

## GOD THE SON IS "I AM"

### I. [John 8:31-59](#)

A. Prior to the encounter in today's text, Jesus faced off with Jewish leaders who were divided as to *Who He was*. Many did not believe He was even a legitimate prophet from God, let alone the Messiah and the very Son of God. Earlier they'd brought a woman to Jesus who'd been caught in the act of adultery, hoping for Jesus to condemn her. Later Jesus makes another "I Am" claim: "*I am the Light of the world.*" The Pharisees have great difficulty with Jesus' candor and wisdom as He confronts them, confounds them, and ultimately condemns them. They're borderline apoplectic and are they're looking for a chance to kill the Christ.

B. [John 8:31-59](#) (ESV) takes us right into the middle of the conflict...

1) **V31-32: 31** So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (These appear to be alleged believers vs genuine believers. Their words and deeds betrayed their professions. They're fake believers.)

2) **V33-36: 33** They answered Him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that You say, 'You will become free?'" **34** Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. **35** The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. **36** So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (These self-righteous posers didn't see themselves as slaves to sin. 'Set us free from what?!' Their faith is in their Jewish lineage, parentage, and works, not in the One who can truly emancipate them.)

3) **V37-40: 37** I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill Me because My word finds no place in you. **38** I speak of what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have heard from your father." (Who's your daddy?!) **39** They answered Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, **40** but now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. (What were the works that Abraham did? "He believed God and it was reckoned to Him as righteousness." He trusted God and obeyed Him! These Pharisees do not and will not! What about you?!)

4) **V41: 41** You are doing the works your father did." They said to Him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father--even God." (Sounds like a slanderous dig, a sneer, suggesting that Jesus' birth was illegitimate.)

5) **V42-43: 42** Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of My own accord, but He sent Me. **43** Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear My word.

6) Perhaps the most stunning scene in all the Star Wars movies, was when Darth Vader has Luke Skywalker pinned under his lightsaber and says, to him, "Luke, I'm your father!" No one saw that coming! But remember that was a science fiction movie. The next revelation is even more illuminating because it actually happened. Listen to what Jesus reveals regarding the parentage of the most religious men on the planet:

7) **V44-51: 44** You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. (Happy Father's Day!) He was a murderer from the beginning, (Inspired Cain to kill Abel) and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (Eve bought his lies and Adam likewise!) **45** But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. **46** Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? **47** Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God." **48** The Jews answered Him, "Are we not right in saying that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" (i.e. 'You're a spiritual halfbreed and an evil spirit!') **49** Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. **50** Yet I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks it, and He is the judge. **51** Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word, he will never see death." (The first step in keeping God's Word is to believe it!)

8) **V52: 52** The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, 'if anyone keeps My word, he will never taste death.'" (Once confronting Sadducees, Jesus affirmed God as the Father of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of the living not of the dead.)

9) **V53-58: 53** Are You greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do You make Yourself out to be?" **54** Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing. It is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.' **55** But you have not known Him. I know Him. If I were to say that I do not know Him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know Him and I keep His word. **56** Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see My day. He saw it and was glad." **57** So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" **58** Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." (This is Jesus' most profound claim to Divinity. Notice Jesus doesn't say, 'Before Abraham was, I was.' Jesus' God-claim fills them with rage!)

10) **V59: 59** So they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple. (Because His time had not yet come.)

**C. The past few weeks we've been looking at Jesus' claims to Deity. Just like the Pharisees had to contend with His claims, you have to contend with His claims as well. Here's some truths to ponder as you go through the days ahead...**

**1) Any man can sire a child but not everyone can be a good father. In this text, Jesus calls Satan a murderer and the *father of lies*. Elsewhere Satan's called the accuser, one who appears as an angel of light in order to deceive, a thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy. We were born under the parental custody of the ultimate child-abuser but God the Father sent His only Son in order to take custody of us. Our freedom and adoption were purchased by God the Son--Jesus Christ!**

**2) Anytime you're being instructed or influenced to disbelieve or disregard the Word of God, that is the voice of the *father of lies*. You may hear his voice in a brothel or a bar, at work or in a locker room, but sadly you may hear it in a church.**

**3) Had Jesus not been God when He said, "*Before Abraham was, I Am*" then the charge of blasphemy and verdict of stoning would've been justified under the Law. But instead of a guilty man dying of stoning, an Innocent Man would take our guilt and shame upon Him and die on a cross--The Righteous One for the unrighteous, God the Son for sinful man, Divinity the sacrifice for humanity.**

**4) Either Jesus wasn't who He thought He was; wasn't who He said He was; or He was absolutely Who He said He was. Either a good man, who wasn't who he thought he was, died on a cross; or a man, who wasn't who he said he was, died on a cross; or a Man, who was precisely Who He said He was, died on the cross. Did this One called Jesus die out of lunacy, die for a concocted hoax, or die for you? The ramifications of your choices are eternal.**

**D. Colossians 1:15-23 (ESV) who God the Son truly is: 15 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent. 19 For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. (Just so you know, that's Who died for you...)***

**\* Close with Prayer...**

### **Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff**

#### **John 8:31-59 (ESV)**

**31** So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." **33** They answered Him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that You say, 'You will become free'?" **34** Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. **35** The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. **36** So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. **37** I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill Me because My word finds no place in you. **38** I speak of what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have heard from your father." **39** They answered Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, **40** but now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. **41** You are doing the works your father did." They said to Him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father--even God." **42** Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of My own accord, but He sent Me. **43** Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear My word. **44** You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. **45** But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. **46** Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? **47** Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God." **48** The Jews answered Him, "Are we not right in saying that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" **49** Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. **50** Yet I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks it, and He is the judge. **51** Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word, he will never see death." **52** The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste death.' **53** Are You greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do You make Yourself out to be?" **54** Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing. It is My Father who glorifies

Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.' **55** But you have not known Him. I know Him. If I were to say that I do not know Him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know Him and I keep His word. **56** Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see My day. He saw it and was glad." **57** So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" **58** Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." **59** So they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

### Colossians 1:15-23 (ESV)

**15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. **16** For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through Him and for Him. **17** And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. **18** And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent. **19** For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, **20** and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross. **21** And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, **22** He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him, **23** if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

### Film Clips & Other Links

"God Is" - John Piper (Sermon Jam)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wpo6CdsBFLE>

"He Is" The Names of God - Eric Ludy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NschCa395-M>

The Ten Commandments Movie - Burning Bush Scene

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0Mg-eZqEdI>

Star Wars Episode V - "Luke I Am Your Father" Scene

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgDPi5WvC8M>

"The Home Game" - Musical Trailer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kJrZOSiQC4>

### Bonus Stuff

#### Exodus 3:13-15 (ESV)

**13** Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" **14** God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" **15** God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The LORD the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

#### Luke 20:27-40 (ESV)

**27** There came to Him some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection, **28** and they asked Him a question, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife but no children, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. **29** Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and died without children. **30** And the second **31** and the third took her, and likewise all seven left no children and died. **32** Afterward the woman also died. **33** In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had her as wife." **34** And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, **35** but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, **36** for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. **37** But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. **38** Now He is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to Him." **39** Then some of the scribes answered, "Teacher, you have spoken well." **40** For they no longer dared to ask Him any question.

### **Theological Note on Exodus 3:14**

The ESV Study Bible

*13 Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" - Exodus 3:13-14 (ESV)*

**3:14 I AM WHO I AM.** In response to Moses' question ("What is [Your] name?" v.13), God reveals His name to be "Yahweh" (corresponding to the four Hebrew consonants *YHWH*). Three occurrences of "I AM" in v.14 all represent forms of the Hebrew verb that means "to be" (Hb. *hayah*), and in each case are related to the divine name Yahweh (i.e. "the LORD"; see note on v.15). The divine name Yahweh has suggested to scholars a range of likely nuances of meaning: (1) that God is self-existent and therefore not dependent on anything else for His own existence; (2) that God is the creator and sustainer of all that exists; (3) that God is immutable in His being and character and thus is not in the process of becoming something different from what He is (e.g. "the same yesterday and today and forever," Heb. 13:8); and (4) that God is eternal in His existence. While each of these points is true of God, the main focus in this passage is on the Lord's promise to be with Moses and His people. The word translated "I am" (Hb. *'ehyeh*) can also be understood and translated as "I will be" (cf. ESV footnote). Given the context of Ex. 3:12 ("I will be with you"), the name of Yahweh ("the LORD") is also a clear reminder of God's promises to His people and of His help for them to fulfill their calling. In each of these cases, the personal name of God as revealed to Moses expresses something essential about the attributes and character of God.

- Theological Note on Exodus 3:14, *The ESV Study Bible*, Crossway, p. 149.

### **Theological Note of John 8:58**

The Life Application Study Bible

*"Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I AM!" - John 8:58 (NLT)*

**8:58:** This is one of the most powerful statements uttered by Jesus. When He said that He existed before Abraham was born, He undeniably proclaimed His divinity. Not only did Jesus say that He existed before Abraham; He also applied God's holy name (*I AM* -Exodus 3:14) to Himself. This claim demands a response. It cannot be ignored. The Jewish leaders tried to stone Jesus for blasphemy because He claimed equality with God. But Jesus *is* God. How have you responded to Jesus, the Son of God?

- Theological note on John 8:58, *The Life Application Study Bible*, Tyndale, p. 2310.

### **The Deity of Christ**

The Reformation Study Bible

Faith in the deity of Christ is necessary to being a Christian. It is an essential part of the New Testament gospel of Christ. Yet in every century the church has been forced to deal with people who claim to be Christians while denying or distorting the deity of Christ.

At the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, the church, in opposition to the Arian heresy, declared that Jesus is begotten, not made and that His divine nature is of the same essence (*homoousios*) with the Father. This affirmation declared that the second person of the Trinity is one in essence with God the Father. That is, the "being" of Christ is the being of God. He is not merely similar to Deity, but He *is* Deity.

The confession of the deity of Christ is drawn from the manifold witness of the New Testament. As the Logos incarnate, Christ is revealed as being not only preexistent to creation, but eternal. He is said to be in the beginning *with* God and also that He *is* God (John 1:1-3). That He is *with* God demands a personal distinction within the Godhead. That He *is* God demands inclusion in the Godhead.

Elsewhere, the New Testament ascribes terms and titles to Jesus that are clearly titles of deity. God bestows the preeminent divine title of *Lord* upon Him (Philippians 2:9-11). As the Son of Man, Jesus claims to be Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) and to have authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:1-12). He is called the "*Lord* of glory" (James 2:1) and willingly receives worship, as when Thomas confesses, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).

Paul declares that that the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily (Colossians 1:19) and that Jesus is higher than angels, a theme reiterated in the book of Hebrews. To worship an angel or any other creature, no matter how exalted, is to violate the biblical prohibition against idolatry. The *I ams* of John's gospel also bear witness to the identification of Christ with Deity.

In the fifth century, the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) affirmed that Jesus was truly man and truly God. Jesus' two natures, human and divine, were said to be without mixture, confusion, separation, or division.

- *The Reformation Study Bible*, R.C. Sproul General Editor, Reformation Trust-Ligonier Ministries, p. 1851.