

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
IHOP BIBLE STUDY  
October 2003 (Washington D.C.)

**Topic: John 8:42 to 8: 59 “Not see death” or “Jesus as the word.”**

NOTE: This is our third major section of the Summary Chart of John's Gospel. This chart is available elsewhere on our website. The overview of these seven sessions is to define the Work of God. This definition has two parts: “To do the work of God,” and the “Validity of Jesus' Teachings.” Today's session is the second study in this section. It is one of four studies in this section.

I. Read the assignment in one reading.

The audience is the Pharisees.

While this is a short reading, it is a powerful testimony to Jesus' understanding of the meaning of *Christos*; *Jesus embodied The Logos*. Today's exercise embraces two items. The first is that Jesus presents his argument that he is The Christ. The second is Jesus defines his relationship to God.

Jesus' relationship to God

As in previous segments of this study of John's gospel, it is important to say that God is not an object to be studied. Rather, God is a relationship. This makes the key verse 8:47, “He who belongs to God hears what God says.” Jesus' experience of his relationship to God is supported in vs. 8:42, “If God were your Father, you would love me.”

When God is understood as an *object* it is possible to make the erroneous assumption that Jesus is speaking literally. When it is understood that God is a *relationship*, then Jesus is speaking metaphorically: God is like my father. In this way, Jesus reveals more about his experience with God and less about the nature of God. Remember, a Jew never identifies G-O-D in any fashion. To do so is idolatry and breaks the first of the 10 Commandments.

Jesus relationship to The Logos

For me, this is the most surprising part of our study. Jesus validates who he is. Thinking off the top of my head, this may be the only place in the Gospels where this revelation takes place. This is phenomenal!

Look at the following verses:

8:51 – “I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my **word**, he will never see death;”

8:53 – “. . . yet you say that if any one keeps your **word**;”

8:55 – “. . .his **word**.”

While writing this study (in Maryland), I do not have the reference of a a Greek Lexicon or a Concordance, but usually **word** is translated as **logos**. This idea is supported in vss 8:58, “I tell you the truth,’ Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” Obviously, this is the same reference made in John 1: 1, 2. **Jesus experienced himself as The Word!**

When God's nature is The Perfect Atonement, then The Word embodied by Jesus is Perfect At-One-Ment. This is implied in Jesus' question in 8: 46, “Can any of you prove me guilty of **sin**?” Again, it is important to remind ourselves that sin is not a

moral category. Rather, sin is anything we do to **separate ourselves from neighbor, self and from Perfect At-One-Ment**. Separation is the antithesis of At-One-Ment. In this way, separation is sin. Jesus supports this description. When Jesus says, “He who belongs to God hears what God says in 8:47, “The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”

Further, Jesus supports this experience in 8: 51b, “I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my **word** he (or she) will never see death.” Why is this true? It is true because those who live in the **word do not live in this world of death**. They live in the world with Perfect At-One-Ment! Perfect At-One-Ment is eternal, and thus can be associated with the term G-O-D.

In this way, Jesus is the first born of many brothers and sisters. It is a privilege to live among them. Those who do, they have an obligation to awaken others to this privilege. This is supported in 8:47b, “The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.” Those awakened to this knowledge can rest until all the world is likewise awakened.

When this interpretation is applied, we can see why the Pharisees thought Jesus was “demon possessed.” (8:48.) Those who gain clarity of the truth that humans live in two worlds often are understood as *possessed*. In a way they are, but not by demons. They are *possessed* by the experience of the truth. (8:49 – 51: God possessed.)

II. Your assignment is to discuss the following:

A. In light of the study above, what does Jesus mean when he says, “Why is my language not clear to you? (8:43.)

B. What is the experience Jesus points to in the statement in 8: 44, “You belong to Your father, the devil.” (Please recall that the “devil” is always a liar, and wants us to believe an illusion.) How does this fit into the conversation above?

C. What is the experience of not hearing referred to in 8: 47b, “The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God” (The Perfect At-One-Ment).