

The "I AM" Sayings Prove Jesus to be Divine

By Adel Mohammed El Naggat

As we reflect on the whole witness of the inerrant and infallible Scriptures, regarding the Person of Jesus, we can see many elements and various passages that assert, affirm and prove His divinity. For example, there are the Messianic prophecies, such as, Ps.2:7,12, which speaks of Him as God's Son. Ps.110:1 declares Him as lord, while Ps.45:6 and Isa.9:6 speak of Him as God. Then there are the didactic passages, for instance, Jhn.1:1,14 speak of Jesus the Christ being the Word and the Word also being divine (God), then becoming flesh [human]. Phil. 2:5-11 speaks of Him being the "form of God" and Heb. 1:2-3; Col. 1:15 declare that "He is the radiance of the glory of God, the exact representation of His being and the image of the invisible God," while Heb. 1:8 boldly states that He is God, and 1 Tim. 3:16 asserts that this God "appeared in a body." We also have the narrative materials, such as, Mk. 2:27-28; Lk. 5:20; Jhn. 11:43-44, amongst many others, which testify that Jesus claimed divine prerogatives. These include, redefining the Sabbath, forgiving sin and raising the dead.! However, besides His own bodily resurrection, I genuinely believe that it is in the "I am" sayings of Jesus that we are presented with some of the clearest assertions, affirmations and proof of His divinity. For in them we have the very words of Jesus concerning His "true identity." Here we have the self-disclosure of the Incarnate God. It is with the assistance of the Apostle John, along with other eminent theologians, that I seek to present this truth.

I begin by stating that the implicit intentions of the Apostle John, in writing his version of the Gospel of Jesus the Christ, are to be found in Chapter 20 verses 30-31. There, John clearly states, "Jesus did many more miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. So, we see that John's aim is two-fold. Firstly, it is revelatory, he seeks to reveal and demonstrate "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Secondly, it is evangelistic, he wants people to know the true identity of Jesus, so "that you may have life in his name." Now, for the purpose of this essay, it is the initial aim of John that I want to highlight. As we have seen, John is seeking to prove that " Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world" (4:42). And in his attempt to do so he enlists the aid of many things. For example, the statements of witnesses, such as John the Baptist (1:29, 32-36), the Samaritan woman and villagers (4:39-42), Jesus (8:13-14), and God Himself (8:17; 12:28-30), accounts of the life, ministry and works of Jesus, including His many discourses and His eventual death and resurrection. He also introduced, or recorded, various miracles (signs) performed by Jesus, which are also recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. However, it is he alone, of all the Gospel writers, who that gives an account of the sermonic discourses of Jesus, which shed light on the meaning of the message behind the miracles that took place. Hence John's use of the Greek word 'semeion' [sign], rather than simply 'dunamis' [miracle]. Now, included in these sermonic statements are some of the "I am" sayings, for example, "I am the bread of life" (6:35) and "I am the resurrection and the life." The

remainder of the sayings took place during his verbal interactions with the people (8:12), the Pharisees (10:7, 9, 11), and His disciples (14:6; 15:1).

Another thing which I seek to draw the readers attention to is the actual Greek words 'ego eimi', translated (I AM). Leon Morris correctly states, "Jesus uses an emphatic "I AM" to bring out important teaching about his person. In Greek, the personal subject of the verb is not normally expressed: the form of the verb makes clear what the subject is. But if it is desired to emphasize the subject, then the appropriate pronoun may be used. What makes this so important in John is that we find a similar usage in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. There we find that the translators used the emphatic form of the speech when they were rendering words spoken by God." He then goes on to say, "When Jesus used the "I AM" construction he was speaking in the style of deity." And, "There is general agreement among Johannine scholars that this kind of language is a significant pointer to what John is telling us about the person of Jesus." (1) In other words, when Jesus was using the "I AM" construction he was indicating His divinity, and in John recording His statements he was doing likewise.

Morris, also, correctly observes that there are two groups within the "I AM" sayings. One with the predicate and one without the predicate. Commenting on them he says, "Both constructions are somewhat unusual, and the form a Johannine distinctive." Quoting J.H.Bernard, he goes on to say, "This is clearly the style of Deity...Its force could at once be appreciated by one familiar with the LXX version of the Old Testament." (2) In examining both groups of the "I AM" sayings, I would like to follow Morris's example and present the former group first and the latter group second.

"I AM the Bread of Life"

The first of the notable "I AM" sayings, in the book of John, is "I AM the bread of life" (6:35). This was uttered in the discourse which followed the feeding of the multitude. During the discourse, Jesus tells the crowd, "Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you" (6:27). As He seeks to elicit their faith in Himself, He is met with a challenge to "demonstrate His credentials." (3) "What sign do you do that we may see and believe?", they ask. To this they add, "Our forefathers ate manna in the desert, as it is written: 'He gave them bread to eat'" (v.31). They were obviously implying that Moses gave them the manna, for Jesus goes on to correct their misunderstanding. He states, "I tell you the truth, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it was my Father" (v.32). To that He adds, "My father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven" (v.33). By this, Jesus was not only implying that God gave "bread from heaven" in the past and continues to do so in the immediate present, but was also implicitly stating that He Himself is "the bread of God come down from heaven" (v.33). "In apparent expression of some stirring of spiritual desire they ask for this bread from heaven, though how earth- bound their understanding remains will emerge as the conversation continues." (4)

Now, it is in response to their request that Jesus makes the astounding claim, "I AM the bread of life, he who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (v.35). This saying actually enshrines the essence of Jesus' message. He is the answer to the needs of the human heart. "The bread of life implies the fundamental, elemental role Jesus claims to fulfil in relation to the yearning human spirit. For Jesus' bread was 'the staff of life', the primary source of nourishment. But since bread is a basic food universally, there is also the implicit claim that he fulfils this role for everyone. He is (the Saviour of the world)" (5), and gives life to the world (v.33). Morris, interestingly, points out that the definite article, before the word bread, indicates the fact that Jesus, and Jesus alone, is the one who is the bread of life. (6) While Milne states that, "the bread of life also points to the satisfying nature of Jesus." (7) This is clearly seen in the corollary, "never go hungry, and never be thirsty." All other bread, like manna in the wilderness, leave a sense of dissatisfaction. The inner ache is not assuaged: we hunger again. By contrast Jesus, once tasted, obviates the need for further satisfaction. In conclusion, we contend that in the claim, "I AM the bread of life," Jesus is making His heavenly origins known, and the fact that He alone supplies the spiritual need of His hearers.

"I AM the Light of the World"

This is the second "I AM" statement that is followed by a predicate. John has previously informed us, in the Prologue, that the Incarnate Word was "the life," and "the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it" (vv.4- 5). He once again picks up the light metaphor, and elaborates what he has previously said. John states that Jesus made the claim, about being "the light of the world," and other similar statements, on various occasions. For example, 8:12; 9:5; 12:35-36, 46. Although John does not actually identify exactly when Jesus made the claim in 8:12, he does tell us where He made it. He gives the Feast of Tabernacles, and the possibly the temple courts, as the backdrop to this eventful drama (7:14).

During the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, two major religious, and highly symbolic, ceremonies took place. The first was the out-pouring of water on the west side of the altar, by the Levitical priests, as the choir sang the Great Hallel (Ps. 113-18). (8) The second was the lighting of several large candles in the temple precinct. John indicates that Jesus took the opportunity of using these two symbols to illustrate His teachings (7:37-38; 8:12). The light metaphor is steeped in Old Testament allusion. The glory of the very presence of God in the cloud led the people to the promised land (Ex. 13:21-22), and protected them from their enemies (Ex. 14:19-25). The Israelites were trained to sing, "the LORD is my light and my salvation" (Ps. 27:1). The Word of God, the law of God, is a light to guide the path of those who cherished instruction (Ps. 119:105; Pr. 6:23); God's light is shed abroad in revelation (Ezk. 1:4,13,26-28), and salvation (Hab. 3:3-4). "Light is Yahweh in action" (Ps. 44:3). Isa tells us that the Servant of the LORD was appointed as a light to the Gentiles, that He might bring salvation to the ends of the earth (Isa. 49:6). The coming eschatological age would be a time when the LORD Himself would be the light of His people (Isa. 60:19-22; cf Rev. 21:23-24). Perhaps Zech 14:5b-7 is especially significant, with its promise of continual light on the last day, followed by

the promise of living water flowing from Jerusalem-this passage probably forming part of the liturgical reading of the Feast.

So, with these verses in mind and "in the context of such powerful ritual, Jesus' declaration must have come with stunning force." (9) What is also stunning is the note of universality about the claim. He is not simply the light of the Jews, but "the light of the World." This reference to light is not just physical or moral light. As Morris correctly points out, that when Jesus declared, "If anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him" (11:9-10), that the reference to the light not being in him, shows that we have moved from physical illumination to spiritual truth. He then comments, "Jesus is telling his hearers that those who reject him, who do not take him into their lives are in grave danger." (10) By way of summary, we contend that in each of the "I AM the light of the world" passages, the main thought is that "Jesus is the only light and that people must respond to the coming of the light by giving him a welcome and believing in him. Apart from that they are lost eternally. That Jesus is the light of the whole world and that people's eternal destiny depend on their reaction to him tell us something very important about him." (10)

"I AM the Door"

The next "I AM" saying of Jesus is found in the context of a disputive discourse with the Pharisees. We see in chapter 9 Jesus healing the blind man, who is subsequently excommunicated for defending Jesus and who eventually believes in Him (vv.34-38). After this miraculous sign, and the subsequent ill treatment of the former blind man by the Pharisees, Jesus contrasts Himself with the religious leaders of His day, whom He terms as "thieves and robbers." This contrast is dressed in the form of a "figure of speech" (v.6), which consists of some very striking metaphors. For example, "sheep pen" (10:1), "shepherd" (v.2), "watchmen" (v.3) and "door", or, "gate" (v.3). Despite the vividness of the metaphors, the Pharisees did not grasp Jesus' point (v.6). Therefore, Jesus, seeking to explain His message and expand its meaning, not only elucidates, but also amplifies and inter-relates the metaphors. For example, He now claims, "I AM the door" (by which the sheep of the sheep pen enter) (v.7). Previously, He spoke of Himself as "the shepherd" (v.2), which HE will do again with a further modification (v.10).

What does Jesus mean when He says "I AM the door"? In order to answer this, we may find it helpful to remind ourselves that a sheep pen normally has one doorway, and that the shepherds of the Near East often slept in the doorway, acting as the door itself. It is plain to see then, in order for the sheep to enter the pen they would obviously have to enter through the doorway, and metaphorically speaking through the shepherd. Thus in answer to our question, we see that Jesus is saying He Himself, and no other, is the means by which the sheep may enter into the promised fulness of life (vv.9-10). For as Morris points out, "Jesus says He is "the door", not "a door." There is something exclusive about "the" door. He is saying that the way into life goes through him, and him alone. He is the door." (11) This is further emphasized when Jesus says, "The thief only comes to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life; and have it to the full." "This is a proverbial way of insisting that there is only one means of receiving eternal life, only

one source of knowledge of God, only one fount of spiritual nourishment, only one basis for spiritual security-Jesus alone". (12) Jesus also said, "If anyone enters through me, he will be saved, and go in and go out, and find pasture" (v.9). Although He does not explain what He means exactly by "saved", we can take it as meaning having "eternal life." For we find the two concepts of being "saved" and having "eternal life" linked in Jhn 3:16-17. Therefore, expositional consistency demands that we understand a similar linkage here.

Thus in conclusion, as Morris has so astutely observed, "once again we encounter the thought of an exclusive salvation, exclusive in the sense that it can be entered only through the door, Jesus Christ. If there is one door for all the race, then once more we are reminded of something very important about Jesus. Like the other I AM sayings, this one leads us to think of deity." (13)

"I AM the Good Shepherd"

The next I AM saying of Jesus is closely related to the one previously discussed, in the sense that it is a metaphor that has been used in the same "figure of speech", in which we find "I AM the door." In chapter 10 verse 1, Jesus speaks of "the shepherd." He now adds an adjective to the word shepherd, and makes the claim "I AM the good shepherd" (10). Here again Jesus is contrasting Himself with the religious leaders, whom He is speaking too, who are the not-so-good-sheperds, or retaining the metaphor in the passage, "the hired hand" (vv.12-13). That He is referring to the Pharisees, as the "hired hand", is evident in verse 13. For there He speaks of the hired hand as "not caring for the sheep." This is an obvious referal to their harsh treatment of the former blind man.

When Jesus used the term "the good shepherd", He is speaking of His intrinsic goodness, as well as His moral rectitude and beauty. In His using the term "shepherd", He is speaking of His position. He is the shepherd of the sheep, He is the one who protects, leads, guides and nourishes the sheep. In turn, the sheep are utterly defensive and totally dependant upon the Shepherd. It is hard not to see an allusion to Ps 23, where the LORD is the Shepherd, who protects, leads, guides and nourishes His sheep. Jesus is also referring to His mission. For on no less than three occasions, He speaks of "laying down" His life for the sheep (vv.15,17,18). The Shepherd, who protects the sheep, now protects them to the point of death. The Shepherd now reveals that He is also the sacrificial "lamb of God" (1:29,35), who willingly lays down His life for the sheep. "The death of Jesus is no tragic accident, but the divinely appointed way whereby salvation would be brought to those who trust in Him." (14) It was not just for the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" that He was to lay down His life, but also for the "sheep of another pen" (10:16), the Gentiles. Thereby, making one flock, resided over by one Shepherd (v.16). How can the death of one man avail the redemption of so many, unless it was rendered more than sufficient by the divinity of this one man.! Thus, we contend that this I AM saying screams out the divinity of Jesus the Christ.

"I AM the Resurrection and the Life"

This particular I AM saying was made to Martha, who's brother Lazarus had recently died. When Jesus told her that Lazarus would rise again she took this to refer to "the resurrection of the last day" (11:23-24). It is at this point that He makes this explicit and astounding claim, "I AM the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, even if he dies, he will live, and everyone who lives, and believes in me will certainly not die." (11:25-26). With this claim, Jesus is not simply stating that He imparts resurrection and life, but that He Himself is resurrection and life. As John said in his Prologue Jesus, (the Word), was life (1:4). Morris notes, "That he is the resurrection means death, which to us appears so final, is no obstacle, and that he is the life means that the quality of life that he imparts to us here and now never ceases." (15) This claim of Jesus is fully substantiated in the following raising of Lazarus from the dead (v.44).

In commenting on John's recording of this incident, Morris powerfully states, "He is writing about one who is supremely great and who has breathtaking superiority over death. It is a comment to the human race that in the end we all face death and there is nothing we can do about that. We may stave off death for a time, but when it takes place it is final. John writes about a Lord for whom it is not final. He is such a great person that even death gives place to him." (15) Surely this claim of Jesus' has no place on the lips of an ordinary man, but can only have place on the lips of Him who is divine.

"I AM the Way and the Truth and the Life"

This is the next I AM saying, to be addressed to those who have committed themselves to Jesus. On the eve of the Lord's crucifixion, Jesus gives His 'Kingly farewell speech'. He has just instituted the Lord's Supper, (though John does not record this), and announced His imminent departure (13:33,36;14:2-3). In conjunction to the announcement of His departure, He adds, "You know the way to the place where I am going" (14:4). To this, the perplexed disciple Thomas responds, "Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?". "He wants the position to be clear, and will not let our Lord's word stand as though he understands them when he really does not. The man's fundamental honesty stands revealed". (16) This provides Jesus with the opportunity of expanding and elucidating what he has just said. Thus, He replies, "I AM the way and the truth and the life". To which He adds, "No-one comes to the Father except through me" (14:6), (*italics mine*). Despite the controversy that surrounds these words, and the many forms of translations and interpretations given, it is clear, by the syntactical structure of these words, that Jesus is saying three distinct things about Himself. (The stress in the verse falls on "the way", since that is the issue (v.5). However, the three terms, "the way", "the truth" and "the life" are syntactically co-ordinate. Hence the indication that Jesus is declaring three distinct things about Himself.)

First He says, "I AM the way". Again, we see here an exclusivity which can not be denied, nor overlooked. Since Jesus refers to going to His Father's house (v.2), and that "No-one comes to the Father except through me (v.6), we can see that He is not speaking of a moral or ethical way, but the way of salvation. The way of salvation leading to the Father. He is confidently stating that He is not one of many ways to God, but "the" way. This astounding claim hits at the heart of our pluralistic society and the syncretistic

philosophy that it dearly subscribes and holds on to. With one fell swoop, He disintegrates man's false notions of approaching God, and asserts His 'uniqueness'. His substitutionary, atoning death is closely linked with Him being "the way". For it is through His death that God and sinners are reconciled.

Second, He claims to be "the truth". This speaks of His utter veracity and reliability. All that He has said, claimed and done can be both believed and trusted in, not simply because He tells the truth, but because He is the truth. For He is the Word of God that has become flesh (1:1,14). As Carson insightfully points out, "Jesus is the truth, because he embodies the supreme revelation of God—he himself 'narrates' God (1:18), says and does exclusively what the Father gives him to say and do (5:19ff; 8:29), indeed he is properly called God (1:1, 18; 20:28). He is God's gracious self-disclosure, his "Word", made flesh (1:14). (17)

Third, Jesus states that He is "the life". This, as Morris correctly states, "takes us into the same area as the saying, "I AM the resurrection and the life". (18) Once again we observe Jesus associating very closely with life. "It is he alone whose life is unique, self-existent like the life of the Father (5:16). He is the life and the source of life to others (3:16)". (19)

We contend, then, that "this comprehensive saying claims an exclusive position for Jesus. He is the one way to God, he is thoroughly reliable, and he stands in a relation to truth such as no one else does. The same, of course, is true of his relationship to life". (20)

"I AM the True Vine"

Now we come to the final I AM saying with the predicate. During the upper room discourse, Jesus twice makes the declaration, that He is "the vine". On the first occasion He links Himself with the Father, when He says "I AM the true vine, and my Father is the gardener", or, "vinedresser" (15:1). On the second occasion He links Himself with the believer, when He declares, "I AM the vine; you are the branches", or, "vine canes" (21), and "goes on to refer to the mutual indwelling of the Saviour and the saved (15:5)". (22)

Many commentators have indicated the connection between this declaration of Jesus' and the Old Testament usage of the vine image. One of these is the noted theologian Bruce Milne. In his commentary on the Book of John, which places the emphasis on Jesus' mission, he states, "The image of the vine serves the 'mission' theme in two important ways. In the first place, it was the supreme symbol of Israel. A great golden vine trailed over the temple porch, and the coinage minted during the revolt against Rome (AD 68-70) also bore a vine symbol. The Old Testament has many pertinent allusions. Possibly the most important in connection with Jesus' claim, I am the true vine (v.1), is Psalm 80, which blends talk of Israel as 'the vine out of Egypt' (v.8) with 'the son of man you raised up for yourself' (v. 17).

But the vine 'is burned with fire' (Ps. 80:16). Israel has failed in God's long-term role she was called to fulfil, that being 'a light for the Gentiles' (Is. 49:6), to bring God's salvation 'to all the ends of the earth'... Israel, however, was more attracted by the gods of the

surrounding nations than penetrating them as a missionary. Her centuries-long declension from God's purposes now reaches its nadir in the rejection of the Messiah and the repudiation of the kingship of God (19:15). But God's purposes, from which Israel turn in final apostasy, does not fall to the ground. It is grasped anew by the one who stands in the midst of Israel, and among the disciples. In contrast to the vine which has destroyed itself by disobedience, Jesus is 'the true vine'. He is the obedient Son through whose sacrifice and consequent mission the age-old purpose of Israel would find fulfilment, the nations would be reached, and 'all the families of the earth shall bless themselves' (Gn. 12:2).

He then continues, "The image of the vine has a second, less theological, pointer to mission. the vine is an essentially utilitarian plant; it exists to bear fruit. W. Temple eloquently portrays the fruit-bearing function of the vine. 'The vine lives to give its life-blood. Its flower is small, its fruit abundant, and when that fruit is mature and the vine has become, for a moment, glorious, the treasure of the grapes is torn down and the vine is cut back to the stem'. This function is reflected in Jesus' stress on fruit-bearing (explicitly in verses 2, 4-5, 8, 16). We should therefore beware of interpretations of this passage which concentrate solely on our inward relationship with the Lord. Its real thrust is the renewal of the mission of Israel through Jesus the Messiah and the disciple community. While more 'subjective' aspects are not entirely absent (cf. Jesus' reference to 'love' and 'obedience' to his commands; 10, 12, 17), the primary focus remains bracingly objective and missionary. Jesus by his exaltation in death and resurrection will be removed tangibly from the world. The disciples are sent into the world, as was Jesus, to carry on the task in his 'absence'. That is the principle implication of Jesus' saying, I am the vine; you are the branches". (23)

While I concur with Milne's interpretation of Jesus being the fulfiller of God's missionary objectives, i.e. the true vine, through His life, death and subsequent resurrection. I do not whole-heartedly agree with his interpretation of I am the vine; you are the branches. I would tend to agree more on the lines of Morris' argument when he states, "the second saying emphasizes the vital contact with Christ. 'He who remains in me, and I in him', says Jesus 'this man bears much fruit, apart from me you can do nothing' (15:5)." He continues, "it is an error to suppose that in the energy of the flesh that we are able to do anything that pleases God. For that we need the strength that he alone can supply. The condition of fruitful in Christian service is vital contact with Christ... Exactly what the "fruit" is is not explained, but usually in the New Testament the word means qualities of Christian character (Matt. 3:8; 7:20; Rom. 6:22; Gal. 5:22 etc.) and we should see this as primary in mind here. (24)

When we consider that "Salvation comes from God" (Jonah 2:9), and that Jesus the Christ is appointed of God as "a light for the Gentiles", so that He may bring God's "salvation to the ends of the earth" (Isa. 49:6), and that the transformation of the believer is only possible by the work of the indwelling Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9), and one's vital contact with Him (Jn 15:5). We can see that this I AM saying, like the rest, indicates His deity.

"I AM" without the Predicate

Having briefly examined the I AM sayings with a predicate, we now come to the I AM sayings without the predicate. While it may be true that the Greek words 'ego eimi', (translated I am in English), can normally have a simple human meaning (e.g. Jn. 9:9; 12:26), as we have already pointed out John's use of the term is highly distinctive. This truth is evident as one views the following passages in their context.

In John Chapter four, we see Jesus having a conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well. When she states that the matters that they have been discussing would be dealt with by the coming Messiah, Jesus responds, "I AM, who am speaking to you"(v.26). Morris points out that, "Ethelbert Stauffer", (whoever he is!), "denies that this is 'an indirect messianic affirmation', and insists 'that John wishes Jesus' answer to be understood as the theophanic formula ANI HU'. (25) While I Totally disagree with Stauffer that this is not 'an indirect messianic affirmation', as a syntactical analysis indicates that it is. (For Jesus is directly responding to her statement about the Messiah (v.15)). I do, however, concur with him that that this is a "Theophanic formula". For as we have previously stated, John's usage of the term is highly distinctive, the underling emphasis being divinity. I see no incongruity in seeing Jesus' claim as an indirect Messianic affirmation, and a claim to deity. For, we have already observed that John's intentions are to demonstrate the Messiahship and Deity of Jesus (20:30-31). Also, we see a link between "the Prophet who is to come into the world" (6:14), and His deity (6:33).

Two other passages, in which we find the "I AM" sayings, are Chapters 8 and 13. In the former passage, Jesus says to the Jews, "Unless you believe that I AM, you will die in your sins" (v.24). While in the latter, He declares to His disciples, "I tell you before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe that I AM" (13:19). Morris helpfully comments, "In both passages we find the Johannine emphasis on the importance of believing, and in both it is linked with Jesus' own person. In both Jesus is saying that it is important that those addressed come to trust him as the I AM, which looks very much like a claim to sharing in the nature of deity". (25)

Probably the most familiar "I AM" saying, without the predicate, is to be found in verse 58 of chapter 8. There, Jesus pulls the theological rug from underneath the feet of the Jews, when He confidently asserts His pre-existent and consequently His deity, by saying, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM". It is evident, from the context, that Jesus was declaring His deity. For the biblical record states, "At this, they picked up stones to stone him". John has previously stated that the Jews tried to kill Jesus, for exactly the same reason-"He was calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God" (5:18).

Now that we have briefly examined both groups of the "I AM" sayings, from a historical, literary, lexical, syntactical, structural and theological approach, we conclude that the "I AM" sayings prove the deity of Jesus the Christ. And that when Jesus uttered these solemn words, He sought to convey the astounding fact of his divine nature--as did the Apostle John when he recorded these life-giving words.

NOTES

1. Leon Morris, Jesus Is The Christ (STUDIES IN THE THEOLOGY OF JOHN), pp. 107-8.
2. Ibid., p. 109.
3. Bruce Milne, The Message of JOHN, p. 110.
4. Ibid., p. 111.
5. Ibid.
6. L. Morris, Jesus Is The Christ, p. 110.
7. B. Milne, The Message of JOHN, p. 111.
8. Mishnah, tractate Sukkah 4.9.
9. D.A. Carson, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN, p. 338.
10. L. Morris, Jesus Is The Christ, p. 113.
11. Ibid., p. 114.
12. D.A. Carson, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN, p. 385.
13. L. Morris, Jesus Is The Christ, p. 114-15.
14. Ibid., p. 116.
15. Ibid., p. 117-18.
16. L. Morris, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN, p. 640.
17. D.A. Carson, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN, p. 491.
18. L. Morris, Jesus Is The Christ, p. 119.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., p. 120.
22. Ibid.
23. B. Milne, The Message of JOHN, p. 219-20.
24. L. Morris, Jesus Is The Christ, pp. 121-22.
25. Ibid., p. 122.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

NESTLE-ALAND, NOVUM TESTAMENTUM GRAECE (26th Edition).
David Alan Black, USING NEW TESTAMENT GREEK IN MINISTRY.
Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton, The Septuagint With Apocrapha.
Gerald Bray, KNOWING JESUS.
F.F. Bruce, THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.
D.A. Carson, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.
Mario Pei and Frank Gaynor, Dictionary of Linguistics.
Jay P. Green, Sr, Editor, Pocket Interlinear: New Testament.
Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology.
Bruce Milne, The Message of JOHN.
Leon Morris, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.
Leon Morris, Jesus Is The Christ (STUDIES IN THE THEOLOGY OF JOHN).

Peace in Jesus name,

Adel Mohammed El Naggar

Please free to contact me at Adel_el-naggar@dial.pipex.com