

“I Am”

Portraits of Christ in John’s Gospel

John 8:19-28, 47-59

John 8:58 – “Before Abraham was, I Am”

The dialogue in John chapters seven and eight is very exciting and full of contrast. John 7:43 says that *“there was division among the people because of him.”* Some believed Jesus, others would accuse him. Those who were sent to capture Jesus couldn’t bring themselves to do it, because they were captivated by his words (John 7:32, 45-46). One moment, the scribes and Pharisees are asking Jesus about stoning an adulterous woman. The next moment, the Jews want to stone Jesus himself (John 8:3, 59). One thing is certain, Jesus clarified his position on who he was. If he was trying to become popular with the crowd, he sabotaged everything by pressing the truth about his identity and about the faulty foundation on which the Pharisees stood.

“...You are from beneath; I am from above: You are of this world; I am not of this world.” (John 8:23)

“...If you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins.” (John 8:24)

“...When you have lifted up (crucified) the Son of man, then shall you know that I am he and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father has taught me, I speak these things.” (John 8:28)

In John 8:51-59, the argument comes to a climax with the statement, *““Before Abraham was, I Am.”* This is the last straw for many of the Jews. Jesus is openly identifying himself as equal with God. If Jesus is just a man, he is a blasphemer, but if Jesus is telling the truth, the Jews are making war with their LORD (Psalm 2). You must answer the question, “who is Jesus?” Your answer to this question will determine your eternal destiny (Matthew 16:13-17; John 5:17-24; 10:27-42; 11:25-26).

Let’s consider Christ’s claim to be God who came to us in the flesh. (1 Timothy 3:16; 1 John 5:20)

“I Am” is a reference to Jehovah God, The LORD (John 8:58 cp. Exodus 3:14-16; 6:1-3; Isaiah 43:10-15). In John 18:3-6, Jesus answered the soldiers by literally saying, **“I Am.”** Notice what happened to them!

Note these references to Messiah:

Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2; Zechariah 13:7 (Jehovah’s “fellow” or “companion” – the Hebrew word means “associate” or “equal”).

Old and New Testaments confirm the Deity of Christ:

Isaiah 45:21-25 cp. Philippians 2:5-11 (vs. 11 ~ *“...to the glory of God the Father”* – see Isaiah 40:3-5 cp. 42:8; John 1:1-3, 14). See also Isaiah 42:1-9; Colossians 1:12-17; 2:9; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:1-3; 13:8; Revelation 1:5-11.

- **I Am the Bread of Life – John 6:35**
- **I Am the Light of the World – John 8:12**
- **I Am the Door of the Sheep – John 10:7, 9**
- **I Am the Good Shepherd – John 10:11, 14**
- **I Am the Resurrection and the Life – John 11:25-26**
- **I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life – John 14:6**
- **I Am the True Vine – John 15:1, 5**