**JESUS -THE “I AM”**

John 8:53-59

*Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?" Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, NKJV*

In high school mathematics, one of the important things you learn is to make a statement that is true and then provide all the support you need to show it is true. John, the apostle, does this in the gospel he wrote. He begins in chapter one verse one with an amazing claim about Jesus. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*.(John 1:1. See also verses 2-5) John spends twenty-one chapters showing the truth of his opening claim that Jesus is God.

A critical example is the one found in our text for this lesson. In this discussion Jesus answers the question, “Who are you?” Contrary to claims by unbelievers that Jesus never claimed to be God, Jesus PLAINLY declares that He is God by this statement*. "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."* Enemies of Jesus will tell you that Jesus is not claiming to be God. By this they show their ignorance. In Exodus 3, Moses is confronted by God and given the task of delivering the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. Moses says he will not be believed because the people will ask the name of the God who sent him. God responds to Moses by giving His Name as “I AM.”(vs. 14) Pay attention to this fact, Jesus is claiming that name for Himself. *“Before Abraham was, I AM.”* There was not a person among the Jews who would have missed what Jesus is claiming. Upon hearing Jesus state this, the people took up stones to throw at Him. His enemies had already understood that Jesus was claiming to be equal with God even before He took the name “I AM” for Himself. (John 5:18)

Is there any Biblical evidence that Jesus is God? If a person is willing to see and hear, there is much. Here is some of it. Thomas, one of the 12 apostles, openly calls Jesus God (John 20:28). Matthew tells us that Jesus was born of a virgin and quotes a prophecy (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6) that applies to Jesus: "*Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."*(Matthew 1:23). In his letter to Titus, Paul calls Jesus *our great God and Savior Jesus Christ* (Titus 2:13). In Colossians 1:15-17 Paul the apostle plainly declares the deity of Christ. Sit down with cup of coffee or glass of iced tea and read all of these: Matthew 28:9, John 10:30, John 14:9, Acts 20:28, Hebrews 1:8, James 1:2-7, I Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:1, I John 5:20, Revelation 1:8, 22:12-13.

Recognizing that Jesus is God, both Paul and Peter plainly state that Jesus will be the judge of the living and the dead. Grasp this. When the world ends, each of us will have to stand before Jesus (Romans 14:12, Hebrews 4:13) to give account of the things we did in the body whether good or bad. *Therefore, we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad* (2 Corinthians 5:9-11).

Are there any consequences related to our willingness to accept or deny the claims of Jesus? Listen: *"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven”* (Matthew 10:32-33). Our denial of the Christ is often not found in what we say but in how we live and what we value.

Jesus teaches that our priority should be the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). We should recognize that the Kingdom of God is the church, i.e., the collection of people all over the earth who are committed to Christ and are obedient to His word. God made Christ *“to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”* (Ephesians 1:22-23). *But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them* (Ephesians 2:4-10).

There are many in the world who don’t want to take responsibility for their behaviors and are depending on God/Christ to redeem them just because they believe in Jesus. They see what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5 as being in conflict Ephesians 2. They do not conflict in any way. Both stress that we in Christ must do good and will be judged by what we do. Paul makes it plain in the Ephesian passage that our own goodness will never be good enough. We can’t be good enough on our own to be deserving of salvation, but we must recognize that failure to do the good God has ordained is to deny the Christ and the purpose He has in our lives. Believing Jesus is God means we must obey what He tells us do. (Mathew 7:21-27) HE IS THE “I AM.” PERIOD!