

John 10: I AM
6-12-16 PM

In Exodus 3:13-15, Moses is encountering God for the first time. Moses asks God what name for God he should use, and God tells Him His name: I AM (in Hebrews, YHWH / Yahweh, translated as Jehovah). This is a special name that signifies the covenant God is making with Israel. It is so special that in Exodus 20:7 God tells Israel that using it without purpose is a death penalty sin.

This sacred name is used over 5,500 times in the Old Testament. Yet that same name is found nowhere in the New Testament. We often point to the change in the relationship between God and man in the covenant of the New Testament. We suggest that this missing name is because we have a new name to call God: Father. While God is seldom (only about three times) identified as our Father in the Old Testament, He is referred to as such over 300 times in the New Testament. Our inheritance is based on our son ship, which is part of the covenant of Christ.

However, there is a technical exception to the exclusion of Jehovah in the New Testament found in John's Gospel. Five times Jesus identifies Himself as Jehovah, using the name I AM:

John 8:24 – *“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I AM [He], you will die in your sins.”*

John 8:28 - *Jesus therefore said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM [He,] and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.*

John 8:58 - *Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."*

John 18:5-6 - *They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He said to them, "I AM [He,]" And Judas also who was betraying Him, was standing with them. When therefore He said to them, "I AM [He,]" they drew back, and fell to the ground.*

Our translations insert the pronoun “he” in four of these situations, but these are additions to the text based on the unusual grammar of the sacred name. In these cases Jesus is saying that He was Jehovah God. The Jews understood this, taking up stones to stone him in John 5:59.

It is more marvelous to consider the seven times Jesus took that sacred name and then added a characteristic to it:

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE – John 6:35

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD – John 8:12

I AM THE DOOR – John 10:7,9

I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD – John 10:11,14

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE – John 11:25

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE – John 14:6

I AM THE VINE – John 15:1,5

Each of these statements point to a part of the salvation that is in Jesus Christ. They also remind us of the exclusive nature of salvation in Jesus Christ. Like manna, ONLY He sustains us (as the bread of life). Like the sun, ONLY He illuminates our understanding. Like the sheep gate, He is the ONLY door into salvation. He is the ONLY Shepherd of His people; there are no other prophets coming to lead us. He is the ONLY hope of eternal life, and His way is the ONLY way to heaven. He is the ONLY connection we have with God our Father. These seven “I AMs” point us to the truth that Jesus alone (His name, Jesus, in Hebrews Joshua/Yeshua, is a contraction of Yahweh Shua, or JEHOVAH SAVES) is our salvation.

