

The “I AM” of John’s Gospel – Part 2

INTRODUCTION:

1. Last week we began looking at the “I am” statements of John.
 - A. These words are found in each of the gospels, with Matthew using the phrase **18** times, Mark **10**, and Luke **23**. John’s gospel, however, uses them **79 times**, which is not coincidental.
 - B. The vast majority (all but about 12) are said by Jesus, generally in expression of who He is and what He means to the world.
 - C. Last week we considered three categories of these “I am” statements. These were...
 - i. The “I am *he*” statements concerning Jesus being the Messiah.
 - ii. The origin and destination statements of “I am from,” “I am going,” and “Where I am” that referred to Jesus being divine or from God, how he was returning to the Father in heaven, and that also addressed who could and could not follow Him to heaven.
 - iii. Finally, we began looking at a general category I called the “I am” designations, where Jesus declared specific things about Himself and what these means to the world.
2. Today I want to continue our study of this last category, the “**I am’ designations**” of Jesus because there are so many important ones that we could not address them in one lesson.
3. I hope by doing so to help us come to a greater knowledge and appreciation of **Jesus**, who is **the great “I AM.”**

BODY:

I. “I am” and God’s sheep:

- A. Jesus is the door of the sheep (Jn. 10:7-10 – “So Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **I am the door** of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ **I am the door**; if anyone enters through Me, **he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture**. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they **may have life, and have it abundantly**.”).
 1. Jesus stated this in explanation of His parable concerning a sheep fold, a shepherd, and his sheep, which the people did not understand (10:1-6).
 - 2. To claim “I am the door” means that to enter God’s fold, to be one of God’s people, whether shepherd or sheep, one must enter **through Christ** (10:7, 9-10).
 - a. By entering through Christ, the door, one *will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture*, or find comfort and fulfillment, and *have abundant life*.
 - b. What an amazing thing that God would go to such great lengths for those who have sinned against Him.
 - 3. Based on this, Jesus said that all shepherds that came before him were “thieves and robbers” desiring to do harm (10:8, 10a).
 - a. This is not referring to every previous shepherd (i.e., Moses, Elijah, etc.), but to the Pharisees and Sadducees **who refused to enter God’s fold through Christ** (Lk. 11:39 – “But the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but inside of you, you are full of robbery and wickedness.”).
 - b. Jesus’ condemnation was reminiscent of Jeremiah’s warning (Jer. 23:1-4 – “Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!” declares the Lord. ² Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel concerning the shepherds who are tending My people: “You have scattered My flock and driven them away, and have not attended to them; behold, I am about to attend to you for the evil of your deeds,” declares the Lord. ³ “Then I Myself will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and bring them back to their pasture, and they will be fruitful and multiply. ⁴ I will also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing,” declares the Lord.”).
 - c. Jesus is making it painfully clear that Jeremiah’s words were being fulfilled and these wicked shepherds were about to be replaced by those that would care for the sheep!
- B. Jesus is the good shepherd of the sheep (Jn. 10:11-15 – “**I am the good shepherd**; the good shepherd **lays down His life for the sheep**. ¹² He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is

not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. ¹⁴ **I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me,** ¹⁵ even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and **I lay down My life for the sheep.**”).

- 1. Here Jesus contrasted himself with the Jewish leaders. These contrasts are:
 - a. Jesus is the **good** shepherd, or the **ideal, perfect** shepherd, while the Jewish leaders are shown to be no more than hired hands
 - b. Because He is the good shepherd, Jesus is willing to *lay down his life for the sheep*, while the hirelings *flee*, leaving the sheep to be devoured!
 - c. Jesus **owns** the sheep, the **saved**, which is only true of **God** Himself, while these hirelings do not own the sheep and, therefore, did not care that sheep perish under their watch.
 - d. God’s sheep **know** Jesus’ voice and **follow** Him, while these wicked shepherds hated and rejected Him, and desired to destroy Him.
- C. Here we find exhortations and warnings to the shepherds and leaders of God’s flock.
 1. For, Christ, the good shepherd, is to be the standard by which we are to live and judge our commitment to and leadership of the flock of God.
 2. Here we see that we must take great care to tend to, encourage, and protect God’s flock in the face of all threats, refusing to leave them to Satan and his minions (Acts 20:28-31 – “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.”).
- **II. “I am” and God’s vineyard:**
 - A. Jesus is the vine and His people the branches (Jn. 15:1-5 – “**I am the true vine**, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. ⁵ **I am the vine, you are the branches;** he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, **for apart from Me you can do nothing.**”).
 1. Some suggest that vineyards were likely visible to Jesus and the disciples when he proclaimed this, which may be true.
 - 2. Note the contrast between Jesus’ vine and what Isaiah said concerning Israel as God’s vineyard (Isa. 5:1-4 – “Let me sing now for my well-beloved a song of my beloved concerning His vineyard. My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill. ² He dug it all around, removed its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it and also hewed out a wine vat in it; then He expected it to produce good grapes, but it produced only worthless ones. ³ “And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between Me and My vineyard. ⁴ “What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones?”).
 - a. Though said of the Jews entering captivity in Babylon, the condition of the Jewish people had not improved under the self-serving watch of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
 - b. To the contrary, because of their belief that Israel was theirs not God’s, and their rejection and crucifixion of Jesus, they were again about to lose the kingdom to the Gentiles (Matt. 21:33-44).
- B. Jesus presents himself as the “true vine,” or the genuine, ideal, and perfect vine, that will produce good, acceptable fruit to God in the branches who will abide, or remain, in Him.
 1. How truly amazing it is that despite Israel’s, and our, rebellion against God, He still offers in Christ a direct connection to His life-giving and life-changing grace and power.

2. Such grace cannot be taken lightly.
 - a. For, God will remove from the vine unprofitable branches, those that take His grace for granted and bear no fruit.
 - b. But for those who will dwell in Jesus, abundant fruit unto God's glory will be theirs!

• III. "I am" and God:

- A. Jesus is "I AM" (Jn. 8:58 – "Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."").
 1. Although I mentioned this in the intro of the first lesson and was not intending to cover it, I felt that was a mistake, seeing it is one of great importance.
 - 2. For, here Jesus states he is the God revealed to Moses (Ex. 3:13-14 – "Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?"¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'").
 - 3. Jesus was claiming to be **Yahweh**, or **Jehovah** *in the flesh*.
 - a. Therefore, to know Jesus is to know the **One who IS**, to know **Yahweh**, the eternal creator of all things (Jn. 1:1-3 – "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was **with God**, and the Word **was God**.² He was in the beginning with God.³ **All things came into being through Him**, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."").
 - b. Again, what should impress us is that this **eternal, timeless God** cares enough for sinners that He **entered time** in human form to die on the cross to save us! (Phil. 2:5-8 – "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."").
- B. Jesus is God's Son (John 10):
 - 1. The context was the Jews' demand that He tell them if He was the Christ (10:24-31).
 - a. Jesus' answer was that **His works proved** Him to be the **Christ**. So, they should **believe the works**.
 - b. But they did not believe, however, because they were not Christ's sheep, and therefore not God's sheep, seeing as Jesus said, "I and the father are one"!
 - c. This, however, angered the Jews and they sought to stone Him.
 - 2. At this point Jesus does not offer conciliatory words, but defended His claim to be the "son of God" (Jn. 10:34-39 – "Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'?³⁵ If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),³⁶ do you say of Him, whom the **Father sanctified** and **sent into the world**, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, '**I am the Son of God**'?³⁷ If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;³⁸ but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."³⁹ Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp."").
 - a. Jesus's defense of being God's Son was based on **Psalm 82:6** which reads, "I said, "You are **gods**, and all of you are **sons of the Most High**."
 - i. In this Psalm God was addressing Israel's *unjust judges* who possessed the power of life and death like a **god**, as did also the Pharisees of Jesus' day.
 - ii. From this Jesus reasoned that if God called **them** "sons of the Most High," or I might add that if the Pharisees thought themselves to be sons of the Most High, surely the one whom God *sanctified* and *sent into the world* could claim to be **the Son of God**.
 - b. Again, Jesus states that His **works** were proof of His claim (10:37-38).
 - i. This directly connects Jesus' Messiahship to His works. So, if Jesus did the works of the Messiah as prophesied in the O.T., He is the Messiah. **And He did!**

- ii. Now, if Jesus did no miracles, His works would have shown Him to be a fraud.
 - 1) So, how foolish it would have been for John to base Jesus' claim of being the Messiah on miracles!
 - 2) But Jesus' works *were known* and were part of the very foundation upon which faith in Christ was built (Acts 2:22 – “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, *just as you yourselves know.*”).
- iii. What does this mean to me? Since Christ's works prove He is the Messiah, to remain in *unbelief* expressed in *disobedience* is seen by God as denying Christ works—to effectively say He did not do the miracles the Bible claims of Him.
- 3. During Jesus' claim he states that “the Scripture cannot be broken,” or what the Scriptures say must be believed and obeyed.
 - a. This view of Scripture is sorely lacking in the religious world, seeing people continually “break” Scripture by rejecting the parts they dislike and doing what they want instead.
 - b. How easy is it for us to “break” the scriptures?
 - i. We can do so choosing by choosing to ignore God and His will for personal pleasure, gain, popularity in the world, etc.
 - ii. The pandemic has shown a willingness among “faithful” brethren to *break* Scripture by forsaking the Lord in the name of *health and safety*.
 - 1) There are churches and individuals that did not worship together for many months, and some are still not doing so, all because of fear for their lives, all because they want to be safe.
 - 2) That is sad because God says the only real safety is in doing what He says.
 - 3) And I wonder how they hope to justify themselves before the Lord who said, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” or in light of His description of the faithful who “did not love their life even when faced with death” (Rev. 2:10; 12:11).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. As we conclude I want you to consider that...
 - A. You will not be saved nor enter heaven without coming to and obeying Jesus (Jn. 14:6 – “Jesus said to him, “**I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.**”).
 - B. Jesus loves you so much that He was willing to die on the cross to draw you to Him (Jn. 12:32 – “And I, if I am **lifted up** from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.”).
 - C. By coming to Jesus, you are given the wonderful gift of the resurrection to eternal life (Jn. 11:25-26 – “Jesus said to her, “**I am the resurrection** and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,²⁶ and **everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.** Do you believe this?”).
- 2. So, I ask you, “Do you believe this?” Do you believe that Jesus IS all these things?
- 3. If so, you must prove it to God by obeying in F, R, C, BP?