

Come to the Powerful, Great I AM!

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles.

Go to John's Gospel, John chapter 8. We're gonna finish chapter 8 this morning. John chapter 8 in that black Bible in the chair in front of you if you're visiting with us.

Page 79, the back of that black Bible, 79. You'll find John chapter 8 starting in verse 48. John 8, 48. 8, 48 to the end of the chapter to verse 59. That will be our study for this morning. John 8, 48 to 59. Let me read and then we'll dive in.

The Jews answered and said to him, to Jesus, rightly do we not say that you're a Samaritan and have a demon? Jesus answered, I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father and you yourselves dishonor me, but I do not seek my glory.

[1:18] There is one who seeks and judges. Truly, truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he shall never see death at all.

That you said to him, now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died and the prophets, and you say if anyone keeps my word, he shall never taste of death? Surely you're not greater than our father Abraham, who died.

The prophets died too. Whom do you make yourself to be? 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, and you yourselves do not 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.

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw and was glad.

Therefore the Jews said to him, 50 years old, you're not even, and you have seen Abraham. Jesus said to him, truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.

[2:32] Therefore the Jews, they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus was hidden and went out of the temple. Amen. You probably remember the scene.

Four characters slowly walk into the large room, green room. There's fire and smoke billowing all over the place, all into the air.

And then the voice came out. I am Oz, the great and powerful. Remember that?

Wizard of Oz. I mean, if you haven't seen the Wizard of Oz, something's wrong with you. It was released August 25th, 1939, 83 years ago, and two years ago is going to be 85 years ago.

Wow. War is not as old as you, though. Wow. And yet the irony is, the great and powerful Oz, but he wasn't great and powerful.

[3:46] He was some dude standing, pay no attention to that guy standing behind the curtain.

Remember that the second time? He was some guy behind, he was a fake. Not so Jesus.

As we come to this, in John's Gospel, which is proclaiming to us, come receive Jesus, know Jesus, love Jesus, trust Jesus. Today we'll see, come to the powerful, great I am.

Not the great and powerful Oz, but the powerful and great I am. Come to the powerful, great I am.

This is how we can sum up this section of John 8, verse 48 to 59. We can sum it up this way.

Because of Jesus' relationship with the Father, He manifests His powerful mission and His great identity. He came to give us, there it goes, He came to give us eternal life, and He is the great I am.

[4:52] So come to the powerful, great I am. I'll put it up there in a second. Thanks, Travis. This starts really in chapter 8, verse 12, where Jesus says, I am the light of the world.

Actually, it starts in chapter 7, at the Feast of Tabernacles. Of course, towards the end of the Feast of Tabernacles, there was that, the lanterns that they would light up Jerusalem, and that's when Jesus says, I am the light of the world.

They were pouring out the water, and Jesus says, if any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. So this is, finishing this off, this dialogue with the religious leaders, start all the way in chapter

7.

And Jesus says, commanded them, come to the light, or you will die in your sin of unbelief. He's the light. He's the Savior.

He's unique. He's the great I am. And the greatest way his identity is revealed is in his mission, which is going to the cross. And that was a mission given to him by the Father.

[6:04] And then we looked at last week. Thanks, Travis. Do you belong to God? Remember the premise that we had that Jesus established for us. The one who belongs to God hears Jesus' words, believes Jesus' words, and abides in Jesus' words, and loves Jesus.

That's the one who belongs to God. And only the light can open your eyes to see the truth, Jesus, and to savor the truth, to savor Jesus.

And now Jesus finishes off this debate between truth, him, and opinion, the religious leaders, making it as clear as day his true mission and his true identity.

So there's that statement again. Because of Jesus' relationship with the Father, he manifests his powerful mission and his great identity. Which is what?

He came to give us eternal life and he is the great I am. So come to the powerful great I am. That's how you can sum up these few verses, chapter 8, 48 to 59.

[7:21] And there's two aspects that are highlighted from the passage and you see it there, which I'll bring it up to you in just a moment. Two aspects that are highlighted in reference to Jesus' mission and in reference to his identity.

So notice the first one, number one. Jesus' relationship with the Father shows his approval from the Father and that manifests the power of his mission.

What's his mission? You keep my word, you'll never see death. You keep my word, you'll never see death.

Again, verse 48. The Jews answered and said to him, and remember this goes back to what he just said. You must belong to God. You don't hear because you're not of God.

You don't belong to him. So the Jews, which is the religious leaders, and by the way, they were the ones who believed in him in verse 31. Rightly, do we not say you are a Samaritan and have a demon?

[8:35] They accused Jesus of having a demon before. We don't see this in John's Gospel, but you do see it in the Synoptics. Now they're personally attacking him, which is what people resort to when they don't know what else to do.

You're a Samaritan in that he was teaching against Old Testament monotheism. He was embracing heresy, in other words, and he embraced the teaching of demons.

In the Old Testament, you see that pattern. There'd be a worship of idols and they would sacrifice to demons. They would worship idols and they would sacrifice to demons.

So that's what they're saying, accusing Jesus of at this point. So they were in reality calling Jesus a heretic who questioned the truth of the one true God.

The truth is given from the Old Testament. But they did not hear a word he said. All he could do was speak truth. They were fools.

[9:42] And Jesus brings us out. Notice verse 49. Jesus answered, I do not have a demon. Ha ha! How wrong you are.

He answered both of their hateful accusatory rebukes. First, I don't have a demon, but I honor my Father. Demons do not do that at all, by the way.

My Father, who is the true God, He separated the Jews from the true God, whom He'll say later they claim to serve, they claim to know. He does the total opposite of a heretic because all His actions honored the Father.

Jesus said and did only what the Father told Him to say and do. They were the ones who dishonored God because notice the end of verse 49, and you dishonor me.

Honoring God can only happen through the identity and mission of Jesus who came to please the Father in everything. Honoring God can only happen through the identity and mission of Jesus who came to please the Father in everything.

[11:10] In other words, if they dishonored Jesus, they were dishonoring God. And it's pertinent for us to make this clear when we're speaking the gospel to people.

If you say you know God, you cannot deny who Jesus is in His identity and mission because if you do, you are denying God. That goes together.

So they basically shot themselves in the foot with this statement. You're a Samaritan and you have a demon. They're digging their own graves because they did not know the truth.

Jesus goes farther. Verse 50. But I do not seek my glory. Jesus sought the glory of the Father because He did not do one thing of Himself.

And, notice what He says here, there is one who seeks and judges. There's one who seeks what? Jesus' glory. There's one who judges what?

[12:17] Jesus' glory. Judges, another way you could say approves or vindicates. So what's Jesus saying here? It would be the Father who would glorify the Son.

The Father is the one who would seek the Son's glory and would vindicate the Son. He approves of His Son. He gives a stamp of approval of His Son against them.

The Father sought to glorify the Son and the Son only glorified the Father. This is the relationship between Jesus and the Father. That's why we sing, oh sing my soul. Because you get a sense of the relationship between the Godhead that they have, this love, this relationship, this communion. So Jesus' relationship with the Father, it manifests His mission. It manifests, well it shows that the Father approves of Him and thus it manifests His mission.

What's His mission? Verse 51. Truly, truly, I say to you, oh, authoritative statement, here's the kicker, pay attention. Truly, truly, I say to you, oh, if anyone keeps my word, he shall never see death.

[13:33] Whoa. That's the mission of the Son. Keeping His word equals remaining or staying in His word.

Remember verse 31? If you abide in my word, you truly are my disciples. If one joins himself or herself to the Lord, embracing both His mission and identity, that one will never, ever, ever see death.

Friends, this was Jesus' mission to save sinners from death. That's His mission. to save us. And that one, when it comes to Jesus' word, that one believes it, embraces it, clings to it, obeys it, and lives by it.

The passion of a true disciple is Jesus' word or is the word Himself, the personal Jesus. That's why we sang that song, Glorious Christ.

The greatest of all my delights. So His word is superior to Abraham's. He is superior to the prophets.

[14:51] His word trumps over their word. And that embracing His words, notice, will never see death. It will bring eternal life.

And Jesus didn't speak of physical death here. You understand that, right? He doesn't talk about physical death here. This is the final death, the second death, the death that lasts forever which is in the lake of fire.

John brings this up in the book of Revelation. That's the second death. That's what he's talking about here. Their torment goes up forever and ever, Revelation 14, 11. That's what that person will experience if they do not keep His word.

This is a polarization between someone who keeps His word and someone who doesn't keep His word. But for the believer, for the one who embraces and remains and stays in Jesus' word, for the believer, she or he is given eternal life the reason the Father sent the Son in the first place.

That's His mission. He or she has true eternal fellowship with the Father, with the Son, with the Spirit, and the kingdom. He sets you free from sin.

[16:10] He saves you from condemnation. He grants you His great mercy. Come, and He'll save you and love you. Come, and He'll forgive you and justify you.

Come, repent, trust Christ. there's the gospel. What great hope we have as Christ followers as the song goes.

What gift of grace is Jesus, our salvation? So Jesus' relationship with the Father. It shows His approval, the Father's approval of Jesus, and that manifests the powerful mission of Jesus.

What's His mission? So you'll never see death. That's His mission. Number two, this relationship that He has with the Father. It not only shows the Father's approval and manifests the power of His mission, but second, it shows Jesus' obedience to the Father, and that manifests the greatness of His identity.

Greater than Abraham, Jesus says, you bet I am. I get it. You bet. Greater than Abraham, I am. Notice how this happens, verse 52.

[17 : 35] This is gonna catapult us to Jesus identifying, speaking about His identity. The Jews said to Him, now we know you have a demon.

They rebuked Him even more here. Now we know you're totally insane. They discredited His claim, which contradicts God and His words, or so they thought.

Your statement is totally false, since your very words attest to that heretic. You're a heretic. Notice. Abraham died, and the prophets, and you say, if anyone keeps my worry, shall never taste of death, taste, see, why they use a different word, not told. Abraham died, the prophets died, and yet you say this.

Then verse 53. Surely you're not greater than our father Abraham. Yeah, yeah, right. Oh, you're greater than Abe?

[18 : 44] You're greater than the prophets? Their slanderous questions expected a negative answer. You've got to be kidding me, pal. They knew what Jesus was saying here.

See, there's only three options with Jesus. Either Jesus is a complete and total nutcase, or He's a complete and total liar, or He's the Lord.

That's how C.S. Lewis put it. There's no other option. I noticed their cornering question at the end of verse 53. Whom do you make yourself to be?

He didn't make Himself to be anyone besides whoever He is. Eternal word, the Son, make Himself not greater than Abraham.

He's the great I Am. They'll see. Notice, verse 54, Jesus responds. He's going to, brings us to this point where He shows His identity. Jesus answered them, if I glorify myself, my glory is nothing.

[19 : 56] It wasn't about His glory. It wasn't about Him doing what He wants to do. It is my Father who glorifies me. The Father glorifying Him, glorifying the Father who in turn will glorify the Son.

Why? Because the Father loves, adores His Son. and Jesus would be completely obedient to the Father.

They said they knew God. But if they would not commit themselves at all to the Son to whom the Father is committed and they truly did not know God the Father, they were all liars.

The Father glorifies the Son and the Son glorifies the Father who is the one whom they said He is our God. In other words, all Jesus' claims were true but if they exclude Jesus, they were in essence excluded from God because He loves His Son who glorifies me, Jesus says, of whom you say He is our God.

You say He's our God, He's the one who's going to glorify me and I'm going to obey Him. No, no, no. On the contrary, who do you think you are? You say you know God but if you deny me then you're denying God.

[21 : 23] He drives it even farther. Verse 55 says it flat out and you do not know Him. You do not know God but I know Him.

Jesus knows God. He knows the Father. Your God, your God is my Father but you don't know God. You don't know my Father.

And then He says, if I say that I do not know Him I'll be a liar like you. You're liars because you have rejected me.

The Father wants to glorify me and I'm going to obey my Father. Jesus had a special relationship with God because He's the eternal Son and God is the Father.

A unique, special love relationship. So how Jesus is going to obey His Son excuse me, Jesus is going to obey the Father as the Son. How does He do that?

[22 : 29] How does He show He's going to obey the Father? Look at what He says in the next part of verse 55. But I do know Him and keep His word.

Which is the proof He knows the Father. Which is the proof that He knows God. Whom they claim to know. As Jesus called His disciples to keep His word, Jesus' word, Jesus keeps or stays or remains in the Father's word.

He obeys. To know God is to keep His word. To know God is to obey His word. Jesus manifests that. He obeys His Father.

And that obedience, it manifests the greatness of His identity. What identity? verse 56.

Your father Abraham did see my day and he saw and was glad. What's He saying here? He's leading up to the climax of His statement.

[23 : 39] And He begins here by telling them that they rejected, Jesus rejected their claim that they knew God and He rejected their claim that they knew Abraham. Our father, they said.

But as far as Abraham was concerned, he knew God and he rejoiced when he saw Jesus' day. One writer says this, quote, Abraham was purposely looking forward to the time of Jesus with triumphant joy and Abraham saw that day and was rejoiced, he was glad.

So what's the day? When Jesus, the word, became flesh that day. When Jesus took on flesh, the coming of the Son of Man, He inaugurated the Messianic age.

This coming of Messiah, that's what was promised to Abraham. And so he saw that, which tells us something. Abraham, hey, where do you go?

[24:54] Okay. Abraham had long been waiting for the promise of Messiah to come to pass and he saw it, which tells us something. Hey, pal. Hey, pal. You're on a need-to-know basis.

I don't know. Which tells us something. Abraham was living. Abraham was alive even now at that point.

So Jesus fulfilled Abraham's hopes and joys. He saw that when Jesus took on flesh. He saw that. He rejoiced with the angels. He was alive.

He was living. He was living. still alive, his soul. He saw the plan of the Father unfold before him while he was in heaven with God.

He rejoiced with the angels. Catch the scene here. Jesus makes this statement about himself, makes this statement about Abraham and look at how the religious leaders responded.

[26:07] Verse 57. What? 50 years old you don't have, literally. You don't have even 50 years old and you have seen Abraham. It's a mocking question.

This is preposterous. This is absurd. What an idiot. You gotta be kidding me. And then, so now here's the climax.

Here's his identity. Oh, there's the one. Abraham had long been waiting for the promise of Messiah to come to pass and he saw it. Here's the climax, 58.

Jesus said to them, truly, truly, here it is, authoritative statement. Climax, hello, authoritative statement. Here I am. This is important. I am. I am. I am. Before Abraham was born, I am.

And he made a similar statement in chapter 8, verse 24 and chapter 8, verse 28. Unless you believe I am, you'll die in your sins, but here it's even clearer. Jesus alluded to God's identity from Exodus 3, thus he declared himself to be the ageless one, the creator of all.

[27:19] And for us, as the readers of this gospel, it kicks into our memory. John chapter 1, verse 1, in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

So not only was Jesus the long-awaited Messiah, redeemer, who was promised to Abraham, he is God incarnate. Word made flesh.

No, no, no. Abraham's very origin was in Jesus. Jesus could not speak any more direct or climactic than this.

His relationship with the Father, it shows that he is obedient to the Father and that manifests his powerful identity. What's that identity?

I am. And notice, they understood exactly what he was saying as opposed to the Jehovah Witnesses who say, Jesus just says, I was. If Jesus said I was, it would have been like, oh, whatever.

[28:20] You're weird. They wouldn't pick up stones to stone him. Verse 59, therefore they picked up stones to throw at him. They picked up stones to kill Jesus for speaking blasphemy and trying to lead Israel astray.

Deuteronomy chapter 13, he must die. They tried it before in chapter 8, verse 20, but he eluded their grasp and he did it again here because it says Jesus was hidden.

He was concealed supernaturally because his hour had not yet come. Instead of judging the situation based upon facts, they just emotionally responded.

instead of looking at the truth and he went out to the temple and see, there's the irony in that statement because they thought they had grounds to judge Jesus and yet Jesus is the one who's the true judge, isn't he?

And think about it. God made flesh standing right there in their midst. He could have judged them right then. But he didn't come to judge the world, he came to save the world.

[29:42] His identity, the God-man who came to save sinners, he saved us when he should judge us.

What mercy, what gift of grace is Jesus our Redeemer because of Jesus' relationship with the Father, he manifests his powerful mission and his great identity.

What's his mission? He came to give us eternal life. What's his identity? He is the great I am. Come. Not to the great and powerful Oz, to the powerful great I am.

Let's pray. And we stop and we pray to ask that you, Spirit, would drive the truth deep into our hearts to bring about a response of praise, worship, joy, thanks, delight.

As we sang a few moments ago, the greatest of all our delights. your power is unequal. There's no greater sacrifice than when you laid down your life.

[31:00] That was your mission. We're so thankful. And that's our prayer is as we give you thanks and celebrate this truth bind us together as your church.

Displaying that grace to each other and speaking this grace to the world. Use us for your glory in your church. So I encourage you at this time to fill your mind with God's word.

Fill your mind with truth. Fill your mind with the powerful identity with the great identity, the powerful mission of Jesus.

Ponder, let it, let your mind be filled with God's word. Do that. Take a few moments. We'll sing. We'll pray. We'll go to a fellowship meal together.

But take this time if you would to meditate on God's word thanking him that he came to save you.

[32:29] Please do that now. Thank you.