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  - A. The Son of God Revealed (1:19-4:54)
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## Whom do you make yourself out to be?

*Gospel of John, Part XXX*

John 8:48-59

Stuart W. Bryan

### I. Introduction

### II. I honor My Father

- A. Round 1: Initial Dismissive Question & Response (48-51)

*"When their theological argument fails, Jesus' opponents turn to personal abuse"* (Carson, 354). They endeavor to dismiss Jesus with a series of questions. While Jesus ignores their insult, He does respond to their accusation and then He reissues His invitation. There is a pathway of escape from slavery to sin, Satan, and death.

- B. Round 2: Renewed Dismissive Question & Response

They repudiate Jesus' offer and take His promise of escaping death simplistically. They accuse Him of honoring or glorifying Himself, *"Whom do you make yourself out to be?"* Jesus repudiates their accusation and insists that even Abraham looked forward in faith to Jesus' day.

- C. Round 3: Final Dismissive Question, Response, and Rage

This claim brings all the cynicism of His opponents to the fore. *"You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"* In other words, *"You are crazy! Your claims are absurd!"* Yet Jesus doesn't back down. Instead, He delivers the ultimate punch line. *"Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, \_\_\_\_\_."*

### III. Application

- A. I am who I am!

- 1. The Isaianic Background (cf. 41:4; 43:10, 13, 25; 46:4; 47:8; 48:12)

*"You are My witnesses," says the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD, And besides Me there is no savior. I have declared and saved, I have proclaimed, And there was no foreign god among you; Therefore you are My witnesses," Says the LORD, "that I am God. Indeed before the day was, I am He; And there is no one who can deliver out of My hand; I work, and who will reverse it?" (43:8-13)*

## 2. The Mosaic Background (Ex 3:13-15 cf. Acts 17:24-25, 28a)

*Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' " Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'*

The Reformed theologian Louis Berkhof explains:

*"God is self-existent, that is, He has the ground of His existence in Himself... The idea of God's self-existence was generally expressed by the term aseitas, meaning self-originated, but Reformed theologians quite generally substituted for it the word independentia (independence), as expressing... that He is independent in everything... As the self-existent God, He is not only independent in Himself, but also causes everything to depend on Him." (58)*

### B. Divine, Demented, Demonic

*"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about [Jesus]: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." (Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 52)*

### C. Don't fear death (cf. Job 19:25-27; Heb 2:14-15; Rev 1:8, 17f; 14:13)

We should treasure Jesus' glorious promise in verse 51: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."* Jesus is speaking of eternal death, of which physical death is the type and shadow. The one who keeps His Word shall continue to live in the presence of God and will rise again in the resurrection. This is the source of incredible hope, confidence, and courage.

*"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ... Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:31–39, NKJV)*

## IV. Conclusion