

Seven “I am” Statements

This document contains the teacher notes for seven Sunday school lessons on the topic of the twelve apostles. There is a [complementary document](#) containing student handouts to be distributed to listeners to aid in retention while teaching this material.

I claim no infallibility relative to the material presented here. It is, as many have said before, one beggar showing other beggars where to find bread.

These teachings are provided free in the spirit of [Matthew 10:8b](#).

As errors are found, please let me know so I can correct. The theology expressed here should not be construed as representing the theology of Stuart Heights Baptist Church (especially when I am wrong or when I am being an idiot).

The formatting is as follows:

- **bold green text are quotes from commentators** (several are used throughout)
- **bold red text is the Scripture** (NKJV is used unless otherwise noted. Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.)
- **bold blue text are Bible references**
- **bold purple text are questions to consider asking while teaching this material**
- **highlighted, bold, and underlined text in the teacher notes are answers to blanks in the student handouts**
- plain black text are the teachers’ comments

The file formats available online are only the PDFs, but if the native Microsoft Word files are needed, I am more than happy to email them. I can be reached at jim314@yahoo.com.

The audio recordings of several of the teachings themselves are available via our class [podcast](#). Many thanks to David Barber for his faithfulness in this area.

I hope these resources assist in a better understanding of the “I am” statements that Jesus makes in the gospel of [John](#).

Grace and peace,

Jim Fleming
Hixson, Tennessee
February 2015

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Schedule

January 11	John 6:35	I am the bread of life
January 18	John 8:12	I am the light of the world
January 25	John 10:7, 9	I am the door of the sheep
February 1	John 10:11, 14	I am the good shepherd
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February 22	John 15:1, 5	I am the true vine

The Original “I AM”: Exodus 3

To start, let us look back at the original big “I AM” in the Bible in [Exodus 3](#).

1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law [this was before Moses was famous for God—at this point he was only famous for being in Pharaoh’s house], **the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 And the Angel of the Lord** [This is Jesus in the Old Testament. Jesus uses this same phrase again 1,500 years later to point people back to Himself.] **appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. 3 Then Moses said, “I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.”**

4 So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”

5 Then He said, “Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.” 6 Moreover He said, “I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

7 And the Lord said: “I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. 8 So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. 9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” [This is like God telling us to go and lead His children in Iran out of Iran because of their oppression and sending us to Iran’s supreme leader]

11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

12 So He said, “I will certainly be with you. And this *shall be* a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

13 Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”

14 And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” [basically—“I exist”—using any counting system or structure known] **And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”** **15 Moreover God said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.’** [The rest of this chapter gives a preview of what God is going to do in the following chapters.]

This text is all about God saying to the children of Israel: I **am**. I am **here**. A God that is not with us does not do a lot for us. This is not God saying, “I am with you in spirit only.” This is God saying, “I am here **always**.” God isn’t going anywhere. This truth gives us hope because hope is rooted in **truth**. Sometimes our hope is rooted in wishes.

What’s the big deal about I am?

For me, the big deal is permanence.

I am the bread of life . . . permanent **sustenance** (Jesus is the eternal provision)

I am the light of the world . . . permanent sight (Jesus is the light in our world)

I am the door of the sheep . . . permanent start (Jesus is the door to the relationship)

I am the good shepherd . . . permanent supervision (Jesus is our healthy oversight)

I am the resurrection and the life . . . permanent **salvation** (Jesus is our salvation)

I am the way, the truth, and the life . . . permanent safety (Jesus is our safety net)

I am the true vine . . . permanent **source** (Jesus is our connection)

God isn’t going anywhere. That is what makes the “I am” statements so powerful. They are a continual reminder that God is. God is here. God is here always. Even more amazing is the fact that Jesus always will be these things. Jesus will always be the bread of life. Jesus will always be the light of the world. Jesus will always be the door of the sheep. Jesus will always be the good shepherd. Jesus will always be the resurrection and the life. Jesus will always be the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus will always be the true vine.

Week 1: “I am the bread of life”: John 6:1-40

Feeding the Five Thousand

1 After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. [We start a day before ‘the bread of life’ quote because there are events the day before that help to explain and give context to that conversation] **2** Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. **3** And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

4 Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. **5** Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” [Where are they? On a mountain. How many stores are around? None] **6** But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

7 Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii [i.e., days’ wages] worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.”

8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, **9** “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?”

10 Then Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand [easily would have been five digits’ worth of people including wives and children]. **11** And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. **12** So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.” **13** Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. [The disciples had to carry these heavy baskets home—what a wonderful reminder to burn in their memories of Jesus’ provision] **14** Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”

Jesus Walks on the Sea

15 Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king [the crowd wanted freedom from Rome—this was their mindset], He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

16 Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, **17** got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. **18** Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. **19** So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid. **20** But He said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” **21** Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going. [this was the day before]

The Bread from Heaven

22 On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone—**23** however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks—**24** when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus [this is a good thing—people are looking for Jesus]. **25** And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, “Rabbi, when did You come here?”

26 Jesus answered them and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. **27** Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”

28 Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”

29 Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.” [Jesus is talking about Himself]

30 Therefore they said to Him, “What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? [At which point, if I were Jesus, I would have turned and said, “Were you not paying attention yesterday?”] **31** Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

32 Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. **33** For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” [Again, Jesus is talking about Himself]

34 Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.” [These folks are not getting it, so Jesus is going to spell it out for them.]

35 And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life [I wonder if Jesus said this slowly]. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. [Now I think they have Him spun up] **36** But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. **37** All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. **38** For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. **39** This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing [referring back to the fragments He had them gather], but should raise it up at the last day. **40** And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” [Jesus set this conversation up 1,500 years before with His conversation with Moses—He is OK with a really long and slow setup. Ultimately, Jesus answers their question and then He gives them the Gospel. I think He is saying, “Yesterday was an example to make you hungry to want more.”]

I am the bread of life

This morning, the focus is really on that one little phrase in **John 6:35: I am the bread of life. Dr. Constable: The Jews regarded the real bread from heaven as the Law. Jesus did not say He had the bread of life but that He was that bread.**

Bread is first mentioned in **Genesis 3:17-19**. Quick review of **Genesis: Genesis 1**: God makes it. **Genesis 2**: Eve (#winning). **Genesis 3**: We break it (you would think we would get farther into the book before we break things, but it is what it is).

Genesis 3:17-19: 17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return." [Bread is part of the curse. When God designed things in the garden, Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the plants. We have no evidence that they had ever eaten bread before. They may not have even known what God was talking about here. God is saying that there will be work involved in food instead of picking and eating.]

Over 200 times in the Bible this word shows up.

Bread is last mentioned in **2 Thessalonians 3:12** (as part of a command to be simple).

Bread is a staple food. Almost everyone has eaten it. **Did anyone eat it today?**

My daughter has gluten sensitivity so she eats gluten free bread. Do you know why? Because she likes bread. It is almost as if it is baked in to us.

The basic ingredients are water, flour, and yeast. You can add other things, but if you have those, you can make bread. Bread is one of the simplest foods on the planet. **Has anyone ever made bread? How long does it last?**

If you live to be 70 years old, you will eat over 75,000 meals in your life. No doubt, many of those—perhaps even most of those—will involve bread.

I brought some bread with me this morning. Many varieties: white, wheat, etc. Bread for every taste. Even homemade bread. (thank you, Michele Reneau)

Go through the types of bread.

However, all of these will eventually just leave you hungry again. You eat, and you get hungry again.

The root word for the word for bread is the word for 'raised.' Because bread rises when it is finished—just like Jesus rose when He was finished.

“Never hunger” is actually a double negative in the Greek. And double negatives in Greek are stronger negatives than single negatives.

Jesus is the greatest teacher that ever lived—and I think it is because he used analogies that everyone could associate with. Everyone has been hungry. Everyone knows what hunger pain feels like. No matter what society or time, this analogy will resonate. That is brilliant teaching. This is the case with all of the “I am” statements, by the way.

Only Jesus will forever satisfy. God isn’t going anywhere. His plan is to feed us forever on Himself.

Ironside: Salvation is in a person, our Lord Jesus Himself. Remember when Simeon was worshipping in the temple and Mary and Joseph entered with the little Baby, and Simeon said, “There is the salvation of God,” and He hastened to the Baby and took Him in his arms and he said, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” Yes, God’s salvation is in a person, and that person His own blessed Son. To receive Him is to be saved. To receive Him is to have life eternal. It is not about the bread—it is about what the bread points to. It is not about the light—it is about what the light points to. It is not about the door. It is about what the door points to. All these things point to Jesus. Our God isn’t going anywhere.

Application

1. God isn’t going anywhere
2. Earthly bread loaves you hungry
3. Jesus **fills** (perhaps we get hungry after eating because God is reminding us that there is something more than food that satisfies)

Personalization

1. Trust Him
2. Stay **hungry** (hand out the bread—take this home and eat this bread and remember earthly bread does not eternally satisfy—remember that only Jesus satisfies forever)
3. Stay **full** (place confidence in Jesus because Jesus is the bread of life)

Father, we thank you that you are a patient God. We thank you that thousands of years ago you told Moses in that burning bush, “I am that I am.” And we thank you that you were patient in fleshing out that statement in Jesus Christ and showing us that you aren’t going anywhere. We thank you that you give us food to eat to fill our bellies for a short time. We thank you for the hunger that comes afterward to remind us that there is something more. We thank you for Jesus Christ—who we acknowledge as the only one that can satisfy us forever. Help us to remember that every time we get hungry, that Jesus will fix that too. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

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The Original “I AM”: Exodus 3

13 Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”

14 And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” [basically—“I exist”—referring to God’s essential nature] **And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”**

This text is all about God saying to the children of Israel: I am, I am here, and I am here always.

What’s the big deal about I am?

For me, the big deal is permanence. God isn’t going anywhere. That is what makes the “I am” statements so powerful. They are a continual reminder that God is. God is here. God is here always.

The other big deal about I am is when Jesus says it in the New Testament, it is more than two words. In Greek, it is *ego ime* [ego eh-mee]—basically the Greek equivalent of the Old Testament Hebrew. When Jesus makes these ‘I am’ statements, He is claiming to have the same essential nature of God that God has—and this was a claim that no one else could honestly make—and it was the reason that it infuriated the religious leaders of the day. He was claiming to be God when he said these things.

Week 1: “I am the bread of life”: John 6:35

35 And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” [Remember that in last week’s text Jesus set up this statement with His actions the prior day in feeding the 5,000—and He is going to do the same in today’s text]

Week 2: “I am the light of the world”: John 8:12

The background

Just as we did last week, let’s start a chapter before to see the set up. Go to [John 7](#).

John 7:2: Now the Jews’ Feast of Tabernacles was at hand.

The Feast of Tabernacles was an eight-day celebration where God commanded the Israelites to live in temporary huts/booths to remember their 40-year wandering in the desert. It is a look back at God’s provision and it is a celebration of Him.

[John 7](#) takes place during the Feast of Tabernacles. During the Feast of Tabernacles, a lot of things happen—it is an extremely celebratory time with lots of things going on. One of those things is the Temple Light Show (*Simchat Bet Ha’Shoevah*).

Hebrew4Christians.com: During this time the four towering menorahs were lit up and the priests would put on a “light show,” performing “torch dances” while the Levites sang and played music. These would occur every night of Sukkot, all through the night. These festivities were apparently so spectacular that the Jewish sages have said, “He who has not seen the rejoicing at the Simchat Bet HaShoevah, has never seen rejoicing in his life” (*Sukkah 5:1*).

So, I say all that to say, each and every night of the week of [John 7](#), people were seeing a light show and watching things be lit up—keep that in mind.

John 7:14: Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught.

The majority of [John 7](#) is spent watching everyone argue over whether or not Jesus is the Messiah.

Then comes [John 8:2-11](#): **2 Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. 3 Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, 4 they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?” 6 This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear.**

7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.” 8 And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?”

11 She said, “No one, Lord.”

And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”

Couple of points about this text: Jesus is always drawing a distinction between Himself (God) and the religious leaders (in this case, the scribes and Pharisees). **Why did the religious leaders leave? Because of what they heard or because of what they saw?** The text says because of what they heard. **What did they hear? He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.** He is not asking them if they have ever sinned, He is asking them if they have sinned in this matter. If you were going to participate in a stoning, you could not have been involved in the sin. Many feel that these leaders set this woman up and staged the whole event to trick/trip up Jesus. Moreover, if you were the uninvolved witness to the sin, then you are required to throw the first stone. So they, by their very leaving, admit to not being pure in this matter. So either they lied about being witnesses or their hands were not pure in this matter. And Jesus calls them out on it and embarrasses them.

Today’s text: John 8:12

Then comes **John 8:12: Then Jesus spoke to them** [the people watching] **again, saying, “I am the light of the world.** [He is drawing a distinction between Himself and the religious leaders that just failed] **He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”** [He is essentially saying if you follow Me, you won’t walk out in shame, but you will have life—I don’t think this statement had anything to do with the woman—I think it had everything to do with the religious leaders]

Light

Light first shows up in **Genesis 1**. Read **Genesis 1:1-5**. Light preceded earthly life. There was light without life, but there was not life before light.

Genesis 1:14-18: God gave the lights in the heavens for the purpose of communication with man in a form that man can comprehend. Again, God gives His son, Jesus Christ, for the purpose of communication with man in a form that man can comprehend.

Terry Brown: Jesus’ light analogy points back to the Old Testament when the light of God lit the way at night and it points forward to the Messiah that will serve as the light to the Gentiles.

Exodus 13:21; 14:20: The same source can be both blinding and enlightening. Jesus can be both blinding to some and enlightening to others.

Job 38:1, 19, 24: God alone understands light and how it works. (Hint: it’s because He created it)

Psalms 27:1: If God is our light, why should we fear any darkness?

Psalms 104:2: God has such control over light that He wears it

Psalms 119:105: Light shows me where I **am** and shows me where I should **go**—When Jesus proclaims He is the light of the world, He is doing the same for us. **Terry Brown: Jesus wants you and I who are in darkness to see the reality of our lives (how bad things are around us and within us).**

Ecclesiastes 2:13: Light wins vs. darkness. Light always wins vs. darkness. It is just the nature of light.

Isaiah 60:19: One day, the Lord will replace our physical lights with Himself

Luke 15:8: It is only in darkness that we lose things. Light helps us find lost things.

What happened at the cross? Darkness. That was significant because the Light of the World died. **But what happened next?** He rose again—and that Light helps us find lost things.

2 Corinthians 11:14: Even Satan wants to get in on the light

Revelation 21:23: At the end of all things, we will see by God Himself

Back to the woman in **John 8** . . . she should have died for her sin—that was the Law. But the Light of the World extended mercy to her—and He does for us as well.

God wants us to bask in the light—to experience light. Just as basking in external sunlight changes our external complexion, so basking in Jesus’ light changes our internal complexion. But unlike external sunlight—we cannot have too much Jesus.

Julie’s sunburn

There are some that will reject the light. There are some that will accept the light. **What will you do with the light?** **John Piper: It is Jesus or darkness. There is no third alternative.**

Application

1. Light is a prerequisite for **life**
2. Distractions are coming (they may be religious in nature)
3. **Jesus** is the light of the world

Personalization

1. Get to know the Light of the world
2. Stay **focused** on the light (like bugs to a bug zapper; just as Mark Twain said, “Never let school stand in the way of education,” I would say, “Don’t let religious leaders—myself included—stand in the way of the Light of the world”)
3. **Bask** in Jesus’ light

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Week 1: “I am the bread of life”: John 6:35

35 And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” [Remember that in week one’s text Jesus set up this statement with His actions the prior day in feeding the 5,000—and He follows that pattern in today’s text]

Week 2: “I am the light of the world”: John 8:12

12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” [Remember that in week two’s text Jesus set up this statement with what was going on at the temple with the lighting ceremony—and He follows that pattern in today’s text]

Week 3: “I am the door of the sheep”: John 10:7

The background

Just as we did last week, let’s start a chapter before to see the set up. Go to [John 9](#).

John 9:1-7: 1 Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” [Be on the lookout for this theology later in the text]

3 Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. 4 I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

6 When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. 7 And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing. [Summary: the man was blind and Jesus healed him]

John 9:8-34: The Pharisees trying to accuse Jesus of sin by healing this man on the Sabbath (a day set apart to do not work) and arguing with both the man and his parents

John 9:35-10:6: 35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, “Do you believe in the Son of God?”

36 He answered and said, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?”

37 And Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.”

38 Then he said, “Lord, I believe!” And he worshiped Him.

39 And Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.”

40 Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, “Are we blind also?”

41 Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains. [There is an unfortunate chapter division here as Jesus continues his thought to the religious leaders who were not believers]

10:1 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber [Jim’s view: the door can be opened for you, but you cannot work your way in]. 2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” 6 Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. [Does this sound familiar? It has happened each of the prior two weeks.]

Today’s text: John 10:7-10

7 Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Doors

Let’s talk about doors. There are a lot of stories in the Bible about doors. Many more than I first thought when I started studying for this lesson. I will run through a few of them very briefly to give you a flavor of how doors are referenced in Scripture.

1. Doors are first mentioned in **Genesis 4:1-7** (Cain was told by God that “**sin lies at the door**”—implying that sin was close but that there was a separation)
2. Noah’s ark had a door—**Genesis 6:16**
3. There are dozens and dozens of references to tent doors and the door of the tabernacle in the remainder of the Torah
4. **Deuteronomy 6:1-9** commands the Israelites to write **Scripture** on their doors
5. Jephthah makes a vow to God about what comes out of his door in **Judges 11:29-40**
6. A concubine is murdered at the door of her master in **Judges 19**
7. Uriah **sleeps** at King David’s door in **2 Samuel 11:9** (not going home to his wife Bathsheba)
8. Hezekiah took the gold off of the temple doors in **2 Kings 18:16** and gave it to the Assyrians
9. Ahaz closed the doors of God’s house in **2 Chronicles 28:24**
10. Hezekiah opens them back up in **2 Chronicles 29:3**
11. Nehemiah oversaw the repairing of the doors of the gates of Jerusalem in **Nehemiah**
12. God Himself describes bounding the **seas** with doors in **Job 38:8-11**
13. The sons of Korah said they would rather be doorkeepers in God’s house than dwell with the wicked in **Psalms 84:10**
14. Solomon warns against going near the door of the house of the immoral woman in **Proverbs 5:8**
15. Solomon warned that a lazy man turned on his bed like the hinges on a door in **Proverbs 26:14**
16. Ezekiel mentions doors more times than any other book of the Bible—but I don’t understand **Ezekiel**, so we won’t talk about that today
17. Jesus talks about praying behind closed doors in **Matthew 6:6**

18. A **stone** was rolled up against the door of Jesus’ tomb in [Matthew 27:57-61](#) and an angel rolls that same stone back a few days later in [Matthew 28:2](#)
19. Jesus shows up in a room with the doors closed in [John 20:19](#)
20. Peter showed up to a prayer meeting for those praying for his release and he was left standing at the door by Rhoda in [Acts 12:12-14](#)
21. Paul and Barnabas communicated that the Gentiles had heard and believed the gospel through an analogy using a door in [Acts 14:27-28](#)
22. God sent an earthquake to free Paul and Silas in [Acts 16:25-27](#) and the doors to the prison opened
23. Paul describes opportunities for **spreading** the gospel as a door in [1 Corinthians 16:9](#), [2 Corinthians 2:12](#), and [Colossians 4:3](#)
24. And finally, in [Revelation 3:20](#), Jesus is knocking on the door of the believer asking to have communion with him or her (this is not, as is sometimes taught, a verse that is referring to God’s conviction of a sinner’s heart)

Would you agree that doors are used widely in the Bible? (There’s a joke in there somewhere)

How many doors have you gone through today? Doors provide access to places we want to go. Doors also keep out—we lock them to protect our assets and our families. We would not want to live our lives without doors. Doors are good things. But fundamentally, doors do two things: doors open and doors close.

So let’s go back to the blind man. **What did Jesus do for him?** Opened his eyes. **What was the result?** The Pharisees asked questions. **What does Jesus do for them?** He tells them about the door they needed to go through to get to where they wanted to go. Jesus opened their eyes to their unbelief.

Application

1. The Jesus door is **open** for believers. The last time that the word ‘door’ is used in the Bible is in [Revelation 4:1](#)—and that door is open. The first time ‘door’ was mentioned was in a negative sense, but the last time is positive. The door is open for all who would repent and believe.
2. The Jesus door is **closed** for unbelievers. It is only the door of the sheep. There is a sign on Jesus’ door that says, “Sheep only.” No goats or wolves allowed. No imposters—only believers—only true sheep (but more on that next week with the ‘I am the good shepherd’ I am).
3. The Jesus door is the **only** door to God

Personalization

1. Believe **now**
2. Tell **others**
3. Don’t chase **shiny** theology (stay focused on the true door—Jesus Christ)

Seven “I am” Statements

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The Original “I AM”: Exodus 3

13 Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”

14 And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” [basically—“I exist”—referring to God’s essential nature] **And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”**

This text is all about God saying to the children of Israel: I am, I am here, and I am here always.

What’s the big deal about I am?

For me, the big deal is permanence. God isn’t going anywhere. That is what makes the “I am” statements so powerful. They are a continual reminder that God is. God is here. God is here always.

The other big deal about I am is when Jesus says it in the New Testament, it is more than two words. In Greek, it is *ego ime* [ego eh-mee]—basically the Greek equivalent of the Old Testament Hebrew. When Jesus makes these ‘I am’ statements, He is claiming to have the same essential nature of God that God has—and this was a claim that no one else could honestly make—and it was the reason that it infuriated the religious leaders of the day. He was claiming to be God when he said these things.

Week 1: “I am the bread of life”: John 6:35

35 And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” [In week one’s text, Jesus set up this statement with His actions the prior day in feeding the 5,000]

Week 2: "I am the light of the world": John 8:12

12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." [In week two's text, Jesus set up this statement with what was going on at the temple with the lighting ceremony]

Week 3: "I am the door of the sheep": John 10:7

7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep." [In week three's text, Jesus set up this statement with the opening of the blind man's eyes]

Week 4: "I am the good shepherd": John 10:11, 14

The background

Just as we did in the prior weeks, let's start a chapter before to see the set up. Go to **John 9**. **John 9:1-7**: The man was blind and Jesus healed him. **John 9:8-34**: The Pharisees trying to accuse Jesus of sin by healing this man on the Sabbath (a day set apart to do not work) and arguing with both the previously blind man and his parents. **John 9:35-10:6**: Jesus explains to the Pharisees that Jesus is the only door of salvation.

John 10:7-10: Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Today's text: John 10:11-15

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. 15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

Jesus' points:

- Jesus is the good shepherd
- The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep
- The good shepherd knows His sheep
- The sheep know the good shepherd
- The Father knows Jesus
- Jesus knows the Father

This looks to be all about relationships of sacrifice and knowledge.

Shepherds

Let’s talk about shepherds. Here are some example passages about shepherds in the Bible:

1. **Genesis 29:9**: The first mention of a shepherd in the Bible is a **female** shepherd
2. **Genesis 49:22-24**: Jacob’s last words to his sons include a reference to God as a **‘Shepherd’**
3. **Numbers 14:26-38**: God’s judgment on the spies who brought back the poor report was that their sons would be shepherds in the desert for 40 years
4. **1 Samuel 17:40**: David places the five smooth stones in a **shepherd’s** bag before killing Goliath
5. **2 Samuel 5:2** and **1 Chronicles 11:2**: We learn that God told Saul (the first king of Israel) to shepherd his people
6. **1 Chronicles 17:6**: God commanded the judges to shepherd his people (God does not leave His people without a shepherd)
7. **2 Chronicles 18:16** (and several other places): God refers to the scattered nature of the children of Israel as **‘sheep having no shepherd’**
8. **Psalms 23**: the most famous passage about shepherds—this is what shepherding looks like
9. **Psalms 78:71-72**: God **Himself** shepherds the children of Israel
10. **Psalms 80:1**: God again is described as a shepherd
11. **Isaiah 38:12**: Shepherds live in tents to be close to the sheep
12. **Isaiah 40:11**: Shepherds feed their flocks
13. **Jeremiah 3:14-15**: God calls Israel to repentance and prescribes shepherds for her care
14. **Jeremiah 23:1-2**: God warns against **evil** shepherds (perhaps Jesus was pointing the Pharisees back to this passage?)
15. **Ezekiel 34:1-12, 23**: God’s warning against evil shepherds
16. **Amos 3:12**: Shepherds go after those that injure their flocks. The shepherd will pursue.
17. **Luke 2:8-12**: Shepherds hear of the birth of **Christ** (Who better to tell of a Lamb’s birth than shepherds?)
18. **Acts 20:28**: This term is now used of pastors to care for the flock of God in the New Testament
19. **1 Peter 5:1-4**: Peter’s commands to New Testament pastors about how to lead their flocks
20. **Revelation 7:17**: Jesus will lead His sheep to **‘living fountains of water’**

Application

1. **Shepherds** have a job to do (feeding, protecting, caring) and an example to follow (the good shepherd, Jesus Christ—the shepherds have a Shepherd)
2. **Sheep** have a job to do (eating, obeying, submitting) and an example to follow (the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ)

Personalization

1. Follow the good shepherd: **Jesus**
2. Follow the good shepherd: **Jesus**

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12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” [In week two’s text, Jesus set up this statement with what was going on at the temple with the lighting ceremony]

Week 3: “I am the door of the sheep”: John 10:7

7 Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.” [In week three’s text, Jesus set up this statement with the opening of the blind man’s eyes]

Week 4: “I am the good shepherd”: John 10:11a, 14a

11 “I am the good shepherd.” 14 “I am the good shepherd” [In week four’s text, Jesus sets up this statement by showing the people the difference between Himself and the religious leaders]

Week 5: “I am the resurrection and the life”: John 11:25

The background

John 11:1-24: 1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. 3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.”

4 When Jesus heard that, He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” [Jesus says this more than once in His ministry—that someone is sick so that Jesus might be glorified—and never forget that the same may be true of your calamity/illness/sickness/pain today]

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was [which sounds like the exact opposite thing to do if He loved them]. **7 Then after this He said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.”**

8 The disciples said to Him, “Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?”

9 Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10 But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” 11 These things He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.”

12 Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.” 13 However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

14 Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.”

16 Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”

17 So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. [So how many days did Jesus wait? Four. Why? David Guzik: the Jewish superstition of that day that said a soul stays near the grave for three days, hoping to return to the body. Therefore, it was accepted that after four days there was absolutely no hope of resuscitation. Jesus was waiting until there was no earthly hope.] 19 And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

20 Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. 21 Now Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”

23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

24 Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

Today’s text: [John 11:25](#)

25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

27 She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

Epilogue

[John 11:38-44](#): 38 Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 39 Jesus said, “Take away the stone.”

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.”

40 Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” 41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42 And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.” [i.e., that Jesus is the Messiah] 43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” 44 And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.”

Resurrections

Today we will focus on the ‘resurrection’ and not on the ‘life.’ Next week will be the focus on ‘life.’

Let’s talk about resurrections (which we will simply define today as: being dead on the earth and then not being dead on the earth). **How many resurrections are there in the Bible?** At least 10

Here are the resurrections in the Bible (that Jim could find):

1. **1 Kings 17:17-24**: a young boy (done in private by Elijah the same day)
2. **2 Kings 4:32-37**: Shunammite woman’s son (done in private by Elisha the same day)
3. **2 Kings 13:20-21**: a **dead** man (done in private by Elisha’s bones in the same year)
4. **Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:35-43; Luke 40-56**: daughter of Jairus [Juh-EYE-russ] (done in relative privacy by Jesus the same day)
5. **Luke 7:11-17**: a young man from Nain (done in public by Jesus the day he died—the Law dictated a person be buried the same day he or she died)
6. **John 11:1-44**: Lazarus (done in public by Jesus four days later)
7. **Matthew 27:51-53**: many **saints** (done in public by God an unknown time later)
8. **Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-11; John 20:1-10**: Jesus (done in private by God three days later—and the account described four times in the Bible)
9. **Acts 9:36-43**: Dorcas (done in private by Peter the same day she died)
10. **Acts 20:7-12**: Eutychus (done in public by Paul the same day he died)

What later happened to the boy in 1 Kings 17, the boy in 2 Kings 4, the man in 2 Kings 13, Jairus’ daughter, the man from Nain, Lazarus, Dorcas, and Eutychus after their resurrections? They **died**. They were temporary. **What happened to Jesus after His resurrection?** He **lives**. Jesus was different.

Application

1. Jesus’ resurrection was **permanent** (all the others were temporary)
2. Jesus’ resurrection was **better** (it was the only one not attributed to a man)
3. Jesus **is** the resurrection. The others received resurrection, but Jesus is the resurrection. Our hope is in Him.

Personalization

1. Stop looking for temporary solutions—trust **Jesus**
3. My hope of resurrection is in **Jesus**

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Week 6: “I am the way, the truth, and the life”: John 14:6

The background

Today’s text occurs at the table during the **Last Supper**, just after Judas was dismissed

Today’s text: John 14:6

5 Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”

6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

David Guzik: In light of soon events, this declaration is a paradox: Jesus’ way would be the cross; He would be convicted by blatant **liars; His body would soon lie **lifeless** in a tomb.**

The use of the definitive article “the” in Greek is significant—as in, **only**. Also, the last two items (the truth and the life) may be explanatory of the first item (the way).

The disciples followed Jesus for three years, but still did not comprehend what His full mission and ministry was about. Now, Jesus is revealing to them that He is about to leave them, and they pepper Him with questions. Four questions asked before they left the Passover table:

- By **Simon Peter**: **John 13:36-38: Where are you going? . . . Why can I not follow you now?** (His problem: denial about his own character)
- By **Thomas**: **John 14:5** (our key verse follows this question): **How can we know the way?** (doubt about the path and the goal)
- By **Philip**: **John 14:8** (other versions also): **Show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.** (insecurity about the future)
- By the other **Judas**: **John 14:22: How is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?** (lack/vision)

Three of these questions would be answered by Jesus’ I am response. His answers are good yesterday, today, and forever! Jesus has answers before we ask the questions. And, the answer to the fourth question is how we live in response to Him. This verse is called the core statement of the gospel, but it is more.

I am the way

Thomas wanted to know about the end goal; Jesus wanted him to refocus on what was first important—the way to get to the goal! And that there was one way.

Expositor’s Bible Commentary: He did not counter Thomas’s skepticism with an argument or a quotation drawn from his memory. He responded with an authoritative assertion as the master of life. He is the way to the Father because only he has an intimate knowledge of God **unmarred** by sin. He is the truth because he has the perfect power of making life one coherent experience irrespective of its ups and downs. He is the life because he was not subject to death but made it subject to him. He did not live with death as the ultimate end of his life; he died to demonstrate the power and continuity of his life. Because he is the way, the truth, and the life, he is the only means of reaching the Father. Jesus was not exhibiting a narrow arrogance. Rather, he was making the only possible deduction from the fact that he, the unique Son, was the sole means of access to the Father.

Basically, he wanted Thomas (as well as the other disciples) to simply and fully trust Him and trust in Him—no holds barred.

I am the truth

It has become popular in our culture to believe “truth is **relative**.” Or like Pilate at Jesus’ trial, to ask, “**What is truth?**” We even tend to lie to ourselves, and exaggerate to others. None of this is true to the nature of Jesus, the Truth.

Peter Nathan: The Hebrew term used in **Exodus 34:6** and translated by the English word truth stems from a root that means “to be firm or sure.” The earliest-known Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures is the Septuagint, which ostensibly dates from the third century B.C.E. The Septuagint uses the same Greek word in **Exodus 34:6** as is used in **John 1:14** and **17**; it is the principal word for “truth” and “reality.” . . . Logos. . . Truth is part of the very character of God. The apostle Paul, writing to the church at Rome, understood this concept when he wrote: “Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar” (**Romans 3:4**). This brings us to Satan, who is described as the father of lies (**John 8:44**) even though he can masquerade as an angel of light and use accurate information to his own ends. Truth is clearly not just correct **knowledge**. It also relates to how and to what end that knowledge is **used**. Satan uses it for evil purposes, so no matter how correct or godly he may attempt to present himself, “there is no truth in him” (**verse 44**). We find, then, that truth is part of the glory of the Godhead and is a spiritual quality that comes from God. It is also the revealing of our innermost being (**John 3:21**), is associated with the correct manner of **worship** (**John 4:23–24**), and is liberating (**John 8:32**). [It is our defense (**Ephesians 6:13–14**)—reference the Roman belt of

truth.] **It relates to the way of life followers of Jesus Christ have been called to live in this age and the reality of our hope of eternal life (John 14:6). It is a quality of God’s Holy Spirit (John 16:12–13), and it sanctifies us, or sets us apart, for the Father’s purposes (John 17:17–19).**

This element of Jesus’ answer responds to Peter’s earlier question. Jesus struck at Peter’s bravado, and how Peter saw himself was about to be tested. **Are we honest with ourselves about ourselves? Do we see ourselves as God sees us?**

I am the life

John 10:10b: I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. Jesus had a purpose for coming: to seek and save those lost. Abundant life was what He was bringing because He himself was life.

Philip had insecurity about going forward in a future that was unknown; like Thomas, he wanted **evidence**, and then he would be content.

1 Timothy 6:3-10: 3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Key thought for how we live: **Dr. Jim Fleming: The authenticity of our message is damaged when the lives of its champions are singularly **unattractive**.**

Application

- St. Nicholas Cabasilas: He himself is the way, and in addition He is the lodging on the way and its destination**
- Jesus is truth and His truth applied to us inside and out **stabilizes** us (the belt of truth holds the Word of God—the truthfulness of our lives is critical)
- Jesus gives abundant life—allowing us to fulfil our **purpose** and **mission** to point others back to Christ

Personalization

1. Rejoice in the **security** of Jesus giving us one path to the Father
2. Practice truth and it will set you free (in **thought** and **word**) and safely lead you in a consistent walk. **Psalm 19:14: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.**
3. Fully live with Him as the **center** of Your life. This allows you to live an abundant and contented life no matter what state you are in and it draws others toward Him—which is His purpose for us—to glorify Him! Do this not only as part of your church (group ministry), but as an individual.

Seven “I am” Statements

Schedule

January 11	John 6:35	I am the bread of life
January 18	John 8:12	I am the light of the world
January 25	John 10:7, 9	I am the door of the sheep
February 1	John 10:11, 14	I am the good shepherd
February 8	John 11:25	I am the resurrection and the life
February 15	John 14:6	I am the way, the truth, and the life
February 22	John 15:1, 5	I am the true vine

The Original “I AM”: Exodus 3

13 Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”

14 And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” [basically—“I exist”—referring to God’s essential nature] **And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”**

This text is all about God saying to the children of Israel: I am, I am here, and I am here always.

What’s the big deal about I am?

For me, the big deal is permanence. God isn’t going anywhere. That is what makes the “I am” statements so powerful. They are a continual reminder that God is. God is here. God is here always.

The other big deal about I am is when Jesus says it in the New Testament, it is more than two words. In Greek, it is *ego ime* [ego eh-mee]—basically the Greek equivalent of the Old Testament Hebrew. When Jesus makes these ‘I am’ statements, He is claiming to have the same essential nature of God that God has—and this was a claim that no one else could honestly make—and it was the reason that it infuriated the religious leaders of the day. He was claiming to be God when he said these things.

Week 1: “I am the bread of life”: John 6:35

35 And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” [In week one’s text, Jesus set up this statement with His actions the prior day in feeding the 5,000]

Week 2: “I am the light of the world”: John 8:12

12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” [In week two’s text, Jesus set up this statement with what was going on at the temple with the lighting ceremony]

Week 3: “I am the door of the sheep”: John 10:7

7 Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.” [In week three’s text, Jesus set up this statement with the opening of the blind man’s eyes]

Week 4: “I am the good shepherd”: John 10:11a, 14a

11 “I am the good shepherd.” 14 “I am the good shepherd” [In week four’s text, Jesus sets up this statement by showing the people the difference between Himself and the religious leaders]

Week 5: “I am the resurrection and the life”: John 11:25

25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.” [In week five’s text, Jesus sets up this statement by allowing Lazarus to die and then follows up the statement by raising Lazarus]

Week 6: “I am the way, the truth, and the life”: John 14:6

6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. [In week six’s text, Jesus sets up this statement by allowing the disciples to ask Him questions that point to Him as the answer for each of these items]

Week 7: “I am the true vine”: John 15:1, 5**The background**

This week’s lesson is a continuation of the conversation from last week’s lesson that Jesus has with His disciples in the upper room. It’s known as the **upper** room discourse and it spans **John 13-17**. It starts with Jesus washing the disciples’ feet and moves into a wide variety of bite-sized nuggets that Jesus shares with His disciples just hours before His arrest and crucifixion. Some topics include:

- Jesus identifying Judas as the betrayer (even though none of the other disciples ‘got it’)
- The ‘new commandment’ (love one another) and predicting Peter’s denial
- Jesus’ famous words from last week’s lesson, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life”**
- The unity and connectedness between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- Love, how the world will hate them, more on the Holy Spirit, the joy that will come, and then describes how He has overcome the world
- Jesus finishes in **John 17** with a chapter-long prayer for His disciples and for us

In summary, **John 13-17** is a **private** conversation between Jesus and His disciples and represents what we think are Jesus’ **last** messages to them.

Today’s text: **John 15:1, 5**

1 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Vines

Let’s talk about vines. **How many vines are there in the Bible?** A lot (below is 1/10)

1. **Genesis 9:19-29**: first mention = **Noah** (this does not go well)
2. **Deuteronomy 8:6-10**: vines were part of God’s promise that the Promised Land would be **good**
3. **Deuteronomy 32:32**: vines can be connected to the **wrong** source
4. **1 Kings 21**: Naboth’s vineyard
5. **Nehemiah 5**: the people were in debt over their vineyards (a good thing can be misused/abused)
6. **Psalms 128:3**: vines are used as a euphemism for having children
7. **Proverbs 24:30-34**: what a lazy man’s vineyard looks like
8. **Proverbs 31:16**: what the **Proverbs 31** woman does—plants vineyards
9. **Song of Solomon**: lots of references to vineyards and we won’t go there in mixed company
10. **Isaiah 5**: God’s disappointing vineyard
11. **Matthew 20, 21; Mark 12; Luke 13, 20**: Jesus telling **parables** about vineyards
12. **Matthew 26, Mark 14; Luke 22; John 15**: passages about the Lord’s Supper—including our text
13. **Revelation 14:17-20**: an angel ‘reaps’ a ‘harvest’ from a human vineyard (this does not go well)

Application

1. **Connection** is critical (and sometimes messy)
2. **Relationships** are critical (and often messy)
3. Jesus is the true vine (He is the ultimate connector and builder of relationships)
4. God isn’t going anywhere (recap of the whole series—I AM)

Personalization

1. Get connected (it is worth it)
2. Stay in relationship (it is worth it)
3. **Abide** in Christ and bear fruit
4. Trust Him (He is worth it)