

The God That Is

An Essay by Elder Vernon Johnson, Denton Texas PBC

Exo. 3:13, 14, "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

One of the names for God the children of Israel knew him by was "I AM." The term, I AM, indicates an unchanging ever present God. A God that is "the same yesterday, to day, and for ever." When Jesus told some unbelieving Jews in John 8:58, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am," they knew he was claiming to be the great "I AM" and thus took up stones to cast at him.

The gospel of John presents a picture to us of Jesus as being the great "I AM." Jesus referred to himself as I AM (I am) in eight different ways as follows:

- 1. I am the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5).**
- 2. I am the bread of life (John 6:35).**
- 3. I am the good shepherd (John 10:11, 14).**
- 4. I am the door of the sheep (John 10:7).**
- 5. I am the door (John 10:9).**
- 6. I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25).**
- 7. I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).**
- 8. I am the true vine (John 15:1).**

First Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." It is a particular world that Jesus is the light of. He is not the light of the world of darkness, nor of the world of iniquity, nor is he the natural light of the natural world (He created the sun, moon, and stars for that purpose). He is, however, the light of the spiritual world. To see takes eyes and light. Without either it is impossible to see. When a person is born again he receives spiritual eyesight and Jesus becomes his light (that which manifests) and he is able to perceive spiritual things (I Cor. 2:9-14). Jesus in his life has made manifest to us through his word everything that is good!

Second, Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." We don't

normally think of bread as something that gives life, but something that sustains life or gives sustenance to life. When we eat natural bread it may satisfy our appetite for a little while, but after a while we hunger again, thus we eat more. However, the bread that Jesus is, is something we eat and satisfies our hunger so that we never need hunger again. When I came to realize that Jesus has saved me from my sins by his finished work at the cross, I have never had to hunger for another savior. I am satisfied he saved me and I no longer need or desire another savior. This bread of life (Jesus) satisfies me.

Third, Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd." As the good shepherd he gave his life for the sheep. Jesus is also called the "great shepherd" of the sheep. There have been many down through the ages who have given their lives that others might live. Not one of them, however, ever redeemed one person from even one single sin! Jesus, by being the good shepherd manifests his love for the sheep, and by being the great shepherd, manifests his ability to save them. The fact that he is my shepherd makes these thoughts precious.

Fourth, Jesus said, "I am the door of the sheep." He also said, "All that ever come before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them." Thus Jesus is our eternal security. We are preserved in him. No one can touch our eternal life for they must go thru the door (Jesus) to get to us and this is impossible. Aren't you glad that your eternal life is preserved and secure in Jesus Christ?

Fifth, Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." A distinction is made between this door and the previous door. The previous door speaks of Jesus as our eternal security and preservation. This door speaks to us of the kingdom of heaven, i.e., the church kingdom on earth. It is thru the finished work of Jesus and our obedience to his word that we are saved from a condemning conscience as taught in I Pet. 3:21, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Also through the completed work of Jesus and his word, we are fed of this spiritual food thru the preaching of the gospel and thru reading and studying God's word.

Sixth, Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." Death is a reality we all face. Yet, it is not the end of all things, but only a passageway, thanks to Jesus. Jesus himself died on Calvary's cruel cross, yet three days later he arose a victor over death, never to die again. He has the power over death. When we think of death usually it is the death of the body we are thinking about. Yet the scriptures say, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins". When we were dead

(absent of spiritual life) God quickened (gave spiritual life) us as we read in John 5:25, "Verily, verily I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the son of God, and they that hear shall live." Both the new birth and the resurrection of our bodies are "life from the dead" by the power of Jesus who is the "resurrection and the life."

Seventh, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Jesus is "the way" of salvation. It is because he is "the truth" personified that he was a fit savior, for he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, who kept the law to a jot and a tittle and thus became the only savior of sinners. It is because he is "the way" and "the truth" that he is "the life" giving us eternal life.

Eight, Jesus said, "I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman." He also said, "I am the vine and ye are the branches." It is only as we abide in him, his love, his words, and his commandments that we as the branches (his disciples) can bring forth fruit to the glory of God. Jesus said, "Without me ye can do nothing." We are dependant on him to do anything godly and good in his sight. As "the vine" he supplies all we need to be fruitful. His chastisement purges us that we may be even more fruitful.

In each of these things that Jesus said "I AM" there is a present reality of the presence of God manifests towards us that gives us hope and consolation as we live our present lives. Jesus truly is "the God that is."