

## CHAPTER 25, JESUS, THE SON OF GOD

## TIMELESS TRUTH: HE IS I AM

CHAPTER SUMMARY (Have someone in your group read the summary section.)

*Who do you say I am?* It was the most important question Peter was ever asked. People did not know what to make of this Jesus. He was like no other rabbi. His claims about Himself were outrageous and way out of line if He were merely human. Two thousand years had passed since God promised Abraham that through his seed all nations would be blessed. A thousand years had passed since God promised David that his descendant would reign forever. Now, in Jesus, God's marathon plan of redemption was sprinting toward its climax. Peter's answer to the question would change his life forever.

"You are the Messiah," Peter confessed. Then Jesus began to teach His disciples that this messianic mission included suffering, death, and a resurrection from the dead. They objected to this idea of a Messiah, but Jesus rebuked them. His mission was set and no one could come between Him and the cross. In fact, He taught His disciples that they too would need to lose their lives to save them.

Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a mountain and gave them a glimpse of His future glorification. When He was transfigured before their very eyes, they fell face down in fear. Jesus had often made "I Am" statements connecting Himself to the name YHWH or "I Am." Then a voice from heaven stated that Jesus was the Son of God, thereby confirming His assertions.

*I AM the light of the world. I AM the bread of life.* Jesus declared that failure to believe in Him would have eternal consequences—you would die in your sins. But the Pharisees knew full well the weight of the "I AM" statements – and Jesus' claims to be God were, to them, nothing short of blasphemy. From then on, their hatred of Him ripened into an assassination plot.

*I AM the resurrection and the life.* Despite getting word that His friend Lazarus was on his deathbed, Jesus delayed His journey. By the time He arrived, Lazarus had been entombed for four long days. Sisters Mary and Martha mourned their brother's death, disappointed that Jesus had not arrived in time to heal him, but Jesus assured the women that His delay was for divine glory. At His command, Lazarus walked out of his tomb, vindicating Jesus' assertion that He alone is the Source of life.

The march toward Jerusalem continued. His time was fast approaching and He had to prepare the disciples for what lay ahead. He told them that the kingdom of God is accessible to those with childlike trust and humility, not through performance. Along the way, Jesus met a rich young man who had performed well since childhood. Jesus told him that discipleship, for him, would mean giving away his riches. Unable to part with earthly wealth, the young man walked away from Jesus' offer. So strong is the lure of riches that, as far as the gospels record, this is the only time Jesus' offer was refused.

For the third time, Jesus told them that His work included suffering, death, and a resurrection after three days. Now it was time for Jesus' grand entrance. He sent His disciples to fetch appropriate transportation and a colt was just where Jesus said it would be. He mounted the donkey and triumphantly rode into Jerusalem as people laid down their coats and branches on the road and hailed Him as the long awaited King, son of David!

Jesus was preparing to glorify the Father's name. He continued to offer eternal life to all who would believe. The incensed Pharisees instilled fear in many; some who did believe kept quiet. But Jesus' claims were non-negotiable; He was the only Source of eternal life, the climax and culmination of God's redemptive plan. *Who do you say I am?* It is the single most important question that everyone must answer.

**ICEBREAKER QUESTION:** What event in this chapter in the life of Jesus would you like to have witnessed? Why?

1. Jesus said we must “deny ourselves” and “take up our cross;” and if we seek to save our lives we will lose them. (p. 353-354). What are the implications of these commands for your life, such as marriage, parenting, and career ambition?
2. Jesus was transfigured on the mountain (p. 354). The Greek word translated transfigured is the root of the English word metamorphosis which refers to a radical change. This same word is used in Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18. What do these verses teach us about the transformation of every believer?
4. Look up 1 John 1:5-7 and 2:8-11. What did Jesus mean when He said that “*whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life*” (p. 357)? What does this look like for the Christian living a typical daily life?
5. Look up Exodus 3:14, Isaiah 43:11-13, and John 5:18. Why did Jesus’ opponents try to stone Him (p. 358)? How might you answer the skeptic who says that Jesus never claimed to be God?
6. Up to this point, Jesus had claimed to be the bread of life, the water of life, and the light of life. And here with Mary, Martha, the disciples, and a crowd of mourners, He claimed to be the resurrection and the life with another I AM statement (p. 359). What is the relationship between belief and life? Between belief and resurrection?
7. Why do you suppose Jesus was “deeply moved in spirit,” “troubled,” and wept? Consider Genesis 2:17, Romans. 6:23, 1 Corinthians 15:26, Hebrews. 2:14-15, and I Thessalonians 4:13-17. How has your faith helped you deal with death?
8. Three times Jesus predicted His death and resurrection (p. 353, 354, and 362; Mark 8:31, 9:30-31, 10:32-34) and followed each with a lesson on discipleship (p. 353-354 [Mark 8:34-38], Mark 9:33-37, Mark 10:35-45). What principles of discipleship did Jesus teach and why would He relate them to His Passion?
9. After Jesus entered Jerusalem as the rightful King of Israel, He cleansed the temple because some had turned it from a house of prayer into a place of corruption (p. 364). Suppose Jesus walked into our own church. With what would He be most pleased? What corrections might He make?
10. At what points was Jesus’ humanity most evident to you? His deity?

In the time remaining ask your group members to share any of their personal reflection insights from their journal entries.

## CLOSING PRAYER

## CHAPTER 26, THE HOUR OF DARKNESS

Journal your answers to these questions as you read through the chapter this week. You may wish to read one day and journal the next, or spread the questions over the whole week.

## DAY 1

1. While in the upper room with His disciples, Jesus knew his death was imminent. What was most important to Him (p. 367-371)? How would you spend the last day of your life and why? How might your answer shape your daily life now?
2. In John 14:1-17 (p. 369-370), Jesus described His relationship with the Father and the Spirit. This relationship, referred to as the Trinity is foundational to our understanding of God. How would you describe their community?
3. What did Jesus teach about the relationship of the Spirit to you personally?
4. Jesus said, *“If you love Me, keep my commands”* (p. 370). Looking at your past week, in what ways have you succeeded in following Jesus’ commands?

## DAY 2

1. List some ways we see Jesus’ love for his enemies. How does this compare with your treatment of *your* enemies? Your loved ones?
2. Describe Peter’s volatile relationship with Jesus. What lessons from him can you apply to your own relationship with the LORD?

## DAY 3

1. Jesus’ crucifixion happened in conjunction with the Passover. What does it mean that Jesus is our Passover lamb?
2. *“It is finished”* (p. 314, John 19:30). During the time of Christ, this was the same word which was written across tax receipts and mortgages, meaning “paid in full.” What was finished? Look up John 1:29, Romans 5:6-10, and 2 Corinthians 5:21 for insight. Ponder for a moment your personal “debt” and your new “account status” because it was “paid in full,” then respond in appropriate prayer.