

20 So he said to his daughters, "And where *is* he? Why *is* it *that* you have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread."

21 Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses. 22 And she bore *him* a son. He called his name Gershom, for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land."

23 Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. 24 So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged *them*.

3 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, 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 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."

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?"

6 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."

7 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?"

8 14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." 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.' 16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you and *seen* what is done to you in Egypt; 17 and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey." ' 18 Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.' 19 But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. 20 So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go. 21 And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed. 22 But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put *them* on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."

4 Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.' "

2 So the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?"

He said, "A rod."

3 And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take *it* by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), 5 "that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

6 Furthermore the LORD said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand *was* leprous, like snow.

Zechariah 12:8-10 New King James Version

⁸ In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David *shall be* like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. ⁹ It shall be in that day *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

¹⁰ "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

The 7 "I AM" Statements of Jesus: OT Background & NT Meaning

John's purpose for writing the gospel: "these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ" (John 20:31).

John's background for his book: "the framework for Jesus' understanding of his own mission is shaped by the Scriptures mediated by the Jews" (D. A. Carson).

John's 2 questions for the reader to wrestle with: 1) Who is Jesus? 2) What do I do with his words/teachings?

OT Background: Exodus 3:1-20, especially verses 13-18. (cf. Is. 41:4; 43:10-13)

NT fulfillment: John 6:20; 8:24, 28, 58; 18:5.

Synopsis: When God calls Himself the "I Am" in Exodus 3, it's a pivotal moment in redemptive history. God reveals Himself to His people and comes to redeem them out of exile and lead them into a new life. God's name discloses who He is and what He is like. He is the I Am, the eternal, unchanging, self-existent one, infinite and glorious in every way, and above and beyond all created things. He is God.

When Jesus applies the title "I Am" to himself, he claims to be God (John 8:58). Not a helper to God or a great teacher, but the divine, eternal, pre-existent, infinite, perfect Being. He is Israel's God. He is greater than Moses because he is the God of Moses. He has life in himself and he can give life to us. The Jews knew taking on this title was making such a claim, which is why they immediately pick up stones to kill him (8:59).

The seven "I Am" statements in John might best be understood as falling under and echoing this initial, ultimate claim of Jesus. He is God, and he is the God of Israel. All the OT and God's redemptive acts were pointing to the coming of Jesus as the God-in-flesh, the true and better Israel, and the fulfillment of all the OT types and shadows.

1) I Am the Bread of Life

OT Background: Exodus 16; Deut. 8:3; Ps. 78:23-25

NT Fulfillment: John 6:22-59, especially verses 28-35.

Synopsis: Jesus enters a dialogue with Jews who had followed him because of his miracles—including the recent feeding of the 5,000—and yet they missed the reality behind them (he is the Divine Messiah). More important than solving their physical hunger for food through bread, Jesus offers himself as the Bread of Life to fulfill deeper longings and an eternal need.

There is more to the bread from God than the bread itself (Exodus 16). It's not an earthly bread but a heavenly bread. It comes from above—from God—and comes down to us only by his grace and goodness. We need more than physical bread and we need it from someone other than ourselves. God will provide what we need most, and we should raise our eyes in faith.

Jesus takes this Old Testament background to bread for God's people and he claims to be the bread of life. He explains the bread in the wilderness of Exodus was only a temporary provision, and that it points to a true and eternal bread from heaven God would later give. This bread is now before the Jews. The manna pictures Jesus, who is sent from God, comes down from heaven, must be taken by faith, who must be eaten/fully taken in, and who gives life.

2) I Am the Light of the World

OT Background: Exodus 13:17-22 (cf. Ex. 14:19-20); Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6 (both verses are in the four Servant Songs of Isaiah).

NT Fulfillment: John 8:12-30. See also John 1:4-5; 3:19-21; 9:5; 12:35-36).

Synopsis: Light is one of the most prominent themes in John's Gospel. The world is lost and hopeless in darkness (John 1:4-14). The darkness cannot change its condition. Light must enter and invade. One cannot see or lead others in the darkness, so light is necessary to guide us and walk forward. John picks up light from a rich OT heritage and shows how Jesus is the light.

Based upon the fact that in John 8:12 Jesus ties the idea of being the light with his people following after him in the light, the most likely OT background in mind here is the light of God's presence leading Israel in the wilderness via the pillar of fire (Exodus 13-14). Just as the Israelites were led by the pillar of fire (light) in the exodus and saved from the Egyptians as they crossed the Red Sea, so also Jesus says those who follow him (light) will have life.

A secondary OT background of the image of light is found in Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6. This light has to do with the salvation of the nations, and it is probably the primary reference in other passages like John 12:35-36, 46.

3) I Am the door or gate & 4) I Am the Good Shepherd

OT Background: Psalms 118:20 (gates = door); Ezekiel 34 and Jeremiah 23 (cf. Isaiah 40:11; Numbers 27:15-18; Micah 5:4)

NT Fulfillment: John 10:1-18

Synopsis: In John 10:1-18, Jesus makes two of the I Am sayings together. He claims he is both the door through which the sheep enter as well as the Shepherd who knows the sheep and lays down his life for them. The metaphor of the door does not have the rich OT background as shepherding imagery does. But, Jesus is both the only way (door) a person enters into the people of God and the one who gives his life for the life of sheep, whom he knows and protects. He is the one who gathers the sheep and cares for them (shepherd) and he's also the means by which they enter and are kept safe (door).

We should recall that Jesus is talking to the Pharisees in this conversation. The claims to be a good shepherd and Israel's true shepherd was (in part) a rebuke against them. As the influential teachers in Israel, they should have led the people to truth. They should have put the people before themselves. They should serve God's agenda rather than their own. But the Pharisees are like the bad shepherds in Ezekiel 34 and Jeremiah 23, leading them astray through false doctrine, prioritizing themselves over the sheep, and abusing them. Through this metaphor, Jesus at once lumps the Pharisees into the camp of the false prophets and bad shepherds of the OT while claiming to be the true and good shepherd those same OT passages promised (Ezek. 34:11-16, 22-24; Jer. 23:3-4).

Jesus comes not to pile burdens on but to relieve them and carry them himself. Jesus comes not to scatter the sheep but to gather them. Jesus comes not to devour the sheep but to defend them. Jesus comes to seek out, rescue, heal, and feed the sheep. He will do so because he loves the sheep and they belong to him. This is proven and accomplished by him giving up his life for his sheep.

5) I Am the resurrection, and the life

OT Background: Genesis 1-3; Isaiah 53:10

NT Fulfillment: John 11:17-27

Synopsis: Similar to other I Am statements, Jesus doesn't just talk about what he can do or give, but who He is. He doesn't just give bread (like Moses) but he is the bread. He doesn't merely reflect light; he is the light. So also, in John 11, Jesus says I am the resurrection and the life.

The OT background isn't as clear here as other statements, but most commentators believe Genesis 1-3 is partially in view. God is the Creator and Life-giver, granting life to creation and breathing life into Adam. However, the first Adam chose sin which brought about death for mankind and brokenness for the creation. Jesus comes as the second Adam, righteous and blameless in all his ways, comes to undo what Adam did and reverse the curse (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15). Where Adam brought about death and decay, Jesus gives life and restoration. He provides not only resurrection and life to individuals who believe in him but for the entire world.

While many of the Jews wanted things from Jesus without having to receive and believe in Jesus, the offer of Jesus is himself. He doesn't give bread and allow people to reject submission and belief to him, nor does he offer to give life apart from that life being found in him. These are free and gracious gifts, and they come only in and through Jesus. He is the resurrection and the life. He is the 2nd Adam, bringing resurrection and life where the first Adam offered us only death.

6) I Am the way, the truth, and the life

OT Background: Exodus 26:33; Leviticus 16

NT Fulfillment: John 14:6

Synopsis: It's likely Jesus is here contrasting himself to the many ways in the OT that God prescribed for how the Jews could approach and relate to him. The systems of the sacrifices, temple, the curtain, tabernacle, and other means of worship were temporary "ways" to God. As the NT makes clear, these things in and of themselves did not cleanse or make people acceptable to God, but they were avenue by which God's people could walk in faith and follow after Him (see Hebrews 8-9).

Jesus contrasts himself to anything before him they thought led them to the Father. He is the only one who provides the way to the Father, but he is also at the same time to the full revelation of the Father (truth). Jesus is telling them there's nowhere else to look; nowhere you need to look or can look to find the true path to God. Jesus is that one way and that one path. He offers what Israel looked for and needed, and he replaced all prior things set up as temporary means by which man relates to God. All of these pointed to him and accomplished limited things (such as only making people ceremonially clean but not truly clean), and he is now here and able to accomplish salvation and redemption fully.

7) I Am the true vine

OT Background: Two vineyard songs: Isaiah 5:1-7 (the desolate vineyard) & Isaiah 27:2-6 (the fruitful vineyard).

NT Fulfillment: John 15:1-6

Synopsis: Here in the last I Am statement, Jesus speaks of a vine, a common OT symbol for Israel (God's people). The language of the unfruitful branches is tied to Israel as the desolate vineyard in Isaiah 5, but Jesus says the people of God have life and fruit now by being in him, as pictured in Isaiah 27:2-6. Jesus is not simply saying Christians are fruitful by resting in him (though this is true), but he's making the redemptive-historical claim he is the new Israel.

He both fulfills Israel's destiny (because Israel never could) and is the one in whom the people of God find true, flourishing, fruitful life. He is the true and better Israel, succeeding where they failed, bringing flourishing life and fruit where they dried out and offered nothing on the vine.

That is the 7 "I AMs" of the New Testament and their Old Testament attributes of the LORD / JEHOVAH / YAWEH (which is almost always the visible image of the invisible God who is God the Son). 7 is completeness.

The 8th I AM is found in the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 is the number of New Beginnings and speaks to the time when God makes all things new.

Revelation 1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega. The Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Alpha and the Omega" (PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE).