

**Life in His Name – Part 23**  
**Who Jesus Says He Is – John 8:48-59**  
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Intro:**

- This morning we are back into John chapter eight, where we will dive into the final questions and statements of the discussion between Jesus and the Jewish leaders when Jesus was teaching at the temple in Jerusalem during the Festival of Tabernacles.
- At this point, the discussion has become quite heated, with claims and accusations dropping like bombs targeting each other's identity and relationship with Abraham and God the Father.
- I am centering this message around the two questions we find in this passage. The first is, "Jesus, aren't you a Samaritan and demon-possessed?" The second asks Jesus point blank, "Who do you think you are?" From Jesus's responses to these questions, we gain extraordinary information about Jesus and receive the greatest solution for our greatest problem.
- I want to remind us why this Gospel was written. John says this is his purpose for writing, so let's read this out loud together:

**John 20:31 ESV**

**These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**

- Every time we read the Gospel of John, we have to ask, "How does this passage lead me to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, so that I may have life in His name? This is what John and the Holy Spirit want us to focus on, and so with that focus, we read.
- In the discussion, right before our verses for today, Jesus levels fierce accusations against the Jewish religious leaders, telling them that they belong to their father—the devil—and that they carry out his will. They do this because they don't hear Him, don't love Him, and don't belong to God.
- To these accusations, they respond with their own accusations against Jesus, delivered in the form of a question:

**John 8:48 NIV**

**The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?"**

**Jesus, aren't you a Samaritan and demon-possessed?**

- This was a significantly demeaning accusation by the Jews. "You are a demon-possessed, half-breed." You are ethnically compromised, theologically misguided, and demonically controlled.

**John 8:49a NIV**

**"I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus,**

- *I am not possessed by a demon.*
  - Jesus emphatically denied this charge. Jesus was in no way empowered or possessed by a demon. Not only did these guys miss the mark in their identification of Jesus, but they were also shooting in the other direction. They were 180 degrees off course, attributing what was God's to the devil. It takes a very hardened heart and clouded mind to come to this conclusion.

- Jesus did not address the charge of being a "half-breed" Samaritan. He indeed was not a Samaritan (they could have known this by investigation), but in one respect, he was a "half-breed," but not in the way they thought. He was fully God and fully man.

### **John 8:49b-50 NIV**

**"But I honor my Father and you dishonor me. 50 I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge.**

- *I am honoring My Father, and My Father seeks My glory.*
  - Jesus replied that He honored His Father, that what He was doing was honoring to God. What he was doing was right by God. And Jesus was not seeking to bring glory to Himself. His desire and aim were to bring honor and glory to the Father, not to Himself. Because of who Jesus was and what He did, the Father's aim was to bring glory to Jesus. This was a significant statement, to say that God was honoring Him.
  - Then Jesus added this descriptor of the Father, "He is the judge," meaning that the Father's word is the final word. He is the one who has the authority to judge, and what He says is, is. And then, connecting the Father's word with His word, Jesus adds this mind-bending claim:

### **John 8:51 NIV**

**Very truly I tell you, whoever obeys my word will never see death."**

- *I am offering that whoever obeys my word will never see death.*
  - This is the proverbial "fountain of youth." This offer is for something that people from every generation and every location desire. This is an offer to overcome the one thing that is certain for all of us—death. The final destination of our mortality. And Jesus offers immortality.
  - We must notice this offer is conditional. The condition to "never see death" is to "obey my word." This means to "hang onto, retain, keep, and follow" my word. This is to be believed first and then followed second. Those who do these things will be rewarded with immortality or to "never see death."
  - Now what "death" is He talking about? Because death is all around us. Everything dies, from microbes to plants, to insects, to animals, to humans. Everything on this planet eventually dies. Even those who believe in and keep His word.
  - In a few chapters, we will read about this, but it is helpful for us to read it here. This is what Jesus said to the grieving Martha on the death of her beloved brother Lazarus.

### **John 11:25-26 ESV**

**Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die."**

- So Jesus said, even though we die, we will live. Jesus already said this in the book of John.

### **John 5:24 ESV**

**"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."**

- This means that all of us here are in death, but those who believe go from being in death to being in life. So, what does He mean by "never see death?"
- What Jesus is referring to is the "second death." This is the death that Jesus talked about to John when he wrote the book of Revelation. There is a "first death," and then there is a "second death" (Rev. 2:11, 20:6, 20:14, 21:8). There is death that leads to eternal death. And there is death that leads to eternal life. If you believe in Jesus and keep His word, you will not "see the second death," the real and permanent death. The first death is temporary, and the second death is eternal.
- This means that those who are in Christ are immortal and receive eternal life. When we die, we don't pass from life to death, but we pass from death to life. And if what Jesus says is indeed true, which it is, then you don't have to be afraid of death because you will live forever – you are immortal.
- For the sake of Jesus's discussion with the Jewish religious leaders, He was claiming the power to give eternal life, which only God has. He was claiming divinity.

### **John 8:52-53 NIV**

**At this they exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death. 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"**

### **Jesus, who do you think you are?**

- Now we come to the second question, point blank, asked of Jesus. The religious leaders wanted to hear what He said about Himself, even though they did not want to hear it before and discredited His answers. And this is what Jesus said about Himself:

### **John 8:54 NIV**

**Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me."**

- *I am the one who My Father glorifies.*
  - He repeats what He has previously stated. He said again that He was not trying to glorify Himself because that means nothing. However, the one that they claim as their God is one who glorifies Christ. Christ was glorified by the voice of the Father, the descending of the Spirit, the visitation of the angels, and the transfiguration of His body as well as in other ways. God's primary glorification of Christ while He was on this earth came when the Father resurrected the Son.

### **John 8:55a NIV**

**Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him**

- *I am the one who knows the Father.*
  - Jesus goes on in His explanation of who He is by saying that He knows the Father. This is knowing His mind, His heart, His ways. This deep knowledge is gained through intimacy. God the Father is known to Jesus. Jesus is not getting to know Him, seeking to know Him, hoping to know Him; He *knows* Him—like no one ever has or ever will.

### **John 8:55b NIV**

**and obey his word.**

- *I am the one who obeys the Father.*
  - Not only does Jesus know the Father, but He also obeys His word. Jesus followed and perfectly fulfilled the word and the will of His Father. What Jesus did and what Jesus was doing were in obedience to the word of His Father. He is not a son who knows the will and the word of his father; He is the Son who knows and obeys, truly, fully, and completely (unlike those who were opposing Him).

**John 8:56 NIV**

**Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."**

- *I am the one who made Abraham rejoice.*
  - Jesus was telling them, you guys claim (falsely) that you are "sons of Abraham." I want you to know that Abraham saw my day and rejoiced! I am the fulfillment of the covenant to Abraham. I am the promised Son that was to come. I am the one who fulfills the promise. I am the ruler who will reign forever supreme. I am the one who will make all the nations glad.

**John 8:57-58 NIV**

**"You are not yet fifty years old," they said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" 58  
"Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"**

- *I am who I AM.*
  - He could have said, "Before Abraham was, I was," meaning that He was older and, therefore, greater than Abraham. He did not say that but chose to use the exact language that God used to reveal Himself "I AM who I AM" (Ex. 3:14). Jesus said He was God. He claimed divinity clearly and straightforwardly. And this was not lost on the Jews.

**John 8:59 NIV**

**At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.**

- They knew He claimed to be God, and they did not believe and therefore decided to kill Him, for in their minds, this was blasphemy. But Jesus was not going to die this way, and this was not the will of the Father. He was going to die in the way it was foretold by prophecy. He was going to die on a tree for the sins of the world.

**Conclusion**

- **Jesus, who do you think you are?**
  - *I am the one who My Father glorifies.*
  - *I am the one who knows the Father.*
  - *I am the one who obeys the Father.*
  - *I am the one who made Abraham rejoice.*
  - *I am who I AM.*
- And if you believe and obey His word, you will never see death. By believing, you will have life in His name. Believe Him. Love Him. Follow Him. Worship Him. For He is the great I AM.