



BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM.

“JESUS SAID TO THEM, ‘TRULY, TRULY, I SAY TO YOU, BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM.’ SO THEY PICKED UP STONES TO THROW AT HIM, BUT JESUS HID HIMSELF AND WENT OUT OF THE TEMPLE.”

JOHN 8:58-59

BIG IDEA

Since Jesus is God, I will believe and obey him.

JESUS IS GOD.

Jesus has used the Feast of Booths to make some extraordinary claims about himself. He’s used it as the perfect occasion to take his ministry and claims public.

John 7:37-39 - On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”

John 8:12 - Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

John 8:23-24 - He said to them, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.”

John 8:56-59 - “Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.’ So the Jews said to him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.’ So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.”

These claims stand. They stand today. And just like they elicited a response then, they need a response today. IGNITE’s mission at FGCU is simple, but profound: we want to give every student, this year repeated opportunities to see, hear, and respond to the gospel. We want every single athlete, Greek, nursing major, business major, professor, and janitor to have the opportunity to hear Jesus’ claim to be God so that they will have the chance to respond to it. It certainly elicited responses back then.

John 7:40-44 - “When they heard these words, some of the people said, “This really is the **Prophet.**” Others said, “This is **the Christ.**” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” So there was a division among the people over him. **Some of them wanted to arrest him**, but no one laid hands on him.”

John 8:30 - “As he was saying these things, **many believed** in him.”

John 8:59 - “So **they picked up stones to throw at him**, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.”

We must take Jesus’ words and respond to who he truly claims to be. We cannot redefine who Jesus is. It will do no good to put a 21st century “intellectual” spin on the claims of Christ. It is dishonest and of no use to put words in Jesus’ mouth or take them out. To truly respond to Christ, we can’t approach him with confirmation bias. We must ask, “Who does Jesus claim to be? Who does the Bible teach Jesus to be?” And you must respond to that. If you do not do that, you are not dealing with Jesus. You have created a different person out of the figment of your imagination.

If you deny Jesus, deny him outright. Don’t follow a made up Jesus.

If you believe Jesus, believe him outright. Follow him truly.

So who does Jesus claim to be and how does that affect your life?

1. Jesus teaches salvation comes by believing in him. Do you believe him? (vv. 39-47)

John 8:45-47 – “But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”

What is the truth? Jesus gives living water to those who believe (7:37-39), Jesus is the life-giving light (8:12), Jesus sets people free (8:31-32).

The truth that Jesus refers to is the truth of salvation through his death, life, and resurrection.

John 14:6 – “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

The Real Jesus: What Christianity Teaches:

- The truth is that Jesus is the only way to salvation.
- All other “ways” to salvation are lies.
- Unlike other “ways”, Christianity relies on Jesus’ work, not yours.
- Nobody is too far gone.

2. Jesus teaches that his disciples freely obey him. Do you obey him? (vv. 31-38)

John 8:31-32; 34-35 – “So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’... everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever.”

Jesus speaks to the heart of discipleship. He says that true disciples “abide”. They continually remain in obedience to his teaching. He contrasts the obedience of the disciples with the sinfulness of those who are against Christ. He uses obedience, or abiding, as a marker of who is really his disciple. I think we must notice two things here.

The Real Disciple: What Christianity Teaches:

- Obedience is the outflow of salvation, not the way to it. (v. 31)
- Serving Christ is true freedom.

AIM FOR THE HEART.

1. To the one who hears the claims of Jesus and hates him, it’s never too late to turn around.
2. To the one who hears the claims of Jesus and loves him, continue to pursue him.
3. To the one who loves Jesus and is struggling in sin, you can go to your Father forever.
4. To the one who says he loves Jesus but actually loves sin, who do you want to follow? .