



HomeGroup **LEADER** Discussion Questions

Week 1: Jan 2-8

**THIS IS THE START OF A NEW SERIES AND A NEW YEAR!
WE SUGGEST YOU PICK 2-4 QUESTIONS FROM THOSE BELOW FOR YOUR DISCUSSION.**

Who is Jesus to you? This is arguably the most important question we could answer. To some, Jesus was a wise man or religious teacher from long ago. To others, he was a prophet. Of course, to Christians, Jesus is none other than the Son of God— the Messiah, or Christ. As we step into a new year, what better time could there be than this to sharpen our understanding of who Jesus is? Who did Jesus say he is? For starters, Jesus is the one who declared, “Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”

Main Texts: Exodus 2:23-3:15 and John 8:12-59 *Only some of these verses are directly referenced in the sermon, but the surrounding context is especially important this week for understanding the passages. It would be helpful for leaders to read through all of these verses ahead of time even if you don't get to read them together as a group.*

CONNECT

1. How was Christmas and New Year's for you? What did you do?
2. Have you made any New Year's resolutions? What are you hoping for in 2021?
3. What did you find most significant in this week's sermon?

LEARN

4. Read Exodus 2:23 through 3:11. What verbs stand out, especially in 2:23-25 and 3:7-11? *Pastor Tom points out the key verbs in the sermon. You can refer to question #9 below.*

5. As you look at these verses in Exodus, what ideas or words remind us of Jesus? If you are able, think of specific examples from Jesus' life and ministry.

There are numerous ways you could answer this. The Incarnation and Advent we just celebrated, in addition to the cross and resurrection are the most obvious, but there are plenty of other episodes as well. Think, for example of how Jesus heard the cries of the paralytic (Mark 2:1-12), saw and healed the demon-possessed (Matt 8:28-32), etc.

6. Exodus 3:14 is famously difficult to grasp, but the context can help guide our thoughts. For a people being enslaved, brutally treated, and even killed, what significance could the description of God as “I AM” have had for Moses and the people of Israel?

This is a difficult question and topic, but the “I AM” description comes in the midst of a situation that surely seemed full of despair and hopeless. Who wouldn’t blame the Israelites for wondering if the God of their ancestors was still active and present and aware? Maybe the gods of the Egyptians were superior? In this setting, God reminds us that He is. He is the ever-present, self-existent, self-sustaining, all-powerful God. The Exodus would become THE central display of who God is that Israel was to remember and recite in future generations (think of the annual Passover ritual). It’s in this setting that God declares and reassures His people that I AM.

7. Read John 8:12-59. Where do you see the tension escalate in the interaction between Jesus and the religious authorities?

This question requires some time to get through but possible answers are obvious as you read. If you have less time to devote, you could start at verse 31 or even 39. Look out for the questions or statements the religious leaders make and how Jesus responds.

APPLY

8. Think of the various ideas in our day and culture about “God” or a divine being. How do they compare with the I AM described in our passages this week?

This could make for an interesting discussion as you think through how friends, family, and co-workers might think about God (if you know). You can also think about how ideas about God are portrayed in movies and television.

9. Fill in the following phrase with the words below taken from Exodus:

“I AM the one who _____.” Which are most meaningful to you right now? Why?

- *hears*
- *remembers his covenant*
- *sees*
- *knows*
- *has come down*
- *has sent a deliverer*
- *is with you*

10. Some skeptics argue that Jesus never claimed to be divine or the Son of God. How could John 8:58-59 (with the verses from Exodus in mind as well) be used to respond to that argument?

It should be clear that the religious authorities knew what Jesus was claiming and their response was to attempt to kill Jesus on the spot. People who make a skeptical claim like this are likely failing to account for or understand this passage from John 8:58-59 (and others).