

Unveiling Glory & Unleashing Hostility – Part V
Pastor Ty Blackburn
John 8:45-59
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Amen. Turn with me in your Bibles if you will to John 8. We're going to continue our exposition of this chapter and come to our last message in the 8th chapter of John this morning. We've been looking at a section of the last section of this chapter. We've been looking at Verses 45-59 and we've titled this series of messages 'Unveiling Glory & Unleashing Hostility'. We've titled this series of messages that because that's exactly what we see in those last 15 verses of John 8. Jesus is really in the most profound way unveiling the glory of who He is. He is declaring it with increasing clarity. He's answering that most fundamental of questions: Who is Jesus Christ? He's answering it with utter transparency, clarity, and as He unveils more, and more, and more, what happens is not a response of submission, and joy, and faith, but is increasing hostility. We've seen as we've looked at this passage, this is now our fifth week in this passage, that it grows.

They start off accusing Him of being possessed by a demon, or they think He might be, then they determine He must be. Then finally, we're going to see in our Verses today, we're going to look at Verses 58 and 59, they seek to kill Him. So it shows that man doesn't just need more truth, he needs a new heart. What I want to title the message today, the subtitle, it's 'Unveiling Glory & Unleashing Hostility – Part V', and the subtitle would be 'Jesus is Jehovah'. I used that term Jehovah, instead of Yahweh. I use it intentionally. In fact, I almost titled this, if I was titling it and wasn't in the series, I might have called this, 'Jehovah's Eyewitnesses' because it is this passage that absolutely demolishes Jehovah's Witness' theology. It utterly obliterates it. It's a sad thing to see so many people captured by this deception.

They are nice, friendly people. I mean, I've talked to a number of them at my door in the last few years, inside my house, sitting at my table. The gentleman that met with me came several different times to the house bringing literature and I finally got him to sit down with me. Usually I didn't have a lot of time to talk. I'd talk for about 10 minutes and, "Okay, now I've got to go. We have to head somewhere. Let's make an appointment." He came and he sat down at my table and we talked for about an hour. I took him through John 8, I took him through John, and went to John 8:58, this passage we're going to read today, and said, "Look at this." He looked at it and didn't respond to it and then basically he told me, I mean he was gracious about it, but he basically took me to Matthew 24 and 25, I forget where

the verse is where it says that Jesus will have witnesses. Basically what he was saying is there is a verse in the prophecies there in Matthew 24 and 25 where it says that certain people will interpret. They take it as they have the ability to interpret the Bible and we don't. That's how he was just kind of ending, "Yeah, what you just said may be compelling except that you don't know how to interpret the Bible, we do." "Well let's just look at what it says." This gracious guy and we parted on cordial terms except I was telling him, "You've got to believe that Jesus is God or you are denying Christ." Jesus is Jehovah.

They use the pronunciation Jehovah which is an older pronunciation. We now say 'Yahweh'. It's an attempt to pronounce the Tetragrammaton. Theologians refer to it that way, Tetragrammaton means *'four letters'*. The Hebrew language as it was written, when the Scriptures were written, was a consonantal language. That is they only wrote down the consonants. They didn't write down the vowels and so the name of God that Moses had disclosed to him in Exodus 3, Exodus 6, and throughout the Exodus wanderings, God unveiling what His name means, was the name, if you write it in English, and transliterate from the Hebrew, YHWH, four letters. They supplied the vowels, I mean they used vowels, but they supplied them. They weren't written down. Now the reason that it is Jehovah is because the Germans were the first guys really looking at those texts. Luther and his followers, and so a Y to a German is a J, and a W is a V. So you have instead of YHWH, you have JHVH, and they supply some vowels and make it Jehovah. It's the same name, it's Yahweh. It is the most important word in all of Scripture. The name of God, this name occurs two times more than all the other names of God in the Bible combined. 6,828 times in the Hebrew Bible you have the Tetragrammaton, YHWH, Yahweh.

In your English Bible you probably have it in the word '*LORD*' in all caps. Capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D. Note the difference. Sometimes you'll have the word '*Lord*', capital L, lowercase o r d. It's a different word, a different Hebrew word behind it, but 6,000, almost 7,000 times you have in your Old Testament the word '*LORD*' in all caps. Every time you see that, that is the personal name of God. It is Yahweh, or Jehovah. I would call this passage '*Jehovah's Eyewitnesses*' because in this passage before us this morning, Jesus declares Himself to be one in the same as Yahweh, or Jehovah. He's been making the claim that was clear enough all throughout, but at this moment the veil is fully pulled back and He basically says, "I am Jehovah," because He says, "I am." To say, "I am," is to say, "I am Jehovah," because Jehovah, or Yahweh, the name meant something. In the Bible names mean things. The name Daniel—'*God is my judge*'. The name Jonathan, we chose the name Jonathan because it means '*The Lord gave*'. Okay,

you may have when you had children looked at the name books and stuff, and you choose a name because it means something. Although we don't normally think of it even when we say it, do we? I don't think about that as often. When you say somebody's name it's just a tag, it's who they are. That's part of what a name is. It's not so much that it's Jim, it's the guy I know that is him, it's his person behind it. But the name Yahweh literally is a form of the verb 'to be' in Hebrew, and there was a wordplay going on when we read in Exodus 3, Moses said, "What is Your name?" And God said, "This is My name. I am that I am. Thus you shall say, 'I am.'" The next verse says, "Tell them that the Lord, Yahweh..." which is almost identical to 'I am' in Hebrew. Basically the third person singular of that same being verb so that it was undeniable that God was saying in the name Yahweh what it means is 'I am'. We see in this passage, Jesus claiming to be the great 'I am'.

Now that's the theme of the passage. Jesus is Yahweh, and let's read it together. We'll begin reading, let's read it from, well we'll read the whole thing, Verse 45-59.

John 8:45-59 :

45 But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. 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.

Let's pray together.

Our Father, we come to this passage which lifts up to us the glory of Your Son. Our prayer is that Your Spirit would quicken our minds, open our minds, Your Spirit would illuminate Your Word, that we might truly see the glory of Your Son. Father, we come in dependence upon You. Show us Your glory. We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

You know the heresy of Jehovah's Witness' theology is not new. It's only new in a sense that it's been repackaged. In 1870, a guy name Charles Taze Russell founded the Jehovah's Witness' cult, but basically he was repackaging an ancient heresy that dates all the way back to the early 4th Century. The heresy is the heresy of Arianism. Arius was a man who was a deacon at the church in Alexandria, and he taught because he submitted the Word to his own reason. This is actually the problem that is always there when you run into heresy, and this is instructive for us. Heretics always stumble at this. They try to make God's Word fully make sense to them, so they set reason, human reason above the Word of God. Let me show you how he did it. He basically said, "If Jesus is the eternal Son of God, then there must be a time when He came into being because what does it mean to be begotten except that you weren't and then you became?" So he used human reason and applied that to what God had revealed. He actually had a little song. I don't know how it went, the melody or whatever. You should be glad of that because I'm not going to sing it, but basically it said, "There was a time when the Son was not," and he began to teach that. He was a Bible study teacher there in Alexandria, and after this began to filter out, the Bishop there, Ambrose of Alexandria, basically said, "You've got to stop teaching that." Then controversy rose in the church, there were a number of people who had begun to believe that. They had assented and they declared it to be heretical, and yet it had begun to spread like wildfire.

In fact, one of the reasons it did, let me just say this quickly. We started a class today, our Associate Pastor, Steven Gaines, is teaching a class on church history. One of the things he'll be going over is things like this, how important it is that the Lord is guiding, and governing all things including the rise of somebody like a heretic like Arius. But what happened was Arius begins espousing this false doctrine at a crucial moment in history. Every moment is a crucial moment in history, but this particularly, remember Constantine had just legalized Christianity

in the wake of his vision in 313 A.D. Up until that point it was outlawed to be a Christian. You could be persecuted, and there were moments of persecution that were very intense, but Constantine suddenly makes Christianity the law of the land. In fact, he declares we ought to all be Christians so the church is kind of flooded. It's the new thing, it's en vogue to be a Christian, and so suddenly within the church you have all these unbelievers.

Now let's start talking about what does the Bible say about the Person of Jesus Christ? Arius comes out appealing to philosophy and human reason, "There was a time when Jesus was not." He starts speaking in 319. In 321 he is excommunicated. 325, the Council of Nicea is called by Constantine. 318, I think, out of 320 Bishops vote for the orthodox position that Jesus is fully God. Historians tell us that a number of those people were really Arians who just used theological double speak. They really didn't believe that Jesus was God but it is kind like a lot of the guys, the liberals that are professors today, that sign a statement saying they believe Jesus is the Son of God, that He died for our sins, and yet they really don't mean quite the same way that you and I do.

I remember when I was in seminary, our dean was actually on faculty with another guy who later came into the area where we were, and the Washington Post had done a story about these two Baptist professors who taught in the same school in the same department. They were both church history professors at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the 1980's. Back then Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was a bad place to be in the 1980's because truth was very rare. In fact, most of the faculty, when Al Mohler took over in 1993, were unbelievers. Isn't that amazing? They were unbelievers! They didn't believe the Gospel. They didn't believe the virgin birth, they didn't believe in the blood atonement of Jesus Christ, they didn't believe in the bodily resurrection. To give you an example, these two church history professors were in the Washington Post and basically they were both quoted about Easter. It was Easter, you know how you have lots of articles come out at Easter? This year was no different, and they quoted my professor and He said, "Jesus is the Son of God and I believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ." But he was one of the few at Southern that held to the truth. The other guy said, "I believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ as well. Easter is about the resurrection, I just don't believe in quite as literally as my friend Timothy." What does it mean to believe in the resurrection just not quite as literally? He doesn't believe the body of Jesus got up and walked out of the grave. Paul said, "If you believe the body of Jesus is still in the grave, then close the doors of the church, we of all people are most to be pitied. Forget it! What are they doing proclaiming a

message of a Savior who really has not risen? The foolishness and the wickedness of deception.”

Well Arius was propagating that kind of false message, saying that there was a time when Jesus was not, and the climate was right, and even though the Council of Nicea voted to say Jesus was God, the next 60 years basically, Arianism was coming in like a flood. A guy named Athanasius of Alexandria, from the same home church as Arius, stood up against the world basically and proclaimed not what reason says, but he went to the Bible and he kept looking at the Bible. We believe in reason, but we believe in reason submitted to Scripture because we know that God has spoken. This is actually much more logical than their position, we also know that if God, the infinite God of the universe who has created everything, and is holding everything up even right now, if He is going to reveal something to us, we shouldn't be surprised if some things are hard for us to understand.

Isn't it ridiculous to think that everything should be made subject to our reason? It's like an ant trying to tell me how to live my life. I walk by and he's like, "Man, you are just walking wrong. You don't know what you are doing." You know what I would do to him? I'd go (makes stomping noise). Well thankfully God doesn't do that to us, but Arius basically is propagating this false doctrine. Athanasius goes back to the Scriptures, and he keeps studying the Scriptures and he's saying, "Look what the Scripture says. Look what Jesus said about Himself." It doesn't matter if it makes sense to you, or if it satisfies certain, platonic, philosophical principles, what matters is God has spoken. So he propagated it. In fact, it got to be a phrase in that day because so many Bishops were against him that it was Athanasius' contra mundum, Athanasius against the world. He kept preaching the Word. He was exiled from his post as Bishop of Alexandria, he succeeded Ambrose in 328. Over a 45-year period he was exiled five different times. Five times under the sentence of death, he was hidden away out in the desert. Then something would happen and the Emperor would say, "Okay, now it's not outlawed anymore," and he would come back. He wrote, and he preached, and he wrote, and then he preached. Then in 381, the Council of Constantinople, the church came back and said, "Yes, we reject Arianism. It is not true to the Word of God."

That's essentially what Charles Taze Russell came back and repackaged in 1870 because they believed that Jesus is not Jehovah. In fact, I thought to myself, "I'm going to start saying, 'Hey, I believe Jesus is Jehovah.'" I'm going to be just that upfront with it. I tell them I believe Jesus is God. The last one I talked to, a lady showed up at my door with a friend and I said, "Listen," I didn't have much time to

talk, “I want you know I believe Jesus is God,” and the Bible teaches that. Next time I’m going to say, “Jesus is Jehovah,” and stop dishonoring Him.

This passage shows it clearly. It shows that Jesus is Jehovah. We’re going to look at four points. I want us to see all that the passage says and we’re going to end up with the main point, Jesus is Yahweh, or Jehovah. But we have three points we’re going to look at before that that are going to be briefer. We see in this passage when Jesus says, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”** Some of your translations say ‘was’, some say ‘was born’. The verb there could be taken either way. The idea is that before Abraham came into being, that’s really what the word means. It’s not really about being born so much as came into being, but of course that’s the same thing as being born for us, isn’t it? “Before he came into being, I am.” The four points about Jesus:

1) Jesus is Eternal:

The first thing we see clearly is Jesus is eternal. He says, **...before Abraham was born, I am.** Jesus is not merely preexistent to Abraham. He could have said, and this would have fit Jehovah’s Witness’ theology, this would have fit Arius’ theology, “Before Abraham was, I was.” Because they teach that Jesus was the first created being, and He is the only being directly created by God. Everything else was created through Jesus. That’s what they believe. If Jesus had said, “Before Abraham was, I was,” that particular verse would have at least allowed for that. There are a lot of other places that prove that to be wrong, but this one definitely does because He says, “I am.” “Because when Abraham was not, I am.” He’s saying that He is one who exists in the eternal present. Time has no dominion over Him.

This is what the author of John’s Gospel, John himself is saying in John 1:1 in the prologue, when he begins his Gospel to tell us who Jesus is. The point of his whole Gospel, he says, ***In the beginning was the Word...*** and then he talks about creation. ***...the Word was with God, the Word was God.*** Before creation. There was never a time when the Son was not. Somebody write that into a song. There was never a time when the Son was not. He is eternally proceeding forth from the Father. God is using this, communicating to us in a way we can understand the nature of the triune God. They are three in Person, one in essence, and the way that their relationship is described is the Son is eternally begotten from the Father. The Spirit is eternally proceeding from the Son and the Father. What we do, we can’t fully comprehend it. What we have to do when we come into these areas, the best we can do is circumscribe this glorious truth and not transgress and step on it by

imposing our own understanding upon it. It's something too wonderful to be fully comprehended by man. We can only apprehend it, but God has spoken truly and clearly. He does want to be understood, and if we come to Him humbly He will teach us. *...before Abraham was, I am.*" In fact, Jesus in using the 'I am' statements in John's Gospel, in fact when you look through John's Gospel you find 21 different times, there are 21 different 'I am' statements of Jesus. Now seven of them you can package with other, like He says, "I am," and He says it three times. Like for instance, in John 6 He says, "I am the bread of life." He says it Verse 35, He says it in Verse 48, and He says it in Verse 51. He says the same thing three times. So you can break it down really into 14 sayings. There are 14 'I am' sayings of Jesus where He says, "I am." Seven of those come with a predicate. Seven of those have a predicate nominative attached to them. "I am," like what I just told you, "I am the bread of life." But there are seven other sayings of Jesus which are absolute 'I am' sayings. That is, there is no predicate, He just says, "I am."

Now here is one of those absolute statements: *...before Abraham was born, I am.*" Emphasizing His eternal existence, that He is God. When He uses these 'I am' sayings, the Jews who knew their Bibles recognized what He was doing, and it is clear in the passages. Didn't they recognize what He was doing? Why do we know that? They picked up rocks to stone Him. They knew He was claiming to be God. This is why I can't believe, you read that, and I read that to my friend, and I said, "What do you do with that?" That's when he pulled out the Matthew 25. "We know how to interpret the Bible and you don't." Jesus is drawing on a rich tradition of the Scriptures, this 'I am' name. Almost 7,000 times it's used in the Old Testament, but then you also have other passages where this name, Yahweh, is expounded so to speak, or elaborated on, a number of places. Exodus 33:19, where Moses says, "Show me Your glory." The Lord says back to him, "I will show you My glory. I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim My name, Yahweh, before you." What does he do the next day when he is hiding in the cleft of the rock? He says, "Yahweh, Yahweh." You read in your Bible, and I read in my Bible, "The Lord, the Lord," but it says, "Yahweh, Yahweh, compassionate and gracious." So he's proclaiming the name. He's unveiling the name.

Well, there are other passages that do that in an extraordinary way, and one section of Scripture is Isaiah 41 to 58. A dozen different times, you have 'I am' sayings in Isaiah, and now listen. When Jesus was ministering and when John was writing his Gospel, most Jews, like everybody else in the Mediterranean world, really read their Bible in Greek, because that was the one universal language. No matter where you went, they spoke Greek, and the Jews had been dispersed out of Palestine. Many of them were in other places, and so they were reading their Septuagint.

Septuagint is the word for the Greek translation of the Old Testament. It's sometimes written as LXX (70). There were 70 scholars who were involved in the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, so that the people could read the Bible in their own language.

Well, the Septuagint is the book that's normally quoted by the Gospel writers and is in the mind of them as they are preaching, because they want to be accessible. You know, sometimes when you look at translations, you'll see they're following the Septuagint exactly. Well, the Septuagint was what was in the mind of the people, and they knew Isaiah. And when you read Isaiah 41-58, you find 12 different times *ego eimi*. *Ego* is the Greek word for *I*. We get our English word *ego*. So it's *ego*. *Ego eimi*. *Eimi* is the Greek verb for *am*, and is translated this way. It means *I am*. It doesn't just mean *am* like our word *am*. It means *I am*, because the pronoun is there in the form of the verb. So when Jesus says, "Ego eimi," He's emphatically saying, "I am," almost as, "I Myself am."

Well, you have that a dozen times on the lips of the Lord in Isaiah, and I want to show you this. I said Jesus is claiming to be eternal when He says: ***...before Abraham was born, I am.***" He's speaking to this crowd who had been reading the Scriptures in the Greek, and they look at Isaiah 41:4, and this is talking about the greatness of Yahweh:

Isaiah 41:4

***"Who has performed and accomplished it,
Calling forth the generations from the beginning?
'I, the Lord, am the first, and with the last. I am He.'"***

That's what it says. You have a *He* there, but it says, "I am." The *He* is supplied. "I am the first and I am the last. I AM." Then turn over to Chapter 43:10-13.

Isaiah 43:10-13

***10 "You are My witnesses," declares the Lord,
"And My servant whom I have chosen,
So that you may know and believe Me
And understand that I am He.
Before Me there was no God formed,
And there will be none after Me.***

**11 “I, even I, am the Lord,
And there is no savior besides Me.**

**12 “It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed,
And there was no strange god among you;
So you are My witnesses,” declares the Lord,
“And I am God.**

**13 “Even from eternity I am He,
And there is none who can deliver out of My hand;
I act and who can reverse it?”**

Do you see? There’s the eternality of God, the eternality of Yahweh, and Jesus says: **...before Abraham was born, I am.**” Then they picked up rocks. You see that taught in Revelation 1:17. Remember when John falls down before the Lord? He sees His glory. He sees the glory of the resurrected, glorified Christ, and he falls as a dead man, and Jesus touches him and says, “Do not be afraid.” What does He say? **...“Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore,...** The book of Revelation ends with Jesus saying at the end to John:

**Revelation 22:13 ~ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last,
the beginning and the end.”**

He is eternal.

Hebrews 13:8 ~ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

He is eternal.

2) Jesus is Self-Existent:

Secondly, we see in the passage back to John 8, when we look at this idea of **...before Abraham was born, I am...** he’s also saying that Jesus is self-existent. This is another one of the attributes of God. Eternality is an attribute of God, the fact that He existed not just forward. We exist going forward, but we came into being at a point in time. We’re like a ray. I think I did this sometime recently, didn’t I? I did the ray a few weeks back. A point with an arrow going that way is a ray. That’s all that we can be. If you believe in Jesus Christ, then you’re going to live forever. If you don’t believe in Jesus Christ, you’re going to exist in death

forever. But you started at a point in time. The Son of God, the Holy Spirit, and the Father are the only ones who are a line, going infinitely in both directions.

So that's His eternality, but the second attribute is He's self-existent, that is, this attribute of God that He depends upon nothing outside of Himself. He exists from within Himself. His life comes from within Himself. Now, that's not true of anybody else. That's not true of any angel. That is only true of God. When Jesus says *...before Abraham was born, I am...* He's saying that of Himself. "My existence is from within Myself." John's been telling us this already when he said in John 1:4, *In Him was life...* He has it coming out of Him. Life is emanating from within Him. It's not given to Him, not borrowed for Him. The Father hasn't given Him life. No, it's from within Him. He is self-existent. He is independent. Everything else depends on Him. He's entirely in a different class. He's in a class by Himself, and only God is in that class: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I mentioned earlier those 7 "I am" sayings. There are 14 "I am" sayings in total. 7 are predicates and 7 are absolute. The 7 predicates that He uses, I think one of the reasons He's telling us, revealing His glory, is look, "I'm Yahweh. I'm the self-existent one, and let me show you who I am to you. I am the Bread of Life. Everyone is hungry except for Me, but I am your food. I am the Light of the world. Everyone's in the dark except Me. I emanate light. I am the door of the sheepfold. Everyone needs to find a way into Heaven. I am the way into Heaven. I am the Good Shepherd. You're all lost sheep, but I'm not. I'm the Shepherd. I'm the resurrection and the life. You're dying. You will die soon. I alone possess the ability to impart life. I am the resurrection. I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). You don't know which way to go. You don't know what the truth is. You don't know where to find life. I'm all of those. I am the true vine. You're the branches. Without Me, you are nothing. You're just a branch cut off with no life coming out of you. You must be connected to Me, but I don't need to be connected to anything. I am the true vine." So Jesus is self-existent. That's the second point.

Again, another thing that clearly shows His deity, and in fact, the third point I want to say just to sum up the first two, really, is:

3) Jesus is God:

John 1:1 had said this:

John 1:1 ~ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

We read earlier from Colossians. Ted read from Colossians earlier. We heard in Colossians 1:19, “For God was pleased to have all the fullness dwell in Him.” In Colossians 2:9, Paul again says, listen to this:

Colossians 2:9 ~ For in Him (Christ) all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,...

All the fullness of God is there in the Man Christ Jesus, and that’s what He’s saying to them. ***...before Abraham was born, I am...*** I am fullness. I have no need. This idea of self-existence means there’s no need in God. There is no need. He doesn’t need you. He doesn’t need me. He didn’t create because He was lonely. That is a blasphemous, foolish, stupid sentiment. God was never lonely. He is fullness. He is overflowing joy and love and happiness. Nothing can touch that. And because of that, you and I can go to that fountain, and He invites us to that fountain to dwell in it with Him. Jesus is eternal. Jesus is self-existent. Jesus is God. You have that just looking at the text, taking the words from the text, and then finally, you have it nailed down with the fourth point:

4) Jesus is Yahweh:

He’s claiming to be Yahweh. ***...before Abraham was born, I am.*** We’ve made clear the connection between Yahweh and *I am* in Exodus 3. I mentioned 7 absolute sayings. There are 7 predicate sayings we just went over, and 7 absolute sayings. I want you to walk with me through John’s Gospel and look at these. Flip back over to John 4:26, and you have the first time that Jesus says, “I am,” in the book of John. In Verse 25, the woman at the well says to Him:

John 4:25-26 ~ The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.”

In the Greek it says, “The One speaking to you, I am.” That’s what He says. This Samaritan woman, a woman and a Samaritan is the first one to hear that glorious utterance from our Savior over His lips, “I am.” In Chapter 6:20, remember when the disciples get into the boat, they’re without Jesus there on the Sea of Galilee, and there’s a bad storm. They’re crossing. They’re frightened. It’s dark. They don’t know where Jesus is. He’s back on the other side of the sea, they think.

John 6:18 ~ The sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing. 19 Then, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened.

They're frightened. They're in this storm on the Sea of Galilee. They're terrified already, and now they see a man walking on the water, and this is what He says. It says in the text, "It is I," but what He said was, "Ego eimi (I am). Do not be afraid."

John 6:20 ~ But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." 21 So they were willing to receive Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

"I am. I have the authority. I am Yahweh." Then back into John 8, Verse 58 is not the first time in this Chapter, in this discussion, that Jesus has used the "I am" formula. In John 8:24, He's talking to the Jews there earlier in this same conversation, and then He says:

John 8:24 ~ Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins."

John 8:28 ~ So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.

And then Verse 58:

John 8:58 ~ Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

The third time in this same conversation He says, "I am," and it put them over the edge. "Now we know what He's saying for sure. He's saying that He is Yahweh." You find it also in John 13:19. He's telling His disciples at this point what's going to happen. He's going to be crucified. He says in Verse 19:

John 13:19 ~ From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am.

And then perhaps the most staggering of all is John 18:5-6 and John 18:8, where three times we have these words in the text. Judas comes out with a cohort of officers from the chief priests. Jesus says in Verse 4:

John 18:4-8 ~ ...“Whom do you seek?” 5 They answered Him, “Jesus the Nazarene.” He said to them, “I am.” And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them. 6 So when He said to them, “I am,” they drew back and fell to the ground. 7 Therefore He again asked them, “Whom do you seek?” And they said, “Jesus the Nazarene.” 8 Jesus answered, “I told you that I am; so if you seek Me, let these go their way,”

It’s astounding. He says, “I am,” and they fall on their faces. The glory came out and God didn’t allow them to have any resistance initially. They fell on their faces almost like what John does in Revelation, and the amazing thing is they got up and they’re like, “What happened?” and Jesus says, “I am. This time, come on and arrest Me.” Isn’t that amazing? Jesus is Yahweh. He is the great *I am*. It is clear in the passage.

There’s so much that this Name means when you look back in the Old Testament, and we don’t have time to go into all of it. I’ll mention to you a couple of things that I want to share with you and leave in your thoughts today, and the first is the fact that this Name Yahweh was used by the patriarchs, and even back to the days of Enoch, I think it was known by Adam, even. We can infer from that, but it was not fully known until the Exodus, because in Exodus 6, the Lord says to Moses right after the burning bush, just shortly after that when he goes down to Egypt and runs into trouble, God says to him, “Listen, I want you to know something. The patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – they knew Me as El Shaddai, but My Name Yahweh I did not fully disclose to them, but I’m going to disclose it to you.”

Now, they did know the Name Yahweh, because they called on the Name of Yahweh. We read that in Genesis, but they didn’t understand the full meaning of it. What’s going on with that? Yahweh has this rich, personal element, and in fact, I think it’s seen as the personal Name of God. It’s God disclosing the essence of who He is. I mean, you could say that we all have many names in a way. I mean, we don’t really have names, so to speak, but if we think of it this way, the names of God are something like this at times: Father. I have the name father or dad. I’m also a son. I’m a husband. I’m a pastor, right? All these names apply to me, but then you say, “Who is he?” Ty. We could say that about you. You have these different names, and yet who are you? If we’re really talking about you, we name your name.

That's the Name Yahweh. That's the personal Name. He's Creator. He's Master. He's Ruler, but He's Yahweh. Now, let me show you how this unfolds. These things weren't fully understood by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God is saying, but they were already hinted at all the way through, and you see it way back in Genesis 1 and 2. To me, it's just so beautiful how God puts together His Word. Listen to this. In Genesis 1, you have the account of the seven days of creation. In Chapter 1, you actually had 6 days. Chapter 2:1-3 should be in Chapter 1. The Chapter and Verse divisions aren't inspired. They weren't there originally, okay? They should have divided it at Genesis 2:3, because Genesis 2:1-3 is the seventh day of creation. God rested on the seventh day and He blessed it.

All through the seven days of creation, Genesis 1:1 to Genesis 2:3, you have the Name of God: Elohim. Elohim means God. It's actually a majestic plural of the word which literally translated would be Gods, but in the Hebrew, it's used with singular verbs so that you know he doesn't mean Gods, but he means God singular. It's kind of like when we have singular and plural verbs that don't come out as much usually only with pronouns. We have to change the verb for a singular versus a plural. Take my word for it. The verbs in the Hebrew are singular, so that it means a singular subject. It says, "Elohim created the heavens and the earth," and created is singular. So it's a majestic plural, but it's picturing God's greatness. He's like all the Gods in one. That's why God, I think, chose that name. All through Genesis 1, it's Elohim, Elohim, Elohim.

Think about Genesis 1. God spoke and it came to pass. He says, "Let there be light," and there was light. He says, "Let the skies be filled with birds. Let the waters teem with creatures," and it was so. He just says it and it happens. An aspect of God's transcendent majesty is on display in Genesis 1:1 to 2:3. Why are there two creation accounts? Why is Genesis 2:4-25 all about the sixth day of creation? You have seven days lined out in Genesis 1, and on display in Genesis 1 is the majestic glory of this great Creator. In Genesis 2:4, you have a spotlight now. It's like a slow motion instant replay to go back into day six and look at what happened on day six. That's where you read that the Lord took the dust of the earth, formed it into a man, and he breathed into it the breath of life. What you have in Genesis 2:4 is the first appearance of the word Yahweh. All the way through Genesis 2, it is Yahweh Elohim, Yahweh Elohim, Yahweh Elohim. The same God, Elohim, is the One who created, but He's also known as Yahweh Elohim.

What does Yahweh do? He takes the dust and forms it with His hands. He breathes into it the breath of life. He speaks to man. He creates a garden for man. He gives him instruction. He communes with man. He meets man for a daily walk. That's the glory of God on display there in creation. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob come to know the Lord in some way. They see His power as the El Shaddai. They see Him give Abraham a son at 100 years old. They see Him do great things, but they haven't seen His full nature as Yahweh.

That's what Moses is hearing in Exodus 6 when he says, "They didn't know Me like you're going to know Me." What did we see? What was He already showing about Himself? We read the words from Exodus 3 earlier. "I'm the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I have seen the suffering of My people. I have heard their cries, and I am concerned about them, and I have come down." This is Yahweh. Yahweh is a God who personally relates to His people. He is the majestic Lord of glory who is so transcendent that we can't fathom His greatness and His majesty, and yet He draws near. He breathes on us – the intimacy of that when He breathed into man the breath of life. He could have said, "Let there be life in that man." He didn't have to form the man. He could have just said, "Let that happen." No, but He formed him with clay and He breathed into Him. The intimacy in that.

Think about when you're holding a little baby and you feel the baby's breath on you, and the baby is feeling your breath on it. Hopefully good breath, and when you're breathing like that, the intimacy of that, the warmth of that, the love, that's how God is, and He's revealing that in Exodus. "This is who I am. I'm a God who comes down to deliver you out of your afflictions, to meet with you, to love you, to bring you to Myself." It's a watershed moment in history. Now think about it and look. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had the Lord speak to them in some neat ways, but Moses and the people had the Lord appear to them in a pillar of fire. They got to see His glory every day for 40 years. They got to see it with their own eyes.

Now back to John 8:58, what is the context? When did Jesus say *...before Abraham was born, I am...*? When did Jesus make clear beyond a shadow of a doubt, "I am Yahweh"? It was in the immediate aftermath of the Feast of Tabernacles, which celebrated the glory of God coming down in that pillar of fire, the deliverance of Israel, but particularly Him dwelling among His people. While they were in tents, God was among them. That's what all of that's about, and in that setting with the hearts having just gone through rejoicing in that, Jesus says, "Do understand. I am Yahweh. I have heard the deep cries of your heart. I have seen the affliction with which Satan is afflicting you, the bondage that you are in as children of the devil, and I'm concerned about you. I have come down with My

mighty hand to deliver you and to bring you to Myself. I am Yahweh who saves you.” They should have just fallen down in incredible joy. “God has come!” The most wonderful thing that a human being could ever hear is to hear God Himself saying, “I have seen your affliction. I have heard your cries. I care about you, and I am here to deliver you.”

The wonder of it is, listen, in reality, every one of you now knows that, because the Gospel has been preached to you. God has heard your cries. He has seen your affliction. He cares about you, and He has come down to save you. And all that’s left is to run to His Son. His Son is Yahweh in the flesh. I mean, how much more can He do to come down? He left the glory of Heaven, and He took flesh to Himself, and He lived and walked in our shoes. He who is so holy He can’t look on sin, came down and lived in a world of it, and then He became sin on the cross, entering fully into everything, entering into death itself. As He said to John in Revelation, “I am the first and the last. I was dead, but I am alive forever more. I went into death and I destroyed death. I have gone all the way down into every bit of suffering that you have ever experienced, and I am here to deliver you.”

Now why would anybody reject a God like that? Why would you hold out in your heart against a God like that? He’s a God who loves you, and has seen your suffering, and has come down to make known Himself to you so that you can be saved. Now, you’re going to have to repent, turn from sin, but when you turn from sin, you’ll find that He was what you were hungry for all along anyway. He was what you were thirsty for. Nothing in this world satisfies. Jesus satisfies. That’s why He’s been saying, “I am the Bread. I am the Light. You’re in the dark. Come to Me.” Rush to Him today and know that Yahweh, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness and truth, who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin, no matter how ugly your sins are, He says, “Come.” Come to Him today. May God help us all to be sure that we have gone to Him and that we’re clinging to Him.

Let’s pray...

Our Father, we exalt You the Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – who have made known to us such a glorious salvation. We ask that You would quicken the hearts of those who are still dead in their sins, that, Lord Jesus, You would look upon them and cause them to come to life and to repent and believe. Only a look from You is all it takes, Lord, and so they just need to look at You. You said if they will look at You, You will save. Whosoever will call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.

Father, forgive us who do know You, from ever being so forgetful that we forget that You are everything that we long for. You're everything that we need, and You should be everything that we ever seek. Help us to live and walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which we've been called. We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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