

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

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THE "I AM"'S OF CHRIST

by Henry M. Morris*

Those "Christians" who think of the Lord Jesus Christ as just a great man who never really claimed to be God need to confront His amazing statement to the scribes and Pharisees there in Jerusalem when they were berating Him in the temple. "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day,*" He said. Then, when they questioned that assertion, He went on to insist that "*Before Abraham was, I am*" (John 8:56,58).

This was such a bold claim to deity, that they immediately prepared to stone Him for what they thought was blasphemy. But He somehow "*hid Himself,*" (v.59) and escaped.

Of course, if He was not God, what He said *was* blasphemous, which was a capital crime under the Mosaic law (Leviticus 24:16). He was actually claiming to be the God to whom Moses spoke at the burning bush, when he asked God what His name was. God had answered that His name was "I AM" (Exodus 3:14)—that is, He is the God who is eternally self-existent, transcendent to time as well as to space and matter. And *that* was who Jesus was claiming to be!

But what about His claim that He and Abraham had seen each other, and that Abraham rejoiced to see His day? Abraham's time was centuries before that of even Moses.

That claim probably was in reference to the very critical time when "*the word of the LORD* [that is, the pre-incarnate Christ] *came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward*" (Genesis 15:1).

This was the very first of His great "I am" claims, as He promised to be both Protector and Provider to Abraham in a strange and hostile land.

It is fascinating to note the frequency of such "I am" claims in the Bible after this first one, and how they occur in multiples of seven, a fact which seems possibly designed—not by the human authors, of course, but by the Holy Spirit who inspired them (that is, of course, assuming my own somewhat arbitrary countings are correct).

For example, there are seven "I am"s in the Book of Genesis, the first being Genesis 15:1, as already noted. The second is in Genesis 15:7, where God, speaking to Abraham, said simply: "*I am the LORD.*" The word, "LORD," of course, is the Hebrew *Yahweh* (or *Jehovah*), and carries essentially the same meaning as "*I Am,*" or "*The One Who Is.*"

Then, there are 21 (i.e., 3x7) "I am"s in the Book of Exodus, including the divine answer to Moses, already mentioned, "*I AM THAT I AM*" (Exodus 3:14).

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The wonderful Book of Psalms contains seven “I am”s that speak prophetically and sadly of the future sufferings of the incarnate Christ. These are:

“*I am a worm, and no man*”
(Psalm 22:6).

“*I am poor and needy*”
(Psalm 40:17).

“*I am . . . a stranger unto my brethren*”
(Psalm 69:8).

“*I am full of heaviness*”
(Psalm 69:20).

“*I am poor and sorrowful*”
(Psalm 69:29).

“*I . . . am as a sparrow alone upon the house top*”
(Psalm 102:7).

“*I am withered like grass*”
(Psalm 102:11).

These all occur in psalms that are specifically known to be Messianic psalms (thus referring to Christ) because they are quoted as such in the New Testament.

The prophetic books abound in “I am” statements by the Lord. The second division of Isaiah, for example, (Isaiah 40–66) contains 35 such claims (7x5). The first is Isaiah 41:4. “*I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am He.*” The last is Isaiah 60:16. “. . . *I the LORD am thy Savior and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.*” However, the first division of Isaiah, which has a different theme than the second division, has no such “I am” statements.

The Book of Ezekiel contains 70 of these great assertions (more than any other single book). Jeremiah contains 21 of these statements. Then, all the smaller prophetic books of the prophets have a total of 21 “I am”s. All told, the 17 prophetic books contain a total of 154 (22x7) of God’s great “I am” claims.

The final such claim in the Old Testament is found in Malachi 3:6, in which God appropriately reminds everyone that “*I am the LORD, I change not.*” He is the great “I AM,” the self-existent God. We must remember always that our own personal Savior and Lord Jesus Christ has revealed to us that He Himself is that same great I AM.

It is in the Gospel of John, however, that the most beautiful and personally meaningful “I am”s are found. There are seven of these, as follows:

“*I am the bread of life*”
(John 6:35,48,51).

“*I am the light of the world*”
(John 8:12).

“*I am the door of the sheep*”
(John 10:7,9).

“*I am the good shepherd*”
(John 10:11,14).

“*I am the resurrection, and the life*”
(John 11:25).

“*I am the way, the truth, and the life*”
(John 14:6).

“*I am the true vine*”
(John 15:1,5).

How anyone could hear or see these claims and then still deny that they were claims to deity is a great mystery. For example, how could anyone except God Himself claim to be the way, the truth, and the life?

Well, maybe a madman might make such a claim, or maybe a gross scam artist of some kind. But no honest, sane person could ever do so—unless the claim were true!

That is the choice. Either Jesus Christ was mad or wicked—or else He truly *is* the way, the truth, and the life. He is the one way to reach God, the incarnate truth about God, and the only real giver of eternal life with God. One will come to the

same conclusion as he examines each of these seven great “I Am” claims.

The Lord Jesus Christ is “very God of very God,” as the old creeds expressed it. God “*created all things by Jesus Christ*” (Ephesians 3:9) and it is “*in Him we live, and move, and have our being*” (Acts 17:28). Furthermore, it is He who has “*made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself*” (Colossians 1:20).

Look also at the remarkable claim in John 11:25–26: “*I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*”

Death has always been man’s great enemy. It always seems a great tragedy and sorrow when a loved one dies, and people generally try to stay alive as long as possible. But Jesus claims to be able to restore one’s life even after he dies, and then to keep him alive forever! What a preposterous claim for any mortal man to make!

Yet He demonstrated His ability to do just that when He Himself defeated death, rising bodily from the grave on the third day. After all, He is the I AM, the self-existent One! Therefore He is fully able to make good on His promise to those who come to Him for forgiveness and salvation, “*Because I live,*” He says, “*ye shall live also*” (John 14:19).

There are also seven great “I am” statements in the Book of Revelation, and one of the key verses of this set has to do with His resurrection. “*I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death*” (Revelation 1:18).

“*Believest thou this?*” He would ask today, just as He asked Martha long ago as she was grieving over the death of her brother, Lazarus (John 11:26). How could anyone doubt the overwhelming evidence

of Christ’s victory over death (the evidence of the empty tomb, the many post-resurrection appearances, the transformation of the disciples, the testimony of 2000 years of hosts of lives also transformed through faith in Him)? Many *have* believed, of course, but there are multitudes who have not, and for them there is the dread prospect awaiting them of an eternity without God. “*If ye believe not that I am He* [but “He” is not in the original; Jesus just said, ‘*I am*’], *ye shall die in your sins*” (John 8:24).

It is significant that the other six “I am”’s in Revelation also stress His eternal existence, from eternity to eternity. Note the list below:

“*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending*”
(Revelation 1:8).


“*I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last*”
(Revelation 1:11).

“*Fear not; I am the first and the last*”
(Revelation 1:17).

“*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end*”
(Revelation 21:6).

“*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last*”
(Revelation 22:13).

“*I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star*”
(Revelation 22:16).

Our glorious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom we have trusted our eternal souls, is more than just a great religious teacher who was martyred for His faith long ago. He is alive on His throne in heaven, having defeated death forever. He was our great Creator, our sin-bearing Savior and will be our eternal Lord and King. 

DON'T THE FOSSILS PROVE EVOLUTION?

by John D. Morris

For decades students have been shown a representation of the fossil record appearing as a vertical column with marine invertebrates on the bottom, overlain by fish, then amphibians, reptiles, and mammals, with man on the top. The column is a column of time, they are told, with the long ago past on the bottom and the present on top. The fossil column (or similar figure) is presented without question as if it were true—as if it were real data. Students are led to believe that the order of first appearance of the fossils over time proves evolution.

I suggest that it does no such thing, for several reasons. First, the fossils do not occur in this order, simple to complex from bottom to top. The fossils at the bottom (i.e., long ago) are equally as complex as any animal today, and are essentially the same as their modern counterparts. In reality, the fossils *appear abruptly* in the record, fully formed and fully functional without less adapted ancestors in lower levels that would have preceded them in time. To be honest, the entire fossil record consists of predominately marine invertebrates (animals without a backbone, like clams, jellyfish, coral). The column is nothing more than a statement of evolutionary thinking. A case can perhaps be made for the order of first appearance of vertebrates (i.e., fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals), but vertebrate fossils are exceptions to the rule and usually quite fragmentary, with the lower range of each often being extended downward with new discoveries. Most come from Ice Age deposits which sometimes contain human remains also.

Second, the evolutionary presentation in the textbook column implies that all


life has come from one (or perhaps a few) common ancestor(s). But the Cambrian System, the lowest (i.e., oldest) level containing extensive multicellular fossils, exhibits a virtual explosion of life. Suddenly (by this I mean without the necessary ancestors lower in the column), every phylum of life is found—every basic body style, including vertebrate fish. The abrupt appearance of *diverse* forms of life does not match with evolutionary predictions of one form descending into many.

Third, these diverse forms continue up the column (i.e., throughout time) with much the same appearance possessed at the start. The term *stasis* describes the tendency to “stay” the same, remain “stationary” or “static.” Some body styles go extinct as you come up the column, but no new basic styles are introduced.

Summarizing:

- 1) Abrupt appearance
- 2) Diversity at the start, and
- 3) Stasis.

Certainly the fossil record does not prove evolution. On the other hand, its character fully supports creation of multiple “kinds” at the start with no evolutionary lineage, and continuance of those rather static kinds with limited adaptations into the present, or else going extinct. This is the creation idea.

The fossils further support the Flood. While no evolutionary trends can be seen bridging the basic kinds and producing new ones, we do see a transition from totally marine at the bottom to more terrestrial toward the top. At every level the dominant fossil is marine, but more and more land-dwelling fossils creep in. What more persuasive testimony to the Biblical model could there be? 



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