



Before Abraham was, I Am.

(John 8:56-59)

(2019)

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Before Abraham was, I Am.

- **John 8:56-59** ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.” ⁵⁷ So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?”” ⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” ⁵⁹ So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

This verse is used by some to support the theory that Jesus pre-existed with God before time began, but this is not what Jesus is saying. Jesus told the Jews, "Abraham rejoiced to see Jesus day and was glad." We know that Abraham never saw Jesus' day in reality because Abraham was dead and buried long before Jesus even appeared. Abraham saw Jesus day by revelation or vision and not in reality.

Jesus was using this same type of language when he said, "Before Abraham was I am." Jesus was not saying that he pre-existed with God before time began, but that before Abraham was born Jesus was in God's foreordained plan. It means that God had Jesus in His eternal mind and eternal plan for mankind's salvation before time began and long before Abraham was born. Jesus is simply saying, "Before Abraham was even born, he was in his Fathers foreordained eternal plan.

NOTICE: Jesus never said he saw Abraham the Pharisees assumed that was what he meant.

Jesus words, "Before Abraham was, I am" has been used to support the theory Jesus is God. Those who believe that Jesus is God teach their followers that when Jesus used the words "I am" he was saying that he is God. To discover if this is what Jesus was actually saying we will begin at the meaning of the words I, and Am, from Strong's Concordance: -

1

I: carries the idea of self (i.e., ego).

Am: means to be, to exist, to happen and be present.

I Am: together simply means I exist.

The following verses show that God the Almighty is clearly the I Am:

- He said unto Abram, I am the LORD that brought thee out (Gen. 15:7).
- The LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God (Gen. 17:1).
- The LORD said to Isaac I am the God of Abraham thy father (Gen. 26:24).
- The LORD said I am the LORD God of Abraham and the God of Isaac (Gen. 28:13).
- I am the God of Bethel (Gen. 31:13).
- God said unto him, I am God Almighty (Gen. 35:11).
- God said (to Jacob) I am God, the God of thy father (Gen. 46:3).
- God said unto Moses, "I AM THAT I AM; and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exod. 3:14).
- I am the LORD, I will bring you out from the burdens of the Egyptians (Exod. 6:6).
- I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God (Exod. 6:7).
- I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob the land I am the LORD (Exod. 6:8).

- The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD (Exod. 7:5).
- No flies shall be in Goshen that thou know that I am the LORD in the earth (Ex. 8:22).
- The LORD told Moses say to Israel, I am the LORD your God (Lev. 18:1-2).
- Ye shall do my judgments I am the LORD your God (Lev. 18:4).
- Ye shall keep my statutes and live in them: I am the LORD (Lev. 18:5).
- None of you shall uncover those that are near of kin: I am the LORD (Lev. 18:6).
- Thou shalt not pass through the fire to Molech: I am the LORD (Lev. 18:21).
- Ye shall not commit abominable customs: I am the LORD your God (Lev. 18:30).

Leviticus chapter nineteen uses the words, "I am the LORD your God" fifteen times in this one chapter and clearly shows that the "I am" refers to the LORD God Almighty. Leviticus chapter twenty uses the term "I am the LORD" your God four times in this one chapter and clearly shows that the "I am" refers to the LORD God Almighty.

NOTICE: (Exod. 3:14) is the only verse that uses the words "I am" as a title of God in every other verse the words, "I am" are simply a statement to say who God is.

Leviticus chapter twenty-one to chapter twenty-six and the entire book of Ezekiel clearly shows by the context of the verse who the words, "I am" is referring to when it refers to the one and true God. In all the above Scriptures it is clearly seen that the words "I am" are referring to the LORD God Almighty it does not leave the reader in any doubt or a position of having to assume who the title "I am" is relating to.

We see this principle also applies for the men in the following examples of Scriptures:

2

- Abrahams servant said, I am Abraham's servant (Gen. 24:34).
- Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh (Gen. 41:44).
- Moses said, The people, among whom I am (Num. 11:21).
- Who art thou? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite (2 Sam. 1:8).
- Art thou the man of God that came from Judah? And he said, I am (1 Kings 13:14).

In the above verses the words I am apply to Abraham servant, Pharaoh, Moses, an Amalekite and a man from Judah, but they are not titles, but simply statements to say who the person is or a response to a question.

JESUS AND THE WORDS I AM

Some use the following verses to support the theory Jesus is God. They teach that when Jesus uses the words, "I am he was secretly saying that he is God.

- **John 6:35-40:** ³⁵ Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. ³⁶ But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. ³⁷ All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. ³⁸ For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. ³⁹ And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. ⁴⁰ And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

- **John 7:28-29:** ²⁸ Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. ²⁹ But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

Those who hold to the theory Jesus is God say that when Jesus said, "I am" in these verses he was also implying that he was God, but if Jesus was saying that he is the one and only true God by using the words "I am" then we have two one and only true God's, because Jesus repeatedly refers to his Father who is also the one and only true God. You cannot have God the Son and God the Father at the same time otherwise the claim of the following Scriptures is made to be false:

ONE TRUE GOD

- **Isaiah 43:10:** ¹⁰ Thus saith the LORD, before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.
- **Deut. 4:35:** ³⁵ thou might know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him.
- **Deut. 4:39:** ³⁹ the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else.
- **Isaiah 44:24:** ²⁴ Thus saith the LORD, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.
- **Isaiah 45:5-6:** ⁵ I am the LORD, there is none else, there is no God beside me: from the rising of the sun, there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.
- **Isaiah 45:18:** ¹⁸ God himself formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.
- **Isaiah 45:21:** ²¹ who hath declared this from ancient time? Have not I the LORD? There is no God beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.
- **Isaiah 45:22:** ²² be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.
- **Isaiah 46:9:** ⁹ I am God, there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me.
- **Psalms 83:18:** ¹⁸ know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.
- **Psalms 86:10:** ¹⁰ thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.
- **Joel 2:27:** ²⁷ ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, and none else.
- **Malachi 2:10:** ¹⁰ Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?
- **Mark 12:29-32:** ²⁹ Jesus himself said, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: ---- NOW GO TO VERSE THIRTY TWO----
³² And the scribe said unto him, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he.
- **John 17:3:** ³ this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.
- **Romans 3:29:** ²⁹ Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also.

The words, "God is both the God of the Jews and the Gentiles" highlights the truth that the one true God revealed in the Old Testament is the same God that Jesus (God's most beloved Son) revealed to all the world by his life of compassion, mercy, grace and love, by the miraculous power that God poured out on him without limitation at his water baptism and by his suffering on the cross.

- **1 Corinthians 8:4-6:** ⁴ concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. ⁵ For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) ⁶ But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

This verse shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that there is only one true God and there is only one Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE: the words, "One Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him" (v6) have been mistakenly used to support the theory that Jesus is God the Creator, but notice the previous words Paul has just written, "There is only one God the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist." When Paul wrote a similar thing of Christ he was not referring to the original creation, but to the church, the body of Christ (i.e., it is through Christ we exist) and the "All things" refer to all things needed for eternal salvation (i.e., forgiveness of sins, God's favour, mercy and grace, the promises to Abraham and eternal life) all things needed to be saved to eternal life and everlasting glory are in Christ.

It is in this sense Paul made the statement, "Jesus Christ, through who are all things and through whom we exist." It means that without Christ there would be no Kingdom of God it simply would not exist since from before time began Christ was the central focus of Gods foreordained eternal plans and purposes for mankind's eternal salvation.

When Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" he was not saying that he is God, but that he is the way to eternal life and that he was sent by God. Jesus never says he is God nor does he ever use the title God the Son, he only ever refers to himself as the Christ, the Son of God or the Son of man sent from God his Father, adding to this there are literally multitudes of Scriptures that teach that the Father is the creator and the source of all things and that there is no other God beside Him.

The only possible way for anyone to read into Jesus words "I am the bread of life" and "I am from him" is by already having a preconceived and indoctrinated mindset that Jesus is God and reading into the verses far more than what they contain and are actually saying.

JESUS SAID, "I AM THE OFFSPRING OF DAVID AND THE SON OF GOD

- **Revelation 22:16:** ¹⁶ I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.
- **John 10:36:** ³⁶ Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that the words, I am do not always apply to the one and only true God since Jesus in these verses use them to say that he is the offspring of David and the Son of God.

JOHN THE BAPTIST, PAUL AND THE WORDS, I AM

- **Acts 13:25:** ²⁵ as John fulfilled his course, Jesus said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.
- **Acts 21:39:** ³⁹ Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus.
- **1 Corinthians 15:10:** ¹⁰ Paul said, by the grace of God I am what I am.

In these verses John use the term, I am and in Paul's writings in relationship to his ministry the term I am is used of Paul over one hundred times in the New Testament and Jesus only ever refers to Himself as the Son of God, the Son of man and never once refers to himself as God or God the Son it fact there is not one Scripture in the entire Bible that says Jesus is God or that give Jesus the title God the Son.

CONCLUSION

The following words of Jesus, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58) is the only verse in the entire Bible that may suggest to a reader (especially those with a indoctrinated and preconceived mindset) that the I am is implying that Jesus is the one and only true God the almighty I AM, but the following five major Bibles do not assume that Jesus was implying that he was really God Father by capitalizing the words I am in relation to Jesus. All five major and well recognized Bible versions leave the words I am in lower case in the following verse (John 8:58).

American Standard Bible.

- Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

King James Bible.

- Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

New American Standard Bible.

- Jesus said to them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am.

New International Bible.

- Jesus answered, "Before Abraham was born, I am!"

Revised Standard Bible.

- Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, Before Abraham was, I am."

New King James Bible.

- Jesus said unto them, Most assuredly, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I Am.

Out of six major Bibles the only one that capitalizes the words I am, is the New King James Bible, the other five major versions do not assume that Jesus was saying that he is God. The astute Bible scholar will always allow the context to give the meaning to the word used, if there is doubt about one verse then the standard rule is to follow the teachings of all other Scriptures relating to that particular subject matter, because it does not make sense to allow the one text in question to override the meaning of the very clear teachings of all other verses concerning that subject. Jesus never said he saw Abraham, the Pharisees assumed that was what he meant and when Jesus said, "Abraham rejoiced to see Jesus day and was glad" (Jn. 8:56) we know that Abraham never saw Jesus' day in reality because Abraham was dead and buried long before Jesus even appeared. Abraham saw Jesus day by revelation and vision not in reality it is in this same context that Jesus is speaking when he says, "Before Abraham was I am (Jn. 8:58)." Jesus is saying that before Abraham was born God had Jesus in His eternal mind as the centre of His foreordained plan for the history of this earth and mankind's salvation long before Abram existed.