

Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



The Great I AM

KEY PASSAGE: Exodus 3:10-15 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 1:1 | Exodus 20:7 | Luke 22:7
John 1:1-7; 6:33-35; 8:12, 58; 10:7-9, 14-15, 30; 14:1-6, 8-12; 15:1-5 | Galatians 4:1-5 | Revelation 1:8

SUMMARY

God is described in Scripture by a variety of names, but the only time He explained His name is in Exodus 3:14-15 when He appeared to Moses.

After being commanded to go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses wanted to know who he should say sent him. “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’” (v. 14). Then He went on to explain, “This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations” (v. 15). The Lord wants all mankind to remember and know His great name and what it reveals about Him.

SERMON POINTS

The name, “I AM WHO I AM” in Hebrew is the word YAHWEH, which we also know as Jehovah.

It means self-existent and signifies that God had no beginning and will never have an end. This name describes His fullness—His eternal existence, sovereignty, unlimited power, and omnipresence.

There are three basic names for God in the Old Testament.

Although we are unable to fully understand everything about the Lord, we can learn more about Him through His names.

- **Elohim** is the name used of Him in Genesis 1:1 and is translated God. It describes Him as existing before the beginning of time and being the Creator of the heavens and earth and all that is in them.

- **Adonai** is the Hebrew name translated Lord and simply means Master.

- **YAHWEH** or Jehovah is the most sacred and precious name of God used among His people, often in association with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It’s usually signified in the Old Testament with the word LORD written in all capital letters.

We should treat God’s name as sacred and holy.

One of the Ten Commandments states: “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain” (Ex. 20:7). In Jewish culture, God’s name was treated with great reverence, but we live in a society that doesn’t honor the Lord or His name. As Christians we must be careful not to get swept up in the casualness or profanity with which many use the Lord’s name—and this includes the name of Jesus because as the Son of God, His name is also sacred and holy.

Jesus is also the great I AM.

On one occasion during Christ’s earthly ministry, He caused quite a stir when He said to the religious leaders, “Before Abraham was born, I am” (John 8:58). They instantly recognized this as a claim to equality with God and considered His statement to be like profanity. And if Jesus had not been divine, they would have been right because the Scriptures clearly taught that the Lord alone is God.

What the Jewish leaders failed to recognize and believe was that Jesus was God’s Son who came to save them. Galatians 4:4-5 says, “But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son,

born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

Since Jesus often affirmed His equality with the Father, He was either a liar and imposter, or He was God in human flesh walking among men.

- **John 14:9** When Philip asked Him to show them the Father, Christ said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”
- **John 14:11** “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me.”
- **John 10:30** “I and the Father are one.”
- **John 8:58** By saying, “Before Abraham was born, I am,” Christ was claiming not only pre-existence but His identity as I AM—the name of God.
- **John 1:1-3** When the apostle John wrote his account of Jesus’ life, he identified Him as the Word saying, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” He also affirmed that Jesus is the Creator: “All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”

One of the biggest questions we may have about the name I AM is that in some ways it seems incomplete. I AM what? To further authenticate His equality with the Father and clarify who He was, Jesus made several “I am” statements, which supported His deity and explained His purpose for coming to earth.

- **John 6:35** “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.”
- **John 10:9** “I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”
- **John 10:14-15** “I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.”
- **John 15:5** “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.”

- **John 8:12** “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”
- **Luke 22:70** When the Jewish rulers asked Jesus if He was the Son of God, He answered, “Yes, I am.”
- **John 14:6** “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”
- **Revelation 1:8** “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Although the Lord is beyond our comprehension in so many ways, He sent us His Son in human form to be a living expression of Himself and His name. In the person of Jesus Christ, we see both the greatness and love of God for us. The Father loved us enough to send His Son into the world for our salvation, and Jesus demonstrated His love by dying on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. What an awesome God we have—the great I AM.

RESPONSE

- What new dimensions of God and His Son have you seen through the study of His name? How does this increase your reverence and love for Him?
- Taking the Lord’s name in vain includes more than just profanity. As Christians we continually carry Christ’s name with us. What are some ways we dishonor His name with our words, behavior, or attitudes? How can we glorify and exalt His holy name instead?

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