

The Context Bible

Life Group Lesson 14

March 31 – April 6, 2014

John 7:25-8:59

Introduction to the Context Bible

Have you ever wished the Bible was easier to read through like an ordinary book – cover to cover? Because the Bible is a collection of 66 books, it makes reading like an ordinary book quite difficult. Compounding this difficulty is the fact that the later writers of the New Testament, were often quoting or referencing passages in the Old Testament. In fact, much of the New Testament makes better sense only if one also considers the Old Testament passages that place the text into its scriptural context.

You are reading a running commentary to The Context Bible. This arrangement of Scripture seeks to overcome some of these difficulties. Using a core reading of John's gospel, the book of Acts, and the Revelation of John, the Context Bible arranges all the rest of Scripture into a contextual framework that supports the core reading. It is broken out into daily readings so that this program allows one to read the entire Bible in a year, but in a contextual format.

Here is the running commentary for week fourteen, along with the readings for week fifteen appended. Join in. It's never too late to read the Bible in context!

Week Fourteen Readings

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| <p>3/31 Jesus the Messiah Jn 7:25-7:36 <i>Context: The Jews expected an Anointed Savior. It was Jesus.</i></p> <p>Luk 8:1-8:15 Luk 8:19-8:21 Luk 9:18-9:62</p> <p>Jesus and the Pharisees Jn 7:45-7:52 <i>Context: Jesus had repeated problems with Pharisees who were religious, but whose heart was not turned to God.</i></p> <p>Isa 57:1-57:13 Matt 23:1-23:12 Prov 29:23;18:12 Prov 11:2; 15:33 Prov 30:10-30:14 Luk 14:7-14:11</p> | <p>3/31 (cont) Prov 25:1-25:7 Dan 10</p> <p>4/1 Jesus and the Pharisees (Cont'd) Jn 7:45-7:52</p> <p>Matt 23:13 Zech 11 Matt 23:14-23:24 Prov 18:5 Num 15:1-15:31 Deut 26 Deut 14</p> <p>4/2 Jesus and the Pharisees (Cont'd) Jn 7:45-7:52</p> <p>Matt 23:25-23:36 Micah 6 Prov 24:23-24:25 Pslm 33</p> | <p>4/2 (Cont'd) The Woman in Adultery Jn 7:53-8:11 <i>Context: The Law's author reflects mercy as well as justice.</i></p> <p>Num 5:11-5:31 Deut 10:1-10:11</p> <p>4/3 Jesus on Jesus Jn 8:12-8:59 <i>Context: Who is Jesus is life' and history's ultimate question.</i></p> <p>Matt 17:22-17:23 Lev 24:10-24:16 Hos 10 Hos 13-14</p> | <p>4/4 Jesus on Jesus Jn 8:39-47</p> <p>Gen 17:9-18:2 Heb 13:2 Gen 18:3-18:33 Rom 4 Matt 13:1-13:9; 13:18-13:30 Matt 13:36-13:43 Prov 29:12</p> <p>4/5 Jesus on Jesus Jn 8:48-8:59</p> <p>Gen 21:1-25:18 Prov 20:7 Ex 3:7-3:22</p> <p>4/6 <i>Off</i></p> |
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JESUS THE MESSIAH (John 7:25-7:36)

Some among Jesus' audience wondered whether he was the Messiah. Others just shut their minds to the possibility and saw him as at least a nuisance, if not an outright problem needing a solution. Jesus saw not only the hearts and minds of those around him, but he also knew what road lay ahead. As Jesus prophesied what was to come, his message fell on ears as deaf to what he said as to who he was.

Luke 8:1-8:15; 8:19-8:21; 9:18-9:62

In these Luke passages, we read of Jesus teaching about the kingdom of God in parables. He knew the people who heard the message fell into groups – those unresponsive, some with a temporary response, some that found their response choked out by other cares and concerns, and those who responded in faith, bearing fruit and growing before God. This was hardly understood without Jesus explaining, even among his disciples. While teaching, this, Jesus was sought out by his family. Jesus then emphasized his groupings by adding that his family was group four – those who hear the word, and in faith respond and do the word! (Luk 8:1-8:15; 8:19-8:21).

In just the next chapter, Jesus asked his disciples to think about and answer his questions as to who others believed Jesus to be and who they believed Jesus to be. The crowd thought he was John the Baptist or Elijah (not as a reincarnation, John had only been dead a few months or a year, while Jesus was clearly older than that!). They thought he was one in the message or ministry of John or Elijah. Peter answered the more direct question, however, setting out his belief that Jesus was God's Messiah.

In reply, Jesus told his apostles not to tell anyone yet, explaining his coming death and crucifixion (something we will see in John, the disciples really did not understand or fully accept). Jesus taught that others who followed him would walk a similar road, at least in spiritual terms. Here we have Luke inserting the Mount of Transfiguration showing Moses and Elijah bearing witness to Jesus as God's voice declared him the Son, the Chosen One.

While Jesus continued to speak of his sacrificial life, and the way it would end soon, some of the apostles began fussing over ranking – which of them was greater than the other. Jesus put that to rest by turning it upside down! The least is the greatest.

The chapter ends with Jesus again proclaiming the kingdom of God, and setting his face toward Jerusalem and his coming fate.

Mar. 31-
Apr. 2

JESUS AND THE PHARISEES (John 7:45-7:52)

Some of the Pharisees were particularly challenging to Jesus, wanting him arrested and gone. The guards were not willing to arrest him at this time, to the frustration of the Pharisees. One Pharisee, Nicodemus, stood up for the right of Jesus at least to be heard. Nicodemus was quickly shouted down by others who asserted the Scripture does not have a prophet coming from Galilee.

Isaiah 57:1-57:13

This short passage in Isaiah warns against those who mock others. Even among those who follow the outward trappings of religion, mocking others is outside the lines of godly behavior and God's heart for others.

Matthew 23:1-23:12

Jesus pointed out the inconsistency of the Pharisees and others whose actions did not follow their professions. They wore the trappings and followed the outward rules of religion, but were far from the heart of God. God's heart was found in the humble servant.

Proverbs 29:23; 18:12; 11:2; 15:33; 30:10-30:14

Humility is a feature of the Proverbs. It is the precursor to real honor (Prov 29:23), while haughtiness is a precursor to destruction (Prov 18:12). Pride brings disgrace, while humility brings wisdom (Prov 11:2). This humility is part and parcel of fearing and knowing the Lord. It proceeds from wisdom (Prov 15:33).

This humility is contrasted by those who are mockers and slanderers. Their "eyes are lofty" because they think themselves better than others. This is the very sin Jesus was warning against. Jesus wanted his followers to be humble in heart, serving others rather than thinking themselves so grand they judged and looked down on others (Prov 30:10-30:14).

Luke 14:7-14:11 and Proverbs 25:1-25:7

In this Luke passage we get Jesus telling a parable with the same point. Those who listened and honored Jesus' teachings got the message. Seek humility, not self-exaltation. The faithful seeks to serve God by serving others, not live for personal honor and glory.

Proverbs 25:1-25:7 makes the same point, using the example of a king rather than the wedding parable of Luke 14. One should not seek to be in the place of honor. Let honor come on its own!

Daniel 10

Daniel was a mighty man of God. God used him in the king's government as well as the king's personal life. Yet Daniel was also a man of humility. He was humbled before the Lord (Dan. 10:12), and this was something that set him apart. While Daniel was in a three-week mourning, he had a vision sent by God. In the vision, Daniel is not only touched and assured with a personal message, but the messenger specially noted Daniel's humility as the basis for God's response.

Matthew 23:13 and Zechariah 11

The whole approach of the Pharisees to the kingdom of heaven was wrong (Matt 23:13). They thought themselves guardians of the kingdom, of all things God—the holy and just. Yet they were shutting themselves out as well as others.

These would not have been idle words by Jesus. They would have inflamed the ears of those listening who knew their Scriptures. Zechariah 11 is a threat against the leaders of Israel, written in the form of a song. Three of the strongest types of trees (cedars, cypress, and oaks) are metaphors for strong leaders that will be destroyed by the Lord.

The prophet is then commissioned as a shepherd, a job that doesn't last too long. The flock is doomed for slaughter by his bosses, the shepherders. He first dispatches the three defective shepherds, but grows frustrated with the unruly sheep, declares himself finished with his task, and asks for his wages. He is paid well – thirty pieces of silver. He breaks his two staves, one of which represents the covenant of God and his people, the other the union of the northern and southern kingdoms.

The prophet gets re-commissioned, this time as a foolish shepherd. As such, there is a strong judgment pronounced against those who shepherd the flock poorly.

Proverbs 18:5

Similar to Zechariah 11, there is a constant lesson in the Old Testament Scriptures against partiality to wrong or depriving people of justice.

Matthew 23:14-23:24; Deuteronomy 26; Deuteronomy 14; and Numbers 15:1-15:31

Moses had commanded the people about sacrifices in a number of places, including Numbers 15:1-15:31. The point of these sacrifices was tied to sins of the people, both those intentional, as well as unintentional. These sins link to the heart of the people, not

simply the actions. We see that concern in those who are not sinning unintentionally, but “with a high hand” (Num 15:30). These people who are arrogantly living sinfully have no place among God’s people or in his kingdom.

The charge from Deuteronomy 26 is to give to the Lord, and to sacrifice, with rejoicing! Sacrifice and giving should never be out of compulsion. It is to be done, that is certain, but it comes with rejoicing “in all the good that the Lord your God has given to you” (Deut 26:11). This is the declaration that God’s people are obeying with their hearts as well as actions (Deut 26:16-26:17). It is also the way to God’s greater blessings (Deut 26:18-26:19).

There are special features to God’s people (Num 15:1-15:31). God’s people are marked in special ways that can make them stand out in their day and over time. The idea behind the word “holy” (*qadosh* - קדוש) is something sacred and set apart, something consecrated. God’s people are to be so. It is to be evident in what we do, how we appear. The part the Pharisees were missing was that it was to proceed from the heart! The heart is first and foremost to be holy and set apart. The rules were never rules for rules sake. They were opportunities for the people to express and show their devoted hearts and allegiance to the God who saved them.

The lesson for the Pharisees was that they were focused on the outward laws, to some extent worshipping the rules, over and against the one who set those rules up for purposes.

Matthew 23:25-23:36

The “Woe’s” Jesus pronounced upon the Pharisees in Matthew 23 continue with these verses that challenge the Pharisees for being more concerned with what is clean on the outside than the inside. Jesus used the analogy of cleaning the outside of utensils like a cup while leaving garbage (greed and self-indulgence) inside the cup. A similar point is behind the analogy of a beautiful tomb from the outside, which is filled with rotting corpses and uncleanness inside. The final woe is because the Pharisees act as if they cared about the prophets of old, when they would have been the very ones killing those prophets.

An interesting note on the usage of Jesus’s comment about the shedding of righteous blood from Abel to Zechariah is the way it reflects on the Hebrew canon. We read of Abel’s death in Genesis 4:8 and of Zechariah’s in 2 Chronicles 24:20-24:22. Genesis was the first scroll in the Hebrew canon while 2 Chronicles was the last. So in our terminology, it is as if Jesus was saying “all the deaths from Genesis to Revelation.”

Micah 6

Micah 6 contains an Old Testament pronouncement of judgment and woe not too different from that of Jesus in Matthew 23. The prophet speaks out against the Israelites who might be willing to do all sorts of outward actions, sacrificing even up to their own children, but their hearts were far from God. The real actions that would have reflected Godly hearts were found in living justly, valuing and modeling kindness, and having an humble relationship with the Almighty. Instead the sacrifices continued, but the actions were blatantly sinful:

Shall I acquit the man with wicked scales and with a bag of deceitful weights?
Your rich men are full of violence; your inhabitants speak lies, and their tongue is
deceitful in their mouth (Micah 6:11-6:12).

Proverbs 24:23-24:25 and Psalm 33

Those of Micah's day, as well as the day of Jesus, should have known better. The wisdom of the Proverbs taught that judging should always be done impartially (Prov 24:23-24:25). The Psalms spoke with rejoicing over the faithfulness and uprightness of the Lord. The Lord "*loves*" justice (Pslm 33:5) and it's value is built into the very fabric of the world.

Apr. 2
Cont'd

THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY (John 7:53-8:11)

This story is one of the most famous passages in John. It is a touching story of Jesus showing compassion on a woman caught in adultery, as he tells her harsh accusers, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." The accusers leave the scene and Jesus informs the woman that he would not condemn her (after all, he *was* the only one there suitable for stoning her – he was the one "without sin)." He instructs her to go and sin no more.

As touching as the story is, and as significant as some of the theology is, it is not found in the early and most reliable manuscripts. It starts making its presence known most pronounced in Greek texts of the 6th century, although it is present in Latin translation texts from the 5th century and Coptic translations in the 4th century. Several of the texts that do have the story place it in different places, some earlier in John, some later in John, and some even in Luke! Scholars are quick to point out, and are in general unity, that the style and vocabulary of this section are different than the rest of John.

Most Bibles accordingly make an appropriate footnote explaining the likely exclusion of this section. Notwithstanding its absence from the early texts, some scholars still believe it has authenticity. Among the arguments for its absence, is the fear that the story would be seen as an endorsement of adultery, and so early copyists removed it. Personally, the most compelling argument for inclusion is that when Jesus is quizzed over what the Law

of Moses demands for such a crime, his response is to bend and write in the sand. There is only one other time Scripture records God writing upon nature – the Ten Commandments (we do not count the writing on the wall in Daniel because the wall was not nature). If we remember that a major theme of John is the superiority of Jesus to Moses, then this story fits theologically well. The Law of Moses, which is the subject of the accusers' question to Jesus, was really the Law of God delivered to Moses! God wrote the law, not Moses. In like manner, Jesus does not simply quote the Law of Moses. As a superior one to Moses, Jesus writes upon the sand – a simple reinforcement of the superiority of Jesus.

Whether the story was in the original of John or whether it was a subsequent add, it certainly conveys much of the Spirit of Jesus as well as his authority and quick wittedness in comparison to his accusers. These are not features of Jesus that are suddenly missing from the Bible if we remove this passage. The Spirit of Jesus, his authority, and quick wittedness are found on most every page of each gospel. God's word does not stand or fall on this story.

Numbers 5:11-5:31 and Deuteronomy 10:1-10:11

The Numbers 5 section contains what scholars often call an “ordeal.” It is the process for dealing with alleged adulterers when no witnesses come forward. (Earlier lessons spoke of the need for two witnesses to any crime before conviction.) IN essence, this ordeal placed a curse on the woman before God if she were indeed guilty, trusting God to bring about just consequences. In the event her husband falsely accused her, God would liberate the woman. This passage leaves the judgment in the hands of God.

The Deuteronomy passage is inserted for its comment on God actually and physically writing the Law.

He [the Lord] wrote on the tablets, in the same writing as before, the Ten Commandments (Deut 10:4).

This is the punch of John's passage that Jesus knelt in the sand and wrote. John is commenting that the woman's accusers did not need to tell Jesus what the Law provided or said – JESUS WROTE THE LAW. The point of John's passage is not *what* Jesus may or may not have written in the sand. It is *that* Jesus wrote in the sand!

Apr. 3-5

JESUS ON JESUS (John 8:12-8:59)

Jesus spoke truly about himself, but rather than accepting him, those listening chose to argue with him and his message. It is a pity, for those who believed him and abided in his word would “know the truth” that would set them free from slavery to sin. In this

section, Jesus makes a clear claim to deity, something that almost gets him stoned for blasphemy, by saying, “I am.”. Attached as an addendum to this lesson is an excursus on the “I am” statements of John.

Matthew 17:22-17:23

Jesus knew the cross was his destiny for some time before the events finally unfolded. We see this in many places, including the Matthew 17:22-17:23 passage. Hand-in-hand with the knowledge of his death, however, was confident faith that God would raise him on the third day.

Leviticus 24:10-24:16

Blasphemy was truly punishable by death, and in the John passage, if Jesus was *not* the Son of God, the Jews had a valid point for seeking to stone him. The key for John, and for everyone reading the story of Jesus, is that his claim was *valid*, which made the stoning itself sin.

Hosea 10, Hosea 13-14

In these chapters of Hosea, we read the prophet’s cry for Israel to turn back to the Lord. Set within a time frame when the northern kingdom (“Samaria”) was destined for dispersal in the midst of a coming Assyrian conquest, the punishment was fit for the sin/crime.

You have plowed iniquity; you have reaped injustice; you have eaten the fruit of lies. Because you have trusted in your own way and in the multitude of your warriors, therefore the tumult of war shall arise among your people, and all your fortresses shall be destroyed (Hos 10:13-10:14).

The people were urged to sow instead righteousness and reap steadfast love, seeking for the Lord to come (Hos 10:12). But instead, the people sinned more and more (Hos 13:2). God was the “I am” (Hos 13:4) who saved his people from the slavery of Egypt. The people had *no* reason not to worship him, other than self-indulgence and self-importance (Hos 13:6).

Still, God was not content to let the people go their own way. He called them to return and find their deliverance again from the Lord (Hos 14:1-14:3). This is the road of the wise (Hos 14:9).

Genesis 17:9-18:2; Hebrews 13:2; Genesis 18:3-18:33

In the John Passage, Jesus had pointed out that before Abraham was, “I am,” meaning Yahweh (translated the “LORD” – see addendum to lesson) existed. The Genesis 17:9-

18:2 passage gives the promise of God to Abraham. In the passage, “God” speaks to Abraham until we read of the visit by the oaks of Mamre. There the appearance is of the LORD (*YHWH*), the I am.” The LORD does not visit alone, but is one of three, and Abraham does a splendid job of hospitality (“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares (Heb 13:2).”)

The narrative in Genesis continues as the Lord promises Sarah is going to have a son, even though she is far past childbearing age. Sarah overhears the conversation and begins laughing to herself. The insight of the Lord is further illustrated by his calling Sarah out on the laughter. This is the same passage where the Lord signifies that through this work, not only will a mighty nation be born of Abraham, but through this seed, will come a blessing for all the nations of the earth (Gen 18:18).

Romans 4

Abraham was not only the Father of a great nation through whose seed all nations are blessed, he was also the prototype Paul used to explain the salvation that comes to all those who place their faith in Christ. Paul began what we have labeled as Romans chapter four by asking what was gained by Abraham, the Jews’ “forefather according to the flesh” (Rom 4:1). The first of all Jews was not justified by his works, but by believing God. Abraham’s faith was counted as righteousness.

David spoke in the Psalms of this blessing Abraham received. It is the Lord covering sins, not people earning their way into God’s presence. Paul explored the Abraham experience deeper to show how it would apply in principle to all, Jew and non-Jew. A key defining mark of Judaism was circumcision, an action first instructed to Abraham. Paul explained that circumcision was never something that made Abraham special. It was something Abraham received *because* he was special. It was the seal of God’s declaration that Abraham’s righteousness by faith.

Paul then explained the significance of God’s promise that through the seed of Abraham all the nations would be blessed. The promise to Abraham was a promise to everyone. It was never to bring about rightness before God by doing the right things. It was by believing in God’s rightness and faithfulness. Even when Sarah was long past the age to bear children, Abraham believed the promise of God and his faith and trust were not misplaced. Likewise the faith and trust of those who place theirs in Christ, delivered up for sins and raised from the dead in declaration of our own justification and life after death in the presence of God.

Matthew 13:1-13:9; 13:18-13:30; 13:36-13:43; and Proverbs 29:12

What do people do with the promises of God? How do people respond to the justification available through faith in Christ? Jesus used a parable in Matthew 13:1-13:9 and 13:18-13:23, comparing them to seed. Some is sown to closed ears and hearts

who ignore it and refuse to believe. Some is sown to people who react joyfully, seeming to grow in response, only to be transient, falling away when the thrill of the moment is replaced by the distractions and difficulties of life. A third group of seeds compare to people who find more in the world to cling to than the offering of the Lord. The fourth group of seeds in the parable describes those who hear the message of God, understand and accept it, and live a life that bears the fruits of faith.

A second parable to describe the reactions of people is commonly called the “Parable of the Weeds” in Matthew 13:24-13:30 and 13:36-13:43. Jesus explained this parable as a story of the work of Jesus being attacked by the devil. The enemy seeks to dilute and distract, taking away from the growth and fruitfulness of the faithful. At the end of time, God will bring justice to those who follow Satan in his schemes. The followers of Satan are bearing a different fruit, that of the one to whom they listen (Prov 29:12).

Genesis 21:1-25:18; and Proverbs 20:7

Returning to the Genesis account, we see that the faithfulness of God was worthy of the faith Abraham placed in him. The Lord visited Sarah as promised and she bore a son, Isaac. Isaac was circumcised, an act of special significance explained in Paul’s Roman letter read earlier.

The Genesis story follows the life of Abraham demonstrating many of his own flaws as well as God’s faithfulness in the midst of Abraham’s imperfections. God comes to the aid of Abraham and Sarah’s attempts to “cover” God’s promises by making a child through one of Sarah’s servants as a surrogate. We also get a glimpse into ancient legal practices as Abraham executes a contract with Abimelech in purchase of a well.

In Genesis twenty 22 we read one of the most significant prophetic encounters in the sacrifice of Isaac that Jesus claimed in the passage of John read as the source readings for these context readings. In John 8:56 we read of certain Jewish leaders challenging Jesus and his qualifications. Jesus told them,

Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.

This brings up the logical question: When did Abraham see the day of Jesus and was made glad by it?

Any father reading the life of Abraham can quickly respond without doubt about the day of Abraham’s life that made him most “glad” and “rejoicing.” It surely was the day he found out that he did not have to sacrifice his son, Isaac. The Isaac story so fits the gospel account of Jesus, that living it Abraham saw the day of Jesus with great clarity, even if he didn’t realize it at the time.

A careful reading of the story indicates a number of ways the passage spoke or “previewed” Jesus. The call of God to Abraham echoes John 3:16, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there” (Gen 22:2). The “land of Moriah” was the land of Jerusalem, perhaps even the eventual grounds of the temple. Once Abraham made the heart and mind decision to sacrifice Isaac, it took three days before Isaac was, in essence, returned to Abraham alive (Gen 22:4). Isaac had to carry his own wood to the sacrifice, just as Jesus did the cross (Gen 22:6; Jn 19:17). Isaac understood a lamb was to be sacrificed, rather than a bird or bull, previewing Jesus as the Lamb of God (Gen 22:7; Jn 1:29). Abraham had adequate vision to know that God would provide the lamb, in one form or another (Gen 22:8). Isaac was bound feet and hands upon the wood, as Jesus would be two millennia later (Gen 22:9; Matt 27:2).

The Abraham narrative in Genesis 23 records the death of Sarah and her burial as the Old Testament historical narrative begins shifting to the next generation, tracing the seed of Abraham to track God’s faithfulness. Genesis 24:1-25:18 provides the transition shift to Isaac who gets his wife Rebekah and picks up the promised lineage as Abraham dies. These events are expressive of the wisdom in Proverbs 20:7, blessed are the children of those who walk in integrity and righteousness. We are all sons and daughters of our mothers and fathers.

Exodus 3:7-3:22

This readings for context close with the promise of God centuries later coming to another level of fruition in his redemption of the people from a long slavery in Egypt, far from the land promised to Abraham and his descendants. God’s faithfulness is strong through the centuries, even when not evident beyond the day-to-day activities that find years turning to decades as generations come and go.

QUESTIONS FOR WEEK 14

There is a constant challenge to be people of righteous deeds, yet people of righteousness by faith. The two can so easily get confused, but focus in the questions of this week:

1. Some say God relates to man through the cross, while man relates to God through religion. What do you think? Where might that statement be true and where might it be flawed?
2. How and where does the faithfulness of God change our behavior?
3. What real tangible outward signs are there of your faith in God?

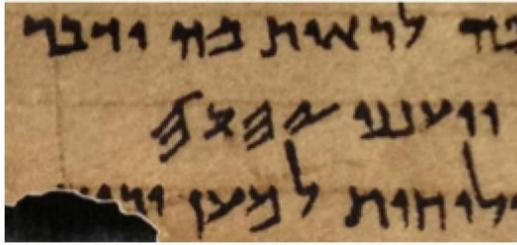
4. Can you find God’s faithfulness in the midst of day-to-day life that seems ordinary by the world’s standards?

Week Fifteen Readings

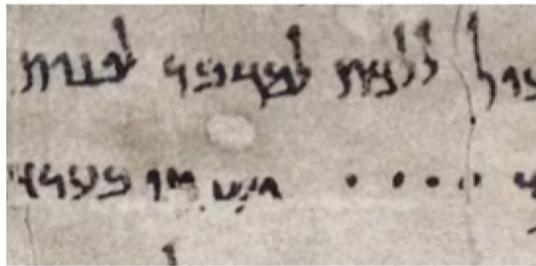
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|---|--|---|--|
| <p>4/7 Jesus Heals a Blind Man Jn 9:1-9:41</p> <p>Luk 4:16-4:25; 4:28-4:30 Luk 13:1-13:5 2 Kgs 18-20 Pslm 6</p> <p>4/8 Jesus the Good Shepherd Jn 10:1-10:21</p> <p>Matt 9:35-9:38 Num 27:12-27:23 Ezek 34 Isa 40:9-40:11 Zech 10 Pslm 16 Jer 23:1-23:18 Prov 27:23-27:27</p> | <p>4/9 Jesus Rejected at Temple; Received Elsewhere Jn 10:22-10:42</p> <p>Luk 5:12-5:16 Luk 4:42-4:44</p> <p>Jesus Raises Lazarus Jn 11:1-11:54</p> <p>Luk 10:38-10:42</p> <p>Jesus Anointed at Bethany Jn 12:1-12:11</p> <p>Matt 26:1-26:16 Deut 16:18-16:20 Prov 14:3 Prov 30:15-30:16</p> <p>The Triumphal Entry Jn 12:12-12:19</p> <p>Matt 21:1-21:5 Zech 9 Isa 62</p> | <p>4/10 The Triumphal Entry (Cont’d) Jn 12:12-12:19</p> <p>Matt 21:6-21:11 Matt 22:15-22:24 Matt 23:37-23:39 Matt 21:12-21:13 Isa 56 Jer 7-9 Matt 21:14-21:22 Jer 24</p> <p>4/11 The Triumphal Entry (Cont’d) Jn 12:12-12:10</p> <p>Matt 22:34-22:36 Num 15:1-15:36 Deut 15:12-15:23 Deut 18:1-18:14 Deut 20-22 Deut 6:1-6:9 Lev 19:18 Matt 22:37-22:40 Rom 13:8-13:10 Prov 22:26-22:27</p> | <p>4/12 Jesus’ Time had Come Jn 12:20-12:36</p> <p>Luk 18:31-18:34 Lam 4-5</p> <p>The Unbelief of Some Jews Jn 12:37-12:50</p> <p>Isa 53 Luk 13:6-13:9; 13:31-13:35</p> <p>4/13 <i>Off</i></p> |
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ADDENDUM: The “I Am” Statements

“I am” is the best interpretation that scholars can give to the Hebrew name for God, *YHWH* (“He is”). To pronounce *YHWH* was itself considered blasphemy by Jews. The name of God was too holy to be uttered. In fact, it was rarely even written. The Dead Sea scrolls give us good evidence of how Jews at the time would treat the name of God. In the scrolls we see two main treatments. Most often, the scribes who were writing the scrolls would simply eliminate the name, replacing it with four dots (one for each letter). Occasionally we see the name *YHWH* spelled out, but done so in ancient Hebrew letters rather than the Aramaic letters in use at the time.



The middle line of this passage from the Habakkuk Pesher (“commentary”) shows the name *YHWH* in the last four letters to the left. They are written in ancient Hebrew script instead of the Aramaic script in the rest of the document.



In this passage from the scroll of discipline, we can see the four dots used for the four letters in the name *YHWH*.

When Moses encountered God in the burning bush on Sinai, Moses asked God what his name was. Our English Bibles give God’s answer as follows:

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you’” (Ex. 3:14).

In the Greek translation of this at John’s time, the name of God written “I AM who I AM” is *ego eimi ho on*. *Ego eimi* is one way in Greek to say “I am,” and *ho on* is a second. Over and over in the Greek text of Moses’ encounter with God, we see God using “*ego eimi*” in describing himself:

- **Ex. 3:6** And he said, “I am [*ego eimi*] the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.
- **Ex. 7:5** The Egyptians shall know that I am [*ego eimi*] the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them.”
- **Ex. 8:22** But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am [*ego eimi*] the LORD in the midst of the earth.
- **Ex. 14:4** And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am [*ego eimi*] the LORD.” And they did so.
- **Ex. 14:18** And the Egyptians shall know that I am [*ego eimi*] the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

- **Ex. 20:2** I am [*ego eimi*] the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

John brings this same holy expression into the words of Jesus, and does so in ways that indicate that Jesus was proclaiming himself as God and Messiah. Jesus took the mantle of God to Moses. There are four places in John's Greek text where Jesus explicitly says, *ego eimi* ("I am") without any predicate. In other words, these are just simple proclamations of Jesus as "I AM." These passages make sense if we see Jesus assuming the title or mantle of God and his holy name. Otherwise they seem to be incomplete sentences. We are waiting for a predicate to go behind "I am..." like "I am this," or "I am that." It reads so awkwardly that the translators occasionally smooth the English. We will use the English Standard Version below, but take out the smoothness to be more literal:

- **John 8:24** I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am [*ego eimi*] you will die in your sins.
- **John 8:28** So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [*ego eimi*], and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.
- **John 8:58** Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am [*ego eimi*]."
- **John 13:19** I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am [*ego eimi*].

Of course Jesus was not speaking Greek, he was likely speaking Aramaic (or possibly Hebrew). John's translation makes it clear, as does the context, that Jesus was making the claim of being *YHWH*, and likely actually saying the name in the process. It is what brought the Jews to the point of stoning him. That Jesus would pronounce the name of God was alone sufficient grounds for stoning Jesus. That Jesus would do so in a context where Jesus claimed the title for himself was utterly blasphemous – unless, of course, it was true. That thought did not enter the people's mind. Although if that thought had entered their minds, if they had known the truth, then the truth would have indeed set them free. In this sense, Jesus also spoke in such a way that John translated *ego eimi* with predicates as well, just as we saw in the Exodus passages earlier. Jesus spoke as *YHWH* indicating himself the presence in the burning bush as he explained what it meant. No longer was it "*ego eimi* who brought you out of slavery." Now it is *ego eimi* in a magnificent new way:

- **John 6:35** Jesus said to them, "I am [*ego eimi*] the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. (John

added that in response to this “the Jews grumbled about him because he said ‘I am [*ego eimi*] the bread that came down from heaven” – Jn 6:41).

- **John 8:12** Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am [*ego eimi*] the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”
- **John 10:9** I am [*ego eimi*] the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.
- **John 10:11** I am [*ego eimi*] the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
- **John 11:25** Jesus said to her, “I am [*ego eimi*] the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.
- **John 14:6** Jesus said to him, “I am [*ego eimi*] the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
- **John 15:5** I am [*ego eimi*] the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

One of the most stunning comes in the Garden of Gethsemane. There Jesus asks the mob who they have come for and they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus’ response was significant. He said simply, *ego eimi*. At this, John recorded that the crowd “drew back and fell to the ground!” Jesus could make no more awesome divine claim, nor could John more clearly carry out the Hebrew themes in his gospel!

A final note on the *ego eimi* passages involves Jesus repeatedly pointing out even as he was the *ego eimi*, he was revealing the true name of the Father. As Moses wanted to know God’s name so that he could more clearly communicate to the people exactly *who* was calling them forth from Egypt, so Jesus used this name to personally demonstrate *who* not only called the Israelites out of Egypt, but who called the world out of darkness and sin into light and forgiveness:

- **John 17:6, 26** “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world...I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”
- **John 5:43** “I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me.”
- **John 10:25** “Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but you do not

believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”

- **John 17:11** “And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.”
- **John 12:23, 28** “And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified...Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’”