

Jesus: I Am the Bread of Life

Part 1

Introduction

I Am

Jesus used many different analogies to describe Himself. The Apostle John is the writer who is best known for using these analogies. In his gospel, we find the seven "I AM's": I AM; the bread of life; the light of the world; the good shepherd; the true vine; the resurrection and the life; and the way, the truth, and the life. From time to time, we will present individual studies on these analogies. Today we will focus on the I AM, and the Bread of Life.

Our Study

It all begins in Exodus. The Israelites had been slaves in Egypt for four hundred years. However, through a series of miraculous events, Moses was raised by Pharaoh's daughter. After he killed an Egyptian who was abusing an Israelite, Moses fled to the wilderness, where he lived for another forty years, marrying and raising a family.

One day when Moses was tending his father-in-law's flock of sheep, he was attracted to an amazing sight - a burning bush that did not extinguish. God called to him from the bush.

When Moses approached the bush, the Lord told him:

The Scripture: Exodus 3:6

"I Am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." At this Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God."

1. What did God say to Moses? _____

2. What was Moses' reaction? _____

3. Why? _____

God told Moses that He had seen the misery of His people and He was going to rescue them from the Egyptians and bring them to a good land.

The Scripture: Exodus 3:9

"God said'... to Moses, 'I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring My people the Israelites out of Egypt.'"

4. What did God say to Moses? _____

Even when God promised to go with him, Moses was still reluctant.

The Scripture: Exodus 3:13

"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?"

5. What did Moses ask God? _____

The Scripture: Exodus 3:14-15

"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... This is My name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generations to generation."

6. How did God answer him? _____

The Amplified Bible translates God's name as "I AM WHO I AM and I AM WHAT I AM and I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE."

According to Andrew Jakes in his wonderful little book *The Names of God*, God used the name Jehovah in this instance. Jehovah is formed from two tenses of the Hebrew (Havah) to be, which means One who is what He is. It is the exact import of the name Jehovah, the expression of God's being. Most of us know how Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt to the Promised Land, by demonstrating the power of I AM.

Now we go to the New Testament where we see that it is this same name Jesus used several times to show who He was. In a debate with Jesus, the Pharisees claimed that Jesus was demon-possessed. This is how Jesus answered them.

The Scripture: John 8:56-57

"Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing My day; he saw it and was glad." "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"

7. What did Jesus say? _____

8. How did the Jews answer Him? _____

The Scripture: John 8:58

"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I AM!" At this, they picked up stones to stone Him, but Jesus hid Himself."

9. What did Jesus say? _____

10. What did the Jews do? _____

The Jews knew the name I AM. When Jesus used that name, they knew He was claiming to be God. To the Jews, this claim was blasphemy. This is why they wanted to stone Him. But, because it wasn't His time to die, Jesus was able to escape.

How much their disbelief must have distressed Jesus. As the Apostle John writes:

The Scripture: John 1:10-11

"He (Jesus) was in the world and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him."

11. How was the world created? _____

12. Even though He came to His own, what was their attitude toward Him? _____

Jesus had created these people. They lived in a world He had created, and yet they would not recognize their Creator.

The religious leaders began to plot how they could kill Jesus. They eventually found a willing ally in Judas, one of His disciples.

Look back to the night before Jesus died. After Judas betrayed Him, he guided a detachment of soldiers and some officials to where he knew Jesus would be.

The Scripture: John 18:4-5

"Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to Him, went out and asked them, 'Who is it you want?' 'Jesus of Nazareth,' they replied. 'I AM [He]', Jesus said."

13. What did Jesus ask the soldiers? _____

14. What was their reply? _____

15. What did Jesus say? _____

The Scripture: John 18:6

"When Jesus said, 'I AM [He]' they drew back and fell to the ground."

16. What did the soldiers do when Jesus said, "I Am He"? _____

Many authorities agree that this translation is inaccurate, stating that the translators added the "He" for the sake of grammar. That name, indicating that Jesus was God, had the power to knock the soldiers off their feet.

I AM is the name that expresses the nature of God - His truth, His justice, and His holiness - the One who "loves righteousness and hates iniquity."

In the second part of this study, we will look at another name Jesus called Himself, the Bread of Life, and show the significance of bread in His culture.

The Answers

1. "I Am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."
2. He hid his face.
3. He was afraid to look at God.
4. He was sending Moses to Pharaoh to bring the Israelites out of Egypt.
5. What was the name of the God who was sending him to the Israelites?
6. "This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I Am has sent you. This is My name forever, and by this name I am to be remembered from generation to generation."
7. That Abraham had rejoiced at the thought of seeing His day.
8. That he was not yet fifty years old and yet he claimed to have seen Abraham
9. "Before Abraham was born, I Am!"
10. They picked up stones to stone him
11. Through Jesus
12. They did not receive Him.
13. "Who is it you want?"
14. "Jesus of Nazareth."
15. "I am [He]".
16. They fell to the ground.

All scripture quotations in this publication are from the Holy Bible, New International Version
(unless otherwise indicated)

Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, New International Bible Society

Copyright © 2006 by JoAnne Sekowsky