανατος, ου m death

Verse 53

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

μείζων, ον and μείζοτερος, α, ον (comp of μεγας) greater

πατρὸς ἡμῶν is omitted in some Western MSS (D etc), perhaps through a feeling that the statement clashes with v 44.

"The craziness of the saying is emphasized by the Jews in adducing the holiest of their forefathers, Abraham, and all who have spoken in God's name, as men who yet experienced death like the rest of humankind. Whom then is Jesus making himself?" Beasley Murray.

The phrase μή σὺ μείζων εἶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ is another example of Johannine irony. The form of the question expects a negative answer. Beasley-Murray comments, "With the question, 'You aren't greater than our father Abraham and the prophets, are you?' (cf. 4:12), the Evangelist expects his readers to answer in both cases, 'Yes, of course!'"

ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅτι who, which
σεαυτου, ης reflexive pronoun yourself

τίνα σεαυτὸν ποιεῖς; is not 'Who do you think you are?' (so NIV), but rather, 'Whom do you make yourself out to be?' Barrett comments, "Once more the Jews simply invert the truth. Jesus does not make himself someone; rather he empties himself of all personal dignity and emphasises his obedience to and dependence upon God (vv. 28, 38, 42, 50), that God may be all."

Verse 54

ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· Ἐὰν ἐγὼ δοξάσω ἐμαυτὸν, ἡ δόξα μου οὐδέν ἐστιν· ἔστιν ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ δοξάζων με, ὃν ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι θεὸς ἡμῶν ἐστιν,

δοξάζω praise, honour, glorify, exalt

δοξα, ης f see v.50

οὐδεις, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing

Cf. 5:23; 8:50; 17:1, 4f.

ἡμῶν is direct discourse, ὑμῶν indirect; the former is more likely to be original (Metzger).

Carson comments, "From Jesus' perspective, the irony is that his opponents claim God as their own, but they display no knowledge of this God's profound commitment to glorify his unique Son (cf. 5:37ff.). The nature of that glorification (cf. notes on 1:14), of course, is not in the public display some might have appreciated, but in the ignominy of the cross and consequent return to the glory the Son enjoyed with the Father before the world began (17:5)."

Verse 55

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

ἐγνώκατε Verb, perf act indic, 2 pl γινωσκω

κἂν (καὶ ἐὰν) even if, and if, even

εἶπω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s λεγω

ἔσομαι Verb, fut indic, 1 s ειμι

ὅμοιος, α, ον like, of the same kind as

ψευστης, ου m liar

τηρεω see v.51

Knowledge of God and obedience go hand in hand – a particular theme of the Johannine literature.

Verse 56

Ἀβραάμ ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ἠγαλλίασατο ἵνα ἴδῃ τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἐμήν, καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐχάρη.

ἠγαλλίασατο Verb, aor mid dep indic, 3 s
ἀγαλλιαω be extremely joyful or glad

ἠγαλλίασατο ἵνα is rendered by Blass-Debrunner (§ 392, 1a): 'He longed with desire, rejoiced that he was to see,' and is so adopted by most recent scholars and in most recent translations. Others view the ἵνα as explaining the ground of the joy: 'he rejoiced in that he saw,' or 'he rejoiced to see' (so Bauer, 131; Hoskyns, 347; Barrett, 351, who cites the modern Gr. χαίρομαι να σε θεωρῶ, 'I'm glad to see you'). Turner's view is similar, regarding it as an instance of the causal use of ἵνα: 'rejoiced because he saw' (Moulton, *Grammar* 3:102).

ἴδῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ὁραω see,
observe, perceive, recognise

εἶδεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ὁραω

ἐχάρη Verb, aor pass dep indic, 3 s χαρω
rejoice, be glad

There are three main interpretations of this verse:

- i) Abraham had some vision or foresight of what God was to do through the Messiah. This receives some support from Rabbinic literature.
- ii) Abraham saw Christ's day after his death when he was in Paradise – so Lindars, Sanders. Sanders says that this does justice to the two halves of the statement which are not then mere repetition.
- iii) 'my day' is the day of fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham, i.e. the birth of Isaac.

Of these, the first alternative is preferable.

Through the promises – and perhaps especially the experience of being commanded to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham saw beyond the present fulfilment to some greater fulfilment to come (so particularly Bruce).

Carson looks at several possible references to such rejoicing by Abraham and comments, "That Abraham 'rejoiced' is taken by some to refer to his laughter at the prospect of a son (Gn 17:17, interpreted as joy, not scorn, as in Philo, *Mut.* 154-169). Certainly there was a Jewish tradition, based partly on Genesis 17:17 and partly on Genesis 21:6, and reflected in Targum Onkelos (an Aramaic paraphrase), *Jubilees* 16:16-29 and elsewhere, that Abraham rejoiced greatly at the birth of his son Isaac. If this birth is understood as the onset of the promise that through Abraham all nations of the earth would be blessed, then Abraham's laughter/joy is connected with his perception that the promised blessings still to come were in process of realisation in the birth of his son."

Verse 57

εἶπον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι πρὸς αὐτόν· Πεντήκοντα ἔτη οὐπω ἔχεις καὶ Ἀβραάμ ἑώρακας;

The Jews would not have been surprised by the thought of Abraham seeing the day of the Messiah, but they *were* offended at Jesus' linking of that day with himself – 'my day'. Carson comments, "A claim like that of v. 56, if valid, would mean the overthrow of all the points they had been arguing. It was easier to interpret Jesus' words rather crassly, as if Jesus claimed to be Abraham's natural contemporary. Then it could be handily dismissed."

πεντήκοντα fifty

ἔτη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔτος, ους n year
οὐπω not yet

'Fifty' is probably intended as a round number: it does not imply that Jesus was 'middle aged'. Beasley-Murray comments, "It simply indicates the common view of the end of a man's working life (see Num 4:2-3, 39; 8:24-25); Jesus has not yet reached seniority, and he claims to have seen Abraham!"

ἑώρακας Verb, perf act indic, 2 s ὄραω see

A few MSS (including P⁷⁵ &*) read ἑωρακέν σε instead of ἑώρακας: 'has Abraham seen you?' It is generally agreed that this represents an attempt to make the sentence more completely match the previous one: 'Abraham rejoiced to see ... and he saw ...'. The MSS attestation of the usual reading is far superior.

Verse 58

εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Ἰησοῦς· Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, πρὶν Ἀβραάμ γενέσθαι ἐγὼ εἰμί.

πρὶν and πρὶν ἢ before

Note the contrast here between the use of γενέσθαι for Abraham and εἰμί for Jesus. Beasley-Murray comments that, "The form is reminiscent of Ps 90:2 (LXX 89:2): Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting σου εἶ *You are!*" On the absolute use of ἐγὼ εἰμί see v.24. "Before Abraham came into being, I eternally was, as now I am, and ever continue to be." Barrett. Beasley-Murray, however, comments, "The intention of the saying, however, is primarily what Jesus means for salvation, rather than of his being. Schnackenburg rightly points out that in Exod 3:14 Yahweh reveals not his metaphysical nature, but his steadfastness and faithfulness and his promise to help his people. The same is even more apparent in the 'I am he' sayings of DeuteroIsaiah (see especially 43:11-13; 46:4; 48:12). In this context the assertion 'Before Abraham was, I am,' forms the basis of the promise of salvation to God's people. This is why Jesus can give the true freedom (v 31) and the life that overcomes death (v 51)."

Verse 59

ἤραν οὖν λίθους ἵνα βάλωσιν ἐπ' αὐτόν· Ἰησοῦς δὲ ἐκρύβη καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ.

"That the Jews take up stones to kill him presupposes that they understand these words as some kind of blasphemous claim to deity." Carson.

αἶρω take, take up

λίθος, ου m stone

βάλωσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl βαλλω
throw

ἐκρύβη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s κρυπτο
hide, conceal

The best attested text ends the sentence with ἱεροῦ. Some MSS, however, add διελθὼν διὰ μέσου αὐτῶν (taken from Luke 4:30), and yet others give a further addition, καὶ παρήγεν οὕτως, so anticipating 9:1. There is no warrant for these additions.

Barrett thinks that John intends a supernatural disappearance.