









Well, again we hear Jesus doggedly, yet humbly, sticking to the truth;  
the truth about his relationship to the Father,  
the truth about his superiority to alternative positions,  
and even the truth about the dishonesty of those who oppose his teaching.

Perhaps it's no surprise then that the personal attacks continue,  
Verse 57. "You are not yet fifty years old," they said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"  
My feeling is that in this verse,  
which is the final objection that we'll hear in the whole series,  
we arrive at the heart of what is making people sceptical.

As readers of the Gospel we've known from the very first chapter  
that God the Son—the divine being who would become Jesus of Nazareth—  
we've known that he has existed as God, with the Father, forever.

And so when we hear these opponents say "you are not yet 50 years old",  
it makes us realise that they think he's merely a human being.  
Yes he is human, but we believe Jesus is the divine human, the God-man,  
who has a history extending way back into eternity.

But these people can't accept this: "*You're just a man, and a young one at that!*"  
According to Jewish custom  
50 years of age was a significant marker of eldership.  
So they're being a bit condescending. "*Watch what your saying, Junior!*"

So this is the big stumbling block.  
*"He's making all these claims, but he's just another guy like one of us."*

And today of course there's the same objection,  
I had an uber driver from Afghanistan the other day,  
he said "you believe that Jesus is God's Son. He's just a prophet!"  
It's the same scepticism; "he's just a man."

And it's a scepticism that can also be found in a more subtle way within the church.  
We confess with our mouths that Jesus is God,  
but maybe in our hearts we wish he was just a man  
We say he's God, but we don't treat him as God,  
We're sceptical of his call to take up our cross and follow him.  
"He didn't really mean that, did he?"  
We can easily deny the divinity of Christ by our actions if not our lips.

And so how does Jesus respond to this, the most typical type of scepticism?  
With a statement that brings the whole two chapters to a climax:  
"Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"<sup>59</sup> At this, they  
picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.  
It's a funny sounding thing for Jesus to say, isn't it?

It doesn't even make grammatical sense: before Abraham was born, I am!  
 Is this why they wanted to stone him? Because they didn't like his grammar?  
 Of course not, they knew exactly what Jesus was saying.

The key is in our OT reading from Exodus Ch 3.

Moses has been commissioned by God as a prophet and leader of Israel,  
 And Moses asks "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers  
 has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" <sup>14</sup> God  
 said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to  
 you.'

And so In John 8:58, Jesus is taking God's own name for himself.

There are some sceptics who claim that Jesus never said that he was God.

What they mean is, Jesus never said the exact words "I am God."  
 But by taking the name of God as revealed in the OT  
 we see that Jesus quite clearly makes the claim that he is divine.

And so, once more, Jesus meets scepticism with a clear restatement of the truth;  
 he is not simply a man like all the rest,  
 but he is *God himself* who's become one of the human race.

I suspect that many of us still have a question.

So far what we've observed looks like a battle of opinions:

Jesus makes a statement > people object > Jesus makes the statement again.  
 So there's a question as to whose opinion we should believe.

This is where we have to lift our eyes beyond these two chapters  
 to the end of the Gospel,  
 where John records the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.  
 If Jesus is making claims about having the answer to death,  
 and if he is going to be greater than Abraham who lived and died,  
 then these claims must be backed up somehow.

Naomi Osaka had her sceptics,  
 but the moment she hoisted that trophy over her head  
 their scepticism counted for nothing.

And that moment for Jesus came when he walked out of the tomb;  
 that was the clincher,  
 the crowning moment giving weight to all that was said previously,  
 that's the moment which put the sceptics in their place.

Sceptics can say what they like, but Jesus speaks the truth.  
 Let's keep listening to him. Prayer.