

“I AM” Statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John

Passage	“I AM...”	Comment
4:1 - 42	“I AM, the one speaking to you” (The Messiah)	Garners a faith response – she brings the whole town
6:20	“I AM. Do not be afraid.”	Similar to OT theophany in the fear of the disciples and message
6:35, 51	“...the bread of life.”	Contrasts with the perishable food the crowd asks for
8:12 (9:5)	“...the light of the world.”	Pharisees challenge Jesus’ claims to authority
8:24	“Unless you come to believe that I AM you will die in your sins.”	
8:28	“When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will realize that...”	
8:58	“Before Abraham was I AM”	Crowd wants to stone Jesus
10:7, 9	“...the sheep gate.”	Contrasts to the example of bad leadership of the Pharisees
10:11, 14	“...the good shepherd.”	
11:25	“...the resurrection and the life.”	Martha declares faith in Christ
13:19	“When it does happen, you will believe that I AM”	Jesus’ betrayal will show his divinity
14:6	“...the way, the truth, and the life.”	Jesus reveals the true way to the Father
15:1, 5	“...the true vine.”	Being connected to Jesus is what matters
18:5	“Who is it you want?...I AM”	Guards fall to the ground in fear

The Gospel of John purposefully uses a specific Greek grammatical phrase, *ego eimi*, translated as “I AM.” This ties back to the language of the OT where God reveals himself – “Tell them that I AM sent you” (Ex. 6:6).

Three different grammatical types of the phrase are seen in the gospel:

- Absolute use with no predicate, “Before Abraham was I AM.” (8:58)
- Understood predicate but not expressed, “I AM. Do not be afraid.” (6:20)
- Use with a predicate nominative, “I AM the sheep gate.” (10:7)

These statements perform two functions in the Gospel of John:

- 1) Identify Jesus as divine and equal to the Father
- 2) Assert Jesus’ claim as the new locus of faith (for both Jews and Gentiles) in contrast to other Jewish traditions