



Who is Yeshua the Messiah?
 Part 10: The Great I AM (Part B)
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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. When I presented Yeshua’s life-altering question to you last week—“Who do you say that I AM?”—Did you contemplate your answer? — — Who is Yeshua the Messiah to you personally? What does He mean to you? What has He done for you? What promises has He given to you? And how should you pray, worship, and live on account of your answer to these questions? — — How much time did you spend contemplating your answer? — — What IS your answer? — — If you were with us last week, you know the answer I presented to you, which I believe is wholly Scriptural and supported by the Holy Spirit that dwells within me and all who believe. You would know that I personally believe without doubting that Yeshua the Messiah is “the Great I Am,” One in being with the Father and the Holy Spirit—He is our eternal God, who is echad (אֶחָד). He is One! He is therefore the One who spoke to Moses on Mt. Sinai from the burning bush, saying in the Hebrew, “Tell Israel ‘e’yeh ash’er (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר),’ sent you,” and in the Greek, “Tell them ‘Egō Eimi (ἐγὼ εἰμὶ)’ sent you.” He is the One who spoke to the people of Israel, according to all four Gospels, identifying Himself as “Egō Eimi (ἐγὼ εἰμὶ)” —that is, “I AM!”—And He meant this in the absolute sense that we might miss if we read through the Word of God too quickly. If you were with us last week, you ought to understand as I do that the “Great I AM” has now sent you and me out to proclaim His good news to all, and that good news is this: God came down from His throne in Heaven to dwell among us in the flesh, to live a perfect human life and teach us how to live by His own example, to die on our behalf so our sins might be redeemed by His one-time sacrifice—to give us a clean slate so we can start fresh as born again men and women, and to rise into eternal life back to the Right Hand of Power so that when we trust in Him, we

can follow Him in His righteousness all the way into His eternal Kingdom, and He will intercede for us all along the Way. God became one of us—God with us—Immanuel—and now He wants US to be like Him, His image bearers, so we can be with Him and so that He can be with us—forever! If you want to understand why we’re spending so much time on the question, “Who is Yeshua the Messiah?,” it’s because your answer to this question is either life or death for you; your answer deep within your heart will determine how you will live the rest of your physical life, and also whether you will live again in the Resurrection. Last week, I demonstrated the answer that leads to life, which is that Yeshua the Messiah is “the Great I AM.” I showed you where Yeshua said this about Himself. I showed you how God’s identity as the “Great I AM” is consistent throughout the Tanakh (Old Testament) as well as the Apostolic writings (New Testament), and I explained that we cannot take a middle ground on this question; we either believe Yeshua’s Word or we do not, and that will make all the difference.

{Next slide} Now that we’ve discussed that Yeshua the Messiah is “Egō Eimi (ἐγώ εἰμι)” —which is to say, “The Great I AM”—I want to show you some prophetic depth tied to this assertion. Today, in part 10 of our series and our second look at the “I AM” statements of Yeshua, we’re going to begin to explore seven characteristics of the “Great I AM” that Yeshua also identified with Himself, and each of these assertions are found primarily, but not exclusively, in the Gospel of John. When Yeshua said, “I AM” the Bread of Life—the Light of the world—the Door—the Good Shepherd—the Resurrection and the Life—the Way, the Truth, and the Life—and the True Vine—He was identifying Himself with God, and I intend to begin to show you this today at a fundamental level. These statements Yeshua made could appear to be random if you have only a cursory understanding of Scripture, but when we plumb the depths of the whole counsel of God, it becomes clear that these are very intentional statements with a very specific theological purpose. It’s important to note that this list does not include all of Yeshua’s allusions that tie Him to His Divine identity, but these metaphors are more than sufficient to make the case, and so that’s what we’re going to start to do today. There’s really too much here to cover in one sermon, and so it’s going to take at least two. Even when we’re done with this section of the series, there will be more to study, and so I also invite you to do that. I’m going to try to incorporate the most important points so you know where to look. Let’s get started this week, and again, today’s theme is going to continue into at least one more week.

{Next slide} Let’s look first at “I AM the Bread of life,” and this one is going to take a little bit of leg work to fully develop, so bear with me. All four Gospels explain that when Yeshua went out to a desolate place on two occasions, thousands of people

followed Him, He taught them until it was too late for them to make it home for their evening meal, and so He multiplied five loaves of bread and some fish so abundantly that everyone ate and there was food left over. We can look to Luke 9, John 6, Matthew 14 and 15, or Mark 6 and 8 for iterations of similar accounts, but today we're just going to focus on John's account, starting with John 6, verses 5-9. There we read: "Then Yeshua lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, 'Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?' But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, 'Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.' One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, 'There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?'..." It's a good question—from a worldly perspective. If the daily wages of 200 men would still not feed this multitude, what good were five loaves and two fishes for them? But Yeshua is not of this world, is He?

{Next slide} We read on in John 6, verses 10-14: "Then Yeshua said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Yeshua took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, 'Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.' Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Yeshua did, said, 'This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.'" Now this is an awesome story, and it's incredible to contemplate how the LORD fed 5,000 men, not including women and children, as the other Gospels detail, but I want to focus on the last verse for now. Yeshua multiplied loaves and fishes, which is clearly a miracle of God, but the people saw Him only as "the Prophet who is to come into the world" on account of this. By this they meant "the prophet like unto Moses," but even with this powerful assertion, they had not yet established the faith in Yeshua's true identity as the Great I AM. Why might this be? Why were they lacking faith?

{Next slide} When Israel was wandering in the wilderness after escaping their bondage in Egypt, Moses was the prophet who brought bread from heaven to feed the masses, and even then the people lacked faith. We read in Exodus 16:11-16: "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the LORD your God.' So it was that quails came

up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground. So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, 'What is it?' For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, 'This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: 'Let every man gather it according to each one's need, one omer for each person, according to the number of persons; let every man take for those who are in his tent.'''' Just like Moses brought quail and bread miraculously from the LORD in Heaven, so too did Yeshua bring fishes and bread miraculously from the LORD in Heaven. He was indeed the prophet like unto Moses, but was He more than that? For now, consider that it was the Voice of the LORD that spoke to Moses promising this bread that would come from heaven, and through the faith of Moses, the bread came down every day for 40 years. Israel always had enough. Was the Voice of the LORD involved when Yeshua multiplied bread? Only in that Yeshua Himself gave thanks and distributed the bounty through His disciples.

{Next slide} Before we return to John 6 and further explore the meaning of this account, it's important to understand that Moses was not the only prophet who multiplied bread before Yeshua came onto the scene. In 1st Kings 17, verses 8-16, we read the account of a widow in Sidon experiencing something similar during the midst of a famine on account of her faith in the Word of God, which was offered to her through the faith of the Prophet Elijah. Starting in verse 12, Elijah said to the widow: "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." So she said, "As the Lord your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die." And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.' " So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the Word of the Lord which He spoke by Elijah." For now, I just want you to see that the bread was multiplied according to the Word of the LORD and both Elijah and the widow's faith in the Word of the LORD. It was not by Elijah's word alone that this bread kept coming. We've covered the Word of the LORD in past messages in this series, and so we know that it was Yeshua, the Word of God who became flesh, who was on the scene here multiplying bread.

{Next slide} In a third account, we can see that Elisha, the prophet who took over for Elijah, was the vessel God chose for a very similar miracle. Pay attention as we review 2nd Kings 4, verses 42-44, where the "man of God" referenced in this passage is Elisha. We read: "Then a man came from Ba'al Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread, and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, 'Give it to the people, that they may eat.' But his servant said, 'What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?' He said again, 'Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the LORD: 'They shall eat and have some left over.'" So he set it before them; and they ate and had some left over, according to the Word of the LORD." Again, it is the Word of the LORD Who promised bread in abundance, and by faith the people ate and were satisfied from a source that did not appear at first to be enough. I want to share two other observations here. The initial bread offered was from the firstfruits offering, and this was a prophetic nod to Yeshua, who would be the fulfillment of the Firstfruits offering when He rose from the dead literally on the Firstfruits Holy Day. This will become even more relevant to you before we're done. But note also how Yeshua spoke to Elisha and said: "They shall eat and have some left over." This was precisely what happened when Yeshua came and also multiplied the willing offering of five loaves in the Gospel accounts. The Word of the LORD would bring bread in abundance yet again, but in the Gospels the Word of God was there with the people in the flesh. And in the Gospel examples, Yeshua would tie what He was doing directly with the spiritual purpose of all of these stories combined. What was God showing us, not just with Moses and the manna in the wilderness, or Elijah and the widow or Elisha and the 100, and not just with Yeshua with the multitude, but with Yeshua as the source of this bread from heaven, the Great I AM? Before we return to John 6, consider what Yeshua's disciples said when He asked them what people were saying about Him, according to Matthew 16, verses 13-16, for this passage will bring some additional insight. The multitude following Yeshua around were saying He was, among other possibilities, "Elijah ... or one of the prophets," just like we read in John 6. You see, Moses, Elijah, and Elisha were three prophets God used to multiply a scarce or nonexistent supply of bread abundantly. Now Yeshua was doing the same, and most people who witnessed these miracles saw Yeshua only as a prophet like them. But Peter knew Yeshua was more than this. He knew: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Peter had seen Yeshua walk on water—in fact, according to John 6, this took place right after Yeshua multiplied the loaves and fishes. And Peter had walked out on the water with Him, empowered by Yeshua's Word alone. Grasp this point. Yeshua didn't say: My Father commands you to walk out on the water, Peter; He simply said "Come!" It was by Yeshua's Word, by the Word of God, that Peter was able to walk on water. Likewise, it was by Yeshua, the Word of God who became flesh, that

any bread was ever multiplied, and every instance was meant to reveal Yeshua's true identity to us. Yeshua wasn't just another prophet offering abundant physical bread. There was something more going on here.

{Next slide} I want to show you one other thing before we return to John 6, and it comes from the passage right before Peter's confession that we just covered in Matthew 16. In the section we'll be reading, Yeshua had just multiplied seven loaves and a few little fish; He multiplied it for yet a second group of people—"4,000 men, besides women and children," according to Matthew 15, verses 32-39. In Matthew 16, verses 5-12, we read what happened next: "Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Yeshua said to them, 'Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.' And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'It is because we have taken no bread.' But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, 'O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.' Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees." So this is a good passage to segue back into John 6 for two reasons. First, we can see Yeshua's own testimony that He multiplied five loaves for 5,000 men and seven loaves for 4,000 men, and there was bread left over. In doing this, He absolutely fulfilled Elisha's prophesy. To remind you, it was: "thus says the LORD: 'They shall eat and have some left over.'" The LORD said, by His Word, that bread would be multiplied to abundance, and His Word did not return to Him void. When considering this magnificent Truth in the physical realm, can you empathize with Yeshua's frustration a little when His disciples were concerned about not bringing bread with them to eat. Yeshua was kind when He said, "Do you not yet understand, or remember" what I did? "How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?" The question I want to pose for you on this first point is this: Do you understand yet that when God multiplied bread, whether from nothing or from a very sparse supply, He was not simply performing a miracle to satisfy physical hunger. The purpose of these miracles goes much deeper. And so, the second reason I wanted to segue with this passage is this: Yeshua was talking about the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. He called it "leaven," and we know that "leaven" is symbolic for "sin" in the Passover celebration. We celebrate the Feast of Unleavened bread for seven days starting with the Passover Seder, removing all of the leaven from our homes. We eat

only unleavened bread, and we also examine ourselves to remove sin from our lives. The Passover celebration itself, which we're going to speak about in brief, was symbolic for what Yeshua Himself would do on the cross: He would offer up Himself on our behalf as the Unleavened Bread from Heaven. Yeshua, the Word of God who became flesh and dwelt among us, was akin to "Unleavened Bread." He said, "I AM the Bread of life." And His point here was this: His doctrine, which was from God because He is God, contains no leaven, unlike the false doctrine taught by the Scribes and Pharisees. As we've discussed many times before, especially when studying Matthew 15, 23, and Mark 7, the Scribes and Pharisees taught as doctrine the commandments of men, while Yeshua taught us to keep the commandments of God. This was the point Yeshua was trying to teach His disciples in Matthew 16, but we're going to drill down quite a bit deeper here than this. It's not just Yeshua's doctrine, the Unleavened Bread, that we ought to consume, but His very essence: who He is, what He has done, what He has promised, and what that means for us. And so, before we move back to John 6, let me rephrase a very important question, based on Yeshua's own words. "Are you starting to understand that these stories from God's Word are not about bread?" By the time we're done today, I truly hope that you understand.

{Next slide} When we turn back to John 6, then, I first want to remind you that Yeshua had fed 5,000 men, not including women and children, by multiplying five barley loaves and two small fish, and then He sent everyone away; He also sent His disciples over the sea toward Capernaum and stayed back. He walked on water to meet them in the middle of the sea, and there these disciples recognized Him as the Son of God—at least, according to Matthew's account of the event in Matthew 14:33. On the contrary, the multitude noticed that Yeshua and the disciples were missing the next day and followed them all to Capernaum, but most of them fared even worse than the disciples in understanding Yeshua's purpose in multiplying bread, as we will see. Starting in John 6:25 through 27, we read: "And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, 'Rabbi, when did You come here?' Yeshua answered them and said, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.'" Remember, these were the men who believed He was a prophet because he multiplied the loaves and fishes. These were the ones who marveled at His teachings, but still struggled to grasp them. These were not yet disciples. They sought signs and wonders, and not the God who brings such signs and wonders to reveal Himself to His people. Unfortunately, for most men and women, the true message of God is too difficult and they walk away, but a

remnant always endures until the end. By the time the dialogue here is over, those who have eyes to see and ears to hear will comprehend the food which endures to everlasting life that Yeshua intended to reveal, and everyone else will return to their lives in the world. Let this be a lesson for you today, also. Which group are you going to end up in? When the multitude heard Yeshua speak about the food which endures to everlasting life, they replied, doubtingly, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

They sought for a sign—multiplying the loaves and fishes wasn't enough. They remembered the prophets of old and believed Yeshua did the same thing, which is why they believed Yeshua was only a prophet, but now Yeshua was going to correct their understanding and speak to them in parables, giving understanding only to those truly seeking it. He said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Moses was a faithful prophet, but the Father gave the bread from Heaven. It was God who provided the bread, but this bread was physical. Now, the Father had sent the "true bread from Heaven," and this was the bread that was going to give "life to the world." Yeshua Himself is this bread, the Word of God who became flesh, and it is internalizing everything about Yeshua that brings eternal life.

{Next slide} The crowd, not understanding what He was saying, pressed Him for more details. They said: "LORD, give us this bread always." Was this a confession of faith? Were they patronizing Him? Either is possible, but as the dialogue continued, any faith they had would be tested and many would walk away without it. The LORD does not want the half-hearted to follow Him; He only wants those who are all in, as He Himself has said, and the rest of John 6 proves this to be true. Yeshua, seeking only those who were truly seeking Him, would test the crowd with what He said next. He replied: "I AM the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." Did He mean that He would always multiply physical bread and bring physical water, even in a desolate place? Yes, the LORD will always provide what we need, but at this point, He has made it clear that this wasn't what He meant, and now some of the Jewish leaders in the crowd began to get the idea. They complained that He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." They complained that He said, "I am the Bread of life," but it was this very statement that would ultimately separate those who would become His disciples from those who would walk away from Him. When Yeshua answered them, He turned things up a notch, He said in verses 45-51, "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be

taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.” He then repeated: “I AM the bread of life.” What did He mean? He was plainly saying that He is the “Great I AM” who was teaching them the Word that comes from the Father. He continued: “Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” If you’re sitting there thinking that this statement is hard to grasp, you’d be right. Even the disciples would say the same, as I’ll show you, but Yeshua had a purpose in saying this to them—By saying, “I AM the bread of life” and “If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh,” Yeshua was explaining His identity as one in being with the Father and His purpose in coming out from the Father to the Earth, but He was explaining it purposefully in a way that would turn off those who refused to seek Him further for understanding. God wants us to understand Him, which is why He came in the flesh to teach us the Word of the Father, but He doesn’t want to simply hand-out an intimate relationship with Him to everyone. To know God intimately, we need spiritual eyes to see and spiritual ears to hear so that we can take God’s Word into ourselves and make it a part of us. We have to pursue Him for understanding! If we look at God’s Word with physical eyes and listen to it with physical ears, not giving God the time of day, we will simply not come to understand who He is.

{Next slide} And so, as an aside, if you’re not shocked yet by what Yeshua has communicated so far, the next passage I’m going to show you really brings things to a head, and it also introduces a second “I AM” concept that I will get to before we close. Even with spiritual eyes and ears, this saying is very difficult to read and understand, but it’s possible, because the text itself and the whole context of Scripture explains it. Listen carefully to John 6, verse 52, where we read this: “The Jews [meaning the Jewish leaders] therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, ‘How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?’” I want to stop here for a moment and point out—if you don’t already know—there are religious groups today who believe that this is what Yeshua is literally requiring of His followers here. There are people who believe that Yeshua was literally saying that we have to eat His physical body and drink His physical blood to inherit eternal life. In fact, each week, some religious groups offer bread and wine at church and teach that it magically transforms into Yeshua’s literal flesh and blood when a priest breathes on it. I wish I was making this up. I don’t mean to be insensitive or

uncharitable here, but I need you to know, if you don't already, that this is false doctrine. Did they not understand what Yeshua said earlier, "Do not labor for the food which perishes but for the food which endures to everlasting life"? What about when He said, "How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?" Could we not say the same thing here, and simply rephrase it? Couldn't we ask: How do you not understand that I am not speaking with you about my physical body and blood? I'm getting ahead of myself. When the Jews asked, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat," here's what Yeshua said in reply, starting from verse 53 and continuing to verse 58. He said: "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever." Brothers and sisters: This is a very difficult saying! But are we meant to take the LORD's Words literally here? We are not!

{Next slide} Before I explain this passage and show you the other God-only reference that it contains, I want you to see its effect, first, because it still has this effect today. After Yeshua had finished saying these things, we read, jumping ahead to John 6, verse 66, "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more." There's a few things to note about this: The chapter and verse number, though it was added later after John had written his Gospel, does not appear accidental to me. It seems inspired. Now, this is my own observation, but the verse number is literally John 6, verse 66, and "yes," this verse actually does explain the Mark of the Beast in a sense. To walk away from the LORD in disbelief leads to eternal death. Yeshua had just explained this Himself. The Mark of the Beast is literally to think and to do the things that are against God and His Word—the Mark is on our hand, representing our actions, and between the frontlets of our eyes, representing our thoughts. We have to think and do the commandments of God, according to His Word, to take on the Mark of God that leads to life. Now, Yeshua, who is the Word of God who became flesh, said quite directly: "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the Last Day." No matter what the underlying meaning of this passage is, the effect of faith in the LORD's body and blood is eternal life and the effect of disbelief is eternal death. The MANY DISCIPLES who went back and walked with Yeshua no more on account of this saying chose the path

of eternal death. This is not ambiguous. It's straightforward. These weren't even among the multitude who had eaten bread; these were disciples, but now they were disciples no longer. And so, let me ask you: What does it take to be a disciple of Yeshua? One, we have to believe in His identity, that He is God—that He is the Great I AM—that He is the bread of life sent forth from God so that all who believe in Him will not perish but will inherit eternal life. Two, we have to follow Him; we have to continue to walk with Him in His righteousness until the end of our natural lives, even when things get difficult or our understanding grows foggy. We have to endure in our faithfulness to Him. Again, these disciples turned away, and so they were disciples no more. In Matthew 7:14, Yeshua said, "Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." Perhaps this saying in John 6 is one of the reasons why. The good news is this: the 12 Apostles understood who Yeshua was and they even understood what He was saying, and they and their peers are the ones who wrote the Apostolic Scriptures for us. When Yeshua looked around and saw many walking away from Him, He turned to the 12 and asked, "Do you also want to go away?" — — Let's be clear: Yeshua does not want any one of us to walk away from Him, but He lets us go. He wants our whole heart, and if He doesn't have it, then we can't be with Him. And the difficult passage from John 6, verses 53-58, is an illustration of how Yeshua separates those who are all in from those who aren't. — — In John 6:67-69, Simon Peter answered Yeshua, saying "LORD, to whom shall we go? You have the Words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Peter understood what the LORD was saying and He wanted nothing other than to be with His God, but how did he get there. How can we get there? Remember the LORD said, according to Jeremiah 29:13: "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."

{Next slide} When we go back just a few verses in John 6, we can see the disciples doing just that, but only those whom the Father knew to be truly seeking Him would receive the spiritual insight Yeshua was conveying by the power of His Holy Spirit here. In John 6:60-64, we read: "Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, 'This is a hard saying; who can understand it?' When Yeshua knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, 'Does this offend you?' Now I want to stop here for a moment. Isn't this the question for us all—for you and me? Does this Word of God offend you? — — It does not offend me, because of what Yeshua said next, bringing full understanding. We read: "What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are Spirit, and they are Life. But there are some of you who do not believe.' For Yeshua knew from the beginning who they were who

did not believe, and who would betray Him.” Let me break this down for you simply. When Yeshua said, “What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend to where He was before,” He was saying, I AM God. This is also what He was implying when He said, “I AM the bread of life.” He is the Word who rained down as manna from Heaven, for those who understood Him. He is the Word who multiplied bread for Elijah and Elisha to show His glory. He is the Word who multiplied bread and fish for His followers, and He was now with them in the flesh. He was the Word who became flesh and dwelt among them. Look again closely at what He said to the disciples who sought Him eagerly. He said: “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are Spirit, and they are Life.” How could it be that we must eat His flesh to inherit eternal life, and yet His flesh also profits nothing? How can both of these things be true? It is because the Words that He spoke—that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood—must be understood spiritually. ONLY when we understand these words spiritually can we inherit eternal life. Just a few chapters earlier, in John 4:24, Yeshua said to the Samaritan woman at the well: “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and Truth.” In other words, we have to understand the full counsel of God’s Word according to what the Holy Spirit teaches us. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 3 that a veil covers our understanding without faith in Yeshua, but when we come to trust in Yeshua, the veil is taken away. God takes the veil away for those who seek Him with all their heart; those who know He is good and that His mercy endures forever. Those who know that His commandments are life to us. Those who believe, understand and internalize the Truth that Yeshua gave His body and blood on the cross for our salvation, and without the grace He offers in this sacrifice, we cannot be forgiven. It was Yeshua’s own sacrifice of His body and blood alone that gives us the opportunity to walk with God eternally, and this is the Spirit and Truth of these difficult sayings. If Yeshua, who said, “I AM the bread of life” ascended to the place He was before—to the place of glory seated at the right hand of power on the throne in Heaven—we would understand that we ought to embrace, internalize, and act upon the gift of eternal life God has given us through the sacrifice of Yeshua on the cross. And Yeshua has indeed returned to His throne to sit at the Right Hand of Power. Thus, to eat Yeshua’s body and drink His blood is to internalize what He accomplished for us according to His Word and to make Messiah Yeshua the center of our own identity. It is in this understanding that we ourselves can proclaim, as Peter did, “LORD, to whom shall we go? You have the Words of eternal life.”

{Next slide} Peter understood the context of Deuteronomy 8, verses 1-4, where the LORD said to the children of Israel: “Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess

the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers. And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.” Accordingly, Yeshua said to His disciples: “The flesh profits nothing” and “The words that I speak to you are Spirit, and they are Life.” He is the Word that proceeded from the Mouth of God; the Word who was in the beginning with God and was God; the Word Who became flesh and dwelt among us. And when He did, according to Matthew 4, verses 3-4, the tempter came to Him and challenged Him, saying, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” But Yeshua, being sinless in the flesh as the Son of God, answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” Hebrews 4:15 explains that Yeshua “was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin,” and this episode in the wilderness was a prime example of that. Just like Yeshua said to the Apostles who were concerned about bread and to the Jews wondering whether He actually meant for them to eat His flesh, the Truth of the matter is that “man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD,” for as David wrote in Psalm 119:160, “The entirety of [God’s] Word is Truth.” When we take into ourselves the Bread of life—the Word who became flesh—what He demonstrated for us, what He accomplished for us, and what He promised for us—we will inherit eternal life. This is what it means to eat the Body of Messiah Yeshua. It is to internalize who He is, what He did, and why it matters for you and me, and then to act on it.

{Next slide} Now, before I show you the other I AM allusion that Yeshua brought to the table here, understand that many of Yeshua’s disciples walked away from Him because they misunderstood His words—they thought He meant to literally eat His flesh and drink His blood. If this actually was what Yeshua was saying, we would have to reject Him as a false prophet. The idea that we must consume flesh and blood is completely anathema to what God teaches in His Word. Because Yeshua said literally, “the flesh profits nothing” and “the words that I speak to you are Spirit and they are Life,” we ought to understand that He meant His comments to be taken metaphorically. He always taught in parables, and this was no exception. Here, as always, Yeshua meant something consistent with Scripture. There are many verses and even a whole sermon series I could present on the topic, but for right now I want to point you to a message for Yom Kippur I presented in October 2022, called “The Life Blood of Atonement”

(<https://youtu.be/kYJaLR9zW8Q>). It explains how God requires blood to be given as a sacrifice for sin, and this is a concept we also have to grasp. For today's purposes, consider Leviticus 17, verses 10-14, which addresses this. According to the Word of the LORD, we read there: "whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.' Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.' "Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.'" Thus when Yeshua explained that the Word He spoke is Spirit and it is Life, what He was explaining is that He was about to offer His life—He was about to pour out His blood—as a voluntary sacrifice for the atonement of our sins. He did not and would not offer His own blood as a literal drink, for to drink the blood of any creature is a sin that leads to death. This goes for both the native born Israelite and the stranger who dwells among them. God didn't change His mind about this when Yeshua came along. In Acts 15, the Apostle James said quite directly that new Gentile believers coming into the faith ought to "abstain from ... blood." Abstaining from blood consumption was one of four things new believers had to do immediately upon entering the faith, and this was relevant because the pagan cultures around Israel were commonly consuming blood with the meat that they ate. Many pagans used the consumption of blood as a religious ritual; they believed they would internalize the life energy from the animal's blood by consuming it. That being said, it's not possible that these same leaders who taught new Gentile believers to abstain from consuming blood would also teach them to literally drink a cup of Yeshua's blood as part of a communion ritual. The idea is outrageously wrong. Here's the truth of the matter: These are deep spiritual concepts that Yeshua was teaching, and only those who are truly seeking Him come to understand them and endure in their walk with Him. The same is true of you and me today. If you aren't grasping what I'm teaching today, the only solution is to seek the LORD for understanding, because He said, "I AM the bread of life," and unless you eat this Word, you will not inherit eternal life."

{Next slide} So what else was Yeshua teaching in this difficult passage? In brief, as the writer of Hebrews explained in Chapter 9, verse 12, "Not with the blood of goats and

calves, but with His own blood [Yeshua] entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” While God offered temporary atonement through animal sacrifices in the past, He provided a way through Yeshua to permanently redeem his people who desire to be with Him and follow His Word through the sacrifice of Himself. Only God Himself could permanently make atonement for our sins by the sacrifice of His own perfect body, in which He lived according to His own Word. Because He lived this flawless life, as the “Unleavened Bread of Life,” it was through the shedding of His own blood that we can have same spiritual life that He forever has within Himself. It is faith in the Spiritual meaning behind Yeshua’s actions that we internalize when we figuratively eat His body and drink His blood. These ideas are consistent with what Yeshua taught during His last Passover Seder living in the flesh. The Seder was commanded by God to memorialize Israel’s exodus from Egypt, a prophetic template for our own exodus from sin. Israel spread the blood of the lamb on their door posts so the angel of death would pass over them, and they ate unleavened bread because they grabbed their dough and cooked it before it had a chance to rise. God said to do this in memory of the salvation He offered to His people Israel. Now, we also remember Yeshua’s blood sacrifice for the atonement of our sin and how He gave up the life of His sinless flesh so that we could take part in the eternal promises from His Word. We embrace the salvation He offered to us. We read in Luke 22, verses 19-20: “And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.” If you’ve been around Christianity at all, you know these truths. What you might not know is how they demonstrate that Yeshua is the Great I AM. There are at least two witnesses that explain it. In 1st John 4, verse 16, the Apostle wrote: “And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.” And so if God is love, then add to that John’s earlier comment from his first letter, in chapter 3, verse 16, where we read, “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us.” This verse has its root in Yeshua’s own statement recorded in John 15:13, where we read: “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” In other words, the Great I AM, who is love, demonstrated His love for us by pouring out His blood as an eternal sacrifice for our sins. We know that He is God, because He lived a life without sin, and no man is without sin. He was the “Unleavened Bread” of life, the flawless Word of God Who came into the world so that we might know God and follow Him.

{Next slide} There's one more concept I want to cover very briefly today that I hope will bring all of this together for you. When Yeshua went to demonstrate His identity by raising His friend Lazarus, who had died, from the grave, He said something very powerful to Lazarus's sister Martha. We read in John 11, verses 25-27, the second of seven I AM statements that we're going to cover in this part of the series, and it relates to the first one we've covered. In the passage, "Yeshua said to her, 'I AM the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?' She said to Him, 'Yes, LORD, I believe that You are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.'" Martha's testimony is confirmation of the passage's meaning, and it is the same testimony that Peter gave, which we read earlier. When Yeshua states, "I AM the resurrection and the life," Martha said, "Yes LORD, I believe You are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." This is confirmation of Yeshua's assertion that He is God who has come in the flesh. It's a confirmation that Yeshua is the Word of God who became flesh. It is also confirmation that the very sacrifice of Yeshua's blood for our atonement is also an aspect of God's eternal plan for our redemption. The first thing to take note of is the second part of Yeshua's "I AM statement," which is "I AM ... the life." Based on what we covered earlier in John 6, Yeshua had already confirmed that His blood sacrifice would be the life power that would provide an opportunity for His children to be restored to Him, following our fall into sin. Recall also what we read earlier in Leviticus 17:14. There God said: "the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." If Yeshua is the Life, and the statement is connected with His identity as "the Great I AM," and it is, then it's clear that the blood of our perfect God could bring life to those who trust in Him for atonement, for the eternal life is in His blood—and only His blood. Based on the context of the account, both Martha and her dead brother Lazarus had believed in Yeshua's identity as the Son of God, and this is what brought the power over life and death onto the scene. This brings up the other part of Yeshua's statement; namely, "I AM the Resurrection." We covered the Resurrection of the Dead at length in our previous sermon series, "Elementary Principles of Messiah Yeshua" (<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7ZxP9bZ9iQpsXpKHx7mjBL2ewsJXkvD>), and I urge you to watch the section on the resurrection for a deeper dive on this subject. For now, consider 1st Corinthians 15, verses 20-23, where the Apostle Paul has made it clear that Yeshua, who is risen from the dead, "has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep," meaning that He was eternally selected to come into the world, to live a perfect life, to die for the atonement of our sins, and then to rise from the dead to lead the way for all who put their trust in Him. This was always part of God's plan. This is

why Paul added: “Messiah the firstfruits, afterward those who are Messiah’s at His coming.” Without getting into too many details, it is the very Truth that Yeshua is God that enabled Him to raise Lazarus from the dead, even though Yeshua is the Firstfruits in the resurrection.” Because He is God, who at that time was living in the flesh, He literally embodied the eternal resurrection in Himself. His power over life and death is eternal because He is eternal. Though His blood sacrifice for atonement was yet to come, the sacrifice was also eternally part of God’s plan and thus was available to Lazarus as well as to all the Patriarchs who believed in Him prior. Because He was God, is God, and forever will be God, Yeshua has the power of Resurrection and Life within Himself.

{Next slide} The Apostle Peter spoke of this in the Temple during His testimony in Acts 2. In verses 22-24, we read: “Men of Israel, hear these words: Yeshua of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.” Peter’s testimony is consistent with Yeshua’s “I AM” statement. Death could not hold Him. He said Himself, according to John 10:18, “...I have power to lay [My life] down, and I have power to take it again...” It’s not difficult to understand that only God has such power over life and death, and only God has the power to raise the dead. Yeshua said He had this power Himself, and He demonstrated it by raising Lazarus from the dead and by rising from the grave Himself. As it pertains to us, Yeshua’s resurrection is what provides us hope of eternal life with Him in His Kingdom, but His resurrection could not have been accomplished without God first coming in the flesh and then dying on the cross as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. As Paul wrote in Romans 10:9, “if you confess with your mouth the LORD Yeshua and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” He had to be dead in the flesh in order to be raised up again, and He had to be God in order to have the power within Himself to accomplish all of these works for the people of God, for God created the heavens and the earth and everything in it, and all things are possible with God. As the perfect Word who became flesh, He offered up His own blood, that is His life, for our atonement. And as the perfect God, who is the very author of life Himself, death could not hold Him and He therefore rose from death to provide a way back into His Kingdom for all of us who internalize what He has accomplished. This is what it means to eat His body and drink His blood. Next week, we will continue to explore the “I AM” statements in the Gospel

of John. Until then, be blessed in your faithfulness to God in the name of Messiah Yeshua, our LORD and our God. Shabbat shalom.