

THE GOD OF THE LIVING

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The Jews of Jesus' day rejected God as their Father and Jesus as his Son as Jesus told them, "Because my word hath no place in you" (John 8:37). They wanted to claim Abraham as their father, but Jesus reasoned with them, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham" (v. 39). The Master Teacher pinpointed the reason they were having such difficulty: "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (v. 47). In the discussion that followed, Jesus offered them eternal life from the living God: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by" (vv. 51-59).

Jesus affirmed identity here with the Great "I Am." The present tense used in this construction placed emphasis on the fact of the eternity of God. The Jews, while objecting to Jesus, understood his claim of deity, for they gathered stones to stone him.

The statement of Jesus to his friend Martha while showing the bright hope of trusting in the living God for life beyond the grave also shows the serious consequences of rejecting the Lord and his word. John recorded, "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25-26).

The teaching that God is the God of the living is never presented in clearer fashion than when Jesus said, "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the

God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him” (Luke 20:37-38).

The ones who live with God forevermore are those who come to him through Jesus Christ, for only through Christ and his word is eternal life made available. The apostle John wrote Jesus’ words to the apostle Thomas: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. . . . Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me” (John 14:6, 19-24).