

THE I AM'S OF JESUS #1

Today I want to start a new series on the “I AM’s of Jesus”. These statements of Jesus leave no doubt as to what He was claiming. Beyond the obvious claim of Jesus is also a particular aspect of His Deity. The 7 distinct statements of Jesus all take place in the book of John. It is fitting that they all take place here because it is in this book that Jesus is specifically focused on as the “Son of God”; a term that was clearly understood to a claim of Deity. The actual name “I AM” of course goes back to Moses’ interaction with God at the burning bush – **Ex. 3:13-14** -. The children of Israel understood the significance of this name – it was the name of God. In the NT, Jesus will use this name on 8 different occasions. Most attribute the “I AM’s” of Jesus to be 7. I see an 8th. We begin with:

1. **Before Abraham was, I AM – John 8:58** -. There can be no doubt as to what Jesus was claiming here. The term I AM is a term that not only belongs to God but also speaks of His eternity. Abraham lived about 2000 years before Christ. Jesus did not claim that “before Abraham was, I was”, He claimed “before Abraham was, I AM”. Jesus was clearly claiming to be God. The Jews understood that – vs. 59 -. The Jews thought that Jesus was guilty of blasphemy because He was claiming to be God. As a result, they tried to stone Him. The Jews clearly understood what the cults do not understand about this statement by Jesus. Notice now the events that triggered this statement:
2. **Instructing newly so called disciples – vs. 31-38**. In verse 30, we see “many believed on Him”. It is these so called new believers that Jesus begins to address. We will see that Jesus gave these so called believers very foundational truth and they already had a hard time with it – vs. 31-38 -.
3. **Jesus reveals who their true father was – vs. 39-44**. When these Jews try to again claim that they are Abraham’s children, Jesus sets them straight as to who their true “spiritual” father was. They no doubt were the physical descendants of Abraham but his spirituality was not in them. Jesus would shock these Jews by stating who their real father was – vs. 39-44 -.
4. **They were not of God – vs. 45-47** -. Notice that Jesus uses the word “truth” and “God’s Word”. He is certainly claiming authority. Jesus is basically tying Himself into both things. Jesus also tells these “believers” that they “are not of God”. So far Jesus has called them the sons of the devil and not of God. He isn’t done ruffling their feathers.

5. **Jesus makes another claim of deity – vs. 48-51 -.** After these “believers” call Jesus a devil, Jesus responds of course by denying it and then in verse 51 states that any man who keeps His words “shall never see death”. This of course referred to salvation. Only God could make such a claim.
6. **The Jews counter with Abraham and the prophets – vs. 52-56 -.** The Jews think they have Jesus by stating that Abraham and the prophets were dead. They ask Jesus if He is greater than these OT giants. Jesus again makes some very powerful claims in these verses. Jesus calls God His Father in verse 54. In verse 56, Jesus states that Abraham rejoiced to see His day and also saw it. He was telling the Jews that Abraham knew of Him and saw His ministry as the Messiah by faith. This leads us to the final confrontation which precipitated Jesus’s claim of I AM:
7. **Before Abraham was, I AM – vs. 57-59 -.** In verse 57, the Jews think they have Jesus again. Jesus was clearly not 2000 years old. They state that He was not even 50 yet. So how could Abraham know about Him? Jesus clears up the confusion – “Before Abraham was (born), I AM (eternally existed as God). Jesus was going beyond His humanity by revealing His Deity. The Jews when hearing this attempted to stone Him but He passed “through the midst of them”. This is another example of the Deity of Christ. When a crowd wanted to stone you, you didn’t get away. It doesn’t say that Jesus “escaped” or “ran away”; it states that He passed “through” them. However Jesus did this, it is a miracle nonetheless. Jesus proved His statement of “I AM”.