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“Jesus is the I AM”

John 8

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In Matthew 16, Jesus is with his disciples in a pagan town near the Golan Heights. He uses this opportunity to ask his disciples a very important question. He asks, “Who do men say that I am?” In modern terms, Jesus is asking, “What is the word on the street about me?” In response to this question, Peter makes the great confession, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”

In John 8, Jesus is not asking who people think he is; rather, he is going to proclaim clearly who he is. Jesus explicitly asserts His divinity—that He is God.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus makes seven “I AM” statements that express who He is and how He relates to humanity.

### Seven “I AM” Statements

1. I am the bread of life ([John 6:35](#))
2. I am the light of the world ([John 8:12](#))
3. I am the door for the sheep ([John 10:7](#))
4. I am the good shepherd ([John 10:11](#))
5. I am the resurrection and the life ([John 11:25](#))
6. I am the way, the truth, and the life ([John 14:6](#))
7. I am the true vine ([John 15:1](#))

These statements are timely for us in uncertain times because we must draw close to the one who is our reliable trust in all seasons. We want to better understand who Jesus says he is. These are no ordinary statements. These are Jesus’ self-revelations.

When Jesus makes these statements, he is attaching his words to the events of Exodus 3 in the Old Testament.

### John 8:23-30

*<sup>23</sup> And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. <sup>24</sup> Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."*

*<sup>25</sup> Then they said to Him, "Who are You?" And Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. <sup>26</sup> I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."*

*<sup>27</sup> They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father*

*<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. <sup>29</sup> And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." <sup>30</sup> As He spoke these words, many believed in Him."*

In verse 24 and verse 28, Jesus refers to himself by saying "I am He". In the original language, Jesus used the Greek words *ego* which means "oneself" and *eimi* which means "I am". Jesus combined these two words in a very unusual grammatical construct. To the original audience, it would have almost sounded redundant. Literally he is saying, "I am, I am."

Jesus words in John 8 are directly connected to the events of Exodus 3. Exodus explains that Moses was raised in an Egyptian home. He was a Hebrew living in Egypt. His life was protected when his mother placed him in a basket and placed the basket in the Nile River. He was found and taken in by the daughter of Pharaoh and raised in the court of Pharaoh. Moses still had a heart for the Hebrew people. When he was older, Moses killed an Egyptian task master who was mistreating a Hebrew slave, and then Moses fled to the wilderness for the next 40 years. It is during this time that God meets Moses in a burning bush.

### Exodus 3:1-4

*<sup>1</sup> Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup> And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. <sup>3</sup> Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."*

*<sup>4</sup> So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."*

*<sup>5</sup> Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." <sup>6</sup> Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.*

*<sup>7</sup> And the Lord said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know*

*their sorrows.<sup>8</sup> So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.<sup>9</sup> Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.<sup>10</sup> Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”*

*<sup>11</sup> But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”*

*<sup>12</sup> So He said, “I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”*

*<sup>13</sup> Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”*

*<sup>14</sup> And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”*

In Exodus 3, God reveals himself to Moses using his proper, covenant name. In Hebrew God literally is saying that his name is “the self-existent one” or simply put, “I am”. About two hundred years before the time of Christ, the Greeks commissioned seventy Hebrews scholars to translate the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament, into the Greek language. When they came to Exodus 3:14, they used the Greek phrase “*ego eimi*.”

In John 8, when Jesus used the phrase, “I am” he was identifying himself with the covenant name of God. Jesus was plainly revealing himself to be God. Jesus is asserting his divinity. This is supported by the reaction of the Jews who heard what he said! They clearly understood he was asserting his divinity and the Jews accused him of blasphemy. John 8:59 says the Jews were ready to stone Jesus! When Jesus said, “I am”, he was saying, “I am God.”

This leaves the reader today at a decision point. Jesus clearly claimed to be God. Either he was a liar or he is who he said he was. It is impossible for him to simply be a good moral teacher. All other world religions who identify Jesus as anything other than God they make him out to be a liar.

In the seven “I AM” statements, Jesus reveals his divinity. These statements are extremely relevant today as we seek to know Jesus and live for him.

### Discussion Questions

1. Read the Seven “I AM” statements.
2. Discuss the clear, unambiguous nature of the “I AM” statements. What implications do they have for Christians today as it concerns the divinity of Christ?

3. How would you answer someone who claims Jesus is just a good moral teacher?
4. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)

