

"Before Abraham was, I Am"

These words, spoken by Yahshua (aka Jesus) in Jn.8:58 have led to much controversy and confusion. Some use this verse to prove the Messiah's pre-existence. Others use it to prove the trinity doctrine. And then there are those who use it to prove Yahshua is the great "I AM" of Ex.3:14. So, is Yahshua also Yahweh the Father?

The phrase "I am" is "*ego eimi*" in Greek. Since the Greek New Testament records Yahshua using "*ego eimi*" many times, Christian theologians declare these sayings "The I Am's of Jesus." It is believed that each of these occurrences implies Yahshua's identity as the "I AM" of Ex.3:14. Can this be true? Can Yahshua actually be the "I AM" of the Hebrew Bible and thereby also be Yahweh, the Almighty Sovereign Creator Power Life-Force The Ever-Living of all that exists and will ever exists?

Ex.3:14-15 reads, "And Alueim said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And Alueim said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Yahweh, Alueim of your fathers, Alueim of Abraham, Alueim of Isaac, and Alueim of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." Therefore, the "I AM" in this passage, is identified as "Yahweh," or rather, is representing Yahweh, since no man can see or can ever be directly in the presence of the Every-Living. Through this messenger representative authority, Moses is directed to use the Name of the Divine Creator, Yahweh.

<http://assemblyoftrueisrael.com/Documents/TheDivineName.pdf>

One thing which must be clearly understood at this point of our discussion is that The Father Creator Alueim called Yahweh is "a Life-Force essence," Yahshua clearly taught us in Jn. 4:24. And, He is the only one "who only has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, that no one has seen or is able to see, to whom be respect and everlasting might." 1 Tim. 6:16. "No one has ever seen Alueim," (Yahweh) Jn. 1:18. All Scripture then being correctly understood, would have to lead us to the conclusion, that all apparent communications between "Yahweh" and man, must be through a Messenger, an angel, a representative speaking with the full authority and power of Yahweh, and is thereby granted full authority to use the Divine Name "Yahweh" in the "first" person.

And what does Yahweh say as recorded in Ps.2:7? "I will declare the decree: Yahweh hath said unto me, (King David) thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." David was called a son of the Father Yahweh. Yahshua was also called a son of Yahweh. Yahshua is not Yahweh, and David is not Yahweh, (the Son is not the Father). Therefore, it stands, that Yahshua (the Son of Yahweh) cannot be the "I AM" who is (Yahweh). That alone should be sufficient to discredit the belief that Yahshua was claiming to be the "I AM." But let's look into the matter a little farther.

It is believed that Jn.8:59 further supports the position that Yahshua is the "I AM." Why else would the Yahudim try to stone him? He obviously blasphemed in the eyes of the Yahudim a stone-able offense. Or did he? Is the mere utterance of "*ego eimi*" a blasphemy? Does the use of

"*ego eimi*" automatically identify the speaker as Yahweh, the I AM, and thereby trigger a stone-able offense?

Several individuals aside from Yahshua used "*ego eimi*" in the NT as well. In Luke 1:19, the angel Gabriel said, "*Ego eimi* Gabriel." In Jn.9: 9, the blind man whose sight was restored by Yahshua said, "*Ego eimi*." In Acts 10:21, Peter said, "Behold, *ego eimi* (I am) he whom ye seek." Obviously, the mere use of "*ego eimi*" does not equate one to the "I Am" of Ex.3:14. But perhaps the Savior's use of it was somehow different.

If, in fact, Yahshua spoke Greek to the Yahudim (which is doubtful), he used the phrase "*ego eimi*" at least twenty times and yet, in only one instance did the Yahudim seek to stone him (Jn.8: 58). Yahshua said, "I am" the bread of life" to a large crowd in Jn.6: 35 & 48, yet no one opposed him. In verse 41, the Yahudim murmured because he said, "I am" (*ego eimi*) the bread which came down from heaven." But in verse 42, the Yahudim questioned only the phrase, "I came down from heaven" and ignored "*ego eimi*." The same is true of verses 51; 52.

In Jn.8: 12, 18, 24, & 28, Yahshua used "*ego eimi*" with Pharisees present (vs.13) and yet, no stoning. He, again, used it four times in Jn.10:7, 9, 11, & 14 with no stoning. Yahshua said to his disciples, "...that...ye may believe that "I am" (*ego eimi*) in Jn.13:19 without them batting an eye.

An interesting account occurs in Jn.18 when the Yahudim came to arrest Yahshua in the Garden of Gethsemane. When the chief priests and Pharisees said they were seeking Yahshua of Nazareth, Yahshua said to them, "*Ego eimi*." At that they fell backward to the ground, surprised and startled, that the one they were seeking, had the fortitude to confront them face to face. What followed will make it clear that Yahshua was not claiming to be the "I Am" of Ex. 3:14.

After Yahshua's arrest, the Yahudim took him to Annas first (vs.13). Then they took him to Caiaphas (vs.24) and eventually to Pilate (vss.28, 29). A parallel account is found in Mt.26: 57-68. Notice, in particular verse 59. The same men that had fallen backward to the ground were in attendance when the council sought false witnesses against Yahshua to put him to death. Verse 60 says they couldn't find any. Eventually two came forward. Interestingly, they didn't bear false witness about what Yahshua said in Jn.8:58, but about his reference to destroying the temple and building it again in three days. Where were all those "I Am" witnesses from Jn.8: 58?

The point about Mt.26 is, why would false witnesses be sought if they had true witnesses in attendance? The arresting officers heard Yahshua say "*Ego eimi*." They could have stoned him right there in the garden for blasphemy, but they didn't. They could have reported the supposed blasphemy to the council, but they didn't. Why not? Because it wasn't blasphemy, and it was not a stone-able offense. He was merely identifying himself as Yahshua of Nazareth. The fact of the matter is, the Greek phrase "*Ego eimi*", simply means "**I am the one**", or "**I am He**."

This brings us back to Jn.8: 58. Why did the Yahudim seek to stone him on that occasion? The context of Jn.8 shows that Yahshua;

- 1) accused the Yahudim of "judging after the flesh" (vs.15).
- 2) said they would die in their sins (vss.21,24).

- 3) implied they were in bondage (vss.32,33).
- 4) said they were servants of sin (vs.34).
- 5) said they were out to kill him (vss. 37,40).
- 6) implied they were spiritually deaf (vs.43,47).
- 7) said their father was the devil (vs.44).
- 8) said they were not of Alueim (vs.47).
- 9) accused them of dishonoring him (vs.49).
- 10) accused them of not knowing Yahweh (vs.55).
- 11) accused them of lying (vs.55).

Aside from that, the Yahudim misunderstood Yahshua's words leading them to believe;

- 1) that he accused them of being born of fornication (vs.41).
- 2) Yahshua had a devil (vs.52).
- 3) that he was exalting himself above Abraham (vs.53).
- 4) that he saw Abraham (vs.56).

Yahshua's words in verse 58 were the culmination of an encounter that was so offensive to the Yahudim that they couldn't restrain themselves anymore. They simply couldn't take it anymore so they sought to stone him, not because of two simple words, "*ego eimi*," but because he was making himself out to be greater than their beloved father Abraham. They sought to stone him illegally.

So what does Jn. 8: 58 really mean?

Let's look at the context of Yahshua's statement. It begins in verse 51 with the thought of eternal life; "If a man keeps my sayings he shall never see death." The Yahudim thought since Abraham and the prophets were dead, Yahshua must have a demonic teaching. The context is eternal life. Then in verse 56 Yahshua says Abraham "rejoiced to see my day." He did not say he saw Abraham as the Yahudim misunderstood. How did Abraham see Yahshua's day? Heb.11:13 says, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." He saw Yahshua's day by faith.

Yahshua then resumed the context of his initial conversation by saying, "Before Abraham was I am *the 'coming' one*." "was" is from the Greek "ginomai" it means "to come into being, or to be born,... to arise." In the Greek, the tense of the word is NOT pure "past" tense. It is 2 Aorist, middle voice, infinitive, meaning past tense action without any indication that the act was completed. What Yahshua actually said 'literally' was, "Before Abraham "comes" to be born, I am he. In other words, before Abraham comes to be born (at his resurrection into eternal life), I am he, (*the "coming" one*)." Yahshua was the eternal coming one (the Messiah, deliverer of Israel) in the plan of Yahweh from the beginning. Confirmation of this understanding comes to us from Figures of Speech used in the Bible by E.W. Bullinger, pgs. 521,522. Under the heading "Heterosis (Of Tenses)," sub-heading "The Present for the Future," he writes "This is put when the design is to show that something will certainly come to pass, and is spoken of as though it were already present." He then lists some examples such as Mt.3: 10b, "therefore every tree

which bringeth not forth good fruit is [shall be] hewn down;" and Mk.9:31a, "For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is [shall be] delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day." Included among this list of examples of Heterosis is Jn.8: 58. In other words, although properly written, "Before Abraham comes *into* being, I am (*the one*)" with "I am *the one*" in the simple present tense, the meaning points to the future, "Before Abraham comes to be born, I am the one."

Some translators believe this verse should be translated, "Before Abraham existed, I existed." However, neither Greek verb is in the perfect past tense "was" is in the aorist 'infinitive' (or imperfect past) tense and "am" is in the present first person indicative tense. Let's look a little closer at "was." Concerning the aorist tense, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament by Dana and Mantey says, "It has time relations only in the indicative, where it is past and hence augmented." The verb ginomai 'was' (to have been born) is in the Greek aorist (infinitive) tense, not the indicative. Therefore it should not be understood as being in the past tense. This same reference says of the infinitive, "The aorist infinitive denotes that which is eventual or particular ..." Abraham will eventually resurrect (to have been born) which is why the Greek uses the aorist infinitive. The meaning is, "Before Abraham comes to be born" not "Before Abraham was (or 'existed')."

In conclusion, Yahshua was not declaring that he is the great "I AM" of Ex.3:14. There are many occurrences in the Greek, which proves that the term "I am" is a very common phrase, a verb of existence, meaning "I am *He*" or "I am *the one*." This phrase by itself is not a 'stone-able' offense, for it is used many times. As we have already shown, there were a lot of implications in this chapter which ground into the minds and heart of the Yahudim leaders. All the offenses combined, culminated at this point, into the prophesied path (end result) for Yahshua.

Yahshua was not declaring himself to be Yahweh, or the eternal self existing one, and Yahshua was not declaring his pre-existence. He was, from the beginning of Yahweh's plan, to be the Messiah, the deliverer, the King of Israel, the Son of Yahweh, a Son of the great "I Am." The son had an eternal purpose (as do all of us) in the plan of the Father, but the son did not have a pre-existing life, or "life in himself" as a "Mighty One" or a deity from eternity past, for the Father Yahweh *gave* the son to have life in himself, read John 5:26.

Author of the original Document is **John Cordaro**. Visit his Web-site at:
[The everlasting Good News of Yahweh](http://www.assemblyoftrueisrael.com) to read the original Document.

This Edition contains extensive revisions and additions by:

A.O.Y., Cascade

<http://assemblyoftrueisrael.com>