

## The Names and Titles of Jesus Series

### *"I am the Way and the Truth and the Life"*

In our series on the names and titles of Jesus we began last week in the Old Testament and primarily looked at the **5 descriptions** given of Jesus through the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 9:6.

This week we're jumping ahead into the New Testament and this week we're going to discover together the "**I AM**" statements of Jesus recorded for us by the apostle John. These "I AM" statements are very significant because by claiming these for Himself, Jesus was also claiming to be God Himself. You see Jesus uses the exact same title for Himself that God used to describe Himself to Moses back at the burning bush, when God described Himself as "**I Am, that I AM.**"

**Exodus 3:13-14 (NIV)** *Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"*  
*14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'"*

**Jesus outright claimed that same title for Himself on three separate occasions.**

1. With the Samaritan woman at the well and her response was to run back to her home town and invite everyone to come and see the person who very well might be the Messiah. (**John 4:26**)
2. The next time Jesus claimed God's name, the people who had believed in him picked up stones to kill him because he'd committed blasphemy. (**John 8:58**)
3. The third time Jesus used this title as when the soldiers and Judas came to arrest him. And when he told them who he was they all drew back and fell to the ground, knowing that Jesus had just claimed to be God Himself (**Jn. 18:5,6,8**)

Additionally, Jesus used this "I AM" title seven different times to communicate something important about who He is.

1. I AM the Bread of Life (John 6:35)
2. I AM the Light of the World (John 8:12)
3. I AM the Door (John 10:9)
4. I AM the Good Shepherd (John 10:11)
5. I AM the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25)
6. I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6)
7. I AM the True Vine (John 15:1,5)

Five of those will be explained in your daily devotions this week and one of them we're going to discover this morning.

The one we're going to discover this morning is by far the most controversial and is often the reason why Christians are called narrow minded and bigoted. This "I AM" claim of Jesus sets Jesus apart from all other world leaders who have ever existed. For while most world religions can claim to point you to the way to get to God, none of the other world religions or specifically their founders claim that they are the way and the only way to get to God.

All other world religions claim that they can point you to the path to God but none of them has a founder who claims he is the only path to God.

And yet in the face of all of this Jesus told his disciples in the Upper Room these words, "**I am the way and the truth and the life.** *No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)*

This bold statement smacks right the face of the spirit of our times, **tolerance**. By claiming to be the only way to God, Jesus would be considered intolerant of the thoughts and feelings of others.

One of the more popular ways to view God and the many paths that lead to God is to view God as a vast ocean and all the various rivers that flow into the ocean are all the world religions and belief systems. They may look differently but they all eventually end up in the same location – with God.

And about 48% of all Christians believe that. And if you believe that, then why would you bother telling anyone else about Jesus since we'll all end up in the same place together in the end? Part of the problem is that we live in a society that promotes tolerance to whatever anyone else believes and practices. The problem is that most of our lives can't possibly live like this.

I want to give you two scenarios regarding truth and you tell me which one Christ's claim would fall into.

### **Scenario A:**

Let's say you're a teacher in a high school classroom on geography. You give a test on the state capitals. The students take the test, turn them in, you grade them, hand them back and one of the students objects to an answer on his test that you marked wrong. The question asked what the capital of Minnesota was and he put down Minneapolis. So, this student comes to the teacher and complains that his answer is not wrong – and insists that Minneapolis is really the capital of Minnesota. The teacher insists it's St. Paul – so the student turns to the class and asks for a show of hands as to how many students believe Minneapolis is the capital of Minnesota. Over half the class raises their hands and the student turns to the teacher and says, *"Why should we be held to a standard of your truth versus our truth."*

### **Scenario B:**

That same student approaches the teacher the next day and complains that the temperature in the room is too hot and asks for it to be turned down. To which the teacher replies that the temperature is just right and will stay where it's set. The student turns to the class and asks for a show of hands as to whether the temperature in the room should be turned down and over half the students raise their hands and once again the student turns to the teacher and challenges why they all have to go by the teacher's version of the truth and not the student's version of the truth of the what the temperature should be set at.

So, which scenario would you put Jesus' statement that he is the way, the truth and the life and no one can come to their Heavenly Father except through Jesus. Scenario A or B?

Now, let's go back to Jesus' original statement and see which scenario Jesus' statement should be put into A (objective established truth) or B (personal individual truth).

Okay let's just tweak Jesus' statement slightly and see if this would change anything.

*"I am a way and a really good truth and an exemplary life worth following. I can tell you about a way to get to your Heavenly Father."*

With that slight tweaking which scenario would you put Jesus' claim? It could quite easily fit into scenario B, where truth is based on my personal beliefs. And that's where most other world religions could fit. They point us a way to a good life or a way to develop a closer relationship with God, but no other world religious leader has made the astounding claim that Jesus did. That He is Way and that He is the Truth and that He is the Life and that you have to go through Him and Him alone to get to God.

And the early disciples understood this claim as well.

- **Peter and John were called to appear before the Jewish rulers of the time after they had healed a lame man. They demanded to know how they had healed him and Peter stood up and said:** *"It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.'*

*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."* (Acts 4:10-12 (NIV))

- The **Apostle Paul** wrote: *“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people.”* (1 Timothy 2:5-6 (NIV))  
How many mediators are there between God and man? Just one!! Jesus Christ.
- And in the **book of Revelation** when **John** was given this amazing look into the throne of God, there came a moment when an angel came out with this scroll which would lay out the unfolding of the rest of history and the rich inheritance for God’s people – but there was no one qualified to open the scroll and read what was upon it and so John began to weep (**Rev. 5:3-4**). Mohammed wasn’t qualified to open the scroll, Buddha wasn’t, Confucius wasn’t, none of the prophets were eligible, Joseph Smith wasn’t qualified, Billy Graham wasn’t qualified. But then John saw Jesus – and all of heaven erupted with praise for the only one who was qualified to open to scroll. (**Revelation 5:9**). ‘

### **The Way:**

Jesus said he was *“the Way”* not *“a way”*. The Greek word means a road or highway. Years ago Connie and I and the kids took a vacation to Maine. We left our driveway without a map of any kind and this was before GPS on your cell phones. Our plan was really quite simple – head east and eventually we’ll get there. And so that’s what we did, until we discovered we were passing over into Canada. At that point we thought we should probably get a map. The point is that we were originally very well intentioned, but wrong. And that’s the way many people approach a relationship with God. They figure if they just live a pretty good moral life then they will end up with God in the end. But Jesus didn’t say that a pretty good moral life was the way to God. He said He was the way to God. Without accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you still have to deal with the sins you’ve already committed and will still commit. And no amount of good works can out balance or erase those sins. When dealing with God you’re dealing with a holy sinless God who can’t live in the presence of sin. In heaven there won’t be any sin allowed. So, the only way to be able to live in God’s presence is to deal with your sin, and the only way to accomplish that is through your acceptance of Christ’s death on the cross for your sins.

This description of Jesus was carried on in the world’s description of His early followers as well (Acts 9:2; 19:23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).

### **The Truth:**

Jesus didn’t just claim to know truth or to powerfully teach truth. He claimed to be *“the Truth”* the standard by which all other truth is known. And he didn’t say, “I know truth” or “I can point you to the truth” no he claimed to be the embodiment and standard of truth. When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount he would state a popular interpretation of God’s truth and then would say, “But I say to you...” thereby equating Himself with the Law of God as the authoritative standard of righteousness and truth. John, in his version of the birth of Jesus simply says, “**John 1:14 (NIV)** *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

### **The Life:**

Jesus not only created all of life when he created the universe but he is also life in the sense of he embodies how life was designed to be lived and He’s life in the sense that death could not hold him in the grave but three days later he arose from the dead. Name me one other religious leader who can claim to have accomplished any of those feats during their lifetime.

**John 1:3-4 (NIV)** *Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.*