

BIBLE STUDY | WINTER/SPRING 2026

I AM
therefore
YOU ARE



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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

We have three recommended ways for engaging with *I Am, Therefore, You Are* – **dig in, go deeper, and deeper still.**

DIG IN

- If you are in a study group, join your group weekly to enjoy conversation, discuss the lesson, and talk through the Foundation Questions. If you are doing the study individually, work through the Foundation Questions at your own pace.
- Listen to or watch the teaching each week. The teaching is available on SoundCloud and YouTube. You can subscribe on those platforms or visit christpres.org/group-resources, where you can find all the Bible study resources. You'll also receive a weekly email with a link to the teaching.

GO DEEPER

- Read the weekly Scripture and go through the Preliminary, and Observe and Reflect questions to deepen your dive into God's Word.
- Feel free to complete the questions throughout the week or all at once. If you are in a group, you may discuss some of these questions with your group each week.
- Read the Application Summary.

DEEPER STILL

- We recommend the following resources as companions to your study: *Who is Jesus?*, by R.C. Sproul.

INTRODUCTION

We tend to take for granted that we all have a name that serves as a primary identity marker. Our names tend to speak to something of who we are or where we came from; they have meaning. We don't often think about God having a name, but that was the audacious question Moses asked of the Almighty in Exodus chapter 3. "What is your name?"

The Lord then said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM," and then continued as he articulated his holy name as, "I AM" (v. 14).

The Old Testament writers primarily wrote in ancient Hebrew, which did not contain vowels in its alphabet, so the transcriber rendered this holy name with four letters, transliterated into English as *YHWH* (also called the *Tetragrammaton*). Scholars have debated for centuries the proper pronunciation of this letter grouping, and, by and large, have reached a consensus on "YAH-way" or something similar, which is then translated in English as "I am."

This is the holy name of God that he claimed for himself.

In the first century during Jesus's time, the Old Testament had been translated into Greek—the common language of the day in the Roman world. And in each instance in the Old Testament where the writer cites the holy name of God, the translators notated it as *ego eimi*, a double emphatic "I am," like saying "I am, I am," or "I am that I am."

What makes this significant is that when the apostle John wrote his gospel—which would have been in Greek—there were numerous instances in which he noted that Jesus used this double-emphatic "I am" statement for himself. In no uncertain terms, with every use of *ego eimi*, Jesus was making a statement about himself.

Jesus was claiming the holy name of God for himself.

If this is true—if Jesus is who he says he is—God in the flesh—then the ramifications are profound. Because if Jesus is the great I AM—if he is the eternal, omnipotent, almighty, creator of everything—and if he *also* came to reconcile what was lost (Luke 19:10), then it speaks to our identity; it speaks to who we are as followers of Christ. Because of this reality, the Scriptures make countless claims about who we are in Christ. Because of what Jesus did, we are made different.

Perhaps the best part of all is that because of who Jesus is, and because of what Jesus did and has given to us, we are united with him and therefore able to do the very things he's commanded us to do. We have purpose, meaning, and direction. He enables us, by his power, to carry out the commands of the great I AM. His commands are no longer a burden, but an expression of who he is in us, and we, by his grace, get to engage in the work of the great I AM.

OBSERVE AND REFLECT

1. In the opening verses of the passage, would you say that God came to Moses where he was or that the Lord brought Moses to where God was? Does it make a difference either way? Consider the greater purpose of the passage in your answer.

"I tell you this: I want God to be what God is: the impeccably holy, unapproachable Holy Thing, the All-Holy One. I want Him to be and remain THE HOLY. I want His heaven to be holy and His throne to be holy. I don't want Him to change or modify His requirements. Even if it shuts me out, I want something holy left in the universe."—A.W. Tozer

2. In this passage, what signals that Moses encounters God and not a mere messenger of God? How is this even possible when God dwells in "unapproachable light" (1 Timothy 6:16)? How does this foreshadow Jesus?

3. How can we make a connection between the burning bush and Jesus? What did you learn about the burning bush that also applies to the person and work of Jesus?

APPLICATION SUMMARY

For 400 years under his oppressive rule, Pharaoh held the people of God as slaves. The Lord, in his compassion, heard their cries for help (Exodus 2:23) and drew Moses to Mount Horeb, where he saw the “angel of the Lord” (v. 2) who called out to him in the form of a flame in the midst of a bush which didn’t burn up. The voice of the Lord told Moses to remove his sandals as he now stood in the presence of the One who has power over creation, as evidenced by the bush which remained unconsumed by fire. He stood before the Lord, afraid to even look upon his face—sinful man’s natural response when they encounter a God who is holy, holy, holy (Isaiah 6:1–7).

The Lord, in the fiery bush, instructed Moses to go before Pharaoh, demanding the release of God’s people, Israel, so they could leave Egypt and go back to the mountain of God to worship him.

Moses was more than reluctant to make such demands of Pharaoh; he was terrified to confront a man of such power, but the Lord promised his very presence (v. 12). But Moses had still another objection; in effect he asks, “When I go to Israel and tell them of this plan and they ask me the name of the God who sent me, what shall I tell them? What is your name?” The Lord answered Moses, “I AM WHO I AM . . . I AM has sent me to you” (v. 14). The Lord articulated his holy name to Moses, transliterated from Hebrew as *Yahweh* (YHWH, often noted as “LORD” in the Bible). But what does this mean?

There is a mysterious element to this response which tells us something of God—he is *mysterious*; there are certain things about him about which we will never understand. But this response also indicates that he is *eternal* and *unchangeable*—he responds in the present tense—he always was, always is, and always will be. The Lord’s name also tells us that he is *self-existent*—he is independent, reliant upon no person or thing—he is eternally self-sufficient.

How *could* Moses approach someone like Pharaoh, the most powerful man on earth, making such demands? Only if it was by the power and presence of the omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, unchanging one who condescends to save and preserve *his* people.

When Jesus Said "I Am"

"Jesus prefaced descriptions of His office by a strange combination of Greek words, ego eimi. The word ego in Greek means "I am." We get the word ego (ēgō) from it. But the word eimi also means "I am." If you put them together, ego eimi literally means "I am, I am," as if one were stuttering. In order to understand what Jesus was doing, we need to look at the Greek translation of the Old Testament, where we see that the ineffable name of God, Yahweh, was translated into the Greek language by this same strange construction, ego eimi, which can be translated "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14). Therefore, almost every commentator recognizes that when Jesus said, "I am the door," "I am the bread of life," and other "I am" sayings, He was using the divine name for Himself."—R.C. Sproul

APPLICATION SUMMARY

For the disciples, seeing Jesus walk on water was an overload of the senses because, first, their eyes witnessed what was, humanly speaking, impossible. But secondly, nothing could have prepared them for what they would hear next as Jesus got closer to the boat. Seeing that they were afraid, Jesus said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." Once again, the English translation of this phrase doesn't tell the whole story. In saying, "It is I," Jesus speaks the phrase as rendered in the Greek, *ego eimi*.

In John's gospel, Jesus uses the phrase *ego eimi* ten times. Seven of those instances are metaphorical, where Jesus utters the "I AM" nomenclature when comparing himself to something—like bread (6:35), light (8:12), and a door (10:7). The other three instances in John's gospel where Jesus says, "I AM" are more direct, absolute statements. For example, Jesus tells the scribes and Pharisees, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (8:58). Jesus invokes the name of God and ascribes it to himself, which is why his detractors picked up rocks in an attempt to stone him.

However, Jesus's first use of "I AM" in John's gospel occurs in this account, when the disciples were at sea and witnessed Jesus walking on the water. It's not just that they were seeing something miraculous; they also heard him claim the name of God for himself. We have no indication of what the disciples were thinking other than that they were afraid, which is a typical response in the Scriptures when sinful man encounters a holy God (see: Isaiah 6:1–5). But these were students of Jesus and, therefore, students of the word. Were there passages that immediately came to mind?

Perhaps from the scrolls of Job where it reads in chapter 9, "who alone stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea" (v. 8)? Or maybe from the words of the Psalter which proclaim, "Your way was through the sea, your path through the waters; yet your footprints were unseen" (Psalm 77:19). The disciples all at once were seeing and hearing Jesus do things only ascribed to God.

This was undoubtedly Jesus's intent—for his followers to know *and believe* that Jesus is God, and with faith in him, he will lead us safely to our destination (John 6:21).

WEEK THREE

THE BREAD OF LIFE

JOHN 6:22-59

PRELIMINARY QUESTION

Before reading the passage, write down a few thoughts as to what you think it means when the Lord refers to himself as “the bread of life”?

FOCAL PASSAGE

JOHN 6:16-21

²² On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. ²³ Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. ²⁴ So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” ²⁶ Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

²⁷ Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” ²⁸ Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” ²⁹ Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” ³⁰ So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?” ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” ³² Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

³⁵ Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. ³⁷ All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

⁴¹ So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” ⁴² They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”

⁴³ Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— ⁴⁶ not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰ This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

⁵² The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” ⁵³ So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” ⁵⁹ Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

FOUNDATION QUESTIONS

1. Having carefully read the passage, write down a few thoughts as to what you think it means when the Lord refers to himself as “the bread of life.” How is your answer different *after* having read the passage?
2. To whom is the Lord speaking in this passage—who is his audience? How might the audience impact your understanding of this passage?
3. What are some cultural nuances or themes in the passage for which you must account? Does everything you read in the passage seem to have context in the modern church?

OBSERVE AND REFLECT

1. How is the manna that the Israelites ate in the desert related to our passage in John chapter 6? How does the manna from heaven point us to Jesus?
2. Why was the crowd upset with Jesus after he gave them words of life, identifying himself as “the bread of life”? According to verses 44 through 46, what is the people in the crowd still lack?

“The ‘flesh and blood of the Son of man’ means that sacrifice of His own body, which Christ offered up on the cross, when He died for sinners. The atonement made by His death, the satisfaction made by his sufferings as our Substitute, the redemption effected by His enduring the penalty of our sins in His own body on the tree—this seems to be the true idea that we should set before our minds . . . The food of this world, for which so many take thought, will perish in the using and not feed our souls. He only that eats of ‘the bread that came down from heaven’ shall live forever.”—J.C. Ryle

3. Jesus’s ultimate response to the crowd is that they must “feed on my flesh and drink my blood” to abide in him, and he in them (v. 56). In your own words, what does this mean? And how do we, Christians in the modern-day Church, engage in what Jesus is telling us to do?

APPLICATION SUMMARY

The day after Jesus miraculously feeds the 5000, he makes the statement, “I am the bread of life” (v. 35). The crowds that are following Jesus are looking for him, in part, because they want to see another sign, but more than their desire to see the kingdom of God was their desire for more food; they’re hungry so Jesus asks, “You’re looking for more bread; don’t look for food that perishes, but for food that endures to eternal life; I can give it to you if you believe in me” (vs. 26–29). The crowd responds with doubt, saying, “Why should we believe you? Give us a sign” (v. 30). In no uncertain terms, the crowd is attempting to compare Jesus with Moses: “If you are who you say you are, you should be able to provide bread as Moses did.” The irony is that the day prior, Jesus miraculously provided the crowds with bread (John 6:1–14).

However, instead of asking the crowd to recall the events from the day prior, he reminds them that it wasn’t Moses who fed Israel, but the Heavenly Father. Jesus contrasts the manna from heaven with the bread he could give them—bread that brings eternal life—to which the crowd responds, “Sir, give us this bread always” (v. 34). Jesus replies, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst” (v. 35).

The crowd would have been agitated by Jesus’s words. In saying “I am,” he was identifying himself as the Son of God who is the manna that has come down from heaven—the fulfillment of what Israel’s manna pointed to. Moreover, Jesus boldly and unmistakably claims that *he* alone grants access to the Father, agitating the crowd all the more (vs. 44–47). How do they gain this access to the Father? It must come by “eating and drinking the flesh and blood” of Christ (vs. 54–55).

Quite simply, Jesus calls the crowd—and everyone—to look to him by faith alone and recognize that you can do this by God’s grace alone. We, in effect, must consume Christ and be consumed by him, Jesus, the Bread of Life.

OBSERVE AND REFLECT

1. Read Genesis 1:4, Psalm 27:1, Psalm 119:105, and Exodus 13:21—four Old Testament passages which make reference to light. How do these passages describe light? In what ways are these descriptions of light like Jesus?

“Jesus came into the world to reveal the Father, and he revealed him most fully in his death on the cross. There, if anywhere, the scales fall from the eyes and the acknowledgement is constrained. ‘Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him;...let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation’ (Isaiah 25:9).”—F.F. Bruce

2. Consider the quote above along with verse 28 when Jesus says, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he.” What does Jesus mean when he speaks of having “lifted up the Son of Man?” How does this relate to the light of Jesus?

3. How can the followers of Jesus reflect the light of Jesus?

APPLICATION SUMMARY

The Feast of Tabernacles is the setting where Jesus tells the crowd, “I am the light of the world.” The Feast was instituted by God (Leviticus 23) to remind the Israelites in every generation of their deliverance from Egypt. It begins and ends with a special Sabbath day of rest, and in between those days, the Israelites were to dwell in booths—or tents—to remind them that God had delivered them out of the land of Egypt and their wandering in the desert that followed. On the final evening of the Feast, the temple officials lit four large lamps in the temple courts, which burned through the night as the people sang praises to the Lord. The light from the temple would flood the city. This light was an explicit reminder of the pillar of fire—the very presence of God—who led the Israelites through the darkness of the wilderness. In this context rich with exodus imagery, Jesus tells the crowd, “I AM the light of the world.” He, once again, invokes the name of God (*ego eimi*), while at the same time equating himself to the pillar of fire in the wilderness.

The Pharisees understood Jesus’s implication and refuted his testimony on the grounds that he didn’t have a corroborating witness. However, Jesus is in the Father, and the Father is in Jesus (John 14:11); therefore, the Father always substantiates the testimony of Jesus. Jesus reiterates this as he tells the Pharisees, “I am (*ego eimi*) the one who bears witness about myself” (v. 18). Nevertheless, the crowd remains hostile toward Jesus, and in the verses that follow, Jesus continues to delineate between those that believe him and those that don’t—those who are of this world, and those who aren’t (v. 23). Those that follow Jesus will never walk in darkness, because just as Jesus and the Father are united in perfect fellowship (along with the Holy Spirit), the followers of Jesus are united in perfect fellowship with him and even begin to reflect the very light he casts (Matthew 5:14–16). Such was the case in this passage; though Jesus had his detractors, many still believed and put their faith in the one who came to shine the light of the Father (v. 30).

APPLICATION SUMMARY

The two “I AM” statements in John 10 reference Christ’s role with his sheep. In the first, in 10:1–10, Jesus calls himself the “door of the sheep.” In 10:11–18, he names himself the “Good Shepherd.” These are interrelated but distinct “I AM” statements, and the first reveals to us so much about Jesus’s role as Savior—and his frustration with the Pharisees.

In John 9, the Pharisees refuse to believe that Jesus healed a blind man (v. 18), and also criticize him for healing on the Sabbath (v. 16). The blind man testifies to the miracle Jesus performed, but the Pharisees cast him out of the synagogue. Verses 28–29 say, “And they reviled him, saying, ‘You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.’”

Chapters 9 and 10 blend seamlessly together; there is no change of scene. Jesus addresses the people present after this encounter with the Pharisees. Andreas Köstenberger writes, “In this discourse, Jesus criticized the Jewish leaders for failing to give Israel proper spiritual guidance . . . Chapter 10 provides a commentary on the previous chapter that revealed the Jewish leadership’s legal pettiness, rigidity, and hardness toward God.

When Jesus says, “I AM the door of the sheep,” he uses a metaphor well-known in the pastoral culture of the ancient Near East. Colin Kruse explains, “Overnight the sheep were placed in roughly constructed round stone-walled enclosures. The top of the dry-stone wall was covered with thorns to keep out wild animals. Inside the enclosure, the sheep were safe so long as the entrance was secured by the shepherd. He slept across the entrance as there was no door and no doorkeeper.” Jesus, the door of the sheep, spoke to the protection he offers to save his sheep from the thieves (Pharisees). As modern followers of Christ, we know he is the only way we can be saved from the “thief who comes to steal and destroy,” and we can trust him as the one who came to give life and life abundantly.

OBSERVE AND REFLECT

1. Read Ezekiel 34:11–31. What kind of shepherd does God promise to send? How does the Lord describe us, the “human sheep of his pasture” (v. 31)?

2. Reflect on John 10:16. Who do you think are the “sheep who are not of this fold”?

“He prizes them because they are his—sets a value on each of them. He takes care of them, remembering them both night and day. His heart is never off them, and because of his inward love, there is an outward goodness that he constantly extends to them. He protects them from the wolf. He guards them from a thousand dangers. He supplies all their needs. He guides them in the right way. He brings them back when they wander. He strengthens them when they are weak. He carries them when they are too feeble to go on. He sees that they are a weak flock, a silly flock, and a wandering flock; therefore he is their strength, their wisdom, their righteousness, their all.”—Charles Spurgeon

3. Reflect on the quote above from Spurgeon. How have you experienced the shepherding love of Jesus in your own life?

APPLICATION SUMMARY

This is the third “I AM” statement Jesus gives at the Feast of the Tabernacles, after “I AM the light of the world” and “I AM the door of the sheep.” Continuing his pastoral metaphor, Jesus claims, “I AM the good shepherd.” There are tremendous theological truths embedded in these nine verses, speaking to Christ’s atoning sacrifice on the cross (v. 15), the Trinity (v. 15, 18), the availability of the gospel to the Gentiles (v. 16), the foundations of the Church with Christ as its head (v. 16). But there is also a deeply pastoral thread, an intimate confession of Jesus’s heart for his sheep, his people. He says, “I know my own, and my own know me.”

It is in this remarkable statement that we learn what kind of shepherd Jesus is, because in the next verse, he says, “I lay down my life for my sheep.” Jesus *knows you and lays down his life for you*. Dane Ortlund writes, “It means our haunting shame is not a problem for him, but the very thing he loves most to work with. It means our sins do not cause his love to take a hit. Our sins cause his love to surge forward all the more. It means on that day when we stand before him, quietly, unhurriedly, we will weep with relief, shocked at how impoverished a view of his mercy-rich heart we had.”

Jesus is a shepherd in an economy of mercy; he does not view his flock as producers, evaluating them based on their wool or meat production capacity. The weakest and wiriest are as important to him as the strongest and fluffiest. We can submit to our all-knowing shepherd because his love and mercy toward us extend all the way to the cross. You are loved by the Good Shepherd. There is no greater gift.

OBSERVE AND REFLECT

1. Martha seems to indicate to Jesus that it's still not too late for a miracle (v. 22), yet she discourages Jesus from opening the tomb (v. 39). What might this teach us about our faith when Martha, a woman of deep faith, responds in this manner?

"Jesus asked to see Lazarus' tomb, then, overcome, He wept. Verse 35 is the shortest verse in all of the Bible, but surely it is one of the most poignant. It does not tell us that Mary wept; we've already read that. It does not tell us that the Jews were weeping; we've already read that. It tells us that Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, the eternal Word of God, shed tears. Why did He weep? Had Jesus given in to despair? Did He not know what He was about to do? The Word of God teaches us, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15). Jesus was on the verge of perhaps His greatest miracle, but He entered into the feelings of grief and loss of those whom He loved. He wept with them at the tomb of Lazarus."—R.C. Sproul

2. Notice that Martha and Mary had similar questions for Jesus, yet Jesus responded very differently. What can we learn from this? Why did Jesus weep at the tomb of Lazarus, and what does this tell us about how we should comfort those who mourn?

3. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, yet undoubtedly, years later, Lazarus died yet again. Why would Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead only for him to die yet again? What was the message behind this miracle?

APPLICATION SUMMARY

Just prior to our passage, we learn that Mary and Martha got word to Jesus that Lazarus, their brother and a friend of Jesus, was gravely ill. But if he hurried, perhaps he could arrive in time to heal him. We also see that Jesus deliberately delayed, allowing Lazarus to die and telling his disciples, “and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe” (v. 15).

As Jesus nears the scene, Martha meets him and laments, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you” (vs. 21–22). Martha knew that Jesus had the Father’s favor and that death was not an insurmountable obstacle. Still, it’s not hard to imagine her disappointment when she believes that Jesus is consoling her by telling her that Lazarus will rise again on the last day (v. 24). But Jesus responds, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.” His confession, though Martha didn’t realize it yet, was that Jesus is the great I AM—the only one who creates life and holds power over death.

Jesus continued to the home where he had a similar conversation with Mary as he did with Martha. But instead of a theological discussion on the final resurrection, Jesus was “greatly troubled” and wept with Mary (vs. 33–35). Undoubtedly troubled by the grief of his friends along with the pervasive doubt and unbelief throughout the crowd, Jesus refused to let death have the last word—in the moment and ultimately. Jesus *raised Lazarus from the dead*, giving those present a foretaste of his own resurrection and a foretaste of what would happen on the last day.

The resurrection of Lazarus gives us a glimpse of what Jesus does for all believers who, in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, “put on the new self” (Ephesians 4:24). Faithful Israelites who witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus would have likely recalled the resurrection of Abraham’s son Isaac (Genesis 22:1–19; Hebrews 11:19) and Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37). Jesus did what the Old Testament foretold to show the gathered crowd and all disciples of Christ for ages to follow, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

OBSERVE AND REFLECT

1. Why would Jesus begin this passage by telling his disciples, “Let not your hearts be troubled” (v. 1)? To what was Jesus referring, and why would the disciples find it troubling?

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us.”—C.S. Lewis

2. Throughout this passage, Jesus is making statements about both himself and God the Father. What is he saying about his relationship with the Father? What exactly are Jesus’s claims about who he is?

3. In verse 12, Jesus says, “whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.” What does he mean by this? Who could do greater works than Jesus?

APPLICATION SUMMARY

How can we know God? As the gospel unfolds, we see the clearest revelation of God in Jesus Christ—the Word made flesh (John 1:1–18; Colossians 1:19). This is important to remember as we consider what Jesus meant when he said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (v. 6).

It’s also important to remember that this statement comes immediately after Jesus told his disciples, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward” (John 13:36). Peter objected to Jesus’s words, which he rebuked, telling him he would soon deny him. The disciples undoubtedly found this exchange worrisome, which is why Jesus says, “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me” (v. 1). When Jesus told the disciples “Where I am going you cannot follow,” the disciples must have been thinking spatially or geographically, but as we now realize, Jesus was speaking about heaven (vs. 1–3). Jesus was on the verge of passing through death, then proceeding to heaven, where the disciples couldn’t follow, but they would “afterward.” But how would they follow Jesus? How would they find their way to heaven? Jesus tells them that the way to heaven is by believing in God through *him*—through faith in Jesus; to know Jesus is to know God (vs. 9, 10, 11).

In telling his disciples that he is the *truth*, Jesus is reiterating what he has already confessed to them, that he does precisely what the Father commands, and only what the Father commands (John 5:19); he is the embodiment of truth and therefore reveals to us the clearest picture we will ever see of God.

In the moment, the disciples didn’t understand Jesus’s words, especially so when he said he is the *life*. But soon they would, as they would serve witness to his power to conquer death, revealing that he indeed is the source of life—the Creator—for all who look to him by faith alone (John 5:26; 11:25).

OBSERVE AND REFLECT

1. How is it that Jesus can be the true vine? Is Jesus contrasting himself to someone or something else? What difference can this make in your life knowing that Jesus is the true vine?

2. What other passages in the New Testament can you think of that make reference to fruit? Is there any application of those passages to this? (Hint: See Galatians 5.)

"These are wonderful words when we consider the character of the eleven men to whom they were applied. How weak was their faith! How slender their knowledge! How shallow their spiritual attainments! How faint their hearts in the hour of danger! Yet a very little time after Jesus spoke these words they all forsook Him and fled, and one of them denied Him three times with an oath. No one, in short, can read the four Gospels with attention and fail to see that never had a great master such weak servants as Jesus had in the eleven apostles. Yet these very weak servants were the men of whom the gracious Head of the Church speaks here in high and honorable terms."—J.C. Ryle

3. If Jesus is calling his disciples to imitation, and to this point, Israel hasn't been able to come close to walking as Jesus did, what hope do the disciples have of imitating Jesus? What hope do followers in the modern Church have of imitating Jesus?

APPLICATION SUMMARY

On the eve of his crucifixion, Jesus sits in the upper room with his disciples as he prepares them for what's coming, both in the immediate and long term. It's in this setting that Jesus reveals his next I AM statement, drawing on the imagery of a vine and its branches—something very familiar to all of them in their agrarian culture. Jesus identifies himself as “the true vine.” He uses a word that means “genuine,” and if this is the case, is it in contrast to something else? A vine that *isn't* genuine? To answer this question, we must refer to the Old Testament imagery from which Jesus draws.

Throughout its history, the Lord likened Israel to numerous images—a firstborn son, a wife, God's flock—but in Psalm 80, he likens them to a *vine* (Psalm 80:8–9, 14–15). In addition to the Psalms, Isaiah also refers to Israel as a vine (Isaiah 5:1–7), and he doesn't present it in the best light—the “vine” the Lord planted yielded “wild grapes” (Isaiah 5:1–2). Ultimately, God was displeased with his vineyard and eventually said, “I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briars and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it” (Isaiah 5:6).

When Jesus told his disciples—students of Jesus who would have known the word—that he is the true, genuine vine, the reference would not have been lost on them. The fruit of righteousness and faithfulness that Israel couldn't yield, Jesus *did* yield. But even better, as Jesus identifies himself as the I AM vine, he also tells his disciples that they are the branches of this vine (v. 5); their unity with Jesus gives them unity with the Father. These statements, though undoubtedly not clear in the moment, would be the ultimate assurance the disciples could ever need in the days that would follow—and their joy would be made full (v. 11).

After assuring them of their unity with the Father and the Son, Jesus concludes by calling them to imitation. As they would bear witness the following day, Jesus would lay down his life for his friends, calling them to the same (vs. 12–15). This is the universal call to all Christians because we are branches of the true vine!

INTRODUCTION TO PART 2

“All of the graces of the gospel flow to us because we are in Christ. We are justified because we are in Christ. We are being sanctified because we are in Christ. We are loved as adopted children because we are in Christ. We are forgiven because we are in Christ. We have every need supplied because we are in Christ. We are objects of the Father’s love because we are in Christ. We have eternal hope because we are in Christ.”—Paul David Tripp

After our nine weeks studying the “I AM” statements of Christ, we now move into the “You Are” section of this study. What do the “I AM” statements mean for us? Because Jesus is the light of the world, we are *redeemed*. Because Jesus is the good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep, we are *saved*. Because Jesus is the bread of life, we are *sustained*. Because Jesus is the true vine, we are sanctified. Because Jesus is the way the truth and the life, we will be *glorified*.

WEEK TEN

REDEEMED (DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION)

PRELIMINARY QUESTION

Before reading the passage, write down a few thoughts as to what you think it means when the Lord tells us we are “redeemed”?

FOCAL PASSAGE

JOHN 8:12–30

¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” ¹³ So the Pharisees said to him, “You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true.” ¹⁴ Jesus answered, “Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶ Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. ¹⁷ In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. ¹⁸ I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.” ¹⁹ They said to him therefore, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” ²⁰ These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

JOHN 12:35–50

³⁵ So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. ³⁶ While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. ³⁷ Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, ³⁸ so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” ³⁹ Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, ⁴⁰ “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.”

⁴¹ Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. ⁴² Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

⁴⁴ And Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. ⁴⁵ And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. ⁴⁶ I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. ⁴⁷ If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. ⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰ And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”

OBSERVE AND REFLECT

1. The metaphor of darkness and light appears throughout the Bible. Look up these verses and note what it means that Jesus's work of redemption moves us from darkness to light.

1. Psalm 27:1
2. Isaiah 9:2
3. Matthew 4:16
4. Ephesians 5:8–9
5. 1 Peter 2:9

"Redemption (apolutrósis) refers supremely to the work of Christ on our behalf, whereby he purchases us, he ransoms us, at the price of his own life, securing our deliverance from the bondage and condemnation of sin."—Ligon Duncan

2. Write your own story of redemption, using the metaphor of darkness for sin and light for Christ. How would you share with others about your journey from darkness to light?

APPLICATION SUMMARY

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 85. What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse, due to us for sin?

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God, due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

Jesus says in John 8, "I AM the light of the world." Later, in John 12, he says, " I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness." John's gospel is full of references to Jesus as the light. Beginning in John 1, he writes in verses 4 and 5, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

The prophet Isaiah wrote of the coming Messiah, "the people who have walked in darkness have seen a great light" (9:2). In this messianic prophecy, Isaiah claims that the people who have walked in the darkness of sin (John 3:19) will not only see the light but be changed by it. Isaiah 9:7 says, "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore."

Jesus is not just light that shines in darkness, but he invites us to be redeemed from the darkness bought for us by our sin, and to believe in the light and become sons of it (John 12:36). We are people who walk in the darkness of sin, and belief in Jesus means that we will not remain there. We have been redeemed, purchased, pulled out of darkness and into the light.

And so, as Paul wrote in Romans 13:12, "let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light" by accepting the redemption offered to us by Jesus, the Light of the World.

OBSERVE AND REFLECT

1. Romans 8 is one of the richest chapters in all of the Bible. John Piper calls it a “mammothly glorious chapter.” Spend a few moments reading the whole chapter, and make a list here of phrases that stand out to you.

2. Reread John 10:11 – 18. How does Jesus describe his identity as a good shepherd, and what role does that play in salvation?

APPLICATION SUMMARY

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 33. What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

When Jesus says in John 10:15 that he “lay down my life for the sheep,” he is making a promise that the original audience (Pharisees and followers at the Feast of the Tabernacles) could not have understood fully. Jesus’s death on the cross as an atoning sacrifice for sin is comprehensive for his followers. Paul Tripp writes of justification, “(The gospel) is the most essential and most glorious message ever written and spoken. In his righteous life and substitutionary death, Jesus has made it possible for us to be forgiven, accepted, and declared righteous by God. This is the ultimate good news.”

In laying down his life, Jesus *justifies* his sheep. All the punishment for sin, all the just wrath of God the Father, is consumed by Christ’s dying body. In this, the Good Shepherd does more than lay down his own life; he secures life forever for his flock.

WEEK TWELVE
SUSTAINED (THE DOCTRINE OF ASSURANCE)
ROMANS 11:29-36

PRELIMINARY QUESTION _____

Before reading the passage, write down a few thoughts as to what you think it means when the Lord tells us we are “sustained”?

FOCAL PASSAGE _____

ROMANS 11:1-6; 29-36

¹ I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ² God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? ³ “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.” ⁴ But what is God’s reply to him? “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” ⁵ So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. ⁶ But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. ³² For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

³⁴ “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” ³⁵ “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”

³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

JOHN 6:28-35

²⁸ Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” ²⁹ Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” ³⁰ So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?” ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” ³² Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

³⁵ Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

OBSERVE AND REFLECT

1. Read Deuteronomy 8:1–10. How did God sustain the Israelites in the desert?

“Just like He gave bread or manna to the Israelites during the exodus, the Father sent Jesus to grant and sustain life. Yet Jesus is far better than the manna of the exodus because Israel’s hunger was satisfied temporarily, but those who partake of Christ will never be hungry again (vs. 35, 40, 47, 54). The Bread of Life grants and sustains eternal life — no one who comes to Christ in faith can ever be cast out (v. 37). We are confident of this because the Father has given to His Son a people who cannot be lost (v. 39), since the Father compels them to put their fate in the hands of Jesus, and He will raise His people from the dead on the last day (vs. 39, 44, 54).” —Tabletalk Magazine (Ligonier)

2. Why does Jesus’s calling back to the manna from heaven and his promise that he is the “bread of life” help us to know that he will sustain us in faith until the “day of completion” (Philippians 1:6)?

APPLICATION SUMMARY

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 36. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God’s love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

Philippians 1:6 says, “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” In writing these words, Paul assures the Christians in Philippi, and us today, that Christ will sustain them until the day they are united with him in eternal life. The question of the assurance of our faith can bring to mind anxiety or fear. Is it possible to lose salvation?

The throughline of security, sustenance, and provision is clear from the beginning of Scripture to the end. God provided leaves for Adam and Eve to hide their shame; he provided a ram for Abraham to sacrifice instead of Isaac; he provided manna for the Israelites in the desert; he provided Christ, the ultimate sacrifice, for all who call upon the name of the Lord. Our salvation has never been dependent on us; rather, it is the covenant-keeping God who has always provided the surety we need to be in right relationship with him. When Jesus says, “I AM the Bread of Life,” he is speaking contextually to an audience that would have known the trauma of famine and the story of God feeding the Israelites with manna from heaven. Jesus promises them that they will never go hungry, they will never lack the one thing they truly need: him.

APPLICATION SUMMARY

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 35. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

Abiding in Christ is a gift for all believers that leads, as Paul Tripp noted, to death and life. When Jesus describes himself as the True Vine, and God the Father as the Vinedresser, he speaks of our ongoing sanctification. We are "pruned" as part of our sanctification, and the Father deliberately convicts and rids us of the ongoing sin that marks our fallen nature. And yet, because we are grafted to Christ, the true vine, we are able to grow in righteousness and bear the fruit that marks a true Christian. When Paul writes of the fruit of the Spirit, he gives us the role of the third person of the Trinity in our sanctification in describing how the Holy Spirit grows the fruit of Christ-following in us.

Our sanctification, when described in this metaphor of the vine, is a trinitarian gift. The Father prunes us, the Son provides the means by which we can be sanctified, and the Spirit grows in us the fruit that Jesus says "proves to be my disciples." Though our sanctification will not be complete until Christ comes again, we can take heart in knowing that we have the power of the Trinity continuing to shape us more and more like Jesus as we wait for that glorious day.

WEEK FOURTEEN

GLORIFIED (THE DOCTRINE OF GLORIFICATION)

PRELIMINARY QUESTION

Before reading the passage, write down a few thoughts as to what you think it means when the Lord tells us we will be “glorified”?

FOCAL PASSAGE

1 CORINTHIANS 15:35–59

³⁵ But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” ³⁶ You foolish person! eWhat you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. ³⁹ For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰ There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

⁴² So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

⁵⁰ I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. sWe shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵ “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

JOHN 14:1–7

¹ “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

APPLICATION SUMMARY

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 38. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

A. At the resurrection, believers, being raised up to glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

The doctrine of glorification is far more than eternal life; rather, it speaks to the overwhelming, glorious, perfect nature of our own bodies and souls as we will commune with Christ in the new heavens and new earth forever. Because Jesus is the only “way, truth, and life,” belief in him opens the door to the Father’s house, to eternity. Peter writes in 2 Peter 3:13, “But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” The life of the Christian here is marked by the work of Christ—how he redeems, saves, sustains, and sanctifies us. But it is also marked by knowing what comes after this life, the gift of eternity. Paul Tripp describes it this way, “The promise is that after the end, God is going to give us a new home . . . What will make it radically different from the broken world we live in is that it will be a place where righteousness will dwell unchanged forever. Righteousness doesn’t just mean that the new heavens and new earth will be inhabited by a holy God and people who are now partakers of his divine image; that is, fully formed into the image of his Son. It means that everything will be righteous. Everything will be in its proper place, doing perfectly what it was meant to do.”

The glory that awaits us, through Jesus, who is the only way, truth, and life, will be a magnificently perfected world, made completely new. Jesus beckons us to follow him, to be redeemed, saved, sanctified, and sustained until that glorious day.

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