



*The Rock is a Youth
Ministry of Ascension
Lutheran Church*

I Am Who I Am!

Based on Exodus 3:13-14 & John 8:58

Abbott	Michael
Costello	Zach
Theodore	Joe
Alvin	Annee
Simon	Ryan
Moses	Oliver
Bush	Toby
Popeye	Matt W.
Olive Oyl	Allee

Setting: Little Bro Theodore sitting in room as his big Brother Alvin and big brother Simon come by his room.

Theodore: *(Banging his head against his Bible.)* I don't get it! I don't get It!

Alvin: What's the matter, little brother?

Simon: Get your midterm grades? Have a test today?

Alvin: Invest your whole McDonalds paycheck in the stock market?

Theodore: Ha, ha. Very funny.

Alvin: Well what is it?

Theodore: Remember how I started reading through the Bible at the start of the school year.

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- Simon: Let me guess. You hit Leviticus and your stuck. Right?
- Theodore: I wish! I've been stuck on these two verses in Exodus for three days now.
- Alvin: Three days? Oh that's nothing, Little brother. The Israelites were stuck in Exodus for 40 years. *(Pause.)* I tell you what: tell us the verses your stuck on, and—like Moses—we'll lead you out of your devotional desert.
- Theodore: Okay, oh wise one. Exodus 3:13-14. Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' "
- Simon: That's it? So what's your problem?
- Theodore: Oh, come on. How can God give him an answer like that? It sounds like God's toying with him. "I am who I am"? Two days ago when I first read this—right after my beloved Chicago Cubs lost the playoffs--all I could think of was "Who's on First". *(Abbott & Costello appear off stage.)*
- Costello: Who are you?
- Abbott: I am.
- Costello: You are who?
- Abbott: I am who?
- Costello: Who's who?
- Abbott: He's who.
- Costello: Who's he?
- Abbott: He is I.

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Costello: How can he be you?

Abbott: How can you be he?

Costello: I am me.

Abbott: So you are you?

Costello: I am who I Am. (*Abbott & Costello disappear.*)

Alvin: Hmm.... I see what you mean. But you know, I don't think God was trying to just be coy or funny with Moses. So you tried to figure it out again yesterday?

Theodore: Yeah. Right after I finished breakfast yesterday morning I said another prayer and took another stab at understanding these verses.

Simon: Did it work?

Theodore: All I could think of was "Green Eggs & Ham". (*Moses and Burning Bush appear.*)

Mo: I am Moses. Mo I Am. I will not lead them, Great I Am.

Bush: You will not lead them here or there?

Mo: I will not lead them anywhere.

Bush: You will not lead them from Pharoah's Land?

Mo: I'd rather stay in Midian.

Bush: You will not lead them to God's Land?

Mo: I will not lead them, Great I Am.

Bush: Will you help them as they weep?

Mo: I will not help them. I'll tend sheep.

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- Bush: You will not lead them to my Land?
- Mo: I will not lead them, Great I Am.
- Bush: But Mo, I'll lead YOU everyday.
- Mo: But will you give me words to say?
- Bush: I will lead YOU in every day.
- Mo: I just cannot. I'm only man.
- Bush: But I Am God. I Am I Am. *(Mo & Bush disappear.)*
- Alvin: *(Pause.)* Hmm.... We had eggs and ham for breakfast yesterday, didn't we? Maybe you need to start doing your quiet time at bedtime.
- Theodore: Exactly. That's why I waited until after supper tonight. But then mom made that funky spinach casserole, and...
- Simon: Don't tell me. Popeye and Olive Oyl? *(Popeye and Olive Oyl.)*
- Olive Oyl: Oh, Popeye, you're so strong and muscular.
- Popeye: I yam what I yam, and that's all that I yam.
- Olive Oyl: And you get all that strength from eating cans of raw spinach?
- Popeye: Actually, I get all my strength from reading God's word...after all, he's the original one who said "I Yam who I Yam". *(Popeye laugh.)*
- Olive Oyl: Oh Popeye! *(Popeye & Olive Oyl disappear.)*
- Alvin: Hmm... And mom and dad wonder why you're struggling in algebra?
- Theodore: Some help you are, big sis. Clearly you don't even know what it means!

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- Simon: Well, actually, you're right. Like so many things we read in the Bible, a lot gets lost in translation, or at least in understanding shocking Biblical words in our modern world.
- Theodore: What do you mean?
- Alvin: Read that first verse again.
- Theodore: Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"
- Simon: There. The question "What is his name?" was really kind of like asking, "What is his nature, his character, his essence."
- Alvin: Yeah. The Hebrew words used here implied that. And remember, names meant a lot more to people in those days than they do to us today.
- Theodore: They didn't just pull names out of a hat, like when mom and dad just happened to name us Simon, Alvin, and Theodore.
- Simon: Yeah. Bible names really meant something.
- Theodore: Oh, yeah. Like even Moses name meant "drew out" because Moses was drawn out of the Nile River as a baby.
- Simon: Right. And "I Am" was just as meaningful to the Israelites.
- Theodore: So what did it mean?
- Alvin: Well, a lot of scholars think it meant the present tense "I Am" or the future tense "to be" or "he who causes to be" or "he who brings into existence".

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Theodore: Didn't Jesus use this kind of wording in referring to himself in the New Testament. In the Gospel of John Jesus had a whole series of "I Am" statements.

Simon: Yeah, in fact, in John 8:58, he said "I tell you the truth...before Abraham was born, I Am."

Theodore: So Jesus was kind of the original Popeye: a sort of super guy.

Alvin: Yeah, only when Jesus said "I yam what I yam and that's all that I yam" it really upset the Jewish leaders who immediately knew he was claiming to be God.

Theodore: And they tried to stone him.

Simon: Anything else you need help with, little brother?

Theodore: Well, actually, you two were correct at the start. I got poor mid term grades, have a hard physics test today, and I got sacked from my job at McDonalds last night for failing my cheeseburger exam.

Alvin: God's name should give all of us hope. It tells us he was, he is, and he will be.

Simon: He spoke and the stars and all creation came into being with less effort and more certainty than you or I flipping on a light switch.

Theodore: Hmm...so I guess school grades, a physics exam, and the science of making a cheeseburger aren't too big for God?

Alvin: Nope.

Theodore: Even the Cubs winning the World Series some time?

Simon: Well, maybe not in our lifetime, little bro!