

Christ...Co-Eternal with the Father

John 8:46-59

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Introduction: Before we read the last few verses of John Eight let's just take a minute or two to remember its setting. It starts with the woman taken in adultery. There the religious Jews hoped to entrap Jesus on the issue of the law. They believed that He was a law breaker and a friend of lawbreakers because as they put it so eloquently.

Luke 15:2 "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

Instead of justly condemning the woman for her sin, Jesus revealed to the crowd...and to us...that we are all condemned and that none of us are fit to condemn someone else. There is no hope in our own righteousness no matter who you believe yourself to be.

What followed was a series of confrontations with the Pharisees who were angry about being outwittedstill again...by Jesus. Jesus starts each one with allegorical assertions of His Sonship with the only true God. He tells them He is the light of the world. They tell HIM out rightly that anything He says about Himself is untrue because it is "self testimony." Jesus points out that what He says is true and that even the Father who is the God they believe in, also testifies that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God.

John 8:18 ¹⁸ "I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me."

He tells them He is going away...back to where he came. They wonder if He will kill Himself. [22] He says NO...You will kill me and then know for certain who I am. [28]

He tells them they will die in their sins if they do not put their trust in Him. [24] They ask Him again..."Who Who Are You?" Jesus responds with:

John 8:25 "What have I been saying to you *from* the beginning?"

They cannot hear Him because they are not children of God but children of the Devil.....which is a particular class of unbeliever....bent on killing God or His Son.

John 8:43-45 ⁴³ "Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is* because you cannot hear My word. ⁴⁴ "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.

Today's text is climactic....to say the least. In it Jesus comes right out and says unmistakably that He is the very God of Creation. The Son of the one true and living God. I want you to embrace this fully. It is not true that Jesus never claimed to be God as is commonly asserted by cults, and liberal denominations. These folk claim that the

disciples thought that up later so that they could create a religion and make themselves important. Let me read it to you now....

John 8:46-59 ⁴⁶ "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? ⁴⁷ "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear *them*, because you are not of God." ⁴⁸ The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly 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 "But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. 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, and the prophets *also*; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.'" ⁵³ "Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom 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 and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word. ⁵⁶ "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and 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 born, I am." ⁵⁹ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

- Jesus explains to them and to us the reasons for unbelief. [46-47]
- Jesus reveals the heart of God toward all races and nations of people. [48-50]
- Jesus says that He keeps men from dying. This is the only hope of men. [51-55]
- Jesus says that He and Abraham saw one another. He is not a mere man. [56-57]
- Jesus says that He is the One true God of Israel. [58-59]

The Reasons for Unbelief [46-47]

John 8:46-47 ⁴⁶ "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? ⁴⁷ "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear *them*, because you are not of God."

Jesus makes Himself the issue here. We should do the same when we speak. It is not about lifestyles, sins, membership in religions or even doctrines believed. Jesus has been going back and forth with these guys on this exact issue for several chapters now. He claims to be the answer to every question of humans, but they prefer any other answer.... and not much has changed today. Let's see how Jesus reasoned with them.

"Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?: For you and me the question would go like this. What do you think about Christ? Do you think He was a sinner? Do you think He was a liar? Anyone who says He was a sinner

and a liar are “children of the Devil” and you can move on. Most people will not say that however. The Gospel is about Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God.

John 8:47 ⁴⁷ "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear *them*, because you are not of God."

Reason number one for unbelief therefore is.....Men never actually hear the words of Christ. They hear the words of preachers , doctrines, prayers, religions to be joined, sins to be forsaken, rituals to be performed....etc.

Reason number two for unbelief is.....Men are separated from God. They cannot hear spiritual words because they are not spiritual. God’s Words sound like gibberish and are therefore rejected until the Spirit of God opens the ears and eyes of the heart to them.

1 Corinthians 2:14 ¹⁴ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

2 Corinthians 4:6 ⁶ For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Our witness is to Christ. Everything else is a distraction. Do not become a distracted believer. Our hope for men is in God and not in us. We must tell of Christ, but the Spirit must make men alive through that witness and grant them faith in Christ alone.

The Mind of God toward all peoples on the earth [48-50]

John 8:48-50 ⁴⁸ The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly 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 "But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges.

This is really two questions in one. Jesus should just give a simple “no” answer to this question. He was certainly not either of them. But the two groups are connected in the mind of the questioners and Jesus knows this. The question in today’s culture might sound this way....”Isn’t it true that you are Slavic and demon possessed. Their purpose is not entirely clear. They may have been thinking that since Jesus did not observe all of their “non-biblical” rituals and rules [like the Samaritans] that he was a de facto “Samaritan.” More likely they were just throwing insults at Christ. They hated the Samaritans and would not talk to them, eat with them or even help one if he was lying on the road dying. A denial would have shared their opinion of them.

"I do not have a demon”: Jesus totally ignores the accusation of being a Samaritan. In so doing He affirms His identity with all men. Christ loves and redeems men from humanity. The single race known as the human race. Yes we are different in many ways and yes we think, act and speak differently. Some are more pleasing to our taste and others not so much....but in His kingdom there will be some from every group to worship Him throughout eternity. The heavenly kingdom choir will sing.....

Revelation 5:9-10 ⁹ a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. ¹⁰ "You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

"I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me:" Jesus contrasts demon possession with a desire to honor God. Honor means to value God Highly. We call it a High View of God. This Satan would never do. He sets a high value on himself and leads men to value themselves more than one another or especially God. Men do have value, but it is not ultimate. Men are receivers of life. God is the life giver. Men die, but God gives eternal life. Men fail, sin, grow old, become disabled or even insane, but God continues the same. Men are important, but God is more important. Jesus says that they do not value Him because He values God above all other things including their religious self righteousness and doctrine.

"But I do not seek My glory": Jesus quickly asserts that that He is not seeking to get them to honor Him. He is commenting on why they cannot hear or understand His words. Jesus does not seek His Glory but the Glory of the Father. Jesus here is our model human image bearer. We should not seek our glory, but the glory of the Father.

How are you doing with that so far? If you said, "not to well," you are in good company. It is in our DNA to seek our glory. Even when we do good things we want someone to know about it. We want people to know that we do not seek our own glory so that they will think more highly of us. You should be aware of this about yourself, but do not despair over it. BUT know that like everything else we believe or do or are....we come short of the Glory of God. BUT.....Jesus does not come short and because of our life giving union with Christ through faith alone in Him alone....

2 Corinthians 5:21 ²¹ *God* made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Jesus honored the Father perfectly. And like everything else in our lives, He did it on our behalf because we fallen but redeemed sinners are still unable to do it for ourselves.

"There is One who seeks and judges.": This means that there is one who seeks for glory giving and passes judgment on it. God observes all the glory men bestow and He makes a judgment on it. It is not a trivial things to ignore the Glory of God and Christ in your life and actions. God is seeking or actively looking for and at the actions, thoughts and words of men in this particular area. When I hear some believer say of a preacher, "he is the most wonderful godly man who loves Christ and serves Him sacrificially more than anyone I have ever known".... I want to stop them in mid-sentence. GOD WILL BE THE JUDGE OF THAT! God heard you say that and He will decide about that.

In the same way do not allow yourselves to believe that you are less worthy of condemnation than others you know. Or...that you are closer to God than others you know. It may be true....but it has nothing to do with you. God has given you life where there was only death. He has given light where there was only darkness. By all means....draw closer everyday to God.....but give honor only to Him for that miracle.

1 Peter 1:3-4 ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

The Only hope of Eternal Life [51-55]

John 8:51-55 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, and the prophets *also*; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.' ⁵³ "Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom 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 and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.": This goes with "I am the bread of life!" "I will give you living water!" And... "I am the light of the World!" It is a raw assertion of power over life and death. It is a God claim and the Pharisees understood it pretty well. They respond by saying.....

John 8:52 ⁵² "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets *also*; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.'

"Abraham kept the word of God and he died. So did the prophets. Only a demon possessed person would say such a things." There is another possibility, but they will not entertain that one. God Himself could say it and it would be sane and true. Jesus is driving them toward this thought and they do not want to go there. This is exactly why Jesus started this confrontation with a question..."Can any of you point out and convict me of any sin at all that I have committed?" Before this He has pointed out His miracles of healing, power of nature and even resurrection. He is doing what only God can do and He has no sin.

"Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out *to be*?": This is one of those "duhhhhh" moments. If He had a supernatural conception, lived a supernaturally sinless life, done supernatural miracles and claimed to be supernatural.....then maybe....JUST MAYBE, He might be claiming to be GOD!

"If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God': The Father has spoken through Abraham, and all the prophets about the arrival of Jesus. He spoke from heaven at Jesus' baptism while these guys stood on the shore. He sent John the Baptist, whom they believed to be a true prophet of God. They say they belong to God but they do not believe what God says about His Son.

You have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word: The Jehovah's Witness is in the same boat today. They claim to be witnesses for the one true God, but

discount, distort, disbelieve and dispense with everything Jehovah says about His own Son. WOW! Jesus nails this right here. You cannot be “of God” and refuse to believe what God says about His Own Son Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the One True God [56-59]

John 8:56-59 ⁵⁶ "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and 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 born, I am." ⁵⁹ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.": I like the way the NIV captures the meaning of these tenses here.

^{NIV} **John 8:56** Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."

Abraham was their father in the flesh and they were very proud of that. Jesus gets in a real dig at this point. He reminds them that their spiritual Father whom they so admire had joy at the thought of seeing the Messiah. Now here they are looking at Him and they are repulsed and full of hatred and murder. What a contrast in a simple statement.

Referring to the sight of Abraham, the writer of Hebrews says this:

Hebrews 11:13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

God had promised Abraham a descendent through whom God would bring His favor upon all the nations of the world.

Galatians 3:7-9 ⁷ Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. ⁸ The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU." ⁹ So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

"You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?": In typical fashion these guys distort what Jesus said. Jesus said that Abraham saw or foresaw Christ coming. They turn that around 180 degrees. Although that was not what Jesus said....it was nevertheless a true statement.... so Jesus runs with it and makes what is the definitive claim to Deity in the New Testament. It was profound and do not miss this my friends....It was perfectly understood by those who heard it.

Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.": Let's try to understand this in its Jewish setting. God gave out His name for the first time at the foot of Mount Sinai.

Exodus 3:13-14 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.'"

The Children of Abraham in captivity were given, through Moses the name God wanted to identify Himself by. That name is "I AM." It means I exist, I live, I remain. Everyone present that day knew it by heart to be the name of the God who led them out of Egypt, fed them in the wilderness and led them into the promised land. Abraham was already long dead when God gave that name to Moses.

So Jesus is saying that even before Abraham.....and there is not much before Abraham in the mind of Christ's listeners that day.....Even before Abraham was born....I....Jesus of Nazareth....Existed....and was alive.

When you add this to "I am the bread that your fathers picked up in the wilderness. I am the water that your fathers drank from a rock there and I am the light that gave birth to creation and life itself," you have a powerful and unmistakable claim to be the God of the Universe in human form. God is standing before your eyes as a human being. There reaction is predictable at this point.

John 8:59 ⁵⁹ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

CONCLUSION: The really important question as we come to the end of Chapter eight is your reaction to this. It is included here to exalt Jesus higher and higher in your mind. It is intended to make Him even grander than we ever thought possible. Finally...to overwhelm us with the reality that The Creator and Sustainer of all things crammed Himself into the womb of a young woman and was born a total human being for the purpose of doing what you could never, ever do. Living perfectly and sinlessly for God and paying for your sins with a fully acceptable payment. Think often of this when you pray and read the Scripture. God the Son left heaven to become your payment for sin and give you righteous standing before God in heaven.

Colossians 1:13-22 ¹³ For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹ For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, ²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven. ²¹ And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds, ²² yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach--