

“I Am the Lord Your God”

Biblical Research Activity

The phrases “I am the Lord” and “I am the Lord your God” appear over and over again in the books of the Word. They appear most often in Leviticus and Ezekiel.

In Leviticus these phrases are used directly following a law or rule that is being given by the Lord to the Israelites. Look over chapter 19 and see how the phrases are used over and over to give emphasis at the end of a law. For example, “You shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord” (Leviticus 19:12). The Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church helps us to see that the Lord is giving confirmation of these laws (see *Arcana Coelestia* 7192).

In Ezekiel the phrase usually takes the form “*then you shall know* that I am the Lord your God.” Here, they are used following prophecies about what the Lord is going to do. For example, “I will break down the wall you have plastered with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground...it will fall, and you shall be consumed in the midst of it. Then you shall know that I am the Lord” (Ezekiel 13:14). Look at the rest of chapter 13 to find more examples. These illustrate how people had to be *shown* that the Lord is their God and have this demonstrated through His awe-inspiring actions, or else they would not have known who He is.

Possible Activities:

1. Using a computer Bible search, or just your own fingers and eyes, determine how many times these phrases appear in Leviticus and then in Ezekiel. If you have a Bible search, check out how often the phrases appear in other books. Can you calculate how much more often they occur in Leviticus and Ezekiel than in other books of the Word?
2. Do some research on when Leviticus and Ezekiel were written. When were they given, relative to the birth of the Lord? What do we know about what was happening to the Israelites at those times? (Many copies of the Bible have articles at the back which describe something of the settings for the different books.)
3. The name “Leviticus” means the book of the law. Ezekiel is the name of a prophet. Look up the words “legal” and “prophetical” in a dictionary and/or thesaurus. What is the connection between these concepts and the nature of the books of Leviticus and Ezekiel? Do you see a connection in your between simply being *told* something and coming to *know* it through experience?

The shift between Leviticus and Ezekiel suggests how people’s understanding of the Lord, and recognition and reverence for His name, changed over the years. What might a study of these two books tell us about why the Lord was born into the world when He was?

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,” says the Lord (Zechariah 2:10).