



Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

Short Study 38: The "I Am" Statements of Jesus 1. The Bread of Life

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Read John 6:35-37, 41-58.

Introduction to the "I Am" passages in general. There are seven recorded occasions when Jesus said "I am" with a meaning that was deeper than a passing descriptive statement (such as "I am hungry" or "I am a Christian"). At the root of each statement was the astounding claim that is recorded in John 8:58, "Before Abraham was, I Am." The seemingly ungrammatical language of the claim was intentional – "I Am" was what God told Moses to call Him (Exodus 3:14). Jesus was identifying Himself with God. Each of the other "I Am" passages therefore tell us, not just a fact about the man Jesus, but a fact about the Lord God (for indeed, Jesus is both man and God).

Passage Introduction. The context of this statement is shortly after the Feeding of the 5,000, when some of those who had been fed asked Jesus for an ongoing miraculous provision of bread (John 6:34). Jesus redirected their thinking, pointing them to a higher purpose - to Himself as the source and sustainer of spiritual (eternal) life.

1. Come to receive (v35). Look up other occasions when Jesus said "Come to me" (Matt 11:28; John 5:40; John 7:37). Does this just mean the initial act of receiving Jesus as Saviour, or is it more?

2. Hunger and Thirst Satisfied (v35). Compare this passage with John 4:13-14. "Hunger" and "thirst" suggest *intense* desire for some lack to be fulfilled (contrast "peckish" and "feeling dry"!). What lacks might drive us to Jesus?

3. Bread of Life (vv 35, 48, 51). Bread was the staple diet in Israel (a basic necessity, rather than a luxury). Why do you think Jesus used this for His illustration rather than something that might taste nicer? Read other New Testament passages that mention 'spiritual' bread (Matt 6:11; Matt 7:9-11; Matt 15:26-28; 1 Cor 11:23-26). What light do these passages shed on the study passage (and vice-versa)?

To think about: You already have plenty to think about in the paragraphs above, but you might like to ask yourself "Am I hungry enough for more of Jesus?"

To dig deeper: Read what you can find on the "I Am" sayings of Jesus in general. Also, on the Shewbread and Unleavened Bread, thinking about what these might teach us about Jesus.