

Who Do You Think You Are?

John 8:52-59

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I want to start in John 8:51 and read down to verse 53. Jesus speaking, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.” We’re going to see that this is the statement Jesus made that really got them hot—really got them angry—and they wanted to kill Jesus. “Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil,” or a demon, “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 makes thou thyself?” In reality, he’s saying, “Who do You think You are?” The NIV actually translates it that way, “Who do You think You are?”

This section of John 8 is at the end of a long dialogue and discourse that Jesus has been having with a group known as the Jews. Now, they’re called Jews who believe, but their belief wasn’t genuine, real, or authentic because they didn’t come to Jesus knowing who He was. They were blind to the reality of who Jesus was. When you come to Jesus Christ, you must come to Him as your Lord and Savior trusting Him to save you, but they were blind to that.

Jesus has already revealed several interesting things about Himself. Back in verse 12, He said He was the light of the world, if someone followed Him they wouldn’t walk in darkness. In verse 24, He revealed Himself as the Great I AM. (We’re going to get that, again, tonight.) In verse 32, He said that He was the truth that set men free, and that kind of got them a little riled up. “We’re Abraham’s seed. We’ve never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say to us, being Jews, that we would be set free? We’ve never been in bondage.” They were getting hotter, and hotter, and more hostile towards Jesus; and Jesus, of course, knows that they’re going to want to try to stone Him. At the end of the chapter, they rush and try to grab stones that they may put Him to death.

The question that is asked is what I want to key off of tonight in verse 53, “Who do You think You are?” The most important question that we could ever ask and answer is: Who is Jesus? Everything hinges upon that question. Who is Jesus? Why He came? What did He come to do? So, the Person and the work of Christ. Those are the kind of categories that theologians put it in—the Person and the work. You need to know who He is, what He came to do, and what He accomplished in His work.

There was a time that Jesus turned to His disciples and actually asked them, “Who do men say that I am?” That was Jesus asking them who the populous people said He was, and we know that ultimately Peter said, “You’re the Christ, the Son of the living God,” and Jesus said, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but My Father who is in heaven.” That was Jesus asking them who people thought He was. This is a unique set-up where they are actually asking Jesus, “Who do You think You are?” Guess what Jesus does. He lets them know who He is.

If you're taking notes, there are five claims that Jesus makes about Himself and His relationship to the Father, and they are very, very important. First, Jesus claims honor that comes to Him from the Father. Jesus claims, first of all, that there's an honor that the Father has given to Him, and it's for us there in verse 54, "Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me," that's the point, "of whom ye say, that he is your God." When Jesus said in verse 51 that if you believe in Me, follow Me, you'll never die, that's what freaked them out completely. They say, "Wait a minute. This doesn't make sense. Abraham," and no one more important than Abraham to the Jews, "died, and the prophets died, so who do You think You are? Jeremiah's dead, Isaiah's dead, Ezekiel's dead. All these prophets are dead, and You say that if we believe in You, we're never going to die?" That was kind of the straw that broke the camel's back, "This is enough. We can't handle anymore. You are demon-possessed," you have a demon.

If somebody attacks you, you can feel pretty good if they attack you for righteousness sake, they attacked Jesus. You're in good company. Jesus said, "If they come against and persecute Me, they're going to persecute you also because you're following Me."

Jesus, in answering the question, says, "I receive honor from My Father," so God the Father is actually honoring Jesus Christ. How did the Father honor the Son? First of all, at His birth by sending angels. That's pretty cool, right? The Christmas story when Jesus was born angels showed up in Bethlehem and announced the birth of the Son of God. You talk about an awesome birth announcement, that's pretty cool, and they proclaimed His birth; so the Father was honoring Him even at His birth. Then, God actually put a star in the sky and sent the Magi, the three wise men, to come and to worship Him there. They gave Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh, all symbolizing that He was the king.

Secondly, God the Father honored Jesus at His baptism. These are just a few of the highlighting where the Father honored the Son. Remember when Jesus was baptized and came up out of the water? What happened? Something I have never seen happen in all my years of baptizing people.

There's some kooky thing on the internet right now about some baptism that was taking place where the heavens opened and doves came down. It's all fake and phony and crazy. People like to follow that kind of sensationalism, but this was a miracle from God. Jesus, the Son of God, came out of the water. The heavens opened and the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and (this is the cool part) an audible voice from heaven, God the Father, said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," or some translations have, "...in whom My soul delights." That's pretty cool, right? The fact that when Jesus came out of the water, God the Father actually acknowledged and honored the Son. They're all uptight with Him, "Who do You think You are?" "Well, when I got baptized, the Father spoke from heaven and said, 'This is My beloved Son in whom My soul delights.'"

How about His resurrection? In Romans 1:4 (write that down), it says that He is, 'declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead.' The resurrection actually

sets Jesus apart. The word is horizoned off, so it's a separation of Jesus from everyone else in His resurrection. God honored the Son by raising Him from the dead.

Fourthly, the way God the Father honored the Son, would be the ascension and His exaltation. We don't often stop to think about this, but Jesus was incarnate in the womb of the virgin Mary, He was crucified, buried, rose from the dead; so we have His incarnation, the crucifixion, and the resurrection. After the resurrection, forty days later, Jesus physically, bodily, visibly, ascended right back up into heaven from whence He came. He came from heaven, and He went back to heaven. What an exit that is! That's pretty cool. They stood there looking and watching, and the angels showed up and said, "The same Jesus that you've seen go is going to come back in like manner as He is departed." Jesus was seated at the right hand of God the Father, that's a place of exaltation. Then, at the Second Coming, which is future, God the Father will honor the Son.

In Philippians 2, you know the verse so well, it says that there is coming a day when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ—listen to this word—is Lord to the glory of God the Father. It's going to tie-in with Jesus saying, "I AM." He is Lord. He is Jehovah, and He is therefore the glory of God the Father. When Jesus Christ returns, the Father will honor Him by having everyone bow their knee, and they will confess that Jesus is Lord.

Now, if you are a believer, you bow your knee now and confess Him Lord in salvation; but if you have rejected Jesus Christ, in that day it will be your condemnation. Then, in heaven, it doesn't stop there...Nathan mentioned a minute ago as we were worshiping the Lord, that heaven is going to be an awesome place, a place of worship. When we get to heaven, we're going to be singing a song, Worthy is the Lamb. We are going to be worshiping Jesus, extolling Jesus. We're going to take our crowns, which are a picture of our rewards, and we're going to throw them at His feet and worship Him for all eternity. In all those ways, and many others, God the Father honored Him.

The question we need to ask ourselves is: Do we honor Jesus? Do we honor Jesus by our faith trusting Him to save us and Him alone? Do we honor Him by our actions? It's not just believing in Jesus, but it's living out the Christian life in a way that brings honor and glory to Jesus Christ. We don't want to dishonor Him. And, by our words—how challenging that is—that our words would bring glory to God, glory to Jesus Christ. So, we trust Him, we serve Him, and we want to glorify Him in our lives and the way we live.

In John 5:23, it says, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." As I've often said, "If you're wrong about Jesus, you are wrong about God. You can't be wrong about Jesus and right about God." So many people think, Well, I don't believe Jesus is this or that, they reject the Jesus of the Bible but say, "I believe in God." Well, it's not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It's not the true and living God. There really is only one God, and if you're wrong about who Jesus is, then you're wrong about God, which leads me to my next point.

Jesus claimed, secondly, that He had knowledge of the Father, an intimate relationship and knowledge with the Father. Not only did the Father honor Him, but He came to reveal God the Father to us. Look at verse 55. He said, "Yet ye have not known him," He mentions the fact that God was His Father, and says, "Yet ye have not known him; but I know him," there's the claim, "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." Jesus isn't speaking in politically correct speech. Jesus isn't trying to say things that will win friends and influence people. It may influence people, but He's not trying to win friends. Jesus said, "If I say that I don't know Him, then I'm just going to be a liar, just like you." He's actually pulling out the stops and has a very direct attack against them.

Here's the point: Only Jesus can reveal to us God the Father. It is Jesus Christ who reveals to us the Father. Not that He is the Father, but the fact is that He comes to reveal or make Him known. Remember in John 14 when Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto," and He said this word, "the Father, but by me." The minute Philip heard that word, "the Father," he just said, "Well, if You'd show us the Father, we'd be satisfied." And, Jesus said, "Philip, how long have I been with you, and you've not seen Me? He who has seen Me, has seen the Father." Now, don't misunderstand His words. He's not the Father, but He does reveal God the Father.

In case you haven't noticed it, and I'm going to get there in just a moment, God is manifested in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Some of you might be thinking, Wait a minute, you know, You've got God the Father, God the Son, and if He's God, then who's the Father? Who's this Father dude? God is three Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—only one God. It's called the triunity of God, and this is what the Bible teaches. This is what Christians have believed for millennia, so Jesus claimed, "I came to reveal the Father. I know the Father. If you see Me, you've seen the Father." Write down Colossians 1:15. It says that Jesus is "the image of the invisible God." We get our word photo or photograph in that word "image." If you want a picture of who God is and what God is like, then you look at Jesus Christ.

Here's the third claim that Jesus made (verse 55). Jesus claimed obedience to the Father. He says, "I've been honored by the Father, I know and reveal the Father, and I obey the Father," unlike them. Notice at the end of verse 55, "...but I know him, and keep his saying." Jesus said, "I'm doing what the Father tells Me to do." Those are the claims that Jesus is making here, so to look at Jesus is to be able to say, "This is how God wants me to live." You know, the man of the world—the man who has rejected God's Word and God—doesn't have a model on how to live. He has to just kind of create in his own mind, "How I should live and what I, as a man, should be." If you could go to somebody for counseling, "I need to get off alcohol," or "I need to get off drugs," once you get off the alcohol and drugs, what do you want to be? Do you want to be truthful, honest, and humble? "No, no. I just want to get off alcohol." You go to a psychologist, "I need help. I'm having these problems." "Okay, I can help you with your problems, but what about the positive way to live? Do you want to be humble, truthful, and a man of your word?" "No, no, no." "Do you want to be righteous?" "No, no, no, no. I don't want to be that. I'll lose money if I do that. I won't have fun if I do that."

What I'm trying to say is that the world doesn't really know what we're supposed to be, what we're supposed to do, how we're supposed to act. We don't even know if we're male or female anymore. We don't know what any of us really are. It's insane. We've lost all comprehension of truth and objective truth, especially objective truth. You have to have a transcendent fixed point in God to have objective truth. We've lost the standard of what is right or what is wrong, there is no right or wrong, and moral relativity is rampant in our culture. It's fed into politics, our laws, everything. That's why it's so important for us as God's people to stand on the truth of God's Word. Jesus is our model. He's a model for both men and women, too, by the way, of His humility, His grace, His mercy, His love, His righteousness, and His holiness. Jesus reveals the Father by living obediently to Him.

A good way to know if you're growing in likeness to Christ (just a little footnote here) is to take 1 Corinthians 13, the love chapter, and take out the word "love" and put in your name. See how far you get. It starts off, love is patient and kind, "Love suffers long and is kind," I'm sorry, I've messed up right there already. Take 1 Corinthians 13, substitute your name for "love," and see how far you go before it sounds blasphemous. You won't get very far if you're honest with yourself, but if you take the name "Jesus" and substitute it for "charity" or "love," you can read the whole chapter and it fits just perfectly. That's our goal, that's our model. That's what we're shooting for—to be like Jesus who came and was obedient to the Father.

Here's the fourth claim (verse 56). Jesus claims Abraham rejoiced to see His day. This is kind of getting close now to the fifth claim, which is the climactic claim. Notice it in verse 56. He said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day," there He made the claim, "and he saw it, and was glad." This is an amazing statement by Jesus. Jesus acknowledges "Your father Abraham," but said, "rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." I want you to notice what Jesus says here. He says, "rejoiced to see my day." He didn't say, "He rejoiced to see Me," I think that's involved and included, but He said, "rejoiced to see my day."

The question is, and Bible students wrestle with this: In what sense or what way did Abraham see Jesus' day? I believe that it's in a dispensational sense; that Abraham, by faith, looked forward to the time when God would fulfill His promises to send that Promised Seed, the Messiah, who would be the Savior of the world. First, he saw the day of Christ (write it down) by faith. God told Abraham, when he was almost 90 years old, "You're going to have a son." I'm sure Abraham responded how I would respond if I were 90 and God said, "You're going to have a son," I would sit down and go, "Shew! I need a rest. I'm tired." But no, Abraham didn't do that. Abraham just believed God. He said, "Okay, God! You said it, I believe it!" And God imputed righteousness to him. That's, in a sense, how Abraham saw that day when he knew that Christ, the Messiah, would come as the Promised Seed and that Jesus would be the fulfillment of that promise—the promise of the Son and the chosen seed by faith.

Abraham also saw the day of Christ in type in Genesis 22 when God came to Abraham and said, "Abraham, take now your son, your only son, Isaac, who you love, and offer him upon a mountain that I will show thee of." Abraham saddled the donkey, got the wood, got Isaac, and they took off for the land of Moriah. It's a beautiful story because as they're headed up the

mountain, Isaac turns to his father and says, "Father, here's the wood for the sacrifice and here's the fire, but where's the sacrifice?" This is what Abraham said. It's an amazing statement. He said, "God will provide Himself a sacrifice." Abraham saw the day of the Lord Jesus. I believe, in Abraham's statement, what he's saying is that God will provide—Jehovah-jireh—God sees, and when there's God vision, there is God's provision; and that God would actually be in Christ reconciling the world to Himself on the cross. I love the fact that Abraham said, "God will provide Himself a sacrifice," and then the picture of the type where Isaac is taken off the altar, the ram is caught in the bushes and is put in his place. It's a picture of substitution as Jesus died on the cross for us and took our place. Abraham saw that in picture and in type in the Old Testament.

Some scholars believe that it could've been just a special revelation given to Abraham that maybe isn't even recorded in the Scriptures, that God spoke to him or revealed it to him in a dream; but Jesus is pretty clear about this that "Abraham rejoiced to see my day...and was glad." Abraham looked forward in faith, and it brought joy. When we walk in faith and focus on Jesus and look to the future, it brings joy to our hearts. When we keep our eyes focused on Jesus and look to the future and know that God always keeps His promises, it brings joy to our hearts. It's when we look to ourselves or to our problems that we start to get discouraged, so we need to trust in Him.

Here's the fifth and the last, the climax of the Lord's claims, Jesus claims to be God (verses 57-58). "Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" They didn't understand what He meant when He said, "Abraham saw My day and rejoiced." They said, "You're not even fifty years old." Now, some people get confused about the age of Christ here and think, Well, He wasn't fifty. He probably died about 33. They're just kind of rounding it out. They're not sure about His exact age. They just say that by maximum standards, "You can't be over fifty, yet how is it You say that You have seen Abraham," or that "Abraham has seen Your day?"

Verse 58, "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was," and here it is, "I am." The response to that finally is, "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." It's interesting. The chapter opened with them bringing a sinful woman to Him and Jesus telling them, "He that is without sin among you let him cast the first stone," and here they are looking around for rocks to throw at Jesus. How ludicrous is that? Jesus says, "If you're without sin, you can throw a stone," but they took it into their own hands finding rocks and trying to stone Jesus.

For Jesus to say, "Before Abraham was, I am," was an amazing statement and the fact that Abraham saw his day, but He used a very, very powerful statement about Himself. It's at the end of verse 58, "I am." In the Greek it's ego eimi. Seven times in John's gospel Jesus used that phrase and said, "I am the light of the world. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the door. I am the true vine," so He used that several times. This time, He simply says, "Before Abraham was, I am." It's important to understand what Jesus is laying claim to here. Jesus is

doing what is so important to understand. He's claiming to be God. He's claiming to be divine. Jesus' claim was a claim to have existed before Abraham, "Before Abraham was, I am." You would think He would say, "Before Abraham was, I was," but He doesn't say it like that. He said, "I am." The idea there is that He pre-existed Abraham, but from the tense of the verb "I am," He was also claiming, more importantly, what is called eternity—the idea that He was not just pre-existing His birth at Bethlehem, but that He is eternal.

There are some false teachers that are still around today that will admit that Jesus pre-existed His birth at Bethlehem but won't admit or believe that Jesus is eternal. One of the attributes of God, which Jesus is claiming to be, is that He is eternal. You know the kids that ask the question: Who made God? or Who made the guy, who made the guy, who made the guy, who finally made God? Where did God come from? God didn't come from anywhere. God just is eternal. You say, "Well, how does that happen?" I don't know because I'm finite. I'm not infinite. I can't fathom or comprehend this eternal being. I mean, I have a hard time remembering what went on in my life yesterday, let alone eternity past. You either believe that there was an eternal, all-existing God, or you believe that some matter of some form existed that had to evolve. It just really boils down to that. It takes faith to believe both. It takes less faith to believe that (Genesis 1:1), "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The Bible doesn't actually argue the existence of God, it just states the fact that He existed and He always has been and He always will be. God is eternal.

God is also immutable which means He doesn't change, so He's the eternal, self-existent, immutable, unchanging God. Jesus is claiming this right now. This is why they're just blowing their top like, "Get me a rock, get me a rock. We gotta kill this guy! This is blasphemous!" Jesus' claim is either true or false. There's no if, and, or but's about it. He's claiming to be the eternal God.

The Jehovah's Witnesses got their doctrine of Christ from Arian, an Arian heresy. They believe that Jesus pre-existed Bethlehem, but they don't believe that He was eternal. They believe that He was created by God. They actually believe that He was created by God as first an angel and that He became, from an angel, the Son of God. They don't believe in the eternity of Jesus Christ, which would support the doctrine of His deity. Now, if Jesus is not eternal, then there is no triune nature in God, the Godhead. There is no trinity. There would just be God the Father, no God the Son, and at some point in time, God the Father created Him; but that's not what the Bible teaches. The Bible teaches that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit all co-equal in Their essence—separate Persons but co-equal—have existed for all eternity. You're saying, "Pastor John, you're giving me a headache. I can't fathom that." Well, God is also transcendent—He's above us, He's beyond us, He's past our being able to understand or find out. I'm glad He is, aren't you? He's wonderful. That's why we worship Him because He's bigger than we are.

Here's Jesus arguing with these guys. They think they're cool because they're Abraham's seed and, "Who do You think You are telling us that if we believe in You, we'll never die. Abraham died, the prophets died, do you think You're better than Abraham?" "Well, before Abraham was,

I AM.” When they heard that, they knew what Jesus was laying claim to—He was laying claim to being God. Jesus was actually using the divine name by which God had revealed Himself to Moses.

Write down Exodus, and this is where I want to give you some verses to write down, 3:13-15. If you want to turn there real quickly, you can follow with me. “And Moses said 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.” Jesus was actually going back to the burning bush when God spoke to Moses and identified Himself as, “I AM.”

The English word we use to convey the idea for the name of God in the Hebrew is YHWH. It means to be or being. In the English it has come to be Jehovah, but the name Jehovah is kind of a made-up name to try to convey this idea to be or being. It’s actually an artificial word put together from four Hebrew consonants, YHWH; and the vowels from another name for God, Adonai. Actually, the word Jehovah or Yahweh or YHWH, the Jews didn’t want to pronounce the name of God. They didn’t want to say the name of God because it was too holy, so they wrote it in a way that no one could say or pronounce that name. The name Jehovah, as we have translated it or should be better translated Yahweh, is in the Old Testament about seven thousand times. We don’t really know how to pronounce that name, but in the New Testament Jesus used that phrase “I AM” to claim to be Yahweh or Jehovah of the Old Testament. The meaning is that of eternal self-existence, so you couldn’t think of a stronger claim that Jesus could make to be divine. Again, when you’re talking to Jehovah’s Witnesses on your doorstep or in your house, they are blind to the reality of who Jesus is and are thus without God and without hope.

Jesus claims to be Jehovah. It speaks of underived existence. Let me give you the verses. In Exodus 17:2, 7, we are told that the people tempted Jehovah in Rephidim. Then, when you come to the New Testament, (these are the two you want to contrast, Exodus 17:2, 7 with 1 Corinthians 10:9) we learn that it was Christ who the Israelites tempted. The Jehovah of Exodus 17:2, 7 is, according to 1 Corinthians 10:9, a reference to Jesus Christ. We also find that the vision in Isaiah 6:1-5 that the prophet Isaiah had of the Lord, Yahweh or Jehovah, high and lifted up and His glory filled the temple that when you come to the New Testament, it’s a reference to Jesus Christ—the pre-incarnate Christ—according to John 12:41. I’ve always liked that. I think it’s pretty cool that when Isaiah says, “I saw the Lord, high and lifted up, and his glory filled the temple,” and in the New Testament it tells us that is a reference to Jesus Christ.

The same prophet, Isaiah, wrote by inspiration, “The voice of him that cries in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the LORD.” The word “LORD” there, all capitals, is Jehovah or Yahweh, “make straight the desert highway for our God.” Then, when John the Baptist introduces Jesus,

he quoted from Isaiah 40:3, thus showing that the Jehovah Elohim of the Old Testament is Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Whenever John the Baptist, in the gospels, says, "I came to prepare the way of the Lord," and it quotes from Isaiah, Isaiah tells us that that way of the Lord is Jehovah or Yahweh. So, who is Jesus? He's Jehovah! He is the God who is eternal and is the covenant-keeping God.

Write down Isaiah 45:21-23. Jehovah prophesied of a day when every knee should bow to Him, and every tongue should swear or confess Him, and when you turn to the book of Philippians 2:9-11 (I've already quoted it), that they will bow their knee and confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. It's a reference to Jesus being Jehovah of the Old Testament.

Write down Joel 2:32. We're told, "...that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD," again, the Great I AM, Jehovah, Yahweh, "shall be delivered," or saved; and then when you turn to the New Testament, Romans 10:13, we learn that it is the Lord who saves, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." It's a reference to Jesus Christ. So, who is Jesus? He is Jehovah. He's the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Let me give you a couple of other references, and I won't expound on them. There's John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," or God was the Word. It's a powerful reference to the deity of Jesus Christ. Again, in the gospel of John 5:17-18, Jesus actually said that God was His Father. In the Greek it's My own unique Father. Again, they picked up stones to stone Him, claiming to be equal with God and that was blasphemous. And, after His resurrection, I love it, in John 20:28 when Thomas saw the risen Christ. Thomas said to Jesus, "My Lord and my God." That's a great verse to give to a Jehovah's Witness. You say, "Why a Jehovah's Witness?" Because they don't believe in the deity of Christ, so you ought to write it down so you won't call me when that happens. "Pastor John, can you come to my house and meet with the Jehovah's Witnesses on Saturday?" "No, you can take care of it." Thomas said, "My Lord and my God." Did Jesus say, "No, no, no, Thomas, no, heaven's sake don't call Me God." He didn't correct him. He didn't straighten him out. He didn't tell him, "You're out of bounds there." He received that statement, "You are God."

Write down Hebrews 1:8, "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." That's a quote from Psalm 45:6-7. There's also Titus 2:13, we know the verse, it says, "Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," believe one in the same that Jesus Christ is our great God and He's our Savior and He's coming again.

Who is Jesus? He is our great God and our Savior. He's the eternal self-existent God, so He calls us to believe Him, to follow Him, to obey Him, to trust Him, to serve Him. The question is: Are you? Have you come to Jesus Christ, trusted Him for your salvation?

What was the response or the reaction of the Jews to what Jesus claimed? It's there in verse 59, "Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus," it says, "hid himself, and went out of

the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.” They take up stones to throw rocks at the Rock of ages. Isn’t that interesting? God comes down from heaven, is there in there midst—Immanuel—and they want to kill Him. How blind can you be? He’s The stone which the builders rejected,” He’s also the stone that if you fall on Him, you’ll be saved; but if He falls on you, He’ll grind you to powder. He’s the Son of God who came to save.

Notice two things I find interesting in verse 59. Jesus hid Himself. Secondly, Jesus just passed by. Because of their hard hearts and their unbelief, because they didn’t believe who Jesus was, Jesus hides Himself from them. There are those today that are hardened in their hearts, they’re blind to the truth, and Jesus is hidden from their sight. They don’t see Him. They don’t know Him, and then Jesus just passes by. They miss out on the encounter with the Son of God. It’s interesting that Jesus came to seek and to save that which is lost; but these Pharisees, these religious Jews, were so blind to their sin and their need of the Savior that they didn’t recognize or see Him.

How different was blind Bartimaeus who sat by the wayside begging, and when he heard—all he could do was hear, he couldn’t see—that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he cried out to Jesus, “Have mercy on us...thou Son of David.” That’s one of the places in the Bible I wish I could’ve been to see and to hear. I would’ve loved to hear Bartimaeus’ voice, just the sound of his voice, “Have mercy on me!” They tried to silence him, “Be quiet. Blind man, go away.” But he yelled louder, “Jesus! Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!” Freaked out! Jesus heard his cry and stopped. He said, “Bring him to me.” They went to Bartimaeus and said, “Hey, He’s calling for you.” Can you imagine what joy must have filled his heart as he threw away his cane? They led Bartimaeus up to Jesus, and Jesus said, “What is it you want Me to do?” He said, “Lord, that I might see,” and Jesus reached out and touched his eyes and healed him and gave him his sight. What a picture that is! Here you have these religious self-righteous Jews claiming that because they are of the lineage of Abraham that they’re going to go to heaven, and they stumbled over that stumbling stone, Jesus Christ. But you have this poor blind beggar, senses his need, calls out to the Lord, and Jesus reaches out and saved him.

There’s an interesting contrast between the end of chapter 8 and the first verse of John 9. There’s a blind man there, and it says, “And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.” You have at the end of John 8 a reference to Him passing by, and then you have another reference of Him passing by, but he stopped to save this man who is blind and opened his blinded eyes.

Jesus came to open blinded eyes. Jesus came to set the captives free, and without Jesus, you’re without God. He’s the way, the truth, and the life. No one gets to the Father except by Him. Let’s pray.