

In Exodus 3, we read the story of Moses and the burning bush—a bush on fire, yet it did not burn up
God calls to Moses out of the bush and tells him he is on holy ground
God tells him that he has heard the cry of the Israelites who work as slaves for the Egyptians
And that Moses is to go to Pharaoh and take the Israelites out of Egypt
Moses says, "Who am I to do this?" and God says that God will be with him
When Moses asks what to say when the people ask who sent him, God replies...

"I AM WHO I AM... Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" Exodus 3:14
For Quakers I think this is particularly powerful, as we focus on the Divine Presence and Eternal Now

The Gospel of John has multiple I AM statements made by Jesus...

- "I am the bread of life" John 6:35
- "I am the light of the world" John 8:12
- "Before Abraham was, I am" John 8:58
- "I am the door/gate" John 10:9
- "I am the good shepherd" John 10:11
- "I am the resurrection and the life" John 11:25
- "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" John 14:6
- "I am the true vine" John 15:1

I want to take them one at a time, set a bit of the context, and reflect on the statement Jesus made

"I am the bread of life" John 6:35

At the beginning of John 6—Jesus fed a crowd of 5000 with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish
The crowd follows after Jesus, asking for a sign that God sent him

They remind Jesus that while in the wilderness, their ancestors ate manna
As it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat"

John 6:32-35 NRSV

Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

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

The Feast of Tabernacles has just been completed and likely this scene takes place in the temple

There is a large candlestick that is lit

John 8:12 NRSV

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

As Jesus prepared to heal the blind man in John 9, he said

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." John 9:5 NRSV

In John 12—after the triumphant entry and before the last supper—Jesus is talking

He reminds them that he is one with God and that he came to save the world

John 12:46 NRSV

I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness.

"Before Abraham was, I am" John 8:58

Jesus has a conversation with the Jewish leaders about Abraham, who they say is their father
Jesus says if Abraham was your father, you would be doing what Abraham did
Instead, you are trying to kill me—because you follow your father, the devil
They argue about who is greatest—Abraham, the prophets, or Jesus
Jesus points to God, who he knows and follows, as did Abraham
They ask if Jesus, a man who is not 50 years old, has seen Abraham...
John 8:58 NRSV

Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am."

"I am the door/gate" John 10:9

(Older versions use "I am the door" while more modern translations use "I am the gate")
Jesus uses a familiar metaphor for the people in talking about sheep and their shepherd
He contrasts the thief and the shepherd—the shepherd is known and comes in the gate
The sheep know the shepherd's voice and follow him—but the people were confused
John 10:9-10 NRSV

I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

"I am the good shepherd" John 10:11

Jesus expands his teaching...
John 10:11-16 NRSV

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd."

"I am the resurrection and the life" John 11:25

Jesus arrives at the home of Mary and Martha to find out that Lazarus has been dead 4 days
Martha says that if Jesus had been there, her brother would not have died
Jesus counters that he will "rise again"
Martha says she knows all about rising again in the resurrection on the last day
But, Jesus says it isn't just then—it is now—when he says these words...
John 11:25-26 NRSV

Jesus said to 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. Do you believe this?"

Jesus mourned with his friends, asked the stone be rolled back, and called Lazarus to come out
Lazarus came out of the tomb bound in death cloths, which the people removed

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life" John 14:6

Jesus is talking to the disciples about going to the Father
John 14:6-9 NRSV

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."

"I am the true vine" John 15:1

Throughout this section, Jesus has many conversations with his disciples—always teaching them. From Galatians 5:22-23 we remember that *"the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control"*
John 15:1-9 NRSV

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing... If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love."

"I AM"