

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Jesus Is Yahweh Fifth Week of Lent Tuesday, March 24, 2015 8:15 AM Nm 21:4-9;
Jn 8:21-30 (All Christians are baptized to be a reflection of the incarnation of Christ.)

We are reading from **the Gospel of John**, and this of course is a unique gospel, different from the other three, and it is unique in particular because it has so **many long discourses of Jesus speaking**. But we have to keep in mind that this is **the evangelist conveying his inspiration through something that he has really formed himself**. Now the Fourth Gospel relies on the witness of the beloved disciple, so it is very authentic. But the words are not necessarily the actual words Jesus said. And it may also be that some of what is found in the Fourth Gospel in the mouth of Jesus is actually **addressed to the Church after the death and resurrection of Jesus**. This seems to be the case because there was a great division within early Christianity, as we see from the Letter to the Galatians, Christian Jews who didn't agree about who Christ was.

Now Paul simply argued with his opponents. **John** doesn't so much argue with his opponents. He has Jesus argue with his opponents. **He has Jesus speak to issues that probably could not have actually come up already in Jesus' own day before his death and resurrection**. So that explains a lot of these texts, this and tomorrow's, which you won't read because it's the feast of the Annunciation, and beyond that.

So here are discourses. Here are divisions. And they have to do with **who Jesus really is**. Now there were a lot of people who followed Jesus then and who follow Jesus now who acknowledge something about him that is really special, but they don't necessarily acknowledge that he is God. But that's exactly what this text says: "I AM." That is what the voice that was speaking with Moses said when Moses asked, well, "Who should I say sent me?" And the answer was, "**I AM.**" This is "I AM" too. And John means it to identify Jesus

with God, which is not necessarily to say the Most High God, because already in the announcement of Gabriel to Mary, which you will read tomorrow, Gabriel says, “And he shall be called the Son of the Most High God.” That was a title even in the Old Testament for Yahweh. **Here John is saying, yes, Jesus is Yahweh. He is the Son of the Most High God, and he is here revealing to us the Father’s will in, not only what he says, but what he is and what he does.**

It says here that “When I am lifted up,” referring of course to the Cross, “you will see that I AM.” Well, yes and no, some did, some didn’t; some do, some don’t. Seeing is really a gift. Why it works the way it does, no one can say. Some of us have the gift of seeing; some of us do not. But the point we have to take away from this is **if we really want to witness to Christ, we have to be like Christ.** If we expect people to listen to the message of the gospel, it has to be living inside of us. It can’t just be our words. It has to be the way we live. It has to be our actions. It has to be the very meaning of who we are because it was the very meaning of who he was. So John makes the distinction, “I am from above, you are from below.” This is a distinction we all have to look at. **“From below” means life in the world,** life doing what everyone else is doing, life thinking what everyone else is thinking, going along with the world’s projects. **“From above” is something else. This is being in touch with the divine.** This is being in touch with the heart of the Father. And **all Christians are baptized to be a reflection of the incarnation of Christ,** in touch with the heart of the Father, living out in our lives what the Father wills. And that and that alone will bring people to the gospel of Jesus Christ.