

John 8:56-59

Introduction.

1. One of the difficult Bible passages is John 8:56-59.

JOH 8:56 "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

JOH 8:57 The Jews therefore said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

JOH 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

JOH 8:59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.

2. In this passage Jesus made an outrageous claim by all human standards in regard to His age.
3. Some believe this passage teaches Jesus was nearly 50 years old rather than the traditional 33 years of age most believe He was.
4. Others challenge the statement Jesus made about His pre-existence, and seek to deny His Deity.

1. Jesus' Statement

- a. Jesus boldly exclaimed, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." (Jn. 8:56).

- 1) Jesus here speaks of their father Abraham rejoicing to see His day - "My day."

- 2) "Rejoiced" has the idea of being "overjoyed."

- 3) This probably does not refer to a single event in Abraham's life.

- 4) It likely refers to his life once he believed the precious promise God gave to him. (Gen.12:3; 22:18).

GEN 12:3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. "

GEN 22:18 "And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

- 5) This promise would have been on the heart and mind of Abraham from the time it was made.

- 6) The words "My day" refer to the age (coming) of the Messiah.

- 7) Abraham believed that day would come when the Messiah arrive and he rejoiced.

- b. Christ shocked and upset the Jews by this statement, and they proceeded to twist what Jesus actually said.

- 1) Observe the way the Jews twisted the words of Jesus.

- 2) Christ said "Abraham rejoiced to see My day..."

3) They affirmed Christ said He saw Abraham.

- "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" (Jn. 8:57).
- The twisting of His words may not have been deliberate, but then it could have been.
- They often twisted His words.

c. Some believe they were affirming Jesus was near 50, but this is not the case.

- 1) There is no evidence the Jews were suggesting Jesus was near 50 years of age.
- 2) They responded by saying He was not even 50 years old, that is, not even an elder or one entering His senior years.
- 3) They made this statement to discount the statement of Jesus that they twisted to mean He was before Abraham.
- 4) How could someone who had not even reached the age of 50 have seen Abraham?

d. Note:

- 1) Christ was before Abraham, but that is not what He originally affirmed.
- 2) Jesus will proceed to affirm His pre-existence. (Jn. 8:58).

d. How old was Christ?

- Christ was born during the reign of Herod. (Lk. 1:5). John was about 6 months older than Jesus. (Lk. 1:26).
- Herod died in about 4 B.C. (Matt. 2:19).
- Jesus may have been nearly 2 years old before Herod died. (Matt. 2:16). He could have been younger and Herod was trying to make sure he killed Jesus.
- Jesus and His parents were in Egypt for a time, and came back to Palestine after the death of Herod.

MAT 2:11 And they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell down and worshiped Him; and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.

MAT 2:12 And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their own country by another way.

MAT 2:13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise and take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him."

MAT 2:14 And he arose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed for Egypt;

MAT 2:15 and was there until the death of Herod, that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "Out of Egypt did I call My Son."

- This means Jesus was born somewhere around 6 B.C..
- Assuming Christ began His ministry is around A.D. 26, Jesus may have been around 31 or 32 when He began

His ministry.

1) Luke said Christ was **about** 30 when He began His ministry. (Lk. 3:23).

LUK 3:23 And when He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was **about thirty years of age**, being supposedly the son of Joseph, the son of Eli,

- Luke does not claim to give the exact age of Jesus, but gives a close approximation - note “about.”
- Luke did not know His exact age, and evidently His exact age was not significant.
- Jesus may have been 30 or perhaps a year or two older or younger.
- The language could permit even more than a year or two more or less than 30. This would still be “about.”
- Assuming Jesus was about 30 we can determine His age very closely.
- Christ's age [life time] is determined by counting the Passovers after the beginning of His ministry.

2) There were 3 or 4 Passovers during Christ's ministry.

<p>The first one is recorded in John 2:13.</p> <p>And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.</p>	<p>The next Passover is recorded in John 6:4.</p> <p>Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.</p>
<p>JOH 5:1 After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.</p> <p>John 5:1 is assumed to be the second Passover of His ministry. It is not called a Passover feast by John. It could have been the feast of tabernacles, the feast of Pentecost, the Passover, or some other feast. John said, “a feast of the Jews.” John has always used the word “Passover” elsewhere in his gospel.</p>	<p>The final Passover is found in John 11:55</p> <p>Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover, to purify themselves.</p>

3) The ministry of Christ was about 21/2 to 31/2 years depending on the number of Passovers.

4) Christ may have been about 32 or 33 at the time He claimed to be before Abraham. See John 6:4 and John 11:55.

5) He lived to be about 33 or 34 years of age if you add 2 ½ years to about 30 or 31 years of age.

6) We cannot be sure of His exact age at the beginning of His ministry; thus, we cannot be exact.

2. Christ Is Pre-existent

- a. Though Jesus original statement to them was twisted to mean He claimed pre-existence, He now makes that claim.
- b. Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." (Jn. 8:58).

1) Jesus affirmed He existed before "Abraham was born."

2) He used the words "I am," not "I was."

3) Abraham was called at the age of 75 in about B.C. 1876. (Gen. 12:4).

- The Exodus occurred about B.C. 1446 that was 430 years after the call of Abraham. (Gal. 3:16,17).

- Abraham was born about B.C. 1951 [1876 + 75).

- This means Jesus was claiming to have existed even before that date.

4) This means He was not a mere man or even a prophet like the prophets of old.

c. This infuriated the multitude.

1) They interpreted Jesus' statement as a claim to Deity.

2) Since they viewed Jesus as a man, this was tantamount to blasphemy.

3) They then sought to kill Him.

"Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple." (Jn. 8:59). See Lev. 24:15,16.

4) The words "went out of the temple" seem to have the idea that He "slipped out of the temple."

5) He "went out" undetected because of the threat to His life.

6) Jesus had come to die for man as an atoning sacrifice (Matt. 20:28), but He had not come to die in that manner.

7) His ministry was not complete. He would die once He had completed His earthly ministry.

8) He would die by crucifixion, and the sins of mankind would be laid upon Him. (Jn. 8:28; 12:32; Isa. 53:4-6).

d. The Bible makes it plain that Jesus was pre-existent.

1) Jesus said He was before the "world was." (Jn. 17:5).

2) He was before all creation. (Jn. 1:1-3).

JOH 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

JOH 1:2 He was in the beginning with God.

JOH 1:3 All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

3) The fact He "was God" means He is eternal.

4) Deity does not have a beginning.

5) No one has made God, but He has always been.

6) It is explicitly stated He created "all things" and "apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."

- Since everything that has been made was made through Jesus, it means He was not made.
- He has always been and always will be.
- Colossians 1:15-17 supports these conclusions.

COL 1:15 And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.

COL 1:16 **For by Him all things were created**, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- **all things have been created by Him and for Him.**

COL 1:17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

- Christ is called "the firstborn of all creation." The word "firstborn" means He was before creation and denotes superiority or pre-eminence over creation. "prototokos" [proh **tah** tah kahs] - "first-born, having special privileges, before."
- It does not mean He came into existence at some time before the world was created and was a mere created being.
- Christ was before all creation. (Col.1:17).
- As Creator Christ was and is superior over all creation.
- He also has "all authority." (Matt. 28:18).

3. Other passages

a. Jesus is called the "beginning" of creation. (Rev. 3:14).

1) The word "beginning" is from the Greek "arche" [ahr **kay**] meaning "beginning, cause, source, first place, high estate."

2) The word "beginning" does not mean Christ was created.

3) It means Christ is the source or cause of creation. (Jn. 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 1:2).

b. Christ is eternal. (1 Jn. 1:1,2; Isa. 9:6,7).

1JO 1:1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life--

1JO 1:2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you **the eternal life**, which was with the Father and was manifested to us--

ISA 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, **Eternal Father**, Prince of Peace. The words "Eternal Father" literally mean "father of eternity." It is also affirmed that Jesus would be called "Mighty God" - a reference to His Deity.

ISA 9:7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

Conclusion.

1. Christ was about 32 or 33 years old when He made His bold statement.
2. Jesus was pre-existent. He was before Abraham and the world.
3. Jesus was Deity, eternal, and the Creator of all things.
 - a. It means Christ is the source or cause of creation.
 - b. He is Superior to all creation.
 - c. Christ is Deity and eternal. (Jn. 10:30; 14:9; Col. 2:9; 1 Jn. 1:2).
 - d. One day every knee will bow to Him. (Phil. 2:9-11).

PHI 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
PHI 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth,

PHI 2:11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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