

John 8vv48-59

So far in John's gospel, Jesus has taught that he is the 'bread of heaven' and the 'light of the world', but as his dispute with the Pharisees draws to a close, when Jesus is asked the question, "Who do you think you are?"... his reply results in them picking up stones to kill him.

#1 - Jesus is "the LORD"

In v58 Jesus says, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am*". Jesus is not saying that he is older than Abraham, if he was he could have said, "*Before Abraham was, I was.*"

But that is not what Jesus says. He uses the present tense "I am" to speak of his existence more than 2,000 years earlier, and claims a transcendence over time that could only be true of God.

And there's more, as Jesus is claiming not only to be eternal, but also to be the God who appeared to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3). In calling himself "I am", Jesus uses the name which is the exact same name that God the Father uses for himself - it is God's personal name (YHWH, "the LORD").

Today, Jesus is God.

Tomorrow Jesus is God.

This means that being a Christian is not a "one day a week" hobby, like watching football, or going to a book club. Being a Christian is a 24/7, 365 day a year experience, where Jesus deserves our praise and honour each and every day, because he is the LORD.

However, we are not only to recognise who Jesus is, and respond appropriately... we can also rejoice in what he promises, knowing the he has the power and authority to keep his promise.

#2 - Jesus is the LORD of life

In v51 Jesus make an awesome promise, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.*"

Were Jesus not the eternal "I am", then we might wonder if he can really make such a promise? But Jesus is the eternal LORD and is therefore very able to promise to all those who put their trust in him, that they will not 'see' death, but have eternal life.

Jesus does not mean Christians will not physically die. As his opponents point out, all people physically die (vv52-53). But Jesus is promising that those who follow him will be made spiritually alive (Cf. John 1vv12-13), and though they will physically die, the Christian believer will be taken through death to enjoy eternal life in God's new creation.

Only the LORD could make such a promise!