

John: The Gospel of Light and Life
Adam Hamilton
Chapter 3 Discussion
The “I AM” Sayings of Jesus (pgs. 57-71)

Opening Prayer

Holy God of light and life, thank you for your Son, Jesus Christ. Bless our time together as we study this Gospel. Open our hearts so that we may be receptive to your word and grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Bible and Book Study and Discussion
“I AM”

Read John 20:31 (pg. 163) (Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible pg. 1856)

- Here John states his reason for writing this Gospel.
- These seven “I AM” sayings about are contained in this Gospel and point to the divinity of Jesus and affirm that Jesus gives life to all who believe in him.
- The great language the words for “I AM” are *ego eimi*.
 - How do we translate the Greek word *ego*?

 - How do we translate *eimi*?

- **Read Exodus 3:13-15 (Cultural Background Study Bible pg. 110-111)**
 - What was the significance of the name “I Am Who I Am” in the polytheistic culture where Moses lived?

 - What do you think is the significance of this name in our culture today?

Biblical Research

- On pg. 64, Read the seven “I AM” sayings.
 - *I am the bread of life.*
 - *I am the light of the world.*
 - *I am the gate of the sheep.*
 - *I am the good shepherd.*
 - *I am the resurrection and the life.*
 - *I am the way, the truth, and the life.*
 - *I am the true vine.*
- Note: That the sayings about gate and the good shepherd are grouped together.
- What does this “I AM” saying tell us about Jesus?

- How does this saying proclaim that Jesus gives life to everyone who believe in him?

- How did Jesus build on or reinterpret Old Testament understandings of these words and phrases?

- How does this “I AM” saying speak to us/you today?

Group Work/Readings

Group 1

“I am the gate of the sheep.” (John 10:7)

“I am the good shepherd.” (John 10:11)

Larger context: John 10:1-16

Related Old Testament references: Psalm 23; Isaiah 40:11, 56:7-8; Ezekiel 34:23.

Group 2

“I am the resurrection and the life.” (John 11:25)

Larger Context: John 11:17-27

Related Old Testament references: 1 Kings 17:17-24; Isaiah 25:8, 26:19a; Ezekiel 37:1-14; Daniel 12:1-4; Hosea 6:1-3, 13:14.

Group 3

“I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6)

Larger Context: John 14:1-6.

Related Old Testament references: Exodus 13:21-22; Psalm 25:4-5, 8-10; Psalm 31:5-6; Psalm 139:7-10, 24; Deuteronomy 32:4.

Group 4

“I am the true vine.” (John 15:1)

Larger Context: John 15:1-8

Related Old Testament references: Psalm 80:8-19; Isaiah 5:1-7.

I AM the bread of life

- Hamilton points out that John relates this “I AM” saying to two significant events: Jesus feeding the multitudes and Passover. The story of Jesus feeding the multitudes is the only miracle story that is recorded in all four Gospels.

Read John 6:26-59 (pg. 75-76) (Cultural Background Study Bible pg. 1821-1822)

- ***Read Exodus 16:4, 15 (Cultural Background Study Bible pg. 138)***
- ***Read Nehemiah 9:15 (Cultural Background Study Bible pg. 791)***
- ***Read Psalm 78:23-24 (Cultural Background Study Bible pg. 958)***
- What does the saying “I am the bread of life” tell us about Jesus when considered in the context of Passover?

- What does the saying tell us about Jesus when considered in the context of manna in the wilderness or desert?

Note that in addition to the Old Testament contexts of Passover and manna, we also understand this “I AM” saying in the context of Holy Communion.

- When you partake in the sacrament of Holy Communion, how are you participating in Christ’s story of salvation?
- How does the sacrament of Holy Communion bind people together?
- What is the significance of the phrase “Breaking bread”?
- What does “bread” symbolize or signify in our culture?
- In our community of faith? In your family?
- How does the bread of Holy Communion bring you spiritual sustenance?

“I AM the light of the World”

- Old Testament references
 - Genesis 1:3, 5, 16 (*Cultural Background Study Bible pg. 4-5*)
 - Exodus 13:21 (*Cultural Background Study Bible pg. 134*)
 - Psalm 27:1, 56:12-13, 119:105 (*Cultural Background Study Bible pg. 903, 935, 1000*)
 - Isaiah 2:5, 49:6, 60:1, 19 (*Cultural Background Study Bible pg. 1112, 1196, 1211-1212*)
- What does the “light” represent in these Old Testament texts?

- When God called Israel and Judah to be the light for the nations, what did God intend for them to do?
- What is the significance of light in the Jewish Festival of Booths?
- What does light symbolize in the Christian faith?
- How have you experienced spiritual darkness?
- How have you experienced the light of Christ?
- How is your faith community a light that shows nonbelievers the way to Christ?

Reflect

- Read John 8:12 (pg. 79) (*Cultural Background Study Bible pg. 1826*)
- How did you feel during the reading?
- How do you feel in light?
- How do you feel when it is dark?

Hymn Study and Discussion

“Christ Be our Light”- Bernadette Farrell

Verse 1

Isaiah 9:2(Cultural Background Study Bible pg. 1129)

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

Longing for truth, we turn to you.

*Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.*

Refrain

*Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.*

Verse 2

*Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice.*

Refrain

Verse 3

Isaiah 55:1-2(Cultural Background Study Bible pg. 1205)

*Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.*

Refrain

Verse 4

*Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.*

Refrain

Verse 5

1 Corinthians 12(Cultural Background Study Bible pg. 2006-2007)

*Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.*

Refrain

- The first verse of the song talks about how we long for light in the darkness.... How would you interpret this phrase?
- How could the Refrain be used as a prayer for light or guidance as we wait for the light of Christ to come into our lives, and illuminate our path?

Wrapping Up

Reflect (Personal/Optional)

- Re-read the “I AM” statements (pg. 64)
- How has your understanding of the person, purpose, and ministry of Jesus Christ grown through this study of the “I AM” sayings?
- Do any of these “I AM” sayings speak to you in a special way?
- Which of the sayings can you be for someone else?
- What are the new insights do you have regarding your relationship with Jesus Christ?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, when we look at you, we believe we are seeing the Father. We know that we need more than bread to live. We need you and the love, mercy, and life that you give. Be the bread of life for us. Sustain us and feed our souls. Be our light and dispel the darkness in our lives. May your light so shine in us that other might see you through us. Amen.