

**Episode:** Three Gospels Series No. 07

**Narrator:** John the Apostle

**Primary Scriptures:** John 4-8

**Story Summary:** Early ministry of Jesus, “I AM” statements

**Location:** Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

**Time:** Circa 30 AD

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** John 4:23; 5:24, 39-40; 6:29, 35, 51, 65; 7:37-39; 8:7, 12, 31, 34

In the time of Jesus’ ministry, the Jews were hoping for the coming of a Messiah, though the precise meaning of that expectation varied from person to person. Some expected a prophet like Moses, some expected a king like David, some expected a military leader to free Israel from the domination of Rome. In the gospel of *John*, Jesus overturns all those expectations.

In Sychar, Jesus reveals himself as a savior of Samaritans, not just Jews. He portrays himself as the water of life and as a prophet who can reveal the meaning of all things. In the first big evangelical rally, many of the residents of Sychar became believers in Jesus.

The second miracle of Jesus was healing the official’s son from a long distance. This miracle revealed Jesus as a messiah who heals physically, and is not limited by space and time.

At the Pool of Bethesda, Jesus revealed himself as one who is the lord of the Sabbath, and the one who gives eternal life. Through discussions about the Sabbath, Jesus reveals himself as the Son and as the one that the Scriptures testify about.

With the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus is publicly shown to be kingly... someone who would fulfill the dreams of many people. With that, Jesus begins revealing himself to have characteristics that were entirely unpredictable.

Throughout the book of *John*, Jesus says many things about himself. Seven of his statements are known as the “I AM statements.” The form of these statements essentially equates Jesus with God, because God called himself, “I AM.” Jesus says he is the:

- Bread of life (John 6:25-59)
- True gate (John 10:1-6)
- Resurrection and life (John 11:1-43)
- True vine (John 15:1-17)
- Light of the world (John 8:12-30)
- Shepherd (John 10:7-21)
- Way, truth and life (John 14:5-14)

Modern Christians read these statements from a positive, reassuring viewpoint. Keep in mind that the Jewish leaders would have heard them as vicious blasphemy, each deserving death.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Why would the Samaritans in Sychar have been surprised that Jesus spent time teaching them?
  2. Describe the circumstance when God first called himself "I AM".
  3. Why were the Jewish leaders upset that Jesus healed the paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda? Why did Jesus command the healed man to pick up a mat that he would no longer need?
  4. Starting in John 5:19, Jesus called himself "son", and calls God his father. Why did that infuriate the Jewish leaders.
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1. The Jews generally despised the Samaritans and would not associate with them. Although the Samaritans worshiped the God of the Jews, they did not follow Jewish traditions and were not allowed to worship at the temple in Jerusalem. 2. Exodus 3 tells the story of Moses and the Burning Bush. In Exodus 14:3, God names himself "I AM." 3. Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath, when it was not allowed to work. When the man picked up the mat as Jesus commanded, he was working...according to the Pharisees. 4. The Jews recognized God as one entity. When Jesus called himself the son, he was indicating that God had an entirely different nature than the Jews thought.

### Application Questions:

1. Jesus asked the paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda if he wanted to get well. The man immediately thought Jesus was referring to physical health. To what else could Jesus have been referring? Do your immediate problems sometimes obscure your ability to see the bigger picture?
2. In John 5:12, the Jewish leaders were incensed that the man was carrying a mat on the Sabbath, but they neglected that the man had been miraculously healed. Do you ever miss important things because you are focused on getting your way?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. The ancient Jews believed they were the only ones worshiping God correctly. Do you ever feel that way when discussing religious matters with others? How important is this kind of "correctness" to you? How do you measure whether you are worshiping God in the manner God wants?
2. In the modern world, it is popular to believe that there are many ways to please God. In John 14:6, Jesus says he is the way, the truth and the life... and no one comes to the Father except through him. Does Jesus really mean what he says in that verse or is he being overly dramatic? Do you tend to believe Jesus or societal norms? How can you reconcile that verse with current cultural perceptions?