



*John 8:51-59*

# His Best Friend's Gospel

*Before Abraham Was... I  
AM*

## What We Believe Matters.

- More than 9 in 10 Americans (91%) celebrate Christmas.
- More than 7 in 10 (72%) say the Jesus Christians believe in was born in Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago. Few (9%) disagree, while 18 percent aren't sure.
- However, around 41% say God's Son existed before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. 32% of Americans disagree, and 28 percent say they're not sure.
- **Among regular church attenders**, 98 percent believe Jesus is the Son of God the Father, 95 percent say he was born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago, but only 63 percent agree the Son of God existed before Jesus was born.
- In the 2022 "State of Theology" survey, 43% of *evangelical Christians* said they *agreed* with the statement "Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God."







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## APOLOGETICS — Defending our faith

*“I know that you believe Jesus is God, but in the Bible where does Jesus himself say that He is God, and to worship him?”*

Could you answer the question?

Would you know where to turn?

Does Jesus ever actually claim to be God, or is it just something others said about him?



<sup>51</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” <sup>52</sup> The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’” <sup>53</sup> Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?”

*John 8:51–59*

*ESV*





<sup>54</sup> 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.’ <sup>55</sup> But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. <sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.”



<sup>57</sup> So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” <sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” <sup>59</sup> So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.



## Ego Eimi — I AM

- Already highlighted that several times Jesus uses the Greek words Ego Eimi (ἐγώ εἰμι) to describe himself,
- Septuagint — Greek translation of the OT That Jesus and the Apostles use — translate Exodus 3:14 using these exact words when God reveals his name.
- But how do we know this is a divine title? Could Jesus just be using this in a “normal” sense? Perhaps on some occasions... but not here.



## Tenses Matter.

- Before Abraham Was (past tense)... I am (present tense). Even in English, this is “wrong” grammatically. In Greek, tenses matter even more.
- Specifically doesn't say I was (*ego ēn*) but I AM
- Jesus goes out of his way to “break” the rules of grammar to make a point here — and the point is simple — He has the same divine name that God revealed to Moses.



Jesus explicitly, and unambiguously claims divinity here.

- There can be no doubt that Jesus is making a specific claim about his divinity here.
- And the Jewish people know it — look at how they respond: “So they picked up stones to throw at him”.
- Why? Leviticus 24:16 *“Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.”*
- They understand his claim here with certainty.



Jesus was pre-existent, The Eternal Son, God for all time.

- “Before Abraham was...” Jews trace their lineage of faith back to Abraham — their “father” through the covenant. Jesus is a Jew, but is drawing a much different lineage.
- He is not merely an heir of the promise, but the one who makes the covenant.
- However far back humans want to trace their legacy, Jesus is making clear he was already in existence, because he is eternal.
- Abraham looked forward to his coming — Abraham and all the prophets put their faith in Him for salvation.



## The Cross displays his Divinity.

- The second time Jesus uses the name “I Am” unqualified.
- Verse 28 “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he”.
- The Cross is the ultimate display of his Divine power — coming to save his people from Sin.

