

## THE EXISTING ONE

In the Old Testament book of Exodus, it is stated that when God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and Moses asked Him, “What is Your name?” God replied, “**I AM** (ἐγώ εἰμι) **the Existing One** (ὁ ὢν)” (Ex. 3:14; Orthodox Study Bible).

In the Greek text of the Septuagint, God’s response “I AM the Existing One” is written **ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν**. The noun along with the definite article **ὁ ὢν** can be translated into English as “the Existing One,” “The One Who exists,” “He Who exists,” “The One Who is”, or “He Who is.”

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is referred to with this very same name of God. We will demonstrate this by placing the phrase used in the original Greek text of the New Testament next to the English.

St. John the Evangelist calls Jesus Christ “the One Who exists”:

“The only begotten Son, the **One Who exists** (ὁ ὢν) in the bosom of the Father” (Jn. 1:18).

Jesus Christ uses this same name to refer to Himself in the following verses:

“No one has ascended to heaven except for Him who came down from heaven, the Son of Man, the **One Who exists** (ὁ ὢν) in heaven” (Jn. 3:13).

“not that anyone has seen the Father, except **He Who exists** (ὁ ὢν) with God” (Jn. 6:46).

“if you do not believe that **I AM** (ἐγώ εἰμι), you will die in your sins” (Jn. 8:24).

“when you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that **I AM** (ἐγώ εἰμι)” (Jn. 8:28).

“most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, **I AM** (ἐγώ εἰμι)” (Jn. 8:58).

The Jews realized very well that by calling Himself “I AM” and “the Existing One” Jesus Christ was in actuality proclaiming to be God. This is why they wanted to stone Him to death on several occasions: “Then they took up stones to throw at Him” (Jn. 8:59). “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus

answered them, ‘Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?’ The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, **and because You, being a man, make yourself God**’ (Jn. 10:31-33). “Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, **making Himself equal with God**” (Jn. 5:18).

The Orthodox Church, following the teaching of the Holy Scriptures and the Apostles, proclaims daily that Jesus Christ is “the Existing One,” the God Who appeared to Moses in the burning bush. It does so through:

1. Her iconography of Jesus Christ by placing the three letters **Ο Ω Ν** (which form the name **ὁ ὢν**) in Christ's halo.
2. The prayer voiced by the priest at the end of every vespers service: “Blessed is Christ our God, **the Existing One**, always, now and forever and unto the ages of ages.”
3. Her hymnology, which consistently states that the “the Existing One,” the God Who appeared to Moses, is Jesus Christ. Behold one such hymn sung during the Vespers of the Transfiguration:

“He Who in the past spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai through symbols, saying ‘I AM the Existing One,’ today [this same God] was transfigured before the disciples upon Mount Tabor, and showed the original beauty of the image, having Himself assumed the human nature.”

