

VCBC SLG—The Gospel of John
Lesson #4

Chapters 4-6

Ch.4: The Savior of the World whose love transcends all barriers—race, gender, religion and sinful past

Ch.5: His own did not receive Him

Ch. 6: He is the God in the beginning, the Creator God—The Great I AM

The Prologue:

The God in the Beginning:

**“In the beginning
was the Word/Logos and the Word was with God, and
the Word was God.
He was with God
in the beginning” (1:2)**

The God of Creation:

**“Through Him all things were made;
Without Him nothing was made that has been made.” (1:3)**

He is life:

“In Him was life...Yet to those who believed in Him...born of God” (1:4, 12-13)

His own rejected Him:

**“He was in the world and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him.”
(1: 10-11)**

The Testimonies in the Gospel

I. The Savior of the World (Ch. 4)

The stories in chapter 4 are all familiar to most of you, and so, I will not go through verse by verse, except to highlight what might John have in mind to illustrate in his selection of these narratives, unique to his gospel, namely

The conversion of the Samaritan woman

The conversion of the people of her town, and

The healing of the son of a “royal” official in Capernaum

And with an “insert” of Jesus’ conversation with His disciples about “whitened fields”.

A. The Samaritan Woman (4: 1-30)

This narrative must have been one of the most uncomfortable stories to the Jews at the time, because what Jesus did break all the cultural traditions (and biases) at the time which include

1. The breaking of racial barrier

John has already explained to us in v. 9 that “For Jews do not associate with Samaritans” and if you grew up in the church, you would have been taught the reason why, most likely

- And that was because at the destruction of the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrians in 722 B.C., the Assyrians purposely moved people around among their occupied nations, likely to destroy their culture for good. And thus for hundreds of years, Jews in the region of Samaria had engaged in mixed marriages that was considered to be a breach of the Law of Moses and they were despised by the rest of the Jewish people as impure and unclean and outside of God’s covenant with Abraham, to the point that they prohibited Jews to have anything to do with the Samaritans socially.

2. The breaking of religious barrier

To make matter worse, the Samaritans still wished to hang on to their Jewish heritage by worshipping YHWH mixed with idol practices, and they had chosen to edit the Pentateuch (which was the only portion of Scriptures they recognized) in many ways, especially in trying to justify their worship away from Jerusalem to Mt. Gerizim. Such alterations of the Law obviously sealed their fate in terms of their relationship with the Jews.

3. The breaking of gender barrier

For a man to approach another woman in public was not exactly the most appropriate social etiquette, not to mention a Jewish man talking to a Samaritan woman.

4. The breaking of moral barrier

Worse, was that, as holy a Rabbi as Jesus, how could He socialize with a woman notoriously known for her immoral lifestyle, and if Jesus is who He claims to be, He should have known.

So, by selecting this account in his gospel, John declares to His(then) readers who were most non-Jews that, the gospel was meant for them right from the beginning, and that as Jesus purposely sought out this woman, He is seeking out to all peoples of different races, different genders, different beliefs and even the worst of sinners.

B. The Samaritans (4: 31-45)

The story of the Samaritan woman ends with the belief in Jesus by “many of the Samaritans from that town” declaring that, “we know that this man really is the Savior of the world” (4:39, 41). With Christianity still considered, at the time, very much a sect of Judaism, this narrative powerfully declares to the world that Christianity is not an ethnic religion of a certain nation or people, but for the world.

As we seek to evangelize the people of our world, this is still an important message—Christianity is not a Western Religion; it is not even a religion, but the very “Good News” from God through the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ unto life—eternal life!

C. Healing of the son of a “Royal” official in Capernaum (4: 46-54)

Apart from this being the 2nd miracle performed by Jesus In Galilee (after He had performed quite a few miracles already in Jerusalem), this narrative contains two rather unusual remarks:

- (1) Jesus rebuked the people of Galilee: **“Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders...you will never believe.”** (4: 48), followed by
- (2) **“The man (i.e. the royal official) took Jesus at His word and departed”** (4: 50), without having seen the miracle!

The significance of the narrative lies likely in:

- The Jews always sought to see miracles, before they would believe (although they already had the Scriptures which testify to Who Jesus is);
- But this official, being a “royal official” (meaning not a local ruler, but that from Rome) did not need to see miracles, only upon hearing the words of Jesus, had come to believe in Him—highlighting again, “His own did not receive Him” (1:11)

D. In Insert: The harvest is ripened—Whitened Field (4: 30-38)

It is interesting to find an additional narrative sandwiched in between the testimony of the woman and the response to her testimony by the people of her town

- For one, obviously that was what actually happened
- But the inclusion gives us a glimpse into the heart of Jesus
 - Whether He was rejected (which seemed to the norm), or
 - He was well received (and in this case, the Samaritans)
 - He wanted the disciples to know that we should follow the example of our Lord
 - Keep sowing the seed, irrespective of the immediate result (or response)
 - It will bear fruit in the long run
 - And the one harvesting may not be us
 - And may not be in the near future
 - But eventually, both the sower and the reaper (not to mention the angels in heaven and the Lord Himself—Luke 15) will all rejoice together!

So, the key verse is

“Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe (or whitened) for harvest.’” (4: 35)

[A note on “Whitened”—“They (the Samaritans) came out of the town and made their way towards Him.” (v.30)—according to Lightfoot]



II. **The Four-fold Testimony of Jesus (Ch. 5)**

The way John, as inspired by the Holy Spirit in structuring his narratives of Jesus' ministry seems to relate to his geographical tours, and here in these three chapters

- Ch. 4
- He begins with Jesus leaving Judea (near Jordan)
- Proceeding back to Galilee (Capernaum), making a stop at Samaria
- Ch. 5
- Now, returning to Jerusalem to attend an unnamed feast
- Ch. 6
- Only to return to Galilee, "teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum" (6: 59) completing a second tour, as far as John's narratives are concerned.

Here in chapter 5, is John's 3rd account of Jesus' miracle which becomes a backdrop to accuse the Jews of their unbelief, leading to a very detailed defense (or accusation) by Jesus pointing out that

- He has extremely strong and irrefutable witnesses or testimonies as to Who He is, and yet they have chosen not to believe.

5: 1-15—Healing of an invalid of 38 years (irrefutable) in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate

5: 16-29—The Father has given the Son the power both to judge and to give eternal life

5: 30-47—His words are backed by a four-fold testimony—more than what the Law Moses demands!

We will skip the story of the healing of the Invalid today (i.e. vv. 1-15) and focus on the rest.

5: 16-29—The Father has given the Son the power both to judge and to give eternal life

Offended by Jesus' claim the God is His Father

“16 So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute Him. 17 In His defense Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” 18 For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

- The breaking of the Sabbath was against the additional rules that the Pharisees had added to the Law of Moses over the years
- The Invalid probably had broken what is called, *Hotzaah*, the carrying of a large object from one domain to another during Sabbath
- But since it was about healing, the crowd might sympathize with Jesus
- But addressing God as “father” in such a personal way is something that the Jews dared not attempt, although, God has addressed Israel as their Father quite a few times, but are all collective in nature, but calling my Father, as they understood correctly, is “making Himself equal with God” (Although some Jewish prayers open with addressing God as Father)

Jesus’ Reply#1: Defense—His power proves that it comes from His Father

19 Jesus gave them this answer:

**“Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself;
He can do only what He sees his Father doing,
because whatever the Father does the Son also does.**

Yes, no way that whatever I have done can be done by a human being

- The healing of the invalid
- The “remote” healing of the official son
- The turning of water into wine, and
- The driving of demons (just a few examples)

It is all a demonstration of the power of the God, the Creator of all, and the Giver of Life

And I can do it, because I am His Son

Kind of like being a carpenter

-I saw what Joseph did

And that’s who I learned to be a carpenter

You understand?

But more than that...

20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all He does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed.

**21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life,
even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.**

22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son,

23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father.

Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

I will be doing far more than I what just said—or what I have done so far

- (a) The power to give life (and raise the dead)

- You read in the Scriptures how God raises the dead (through the prophets) and gives them life
- The Son also gives life (raising the dead will be mentioned later)
 - As the Son pleases (Jesus did raise Lazarus and others, but what follows in this defense, definitely extends to and focuses on life eternal, as we shall see)
- (b) The power to judge
 - Is given entirely to the Son
 - Judgment, in the sense of eternal judgment (as we shall see too)
 - So the warning here
 - If you do not honor me
 - You do not honor the Father
 - And the implication is: you will be judged by me!

Jesus' Reply#2—The Power to give life and Judge

24 “Very truly I tell you,

- **whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me**
 - **has eternal life and**
 - **will not be judged**
 - **but has crossed over from death to life.**

25 Very truly I tell you,

**a time is coming and has now come
when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and
those who hear will live.**

26 For as the Father has life in Himself,

so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself.

27 And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

Jesus uses the “Very truly I tell you” formula to emphasize not only the truthfulness of His assertion but the serious consequence of His Words

(a) Whether you believe what I am saying has eternal consequences, do not take it lightly

- Believe and live eternally
- Or you will be judged and the judgment is: you will remain in your death!

(b) Yes, as (the spiritually) dead

- You now hear my voice
- And if you “hear” (in the sense of believe)
 - You will live!
 - Why?

- Like Father, like Son
- He has Life (the Creator of Life)
- The Son, too, has Life!

(c) As to the power to judge (who lives, who dies)

- I am the Son of Man (perhaps in both senses)
 - As the One foretold in Daniel (7: 13-14) and you know He is going to come to judge all nations, and
 - As one born as 100% man, my sinless life convicts all who sin!

Jesus' Reply#3—The Judgment extends to all who have ever lived

28 “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned. By myself I can do nothing, I judge only as I hear and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but Him who sent me.”

- There will be a future resurrection for all (Rev. 20)
 - All who have done good will rise to live (eternally)
 - All who have done evil will rise to be judged/condemned (the 2nd death)

Don't worry: my judgment is not like yours, trying to please men

- I only seek to please the One who sent me!

[John will leave to the next chapter to explain what is meant by how Jesus would gauge the good and the evil “work”]

To be fair, if we were the Jews at the time, it would be very difficult for us to believe in what Jesus said

- First, Jesus was really a “man”, and to equate yourself as God is absolutely insane and blasphemous. As someone who is committed to the Truth in Scriptures, we would be very angry at anyone who claims he is God
- Furthermore, God has explicitly said in the Ten Commandments that thou shall have no other god—let alone that He has a Son
 - Yes, it is a mystery that God addresses Himself as “Elohim” in plural, but monotheism is the corner stone in their faith in YHWH, there is no doubt about it
 - True, “The Angel of the Lord” always appears to speak in the name of YHWH in the first person, but that is a far cry (in their mind) that there is another “person” in God
 - And yes, the “seed” of David will one day come and reign over all the nations and His Kingdom is meant to be forever, but does it say that this “seed” is God or the Son of God
 - The concept of God having a son (One and Only Son) is totally absent in the OT

So, like today, we firmly believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and if anyone dares to preach that Jesus is not the Son of God, we would very so upset that

- Irrespective of how powerful he preaches
- How good a person he appears to be, and
- Even if he can perform miracle after miracle
 - Not only would we not believe,
 - We would not even bother to waste our time to listen to his reasoning
 - Right?

Now, that what Jesus was facing with at the time!

And so, Jesus launches further into His Defense

Jesus' Reply#4—Irrefutable Testimony and their Core Problems

5: 30-47—His words are backed by a four-fold testimony—more than what the Law Moses demands!

Basis: Their belief and commitment to the Law of Moses in terms of Testimony

“One witness is not enough to convict anyone accused of any crime or offense they may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” (Deut. 19:15)

But Jesus points out that:

“31 “If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true.

I have four reliable witnesses:

(1) John the Baptist

32 There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is true.

33 “You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. 34 Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. 35 John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

- Yes, Jesus accepts that a man’s testimony is not exactly the most reliable, but at least you put some weight into John’s testimony or you would not have sent representatives to inquire of him
- As it turns out, he bore witness to me and told you who I am
- And some of you accepted him (but why not his testimony?)

(2) Jesus’ own testimony

36 “I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish—the very works that I am doing—testify that the Father has sent me.

My own testimony in terms of the many miraculous signs that I have done (even Nicodemus recognized that I have to come from God), and the powerful message that I have taught (about the Kingdom of God)

(3) The Father’s Own Testimony

37 And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, 38 nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent.

- No one has ever heard God’s voice, but He actually spoke at my baptism and the Holy Spirit appeared in the shape of a dove and descended upon me, as a testimony to Who I AM—The Son of God!

(4) The testimony of Scriptures

39 You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

- The irony is: they did study the Scriptures “diligently”

- And do believe in “eternal life” and that it could be found in the Word of God
- And the “very Scriptures” all testify about me
- Yet you “refuse” to come to me for eternal life!

Their Core Problems:

(1) They do not love God

41 “I do not accept glory from human beings, 42 but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. 43 I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. 44 How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God (*mono-Theos*)?”

- I am not talking about polytheism, there is really One God
- The core problem with you is: you do not love Him
- The implication is: if you do love Him, you will love (and believe in) me!
 - As it is: others (so-called Messiahs) you’d rather accept!

(2) You don’t really believe in Moses

45 “But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. 46 If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. 47 But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?”

- You put your hope in Moses—following his laws (on the surface) to a tee
- But you don’t believe in what he has written about me
- The implication is: if you really believe in Moses and obey his words, you would have believed in me.1
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Conclusion:

As much as it was not easy for them to break through their traditional understanding about (1) the Kingdom of God, (2) the true nature of the Messiah, and the idea of a Triune God, Jesus points out that

- If they do love God and obey the Scriptures in their hearts (meaning, the soil of their heart is good), they would be able to understand the strong, strong evidences about Him and believe in Him—same with the evidence of His resurrection!

This is further explained by Jesus in 6:65

“This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.”

III. The First “Great I AM”—“I AM the Bread of Life” (ch.6)

Chapter 6 can be divided into the followings

- **Vv. 1-15: The Feeding of the 5,000**
Vv. 16-24: Jesus Walking on the water
Vv. 25-59: I AM the Bread of Life
Vv. 60-71 Many disciples left Jesus

Vv. 1-15: The Feeding of the 5,000

This is a familiar story of the feeding of the 5,000 already mentioned in the Synoptic Gospel accounts (Matthew 14: 13-21; Mark 6: 32-44; Luke 9: 10-17), so I am going to skip over, except to point out its uniqueness in that

- John tells us that this crowd fed by the miracle of the five loaves and two fish
- Did believe Jesus to be “the Prophet who is to come into the world” (v.14), meaning Jesus has to be the Messiah they have been waiting to usher the Kingdom of God into reality at long last, except that
 - Their concept (and thus representing that of the Jews in general) of Kingdom of God is purely a political and physical one as they sought to “make Him king by force” (v.15)
- Which perhaps explains why
 - Jesus chose to retreat into the mountain by Himself while leaving the Twelve to depart to the other side of the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum.

Vv. 16-24: Jesus Walking on the water

Again, this story is recorded in Matthew 14: 22-33; Mark 6: 47-51 with slight variations and I shall also skip over it today.

In any case, this narrative serves to complete the 2nd geographic tour of Jesus ministry as John has intended to structure, i.e.

- From Judea town near Jordan, via Samaria to Galilee to Jerusalem, then back to Capernaum in Galilee.

Vv. 25-59: I AM the Bread of Life

The following narrative is unique to John’s Gospel which brings out the 1st of 8 “I AM” statements of the Lord.

Wrong Motive for pursuing Jesus (6: 25-29)

“When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.

Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires (or simply ‘the work of God’)?”

Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

On the surface, the people were curious as to whether Jesus performed any miracle to come the other side without having to use a boat, that would again affirm that He must be the Messiah that they wished to crown king.

But Jesus had little interest in satisfying their curiosity, but went straight to point out their wrong motive in that

- The miracles that Jesus performed were done as “signs” to help them believe in Who He is; but
- Their interest in pursuing Him upon “believing” in Who He is simply to satisfy their earthly appetite
 - Whether in trying to make Him king, or
 - Wanting to “have your fill”—given the socio-economic situation, it would amount to “ending their poverty”
 - In either case, it is a pursuit based on “What’s in it for me for this life!”

So Jesus is not deterring them from following Him

- But would point out the most important reason why He has come, and
- The most important purpose of pursuing Him, is to have “ETERNAL :LIFE”
 - Interestingly Jesus uses “work” in illustrate this point

“Work”

- To this crowd, they were likely peasants (whether fishermen, farmers etc.) who were engaged in menial labor and their mentality of work (unlike modern day’s ideas of service or creativity) was very practical—your work to put food on the table, for yourself and your family—and there was nothing wrong with it
- And their enthusiasm in crowning Jesus as king was nationalistic, no doubt, but the bottom line is also economical—the ushering in the Kingdom of God (as Isaiah and other prophets have painted) would mean prosperity for all—planting their own vineyards etc.
- **So, they considered taking the risk to follow Jesus and support Him is the doing of God’s work!**

So, basically Jesus is saying, “Yes, come and follow me—you have found the right one—I am God’s chosen—but not for anything of this life, but for eternity!”

It seems that they “got it” and so they asked, “**What must we do “to do the works of God!”**” Jesus’ reply is obviously totally surprising: “**“The work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent.”**”—in other words, you don’t have to do anything (I have done it all). All you have to do is to believe in me!

Asking for one more miraculous sign (6: 30-40)

So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is “HE (or the ONE)’ who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

³⁴ “Lord,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, “**I AM the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.**

But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. 37 All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

Points of note:

(1) They still did not get (vv. 30-31)

- As much as Jesus rebuked them for pursuing Him for food that would perish, this was still their ultimate desire and they cared less about eternal life
- So, they tried to manipulate the words of Jesus—food that last till eternity to mean food that they can eat now, but not the bread that they ate due to the miracle of Jesus, but “manna from heaven” their ancestors ate
 - For one, then Jesus could prove who He is, and
 - They would also be able to eat “manna”—food that really could satisfy their fill in the here and now—but also all the way to eternity!
 - i.e. they’d probably live forever, except in their present state!

(2) Who Jesus really is (vv. 32-35)

For the sake of time, I will probably only have time to talk about this first of eight “I AM” statement of Christ

- But Jesus points out that, as good as manna was
-
- It is not really not “Manna from heaven” in the truest sense (play on the word, heaven—could refer simply to the sky, but could also refer to the realm of God)
 - Since (as He later said) their ancestors ate Manna, but still died (v.49)
- The “True Bread of Life” is truly from heaven (not from the sky)
- And it is a “HE” (v.33, my NIV version)
 - And I am “HE”
 - I AM the Bread of Life
- This Bread of Life is different:
 - But He gives Eternal Life
 - So that even though, they all still die
 - If they believe in Him (i.e. receive this Bread of Life),
 - They will definitely be “raised” on the last day (throughout this discourse, eternal life and being raised at the last day are inseparable!)

(3) Jesus resigns to the fact that only those the Father draws will believe (vv. 36-40)

- They have seen Him (in person, signs and teachings): what more do they need?
- Genuine belief comes from the Father
 - If the Father so gives
 - He will definitely not drive away—because it’s the Father’s will
 - Not to lose one of them and
 - Will give Eternal life & raise them at the last day?
 - [Death is never the last word for those who believe in Jesus!]

But allow me to talk about the “I AM” statement as we finish today’s lesson

The Great I AM

In the Gospel of John, the Apostle John did something that the other three evangelists did not do in their Gospels. He particularly quotes Jesus saying the He is the Great I AM:

- | | |
|-----|---|
| (1) | In chapter 6 (35, 41, 48, 51), Jesus declares that “I am the Bread of Life” |
| (2) | In chapter 8 (12), Jesus declares that “I am the light of the World” |
| (3) | In chapter 8 (58), He also says, “...before Abraham was, I am” |
| (4) | In chapter 10 (7, 9), he says, “I am the door of the sheep” |
| (5) | In chapter 10 (11, 14), He declares, “I am the good shepherd” |
| (6) | In chapter 11 (25) He announces that, “I am the Resurrection and the life” |
| (7) | In chapter 14 (6), He declares, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life) |
| (8) | In chapter 15 (1, 5) He says, “I am the true vine” |

On the face of it,

- such statements focus on who he is as the Bread of life, the truth etc.,
- but the force of the declaration in the ears of the first hearer centers on the first two words,
- **I AM, or in Greek, *Ego Eimi*. = name OF YHWH**

God calls Himself “I AM”

Exodus 3:14-15

By then, the Israelites have been enslaved for 430 years. And they knew only the gods of Egypt. That’s the reason why when God appeared to Moses, He had to ask, “What is your name?” This question was asked not only on behalf of the people, but also for himself.

The underlying assumption is:

- since every single god we are exposed to in Egypt has a name,
- And each name bears their significance, especially in terms of their territory or origin
- So, you must have a name too with which I can have a sense of what kind of a God you are
- Not to mention the need to introduce you to the people.

It was in this context that God utters, perhaps the greatest verse in the Old Testament,

“I AM WHO I AM.”

As people from the Orient, we know the significance of a name in our culture. A name is more than a name, it embodies who you are--at least it was the hope when we were given our name.

The Egyptians have four classes of deities,

- 1ST TIER: **Amen**, the king of all the gods
- 2ND TIER: **Atmu**, the god of darkness or twilight

- **3RD TIER: Seth**, the god of death
- **4TH TIER: Hapi**, the god of the Nile

There were approximately 64 gods in all.

By introducing himself as “I AM who I AM”, God essential does not give a name, because a name is for a created being or a thing!

Every created being exists by reference to something or someone else:

- You are either a son, a daughter, a father or a mother of someone
- At work, you are the staff of your company
- We all are identified by reference to someone or something related to us.
- This is the created order, each has a name.

But God introduces himself as “I AM WHO I AM”

- essentially, he is saying I exist by myself
- I do not exist by reference to anyone or anything
- Because I am the Creator God
- He is not just the God of all gods
- He is the only God
- All else, are created beings or created things!

Therefore, if anyone asks, then where does God come from? Or who created God?

He still does not understand who our God is

- HE IS WHO HE IS
- You have asked the wrong question
- If he is a created being, no matter how powerful he may be
- He cannot claim to be “I AM WHO I AM”

Then, God told Moses, tell the people that “I AM has sent me to you.”

I AM WHO I AM, in Hebrew = “Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh”

But down the centuries, the Jews considered it too sacred to pronounce this name, even as it was pronounced by the High Priest in the Day of Atonement, they dare not say, (Watlke)

“I AM WHO I AM,
changed to “
HE IS WHO HE IS”,

and thus resulting in the four famous consonants, **YHWH**, which, according to the strongest consensus of biblical scholarship, is pronounced ‘**Yahweh**’.

At the time of Jesus, which was again a distant almost 600 more years after they last had their own country, the civilized world at the time was largely Hellenistic, i.e. converted to the Greek culture. Even the Jews had lost their Hebrew literary customs, and thus about 200 years before Christ, they

felt the need to translate event he Hebrew Old Testament into Greek. called the LXX which was the version commonly used in Jesus time.

And in the **Greek Bible (the LXX)**, in Exodus 3:14, this is what God told Moses, “This is what you are to say to the Israelites, “***Ego Eiu***” has sent me to you.”

Therefore, John in particular records this claim by Jesus,

“Ego Eiu the bread of life...
Ego Eiu the Way, the Truth and the Life...”

and so forth.

The words fell on to the hearers, especially the Scribe and the Pharisees and the priests as words of blasphemy, especially in **8:58** when He makes the clearest statement in this respect:

“Before Abraham was, I AM! (*Ego Eiu*)”

The Gnostics of old and their modern followers want to tell us that

- “Jesus never claimed to be the Son of God but was actually deified nearly three hundred years later by Emperor Constantine for his own nefarious purposes;

John emphatically clarifies not only this is not true.

Not only does He claim to be the Son of God, He claims to be the Great I AM, Ego Eiu, Yahweh himself.

Yes, this is a profound mystery, meaning this is beyond human comprehension, but that does not mean it is not true. The Gospel of John is also called a book of signs, in which he highlights many miracles that Jesus performed, and the greatest of all is his resurrection, He affirms and proved that Jesus is the “I AM— the Resurrection and the Life.”

HE IS WHO HE IS--Ego Eiu, Yahweh, Himself!

In the original Hebrew language, the Lord told Moses His name is “**Ehyeh**-Asher-Ehyeh”. (I AM WHO I AM). But down the centuries, the Jews considered it too sacred to pronounce this name “as is”, even the High Priest on the Day of Atonement did not dare to say, “I AM WHO I AM”, according to distinguished OT scholar, Bruce Waltke. They changed it to “HE IS WHO HE IS”, or in short, “He is”: “**Yihyeh**”–“with the medial y sound in this conjugated form would have had considerable phonetic interchange with the w consonant,” and thus resulted in the four famous consonants “YHWH”, which, according to the strongest consensus of biblical scholarship, is most likely pronounced as “Yahweh” . (Robert Alter)

From 5-Year Daily Devotion of Totalgrowth.org Year#4/Week5/Day29

Vv. 41-51—One more attempt to convince them

41 At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” **42** They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

43 “Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered.

44 “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. **45** It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me.

In spite of having seen Jesus in person, His miraculous signs and heard His teachings

- They still see Him as mere man and the reason?
- Well only the Father could draw them to believe in Him ultimately—as already made plan by the prophets (e.g. Isaiah 54:13; Jeremiah 31: 33-34)
- But if they do come to Him
 - Eternal Life and being raised at the last day is a certainty!

But Jesus still made at last attempt to convince them by reiterating what He has just said:

46 No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. **47** Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. **48** I am the bread of life. **49** Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. **50** But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. **51** I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

The Recap:

- I am from God; I have seen God—what I said is true therefore
 - Believe and have eternal life
- I AM the Bread of Life
 - Manna not the true bread (so not work for it)—your ancestors ate and died
 - But et this true Bread, you will not die
 - Because I am the “Living Bread”—i.e. that gives life
 - So eat and have eternal life
 - This bread = my Life (I give the world, alluding to His death)

v. 52-59—Eat my flesh, drink my blood

52 Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

53 Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you,

- unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.
- **54** Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.

(Why?)

- **55** For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.
- **56** Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and

- **I in them.**
 - **57 Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father,**
 - **so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.**

58 This is the bread that came down from heaven.

- **Your ancestors ate manna and died,**
- **but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”**

59 He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Meaning of coming to Him and believing Him explained:

- it is the eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood
- as later symbolized by the Last Supper
 - the use of bread as symbol originated here
 - rather than the eating of the “lamb” at Passover
 - bread: the body given (or broken) for us
 - wine: the blood shed for the forgiveness of sins for many

The result:

- eternal life and being raised at the last day
- we live in Christ and He in us—a spiritual reality!

Vv. 60-71: The Result of the Discourse

60 On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”

61 Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you? 62 Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! 63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit[e] and life. 64 Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. 65 He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them.” 66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

67 “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

70 Then Jesus replied, “Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!” 71 (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

This is one of the saddest moments in Scriptures:

- “many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him”
- It must have broken the heart of our Lord Jesus!

Why did they leave?

- Well they said “This is a hard teaching.”
- Well, when you think about it

- The key issue is: whether Jesus is from heaven or not?
- If He is, then as hard or hard to understand as it is
 - He knows what He is talking about
 - And we have no choice but believe in Him and what He says
- But if He is not from heaven
 - Obviously He is a liar!

So, this is basically what Jesus is challenging them

- “what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where He was before?”
 - Meaning: If I am from heaven (and if you believe now, we will see that I would ascend back to heaven, where I was before)
 - Then, the life I am talking about
 - Is life of the spirit, and not life in the flesh!
 - Don’t you understand!
 - Life of flesh never counts—it is temporal\
 - Life in spirit is eternal and that why I have come from heaven to give!

As Jesus’ heart was broken, He asked the Twelve—the closest to Him

“You do not want to leave too, do you?”

- Note the sequence of the words
- His heart is bleeding!
 - But what comfort too, are the words by Peter
 - **“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God!”**

Should the Lord ask you the same question today

- What is your answer?