

I AM SERIES: I AM HE

I. THE FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE 'I AM'

A. BACKGROUND AND SETTING:

1. Moses had fled Egypt to the backside of the wilderness
2. At 80 years of age he came to Mt. Horeb—in Exodus 3
 - Mt Horeb certainly identical with Mt Sinai
 - Later Moses struck the rock here to provide water for Israel
 - Here God later gave the Ten Commandments to Israel

B. MOSES MET GOD—Ex 3:4-9

1. God warned him—this is holy ground—remove your sandals
2. God told him two things
 - a. I am the God of your fathers—Elohim
 - Creator God—who made everything
 - God of all gods—supreme God
 - b. I am the God who delivers
 - I have seen my people's affliction
 - I have come down to deliver them from oppression

C. MOSES ENCOUNTERED THE I AM—Ex 3:13-15

¹³ 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." ¹⁵ God, furthermore, said to Moses "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the god of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever and this is My memorial-name to all generations.

D. WHAT WAS GOD SAYING?

1. I AM—the God of your fathers—3:6—known to them as Elohim
2. I AM—the deliverer—3:7-8—this is part of my very identity as God
3. I AM—Who I Am
 - a. This is the four letter *name* of God—Jahweh—Jehovah

- b. It is derived from the verb ‘to be’
- c. Translated—‘Lord’
- d. It has four dimensions
 - The self-**existent** I AM—not contingent upon anything
 - The One who **reveals** Himself
 - The covenant God who **cares** and **sustains**
 - The One who is **able** to **deliver**

E. God explains this: I AM = the **Lord** [see Ex 6:2-8]

Ex 6:2-8

² God spoke further to Moses and said to him, “**I am the Lord**; ³ and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty [El Shaddai], but by My name, Lord [Jehovah], I did not make Myself known to them. ⁴ I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned. ⁵ Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. ⁶ Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, **I am the Lord**, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. ⁷ Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. ⁸ I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; **I am the Lord**.”

1. Jehovah is God **Almighty**—El Shaddai
2. He describes Himself as ‘I am the **Lord**’—in verses 2, 6 and 8
3. He defines this as **covenant** God—verses 4 and 5
4. He remembers and keeps His **promise**—verses 5-8
5. He **personalizes** this—verse 7
 - You are *my* people
 - I am the Lord *your* God

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATION

- The I AM is the Self-**existent** God who is God **Almighty**
- The I AM is also the **Deliverer** of His people
- This is a permanent **promise**—for all generations—Ex 3:15
- **Expectation** for deliverance **continued** to the time of Jesus
- The Expected One—was **identified in different ways**

II. JEWISH EXPECTATIONS AT THE TIME OF JESUS

A. SEE JOHN 1:19-27

19 Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. **20** He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah." **21** They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." **22** Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" **23** John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" **24** Now the Pharisees who had been sent **25** questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" **26** "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. **27** He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

1. Three possibilities

a. The 'Christos'—anointed one

1. Seen in the messianic references in Psalms [anointed one]

- These hint that the Messiah will be like David the king

2. Also the specific prophecy in Dan 9:25-6 of a coming 'Messiah'

b. Elijah

God promised to send him before the great and dreadful day of the Lord—Mal 4:5

c. A prophet

Moses promised God would send a prophet like him—see Dt 18:15

2. John denied being all three

3. This incident shows who the Jews thought the Expected One might be

B. AFTER JOHN'S DEATH—SEE MT 16:14

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" **14** They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

1. Three possibilities

a. John the Baptist

- Whom Jesus likened to Elijah—Mt 11:14

b. Elijah

- Whose power Luke identifies with John—Lk 1:17
- Who Jesus said had already come [John]—Mt 17:10-12

c. Jeremiah or one of the prophets—[possibly like Moses?]

2. Peter's answer to Jesus—verse 16

- **You are the Christ of God, the son of the Living God**
- Mk 8:29—You are the Christ
- Lk 9:20—You are the Christ of God

3. Shortly thereafter—this was confirmed—Mt 17

At the Transfiguration—Elijah and Moses were with Jesus
 But it was **Jesus** who was Transfigured
 “This is My Son, in whom I am well pleased; listen to Him.”

C. All **expectations** were similar

- A divinely chosen—human deliverer
- Like a former prophet—or an anointed king
- Deliverance from **social** and **political** oppression

III. WHAT JESUS REVEALED BEFORE JOHN 4

1. John [not Jesus]—revealed Him as the Son of God—1:34

2. John [not Jesus]—said he was the Lamb of God—1:29, 36

- Allusion to Paschal Lamb → Passover → Easter
- “Who takes away the sin of the world”

3. Andrew [not Jesus]—told Peter they had found the Messiah—1:41-2

4. Jesus *alluded* to being the Son of Man to Nathaniel—1:51

5. Performance of first miracle—water to wine—John 2—revealed His glory

6. Jesus *alluded* to His future resurrection—temple cleansing—John 2

7. Jesus *alluded* to Nicodemus—John 3

- Son of Man—being lifted up—verse 14
- Son of God—sent to save the world—verses 16-17

8. John [not Jesus]—Jesus being the Father's Son—3:35-36

IV. THE TEXT—JOHN 4:

1 The Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John—2 although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. 3 When the Lord learned of this, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. 4 Now he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" For Jews do not associate with Samaritans. 10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." 11 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." 15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

16 He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." 17 "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." 19 "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

21 Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 24 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

25 The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." 26 Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

V. JESUS' ENCOUNTER WITH THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

A. SETTING

1. **Sychar**—near Joseph's parcel of land

- On the ridge route from Judah to Galilee
- Possibly Shechem— ½ mile away
- Or the current Askar—about one mile away

2. The **well**—one of Jacob's ancient wells

- Probably at intersection of ridge and road to Shechem
- One road continues north to Judah
- The other road goes west to Plain of Sharon and coast

3. Near **Mt. Gerizim**

- Where Moses was told to pronounce blessings—Dt 11:29
- Where Joshua fulfilled this—Josh 8:33

B. THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

1. **Ethnic** background—Samaritan

- Israelites intermixed with Assyrians after 722 BC
- Not allowed to help rebuilt temple (538-515 BC)
- Jews avoided contact with them
- Some took longer Jordan valley route next to Gentile land

2. Samaritan **worship**

- Samaritan temple built about 330 BC
- Samaritan claim: this is where Abraham was to offer Isaac
- Destroyed by Hasmonean King John Hyrcanus about 128 BC
- Rebuilt after Bar Kochba revolt, about 135 AD

3. Samaritan **expectations**

Expected a prophet like Moses—Dt 18:15

C. INTERCHANGE WITH SAMARITAN WOMAN—HER RESPONSES

1. After Jesus asked for water—**ethnic/social barrier**

- Verse 9—Jews have no dealings with Samaritans

2. When Jesus offered her living water—**physical barrier** (impossibility)

- Verse 11—You have nothing to draw with
- Verse 12—Are you greater than our father Jacob?

3. When Jesus told her about her husbands—**moral barrier**

- Verse 17—I have no husband

4. The **religious barrier**

- Verse 19—I perceive you are *a* prophet [not *the* prophet]
- Verse 20—Our fathers worshiped in this mountain
- Verse 20—But you say Jerusalem is where men ought to worship

5. When Jesus explained true worship—the **theological barrier**

- Verse 25—I know the Messiah is coming
- When that One comes, He will declare all things to us

V. JESUS' SURPRISING AND AMAZING CLAIM—'I AM HE'

A. JESUS' SURPRISING CLAIM—I AM THE MESSIAH

1. There had been many recent dramatic messianic claims

- a. They were all false
- b. They had all failed—so why should He be so foolhardy?
 - Simon, former slave of Herod the Great rebelled—4 BC
 - Athronges, shepherd 'king' rebelled against Herod Archelaus—3 BC
 - Theudas with 400 others rebelled against Rome—Acts 5:36
 - Judas of Galilee, son of Hezekiah—a Zealot Revolted against Roman taxes—6 AD—see Acts 5:37

2. There had been political and military messiahs

- a. There had been previous successful 'messiahs'
 - All the Old Testament judges—Gideon, Deborah and Samson
 - Old Testament kings: David—Solomon—Hezekiah
 - The Maccabees—Hasmonean dynasty—142-63 BC
- b. But they had brought only temporary relief—then subjugation again
- c. And Jesus did not have any political power or military troops

3. His fame apparently had not yet spread to Samaria

4. He shared this explicitly *first* with a Samaritan, and with a *woman*

B. JESUS' AMAZING CLAIM—"I AM" HE

1. It is a unique phrase—**εγω ειμι**
 - a. Not normally used—the pronoun is usually part of the verb
 - b. In John this phrase is used only by/of Jesus—except three times
 - Twice when John the Baptist says he is *not* the Christ
 - Once John said he was *not* worthy to unlatch His sandals
 - c. Christ uses it to describe some aspect of His divine identity
 - I am the Bread of Life—Jn 6
 - I am the Light of the world—Jn 8
 - I am the Door—Jn 10
 - I am the Good Shepherd—Jn 10
 - I am the Resurrection and the Life—Jn 11
 - I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life—Jn 14
 - I am the True Vine—Jn 15

2. It is a clear reference to the Old Testament ‘I AM’
 - a. Jesus was claiming to be nothing less than Jehovah!
 - b. This He later affirmed in Jn 10:30—“I and the Father are One.”

3. What Jesus was claiming to be—with the name ‘I AM’
 - a. El-Shaddai—God Almighty—Ex 6:3—His *name* is I AM
 - b. The God-Man is like no other man—not as the names of men

1. Human names—are in relation to the progenitor
 - a. Jewish—first name given, last name = son of
 Ex: Isaac ben Abraham, Jacob ben Isaac
 - b. Modern—first name given, last name = family name

2. God’s name shows there was not a human predecessor
 - a. I AM comes from no other except I AM
 - b. Self-existent, without cause, without origin—eternal
 - c. I AM—the eternal was, eternal is, and eternal will be
 - d. Jesus made it clear this applied to Him as God—**Jn 8:58**

Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.

c. The God-Man is like no other god—not as the names of gods

1. All human gods had **names assigned** to them by men

- Homer's 9th century poetry popularized their histories
- Hesiod's 8th century *Theogony* gave them genealogy

2. All human gods' were **limited** and **derived from some source**

a. Example: Zeus—king of the Greek pantheon

1. Was god *of* the sky and thunder

2. Was the youngest child of Cronus and Rhea

3. Cronus was leader of the Titans, son of Ouranos and Gaia

4. Ouranos (sky) and Gaia (earth) were primordial

- But they were over limited domains—sky or earth
- There were *seven* other primordial deities—total = 9

5. Parallel to Zeus in Roman pantheon = Jupiter

b. **Limited domains**—the 12 Olympians (plus Zeus)

- Ares—god *of* war = Mars (Roman)
- Artemis—god *of* forest, hills, virginity, hunt = Diana
- Aphrodite—god *of* love, sex, beauty = Venus
- Apollo—god *of* light, truth, prophecy, arts = Apollo
- Athena—goddess *of* heroes, wisdom = Minerva
- Demeter—goddess *of* grain, fertility = Ceres
- Dionysius—god *of* wine = Bacchus
- Hera—goddess of women, marriage = Juno
- Hermes—travel, shepherds, athletics = Mercury
- Hephaestus—fire, craftsmen, metals = Vulcan
- Poseidon—sea, earthquakes = Neptune

c. But **Jesus** was The **Almighty** God—El **Shaddai**—**Jehovah**

1. His name was **self-appointed**

2. His name was **unknown** until He chose to **reveal** it

3. He had **no ancestry**

4. He was the **self-existent source** of everything

KEY APPLICATION

- Jesus later said **I AM HE**—is the **supernatural** source of **salvation**

Jn 8:23-24—You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that **I Am He**, you will die in your sins.

- Jesus later said **I AM HE**—the **God-Man** who would **suffer** and **die**

Jn 8:28—When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He.

- Jesus was claiming to be the **primordial** source of **life** and **light**—immortal and eternal

Quote **John 1:1-4**

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was with God in the beginning. **3** Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **4** In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.