



I Am

VOLUME 1

TRANSFORMED IN HIM

*A DVD Bible Study
on the I AM Sayings*

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INTRODUCTION

God first introduces himself to Moses as I AM THAT I AM, or another translation of the name is I AM WHO I AM, the term we will be using in this study. Throughout this six-week DVD bible study we will begin to unearth the treasure trove of riches that are found within God's name, I AM WHO I AM.

This study begins with an Introductory DVD teaching by Kim Tapfer and each week of study will conclude with a DVD teaching. Though the DVD teachings will enhance this study, this study can still be thoroughly enjoyed without participating in the DVD sessions. Each week has five days of study. At the end of each day there will be two prompts; **1) Today's Exercise** and **2) Prayer**. At the end of every week there will be a **Further Revelation** prompt before the **Weekly Exercise**.

- **Today's Exercise** will be an opportunity for you to journal on that day's reading.
- **Prayer** will be your prayer response to that day's reading.
- **Further Revelation** provides a place to record new insights you have received about our Lord.
- **Weekly Exercise** helps you summarize what you've gained that week.

Within each day there is room for journaling, but you may find that you need more room to record all your thoughts. In this case, you will not only need your Bible but also a notebook. We have used the New International Version from Biblesoft 2006, but use whatever version you want. We want this study to be fulfilling, rewarding, and we want it to have a flow within your daily life. You can do this study anywhere—in the car, in the waiting room, before going to sleep, etc. At the end of every week there is a **Weekly Exercise**.

The point of this study and each weekly exercise is to bring you closer to I AM and to the idea that I AM is everything, our all in all. We have put most of the Bible quotes in the body of this work. We don't want readers to have to spend a lot of time going between the Bible and this study. We hope this saves a lot of time and gives the study more seamlessness in your life.

The first chapter is devoted to the name God the Father gave to Moses in the Book of Exodus, I AM WHO I AM.

The second chapter is about the absolute usage by Jesus of I AM without the predicate, as in "Before Abraham was I AM" (John 8:58).

The third chapter is about the use of the indirect predicate to refer to Jesus as in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus asked the soldiers, "Whom do you seek?" When they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth," Jesus replied, "*I AM He*" (John 18:4-6).

Chapters four through six cover three of the allegorical sayings of Jesus in the Book of John: "I AM the bread of life," "I AM the light of the world," "I AM the door [or the gate]."

More than anything, every day of this study, we want you to come to understand, in the profoundest sense, I AM. We want you to fill out the blank check of who God is to you on a daily basis. Consider both your wants and needs. As you work through this study ask God each day for revelation of who he is to you. Fill out the blank check Hannah Smith talks about in the quote below. As you close each day thank God for what he has revealed to you about his being I AM.

I believe it (I AM) includes everything the human heart longs for and needs. This unfinished name of God seems to me like a blank check signed by a rich friend given

*to us to be filled in with whatever sum we may desire. . . .*¹

Fill out whatever sum you desire. Use the daily prompts to journal a little about this every day. It can be just a sentence or a novel. It's up to you.

I AM

VIEWER GUIDE – SESSION 1

Drawn Out from the Far End of the Desert
Exodus 3:1-12

1. Moses' early life

Exodus 1-2:10

Unfortunate _____

Unfortunate _____

2. Moses' early adult life

Exodus 2:11-15

Bad _____

Crushing _____

3. Moses' Mid adult life

Exodus 3, 4

Dead end _____

Feelings of alienation and _____

4. Like Moses, we can be at the _____ of
the desert, though it may look a lot _____.

5. Three Truths about the far end of Desert

a. It is a _____ place for a life changing _____ of God.

b. God comes to _____ us out of the desert; to journey with us to face our _____;
and to transform us into the _____ we were born to be.

c. God is _____ us.

Exodus 3:11

WEEK ONE

I AM WHO I AM

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.'"

Exodus 3:14

THE ETERNAL AND UNCHANGEABLE NATURE OF GOD

Some Sunday mornings my husband, Charles, and I walk in the mountains. We take the Bible and a book called *Christ, The Experience of Jesus as Lord* by Edward Schillebeeckx, a Dutch theologian. It is a time for us of entering the Lord's matrix and walking in his world with him. We feel we both receive great revelation and a sense of walking, strolling really, and talking with him, in the garden of the Colorado foothills. We read a little of Schillebeeckx and then the pertinent Bible passage. I find myself saying quite often, "Oh, I never understood that, but oh that's what it means or could mean." For example, we were reading about Lazarus, and I said to Charles, "I have always wondered why Jesus wept at the death of Lazarus. I know he has great empathy and compassion, but he knew he would raise Lazarus." Charles thought for a bit as we sat on our bench in Elk Meadow and watched the wildflowers in the sun. Then he answered, with a touch of uncertainty, "I wonder if the Father in Jesus was looking forward to the death of his own Son, a very sorrowful and painful time, which would be his own sacrifice, that he must witness even though he knew he would raise him from the dead." That kind of revelation came to me when we were studying the "I AM" sayings from the book of John, and I felt as Hannah Smith described in *The God of All Comfort*:

These simple words, I AM, express therefore eternity and unchangeableness of existence, which is the very first element necessary in a God who is to be depended upon. No dependence could be placed by any one of us upon a changeable God. He must be the same yesterday, today, and forever, if we are to have any peace or comfort.¹

"God . . . must be the same yesterday, today, and forever, if we are to have any peace or comfort."

– Hannah Smith

God is eternal and unchangeable.

Deuteronomy 33:27: The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

Psalm 16:11: You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Isaiah 26:4: Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal.

Daniel 4:3: How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation.

1 Samuel 15:29: He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.

Malachi 3:6: I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.

Hebrews 13:8: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Today's Exercise

Review these Scriptures and pick one that is especially meaningful to you today. Why is this passage meaningful to you?

Remember how Hannah Smith beautifully illuminates that the name I AM:

. . . includes everything the human heart longs for and needs. This unfinished name of God seems to me like a blank check signed by a rich friend given to us to be filled in with whatever sum we may desire²

What does your human heart long for and need?

Prayer

Pray for I AM to reveal himself in this way to you today and throughout this study.

Day 2

MOSES MEETS I AM

Quickly review Exodus 1-3 to remind yourself of Moses' early life.

After Moses had left his royal roots, because of murdering an Egyptian abusing one of his fellow Israelites, he became a shepherd. It seemed that Moses was destined to spend the rest of his life tending sheep. In some metaphorical ways that turned out to be his life work, but it was not the four legged variety that he shepherded. His new calling commenced the day when, standing in front of a very ordinary bush, it began to burn and yet not be consumed. And the Lord spoke to him out of the bush. The Lord told Moses that he wanted to deliver his people from the Egyptians, and he said to Moses:

Exodus 3:10 (NKJV): “Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”

“Who are you?” Moses asked God.

Moses, after briefly protesting, asked “Who are you? What is your name?”

Exodus 3:13-14: “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?” 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.’”

Although this is the first time Moses was formally introduced to I AM, Exodus 1 and 2 clearly show that I AM was always a part of Moses' life.

Day 3

MORE ON I AM

I AM is more familiar to us as Yahweh and Jehovah. Adam Clarke's Commentary gives an excellent overview of various interpretations of what God meant:

[I AM THAT I AM] . . . The Vulgate translates . . . “I AM who am.” The Septuagint has “I AM He who exists.” . . . “The Eternal,” who passes not away; . . . The Targum of Jonathan, and the Jerusalem Targum paraphrase the words thus: “He who spake, and the world was; who spake, and all things existed.” As the original words literally signify, “I will be what I will be,” some have supposed that God simply designed to inform Moses, that what he had been to his fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he would be to him and the Israelites; and that he would perform the promises he had made to his fathers, by giving their descendants the promised land. It is difficult to put a meaning on the words, they seem intended to point out the eternity and self-existence of God. Plato, in his Parmenides, where he treats sublimely of the nature of God, says, . . . nothing can express his nature; therefore no name can be attributed to him.³

“Whom shall I say has sent me?”

It is true that, before Moses, there was no written word of or about God, and the Israelites had been living amongst the Egyptians for 400 years. Therefore, it is easy to assume that the Israelites' image of God had been blurred. Their image may have morphed into many gods and deities prevalent in the Egyptian culture. All the Egyptian gods had names, and Moses may well himself have thought the burning bush to be a “god” who, for some odd and inexplicable reason, needed a confused, stuttering shepherd to perform his will. Adam Clarke's commentary says:

*[They shall say to me, What is his name?] Does not this suppose that the Israelites had an idolatrous notion even of the Supreme Being? They had probably drunk deep into the Egyptian superstitions, and had gods many and lords many; and Moses conjectured that, hearing of a supernatural deliverance, they would inquire who that God was by whom it was to be effected.*⁴

Moses, in asking God's name, may also have been inquiring about his nature, his character. Nelson's *Illustrated Bible Dictionary* teaches us that “the people of the Bible were very conscious of the meaning of names. They believed there was a vital connection between the name and the person it identified. A name somehow represented the nature of the person.”⁵

I have always loved Moses' conversations with God. He is, to say the very least, presumptuous. He doesn't mince words. Probably even, he may be a bit sarcastic, “Ok, suppose I do go to the people, just suppose. . . . What am I going to tell them?” It's as if Moses is saying, “Oh boy, this answer better be good, really good, or I'll be in a whole lot of trouble with the Israelites.”

Does God chastise Moses? Does he tell him that it's none of his disrespectful business? Not for an eternal second. He says without hesitation, "I AM WHO I AM." Is he speaking just to Moses? Today, in an audience irony, we know very well that our God, our precious Lord, was speaking to all generations, then and now, from Adam and Eve and Abraham to Hannah Smith and the pastor in your church, from the beginning of time to the present day, from forever to forever, to you and me, this very minute.

Importantly, God tells Moses that this name is God's name "forever," and that God is to be remembered by this from "generation to generation" (Exodus 3:15). This name of God was given to Moses and the Israelites as a name of deliverance, but is also a name of deliverance for all God's people for all generations. It is a name of deliverance for us!

Today's Exercise

Think about I AM as Yahweh and the underlined definitions described in Adam Clarke's commentary. Meditate on the eternity and self-existence of God. What does this mean for our lives?

1. God says only that he is I AM. He does not amplify. He could have said, "I AM loving; I AM good; I AM all powerful." But he doesn't. Why do you think he does not? What does this mean for us?

2. Look up Genesis 28:13,15; Psalm 81:10; Isaiah 45:5, 6, 18, 22; Isaiah 47:8, 10. How does God finish the I AM statements? Record below.

What is the most meaningful of these descriptions of God to you today? And why?

Prayer

Pray for I AM to reveal himself in this way to you today and throughout this study.