

The “I Am’s” of Jesus

(Part 1)

Introduction

Who knows what a word picture is? A word picture is a way of using words to describe an idea so that you can imagine it in your mind. For example, if I said, "*It is darker than the inside of a cat*" you'd know that there is no light at all, not even the glow of the moon or a street light. What comes into your mind if your mom said, "*Your room looks like a tornado hit it?*"

Word pictures use common, everyday things to describe feelings and other concepts that you can't see with your physical eyes — things that you must use your imagination to understand.

To help us understand Him in a deeper and more meaningful way, the Lord Jesus used word pictures that compared Him to everyday things people are familiar with.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, we do want to know You and understand You with the deepest part of our understanding. Open the eyes of our heart and mind this morning as we study some of the word pictures that You used to describe Yourself. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." (John 6:35)

Was Jesus saying he was a loaf of bread? No! He was using a word picture to give you an idea of what He is like. We'll be talking more about that in just a minute.

Lesson

Remember when Moses met God in the burning bush and asked Him what His name was?

Exodus 3:13-14

But Moses protested, "If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' they will ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what should I tell them?" (14) God replied to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you."

God was saying, "I am the One who is." In other words, He never had a beginning and He will never have an end. He was before the beginning began. He created the whole universe!

Jesus is God come to earth in the form of a human. He came so that we could get to know God for who He really is. In describing Himself to His disciples, Jesus often called Himself, "*I am*" and the people knew He was saying that He was equal with God.

This morning we'll be looking at some of the "I Am's" of Jesus.

1. Alpha and Omega

Revelation 22:13

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, like our A and the Z. Jesus was saying that He is the beginning and the end; that He has always existed. He was present before the world began, and He will still be present after it is gone.

He created all things: the galaxies, the world, and everything in it — including you and me.

Colossians 1:15-16

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, (16) for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.

He keeps all systems going — orbits, gravity, tides, seasons, day and night. By telling us He is the Alpha and the Omega, Jesus is reminding us that He will never leave us. He will be with us forever. He should be the One we put first in our lives.

2. Bread of Life

In teaching his disciples, Jesus told them that just like the Father gave the Israelites manna from heaven during their 40-year journey through the wilderness to the Promised Land, the Father gives Jesus to people during their journey through life towards heaven.

John 6:32-35

Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, Moses didn’t give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. (33) The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” (34) “Sir,” they said, “give us that bread every day.” (35) Jesus replied, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Jesus was comparing Himself with bread, a common, everyday thing that everybody can understand. [Teacher, before class cut a slit in the bottom of a round loaf of French bread and pull out a little of the bread. Tuck a pocket-sized New Testament in the loaf. During the pre-session activity, have the children come and break bread with you. They will be amazed to find the Bible inside the loaf and will make the connection between the Word of God and the bread. Ask them what similarities they see in the qualities of bread and Jesus.]

Bread is the basic food of life (the staff of life). You and I cannot live very long without eating, can we? Bread brings you nourishment and makes you grow. In the same way that food is the only source of life here on earth, Jesus is the only source of eternal life.

As our bodies feel hunger for food, so our souls feel hunger for forgiveness and peace. Only Jesus can satisfy the hunger of your soul. Just as bread will not do you any good unless you take it into your body, Jesus will not save you until you receive Him as your Savior from sin. Once you do, the Lord will continue to “feed” you spiritually through His Word.

3. Light of the World

Jesus also compared Himself with light, another common, everyday thing that everybody can understand.

John 8:12

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”

Have you ever been in a place that was “darker than the inside of a cat?” When it’s completely dark you can’t see where you’re going, can you? You can’t even see your own hand held up in front of your face. If you were trying to go somewhere you could stumble and fall or get lost. You might end up on the wrong path, one that would lead you to the edge of a cliff.

Darkness is often used as a symbol of evil, sin, and ignorance. Jesus says He is the Light of the World. He is not one of many lights; He is the only “light” that can make our spiritual darkness disappear. He is like the sun that shines on everyone in the whole world. To come into the “light,” a person must admit he is in the darkness of his sin and receive Jesus as Savior.

Just like the sun is the physical light of the world, Jesus is the spiritual light of the world. [Teacher, use a flash light to show how Jesus turns

your darkness into light. Show how it lights up a dark room.] Jesus' life brings light to mankind. In His light, [Shine the flashlight on each child...] we see ourselves as we really are (sinners in need of a Savior). When we follow Jesus, the true Light, we can avoid walking blindly and falling into sin. He lights the path ahead of us so we can see how to live. He removes the darkness of sin from our lives. If you let Jesus guide your life, you'll never need to stumble in the darkness.

Believers are also called, "*the light of the world*":

Matt 5:14, 16

"You are the light of the world... (16) In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

We are not the source of the light; Jesus is. [Teacher, compare the flashlight battery to Jesus. The torch is useless without it.] As the moon reflects the light of the sun, so we are to reflect the truth and purity of the Lord Jesus to everyone around us.

Closing Prayer

Jesus, thank You for using so many great word pictures to describe Yourself to us. We can understand what it means when you say You are the bread of life or the light of the world because we know what bread and light are like. These word pictures give us a deeper understand of who You are. We always want to be hungry for You, Lord Jesus. Help us to continue to feed upon Your word so that we might know you better every day. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Centers

Craft Corner

Have children draw pictures of the three ways Jesus described Himself in today's lesson: A-Z, Bread, and Light. As they work on their pictures have them explain how Jesus is like these things.

Game Center

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. What is a word picture? (A way of using words to describe an idea so that you can imagine it in your mind.)
2. What did God tell Moses His name is and what does it mean? (I Am, meaning God is and He always was and will always be. He never had a beginning and never will have an end.)
3. When Jesus described Himself to people and said, "I Am" what did people think He was telling them? (That He is equal with God.)
4. What does Alpha and Omega mean? (They are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.)
5. What did Jesus mean when He said He was the Alpha and the Omega? (He is the beginning and the end; that He has always existed.)
6. How is Jesus like bread? (Bread brings us nourishment. Food is the only source of life here on earth; Jesus is the only source of eternal life. Only Jesus can satisfy the hunger of your soul.)
7. If your body feels hunger for food; what does your soul hunger for? (Forgiveness and peace with God.)
8. How can you "feed" your soul? (By reading God's word, praying, fellowshiping with other believers, etc.)
9. How is Jesus like a light? (He shows us the darkness of our sin and shows us the right way to live.)
10. How are we also called, "*the light of the world*"? (Like the moon reflecting the light of the sun, we are to reflect the truth and purity of the Lord Jesus to everyone around us.)

The "I Am's" of Jesus

What "I Am" did Jesus use? Fill in the name and draw a picture.

1. Jesus has always existed, even before the world began.

I Am _____ (Rev 22:13)

2. Just like the basic need of a human is food, Jesus is the only source of eternal life.

I Am _____ (John 6:35)

3. When we follow Jesus, we can avoid walking blindly and falling into sin.

I Am _____ (John 8:12)