

Dr. David Turner, Gospel of John, Session 10, John 8

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This is Dr. David Turner in his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session 10, Tense Times in Jerusalem. Jesus Continues to Teach in the Temple (John 8:12-59).

Hello, I'm David Turner. Welcome to our video on John chapter eight.

During our initial videos on introduction to the Gospel of John, in the second one, we discussed a bit about the textual variance and other issues in the way we have received the Gospel of John. We are now face to face with the major textual variant in John, from John 7:53 to chapter eight, verse 11. We'll spend some time on it, the so-called Pericope Adulteress, the episode of the adulteress.

And then we'll move on to the rest of John chapter eight, as we have been looking at the narrative flow, then trying to isolate important topics about the chapter in various aspects of our study. So, when we look at John 8, again, we remind ourselves that we are in Jerusalem. Jesus is teaching in and around the temple.

The chief priests and the Pharisees are meeting, evidently, somewhere. We would take it on the temple grounds to send their arrest parties out for Jesus. And so, we have this map perspective, a very nice aerial photo here as well, showing us something of what the temple grounds would have looked like, at least the outer platform back in the time.

So, Jesus has been teaching in Jerusalem, and the authorities are sending arrest parties out to get him. And the people that Jesus is teaching have any number of responses to what he's teaching, any number of explanations for who he is, ranging from being a demon-possessed lunatic to being someone who was the Messiah of Israel, and everything in between, for that matter, it seems. So as John 7 comes to an end, the council is meeting and talking about getting rid of Jesus.

Nicodemus speaks up in Jesus' favor, at least saying, let's give him a fair hearing. And he is shouted down as being a person who is essentially a Galilean, an ignoramus. As a person from southern Ohio, I'm used to hearing the expression, a dumb hillbilly.

That would be how I was talked to at certain times as I was growing up. So that's how they thought of Nicodemus, except the hills were in the north back then, not in the south. So as John 7 winds to an end, we read in John 7, 52, the scornful words to Nicodemus, are you from Galilee too? Look into it.

We find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee. In the King James Version of the Bible, not as many current versions, we have this interesting section, this episode of Jesus and a woman who is snatched by the Pharisees in the act of adultery, not because they're so much worried about that, but they wanted to find something to make Jesus look bad. So, in some manuscripts, we read after John 7:52, chapter 8, verse 1, which says, a few, excuse me, then they all went home, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

And then it goes on to speak of the incident where the woman was caught up in adultery. They brought her to Jesus to try to hold something against him. He spoke about that and finally made the accusers look bad.

They left. And he said to the woman, I don't condemn you either. And so go now and leave your life of sin.

8:12, when Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, I am the light of the world. So, as we read this text, we realize that it seems a bit odd that it tends to break up the flow from John 7 and verse 52 over to John chapter 8, verse 12. Most people think the text reads much more naturally to go from 7:52 directly to 8:12.

7:53 itself seems quite odd. They all went home, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Jesus, of course, wasn't even in the picture at this point.

They all went home. Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 8:12, Jesus spoke to the people.

And then all of a sudden, the Pharisees are there challenging him in 8, 13. We thought they all went home. So, it's hard to understand exactly how the flow works if we read this passage.

All that aside, it behooves us since it's a major part of the textual tradition and is a large piece of John that is perhaps disputed a great deal to spend a little bit more time talking about the passage. So, we'll take a few minutes to do that just now. Rembrandt had a quite interesting view of the woman here with Jesus in a painting from 1658.

I'm afraid our image here doesn't do justice to the painting as I've seen it online. So, you may want to, if you care about such things, find this one online yourself to get a little bit better view of it. As it is, it's a rather dark image.

I think that's what Rembrandt was going for. And the light, of course, is focused on the woman who is kneeling there and the sobbing and crying and Jesus standing over her. So, let's go then to some of the issues with the passage.

It is a textually disputed passage for several reasons, yet it's very interesting. From the standpoint of what textual scholars call external evidence, this passage is not found in the more ancient manuscripts. It's found in more recent ones, very many recent ones, as a matter of fact.

However, in the recent manuscripts, it is placed in different spots. In some of them, it's placed in a couple of different places in the Gospel of Luke. It's also found in a couple of different places in the Gospel of John.

One place that it's stashed in John, other than here, is at the end of John as sort of an appendix to chapter 21. Some of the manuscripts do include it in other places, and at this point in John's Gospel, it's marked with obelisks in the margin to keep people from thinking it is unquestionable. I can think of one manuscript in particular where the person writing the manuscript left the page blank to leave room for it if it was later decided appropriate to put it in, but it never was.

So, there's a blank spot in the ancient manuscript where they might have put it in, but they decided not to. It contains lots of words that don't seem to be found elsewhere in John. In other words, language is not really part of John's typical way of speaking, and it does seem to break the narrative continuity of John 7 and 8. All that aside, the passage has a certain power to it.

It sounds like Jesus, and most people who look at the passage are sympathetic toward it, even scholars who feel that it has dubious authority as part of the original Gospel of John. So, more and more people have come to the conclusion that although this passage is likely not to be considered part of the original Gospel of John, it very likely is an authentic tradition about Jesus that sort of floated around in the church after the New Testament was written. We know that, according to Luke, and just from ancient history in general, traditions about ancient people were passed by word of mouth and typically written down at some point, but not necessarily.

So oral traditions were passed along for centuries. Not all the oral traditions about Jesus made it into the New Testament. This bears marks, in most people's opinion, of an authentic saying of Jesus, so probably not originally part of the Gospel of John, but part of the life of Christ.

Interesting summary of this in the Net Bible. I recommend that you check out the Net Bible and use it if you need a biblical resource. That's online.

Net stands for the New Electronic Translation, and it's a very nice site that gives you some very helpful notes on the grammar of Greek and Hebrew and why they make the translation the way they do. And there's a helpful page or so of notes on John 7:53 to 8:11. It's interesting to note that in one other place in the New Testament, in Acts chapter 20, the Apostle Paul is speaking to the elders at the Church of Ephesus,

and he says to them, you know, I haven't taken your money. I've made tents to make a living, and I've been trying to teach you.

Just like the Lord Jesus himself said, it's more blessed to give than to receive. Of course, if you try to find that saying of Jesus, it's more blessed to give than to receive in the Gospels anywhere. You won't find it.

So, this is obviously a tradition of Jesus that Paul had received that none of the Gospel authors had seen fit to include in their texts about Jesus. Yet, we find it on the lips of Paul, and Luke included it in the book of Acts, so we take it as authentic. This text we're looking at here in John is somewhat like that, although we have doubts that it is really a part of the original Gospel of John.

So, a beautiful passage that shows us that God in Jesus does not tolerate sin, yet God will come down and forgive sinners who will follow him. So, we're all grateful for that, are we not? So, move on then from John 7.53 to 8.11, and to the undisputed part of the Gospel of John again, chapter 8, verses 12 to 59, which continues the tumultuous material we've been reading about since John chapter 7, verse 14. Jesus has been teaching in the temple area since the middle of the Feast of Booths and has given the great saying about the Holy Spirit in John 7.37 to 39 on the last day of the Feast, and that has thrown the religious leaders into further throes about what they're going to do with him.

So, they're having their meeting about what to do with him. He's continuing his public teaching. So, what do we have in the narrative flow of John chapter 8? Well, first we have Jesus testifying that he is the light of the world.

This is one of the more arresting and important sayings of Jesus in John, dealing with the light imagery which is crucial with which this book begins. So, 8.:2 says, when Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Not a direct allusion to Isaiah 9, verses 1 and 2, but one that seems to be using the image of light in a very similar way. So now back to the same theme that we first encountered in chapter 5. As soon as Jesus says this, the Pharisees challenge him by saying that he's witnessing himself. You're appearing as your own witness.

Your testimony is invalid. Jesus then explains his testimony in verses 14 through 18 by saying that even though I'm testifying on my own behalf, what I'm saying is true. What I'm saying is what the Father gave me to say.

And in your law, verse 17, in your own law, he says, not that it wasn't his law as well, but he's basically convicting them by their own authoritative documents. In your law,

it's written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. I am the one who testifies for myself.

My other witness is the father who sent me. This brings then a big discussion about who your father is, and Jesus says you don't know him. If you knew who he was, you would know who I was.

And so, he spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Now it's quite interesting to try to go back and understand exactly where that might have been in the temple courts near where the offerings were put. As far as entering into the temple enclosure, the outer rim would be where anyone could go, including Gentiles.

And we get into the court of Israel where Jewish men and women alike could come, then to the court where men could take their offerings, then to the court of the priests. So, I think that the place where Jesus was teaching would have to have been in one of these inner courts where the offerings were taken, although not probably in the inner court where only the priests were allowed to be. Jesus was not a Levite.

He would not have been in that particular area, probably in the area of the court where the Israelite men were permitted to be. So, when we look at the structure of John 8, we've looked at it just from the standpoint of what happens there. We haven't gone quite far enough with that yet.

Let's go back to this slide and look at the rest of the chapter. Jesus is speaking not only to the Pharisees about the validity of his testimony in verses 12 through 20. He's also speaking about his departure.

He says to them, I'm going away. You'll look for me. You'll die in your sin where I go.

You cannot come. This made the Jews ask, will he kill himself? So, here's yet another opinion about Jesus. We saw a bunch of them in chapter 7. Now they think in chapter 8, verse 22, some of them think that he is suicidal.

Of course, this is totally wrong. Jesus continues in verse 23. You're from below.

I'm from above. You're of this world. I'm not of this world.

I told you, you would die in your sins. If you don't believe that I am he, you indeed die in your sins. So, this expression in verse 24, I am he, anticipates perhaps the last part of John chapter 8, where Jesus is saying to him, before Abraham was, I am.

The same verbiage is in Greek. We'll talk about that by the time we get to the end of the chapter. Interesting to see this in the middle of the conversation though.

If you don't believe that I am he, you will die in your sins. So, they say, well then who are you? Verse 25. Jesus replies, well, I've told you that from the beginning.

You already know who I am, and if you don't know yet, you probably never will. They did not understand, verse 27, that he was speaking to them about his father as the one who sent him. So, Jesus says, when you lift up the Son of Man, seems to echo John 3.14 and Moses lifting up the serpent, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak just what the Father has taught me.

The one who sent me is with me and has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him. And as he spoke these words, despite all the opposition he is receiving, once again we see a little ray of light protruding into this rather dark narrative. Even as he spoke, it says, many believed in him.

Chapter 8, verse 30. That sounds quite good for just a bit. However, as soon as we see the saying, many believed in him, we get into a section of John that is quite difficult to understand, because Jesus begins to speak to the Jews who believed in him in verse 31, and he says to them, if you hold on to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

Then you'll know the truth, and the truth will set you free. Now, one would think that new believers in Jesus would take a word like that and respond to it with some caution and with some foreboding and saying to themselves, okay, I guess we really need to pay attention to what he is saying and really hang on to what he is teaching and really take this business of believing and following Jesus seriously. However, the answer that we receive in verse 33 is not that sort of an answer at all.

They say we are Abraham's descendants. We have never been the slaves of anyone. What do you mean we will be set free? So, it seems a rather odd way for believers in Jesus to respond to their master, their teacher.

They are now challenging what he has to say. So, perhaps we should not be so rosy in our understanding of chapter 8, verse 30, as he spoke, many believed in him. Of course, this reminds us, if we are tracking with the emphasis of some of our other videos, of the people way back in chapter 2 who first heard Jesus in the temple and who first saw the signs that he did, who came to some sort of faith in him, respecting him as a teacher come from God by Nicodemus or understanding him to be some sort of a prophet, but that did not mean that they would not dispute with him as they did here in verse 33.

So, back again to the difficulty of understanding what saving genuine authentic faith is in John. So, we then enter into an increasingly hostile discussion between Jesus and these Jews who in some sense of the word acknowledged who he was. Truly, I

say to you, in response to them saying they were free-born descendants of Abraham, truly I say to you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

A slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So, if the son sets you free, that's Jesus, you'll be free indeed. I know you're Abraham's descendants, yet you're looking for a way to kill me because you have no room for my word.

I'm telling you what I've seen in my father's presence. You're doing what you've heard from your father. So, this begins the ensuing narrative about whose father is responsible for them and which block are they the chips off of as the old saying goes.

So, they say Abraham is our father, and Jesus replied that you don't look and act like Abraham. You're doing the works of your father, verse 41, and who that is will come out pretty clearly in a moment. Once again, in verse 41, they insist we're not illegitimate.

The only father we have is God himself. Verse 42, Jesus does not have that. He's saying if God were your father, you'd love me for I came forth here from God.

I haven't come on my own. So, if you were of God, you would follow me. So, he comes right out and says it finally in verse 44, you belong to your father who is the devil.

If you want to carry out your father's desires, he was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there's no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he's a liar and the father of lies. Because I tell you the truth, you don't believe in me.

Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? I am telling the truth. Why don't you believe me? One who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you don't hear me is because you don't belong to God.

So, that is no doubt about it, that Jesus is saying to them that you are not my people. Now, these are the folks who have just been told, we've just been told in verse 30, have believed in him. This is a very difficult passage to understand in that respect.

So, these Jews who believed in him supposedly now are saying in verse 48, aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed? So, now we're wheeling out the epithets again, just like Nicodemus was called a Galilean by the council at the end of chapter seven. Now, the Jews are saying that Jesus is a Samaritan. I guess that would be one notch worse than a Galilean, but not a good thing to be called and demon-possessed.

I'm not sure whether being demon-possessed was worse than being a Samaritan or better, but being both was certainly a very bad thing. Interestingly, Jesus does not deny being a Samaritan. He doesn't take that bait, but he does say, I'm not possessed by a demon.

I honor my father. You dishonor me for honoring my father. I'm not speaking my own glory, but the glory of the one who sent me.

And so, from that, they say again, now we know for sure you're demon possessed because Abraham died, so did the prophets. Yet you say, anyone who believes your word will never taste death. You're greater than our father, Abraham.

So, you see the passage is just going from bad to worse to worst here. Things are spiraling out of control. And ultimately, we're going to have the saying in verse 58, which leads them to pick up the stones.

So, Jesus says, if I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day.

He saw it and he was glad. Very interesting way that Jesus understands the Old Testament, what this is speaking of, as far as what Abraham really understood and thought of in some sort of seed principle is hard to glean from Genesis. But Jesus says that Abraham in some sense understood of his messianic mission.

Perhaps as Abraham reflected on Genesis chapter 12, now it was promised to him that through his descendants, the entire world would be blessed. Perhaps that is what Jesus is thinking about here, about someone from his loins who would actually bless the entire world. So, Jesus makes the comment about Abraham, which really flabbergasts them.

And so, they reply in verse 57, you're not even 50 years old yet. You have seen Abraham. They're saying, you really are out of it.

You really are nuts. So, Jesus replies to them. Here's a very crucial Christological statement.

Before Abraham was, some translations continue to say, for Abraham was born, adding that word to it. Before Abraham became, I am. At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

So, as the chapter concludes, we have another one of these mysterious departures of Jesus. We're almost led to think there that Jesus must have used some supernatural power to get away from them, but that isn't stated for sure, and so we don't really

know. So, how's that for a story without a happy ending? Not a very nice story, one where the dispute about Jesus comes to a head and comes to the wrong head, the head of total negativism about him.

So, we look back on this story now, and we try to get some idea of its structure. How does all this fit together? We seem to have a series here of teachings of Jesus, which set people off in various ways, which leads to various results. Sometimes, the results occur immediately, and there's no intervening dispute.

Jesus teaches in John chapter 7, verse 14. He makes an important statement there, way back in chapter 7, that he goes up to the temple courts and begins to teach. Well, what's the result of his teaching in the temple? Verses 15 through 24 lead to a great dispute, and the result is in verses 25 through 27.

People in Jerusalem began to say, isn't this the guy they're trying to kill? 7, 28, and 29, we have a new teaching of Jesus. You know me, and you know where I'm from, etc., and this leads to the result 7:30, of them trying to kill him. 7:33, and 34, we have a new teaching of Jesus.

I'm with you, but only for a short time, and the response to that is, what is this guy doing? Where does he intend to go? What does he think he's doing? Another short teaching of Jesus, perhaps the central teaching of John chapter 7, verses 37 to 39, is about the Holy Spirit, which tends to lead those who were there sent to arrest Jesus to be unable to do so because they're amazed at his language. The central dispute in all of this narrative in chapters 7 and 8 is that carried on by the Jewish council at the end of John chapter 7. It's sort of a hinge right in the middle of the chapter which ties everything together from chapter 7 when Jesus first arrives in Jerusalem to the end of the discussion. So, the debate amidst the council, where Nicodemus is the lone voice of reason to at least find out what Jesus believes, is sort of the central part of all this.

So, following that, Jesus makes the statement that he is the light of the world. That results in chapter 8, verses 13 through 19, in a dispute over his testimony. So once again, in verse 20, the result of all that is, he spoke these words while teaching in the temple, no one seized him because his hour had not yet come.

So, we have a new teaching of Jesus in chapter 8, verse 21. I'm going away, you'll look for me, you'll die in your sin, or I'm going, you cannot come. This leads to the dispute that goes on in verses 22 through 29 about where Jesus is planning to go, leading to the conclusion of verse 30, even as he spoke, many believed in him.

This sounds good until you look at verses 31 and 32, a new saying of Jesus, once again a new teaching, where he says, if you hang on to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Which leads to the dispute about Abraham and whose children his

heroes are. And the ultimate end of the chapter, chapter 8, verse 59, resulting in them attempting to stone Jesus, but him being able to slip away from them.

So, it's just not a very pleasant chapter to read if you didn't like all the tumult that was going on in chapter 7, all the chaos, all the different viewpoints about Jesus that are all over the place in chapter 7. It only gets worse in chapter 8. The response to Jesus' ministry is not so much all over the place. It is almost positive there in chapter 8, verse 30. So, you're feeling a bit good about these.

Some people are getting it. The trouble is you find out in the rest of chapter 8 from verse 39 and following that, even these people aren't really getting it. So, it's a sad chapter.

So, some of the exegetical issues within John chapter 8, we see of course in Jesus' important saying here, I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life. Part of the extensive imagery of light and darkness in the gospel of John.

We've already spoken about that. Probably no need to continue that discussion in any more depth at this point. Day and night also come into this discussion.

Nicodemus came to Jesus, as you recall, by night. Other things, good things happen during the day. Bad things happen in the night.

That's sort of the way it works. Old Testament background on light and darkness, we'd want to go all the way back I think to Genesis chapter 1, verse 3. See how God spoke light into the darkness. Isaiah 9 talks about people who dwelt in darkness, in the shadow of death, experiencing light.

Isaiah 42 and 49 speak about Israel as to be a light to the Gentiles. Zechariah 14 speaks in a similar way. We're told that the feast of Sukkot or Booths Tabernacles also had a torchlight ceremony in the Mishnah, tractate Sukkot, again, 5, 3, and 4, which may have some relevance to this and some background material that helps us understand what Jesus is saying.

All this light and darkness symbolism portrays an ethical dualism between God and Satan. That dualism is quite starkly portrayed as chapter 8 winds down and Jesus tells them, I am from God, you're of your father, the devil, and Abraham is on my side, not on yours. Another exegetical matter that we should think about here in the chapter has to do with Jesus' special relationship with his father.

We saw this as early as back in chapter 5 where Jesus said, I'm only doing the things that the Father gave me to do. Jesus continues to insist on that throughout chapter 8

he is the agent of the Father. He is the one who is simply carrying out on earth what the Father in heaven has willed, so he's speaking with the Father's authority.

If you reject Jesus, you do so at your own peril because you are resisting not just Jesus, the messenger, but you are resisting the one who sent him, the Father in heaven. Probably the most obvious question here that bothers us the most is the dispute that Jesus ends up having with Jews who, in some sense of the word, have believed in him. How is it that Jesus calls believers children of the devil? That sounds a bit wrong, doesn't it? How can you be both? Apparently, we need to understand the hinge in the chapter, particularly verse 31, in an important way as understanding what characterizes a real believer.

To the Jews who had believed him, believed him in some sense of the word, verse 31, Jesus said, if you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. So, Jesus is speaking here about how one's lifestyle demonstrates one's faith.

It's commonly said in evangelical Christianity that although people are not saved by works, only the work of Jesus saves us. Nevertheless, we demonstrate the reality of our faith through good works. We bring together perhaps Paul's words in Ephesians 2, verse 10, with James chapter 2 and see perhaps they're on the same page after all and saying essentially the same thing, that we don't somehow merit salvation from God by what we do, but what we do shows that we have truly believed in God and truly have been and made his children.

So, we serve God because we love him, and if we don't serve, then there is doubt that we really have come to a believing, loving relationship. Jesus then is saying that the people who are believers in him are going to show it and are going to be living by his teaching. However, these folks are immediately recalcitrant and don't want to have anything to do with his teaching, showing them that they are not really his disciples.

Now we've already seen back in chapter 2, by now you may be tired of me referring back to that passage at the end of chapter 2, but I really think it's a key passage for understanding a lot of what follows in John. So, you may recall that we spoke of this passage before about how on his first trip to Jerusalem, Jesus did many signs and the text tells us that many people believed. Apparently, Nicodemus was one of these people who believed in Jesus in some sense of the word.

Something similar to this in chapter 6, verse 14, and I think other texts in John. So, I think we have to ask ourselves, is the word belief somewhat ambiguous in John? Fortunately, we have people who are called believers who are not exactly toeing the line, paying any attention at all to what Jesus said and what Jesus did. I suppose it would be important for us to tie this passage, at least in principle at the moment,

we'll talk about it more later, to what Jesus says in chapter 15, where he uses the beautiful imagery of himself as the authentic vine, perhaps in distinction from Israel as an unfaithful vine of God.

I am the true vine, Jesus says. You are the branches, and as my father runs his farm, the vineyard, you abide in me, and I in you, and you will bear fruit, and you will be pruned so that you bear even more fruit. If you don't bear any fruit, you'll be cut off and burnt.

And so that very stark language perhaps focuses again on the necessity of what the theologians call the doctrine of perseverance. Those who are more of an Arminian persuasion theologically, when they come to texts like this, believe that true believers lose their salvation, and people who are more in what we often call the Calvinistic camp will think that these people were never really true believers to begin with. They simply professed faith or came to some sort of inadequate understanding of what Jesus said.

Perhaps they didn't even realize it, but later on it turned out that they were not true believers. So, this isn't a class on whether you should take one or the other view in theologically analyzing it. This is a class on John and the complexity of faith in John and the difficulties we have in understanding exactly what these things mean, but this is about the perseverance of the saints.

So, we look at one more thing here primarily, the way in which Jesus makes this saying at the end of John chapter 8, before Abraham was, or perhaps better before Abraham was born, I am, which led them to want to stone him, and Jesus is able to slip away. In the Old Testament, stoning was a penalty for blasphemy, and Jesus has been in a couple of situations previously where he's been accused of similar things, going way back as far as chapter 5. So, when we look at this statement before Abraham was born, I am, what is it that was so offensive about him saying I am to them? Notice that it didn't just simply come at the end of the chapter, but was implied in chapter 8 as early as verse 24. Unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins.

Also in chapter 8, verse 28, once you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he. And then also in verse 58, which concludes the chapter before Abraham was born, I am. A couple of statements later on in John may also echo this saying.

In chapter 13, verse 19, in the middle of washing the disciples' feet and telling them about the betrayer Judas, Jesus said, I'm telling you this now before it happens, that is his betrayal so that you will believe that I am. Also, finally in chapter 18 and verse 5, when the people who are coming to arrest Jesus come up to him and say, he says, who are you seeking? They say, Jesus of Nazareth. And he says I am he.

And immediately those words are so powerful that they fall back to and fall to the ground. So, what might be the power behind these words in Greek, ego, eimi, I am? Perhaps the Hebrew equivalent for this would be found in the covenantal text with Moses in Exodus 3, eheyeh asher eheyeh, I am who I am. More likely in my opinion at least, it's the I am he text that is found once in Deuteronomy and several times in Isaiah, which in Hebrew would be ani hu, I am he, literally I he without a verb.

And when the Greek translation of the Old Testament was made deceptive, these ani hu texts, these I am he texts in the Old Testament were typically translated with ego, eimi in Greek. These ani hu texts in the Old Testament were typically texts where God was proclaiming that he alone was truly God, other gods were only pretenders, and anyone who was not really in the right relationship with him had better watch out. So, we might look at a couple of these just so I make sure that you understand the passages of which I'm speaking.

Deuteronomy chapter 32 and verse 39, amongst others, probably the first text, picking up something in the context here, the Lord will vindicate his people, verse 36, and relent concerning his servants when he sees their strength is gone, no one is left slave or free. He will say, now where are their gods? The rock they took refuge in, will be the false gods. The gods ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offerings.

Let them rise up to help you, let them give you shelter. This is a bit sarcastic, something of a taunt, that if Israel follows false gods they won't really get any help from them. Now the true appeal, see now that I myself am he.

There is no God beside me. I put to death, I bring to life, I wounded and I will heal. No one can deliver out of my hand.

Verse 39 again, see that I am he. So, a couple of the passages in Isaiah chapter 41 and verse 4, chapter 43, and verse 10 are also interesting in this respect. Isaiah 41, 4, beginning in Isaiah 41, 1, just to catch the flow of it.

Be silent before me, you islands. Let the nations renew their strength. Let them come forward and speak.

Let us meet together at the place of judgment. Who has stirred up one from the east, calling him in righteousness to his service? He hands over nations to him and subdues kings before him. He turns them to dust with his sword, and to windblown chaff with his bow.

He pursues them and moves on unscathed by a path his feet have not traveled before. Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from

the beginnings? I, I the Lord, with the first of them and with the last, I am he. A very majestic statement showing God to be transcendent over all the machinations of human beings.

Similarly, Isaiah 43, verse 10, and we'll stop with this example. You are my witnesses, declares the Lord, and my servants whom I have chosen, so that you might know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no God was formed, nor will there be one after me.

I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from them, there is no savior. So apparently when Jesus uttered those words here at the end of John chapter 8, I am he, he was alluding to this string of texts in the Old Testament that speak of God as the only God, the true God, the God who will definitely intervene in human affairs, not one of the fake gods of the nations, but one of the true and living God, who alone will determine Israel's destiny. So, when our Lord Jesus speaks in this fashion, he's clearly portraying himself the way he is portrayed in the prologue to John as the preexistent God, a preexistent person who is implicitly divine.

He's essentially identifying himself with God. Of course, there are several texts in the Gospel of John where Jesus is essentially identified with John, culminating in the amazing words of a Doubting Thomas in John 20, verse 28, when he finally sees Jesus' hands and feet with the marks of the nails in them and Jesus having risen from the dead, Thomas says, my Lord and my God, in total astonishment and in total repentance from his lack of faith originally. So, as we conclude our discussion of John chapter 8, we are again encountered by those words of Jesus echoing Isaiah chapter 48, verse 12, among other Old Testament texts.

Just as the prophet Isaiah was God's mouthpiece to speak to Israel, so a greater prophet, Yeshua, Jesus spoke to Israel as God's mouthpiece. Jesus, as surely as Isaiah was saying to Israel, listen to me, O Jacob and Israel whom I have called, I am he, I am the first and I am the last. Jesus said, unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins before Abraham came to be before he was born, I am.

This is Dr. David Turner in his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session 10, Tense Times in Jerusalem. Jesus Continues to Teach in the Temple (John 8:12-59).