

I AM the Bread of Life (John 6)

Ego Eimi. Last week it was Yahweh, this week it is Ego eimi. Last week it was Hebrew, this week it is Greek, but both mean the same thing – I AM. In fact the Greek actually means, I, myself, AM because in Greek, eimi means I am, but Ego eimi is going that bit further and emphasising the I, so it can be translated as I, myself, am.

So what if Yahweh and Ego eimi mean the same things. But one occurs in the Old Testament while the other appears in the New Testament, especially in one of the gospels. In John's gospel we have seven I AMs. Last week we looked at where the expression of I AM comes from in Exodus 3 where God met Moses at the burning bush and gave to Moses his name Yahweh, meaning I AM.

We remember that the name of God was very, very precious and holy to the Jews and so never mentioned and so imagine the shock hearing the name of God on the lips of Jesus as he says the words. So over the next eight weeks, including this one, we shall be looking at the seven I AMs as they occur in John's gospel. The reason for the extra week is because on 21st of this month, next week in fact, we have the NIFOC United service at Barkingside Methodist Church where I shall be preaching the sermon.

But back to the I AM of this evening. Turn with me to John 6, page 1069. In the first part of the chapter Jesus feeds over five thousand people **with five small barley loaves and two small fish** (John 6:9 NIV) – this is the only miracle that is in all four gospels. Then the evening came and the disciples went off across the lake of Galilee and Jesus needed to get across, and as there were no boats, no taxis around the edge, he went by quickest method he had – that was to walk across the lake causing a bit of consternation to the disciples when they saw him. We pick up the story at verse 25 on page 1070.

“When the crowd who had been feed the day before found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

“Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who 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."

"Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread."

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

"Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. "No-one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. No-one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, 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 real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live for ever." He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum." (John 6:25-59 NIV)

5 questions & a request – look at the questions/request. What was the reply of Jesus and why did he reply as such? Begin at the top. You do not have to get through all the questions/request. There will be a report back session so some notes may need to be taken and a spokesperson will need to be appointed.

1. **"Rabbi, when did you get here?"** John 6:25-27)
2. **"What must we do to do the works God requires?"** (John 6:28-29)
3. **"What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"** (John 6:30-33)
4. **"Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread."** (John 6:34-40)
5. **"I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"** (John 6:41-51)
6. **"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"** (John 6:52-58)

Go into Groups

Plenary Session

1. **"Rabbi, when did you get here?" John 6:25-27)** – *Jesus never answers the question. It is ignored. They are only following for the food – rice Christians. Should be searching for spiritual food.* – Supplementary question – Does this mean that aid in name of Christianity should not be given? No because that can give us a lead in to give the message and also it can be the means by which Christians earn the right to speak.
2. **"What must we do to do the works God requires?" (John 6:28-29)** – *A salvation by works and not by faith. We only have to believe. Is this too easy? Is this where we fall down? For many religions, faiths there is this salvation by works. But it leads to insecurity because how do I know I have done enough, or I have done the right things. We have a salvation that is faith alone, but because then of our love for God that flows from this, we will follow the commands of God which shows that we love him and have faith in him. Remember that we are not saved by good works but that*

"...we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10 NIV)
3. **"What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"** (John 6:30-33) – *Jesus qualifies who the 'he' is. The manna came from God, not from Moses – maybe people thought at times of Jesus that it was due to Moses and not God. Beware of giving glory to a person when it comes from God. Now turn bread into a person who comes down from heaven like the manna coming down. But this time the bread from heaven gives life. Jesus is obviously talking about himself although whether the crowd realise this is debatable. From their next question they probably do not.*

4. **"Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." (John 6:34-40)** – The request. *They realise that they want bread that give life and not just sustains life. Jesus says I AM the Bread of life. But the answer is to believe. It is possible to see Jesus and not believe. Keith Ward, Professor of Theology at Cambridge University, for many years was not a Christian but knew all about Jesus and the Bible. Jesus accepts all who come to him, but all is in God's control (verse 37). Jesus came to be a servant, not to lord it over people.*

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45 NIV)

Also Jesus will let no-one go when they are his.

"My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no-one can snatch them out of my Father's hand." (John 10:29 NIV)

Shows the heart of God – everyone who believes will be saved. Do we want to help in that celebration?

5. **"I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?" (John 6:41-51)** – NOTE – the crowd have put the 2 sayings of Jesus together. *Moaning due to They know the parentage of Jesus. (As an aside – Jesus is in Capernaum not Nazareth [6:17, 59] and due to reaction of crowd this lends weight to the theory that the family may have moved to Capernaum in the childhood of Jesus some 30km {20 miles} as the crow flies. However the crowd did come with him and Nazareth is not on coast of Sea of Galilee, so maybe Jesus had made a name for himself in the region.) Jesus is the only way to God. A prophet is without honour in his own country*

"(Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honour in his own country.)" (John 4:44 NIV)

Again belief in Jesus, sent by God, is the important criteria for eternal life. Manna still led to death, but Jesus, the bread of life leads to eternal life.

6. **"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (John 6:52-58)** – *Is it communion, as we know it? It seems to be so. But we need to remember the words of Paul*

"Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognising the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself." (1 Corinthians 11:27-29 NIV)

When we remain in Jesus, we live forever. We need to remain in Jesus. To live our lives fully for him at work and at play.

I am the Bread of life, a life that is full, that is abundant. That is great.