

Gospel of John

The following is the context of each of the I am statements in John's Gospel:

Where was it, who was there, what was the discussion that led to the statement and any reaction.

1. **John 6:35, 48** I am the bread of life – *you shall not be hungry, one may eat and not die*
 - Where – near the Sea of Galilee at Capernaum
 - Who – large Jewish crowds just after the feeding of the 5 thousand, the crowds were trying to find Jesus again, Jesus and his apostles
 - Discussion – Jesus knows they are looking for food again, so he talks about food that perishes and food that endures for ever lasting life (John 6:27) provided by the Son of Man. They ask for a sign like the manna in the desert for the ancient Israelites had. Jesus reminded them it came from God and when they asked to have it he said “I am the bread of life. **Whoever comes to me** will never be hungry ...”
 - Reaction – The Jews began to complain (John 6:41) and dispute about Jesus as the son of Mary and Joseph not someone who came down from heaven.

2. **John 8:12 and 9:5** I am the light of the world – *never be in darkness*
 - Where – the Temple in Jerusalem just after the woman caught in adultery was brought before him and in Jerusalem where he cures a blind man
 - Who – the Pharisees, other Jews and the woman, Jesus, his disciples and the blind man
 - Discussion – Jesus has just said he doesn't condemn the woman and sends her on her way and then says to those who stayed John 8:12 “I am the light of the world. **Whoever follows me** will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” John 9:5 “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”
 - Reaction – the Pharisees tell Jesus his testimony is not valid, when the Pharisees saw the man cured they condemned Jesus as not from God

because he cured the man on the Sabbath and they didn't initially believe the man had been cured

3. **John 8:58** I tell you, before Abraham was, *I am* – *Jesus hid and left the temple*

- Where – the Temple in Jerusalem
- Who – many Jewish people, Jesus
- Discussion – the Jews are saying Abraham is their father after Jesus refers to them doing what his Father says, **Jesus challenges** the Jews to be more like Abraham **and accuses them of wanting to kill him**, they in turn call him a Samaritan with a demon, Jesus told them that Abraham would rejoice to his day to which he is challenged again by the Jews so Jesus says “I tell you, before Abraham was, *I am!*”
- Reaction - **they threatened to stone him** so he hid and left for his time had not yet come to die

4. **John 10:9** I am the gate – *enter to be saved*

- Where – still in Jerusalem just after the incident with healing the blind man
- Who – Pharisees and other Jews, Jesus and his apostles
- Discussion – Jesus had just taught about spiritual blindness and now uses a story of a sheepfold saying anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate is a thief and bandit, in this discourse he says “I am the gate. **Whoever enters by me** will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.”
- Reaction – see #5 below

5. **John 10:11** I am the good shepherd – *I will lay down my life*

- Where – same as #4
- Who – same as #4

- Discussion - Jesus expands his story to add “I am the good shepherd. **The good shepherd will lay down his life** for his sheep. He has implied the Pharisees and others like them who did not believe in him were thieves and murders, and wolves scattering Jesus’ sheep
- Reaction – division amongst those who heard; many said he had a demon and was out of his mind, others wondered who he really was

6. **John 11:25** I am the resurrection and the life – *believe in me and never die*

- Where – at the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus in Bethany
- Who – Jesus and his apostles, Mary, Martha and Lazarus and many Jews
- Discussion – Lazarus had died and been in his tomb for 4 days, many Jews were comforting Mary and Martha, Jesus tells Martha that Lazarus will rise again, Martha agrees as she believes in the resurrection on the last day, Jesus tells her “I am the resurrection and the life. **Those who believe in me**, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”
- Reaction – Martha acknowledges Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God.

7. **John 14:6** I am the way, the truth, and the life – *all will come to the Father through me*

- Where – Jerusalem at the last supper after washing the feet of the apostles and telling of his betrayal and Peter’s denial
- Who – Jesus and all the apostles except Judas who had left the supper
- Discussion – Jesus had foretold of his upcoming suffering and death, Jesus tells the apostles he goes ahead to make a place for them, Thomas asks “where are you going. How can we know the way?” Jesus replies “I am the way, the truth and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through me.**”
- Reaction – Philip says “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” (still wanting proof)

8. **John 15:1** I am the true vine – *my Father is the vine grower*

- Where – still at the last supper, just at the point of rising to go to the Garden of Gethsemane
- Who – the 11 apostles and others (another Judas is described in John 14:22) and Jesus
- Discussion – Jesus has just told the apostles about the sending of the Advocate, the Holy Spirit. Jesus says “I am the true vine, and **my Father** is the vine grower. He **removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.**”
- Reaction – none, Jesus goes on preparing the apostles for his death and the comfort his Father will send to them when Jesus dies

Through these 8 I AM statements in John’s Gospel

- a) Jesus invites us to;
 - come to him,
 - follow him,
 - enter by him,
 - believe in him, and therefore
 - come to the Father through him.
- a) Jesus promised his apostles, and through them us, that he laid down his life for all, and suffered for all.
- b) Jesus tells us that if we believe all this, stay true and commit to him, his Father will prune us and make us bear more fruit.