



THE GOSPEL FOR THE POSTMODERN WORLD II:

The "I AM"

... but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law . . ." — Galatians 4:4.

The birth, early life and circumstances of God's Son, Jesus Christ, have already been addressed.¹⁻⁶ The central reality is that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

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I AM the bread of life . . . — John 6:35, emphasis supplied; cf. vv. 41, 48, 51.

I AM the light of the world . . . — John 8:12, emphasis supplied.

. . . *I AM* from above . . . — John 8:23, emphasis supplied.

When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that *I AM* he . . . — John 8:28, emphasis supplied.

As long as *I AM* in the world, *I AM* the light of the world. — John 9:5, emphases supplied.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, *I AM* the door of the sheep. — John 10:7; cf. v. 9, emphasis supplied.

I AM the good shepherd . . . — John 10:11, emphasis supplied; cf. v. 14.

I AM the resurrection, and the life . . . — John 11:25, emphasis supplied.

I AM the way, the truth, and the life . . . — John 14:6, emphasis supplied.

I AM the true vine . . . — John 15:1, emphasis supplied; cf. v. 5.

As soon then as he had said unto them, *I AM* he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. — John 18:6, emphasis supplied; cf. vv. 8, 37.

I AM Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending . . . — Revelation 1:8, emphasis supplied; cf. vv. 11, 17; 21:6; 22:13.

. . . *I AM* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, *I AM* alive for evermore . . .

—Revelation 1:18, emphases supplied.

In these repeated affirmations Jesus Christ declared that he himself was the very God who had long before appeared to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14).

The claim of Jesus Christ to be Yahweh himself and to constitute the *Elohim*⁷ is profoundly significant. These names/titles ultimately refer to and embrace all the fundamental attributes of God.⁸ Thus, for example, Jesus is our faith, our hope and our love:

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. — 1 John 4:8; cf. v. 16.

Jesus is our rest, our peace and our joy:

For he [Christ Jesus] is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us . . . — Ephesians 2:14.

Jesus is our justice, our mercy and our judgment. When he said, "For judgment / *AM* come into this world . . .," he was emphatically referring to himself and to the fact that *he himself is the judgment* (John 9:39, emphasis supplied).

For the Father . . . hath committed all judgment unto the Son . . . — John 5:22; cf. vv. 27, 30; 8:16.

The "good news" of the gospel⁹ is that God as Jesus Christ constitutes all the qualities and attributes that he offers to us freely and that he asks us to give. We cannot give what we have not received: ". . . freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8).

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Endnotes

1. See "The Historical Jesus I: His Existence," *Outlook* (October 2006).
2. See "The Historical Jesus II: The Birth Date of Jesus I," *Outlook* (November 2006).
3. See "The Historical Jesus III: The Birth Date of Jesus II," *Outlook* (December 2006).
4. See "The Historical Jesus IV: Nativity and Early Life," *Outlook* (January 15, 2007).
5. See "The Historical Jesus VI: The Hidden Years of Jesus," *Outlook* (February 1, 2007).
6. See "The Historical Jesus VII: The Public Life of Jesus," *Outlook* (February 15, 2007).
7. See "The Gospel for the Postmodern World I: The 'Good News' of the Triune God," *Outlook* (November 2007).
8. "A special significance was given by the rabbis to the tetragrammaton and to *Elohim*, the tetragrammaton denoting the attribute of mercy, and *Elohim*, that of judgment (Gen. R. 33:3). That this was a time-honored distinction is evident from its occurrence in Philo, where, however, in conformity with the tradition of the Septuagint to translate the tetragrammaton by the Greek word *kuriqj*, which corresponds more closely to the concepts of rule and judgment, the name is regarded as the symbol of the attribute of judgment, and the name *Elohim* (translated in the Septuagint by *qe|j*) [is regarded] as a symbol of the attribute of mercy" (*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM ed. [1997], s.v. Yehoshua M. Grintz, "God in Talmudic Literature").
9. See "The Historical Jesus IX: The Gospel According to Whom?" *Outlook* (March 15, 2007).