

THE GREAT "I AM"

Ex. 3:13-14 tells us that when God told Moses He had selected him to deliver Israel from the Egyptians, he said, "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" God's answer was short and simple: "I AM THAT I AM...thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." This may seem like a strange answer, but in this lesson we will look at this further and discuss why it is a perfect one.

First, we notice that this statement is in the present tense. Moses was going to be speaking to men about the God of their fathers: men who were no longer around - people of the past. But their God was not just a God of the past, for He knows no time or age. Indeed, He is called the "Ancient of Days" and the "Alpha and Omega." So He exists continuously and forever in the here and now. Actually, the present is all we have; yesterday is gone and tomorrow is not yet.

Secondly, we notice that He is self-existent. He was not made like the idol images of man, or born like people and animals. He has always been - without the intervention of anyone or anything. In Jn. 8:58, Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am." And when Paul spoke on Mars Hill, he described the "Unknown God" as being the one in whom "we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). In fact, in Jn. 15:5, Jesus said "...without me ye can do nothing." So while we are totally dependent upon Him, He exists all by Himself, without any help at all.

Thirdly, we notice that He is permanent. Heb. 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." He will never become irrelevant, obsolete, or be replaced.

It is interesting that in the Gospel of John, we find seven exceedingly meaningful metaphors, all of which start with the phrase, "I am." Below are those statements and the scripture references for each.

- A. "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst...I am that bread of life...I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Jn. 6:35, 48 & 51
- B. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Jn. 8:12
- C. "I am the door of the sheep...I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Jn. 10:7 & 9
- D. "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep...I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." Jn. 19:11 & 14
- E. "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live..." Jn. 11:25
- F. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Jn. 14:6
- G. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman...I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." Jn. 15:1 & 5

Discussion Questions

1. Although each of the seven metaphors deal with different things (bread, life, door, etc.), can you see a common thread running through them? What is it?
2. We know that God is the source of life. How does this relate to His statements of "I AM"?