



The “I AM” Statements of Jesus

Good morning!

In the last two Posts we looked at Jesus as the Son of Man and the Son of God.

This week we consider an even higher level of Jesus’s self-identification with God the Father. We will call these the “I AM” statements of Jesus. There are at least six. But first let’s go to the Old Testament to understand the background to what Jesus is claiming about himself.

From Moses (about 1425 BC) to the time of Jesus (A.D. 28) the Jews had a growing expectation God was going to intervene in the life of Israel – and in the life of the world – by sending an “Anointed One” – a Messiah who would bring justice and peace to the world.

This expectation climaxes and is fulfilled in Jesus who identifies himself as the divine being in the burning bush who sent Moses to Egypt to set the Hebrews free (see Exodus 3:1-4:7).

Exodus 3:2- Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. ³ So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.” ⁴ When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.” ⁵ “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” ⁶ Then he said, “I am the God of your father, 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. ...¹⁰ “So, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.” ...¹³ Moses said to God, “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?” ¹⁴ 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.’”

So the Jews came to know God as “YHWH” which means “I AM”.

JESUS AND I AM

On several occasions Jesus identified himself as the **I AM** of the burning bush. This was viewed as blasphemy by the Jewish leaders and was one of the reasons they murdered him. Let’s take a look at these passages. (*You can read the full context in your Bible, and also note that the bold letters are my emphasis.*)

The disciples were rowing their boat at night across very rough water when Jesus came walking on the water:

*John 6:19- ...they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. ²⁰ But he said to them, “Don’t be afraid. **I AM** here”*

Jesus confronting the Pharisees in the Temple:

*John 8:23 But [Jesus] continued, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that **I AM** he, you will indeed die in your sins.”*

Jesus continues the confrontation:

*John 8:28- So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that **I AM** he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.”*

The climax of the confrontation with the unbelieving leaders came a bit later:

*John 8:58- “Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, **I AM**!” ⁵⁹ At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.*

Jesus predicts the prophecy he will be betrayed is about to be fulfilled but adds:

John 13:19- *"I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I AM who I AM."*

When the soldiers came to arrest Jesus they demanded he identify himself. He did:

John 18:4- *... "Who is it you want?"* ⁵ *"Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I AM," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.)* ⁶ *When Jesus said, "I AM", they drew back and fell to the ground.* ⁷ *Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they said.* ⁸ *Jesus answered, "I told you that I AM."*

CLOSING THOUGHTS:

Jesus claimed to be the I AM God of the burning bush. Was he a mad man? Was he a conman?

Or...was he---and is he---the incarnation of the Son of the living God?

Everyone has to decide if this is the true Jesus-Who-Is.

How about you?

- Is this the Jesus you follow and proclaim?
- Is this the Jesus whose Spirit has come to live in you?
- Is this the Jesus who is coming to judge the world?
- Is the Jesus who can and who will deliver you into God Country when he appears?

NEXT WEEK: More about Jesus.

God bless you-

Douglas

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