

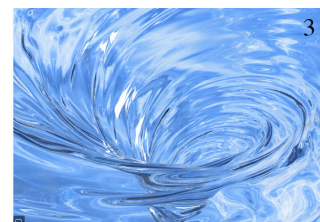
## I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life

John the Beloved informed us of an important statement made by our Lord to His trusted followers. It was:

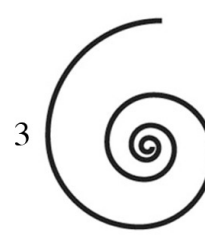
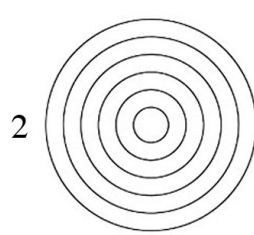
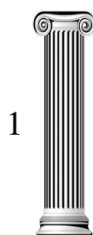
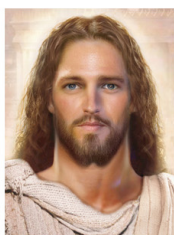
*“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (John 14:6).

In this seven-part statement the Lord expresses portions of His saving mission that lead us to Him and Father and Mother in heaven. We have only to adhere to the four words He gave us in defining His *doctrine*, *gospel*, and *church*, to receive His greatest blessings. These four words are “*repent*” and “*come unto me*” (see D&C 10:67-68, 1 Ne. 10:18 & 2 Ne. 28:32). Three concepts in our Lord’s statement in John 14:6 may be tied to how Christ is our light *and* our living water, statements He made on the most joyous of the Biblical Holy Days, the Feast of Tabernacles. On the first day of this eight-day feast, when four great candelabra were lit, our Lord said, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). Then on the 8<sup>th</sup> or Great Day of this same feast, just after the unique water pouring ceremony, Christ stood to announce that He was also *the fountain of living waters*. He said, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37-38). The Lord’s people would eventually reject Him as their light *and* their living water. Too many do the same today.<sup>1</sup>

When water is poured into a bowl there is often, (1) a *pillar-like* shaft of water *raised up* [symbolizing our *ascension* to God]; (2) When a stone or drop of water falls into this water *concentric circles move out* away from it [symbolizing His *truths* sent out]; And (3) As water is poured out, it may create an *expanding spiral* in the bowl [symbolizing *creation*, one of the most common shapes in the universe]. Like the lighting of the great candelabra, the pouring out of living water ceremony was a rite symbolizing our Lord’s mission as the Great **I AM**. He is (1) the **way**, (2) the **truth**, and (3) the **life**.



- I AM** Christ is *The Great Creator* God. “**I Am**” means, “He Who Causes To Be, He Who Creates.”
- The Way** Christ is *The Way* - the Mediator, Intercessor, and Savior of the world. Because of His Atonement for us, He is **The Way** of Salvation, the door or gate leading us home to Father and Mother in heaven (*ascension*).
- The Truth** Christ is *The Truth* of all things. He said, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples Indeed. And ye shall know the **truth**, and the truth shall make you *free*” (John 8:31-32).
- The Life** Christ is *The Life* as He provides **life** throughout all His *creation*. He also provides the promise of *eternal life* to all those who *repent* and *come unto Him*.



### The Sacred Name-Title I AM

**I Am - the Creator** The sacred name-title I AM is clearly connected to our Lord Jesus Christ as *the Creator* of heaven and earth. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (D&C 38:3; 39:1-2), and the *Savior* of mankind (3 Ne. 11:10, 11 and 14). Margaret Barker provides us the clearest meaning for the name-title **I Am**. Her research reveals that it means, “**I call into being what may be, or I create**. The simple form of *the Name* found elsewhere, usually rendered Yahweh or

Jehovah, would then mean not ‘*He Who Is*’ but ‘**He Who Causes To Be, He Who Creates**’...The song of the living creatures would then be praising not the One who always exists but *the One who created and continues to create*, which is the theme of the second song: ‘*Thou didst create all things and by thy will they existed and were created.*’”<sup>2</sup>

There are many I AM references in scripture. The first is in the Bible in Exodus 3. Moses was a Hebrew raised as an Egyptian, a nation that had many Gods. Moses wanted to know which of them he had come to atop Sinai. When Moses asked, “What is thy name?” (verse 13), God stated, “**I AM THAT I AM.**” He later added, “Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you” (Ex. 3:14).

Like the Lord’s words at Bountiful in the Book of Mormon, Christ, the Great Jehovah of the Old Testament used the term I AM in combination with other name-titles to describe who He really was and is. John, the Beloved of the Lord, quoted Christ informing the unbelieving Jews who He was in John 8:58. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.” The term I AM is used 21 times in John’s testimony of the Lord. In seven of these scriptures, John combines the term I AM with other titles for the Master. They include, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35, 48), “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12; 9:5), “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” (John 10:4, see also 7 & 9), “I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11, 14), “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman” (John 15:1, 5), and “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25).

**Standing in the Lord’s Presence** Scripture reveals that various individuals or groups were unable to *stand* in the holy presence of Jesus Christ – the Great **I Am**. Others *choose* to willingly lay prostrate on the ground before Him in an attitude of total submission and joyful worship (“worship” in Greek means “*prostrate*”). Note five of these events below:

1. Christ’s arrest by the Temple guards just outside of Gethsemane (John 18:6)
2. His appearance to Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-5)
3. His appearance to the four sons of Mosiah, including Alma (Mos. 27:12, 18)
4. His appearance to those at the temple at Bountiful (3 Ne. 11:11-12)
5. His appearance to the Brother of Jared (Ether 3:14 and 4:12).

In three of these five examples, the inability to stand occurred *immediately after* the Lord used the sacred name-title I AM to identify Himself. In the other two situations (both *pre-mortal* appearances by the Savior), those present fell *before* the Lord as He identified Himself with this title. The submission in falling to the ground was because of His great power, glory and righteousness, often in connection with fear. Others fell before Him in love, humility, and submission.

When Saul, the persecutor of Christians, was on the road to Damascus, he could not stand in the Lord’s presence as he experienced a great light descending upon him. Laying prostrate on the ground Saul asked, “Who art thou?” The Lord, stated, “*I am Jesus of Nazareth who thou persecutest*” (Acts 22:8, italics added). Paul was not worthy to stand in His glorious presence. Note that the Lord used both the name-titles “*Jesus of Nazareth*” and “*I Am*” to identify Himself to Paul.

The Lord used the sacred name-title *I am* three times in the Book of Mormon when introducing Himself at the temple at Bountiful. He stated, “Behold, *I Am* Jesus Christ, who the prophets testified shall come into the world. And behold, *I am* the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me...” (3 Nephi 11:11). It was *after* these two identifying statements in the next verse, that the people then fell to the earth, finally recognizing who He was, and that this event was a fulfillment of prophecy. He then invited the people to personally come to *know* Him by individually feeling the prints of nails in His feet, hands, and wrists, and the spear mark in His side. Using again the name-title *I Am* a third time, He stated, “that ye may **know** that *I am* the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world.” The people each came forward one by one to do so. They became sure witnesses of Him. Then with one accord they stated, “Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did **fall down** [again] at the feet of Jesus and did worship him” (3 Nephi 11:10, 11, 14 and 17). Later He again used the term “*I Am*”, stating, “Behold, *I am* he that gave the law, and *I am* he who covenanted with my people Israel...*I am* the law...Behold, *I am* the light” (3 Nephi 15:5, 8; 18:16; see also Ether 3:14 and 4:12).

Joyful submission to God is also evident in Lehi’s vision of the Tree of Life, where many were seen pressing forward, holding tightly onto the rod (the word of God) “until they came forth and **fell down** and partook of the fruit of the tree” (1 Ne. 8:30). We are informed later that the sweet fruit of this great tree is the love of God (1 Ne. 11:22). Lehi’s vision also included those of the New Testament who he saw “**fall down** at his [the Lord’s] feet and worship him” (1 Ne. 11:24). Others in the Book of Mormon who had “**fallen**” to the ground in “*joy*” include Ammon, King Lamoni, his wife the Queen, and their servants, all converted to the Lord (Alma 19:15-17).

Many “falling” references are found throughout scripture. In Leviticus 9:24, for example, the people all “fell on their faces” after the Lord’s glory was apparent before them. Though there is no reference of Him using the name “I Am” there, God did send fire to consume the sacrifice upon the temple altar. When Ezekiel saw God in vision on his throne in heaven, surrounded by a rainbow, he fell down to *worship* him (Ezekiel 1:26-28). In the Mishnah we read of those who gathered in the courtyard of Herod’s Temple on the Day of Atonement. They prostrated themselves upon the ground when they heard the High Priest express God’s sacred *name*. “They used to kneel and bow themselves and fall down on their faces” (Mishnah, Yoma 6.2, 3.8, 4.2).

*The Arrest* At the conclusion of the Lord’s Gethsemane experience, the soldiers and Jewish leaders who came to arrest and crucify Him were all forced to the ground as Christ revealed His true identity to them. In John’s record of this event (John 18:3-8), we read the Lord’s question to those who came to arrest Him. “Who seek ye,” He stated. They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.” The Lord then answered, “I Am, he.” In the original Greek version of this statement, the pronoun “he” is not present. Instead, the Lord refers to Himself as He did in Genesis 3:14 - as the Great I AM,” without the “he.” Jewish leaders understood the profound nature of this statement when the Lord used it prior to Gethsemane in John 8:59. There they picked up stones to throw at him, believing He was blaspheming God’s name in claiming to be I AM (a capital offense). Barker stated, “When Thomas said that he could not compare Jesus to anyone (as in Isaiah 40:18), Jesus took him aside and told him the *Three Word Name* which he [Christ] claimed. When Thomas returned to his companions, they asked him, ‘What did Jesus say to you’ and Thomas replied that if he revealed what had been said, they would stone him [Thomas] for blasphemy” (Thomas 13, cf. John 10:31-33). Barker added, “the letter tau...was *the sign of the Name*.”<sup>3</sup>

### *I AM Scriptures*

#### *Old Testament*

- Ex. 3:6 “I *am* the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”  
 Ex. 3:14-15 “I AM THAT I AM...Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you...this is my name forever.”  
 Ex. 6:2 “I *am* the Lord.” And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name* of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.”  
 Isa. 42:8 “I *am* the Lord. That is my name...”  
 Isa. 43:3 “For I *am* the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, they Saviour...”  
 Isa. 44:6 “I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me there is no God.”  
 Isa. 48:14, 17 “I call unto them, they stand up together...I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee...which leadeth thee by the way...”

#### *New Testament*

- John 6:48 “I am that bread of life.”  
 John 8:12 “I am the light of the world...”  
 John 8:58 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”  
 John 10:9 “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”  
 John 10:11 “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”  
 John 11:25 “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live...”  
 John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”  
 John 15:1 “I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.”  
 Acts 22:8 “I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest...”  
 Rev. 1:8 “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending.”  
 Rev. 22:16 “I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”

#### *Book of Mormon*

- 3 Ne. 11:10 “Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.”  
 3 Ne. 11:11 “And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.”  
 3 Ne. 11:14 “Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the god of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world.”  
 3 Ne. 15:5 “Behold, I am he that gave the law, and I am he who covenanted with my people Israel...”  
 3 Ne. 15:9 “Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live...”  
 3 Ne. 18:16 “Behold, I am the light; I have set an example for you.”  
 Ether 3:14 “Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem by people.” (The Lord spoke these words just after the brother of Jared had fallen down in fear [verse 6]). See also Ether 4:12.

#### *The Doctrine & Covenants*

- D&C 29:1 “Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, the Great I AM, whose arm of mercy hath atoned for your sins.”  
 D&C 38:1 “Thus saith the Lord your God, even Jesus Christ, the Great I AM, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the same which looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic hosts of heaven, before the world was made.”

- D&C 38:3 "I am the same which spake, and the world was made, and all things came by me."
- D&C 38:4 "I am the same which have taken the Zion of Enoch into mine own bosom; and verily, I say, even as many as have believed in my name, for I am Christ, and in mine own name, by the virtue of the blood which I have spilt, have I pleaded before the Father for them."
- D&C 39:1-2 "HEARKEN and listen to the voice of him who is from all eternity to all eternity, the Great I AM, even Jesus Christ - The light and the life of the world; a light which shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not..."
- D&C 93:19, 1-3 "I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fullness... Verily, thus sayeth the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calledth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am. And that I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world; And that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one."
- D&C 132: 24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory. For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives, and few there be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world, neither do you know me. But if ye receive me in the world, then shall ye know me, and shall receive your exaltation; that where I am ye shall be also. This is eternal lives - to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. I am he. Receive ye, therefore, my law" (D&C 132:21-24).

#### *The Pearl of Great Price*

- Moses 1:3 "Behold, I am the Lord God Almighty, and Endless is my name; for I am without beginning of days or end of years; and is not this endless?"
- Moses 7:53 "I am Messiah, the King of Zion, the Rock of Heaven, which is broad as eternity; whoso cometh in at the gate and climbeth up by me shall never fall..."
- Abraham 3:19 "These two facts do exist, that there are two spirits, one being more intelligent than the other; there shall be another more intelligent than they; I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all."

#### **End Notes**

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<sup>1</sup> *Rejecting Christ – the Light of the World & the Fountain of Living* Our Lord made two statements at the Feast of Tabernacles where we see blessing or cursing tied to our choices – to come unto the Lord or reject Him. This is the doctrine of the two ways.

*Light* On the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, just after the great candelabra had been lit - making Jerusalem a shining light on a hill - the Lord said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). This fulfilled Isaiah 9:2, where we read, "The people that walked in darkness [ignorance, idolatry, and sin] have seen a great light [Christ]." Israel would eventually reject this light, as modern Israel often does today. This is why this same Isaiah scripture is found in the Book of Mormon (2 Ne. 19:2). The eyes of the blind and sleepy today must be opened to Christ as our source of light or they will be trampled upon as salt that has lost its savor. The Lord has said that great light - a *consuming fire* - will destroy the unproductive trees of His vineyard in the last-days. We read, "And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame, and shall burn and shall devour his thorns and his briers in one day; And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field . . . And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them, but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, yea, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God (2 Ne. 20:17-21).

*Water* On the final, 8<sup>th</sup> day of the joyous Feast of Tabernacles, called "the Great Day," and just after the unique water pouring ceremony, the Lord stood to inform His people that He was also the fountain of living waters. He stated, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37-38). Not long thereafter Christ was rejected and crucified. He told Jeremiah, "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me *the fountain of living waters*, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns [imperfect mortal leaders], that can hold *no water* (Jer. 2:13). In Isaiah and 2 Nephi we read, "Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly . . . therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even *the king of Assyria* . . . And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? (2 Ne. 18:6; 20:2, see also 2 Ne. 24:25).

<sup>2</sup> See Margaret Barker, *Atonement: The Rite of Healing*, p. 10. See also William J. Hamblin, John 8:48-59: "Before Abraham was, I Am", June 20, 2011. Barker adds that the name-title of God on the forehead of the ancient high priest "is obscured in the canonical texts, but is quite clear in Philo who says the high priest wore a golden plate showing *a name that only the purified may speak*, and 'that Name has four letters'; and in the *Letter of Aristeas* which reads 'On the front of the hallowed diadem...in holy letters on a leaf of gold (the high priest) wears the Name of God.'" (See Philo *Moses* II.114; *Abraham* 103; *Aristeas* 93. A literal reading of the third commandment [Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 5:11] suggests that it applied originally to the high priest: 'You shall not bear the Name of the LORD your God for evil purposes...' The description of the high priest Simon coming out of 'the house of the veil' is a theophany" [Eccles. 50:5-21], in Margaret Barker, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, T & T Clark, pps. 306-07). Barker adds, "The lord was *the first among the sons* of El Elyon, in other words, the chief of the angels. His counterpart, the high priest, would have been the first among the priests. Further, the high priest wore the sacred name YHWH on his forehead when he was officiating in the temple.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Barker, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, T & T Clark, LTD, pps. 125; 306-07.