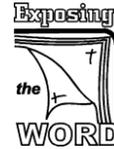




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# The Gospel of **Verifying** John the MESSIAH

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## 18- The Great I Am Debate and Declaration *John 8:20-59*

Jesus is in the temple area and where He had just declared that He is the light of the world and that God was His Father. The crowd has just witnessed Jesus speaking to the woman taken in adultery as well.

We find in verse 20 that these events took place in the temple area of the treasury. *Joh 8:20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.* Notice a couple of things about this area that was a place that Jesus seems to often have sat and observed and taught.

*Barnes Notes* tell us “This was in the court of the women...In that court there were fixed a number of places or coffer, made with a large open mouth in the shape of a trumpet, for the purpose of receiving the offerings of the people; and the money thus contributed was devoted to the service of the temple - to incense, sacrifices, etc.”

*Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible* says, “that there were thirteen chests in it; in the thirteenth only the women were permitted to put their offerings. Probably the other twelve were placed there in reference to the twelve tribes; each perhaps inscribed with the name of one of Jacob's twelve sons.”

*Robertson's Word Pictures* says, “This court was probably the most public part of the temple.”

So Jesus, thought He knew that the opposition to Him and Him ministry was growing, sat in the most public place and continues to teach.

The text of John from John 8:20-59 is a conversation of back and forth between Jesus and this crowd that was gathered around Him. Occasionally there is a

comment inserted by John but for the most part it is a dialogue. Within this dialogue we see the third of the, I AM declarations of Jesus. Jesus declares in *John 8:58 Before Abraham was, I am.*

I concede there are a lot of significant teaching and great truths in this section that we will not pursue during this study. It is not that they are not important but I feel the critical things for us are found in the last couple of verses. Therefore look at the conversation and dialogue that Jesus has with the Jews in the temple area of the treasury. I have place the speaker [i.e. Jesus, John, Jews] in front of the text to help us follow who is speaking. There is a bit of John's comments in the speech verse but I chose to not break it apart to this detail.

### I- The Great I Am Debate and Declaration *John 8:21-59*

[Jesus] 21 *Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.*

[Jews] 22 *Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.*

[Jesus] 23 *And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*

[Jews] 25 *Then said they unto him, Who art thou?*

[Jesus] *And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. 26 I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is*



*true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.*

[John] 27 *They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.*

[Jesus] 28 *Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. 29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.*

[John] 30 *As he spake these words, many believed on him.*

[Jesus] 31 *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

[Jews] 33 *They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?*

[Jesus] 34 *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. 35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. 36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. 38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.*

[Jews] 39 *They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father.*

[Jesus] *Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not*

*Abraham. 41 Ye do the deeds of your father.*

[Jews] *Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.*

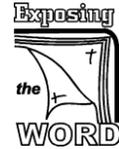
[Jesus] 42 *Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.*

43 *Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. 45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. 46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? 47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.*

[Jews] 48 *Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?*

[Jesus] 49 *Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. 50 And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. 51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*

[Jews] 52 *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. 53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?*



[Jesus] 54 *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: 55 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. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.*

[Jews] 57 *Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?*

[Jesus] 58 *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*

[John] 59 *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.*

## II- Underlined Critical Teachings:

As I have stated we cannot flesh out all the teaching of this section but I have underline a few critical teachings. Let's notice them.

### 1- Prophecy of Death:

28 after ye have lifted up the Son of man Jesus tells them that after they have lifted up the Son of man which signified the death on the cross.

### 2- Freedom in Christ:

As part of this dialogue, Jesus tells them that freedom only comes from the following His word and truth of the Son of God.

31 If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Their reply was that they were the seed of Abraham and had never been in bondage.

33 We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man This is factually inaccurate because at that very

time they were under Roman rule and bondage. The crux of the whole matter was that they were in bondage not only to Rome but also to sin. Notice 34 **Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.**

## III- Declaring His Deity:

Jesus declares in Joh 8:58 **Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.**

This is not the first time that Jesus used this very same terminology in this same setting.

Something that is lost in the format that I choose to use to emphasis and give more weight to the words of the Bible, i.e. the **Bold and Italic of Scripture**, is the words in the KJV that are not in the original text. The words in the KJV are italicized in the text of most Bibles are inserted by the translators for clarity. I have a couple of places with Double Underlines that I want us to notice. Go back and look at John 8:24, 28.

Jesus no less than three times in this section asserts His deity with the words translated into English as **"I am"**.

## IV- What Was He Really Asserting:

For us to understand this we must go to the Old Testament and find the foundation of the **"I am."**

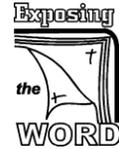
God is dealing with Moses to go and deliver the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt. Notice the conversation he had with God. Exo 3:11-15 **And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? 12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. 13 And Moses said**



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**unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? 14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. 15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.**

So what does this name God uses for Himself mean? It is only four Hebrew letters, YHWH. The Hebrew language did not have vowels. It is translated Jehovah as well as Yahweh. No one is sure how to pronounce this name because it was so revered by the Jews that it was not spoken.

It simply means that God is, always has been and always will be. He is timeless and eternal. There has never been a time when He did not exist. He is the self-existent One. It does not say I was, or will be but I AM. God lives in the eternal present while we are stuck in a moment of time.

Let's look at an example of this word and how it is translated in the Bible so we can learn to recognize it in our English translations. ***Psa 135:13 Thy name, O LORD, endureth for ever; and thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations.***

This word is found 6528 times in the Old Testament. It is translated LORD 6412 of these and LORD'S 108. The form Jehovah is retained on four places (Ex 6:3. Ps 83:18,

Is 12:2; 26:4) with four being translated God.

God was saying to Moses that he had no need of worry because He would deliver Israel by His power and might. That He was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who was going to deliver on His promises.

Jesus is saying here in John that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and that He is going to deliver on His promises. In fact He is the fulfillment of the promise. Jesus is saying He was the God of the Old Testament incarnate in the flesh.

### V- The Reaction:

The reaction was very quick to this claim. He was claiming to be the eternal and self-sufficient God. This was blaspheming in their eyes.

***Joh 8:59 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.***

Jesus slipped away from them as He did many times because His time was not yet come to die.

So what is our reaction to this claim? Jesus is self-proclaiming this at this point. He is witnessing to Himself. Remember ***Hebrews 6:13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself.*** Jesus is giving testimony that He is the Great I Am that is great enough to give His own verification and swear by Himself.

Have you believed and accepted the Great I Am who was wrapped in flesh and dwelled among us to become our Savior as Savior and Lord of your life?