**John 8:1-59**

**If Ye Believe Not that I Am**

**John 8:24**

**John 8:24 – “**I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”

The words spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ in **John 8:24** are part of a response to the Jews who were questioning Him and were attempting to find fault with Him so that they might have something with which to accuse Him and reject Him.

In **John 8:1-6** they had brought a woman caught in the act of adultery with the intent of finding a way to accuse Jesus Christ.

In **John 8:13 & 19 & 25 & 41** the Pharisees questioned his words and falsely accused the Lord Jesus Christ with the intent of finding fault with him so that they need not listen to His message of salvation.

In **John 8:21-22** the Pharisees mocked and ridiculed the words of the Lord Jesus Christ as he spoke to them concerning eternal matters.

Three questions may be asked with regard to the words of our text. They are:

1. What is it to believe Jesus is I Am so that we do not to die in our sins?

2. Why is it that men die in their sins? What does it mean to die in your sins?

3. What is it to believe so that we do not die in our sins?

**First:** **What is it to believe Jesus is I Am so that we do not die in our sins?**

**John 8:24 and 58-59** - “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that **I am** he, ye shall die in your sins … (58) Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, **I am**. (59) Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.”

**The Old Testament:**

**Exodus 3:14** – “**And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM**: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”

**Deuteronomy 32:39** - “See now that I, even **I, am** he, and there is no god with me …”

**Isa 43:10 and 13** – “(10) Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and **understand that I am** he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. (13) Yea, before the day was **I am** he …?”

**Isaiah 48:12** – “Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; **I am** he; I am the first, I also am the last.”

**The New Testament:**

**John 8:24 and 28 and 58**  I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that **I am** he, ye shall die in your sins … (28) Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that **I am** he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things … (58) Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, **I am**.”

AS we already read: **John 8:59 –** “**Then took they up stones to cast at him**: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.”

Compare **John 8:59** with **John 10:30-33** – “(30) I and my Father are one. (31) **Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him**. (32) Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? (33) The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that **thou, being a man, makest thyself God**.”

**Note**: The Jews understood that when Jesus Christ said that He was I am – He was making Himself equal with God. When He said, “I am he.”, He was saying, “I am God!”

Compare - **Isaiah 48:12** – “Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; **I am** he; **I am the first, I also am the last**.”

With - **Revelation 22:13** – “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.”

What is it to believe that Jesus Christ is I Am?

It is to believe as **John Gill** wrote concerning Jesus Christ - “…the everlasting and unchangeable I am, the true God, God over all, blessed for ever; the eternal Son of God, God manifest in the flesh, really made flesh, and become incarnate; the true Messiah, the only Saviour of sinners; the one and only Mediator between God and man; the Head of the church, prophet, priest, and King, and the Judge of quick and dead; as also the light of the world he had declared himself to be …”

**Second: Why is it that men are condemned to die in their sins? And, what does it mean to die in your sins?**

Our text indicates that men die in their sins because they will not believe that Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh – the one true Messiah – the one and only mediator between God and man – the way, the truth, and the life – the only way by which sinners may come to the Father.

But the Scriptures also teach:

**Men are condemned to die in their sins because they are condemned as guilty sinners before God ‑ John 8:7** – “… He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”

**Their defiled conscience condemns them** ‑ **John 8:9** – “And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one …”

**Romans 2:15** – “Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, **their conscience also bearing witness**, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)”

**The broken Law of God condemns them** ‑ **Romans 3:19-20** – “(19) Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and **all the world may become guilty before God**. (20) Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

**The rejected Gospel condemns them** ‑ **John 3:18 and 36** - “(18) He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (36) He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

**Men are condemned because, in their present carnal state, they are not fit to live in heaven.**

**John 8:23 ‑ “… Ye are from beneath … ye are of this world …”**

**Every person born of Adam is born into a realm that is different than where God dwells** – all of us are – from beneath -- of the earth, earthly. We are all fit for the earth but we are not fit for heaven.

**John 3:31** - “He that cometh from above is above all: **he that is of the earth is earthly** …”

**We all speak the language of the earth.** We all communicate of earthly things but not of heavenly things.

**John 3:31** - “… he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth …”

**We all mind (obey) the things of the earth.** We cannot and will not be obedient servants in heaven.

**Romans 8:5-6** – “(5) For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. (6) For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

**Since we all mind the things of the earth, we are at enmity with God and are therefore not subject to Him or His law**.

**Romans 8:7** – “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

Heaven is a place where to Law of God rules supreme – God’s will is done in heaven!

In **Matthew 6:10** our Lord taught us to pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, **as it is in heaven**.”

If we were allowed into heaven in our present state we would live a life of defiance to God in heaven. We cannot be allowed into heaven without being born again – forgiven – justified – sanctified and glorified.

**We are all condemned to die in our sins because of our inability to do anything to change ourselves. We cannot change ourselves from an unbelieving sinner to a believing servant of God even though we may profess to seek the Lord.**

**John 8:21** ‑ “… Ye shall seek me, and ye shall die in your sin …”

Sinners may have “religious feelings” and yet not be truly saved from their sins. They may cry at the gospel message. They may say they have a need of a Saviour but may do so without truly repenting of their sins and believing upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sickness and fear of death may cause many to become religious without truly repenting of their sins and believing upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

Financial problems, marital problems, or other problems may cause a person to begin praying, reading his bible, become active in church, pay his tithe, and profess that he is seeking the Lord Jesus Christ.

A mental understanding of the facts of the coming judgment may cause a person to admit he does not want to go to hell and therefore reform his life and become religious. But, that is not true Christianity – it is not true salvation.

We are condemned because we do not have the ability to cause ourselves to hear or properly understanding the word of God – the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**John 8:43** – “Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.”

Jesus came unto His own, but His own did not receive Him – they did not believe He was God and they could not understand Him as He spoke to them the word of God which testified of Him being who He said He was.

**When a sinner dies in his sins**

He dies perishing under the wrath of Almighty God's punishment.

He dies without hope of ever escaping the eternal punishment due their sins.

He dies in the face of the remedy of perishing in sins.

**Third: What is it to believe so that we do not die in our sins?**

As it is used in this text, the word **believe** is defined as: **to have faith** (in, upon, or with respect to a person) - **to entrust** one´s spiritual well being to Jesus Christ - To commit oneself to - to trust oneself to – to put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Believing includes trusting that Jesus Christ is who He has said He is. He is the great I AM!**

**Believing includes the awareness that I am a sinner.**

**Believing includes the sense that I need a Saviour to save me from my sins.**

**Matthew 9:12** – “But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.”

Only the sick need a physician -- Only the sinner needs a Saviour - Only the lost need to be saved - Only the condemned need a pardon - Only the guilty need forgiveness - Only prisoners need deliverance - Only the defiled need cleansing - Only the impotent need help - Only those separated from God need a mediator to bring them back - Only those who are enemies of God need reconciliation with Him!

**Believing includes the heart-felt acceptance of the truths of the Gospel – the truths concerning the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Within our text – believing is to believe that God was manifest in the flesh to secure the salvation of sinners.**

**Then - I Corinthians 15:1-3** – “(1) Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; (2) By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. (3) For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;”

**That Jesus Christ died** according to the dictates of God’s Law. He died as God’s appointed substitution for sinners. He offered Himself as a sacrifice which God accepted on behalf of sinners. He did all that - according to the Scriptures

**That Jesus Christ was buried**

**The Jesus Christ rose** after three days to justify all for whom he died

**Believing the gospel includes taking heed to God’s call to repentance and faith.**

The gospel call is a call to turn from our sin and trust God's Son for the forgiveness of sins. In that believing we gain eternal life.

Believing includes calling upon the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

Believing includes coming to the Lord Jesus Christ as our only Lord and Saviour!

**Romans 10:9-13** – “(9) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt **believe in thine heart** that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (10) For **with the heart man believeth unto righteousness**; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (11) For the scripture saith, **Whosoever believeth on him** shall not be ashamed. (12) For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that **call** upon him. (13) **For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved**.”

**Matthew 11:28-30** – “(28) **Come unto me**, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”