

John 8:51

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

Analysis

This promise—'if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death'—doesn't deny physical death but promises eternal life. 'Keep my saying' means obey and treasure Christ's words. 'Never see death' uses emphatic double negative in Greek ('ou me'), guaranteeing immunity from spiritual death. This outrages Jews who cite Abraham and prophets who died, missing Christ's point: He speaks of eternal life.

Historical Context

The Jews' response (v. 52) shows they interpreted this physically, not spiritually. Their question 'whom makest thou thyself?' (v. 53) reveals the real issue: Jesus claims authority above Abraham, which requires deity.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's promise of never seeing death change your perspective on physical death?
2. What does it mean to 'keep' Christ's sayings in daily life?

Interlinear Text

ἀμὴν	ἀμὴν	λέγω	ὑμῖν	ἐάν	τις	τὸν	λόγον	τὸν	ἐμὸν
Verily	Verily	I say	unto you	If	a man	G3588	saying	G3588	my
G281	G281	G3004	G5213	G1437	G5100		G3056		G1699
τηρήσῃ	θάνατον	οὐ	μὴ	θεωρήσῃ	εἰς	τὸν	αἰῶνα		
keep	death	G3756	G3361	he shall	G1519	G3588	G165		
G5083	G2288			G2334					

Additional Cross-References

John 5:24 (Parallel theme): Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

John 15:20 (Parallel theme): Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep your's also.

John 6:50 (Parallel theme): This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

Luke 2:26 (Parallel theme): And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Hebrews 11:5 (Parallel theme): By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Psalms 89:48 (Parallel theme): What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.

John 8:55 (Parallel theme): 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.

John 8:12 (Parallel theme): Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

