Last week, I was having a yarn with someone, and they said to me, *"I was talking to another person the other day, and they said something that I know is wrong, but I don't know how to explain <u>why</u> it is wrong."*

Apparently, they were talking about how:

> *"There are some things that (as Christians) we **must** believe, but then, there are **other** things that are not so important, and we can disagree on those."*

And yes, that's true. But the problem is, the example the other person gave them, was to do with the Sonship and the Divinity of Jesus… (Divinity = Godness. For Jesus to be divine, means that Jesus **is** "God").

And the example given, was:

> *"We **do** have to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and as long as we believe that, it doesn't matter if Jesus Himself is God."*

And when the person **I** was talking to heard that statement, they instantly recognised it as a "false teaching" (Good job, BTW)…

So, they recognised it as being false, but they found it difficult to explain, "<u>Why</u> is it false?"; and "Why **<u>is</u>** it important to believe that we worship a triune God? – we worship God the Father/Son/Holy Spirit" (3 persons, and yet one God)…

And I said, "Well, I'm glad you asked, because we're actually going to touch on that, this coming week.

And so, here we are…

Let's set the scene:
Jesus is in Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles.

Now, whenever Jesus turns up at head-office, it seems the religious leaders take the opportunity to have a go at Him. And that's what's been happening. Jesus has been arguing with the Pharisees (who wouldn't believe Him), and **last** week, we started into a section where Jesus is talking with those who "**did** believe Him" (and we're still in that section now)…

But as it unfolds, we're not so sure that they're believers at all… Or maybe there are some believers and some antagonisers, interjecting, while Jesus is talking to the believers…

Whatever it is, there's a show-down coming…

Jesus is telling the truth. And they don't like the truth. He's already accused them of being children of the Devil. (It's not surprising, **that** didn't go down well).

And He said:
47 Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."

Now:

Have you ever noticed, that when someone is losing an argument, one defence method, is to falsely accuse you of something?

And so in politics, they're always accusing each other of being Nazis/fascist? Both sides of politics do this all the time, when they're nothing like Nazis…

Or if Jacinta Price will say something sensible on indigenous policy, she gets accused of being a racist, or a coconut (brown on the outside / white on the inside)…

Or if you say something that offends someone, you are accused of "hate-speech", when there's no hate at all involved…

Well, don't be surprised, they did that sort of thing to Jesus too. They accused Him, their two most hated things:

- You're a Samaritan (lie); and
- You've got a demon (lie)…

I mean, a Samaritan (to a Jew), is what a Jew is, to a Muslim today… They were hated

And to say "You've got a demon", that's like saying, "We'll look at you and raise you one"… You accuse us of being children of the Father of Lies, well you **are** a devil!"…

And here's the thing:
Even though this whole situation is escalating, Jesus doesn't shy away from it. He is speaking the truth, and He **keeps on**

speaking the truth, no matter how much He offends them, and no matter how dangerous it gets for Him.

And Jesus reveals 3 things:

1.
Firstly, His relationship of Honour with the Father.

Jesus does not have a demon – far from it. He is honouring the Father… The logical outcome of this is: Therefore, if they dishonour Jesus, they are dishonouring the Father. If what Jesus is saying and doing, is honouring the Father, to dishonour Jesus, is to dishonour the Father.

2.
Which leads us to the 2nd thing He reveals – Glory. Jesus isn't about self-glorification – He doesn't need to glorify Himself. The one who seeks the glory for Jesus, is His Heavenly Father – the Judge…

3.
Which brings us to the 3rd point:
The **final** judgment will glorify Jesus, because those who are obedient to Jesus, receive eternal life.

Jesus said: "Truly, truly" Amen, Amen. "Truly, truly, I say to you,…

And as I've said a few times now, whenever Jesus says that, that's like typing in bold, underlined, increased font size… This is really, really important – don't miss this bit:

51 Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

Wow, that's a pretty big call… (and He didn't just slip it in, hoping it will go unnoticed. He highlighted it). And so the antagonisers come straight back with more accusations:

"*Well, that confirms you've got a demon…*"

All of the great heroes of the faith have died:

- *Abraham died;*
- *The prophets died..*

And you have the audacity to say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.'?

Who do You think You are??? Do you reckon you're greater than Abraham/the prophets???

You see, they thought Jesus was making some impossible claims. They were judging Jesus by what they did not know. Remember, they did not know the Father. Therefore, they did not know Jesus.

And so, they thought Jesus was glorifying Himself by making these claims… "Self-glorification" – there's not much more repulsive than that, is there… At least we used to think so…

We Australians used to have special phrases for those glorify themselves:

- *full of themselves;*
- *try-hards;*
- *big-noting themselves…*

Now they just become influencers and get rich…

But that's what they were accusing Jesus of doing – glorifying Himself…

Jesus' reply:
"Self-glory" is worth nothing… The only glory that has any value, is what comes from God…

Think about that for a moment: The flesh craves "significance". We want to be remembered/known for what we've achieved…

What are you striving at, to achieve "significance"? Or for older people, it might be about looking for a legacy. What can I achieve, to pass on, and be remembered, after I'm gone???

And we spend our lives, chasing significance, that earns us glory… But, the only glory of any value, is what comes from God. And He values different stuff to what the world does.

Now, when it came to "God", the antagonisers knew Him as "God", but Jesus knew Him as "Father". It's all about the relationship, you see… There are many people who believe in God. So what. Satan believes in God – he ain't saved…

It's about knowing God. It's about being in an intimate relationship with God. He is our Heavenly Father.

(parent/child relationship & the parent's desire for relationship)

You see, these antagonisers, they are amongst those who identified as "believers". And as it turns out, they believe in God, but they did not know Him… And this is a crazy thing – a person can be a regular church attender their whole life, and never really know God.

Do you know Him? Do you really know Him? Is He your Heavenly Father? or does He remain for you, a distant God, Whom you know about?

The evidence that Jesus really knew His Heavenly Father, is in the way He kept His Word. He didn't only know the Word that God spoke. He kept/lived/did it. And this is a theme that keeps coming through in the Gospel of John. "If we really love God, we will keep His Word."
We will:

- Believe it;
- keep it;
- do it.

Righto:
We're up to V56, and this is where Jesus really takes us deep.
He said:
56 Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad."

Now, I'm not entirely sure about the breadth of what Jesus means here.

I'm pretty confident that Jesus Himself had observed the faith of Abraham – that Abraham had such faith that the Son of God would come as the Messiah, he saw it in his mind, and he believed it (with the utmost of confidence). Jesus observed the faith of Abraham…

But, is it boarder than that? Is Jesus also hinting that Abraham is not dead – that Abraham is now with God, and He had the opportunity to see the birth of the Messiah… It sorta sounds like it, but I'm not sure.

But what we **do** know, is how the antagonists understood it.
They said to Jesus, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?",
to which Jesus replied:
Truly, truly, Amen; Amen. "Truly, truly, I say to you,– this is really; really important:
"Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."

And at **that** point, they picked up stones, to kill Him…

Why?

It's because Jesus had just **blatantly** claimed to be "YHWH" (God) — **Blasphemy!!!** And the punishment for blasphemy, is to be stoned to death.

So, how did Jesus claim to be God? He did it in 2 ways.

1.

Firstly, He was demonstrating the difference between human existence & awareness, which begins at birth/conception, and the **absolute** and eternal existence, that it means to be God. God is outside of the constraints of time. He is the Alpha and Omega (That's like saying "He's the A to Z") – He's the beginning and the end. before Abraham was, I am.

2.

And secondly,
He claimed God's personal name for Himself.

When Jesus said "before Abraham was, I am, knowing the Scriptures, the Jews would have gone straight to Exodus 3.

In Exodus 3, God met Moses at the burning bush. And He told Moses to go and tell Pharoah "Let my people go".

And like we sometimes do, Moses comes up with all of these excuses why somebody else would do a better job:

- Who am I? I'm a nobody. Why would they listen to me?;
- And, who are you? Who will I say, has sent me???

Let's read it, from:
Exodus 3:13(ESV)
13 Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"

14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM."
And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

15 God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'YHWH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name <u>forever</u>, <u>and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations</u>. 16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'YHWH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me…..

Do you realise what's going on here? The Lord God Almighty, has revealed His personal Name to Moses. What is

it? YHWH… Should we stop using the personal Name of YHWH? I don't believe so.
This is my name <u>forever</u>, <u>and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations</u>.

Now, in the Hebrew, "I AM WHO I AM." is a bit of wordplay on God's personal Name YHWH. You can see here how "I am" (*'ehyeh*) is very closely related to God's personal Name (*YHWH*) (excuse my pronunciation). Their similarity is because they came from the same base word which means "to be"… It's about the eternal nature of God, shortened into His personal Name "YHWH".

And so God says, "Moses, you tell my people "I AM" has sent me to you." You tell them YHWH is my Name; It is my Name forever; And it is to be remembered throughout all generations…

When God described Himself as "I AM WHO I AM." This was *as if to say, I am who I am: a self-contained, incomprehensible being*[i].

God is. How can we mere humans describe God? How do we comprehend Him? If we could sum up God and comprehend Him, He wouldn't be God…

Now, stick with me:
A couple of hundred years before Jesus was born, the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into the Greek. It is known as the

Septuagint… And in the Greek, "I am" is translated as ἐγὼ εἰμί (egō eimi). Why's this important? It's because when the **New** Testament was written, it also, was written in Greek. And the words Jesus spoke here, are written exactly the same. before Abraham was, I am ἐγὼ εἰμί (egō eimi).

When the Jews heard Jesus' reply, And we don't know if Jesus spoke these words in Hebrew or Aramaic, but when they heard Jesus say what He did, they knew exactly what He was saying:

God said, "Tell them "I AM" has sent you." Jesus said "I AM".
The personal Name of "I AM"? YHWH.
Jesus is YHWH/God…

Now, if anyone else made that claim, that would be blasphemy.
But, it is not blasphemy for Jesus, because it is true…

Ding Dong!!!
You look out the window, and there, standing at your door, is a modestly dressed lady with an umbrella, and a man with a hat. One of them is carrying a little satchel… Who has come to visit?

Jehovah Witnesses…

And you hope that, if you get in quick, they might move on to the next house:
"I'm already a Christian. You don't need to waste your time on me".

"That's alright. We'll just talk for a bit".
And it won't be long, until they probably bring up the Trinity.
"Does your church believe in the Trinity".
"Yes, we do."

At this point, they will probably say, "Did you know that the word "Trinity" isn't in the Bible?"

Now, to their shame, most Christians will be surprised by that.

*But you **won't** be surprised, because you love Jesus enough to read your Bible. And you already **know** the word "trinity" isn't in the Bible. It's just a word we Christians use, to describe what Scripture reveals: that God is 3 persons, yet One. God the Father/Son/Holy Spirit.*

*You see, the person who has just knocked on your door, might be a nice person, but they've been deceived. They do not believe that Jesus is God. **They** believe that Jesus is a created being (the Archangel Michael) (Cool name, but not God).*

And the New World Translation they read, is not the Bible. They have re-written the Bible, to justify their claim that Jesus is Not God…

Here's one example,
Romans 10:9–13 (ESV)

9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus
is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him
from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the
heart one believes and is justified, and with the
mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the
Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in **him** will not
be put to shame." 12 For there is no distinction
between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord
of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.
13 For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved."

Now, every one of those words "Lord", that I've underlined, in the Greek, the word if "Kurios", which means "Lord".

So, what's the train of thought? The pinnacle statement is V13:

13 For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved."

Who is Lord? V9. if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

So, everyone who calls on the name of Who, is saved? Jesus….

Now, V13 is quoting the Old Testament prophet, Joel 2:32 (ESV)

32 And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD (YHWH) shall be saved…..

And yet in Romans, it's applying this to Jesus. It's saying Jesus is YHWH…

But, in the JW New World Translation[ii], in Verses 9 & 12, they translate the word "Kurios" as "Lord", but when they get to V13, they translate it as "Jehovah". They do not want their people to start believing that Jesus is God…

Can you see the deception? Within the one paragraph and the one train of thought, they translate the same word "Kurios" as "Lord" (2 times), and "Jehovah". It's a deception, that completely changes the meaning of the paragraph.

Alright, so, do not be misled.

Jesus is I AM/YHWH/God…

Those who believe **Him** are saved to eternal life.

Last week, we read in V**24** I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am (ἐγὼ εἰμί (egō eimi)) ~~he~~ you will die in your sins."

Now, we didn't dig into this bit last week. In the Greek, the word "He" isn't there. In the light of what we've just read, we know what Jesus means, when He says: unless you believe

that I am (ἐγὼ εἰμί (egō eimi)) ~~he~~ you will die in your sins."

Is believing that Jesus is God, an optional extra? No, it's critical. It goes to the very nature of Who He is. How can I believe in Him, if I do not know who He is.

It is for this reason, that Jesus was crucified. When Jesus said "I AM" to the question of Him being the Son of God, that gave them all the evidence they needed to crucify Him…

Sometimes we might wonder, "Is it OK to worship/pray Jesus?"

Does this confirm it for you?
He is:

- more than an ordinary man;
- far greater than any angel;
- I AM;
- YHWH;
- The Lord God Almighty;
- Creator of Heaven and Earth;
- The beginning and the end…

This is what it means to believe in Him. And it is by believing in Him, that we are saved.

It is right for us to:

- worship Him;
- praise Him;
- bow before Him and surrender ourselves to Him.

He is Lord.
And because He is Lord, we can trust Him in everything.

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[i] Childs, B.S. (2004) *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary*. Edited by P. Ackroyd et al. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press (The Old Testament Library).

[ii] Here's where the JW New World Translation differs.

> **9** For if you publicly declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation. **11** For the scripture says: "No one who rests his faith on him will be disappointed." **12** For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. There is the same Lord over all, who is rich toward all those calling on him. **13** For "everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved."