

# OpenTheo

## A Question of Pedegree (Part 1)



### **The Life and Teachings of Christ** - Steve Gregg

In this session, Steve Gregg discusses John Chapter 8 and the story of the woman caught in adultery. He emphasizes how Jesus is not alone in testifying, as the Father and four other witnesses have testified to his identity. Gregg also delves into the concept of Jesus being both fully God and fully human and the importance of understanding this duality for salvation. He concludes by highlighting the parallels between John Chapters 5 and 8, specifically Jesus' claim to be equal with God and the reactions of the Jews to his claims.

### **Transcript**

In this session, we're taking the second part of John Chapter 8. In our last session, we studied the story of the woman who was caught in the act of adultery and of Jesus' verdict concerning her situation. That story, as I mentioned, is questionable whether it is in its original position here, as it's found after John Chapter 7. Many scholars believe that it belongs somewhere else in the Gospels. Some believe it doesn't really belong originally to any of the Gospels, but that it's authentic.

I have no trouble with it where it is. The only problem seems to be principally the manuscript evidence, which supports placing it somewhere else. In any case, that disputed portion ends at verse 11, and we have the rest of John 8 to take in this session, which is still a lot of verses, although in a previous year, we actually took John 8 as one session, the whole chapter.

I don't know how we ever did it. It's hard enough just to take verses 12 through 59, as we're going to do today. We'll start at verse 12.

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. The Pharisees therefore said to him, You bear witness of yourself.

Your witness is not true. Jesus answered and said to them, Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true. For I know where I came from and where I'm going.

But you do not know where I come from and where I'm going. You judge according to the

flesh. I judge no one.

And yet if I do judge, my judgment is true, for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent me. It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am one who bears witness of myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness of me.

Now, we'll stop there for a moment, because this has to do with the testimony that stands to establish Jesus' claims about himself. Earlier, in chapter 5 of John, Jesus had said, If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. That was in John 5.31. And it's probably that statement that he made, that they're calling him on the carpet about, here, after he said, I am the light of the world, they said, well, you're bearing witness of yourself.

In John 8.13. You bear witness of yourself. Your witness is not true. They seem to be holding him to his words that he made back in John 5.31. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

But in both places, Jesus points out that he is not bearing witness of himself alone. In John 5.31, where he says, If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. The implication is, if I alone am bearing witness to myself, if there's no other witnesses that stand to confirm what I'm saying about myself, then my witness cannot be considered true.

Because the law itself said, in the mouth of two or more witnesses, every word shall be established. And Jesus points it out over here in the John 8 passage, where he says that it's written in your law, the testimony of two is true. And then he points out that he's not the only one testifying of who he is, but his father also is testifying, therefore there are two witnesses.

Actually, back in chapter 5, he pointed out more witnesses than that. Because he said, in John 5, beginning at verse 31, If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another who bears witness of me, and I know that the witness which he witnesses of me is true.

You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. So John's a witness also. Yet I do not receive the testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.

In other words, I don't consider John's witness to be definitive as to who I am. I point it out to you so that you might be convinced that there are more witnesses than you've taken into consideration previously. John, for example, is a witness.

However, I have a better witness than that. He says, in verse 36 of John 5, But I have a greater witness than John's, for the works which the Father has given me to finish, the very works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father has sent me. So he's got not

only his own witness, but he's got John's witness and the witness of the signs, the works that he does.

And then it goes on, verse 37, And the Father himself who sent me has testified of me. So there's a third witness. And then, down in verse 39, he says, You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, but these are they which testify of me or bear witness of me.

So in John 5, he has enumerated four witnesses in addition to himself that confirm who he is. John the Baptist, his works prove who he is. The Father himself is born witness.

And the Scriptures bear witness of who he is. So he's got a fairly well-established backing there, a lot of confirmation of who he is. Now, on this occasion in John 8, verse 12, where he says, I am the light of the world, he was obviously saying something about himself.

He was making a claim for himself. And probably the claim he's making harks back to Isaiah, because Isaiah spoke of the Messiah as one who would be a light, not only to Israel, but also to the Gentiles, and therefore a light to the world. Let me see if I can find real quickly that Scripture.

It's in Isaiah chapter 43, I think. Maybe it's not 43. I'll find it.

Maybe it's 40, somewhere in the 40s. I have not obviously memorized where this is. Okay, it's in chapter 49, it is.

Isaiah 49. And the Messiah is speaking. And in Isaiah 49, 3, it says, And he, that is God, said to me, to the Messiah, You are my servant, O Israel, Jesus is the quintessential representative of Israel, the embodiment of the remnant, in whom I will be glorified.

Then I said, I have labored in vain. Let's get a little further down here. Well, here it is, down in verse 6. Indeed, he says, It is too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, or Israel, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel.

I will also give you as a light to the Gentiles that you should be my salvation to the ends of the earth. This is how Jehovah speaks to the Messiah. It would be too small a task for him to have nothing more to do than restore Israel.

He's going to restore the world. He's going to be his salvation, God's salvation to the ends of the earth. He's going to be a light, not only to Israel, but to the Gentiles as well.

And by the way, when Jesus made this statement about himself, I am the light of the world, which seems to hark back to that prophecy about the Messiah in Isaiah. He's saying, I'm the Messiah. And even though he said, well, you're bearing witness of yourself, and he says, well, my father also bears witness of me, there is another witness who had borne witness of him as well.

And that witness, well, there were actually two of them. One was Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, when John was born. And that's in Luke chapter 1, verses 78 and 79.

A prophetic oracle given by Zacharias at the birth of John the Baptist, picking up in sort of the middle of a sentence, verse 77 actually, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the day spring from on high has visited us, to give light to those who sit in darkness, and the shadow of death to guide our feet into the way of peace. This giving light to those who sit in darkness, refers back to Isaiah 9 too, about those who sat in darkness have seen a great light. And it's quite obvious that Zacharias is referring to not only John the Baptist, but the coming of Jesus afterwards.

But then in the next chapter of Luke, Luke chapter 2, old Simeon, when he held the baby Jesus in his arms, prophesied and blessed God, and said, in Luke 2, 29, Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel. Now, Simeon, who was recognized by the faithful in Jerusalem as a prophet, because the Lord had spoken to him and told him he would not die before he'd seen the Lord's Christ, and those who were like Anna and others of the remnant recognized this man as having heard from God, really.

He was a recognized prophet, and he holds Jesus in his arms in Jesus' infancy and says, this is going to be the light to the Gentiles and the glory of Israel, referring again back to the Isaacic predictions about the Messiah being the light to the Gentiles, the light to the world. So Jesus could have, had he wished, referred back to even this. Here was another bearing witness that Jesus was the light of the world, Zechariah and Simeon, but of course those prophecies were made in a semi-private situation, not entirely, there were people around, but it wasn't exactly made at a great convocation where the whole of Israel was listening, and no doubt most of Jesus' critics were not present when these prophecies were uttered over him.

But there were many witnesses to who Jesus was on this point, besides himself, and that's what he points out. When they accuse him of bearing witness of himself, and therefore they say, in verse 13, your witness is not true, he has to clarify for them. He says, well, even if I do bear witness of myself, verse 14, John 8, 14, my witness is true, for I know where I came from, and just because, even if there were no confirmations, that doesn't mean he's lying.

It doesn't really take two people to speak truth, one person can speak truth, the only problem is, you don't know if they're speaking the truth, until there's two witnesses. And they're basically applying the principle wrongly. When he had said in John 5, 31, if I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true, what he meant was, if I alone, if I'm the only

one bearing witness of me, then my witness cannot be regarded as true.

And therefore they misunderstand and say, well, aren't you bearing witness to yourself now? Therefore, you're not telling the truth. And he said, well, the fact that I'm bearing witness to myself is no guarantee that I'm not telling the truth, after all, I do know where I came from, and I can tell you that, and I can be truthful about it. But you do not know where I come from and where I'm going.

Verse 15, you judge according to the flesh, I judge no one. Now, this statement, I judge no one, has to be taken not in an absolute sense, because he says in the very next verse, and yet if I do judge, my judgment is true. So, obviously, he does reserve the right for himself to make judgments about things and people.

And back in John chapter 5, where we were a minute ago, but in a different part of it, in fact, just before that, John 5, 26 and following says, For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself, and he has given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. And then down in verse 30, John 5, 30, I can of my own self do nothing. As I hear, I judge.

And my judgment is righteous, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of the Father who sent me. Now, some of these themes in John 5, as we've seen, are also repeated in John 8. He was probably speaking largely to the same audience in both places. But he makes the points more than once with them.

Now, he says, I can of my own self do nothing. He's going to say that same thing again in John 8 in the material that's ahead of us. And he says in verse 30 here, As I hear, I judge.

And my judgment is righteous. So, when he says in John 8, 15, I judge no one, he doesn't mean that in some absolute sense. After all, in John 8, 26, he says, I have many things to say and to judge concerning you.

Now, therefore, what does Jesus mean when he says in John 8, 15, You judge according to the flesh, I judge no one. I think his statement, I judge no one, should be understood to mean in the sense that the previous clause indicated. After the flesh.

You judge after the flesh, I judge no one after the flesh. I don't judge that way. I don't just look at outward appearances.

I don't judge someone because he's a Jew or a Gentile. I don't judge somebody because he's educated or not, or because he's a Pharisee or not a Pharisee. That is, part of that party or not.

I don't judge someone on outward appearances. Of course, the woman taken in adultery we've just read about is a good example of that. This woman appeared to be, you know, certainly worthy of condemnation.

And those who were accusing her appeared to be righteous. But Jesus knew that they were not righteous. And spoke in such a way as to bring conviction on their conscience about the same point.

He made a judgment of them. He judged righteously. But he didn't judge according to appearance or according to the flesh.

His judgment is different than theirs, is what he's saying. I don't judge anyone is simply meaning, I don't judge anyone the way you do. It's a little like when James says, in James chapter 1, that God cannot be tempted with evil, neither does he tempt any man.

Well, God does tempt people, or test them. The word test and tempt are the same in the Greek. And God does put people to the test.

The Bible confirms this. But, when it says God cannot be tempted with evil, neither does he tempt any man, it is implied with evil. God doesn't, you know, the modifier from the previous clause is assumed in the second clause.

Likewise here, you judge according to the flesh, I judge no one according to the flesh is implied. Paul even said that we Christians don't judge according to the flesh. He indicated that, or we don't know anyone based upon fleshly considerations, he says.

This is in 2 Corinthians 5.16. Paul said, therefore from now on we regard no one according to the flesh, even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him thus no longer. By the way, literally in the Greek, in 2 Corinthians 5.16, he says, yet now we know him no longer. Thus is not in the original.

And for Paul to say, we know him no longer, would obviously not be taking the absolute sense, but it's one of those things. We know, we don't regard anyone after the flesh, though we once knew Christ after the flesh, yet we don't know him anymore. That's how it really reads, but after the flesh is implied.

So, I mean, we have to be, take those things into consideration. Otherwise, there are some snags here, if we don't take into consideration the implied modifier in the second clause of a sentence like this. So, Jesus did come to judge, and he did make judgments, but he didn't judge after the flesh.

He didn't judge with the unrighteous judgment that the Pharisees did. And then in verse 16, John 8.16, and yet if I do judge, my judgment is true. For I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent me.

Now, contrary to the accusation they made that he was alone bearing witness to himself, he says, no, I'm not alone doing this. I am with the Father. And it is written also in your law that the testimony of two men is true.

I am one who bears witness to myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness to me. So, we have two witnesses, and that's enough. Now, in exactly what sense the Father bears witness to him, he does not clarify.

It is the case, of course, that God had verbally, vocally, audibly borne witness to Christ on at least one occasion before this. Two, actually, but these Jews were not present probably. Well, it's hard to know whether they were at the first time.

The first time was when Jesus was baptized, and God spoke from heaven and said, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Obviously, that was God bearing witness to him, and that might be the occasion he's referring to. And God also bore witness to him in the same way on the Mount of Transfiguration, though none of his audience here were present to hear it at that time.

Later on in John, God speaks to him again in John 12, and some said it thundered when they heard it. Others said it was an angel who spoke, but it was, yet again, the Father testifying to Jesus. Now, that might be what Jesus means when he says the Father has testified to me, meaning he has spoken audibly from heaven and said, I am who I claim to be.

It's also possible that he's referring back to the works that he does, that they testify, and that this is the way that God attests to who Jesus is, by giving him these miracles to perform. That is how Peter understood the miracles and the works of Jesus when he was speaking in the house of Cornelius. In Acts 10, verse 38, it says how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all those who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

And we are witnesses of these things, which he did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem and so forth. So they said, we've seen these works he did, these miracles he did, and we can bear witness to this. And God, this proves that God was with him.

In one sense, God himself was therefore testifying of who Jesus was by the miracles that were given. Likewise, Peter, in Acts chapter 2, is even stronger on this point. In Acts 2.22, Peter says, Men of Israel, hear these words.

Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. Now, Jesus of Nazareth was a man attested by God, that is, God testified of him, God bore witness to him, by signs and wonders and miracles, that's what Peter said. Therefore, when Jesus said, my father also bears witness to me, he could be referring to the fact that God was attesting to who he was through the signs and wonders.

Either one is possible, and of course, both are possible. It's not certain in what way Jesus has it principally in mind. In all likelihood, his listeners there were not present on any of

the occasions when God spoke from heaven audibly.

And therefore, Jesus might not be referring to that because it would carry no weight with him, since they were not there, they had not heard this. But, since they had seen his miracles, certainly they would have reason to believe that he was who he claimed to be, because he was confirming it with signs and wonders. Now, he says in verse 19, or not he, but they, They said to him, where is your father? He's just mentioned his father bearing witness, and they say, we don't know who your father is, we haven't seen him, we haven't heard anything from him, who is he? And Jesus answered, you know neither me nor my father.

If you had known me, you would have known my father also. So, he accuses them of not knowing God. Now, you don't know my father, might mean you don't know who my father is, or you don't acknowledge my father to be who he is.

Or, he could just be saying you don't know God, which would be true too. In any case, that's the end of this particular conversation. It says in verse 20, these words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple, and no one laid hands on him, for his hour had not yet come.

This continues on from chapter 7, where it says in verse 32 of chapter 7, chapter 2, well even before that, excuse me, John 7.30, 7.30 first, it says, Then they sought to take him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. That's the same statement essentially as we were reading in chapter 8, verse 20. And then also in John 7.32, it says, The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

And we know the sequel to that, the officers came back empty handed. It wasn't his time to go. Likewise, it still wasn't his time to go when he made these statements in the treasury in John 8. Now, apparently on another occasion, maybe the next day or later the same day, in John 8.21, then Jesus said to them again, I'm going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sins.

Where I go, you cannot come. So the Jews said, Will he kill himself because he says, where I go, you cannot come? And he said to them, You are from beneath, I am from above. You are of this world, I am not of this world.

Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins. Now, he keeps saying to them that they're going to die in their sins.

And to us in modern Christianese, to die in one's sins, we talk about the multitudes dying in their sins, we mean somebody who's never been converted. And that's very probably his meaning. It's possible he used the expression the same as we do.



It's possible also that he meant you will die for your sins, because he did say on other occasions that what was going to happen to Jerusalem shortly after his time was going to affect many of those who were his opponents personally. And that would certainly be for their sins. I don't know if he's predicting their death under the judgment of God in 70 AD for their sin of rejecting him, or if he's simply speaking more generically, like anybody who doesn't get saved dies with sin on their conscience, with sin unforgiven.

That's, I think, how we would normally use the term these days, but I don't know if that's how Jesus meant it. In any case, what he's saying is very threatening. He's saying their sins are unrequited, and if they don't come to believe in him, they will remain guilty of their sins, and they will die in that condition, and perhaps for that condition.

Now, when he said in verse 23, you are from beneath, I am from above, you are of this world, I am not of this world, his saying, you are from beneath, is talking about their spiritual origins, not their physical origins. When he says, you are of this world, that would be their natural origin, they originated from this world. Jesus did not.

He originated from eternity, from heaven. But when he says, you are from beneath, he clarifies that a little later in the same chapter, when he says, you are of your father, the devil. You are from an entirely different stock than I am.

Now, some people, particularly new age people, generally say that Jesus really didn't claim to be God, didn't claim to be superhuman, and even referring to him as the Christ, is to refer to him in a way that we could refer to all of ourselves, that we are all the Christ. We just need to have the revelation of that. We need to get the insight.

We need to attain to Christ consciousness, so that we understand that we are the Christ. And Jesus was no different from any of us. He was Christ, we're all Christ.

The only difference is he realized it, and lived it out, and acted like it. And that's what we all will someday do, if we just kind of get the, if we make this quantum leap in consciousness to this realization. And yet, Jesus' claims were quite different than what they are represented by these people, because although Jesus very seldom spoke of himself being the Christ, in fact, I can only think of one time where he said he was the Christ.

And he didn't even use the word, but he just confirmed that that's who he was. Well, there are two times where he confirmed it. Once, to the woman at the well, he said, I who speak to you am he.

She had just spoken of the Christ. And then, of course, at Caesarea Philippi, when Peter said, you are the Christ, he confirmed that that was correct. But apart from those two times, Jesus didn't even call himself the Christ.

But he did talk about his uniqueness. He's not like everybody else. And the reason he's

not like everybody else is not just because he realized something about himself that the rest of us have yet to realize, because if we would realize who we are outside of Christ, we are from beneath.

We are of the world. But he was not. He did not originate from the world.

He came down from heaven. And the claim he makes about himself is an entirely unique claim. Everybody else is from the world, but he's not.

He's not just a man who has discovered something important internally that made him more enlightened and more empowered than other people, but he's one whose origins were entirely other than that of other human beings, because he was God. He dwelt in heaven for all eternity, and that's where he came from. Now, when Jesus said things about coming down from heaven on other occasions, people said, well, we know who his parents are.

Why does he say he came down from heaven? Wasn't he born to Mary and Joseph and so forth? And it's obvious that Jesus doesn't mean that he physically floated down from heaven, but he's talking about his preexistence before coming to earth. Now, people often say, Jesus never claimed to be God. These statements that Jesus had a preexistence as God before he came to earth, these ideas were manufactured by the apostles later on as the myths and legends about Jesus grew in their imaginations, and they eventually put things back into his mouth when writing his words, making him claim things he never claimed.

Of course, there's no evidence that there was anything ever put in his mouth that he didn't really say, that his disciples manufactured things. It's quite clear from this verse that if this is authentic saying of Jesus, and there's no reason to doubt it except for unusual skepticism without any basis, that Jesus was claiming that he had a preexistence. He didn't talk about it very often, by the way.

It's true. We don't find very many statements of Jesus about him being God, and this might be one of the surest proofs that the disciples did not manufacture the doctrine and then put it back into his mouth, because if he had never said anything about it, if it was not a true doctrine, and the disciples made it up later that their hero Jesus was actually God in the flesh, this would be such an important aspect of him, and if they were modifying his speech by fabricating sayings from him, they'd certainly fabricate a great number of places where he clearly claimed to be God, because that would be so important to establish. If the disciples were trying to perpetrate this myth, then when they wrote the Gospels, they would have put it in there big time.

I mean, it's obviously the most astonishing claim that is ever made about Jesus. Even to call him the son of God is not as astonishing as to say he is God, because in some sense the angels are sons of God. In some sense, we're all sons of God.

Obviously, when we say Jesus is the son of God, we mean something very different than that, which we mean when we say we are or the angels are, but the point is, a claim so astounding, if it was fabricated, and if the Gospels contain fabricated statements of Jesus that were put in there by hindsight, by the disciples trying to establish an identity for Jesus from his own statements that he never really claimed, they certainly would have had him frequently making claims like this, but he doesn't. He just gives hints of it from time to time. The very subtleness of his claims, the very reticence of Jesus to make outward claims of being God, is a proof that the disciples didn't add a bunch of stuff or else we'd find that stuff in his claims.

They would have manufactured it and made sure we could see it plainly. But this is one of those places where he's making a veiled reference to the fact that before he was born in Bethlehem, he lived in heaven. His birth in Bethlehem was a coming down from above.

It wasn't just coming into the world the way the rest of us have. And in verse 24 when he says, Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins, for if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins. The statement, I am he, in the Greek is ego eimi.

He is not really part of the expression in the Greek. He is in italics there. He just says, I am.

Now before you make notes about that, I want to make something clear. Ego eimi, the expression that is found here, can imply the word he. Even though ego means I and eimi means am and there's no he in that expression, yet in Greek usage it can imply the word he after it.

And that is why the translators put it in here. For example, in John chapter 9, when Jesus healed the man who was born blind, look at John 9.9. People were wondering if this was the same guy since they'd known him as a blind man and now they saw him as a seeing man. Some said this is he.

Others said he is one like him. But he said, I am he. Again here it's ego eimi.

Obviously the he is implied. When the blind man said I am, he wasn't claiming to be God, right? I mean, he's saying I'm the one. I'm he.

Now, I want to point that out because when we come a little later today to John 8.58, where Jesus said before Abraham was I am, he again says ego eimi. And I want to talk as responsibly as I can about the implications of that claim. Ego eimi in the Greek can mean I am.

In fact, that's the literal meaning I am. Period. I am.

It's the ordinary way of saying I am. Anyone would say ego eimi if they're speaking Greek and wanted to say any sentence that had the expression I am in it. It's just the

generic way of saying it.

But it can also mean I am he by implication in some context. As for example in John 9.9 when the blind man said I am. But he meant I am he.

I'm the guy you think, the guy you're talking about. Now, the question then is in places like John 8.24, when Jesus says if you do not believe that ego eimi, you will die in your sins, it is possible that he should be just translated I am. If you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins.

That's a possible translation. It would be a statement that if persons do not believe in the deity of Christ, they will not be saved. They will die in their sins.

This is a possible implication of his statement here. If ego eimi here is translated I am and nothing more. And if we take that as a divine title, which is possible to do.

If that is true, then the one defining trait of sub-Christian cults is their refusal to acknowledge that Jesus is I am, is Jehovah, that he is God. And notably, that is how cults have usually been defined at least in modern times. Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Christian Science and other cults all of which claim to be Christian, we do not regard them to be Christian or saved because they do not believe that Jesus is the I am.

They don't believe that Jesus is God. They believe he is something good and wonderful, but not God. And if Jesus' statement be understood to be if you do not believe that I am, then you will die in your sins, and that is a possible way to understand it, then he would be saying that belief in his deity is essential to salvation.

Now we don't read anywhere in the Bible that belief in the Trinity or belief in a whole bunch of other things, belief in heaven or hell or any of those things are essential to salvation. But there are some things, some beliefs are essential to salvation. You obviously have to have some irreducible minimum of content to your faith and who Jesus is to be saved, below which line people have views about Jesus, but they are unsaved.

It's quite probable that even those of us who style ourselves as knowing a great deal about Jesus and accept the whole testimony of scripture about him, still have ideas and thoughts about him that may not be wholly correct simply because the record doesn't tell us everything we would like to know. We sometimes fill the gaps by our imagination. And that being the case, none of us can claim to have 100% accurate knowledge of Jesus.

We're growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's a growing thing. Yet while we're growing, we consider we're already saved.

I mean, my knowledge of Jesus has yet to grow more, but I believe that I have enough knowledge of Jesus to be saved, that I do not believe I will die in my sins if I die today.

And what that illustrates is that people can be saved even if they don't have a comprehensive understanding of who Jesus is. And it raises the question, well then, at what point does a person's level of knowledge and acknowledgment of who Jesus is, you know, go from the unsaved to the saved level? I mean, what does a person irreducibly, at minimum, need to know and believe about Jesus to be saved? It is possible that this verse answers that question, that they have to know that he's God, that he is the I Am.

And because these people do not believe that he is the I Am, that he is God, they will die in their sins. Now, that is a possibility. It is not clear, however, that Jesus is claiming to be the I Am in this verse, because his words can be construed to be I Am He, in which case it would be a much more vague thing, which is why they don't take up stones to stone him at this point.

Now, at the end of the chapter, when he says in verse 58, before Abram was I Am, it says in verse 59, they took up stones to throw at him because they considered him making a claim to being God. But they didn't take up stones to throw at him in verse 24. Even though he said, if you don't believe that I Am He.

Now, there's a possible, you know, well, why don't they throw stones at him then, or want to? It's possible that they don't understand him to be using the divine title in this case in verse 24, and therefore they keep the conversation going, rather than taking up stones and tearing their garments at having heard blasphemy. Now, remember, Jesus didn't speak Greek. The gospel says they've come down to us, have come down in Greek, and the Greek word that is used in both places, John 8, 24, and in John 8, 58, are both, in both cases, Ego Emi, simply because that's the normal Greek way to say I Am or I Am He.

However, Jesus spoke Aramaic, and in his language, there is no doubt different ways of saying I Am or I Am He. Languages have their own idiosyncrasies about these kinds of things, and in all likelihood, the way Jesus spoke in verse 24, he probably used Aramaic words that meant I Am He, whereas in verse 58, he must have used Aramaic words that simply meant I Am, which is why in the first case they were not overly offended, and in the second case they wanted to kill him. So even though the expressions are the same in the Greek in both places, there's a good chance that he used different words in the Aramaic, but the Greek only has that one way of saying either thing, which is why it's the same in both places here.

But therefore, he might not have said I Am in verse 24, and that you must believe that I Am. Personally, I do believe that a person has to accept the deity of Christ to be saved if at least they are acquainted with the concept. If they know that he made the claim, then I would think they'd have to believe the claim in order to be saved.

If they said, well, I can believe when Jesus says he's the Son of God, but when he says he's God, I just can't go that far with him, I think they'll die in their sins, because they're

not believing his claims by himself. There are people who may have never heard that Jesus is God. In fact, the disciples themselves, in all likelihood, during his lifetime, may not have fully grasped that he was God.

They never called him that, although some of the things he said could have tipped them off, but they were pretty dull of hearing, as we know. They didn't even understand what he meant when he said he was going to rise from the dead. They talked among themselves, discussing the question, what do you think he meant by that? So I'm sure that when he said things that gave evidence that he was God, they didn't understand that either, at least not until after the Holy Spirit was given.

So it's possible that even some people who've never become acquainted with the concept that Jesus is God, yet who believe him to be the Savior and the Lord and so forth, sent down from God, I don't know. Only God knows, really, where that cut-off point is. I feel comfortable, for the most part, making the deity of Christ the issue in salvation, but it's possible that in God's sight there's some other point where people cross the line from being believers in a sub-Christian Jesus to being believers in the true Jesus.

But I suppose, really, God's the one who's going to have to judge that in each case. In this case, they apparently just understood him to be saying, I am he, because their response is, well, who are you? You say that if we don't believe that you are he, then we're going to die in our sins. Well, who are we supposed to believe you are? Who is this he that you are claiming to be? They asked him point blank, and he didn't tell them.

Jesus said to them, just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. Now, from the beginning, he has never yet spoken of himself as the Messiah. He's never told them that.

He did, however, in fact, I'm not even sure he ever outright said prior to this that he was the Son of God, but he did speak of God being his Father, and they understood that to be tantamount to him claiming deity for himself. We know that because back in John 5 again, there's a lot of parallels between John 8 and John 5, as you can see, but in John 5, 17 and 18, it says, But Jesus answered them, My Father has been working until now, and I have been working. For he spoke of God as his Father.

In verse 18, Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. So they understood that speaking of God as his Father, Jesus was making a claim for himself greater than I would be making for myself if I speak of God as my Father. In fact, the Jews themselves spoke of God as their Father.

Later on in John 8, we're not there yet, but they say it in John 8, 41. In John 8, 41, they say to him, He says you do the deeds of your Father. And they said to him, We were not born of fornication.

We have one Father, God. Now, obviously, they didn't think of themselves as blaspheming and worthy of death because they said, We have one Father, God. But when Jesus said, My Father works, and I work on the Sabbath, they realized he was making a claim to a special privilege like a real son has something equal with God.

Like, if God can break the Sabbath, I can break the Sabbath. That's what he's saying. Now, they understood breaking the Sabbath.

If there was such a right, it was God's alone. Only God could do that. And Jesus was basically making himself equal with God.

He said, When my Father does this, I do this. He breaks the Sabbath, I break the Sabbath. So what? It's my business.

I'm his son. And obviously, the claim Jesus made for his own relationship with God by calling God Father had more content to it, far more content than the average person like myself or yourself who might say, Well, God is my Father, and I'm a son of God. So, Jesus has given them enough information for them to know that he's claiming to be God, really, equal to God.

In fact, they understood him to be saying that. In John 5.18, they knew he was making himself equal with God, and that's why they took up stones or sought to kill him. So, they ask him.

They want him to say it more bluntly. When they say, Who are you? Probably, Jesus is evasive here because he knows that they just want him to make a radical claim such as they would find blasphemous and they'd find occasion to kill him on the spot. If he just said, Well, I'm God.

He just said, I came down from heaven. I'm from above. And therefore, if he said more plainly, I'm God, they figured they could get away with killing him, and so he doesn't say it outright.

He's more evasive. He just said, I'm just what I've been saying to you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge concern you, but he who sent me is true, and I speak to the world those things which I heard from him.

Now, this is one of several very important passages where Jesus makes it clear that he did not speak from his own wisdom while on earth he spoke what he heard from his father. This is one of the several places in the Scripture that we deduce that Jesus, when he became a man, reduced himself, handicapped himself, took on the weaknesses and the limitations of humanity. Although he was God in the flesh, the very reduction of himself into human flesh involved the laying aside of certain divine privileges that he had previously, including his omniscience.

And he didn't know anything supernatural except what the father showed him, same as the father might show you something. Jesus said, I don't know of anything. I don't make any judgments except what my father tells me to do.

And he says it here. He says it in several places. We saw it back already in John chapter 5. We looked at it a moment ago when he says in John 5.30, I can of my own self do nothing.

As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is righteous because I do not seek my own will but the will of the father who sent me. I make judgments as I hear from God about it. That's all.

I don't make my own judgments about things. I don't know these things just innately. I hear from my father about it.

And he says the same thing here in verse 26. He says, but he who sent me is true, and I speak to you, to the world, those things which I heard from him. Later on in John 14, in John 14.8-10, says Philip said to him, Lord, show us the father, and it's sufficient for us.

And Jesus said to him, have I been with you so long, and you have not known me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the father. So how can you say, show us the father? Do you not believe that I am in the father, and the father in me? The words that I speak to you, I do not speak on my own. But the father who dwells in me does the works.

So Jesus' words and his works he attributes to the father, not to himself. Now it's interesting too, I mean this is a very clear claim to deity here. A very clear claim that he is God.

Because his response, when Philip says, show us the father, Jesus says, have I been so long with you, and you haven't known who I am? Now that response on Jesus' part would be nonsensical. Unless he was saying, I am the father, I am God. If you've seen me, you've seen the father.

Because if he was claiming only to be lesser than the father, only the son of the father, nothing more. If that's the only claim he was making for himself, there would be no reason for him to castigate Philip for asking to see the father. What do you mean? What do you mean, show us the father? Who do you think I am, is what he says, don't you know who I am? And the implication is unmistakable, that I am the father.

Looking at me is no different than looking at the father. The father is in me, and I'm in the father. There's obviously a lot of mystery about that, but the claim is unequivocal.

Okay, back to John 8, verse 27. But they did not understand that he spoke to them of the father, for some reason. Then Jesus said to them, when you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I can do nothing of myself.



But as my father taught me, I speak these things, and he who sent me is with me. For the father has not left me alone, for I always do the things that please him. So Jesus always pleased his father, and the father chose to honor that.

By the way, God honors us when we please him too. The same author who wrote this passage we're reading in the gospel, wrote in an epistle, in 1 John. I'm kind of out on a limb here, because I forget exactly where it is, but I'm going to find it here.

My problem is I'm looking at 1 Peter, and no wonder. I'm not going to find a passage in 1 John that I look in there. And if I were sharper, I'd be able to just quote it to you, then you could tell me where it is.

Let's see if I can find it. Okay, it's 1 John 3, verse 21 and 22.