

THE "I AM" STATEMENTS OF CHRIST

A defining mark of the Gospel of John is Jesus' seven "I Am" statements. The statements are all revelations from Jesus that he is the promised Messiah, the Anointed One for which Israel had been waiting for centuries.

- I am the bread of life - Jn. 6:35, 48. In identifying himself as such, Jesus references the bread from heaven that the people of Israel ate in the wilderness; yet, eventually, they still died. Jesus says believers will have endless life if they "eat him" (6:51), meaning, believe in and follow him.
- I am the light of the world - Jn. 8:12. Again Jesus references the people of ancient Israel and the pillar of fire that they followed through the wilderness (Ex. 13:21). It is fitting that Jesus makes this statement in the temple courts during the Festival of Tabernacles, which commemorates Israel's sojourn in the desert with a display of bright lights. Jesus is a better and eternal light; whoever follows him will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life (Jn. 8:12).
- I am the gate for the sheep - Jn. 10:7,9 & I am the good shepherd - v. 11. In these statements Jesus is likely referencing Jerusalem's Sheep Gate (ne. 3:1, 32) and the shepherd of Psalm 23. The sacrificial sheep and lambs were brought through the Sheep Gate to the temple for sacrifice, providing a way for the sins of the people of Israel to be covered. But Jesus is a better gate and a better shepherd; he is the gateway to eternal forgiveness and salvation for all people, and he is the ultimate Good Shepherd who restores the souls of everyone who believes in him.
- I am the resurrection and the life - Jn. 11:25. Jesus' words follow Martha's reference to the final resurrection of the body that Daniel prophesied (Da. 12:2). Jesus explains that the resurrection and life is found in more than just an event; it is found in a person - more specifically, in him.
- I am the way and the truth and the life - Jn. 14:6. As the only sinless human ever to walk the earth, only Jesus was able to keep all of the decrees, commands and laws of God and thus walk in the way and truth of God that leads to life (Dt. 26:17).
- I am the true vine - Jn. 15:1, 5. Jesus drew on the many Old Testament references to Israel as a vine (Ps. 80:8-16; Isa. 5:1-7; Jer. 2:21; Eze. 15:1-8; 17:5-10, 19:10-14; Hos. 10:1). Though Israel was the vine God transplanted from Egypt and planted on a hillside, it became a vine that was cut down Ps. 80:16), corrupt (Jer. 2:21) and ultimately destroyed (Isa. 5:5). Jesus, however, is the true vine. He fulfills Israel's promise to obey the commands of God and bear fruit on her behalf. Whoever is connected to him will have life and bear much fruit (Jn. 15:5).

The Gospel of John

1. In the Gospel of John, Jesus 'IS' the 'WORD OF GOD' - the Great "I Am".
2. The Gospel of John was written by the disciple John, and like the previous three Gospels, John remains anonymous with his 'name'. Yet, he alone identifies himself in an unconventional way by referring to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loves" (see 21:20-24/13:23-25/19:26-27/20:2-8/21:7)
3. John seems to address both the Jewish communities and the Gentiles, as his gospel is written in a very simple Green prose. He uses a limited range of vocabulary and often is repetitive in his words and phrases.
4. The three synoptic Gospels focus on the 'EVENTS' in Jesus' life. John's Gospel focuses on the 'meaning' of those events. Tremendously different from the first three Gospels, John elaborates on the stories M, M, & L only 'hint' at. Portions of Jesus' ministry not mentioned in the synoptic Gospels and many of the most beloved stories we have of Jesus, are found in the Gospel of John (see inside).
5. John's Gospel covers the entire three years of Jesus' ministry. The Gospel is broken down into two sections. The first part (the first 12 chapters), narrates Jesus' 'public' ministry such as miracles and signs of who he really is. The second part shifts to Jesus' 'private' ministry with the disciples (see timeline).
6. John's Gospel does not use Jesus' parables but uses every event/miracle to 'show' Jesus is God. In the end of his Gospel, John states: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing, you may have life in His name" John 20:31) John writes with one clear purpose to show Jesus was the 'path' to eternal life.
7. John was the only disciple to not die a martyr and it is thought that he wrote the Gospel while he resided in Ephesus in Asia. The last of the four Gospels in the Bible, it is thought that he wrote the Gospel in the later years of his life 70-90 AD.

