



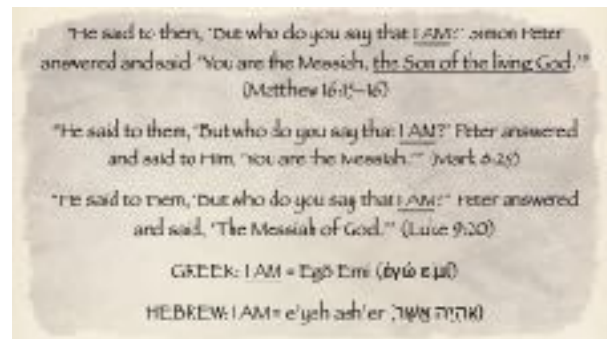
Who is Yeshua the Messiah?
Part 9: The Great I AM (Part A)
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{NOTE: The actual oral sermon and video recording varies significantly and even materially from these notes, but this “transcript” gives you a general idea of the direction of the message.}

{Title slide} Shabbat shalom, brothers and sisters. We’re in week nine of our sermon series, “Who is Yeshua the Messiah?,” and I want to give you the heads up that—including today’s topic—I have about a dozen more concepts I want to address to help answer this critically important question. A few of these matters will take more than one message to address, so only God knows how much longer we’re going to go in this series. If you’ve been with us from the beginning, you’ll notice that we will return to some of the same passages we’ve already covered, but I want you to know that when we do this, I intend to dig into the passage from another angle and show you something new. The Word of God is eternal, after all. As I’ve noted before, we could literally study this question forever. Remember, Yeshua said that Moses wrote about Him; He also explained that the Prophets and the Psalms—all of the Scriptures—were given to reveal the Truth about Him. When we study the Scriptures every day, as God commanded, seeking Him while He can be found, He will reveal His identity, His heart, and His will for us. That being said, concerning the question—“Who is Yeshua the Messiah?”—this is a question that has to be answered. Yeshua asked this question of His own disciples, saying: “Who do you say that I Am?” — — So, who do you declare Yeshua to be? What’s your confession? We all have to have an answer. We’re not studying this question for intellectual stimulation. We’re not coming here week after week to fill our heads with knowledge; though I do hope you learn something from this series. We’re looking to answer this question because it’s literally a matter of life and death for each and every man and woman who has ever lived. Today I’m going to give you another answer, based on Scripture, and it is this: Yeshua the Messiah is the “Great I AM,” and He said so Himself many times. Belief or unbelief in this statement

has consequences. If we believe this, it means that we ought to pray to Yeshua, that we ought to worship Yeshua, that we ought to look to Yeshua for our salvation, our hope, and our deliverance from the world—from sin and death. It means that Yeshua is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, just like He said, and that no one gets to the Father except through Him. On the flip side, if a person does not believe that Yeshua is the Great I Am, he or she is as good as dead. Your answer to this question—my answer to this question—it matters more than anything else. We have to get this right! No one will enter the Promised Land of God without faith in Yeshua's identity here, and that's why we're going to take a couple weeks on today's topic.

{New slide} Now, when considering the question of Yeshua's identity as "the Great I AM," most people turn to His "I AM" statements in the Gospel of John, and we are going to do that, too—mostly next week. So, the first thing I want to show you is the very question itself—the one Yeshua asked His disciples and the one He asks you and me today. Whether we consider



Matthew 16:15, Mark 8:29, or Luke 9:20, the question is the same as you can see on the screen (above). And that question is: "Who do you say that I AM?" Literally, it reads: "Who do you declare me to be?" Who is Yeshua? — — All three versions include the following answer from Peter. He said: "You are THE Messiah," and that answer is good enough on its own, but Luke and Matthew add additional detail; namely, "You are THE Messiah of God" and "You are THE Messiah, THE Son of the living God."

Messiah, which means "anointed one," can refer to any anointed king, such as Saul or David, or any anointed prophet like Elijah and Elisha. Even you and I can be anointed by the Holy Spirit—and God willing, we are. But the context here illustrates that Yeshua is not just AN anointed one, but "THE" anointed one of God, "THE" Son of the Most High, "THE" promised one Who had come to redeem all flesh. Peter's answer contains the Greek definite article "ho (ὁ)," which means "THE." And so, "THE Messiah" refers to THE one and only, not many possible people. The coming Messiah had been prophesied from the very beginning, and now He had come to the earth. He is THE Seed promised to Adam and Eve; to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; to David; and frankly, to the whole world—and faith in Him is the only Way we can be made right with the Father, which I'll show you in a few moments. First, let me ask you this: If "THE Messiah" refers to any number of many anointed prophets or kings, why would Yeshua ask the question to begin with? Why would He ask: "Who do you say that I AM?" Did

anyone else ever ask such a question? Did Abraham, Isaac or Jacob ask other people that question about themselves? Did David ask that question of himself? Did Peter? Did Paul? Should you or I ask other people that question about ourselves? — What would you say to someone who came up to you on the street and said: “Who do you say that I AM?” — Think about that! — I want you to see that the very question itself contains its own answer. — Yeshua is the “Great I AM.” Do you believe it? — I want to change the way the question is posed slightly to shift your perspective. And just so you’re aware, this is my interpretation that I hope will clarify what Yeshua is really asking. In the question, the root word for “who” is “tis (τίς)” in the Greek, and it’s an interrogative pronoun, meaning “who,” “what,” “which,” or even “wherefore.” The latter possible translation is an older English word meaning “for what reason,” and it even implies the question: “So what?” This is interesting. We might contemplate a more direct question that Yeshua was implying here, which is this: “DO you say that ‘I AM?’,” and within the same thought: “And what does that mean for you?” {—Pause—} What does that mean for you? {—Pause—}

{New slide} As I noted a moment ago, when we go to the Greek for the question, it literally reads: “tina hymeis legete me einai (τίνα ὑμεῖς λέγετε με εἶναι),” which is “Who do you declare Me to be?” Even with the question translated directly, everything we’ve pondered so far remains consistent. The question is still unique—it’s not something anyone else would ask, unless they were Yeshua. And, more importantly, when we look at the root of the words, “me einai (με εἶναι),” which literally translates to, “Me to be,” they are specifically a different form of the root words “Egō Eimi (ἐγὼ εἰμί)” in the Greek, which is translated “I AM.” I apologize that this is a bit technical, but I have to lay this groundwork for you to show that the translators of our English text aren’t off base by using the translation “I AM” here in Matthew 16:15, Mark 8:29, or Luke 9:20 in Yeshua’s question, and also that the question posed means everything I’m explaining. Whether the question is “Who do you declare Me to be?” or “Who do you say that I AM?,” it is the same question with the same power and the same purpose. Specifically, the question is meant to direct our attention back to the Scriptures, especially to the Greek version of Exodus 3:14 in the Septuagint. (By way of background, the Greek Septuagint is said to have been commissioned by Ptolemy II Philadelphus, the Greek Pharaoh of Egypt, well before the time of Yeshua, and legend has it that 72 Hebrew Scribes translated the Torah to Koine Greek at his request so that a copy could be kept in the Library at Alexandria. We still have copies of the Greek Septuagint today and it’s clear that several New Testament writers directly quoted from the Greek translation rather than the Hebrew original. For instance, the citation of Psalm 40, verse 6 in Hebrews 10:5-7—where we read: “a body you have

prepared for Me,” isn’t drawn from the Hebrew text, which reads, “my ears have been opened.” The clause in the Book of Hebrews is actually a direct citation from Psalm 39:7 in the Septuagint, which has a different number scheme for the Psalms than the Hebrew version. This isn’t the only example, but to get back to the point, I want you to note that most Jews in First Century Israel would have been quite familiar with the Septuagint, and especially the relevant section in Exodus 3:14 where “God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” In the Septuagint, the Greek reads “Egō Eimi (ἐγὼ εἰμί) ὁ ὢν (ὁ ὢν),” where the Greek word “ōn (ὢν)” is just another form of “eimi (εἰμί).” Thus, the Greek reads literally, “I AM the one who exists,” which ostensibly means exactly the same thing as “I AM that I AM.” This is what God said to Moses in the Hebrew version; namely, “e’yeh ash’er e’yeh (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה),” “I AM that I AM.” The word choice in the Gospels is intentional, although I’ll admit it may be hard to understand without a close study of all the various translations. Continuing into the next clause in Exodus 3:14 in the Septuagint, God told Moses to explain that “ho Eimi (ὁ εἰμί)—the One who exists—was sending him to deliver the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. In other words, the “Great I AM” had met with Moses—the ever existent one. “Egō Eimi (ἐγὼ εἰμί)” is how He referred to Himself in the Greek translation. If you haven’t already, study the text on your own; I know you’ll see the connection, especially if you ask the LORD to help you. The LORD does not misappropriate words, but each time He opens His mouth His Word goes forth to accomplish His purpose. It does not return to Him void. Admittedly, I started today’s message with a more obscure connection on purpose, because it is a perfect introduction to the more solid connections I’m going to show you next.

{New slide} Quite a bit more directly, and to the underlying point I’ve made about the importance of the question—“Who do you say that I AM?”—Yeshua said to the Jewish Scribes and Pharisees, as we read in John 8:23-24: “You are from beneath; I AM from above. You are of this world; I AM not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I AM (He), you will die in your sins.” This is one of the most amazing things we’re going to read today, and it is not an isolated verse. For instance, speaking to the same group of people, we read in Acts 4:12 how the Apostles Peter and John explained the exact same thing about Messiah Yeshua. They said: “there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” As Yeshua had explained earlier, He is the “Great I Am,” and it is His name alone that saves—the name Yeshua, which literally means “salvation.” To the point, when we review John 8:23-24, the exact words, “Egō Eimi (ἐγὼ εἰμί),” are used in each case where we read “I AM” in English, just like in Exodus 3:14 from the Septuagint. Yeshua explained: “I AM from above” and “I AM not of this world.” Think

critically about what Yeshua explained to the Scribes and Pharisees here. His intended meaning is unavoidable. The Great “I AM” is not from the world, even though He was born into it, because He had come down from His eternal throne in Heaven. Yeshua had explained this earlier to Nicodemus in John 3:13, where we read: “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.” This is God’s way of explaining His complex nature to those of us who believe, and when we search Him out, we will find Him. Yeshua, the Son of Man, was the only one to ever come down from Heaven and ascend back up to it, and even when He was in the world, He was still “in Heaven,” because He and the Father are One—He is the “Great I AM”—the “ever-existing One.” The Scribes and Pharisees, who He was speaking to in John 8, were “from beneath” and also “of the world,” even though they thought quite highly of themselves. Remember the LORD said in Matthew 23:12, “whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Though Yeshua was born into the flesh and became a man, He was never “from beneath” or “of the world.” He always was, is, and ever shall be the “Great I AM” from above, who is “not of this world.” He humbled Himself greatly—after all, humility is a fruit of the Holy Spirit—and in His humble state He was exalted on High. But even more clearly than this, Yeshua told these same Scribes and Pharisees: “If you do not believe that I AM (He), you will die in your sins.” Thus those men who thought highly of themselves would be humbled if they did not find occasion to humble themselves. The word “He” is added here in Yeshua’s statement; it’s actually not found in the original Greek, and this is at the very least an interesting side note. The translation should read, “If you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins.” That is, if you do not believe Yeshua is “Egō Eimi (ἐγώ εἰμι),” there is absolutely no hope for salvation. There is “no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” “No one gets to the Father, except through” Yeshua (John 14:6). A few verses later in John 8:28, Yeshua said to the same Scribes and Pharisees, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM (He), and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things....” Again, the word “He” is not present in the original Greek. It’s simply “Egō Eimi (ἐγώ εἰμι),” as in the other instances. At His crucifixion and subsequent resurrection, all would know Yeshua’s identity, even though many of them would still reject Him. His identity is undeniable, but many still hate Him without a cause. They harbor the spirit of Antichrist, the spirit that denies the Son’s identity, the spirit that rebuts: “Do we not rightly say that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?” The Word of God in Isaiah 5:20 judges them, where we read: “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil...” Though the Jewish leaders perceived they had the upper hand on Yeshua in this dialogue, He had control throughout and left the scene unscathed by their words or their attempts to silence Him. In the dialogue that

followed, Yeshua explained that He preceded “Abraham,” the patriarch, who “rejoiced to see [His] day.” He added, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” From a worldly perspective, this statement sounds nuts. The Scribes and Pharisees even said, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” They couldn’t see past their eyes to the spiritual realities Yeshua was communicating to them. Yeshua’s reply was that He, being a man younger than 50, had indeed preceded Abraham, because He is “the Great I AM.” There’s no other possible meaning for what Yeshua said here, and the Scribes and Pharisees now understood what He was saying. According to John 8:59, “they took up stones to throw at Him;...” Though they were blind to the Truth of Yeshua’s identity, they still understood Who He was claiming to be. They considered it blasphemy, but they were the blasphemers on a path to death. Only those who believe Yeshua’s Words will be saved.

{New slide} I want to take you to the Book of Isaiah next. There we can see prophecy that refers directly to Yeshua’s day, and even this very conversation the LORD engaged in with the Scribes and Pharisees. There are many, many references to choose from, and I’m only going to show you a handful, but these should certainly open your eyes to the unity of Scripture and how it relates to the LORD’s complex nature that He was explaining in John 8. In Isaiah 52, starting in verse 3, we read: “For thus says the LORD: ‘You have sold yourselves for nothing, And you shall be redeemed without money.’” In other words, they sold themselves to sin—to do evil—for no reward. There was no purpose for it. It was a violation of God’s instruction and it led to consequences that the LORD foretold. Continuing in verse 4, the LORD explained: ‘My people went down at first Into Egypt to dwell there; Then the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.’ They were taken into captivity in Egypt, and then the LORD freed them from bondage, taking them into the Promised Land. But there they fell away again and the Assyrians oppressed them without cause. In other words, the LORD didn’t desire for Israel to fall into the hands of the enemy, but Israel turned their back on God so God allowed them to be conquered. Not mentioned (and possibly prophesied) here (as part of an inaugurated eschatology), Judah also later fell into bondage to Babylon for the same reason. In any case, the reason I’ve brought you here comes next in Verse 5. It seems to foretell the situation Judah endured in the First Century, when Yeshua walked the earth, when the Roman empire ruled over them. We read: “Now therefore, what have I here,’ says the LORD, ‘That My people are taken away for nothing? Those who rule over them Make them wail,’ says the LORD, ‘And My name is blasphemed continually every day.’” The Jewish leaders could not acknowledge Yeshua, and the Roman leaders didn’t acknowledge Him either. The Jewish leaders desired a Messiah to help them conquer Rome, but little did they know

the Messiah had come to bring eternal salvation that would far exceed freedom from any earthly oppression. Because He did not meet their worldly expectations, they blasphemed Him—they accused the creator of Heaven and Earth and everything in it, the one who redeemed them and delivered them so many times, of possessing a demon. There could be no salvation with such false testimony, for as Yeshua Himself said, “If you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins.” And yet, there were many who believed, and many whose sins were forgiven by the One who brought good news and proclaimed peace and salvation. Continuing, we read in verses 6-7, “Therefore My people shall know My name; Therefore they shall know in that day That I AM He who speaks: ‘Behold, it is I.’” How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’” In the Greek version of this passage, we can understand that God’s people will know His name; they shall know that “Egō Eimi (ἐγώ εἰμι)” speaks—and Yeshua is His name.

{New slide} Consider the plain language of Mark 1, verses 14-15, where we read: “Now after John was put in prison, Yeshua came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’” The Great I AM had come to fulfill the prophecies of old, He preached the good news; that the kingdom of God was at hand for all who believe in the Word that He spoke. Announcing His birth in Luke 2, verses 10-11, the angels proclaimed to the shepherds of Israel: “‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Messiah the LORD.’” Yahweh had come to dwell with Israel in the flesh; He was the Savior who had come to reign forever and ever, and even God’s heavenly angels proclaimed this truth from high above the mountains. But those who ruled over Israel and blasphemed Him would bring judgment upon the nation; only those who call upon His name would be saved. Anyone who rejected Yeshua’s identity as the “Great I AM” would die in their sins. Toward the end of Yeshua’s earthly ministry, the High Priest asked Him plainly, saying: “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed?” Not only did Yeshua answer in the affirmative, He replied: “Egō Eimi (ἐγώ εἰμι).” In Mark 14, verses 61-62, we read His response: “I AM. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” The One who brought good news and proclaimed peace and salvation, declared to the Jewish leaders: “Your God reigns.” Unfortunately for them, they rejected Him without a cause. When Yeshua returns, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Yeshua is Yahweh to the glory of Elohim, but whoever has rejected Him will die in their sins. Those who believe in Him—that He is the Great I

AM—will inherit eternal life. Hearing Yeshua’s statement, the High Priest tore His clothes, violating the Torah of God, bringing judgment upon himself. He declared “blasphemy” to the greatest Truth ever preached, and in so doing He called “evil good and good evil.” The Word of God will judge all who do the same when the LORD returns, for He sits at the right hand of power and is coming on the clouds of Heaven to judge the living and the dead.

{New slide} Turning back a few pages to Isaiah 43, some additional prophecies clearly explained God’s sole position as the “Great I AM”—there is no other beside Him, and we have to consider the implications of this. I think you’ll find it fascinating how similar these passages sound to what Yeshua told the Scribes and Pharisees in John 8, but they rejected the Word Yeshua brought to them. He declared the good news to them, but they did not receive it. Why? In Isaiah 43, verses 10-11, we read: “‘You are My witnesses,’ says the LORD, ‘And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I AM He[—“Egō Eimi (ἐγὼ εἰμί)”. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, AM the LORD, And besides Me there is no Savior.” On the surface, this passage makes it seem that Yahweh alone is the Savior, and any man claiming to be God is a false prophet, and granted, this is exactly what the Jewish leaders believed. But these leaders failed to understand the harmony of Scripture that says exactly the opposite. Besides the Great I AM, there is no Salvation—no Yeshua, that is. So when Yeshua said in John 8:23-34, “if you do not believe that I AM (He), you will die in your sins.” the context is fully apparent. The Scribes and Pharisees picked up stones to throw at Yeshua because they knew what He was saying and they doubted Him. They did this also in John 10:30-33. Right after the LORD said, “I and My Father are One,” again the Jewish leaders picked up stones to throw at Him, saying “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.” They didn’t miss Yeshua’s point. They knew exactly what He proclaimed, but they rejected it. They saw verses such as Isaiah 43:13 and believed such declarations could only apply to the Heavenly Father. We read: “Indeed before the day was, I AM (He); And there is no one who can deliver out of My hand; I work, and who will reverse it?” No one can undo the finished work of God. No one can be saved outside of the salvation that God provides. In Isaiah 43:25, the LORD explained even more directly, “I, even I, AM (He) who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.” The “Great I AM”—“Egō Eimi (ἐγὼ εἰμί)”—He is the only One who can forgive sins. And yet, Yeshua Himself said, “If you do not believe that I AM (He), you will die in your sins.” How could this be? We have to have an answer, and my answer is this: “Sh’ma Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad.” That is: Hear ‘O Israel, the LORD

your God, the LORD is One.” Scripture consistently shows us the identity of the Father and the Son are united, and yet also distinct. Isaiah made clear: “Yahweh, the LORD, is the “Great I AM,” and the Apostolic writings made clear: Yeshua, who is Yahweh, is the “Great I AM.” The Father is invisible, and the Son is visible; the Father is Spirit, and the Son became flesh and dwelt among us. Now today, the Father and the Son come to dwell within us through the Holy Spirit.

{New slide} The ever-existing One reveals His complex nature to His people every chance He gets, all throughout Scripture; we only need eyes to see and ears to hear to grasp the Truths He has presented to those who love Him. The LORD desires that we seek Him out, to turn our lives toward Him and the Way He has shown us, and this is when we can truly “hear the good news” about our Beloved. Consider what the Apostle Paul wrote in Titus 3, verses 3-7, for instance, where he encouraged disciples to “be ready for every good work.” We read: “For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Messiah Yeshua our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Do you see the mystery? Though we were once sinners, now we can walk in the hope of eternal life through “the love of God our Savior.” Indeed, our Father God saved us by His mercy, through the cleansing and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, who He provided for us through the death and resurrection of Messiah Yeshua, our Savior. Paul called the Father our Savior and He called Yeshua our Savior, and this is no accident. Just as Isaiah said, besides Yahweh, the Great I AM, there is no Savior. The answer is “yes” and “amen.” And if we do not believe Yeshua is the Great I AM, we will die in our sins, according to Yeshua Himself. We find another example in Luke 8. Yeshua had crossed the Sea of Galilee into the country of the Gadarenes, where He healed a man living in the cemetery who had been tormented by a Legion of demons. Let's pick up the story in verse 38, where we read: “Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Yeshua sent him away, saying, ‘Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.’ And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Yeshua had done for him.” This is the type of passage that we might completely miss if we don’t pause to study it closely, and what we find is not an accident. Who healed the man? Who freed him from bondage? Was it God the Father or Yeshua the Son? The answer is “yes” and “amen.” Yeshua

told the man to go and preach the good news, to “tell what great things God” had done for him. He obeyed by proclaiming throughout the whole city “what great things Yeshua had done for him.” It’s so important when we study Scripture to grasp what the LORD is showing us in sections like this. We need to pause and contemplate such things. We shouldn’t move on until we fully understand what we’re reading. We shouldn’t move on until we have an encounter with the LORD. The Word of God is living and powerful, and in each and every passage God gives instruction for our lives. Here we’ve learned how important it is to proclaim that Yeshua is God our Savior, who heals us from all of our infirmities so we can hear and obey His Word, which has come forth from the Father. We also learn that those of us who are redeemed cannot rest on our faith in Yeshua alone, for our mission is not only to believe, but to teach others the reason that we have hope so they can also turn to do the work of God in their lives. This is the calling of the Great I AM on His people.

{New slide} We can see a similar theme in the story of the Samaritan woman at the well in John Chapter 4. This woman wasn’t possessed by demons, but she suffered from the consequences of sexual immorality and unfaithfulness. She was living with a sixth man who was not her husband after having five husbands prior, and Yeshua called her out on her poor choices. Was the woman convicted? In verses 25-26, we read: “The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ Yeshua said to her, ‘I who speak to you AM He.’” In other words, He answered her in the affirmative by saying “I AM,” “Egō Eimi (ἐγώ εἰμι).” She didn’t bat an eye, but leaving her water pot behind she ran into the city and testified about Yeshua’s identity, calling everyone in town to come to Him. She said in verse 29, “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” In other words, Yeshua knew her private sins and called her to repent. Only the Messiah, the Son of God, could do such a thing. Only God knows what’s inside our hearts as well as those secrets we have not revealed to anyone else. Have we laid them at His feet and given Him the glory? Based on the Samaritan woman’s limited understanding, Yeshua fit the description of the Messiah she expected, and He also confirmed His identity when she spoke about Him. Remember what we’ve read in 1st John 1:9, “if we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” If the woman was going to everyone she saw, declaring “This man told me all things that I ever did,” it’s clear that she was confessing her sins to her brethren. For this, she was saved by God, and this salvation released her from her shame. In her excitement, she wanted everyone else to receive Yeshua’s salvation, also. Her example is for us.

{New slide} As the story continues, the men she spoke with went out to have their own experience with Yeshua—to see for themselves. This is the very reason we ought to share the testimony concerning our salvation as well as any encounters we have had with the LORD. So that others want to meet Him. We don't have the power to save others within ourselves, because we are not God. But when we explain what Yeshua has done for us—how He has saved us from our sins—others who desire salvation may turn to Him for their own salvation, also. Yeshua is the only One who can save, because He is God—and besides Yahweh, there is no Savior. The Great I Am came forth from Heaven to provide an opportunity for all men and women to receive Salvation, if only they would repent and believe. But how would they believe without a teacher? This is the role the Great I AM calls each of us to fill. We become ministers of reconciliation, seeking those who need to be reconciled with God so that we can point them to Yeshua, the One who reconciles. We read in verse 39, "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, 'He told me all that I ever did.'" Whenever we stand firm and testify concerning the Truth that Yeshua is "I AM," and He has changed our heart to follow Him, we attract the attention of other people who come to consider the Word of Truth for themselves. They come to Yeshua on account of our testimony—what Yeshua has done for us—but they believe because of the testimony of the "Great I AM" Himself; how He convicts them of their own sins through His Word. In verse 41-42, we read quite directly: "And many more believed because of His own Word. Then they said to the woman, 'Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Messiah, the Savior of the world.'" These Samaritans had their own encounter with the LORD, and this brought them to their knees. They themselves were saved, not because of what the woman said, but because they met with the Great I AM Himself. Yeshua is the Savior of the world. These Samaritans confessed Yeshua's identity as the Messiah, the Savior of the world, and this is what changed their lives to follow Him. We ought to lead others in the very same way, after we ourselves have fully embraced the LORD.

{New slide} In fact, we have to be willing to follow Yeshua even when it seems humanly impossible, for only He can keep us above the chaos of the world and the darkness that tries to pull us down. Parallel stories in Matthew 14, Mark 6, and John 6 illustrate the power of the "Great I AM" to help us overcome our fears, discouragement, and doubts. On this occasion, Yeshua sent His apostles ahead of Him on a boat to the other side of the sea while He climbed a mountain to pray. The scene presents a historical parable for the LORD's ascension into heaven while we navigate the stormy waters of this life without His physical presence. As we look to the version of the story

in Matthew 14, we read, starting in verse 25: "Now in the fourth watch of the night Yeshua went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out for fear." There are many who have the temptation to treat Yeshua as a ghost—as one who is no longer with us, but this is not the Truth. Yeshua and the Father have promised to come to us—to all who believe in the Son's identity and accomplishments, and therefore keep the commandments of God. He speaks to us, just as He spoke next to the Apostles in the boat. Starting in verse 27, we read: "But immediately Yeshua spoke to them, saying, 'Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.'" This is good encouragement. The LORD spoke, saying, "It is I." For those who haven't guessed it, that's "Egō Eimi (ἐγώ εἰμι)." He literally said: "Take courage. I AM. Do not be afraid." Take note of Deuteronomy 31:6, where Moses said, "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." And in Isaiah 41:10, take note of this one, too, the LORD said: "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I AM your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." God literally said, "I AM," and I will uphold you with Yeshua—My righteous right hand. Do not be afraid. Be of good courage. The LORD, if nothing else, consistently speaks the same Truth to the point that we ought to both count on Him and believe in Him, and this is the point of the story.

{New slide} Next, Peter, being a good disciple of Yeshua, tested the apparent spirit he saw walking on the water, saying: "LORD, if it is You, command me to come to you on the water." Yeshua replied with a command: "Come." And while we certainly ought to practice similar discernment, we also ought to move when we're sure that the LORD is calling us to follow Him out, even if executing on the Word of the God seems impossible. Remember Yeshua's Word in Matthew 19:26, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Within context, Yeshua was speaking about a rich man entering the Kingdom of Heaven, but the principle can certainly apply to any situation where we act according to God's will. The LORD willed Peter to do something seemingly impossible to build the faith of us all, and that was for Him to get out of the boat and walk on water.

{New slide} Peter did it. He was the only man who ever did, but you and I can certainly walk out with similar faith whenever the LORD asks us to do something seemingly impossible. Our duty is to obey and to trust that Yeshua will take care of all the rest. In Peter's obedience, he took his eyes off of Yeshua. He saw the trials and tribulations of this life, the wind and the waves, and he began to sink. Don't we do this too? We start

out strong, running forward in obedience to God only to hit the first hurdle and begin to sink? If we ever find ourselves in this position, we ought to do the same thing Peter did. He said: "LORD, save me!" We read: "Immediately, Yeshua stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?'" It's not wrong to ask the LORD to help. It's not wrong to understand that He is the "Great I AM," who is always there to uphold us with His righteous right hand. It's not wrong to worship Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God," just as the Apostles did that day. The lesson for us to learn here is endurance. Because Yeshua is "The Great I AM," when we keep our eyes on Him and trust Him to hold us up, we will not sink. We will always stay above the waves.

{New slide} One final example shows us an even greater extreme, even in the face of persecution, prosecution, torture, or death, we can trust the "Great I AM" to always retain control of every detail. He said in Joshua 1:5, "I will never leave you nor forsake you," and He meant this for us to trust, also. Nothing happens to us outside of His will, "and we know," as the Apostle Paul explained in Romans 8:28, "that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Brothers and sisters, you and I are called according to His purpose. Yeshua gave us Himself as an example in every way, even giving up His very own life for us, so that we too might give up everything we have, even our very own lives, for Him. In doing this, as Yeshua said in Matthew 16:25, "whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." When we turn to John 18 then, we find Yeshua in the Garden of Gethsemane with Peter James and John praying, and Judas was about to lead a small army there to arrest the LORD in secret.

{New slide} We pick up the story in verse 3, where we read: "Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Yeshua therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, 'Whom are you seeking?' They answered Him, 'Yeshua of Nazareth.' Yeshua said to them, 'I AM He.' And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, 'I AM He,' they drew back and fell to the ground." I want to stop here, because this is another passage where we might breeze past this verse and not think twice about it, but I want you to contemplate what just happened. Looking for Yeshua of Nazareth, Yeshua replied, "I AM," that is: "Egō Eimi (ἐγώ εἰμι)." The word "He" is not in this text either. The LORD literally declared Himself to be God in the presence of a detachment of Roman and Jewish soldiers—to be the "eternally existent one"—and they fell to the ground at His Word. This is where Yeshua's statement in John 10:17-18 ought to be brought to the

table, where we read: ““Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”” Indeed, the LORD Himself was in complete control of the situation, and likewise, He is in complete control in every situation we might face, also. The question is: "Do we trust Him?" Who do we say that He is? If we have full faith and trust in Yeshua, it doesn't matter if we face trial, punishment and even death for His name, for He has promised us eternal life. Do we believe this? Do we believe that "whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for [Yeshua's] sake will find it"? Do you believe it? While the narrative certainly expresses the story of Yeshua's own trial and tribulation, the LORD desires us to follow Him.

{New slide} In John 16:33, He said, "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." It's not a question of "If" but "when." Will we be ready to step out of the boat and walk on water when Yeshua says "come"? Will we be ready to face persecution and even death for His name, because we know that He is "The Great I AM," the eternally existent one, and He has said in John 14:2-3, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I AM, there you may be also." Our home is not here in this world, it is with the Father in Heaven, and the Father and the Son are One, with the Holy Spirit, the "Great I AM." As we read on in John 18, starting in verse 7, we can see that Yeshua "asked them again, 'Whom are you seeking?' And they said, 'Yeshua of Nazareth.' Yeshua answered, 'I have told you that I AM He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,' that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, 'Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.'" Again, the LORD is in control of every little detail. When He is ready to call us home, when our time has come, He will declare it and it will be as He wills. Do we trust in the will of the "eternally existent One"? Do we trust in His Word? Do we trust in His promises? Do we trust in His identity? Do we trust in the "Great I AM"?

{New slide} If so, then our response ought to be total surrender to Yeshua as we move throughout this life, because this life is temporary and leads to nothing, while eternal life awaits those answer Yeshua's question, "But who do you say that I AM?," the exact same way that Peter did; namely, "You are THE Messiah, THE Son of the living God." You are the Great I AM. You are One in Being with the Father. You are the One who leads all of His children into His Kingdom, and doesn't lose a single one. And He doesn't, so long as we don't wander off on our own accord on account of

discouragement, fear or doubting. Don't let yourself get caught up in such temptations of the evil one. Cry out: "LORD, Help!" for He will extend His righteous Right Hand to uphold you always when you do! He will pull you up and help you walk with Him back to safety. He will never give us more than we can handle, but He certainly is going to challenge us. He's going to command us to come out, and we have to be ready. He's going to allow our enemies to confront us, and we have to be ready to stand in our faith, regardless of the threat. Next week, we will continue to look at the "I Am" statements of Yeshua in the Gospel of John and all of the other nuances that go with it. For now, brothers and sisters, I want you to be at peace knowing that Yeshua has overcome the world and there is nothing that can separate us from Him except ourselves. Our daily focus ought to be humility before the "Great I AM," for when we surrender our own will to His, He will raise us up after Himself and we will experience the incomparable joy of dwelling in His presence forever. I pray this for you and for me. Shabbat shalom.