

John 8:54

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

Analysis

Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing—Jesus reiterates the principle from verse 50. Self-generated honor (ἐὰν ἐγὼ δοξάσω ἑμαυτόν/ean egō doxasō emauton) is worthless (οὐδέν/ouden), literally "nothing." True glory must have objective reality, not subjective self-assessment. If Jesus merely promoted Himself without divine authority, His claims would be megalomania.

It is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God—the Father glorifies (δοξάζων/doxazōn) the Son, validating His claims. The present participle indicates ongoing action: the Father continually glorifies the Son through mighty works, resurrection, ascension, cosmic authority (Philippians 2:9-11). This divine authentication distinguishes Jesus from false messiahs.

The devastating addition—"of whom ye say, that he is your God" (ὃν ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι Θεὸς ὑμῶν ἐστίν/hon hymeis legete hoti Theos hymōn estin)—exposes their hypocrisy. They claim God as "your God" yet reject the one God sent and glorifies. They profess loyalty to the Father while dishonoring the Son—a logical and spiritual impossibility (5:23). Claiming God as Father while rejecting His Son proves their claim false. Jesus will make this explicit in verse 55: "Yet ye have not known him."

This verse establishes Jesus's dependence on the Father (characteristic of John's

Gospel: 5:19, 30; 6:38; 14:10) while simultaneously establishing His unique relationship—the Father glorifies this Son as He glorifies no other.

Historical Context

The Jewish Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)—"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD"—was recited twice daily, affirming monotheism and covenant relationship. "The LORD our God" expressed Israel's unique relationship with Yahweh, distinguishing them from polytheistic nations.

Jesus's claim that this God—"your God"—glorifies Him raised the Christological question to crisis level. Either Jesus blasphemed (claiming divine status, making God His accomplice), or He told truth (He is God's Son, deserving the Father's glory). No middle ground exists.

Early church controversies (Arian, Nestorian, etc.) wrestled with this dynamic: how can Jesus be subordinate to the Father ("I can do nothing of myself," 5:30) yet fully divine ("I and my Father are one," 10:30)? Orthodox Christology affirmed both—Jesus voluntarily submitted in His mediatorial role while retaining full deity. The Father's glorifying the Son doesn't create the Son's glory but reveals and manifests it.

For John's audience—facing expulsion from synagogues for confessing Christ—this verse anchored assurance. Though rejected by religious authorities who claimed to worship the true God, believers stood on firmer ground: the Father Himself honored Jesus. Human rejection couldn't nullify divine validation.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's dependence on the Father's glory (rather than self-promotion) model humility for Christian ministry and leadership?
2. What does it reveal about our heart when we claim to love God but reject or neglect Jesus, His Son?
3. How does the Father's glorifying the Son throughout redemptive history strengthen our confidence in Christ's person and work?

Interlinear Text

ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς Ἐὰν ἐγὼ δοξάζων ἑμαυτόν ἢ δόξα
answered **Jesus** **If** **I** **honour** **myself** ^{G3588} **honour**
G611 G2424 G1437 G1473 G1392 G1683 G1391

μου οὐδέν ἐστιν ἐστιν ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ δοξάζων με
my **nothing** **he is** **he is** ^{G3588} **Father** **my** ^{G3588} **honour** **me**
G3450 G3762 G2076 G2076 G3962 G3450 G1392 G3165

ὃν ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι θεὸς ὑμῶν ἐστιν
of whom **ye** **say** **that** **God** **your** **he is**
G3739 G5210 G3004 G3754 G2316 G5216 G2076

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 25:27 (Parallel theme): It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory.

John 8:50 (Parallel theme): And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

2 Peter 1:17 (References God): For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

2 Corinthians 10:18 (Parallel theme): For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

Acts 3:13 (References Jesus): The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

John 17:1 (References Jesus): These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

John 8:41 (References God): Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

John 7:18 (Parallel theme): He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

John 17:5 (Parallel theme): And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

John 7:39 (References Jesus): (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)