



"The highest of distinctions is service to others."
—King George VI

26-Dec-25

Here I Am! (Part Two)

In [Part One](#), we saw how many [Old Testament](#) heroes of [faith](#) responded to God's call to service with "Here I am," a frequent translation of the Hebrew word *hinneni*. The same response occurs in the New Testament, with faithful men answering with *idou*, its Greek counterpart:

Ananias: The man whom [God](#) used to heal and baptize Saul of Tarsus does not receive enough credit for his faith and courage. Ananias knew that this Saul had been persecuting followers of Jesus. But when God summons him to be His emissary to Saul, he responds immediately with "Here I am, Lord." Notice [Acts 9:10-11](#):

Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am [*idou*], Lord." So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus."

Ananias went straightaway to fulfill his commission, even calling the church's former persecutor "Brother Saul" (verse 17).

Jesus Christ: In [Hebrews 10:5-7](#), the author of the epistle quotes [Jesus Christ](#) saying, "Here I am" to God the Father, tying the Greek and the Hebrew tightly together. These verses conclude a larger point:

Therefore, when He came into [the world](#), He said:

"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,
But a body You have prepared for Me.
In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin
You had no pleasure.
Then I said, 'Behold [*idou*], I have come—
In the volume of the book it is written of Me—
To do Your will, O God.'"

In these verses, the author quotes [Psalm 40:6-8](#) from the Hebrew, where the same word is *hinneh*, another form of *hinneni*. Many Bible translations read, "Here I am!"

Not all the people God summoned to service—patriarchs, prophets, kings—are documented as saying, "Here I am!" but it is a good bet that they did in one form or another.

We must keep in mind that Hebrew, Greek, and English do not correspond precisely to each other. The Bible contains numerous occurrences of *hinneni* and *idou*—too many to cite and consider in this space. Such a personal study might be helpful. However, in general, the phrase "Here I am" stands out as a direct way that godly men willingly "punch in" to work for God, submitting unreservedly to God's commission, giving Him a blank check to tell them what to do.

"Here I am" almost seems to be code for, "I will do it, whatever it is." The nuances of the phrase imply humility, submission, obedience, trust, conviction, honor, service, and innocence. They are the respectful words of a servant, one who is prepared to follow the instructions of his superior implicitly.

Thus, when we volunteer to help a brother, we should not be hesitant. If we are doing *God's* will, *He* will help us. Paul says in [Philippians 4:13-14](#), "I

can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Nevertheless, you have done well that you have shared in my distress." Jesus says in [Matthew 11:30](#), "My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

The Bible also contains examples in which a person did *not* respond with the phrase, "Here I am," to God's call when it was clearly warranted. These examples stand out. The best-known of these appears in [Genesis 3:9-10](#):

The LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" [This would have been the ideal time to say, "Here I am!" Instead, Adam responds with excuses.] So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

Eve does the same thing, blaming the serpent (verse 13). In the following chapter, when the Lord spoke to Cain, the man either remained sullen in his depression or responded with sarcasm, "Am I my brother's keeper?" ([Genesis 4:6-9](#)). When God speaks to Balaam, he also fails to reply with "Here I am" ([Numbers 22:9-10](#)).

Even the prophet Jonah, when initially commissioned by God to deliver a message to the hated Assyrians, "arose to flee to Tarshish" rather than respond with a "Here I am" attitude ([Jonah 1:1-3](#)). The next time, incredibly humbled by his encounter with the great fish, he "arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD" ([Jonah 3:3](#)). How an individual answers God's communication says a great deal about him or her.

The English translation of *hinneni* and *idou* discloses a more profound implication. God reveals His name to [Moses](#) as "I AM" in [Exodus 3:14](#). Jesus uses this same name, "I AM," when He encounters the frightened disciples in a raging storm in the middle of the Sea of Galilee: "Immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'Be of good cheer! It is I [literally, I AM]; do not be afraid'" ([Matthew 14:27](#)).

The two words for "Here I am" and "I AM" are not linguistically related; they come from different root words. But they *are* connected in English, as "Here I am" also contains God's name. When we say, "Here I am," we can silently put a comma between "Here" and "I AM," and in this way, put ourselves in God's service with this phrase.

As a result, we may want to consider *never* failing to respond to opportunities to help others, lest we miss God calling us to service, as almost happened to Samuel (I Samuel 3). As a child, he misunderstood who had called him, but admirably, Samuel persisted in answering the call. Samuel's story, of a child who could not possibly be ready for service, instructs us that, whether we are ready or not, we should always step forward and answer when called upon. God will provide the help we need to accomplish what He wants us to do.

In addition, we should be deeply prayerful and close to God, exercising our spiritual muscles so we will be better prepared when called upon to serve. This lesson is one of the more significant teachings of the [Parable of the Ten Virgins](#) ([Matthew 25:1-13](#)).

One final point: "Here I am" is part of a conversation between two parties. Between God and us, it is a sign of obedience and an aspect of our sanctification. But it is also a conversation between church brethren and us, between our spouses and us, and between our neighbors and us. Modern expressions for it could be "What can I do for you?" "How can I help?" or "I'm here to do whatever you need." It is to step forward, prepared to take instruction and act in another's best interest.

It verges on being a covenant, an agreement in which God has involved us, and in submitting to Him, we are volunteering to work for Him and for others without fully knowing the task. We are implying we will stick with it until it is done, no matter what we must face.

Remember that in the Parable of the Sower ([Matthew 13:3-9](#), 18-23), we are represented by the soil. When we say, "Here I am," we are inviting the Sower to plant so He can produce a crop, to bear fruit. So, what kind of soil will He find? How will we respond? Will we say, "Here I am"? Will we be the good, rich, deep, fertile, productive soil that produces a hundredfold, sixty, or thirty? As Jesus says after giving this parable, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" ([Matthew 13:9](#)).

- James C. Stoertz

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Christian Service](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Although service is not a highly-valued trait in a land that values rugged individualism and self-reliance, selfless service is at the core of God's very character and a trait that we must emulate to go to a higher level of Christian living. God's love is not a commodity that can be bottled up or put into storage. It must be manifested or demonstrated in good works- service to God and service to others. Our Christian liberty obligates us to perform works, not for our salvation, but as an outward demonstration of our love for God. This service must be rendered after a sober reflection or honest assessment of the gifts God has given us to render service. Following Christ's example, we must live our entire lives in a perpetual state of sacrificial servitude - teaching, listening to, encouraging, and physically helping people to live God's way of life. Sacrifice is the essence of Christian service.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Fully Accepting God's Sovereignty, Part Three: The Fruits](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

As Christians, we have a desire to please God, and we want Him to protect and deliver us when the times ahead get tough. John Ritenbaugh illustrates four qualities of character that our full acceptance of God's sovereignty will build and that will prepare us for whatever work God may choose for us in these last days.

Featured Audio Schedule

Friday Night Bible Study

The next Bible Study (Friday 26-Dec-25) will be **Philippians (Part Six)**,

CGG Weekly: Here I Am! (Part Two) (26-Dec-25)

given by **John W. Ritenbaugh**. The Bible Study will be featured on the [CGG homepage](#) from **6:00 pm Friday** (EST) and all day Saturday.

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