

JESUS IS I AM

YEAR: TRANSFORM / FOCUS: LIVING FOR JESUS / SERIES: GOD IS I AM

BIG TRUTH: JESUS IS I AM

Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3; John 1:1-3

BIBLE VERSE: JOHN 8:58

"Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.'"

BIG IDEAS

- Jesus is before Abraham.
- Jesus is Yahweh.
- Jesus is the source of joy.

BIBLE PASSAGE: JOHN 8:48-59; EXODUS 3:13-15

TRANSFORM: LIVING FOR JESUS

In High School, the Transform Year is an exploration of what it looks like to have transformed influence as we seek to live for a Kingdom that is greater than our own. First, we recognize that we will never be transformed if we are not Living for Jesus. To do this, we must first know who Jesus is by looking at who He says He is (John 8:58), and then look at what the Bible says about how in Him, we live by faith (James 1:6). Next, we recognize that to have transformed influence means that we must live as disciples in pursuit of Christ and His Kingdom over ourselves and our own kingdoms.

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know...

- The 8 different "I AM" statements that Jesus uses in the gospel of John.
- We will always be dissatisfied when we search for joy and life apart from Jesus.
- The value and worth of our lives is found in Jesus alone



Every student should feel...

- Awe that God would make a way for our relationship with Him through Jesus.
- Convicted of the lies that they are tempted to believe about Jesus.
- Responsible to use their influence for Jesus alone.



Every student should strive to...

- Read the entire gospel of John.
- Memorize the Bible verse each week.
- Practice sharing the truth about who Jesus is using the 'I Am' statements from Scripture



Every student should want to...

- Grow in their understanding of who Jesus is.
- Abide in Christ deeper than they ever have before.
- Be known for how they point people to Jesus with their lives

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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BIBLE VERSE: JOHN 8:58

“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.’”

Jesus is eternal.

“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.’”

- In John 8 when Jesus makes one of His “I AM” statements, He is making a statement about who He is. In this particular statement, when He says that He is before Abraham, He is not just saying that He was alive before Abraham was, or that He has lived longer than Abraham. He is making a statement about His eternal nature because He is divine.
- Jesus has no beginning or end. He is not a created being. Unlike Abraham who did have a beginning and an end, Jesus does not. Jesus has always existed as Jesus, the Son of God and He always will. His statement in John 8:58 was full of meaning and hope because since He is eternal, those who believe in Him will be eternal also.

Jesus is God.

“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.’”

- Jesus’ statement in John 8:58 is in response to the questions of the Jews who doubted Jesus’ identity. His response to them was not casual, and the fact that He dared say He was before Abraham, the great patriarch of the Jewish nation, stirred them to murderous anger.
- The Jewish people revered Abraham because he was their forefather, chosen by God to be the father of the nation of Israel, so who could be greater than Abraham? Only God Himself and that is what Jesus was saying. Jesus is God. He is not just a man or prophet. He is fully God who came to the world to save it from its sin.

Jesus is known.

“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.’”

- Jesus makes eight “I Am” statements and these statements reveal truths about Himself to us. That the God of the universe chooses to reveal Himself to us is remarkable. He chooses to allow us to know Him and He makes Himself known to us.
- In this particular “I Am” statement, Jesus makes Himself known as the knowable God. He is not a God who cannot be known or accessed by His people. He is near His people and makes Himself available to His people. When Jesus reveals His name “I AM”, it is God telling us who He is—Yahweh, or Lord. We can know Jesus and be known by Him.

BIG IDEA #1: JESUS IS BEFORE ABRAHAM.¹**[THIS]**

It matters who we believe Jesus is and who we say He is. It mattered during Jesus' earthly ministry and even before He came to the earth. In Exodus 3:13-15 when God is speaking to Moses through a burning bush, He calls Himself Yahweh, or I AM. In John 8:58, Jesus also calls Himself I AM. The connection between these two passages is that God is present in both revealing Himself to the world. In Exodus, God speaks to Moses revealing His sovereign rule over all. In John 8, Jesus is revealing that He is Lord God. Because Jesus is God, He has always existed. The Jewish people held Abraham in high esteem, yet Jesus is even greater than Abraham. Jesus is not dependent upon anything or anyone. He reveals this as He reveals that He was before Abraham. By placing Himself before Abraham, He shows His listeners that He is the one true God and Lord of all.

[THEREFORE]

Jesus' I AM statements reveal truths about Him. Why is it significant that He is before Abraham?

It's significant Jesus is before Abraham because it means that Jesus is God. John 1:2, 10:30, and Colossians 1:15-17 help us understand that Jesus is God. Because Jesus is God, He is able to satisfy our sin debt on the cross.

God reveals Himself to His people. How does it help your faith knowing that you can know God?

God is a God who can be known by His people. Because we can know Him, we can grow in our love for Him. Proverbs 8:17, Psalm 119:10, and Jeremiah 24:7 show us that those who seek God find Him.

[THIS]

The Jews questioning Jesus in the John 8 passage would have considered Abraham to be one of their patriarchs and a person to be esteemed. For Jesus to say He was before Him was a bold statement. Jesus was revealing so much about Himself to them, though. He was letting them know that He is God by showing that He is eternal. He has always been Jesus and He will always be Jesus. Jesus isn't a created being. He was not born or made. Though it angered the Jews when He said He was before Abraham, the greatest truth we can hear is that God came down from heaven to save us from our sin. If Jesus isn't God, then His sacrifice isn't sufficient, and our sin debt can't be forgiven. Jesus' "I AM" statement in this passage reveals that He is God and greater than any human on earth.

[THEREFORE]

People who encountered Jesus during His time on earth had strong reactions to Him. How do people have strong reactions to Him today?

People respond to Jesus by accepting Him or rejecting Him. Isaiah 53:3 shows us that people do reject Jesus and they do so because they reject their own brokenness. They don't believe they need a Savior. 1 Corinthians 1:18 shows us that the gospel seems like foolishness and folly to people who don't believe in Jesus. They look at Christians and the story of Jesus and think it is silly or foolish. Their pride keeps them from accepting Him.

1. John 8:58: Jesus has always existed and is greater than Abraham because He is eternal.

BIG IDEA #2: JESUS IS YAHWEH.²**[THIS]**

Names in Old Testament times held great meaning. Often, they reflected some aspect of the person's character. In John 8:58, Jesus calls Himself "I AM", which also translates as Yahweh. Yahweh, in English, is written as "Lord" in all caps and is considered the sacred name of God. This name is how God chose to identify Himself to Moses in Exodus 3:13-15. Yahweh exclusively refers to God and no one else. That Jesus calls Himself this is important because He is revealing His real identity. He is the one true God who came to the earth to redeem it. This is significant because the Jews had waited for many years for the Redeemer to come. When Jesus did come, His identity was disputed, and many doubted that He was the true Messiah. The Jews didn't want to believe that Jesus was from Heaven. They rejected the truth that He was divine in nature and the true Savior. They had preconceived ideas of who the Savior would be, and they refused to let those ideas go in order to really see and believe in the true Savior.

[THEREFORE]

Today people create their own idea of who God is. What are some of the false ideas people hold about God now?

One of the most difficult things for people to accept today is that there is one way to know God or that there is only one God—the God of the Bible. Ephesians 2:8, 1 Timothy 2:5, and Isaiah 43:11 help us understand that God is one and He is the true God. Yahweh is the only God, and we cannot redefine Him or call Him something He is not.

When Jesus calls Himself Yahweh, how is He establishing Himself as the true Savior of the world?

Because God established Himself as Yahweh prior to sending Jesus, when Jesus calls Himself Yahweh, He is establishing Himself as the true Savior. John 17:3, 1 John 5:20, and Hebrews 1:3 help us see that Jesus is God in the flesh. He is God come to the earth to save it from its sin.

[THIS]

It is important for us to know and understand that Jesus is God because it is a pivotal part of our salvation. Only God can save us. We are all sinful and have no way of saving ourselves. None of us can live a sinless life in order to pay our sin debt. Only God could live the perfect life on earth and go to the cross taking our place. When the Jews pressed Jesus about His identity in John 8:48-58, they did so because they didn't really believe He was who He said He was. They trusted more in their own idea of who the Messiah would be and who they thought God was than in who God really is. We often do this now. We define God ourselves and try to make Him who we think He is instead of hearing who He says He is in His Word. God told the Jews who He was—Yahweh. God has told us who He is in His Word. Our only choice is to listen and believe.

[THEREFORE]

Yahweh was the sacred name of God to the Old Testament Jews. How has the name of God become a casual thing today? How can you honor Him and His name now?

There is only one God and no others. We can choose not to use God's name in vain and speak of Him with reverence because He is the one true God as 2 Samuel 7:22 and 1 Kings 8:60 remind us. We also use God's name as a way to justify our own decisions even when they do not line up with His Word. We say, "God told me to do...", etc.

2. Exodus 3:13-15: Jesus is Yahweh. He is the Lord God.

BIG IDEA #3: JESUS IS THE SOURCE OF JOY.³**[THIS]**

When Abraham trusted in God's promises, he trusted that one day God would send the Savior to the world. Abraham's faith was in the future work that God was going to do. Jesus spoke of this trust and faith in John 8:56 when He pointed out that Abraham rejoiced to see the day that Jesus would come to the world. Abraham's joy was not found in earthly things. Though God showed him great favor and blessed him with many earthly things, Abraham's source of joy was in the promise that one day God was going to send the Messiah to the world to bring forgiveness to the world. All that Abraham did and all that he endured, he did so because of this promise. His faith was rooted and grounded in his trust that God was going to bring salvation to the world. This is the lasting joy that Jesus brings to all who believe in Him.

[THEREFORE]

What is joy? Where do you look for joy in your own life?

Joy is a feeling of great and lasting pleasure or happiness. As believers our joy comes from the Lord. Proverbs 10:28 and Romans 15:13 help us see that knowing Jesus is the only way to truly have joy that lasts. Abraham's faith brought him joy because he hoped in the coming of Jesus and not in earthly things.

[THIS]

Joy is an aspect of the fruit of the Spirit as seen in Galatians 5:22. We may experience happiness and feel joy for a time over earthly things, but true joy that is eternal is only possible when we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Psalms 4:7 shows us that Jesus brings a different type of joy than earthly things bring. Jesus is our source of joy. When we know Him, we always have joy. To know Jesus means our sins are forgiven and we have eternal life. To know Jesus means we have hope. This hope can never be taken away from us. Once we are in Christ, we are always in Christ. Once our sin debt is forgiven, we are always forgiven. What joy this brings to us to know that Jesus, who is the great I AM, came down to earth from heaven and paid our sin debt that we might know Him. No matter our circumstances or situation, we can rejoice at this truth, too, just like Abraham.

[THEREFORE]

Knowing Jesus brings joy. How can you increase your knowledge of Jesus this week?

Gathering with other believers to study God's Word is one way to increase our knowledge as we see in Colossians 3:16. Determining to know God's Word so that it is implanted in us like James 1:21 tells us to do is also a way to increase our knowledge of Jesus. When we do this, we will increase our joy because Jesus is our source of joy.

Read Psalm 118:24. Since Jesus is our source of joy, how can you choose this day to rejoice in Him?

Our circumstances do not bring us lasting joy. Jesus does. When we focus on Him and who He is, we can have joy even in the middle of the worst circumstances. We can choose in the midst of a terrible storm of life to have joy because we turn to Jesus and think about who He is and what He has done. We remember that no matter what this life brings, He promises us eternal life with Him.

3. John 8:57: Jesus is our source of joy because He brings salvation.