

The Great I AM (4/13/2020)

*In these days after Easter, many people are still wondering who Jesus was and why billions of Christians around the world worship him. What made Jesus so great? We answer that question in this next series of devotions, as Jesus makes his **Great I Am** statements. As we take a look at how the Son of God reveals himself in Scripture in various ways, we see the many and great characteristics of our Savior and Lord.*


About 1500 years before the birth of our risen Savior, a Hebrew baby named Moses was adopted by an Egyptian princess. For forty years he lived in the palace as a prince of Egypt. He was from the tribe of Levi and realized that God had put him in a unique position to help the Children of Israel as they groaned under their burden of slavery. Rather than waiting for God to call him into action, he took it upon himself to defend a Hebrew who was being beaten by an Egyptian. He murdered the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. News of his crime reached the Pharaoh's ears. The king tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled for his life across the Sinai Peninsula to the region of Midian. There he met and married a shepherdess named Zipporah, the daughter of Reuel. For the next forty years Moses was a humble shepherd for his father-in-law.

One day he was tending the flock by Mount Sinai. There the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a burning bush. This was not a created angel. Rather it was God himself. More specifically, the Second Person of the Trinity—Jesus Christ before he took on human flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary. This miracle is called the incarnation (coming into flesh). That's why we call the Angel of the LORD the pre-incarnate Christ.

He said to Moses from within the bush, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I have seen the misery of my people and am concerned about their suffering. I have come down to rescue them. So now go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." Moses said, "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?" 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.'"

I AM has the same root word in Hebrew as the name LORD (יהוה, Jehovah, Yahweh). I AM. That's a unique name, isn't it? You and I can't say about ourselves, "I AM." We can only say, "I have become. I didn't exist and then I came into being." But not the Angel of the LORD. He is the great I AM. He always has been, he is right now, and he always will be. He is the God of absolute independence, timelessness, constancy, and unchangeableness. He is the God of free and faithful grace and love. He is the God of salvation and deliverance. He himself preached a sermon on his name in Exodus 34, "The LORD, The LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished."

The I AM God is a God of mercy and forgiveness. At the same time he is a God of justice who must punish sin. Where only are God's forgiving mercy and punishing justice reconciled? On the cross of Jesus Christ our Lord. The great I AM cloaked himself in human flesh, perfectly fulfilled God's law, and received in his flesh on the cross the punishment that our sins deserved. Because the heavenly Father declared Jesus "guilty" of our sins, those who believe in Jesus can be assured they are declared "not guilty" for Jesus' sake. He is the great I AM.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." (Hebrews 13:8)  (The First [Alpha], Middle [Mu], and Last [Omega] letters of the Greek alphabet.)

After sharing this devotion with your family, take the time to read Exodus Chapters 1-3.

Pastor Zuberbier