

A Journey with Christ the Messiah

I AM the Bread of Life

John 6:35-40, 47-51

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are continuing a new series that I have entitled *A Journey with Christ the Messiah*. Up until now, we have spent time showing how the Old Testament told of Christ and how Christ fulfilled its prophecies concerning Him. It left us with no doubt that Christ has to be the Messiah as He claimed to be.

In the next few weeks we will be looking at statements that Jesus said about Himself in John's gospel. In chapter 20 of John's gospel, John told us why it was written.

John 20:31 (NASB)

³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ (The Messiah), the Son of God; and that believing you may have **life** in His name.

John wrote his gospel so we could believe that Jesus was the proclaimed Messiah of the Old Testament and that by believing we may have eternal life with Him in Heaven. With that focus, Jesus declares many wondrous things about Who He is. These are things we **need** to know because it determines our eternal future.

John recorded seven times where Jesus says "**I AM**" in his gospel.

- I AM the Bread of Life.
- I AM the Light of the World.
- I AM the Door of the Sheep.
- I AM the Good Shepherd.
- I AM the Resurrection and the Life.
- I AM The Way, The Truth, and The Life.
- I AM the True Vine.

When Jesus proclaims these seven "**I AM**" statements, He is saying some very important things about Himself. He is tying in with what was said by God Himself in Exodus Chapter 3 when He was revealed to Moses in the burning bush and God said "**I AM Who I AM**".

Exodus 3:9-15 (NASB)

⁹ Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them.

¹⁰ Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt." ¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" ¹² And He said,

“Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.”

¹³ Then Moses said to God, “Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ Now they may say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?” ¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” ¹⁵ God, furthermore, said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.”

When Jesus uses the phrase "I AM" He is making an emphatic point that He is God in the flesh! We begin with our first study this morning by looking at John chapter 6. Where Jesus says "I AM the Bread of Life".

All Stand and Read Scripture

John 6:35-40, 47-51 (NASB)

³⁵ Jesus said to them, “**I AM the Bread of Life**; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe. ³⁷ All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”

⁴⁷ Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸ **I AM the Bread of Life.** ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they **died**. ⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and **not** die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.”

As we prepare to continue this journey, let's bow in a word of prayer.

Prayer

BODY:

This statement is made in the context of having just previously fed about 5000 men and all those who were gathered there with just five barley loaves and two fish. At this time there are a number of people chasing Jesus around the Sea of Galilee because many were impressed by what He had done, they desired to see more, and they were trying to be healed by Him. It seemed as though Jesus could not get a moment's rest. These curiosity seeking crowds had now had their bellies filled by His miraculous feeding of the 5000. So now they are looking for Him again. They continue to search Him out. They finally track Him down one more time in Capernaum. The city that Jesus had made His base of operations. It is where He slept at night.

They find Him there and they want more. Jesus uses this occasion to confront them concerning what they are looking for. He takes the opportunity, primarily to reveal more about Himself in terms of Who He is. Jesus wasn't into the "Numbers Game".

Think about it! He had them eating out of His hand. Hanging on His every word. Following Him, you could say, "from pulpit to pulpit". And then He goes and scares them off. He scares them away by preaching a sermon to them about the cross. About the fact that He is going to have to die. He was going to die by His choosing because it was the will of God.

Jesus knows Who He is. Jesus knows what He is about and these people need to know it too. He confronts them about the fact that they trot around the lake like a herd of cattle and are hungering and thirsting about all the wrong things. They follow Him here and there, but they are following for the wrong reasons. They think Jesus is just a neat act to follow.

They told Jesus that they needed signs to prove He was the Messiah. Jesus told them that they had seen signs, but they were not interested in what the signs are saying. The point that is being made here is something that is far, far, more important than food.

John 6:27 (NASB)

27 Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."

Jesus takes this moment to teach them a lesson. He accuses the crowd of ignoring His miraculous signs and only following Him for the "free meal". In other words, they were so enthralled with the food, they were missing out on the fact that their Messiah had come. So they come out and ask Jesus...

John 6:28-29 (NASB)

28 Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?"

29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

Jesus answers them and tells them it is not about **you "doing"** anything. It is not what **you** are called to do. **YOU** cannot do it. **That IS** your problem!. Basically, Jesus says in verse 29, that we just read, that we must **BELIEVE** in Him Whom God has sent. **You need to BELIEVE in Jesus!**

Yet their unbelief continues. They answer in a sneering tone.

John 6:30 (NASB)

30 So they said to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?"

Haven't they seen Him heal countless diseases? Haven't they just eaten of the loaves and fish? Haven't they just heard that He walked on water? Apparently, that wasn't enough. According to them, what Jesus had done was just a "one shot" deal. In their mind Moses was their hero. Jesus had **ONLY** fed them **ONE** meal! Moses fed manna to the Israelites for over 40 years.

Now, Jesus is warning them that they are in danger of treating the "True Bread" of Heaven with the same kind of contempt! That is very serious! He also reminds them that it was **not** Moses who provided the manna, **it was God in Heaven!** It is the same God that is providing the True Bread.

John 6:32-33 (NASB)

³² Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is **not Moses** who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."

They respond to Jesus...

John 6:34 (NASB)

³⁴ Then they said to Him, "Lord, evermore give us this bread."

Again, this was probably in an unbelieving, sneering, voice. "Yeah right! Like there is **"Bread"** that is going to give us life forever. Whatever you say!"

The hearers of Jesus weren't looking past their noses. The whole problem was they were laboring for the things that perish. They were content to stay the same like so many people today. Like all of us by nature. It is a problem all of us have. Jesus is teaching us about human nature here as He teaches us about Himself. Jesus is bringing to the surface here **the fact** that all of us **know** we need life. We were created for such life. But, we look for it in all the wrong places!

- We hunger and we thirst after physical life.
- We hunger and thirst for the right relationship.
- We want the right car.
- We search for the right home.
- We seek happiness in worldly **things**.
- We seek to eat, to drink, and be merry because tomorrow we die.

But that is **NOT** life!

John 6:48-51 (NASB)

⁴⁸ **I am the bread of life.** ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, **and they died.** ⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and **not** die. ⁵¹ **I am the living** bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of **this** bread, **he will live forever**; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

Jesus reminded them that their fathers who had eaten this manna that they were boasting about are **ALL DEAD!** Not that eating was wrong, but there has to be something more. Then Jesus makes the revelation. **"I AM". "I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE".**

This is a VERY POWERFUL claim! When Jesus said "I AM", the Pharisee's knew immediately what He was proclaiming. **That was, that He was God!** In the Jew's eyes, that was BLASPHEMY!

The violent response of the Jews to Jesus' "I AM" statement indicates they clearly understood what He was declaring—that He was the eternal God in human form (The promised Messiah). Jesus was equating Himself with the "I AM" title God gave Himself in...

Exodus 3:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

If Jesus had merely wanted to say He existed before Abraham's time, He would have said, "Before Abraham, I was." The Greek words translated "was," in the case of Abraham, and "am," in the case of Jesus, are quite different. The words chosen by the Spirit make it clear that Abraham was "brought into being," but Jesus existed eternally. Remember what John 1:1 says?

John 1:1 (NASB)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

There is no doubt that the Jews understood what He was saying because they took up stones to kill Him for making Himself equal with God. Such a statement, if not true, was blasphemy and the punishment prescribed by the Mosaic Law was death. But Jesus committed no blasphemy; He was and is God.

This is what Jesus told them...

John 6:35 (NASB)

³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."

Repeatedly, Jesus stresses that this bread comes down from Heaven. That is to say, "I have come down from Heaven." He is actually making Himself equal with God. The Jews could not stomach that. Listen to their reply.

John 6:42 (NASB)

⁴² They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?"

Jesus continues in...

John 6:51 (NASB)

⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

They did not understand what Jesus meant by "eating My flesh". Many must have been convinced by this point that He truly was insane. They started murmuring among each other. But Jesus was not telling them that they had to eat His physical flesh, He was beginning to reveal to them that this "Victorious Messiah" that they were looking for was not during this stay on earth. That would come at His second coming. Jesus was here this time to be a "Suffering Servant". He must die on the cross for our sins and rise again on the third day. Jesus was beginning to teach them that there had to be a cross. This did not make sense to those who had no concept of their sin and their need for a Savior. Their only concern seemed to be their belly and being entertained with earthly magic.

In verse 66 we learn that many of Jesus' followers decided that they did not need to pay attention to this "eating My flesh" stuff and from that day forward withdrew from walking with Him anymore. They didn't ask more questions for clarification. They turned their backs on the Lord Jesus. They weren't hungry for His "True Food".

When Jesus asked the twelve if they wanted to leave too, Peter responds for them.

John 6:68-69 (NASB)

68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. 69 We have believed and have come to know that You **are the Holy One of God."**

The disciples did not understand all that Jesus had just revealed about Himself either, but they stayed with Jesus because they have been given the hunger. They **knew** that there is nowhere else to go. They **knew** that there is nowhere else to find life. They will stay with the Lord.

There will always be those...

- who look for the spectacular
- to be entertained
- to have their egos stroked
- to have their tummies filled

but have **no** stomach for the Word of the Living God. John has told us that Jesus is the Living Word of God. His true food and water are contained in the pages of your Bible. If we are to feed on Christ, we must come to Him and hear His word, and continuously live by His Word.

When Christ died on the cross, He took the sins of mankind upon Himself and made atonement for them. When we place our faith in Him and are **born again**, our sins are transferred to Jesus, and His righteousness is implanted in us. Jesus satisfies our hunger and thirst for righteousness. He is our Bread of Life.

CONCLUSION:

Jesus told Nicodemus...

John 3:3-5 (NASB)

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4 Nicodemus *said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

How can we be born again?

It is the equivalent to the "dying and rising" of Christ in...

Romans 6:3-4 (NASB)

3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into

death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

When you are "born again" you begin feeding on Jesus. **I AM the Bread of Life!**

Jesus was talking to Martha when He resurrected Lazarus from the dead.

John 11:25-27 (NASB)

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, *even* He who comes into the world."

Are YOU hungry? We are speaking spiritually now.

Matthew 5:6 (NASB)

⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Jesus says "I AM the Bread of Life. He who **comes** to Me will never hunger. He who **believes** in Me will never thirst."

Notice the words "come" and "believe." This is an invitation for those listening to place their faith in Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God. This invitation to come is found throughout John's Gospel.

Coming to Jesus involves making a choice to forsake the world and follow Him.

Believing in Jesus means placing your faith in Him

- and believing that He **is** who He says He is,
- that He will do what He says He will do,
- and that He is the only One who can.

He is Lord!