



The “I AM” statements

The “I AM” statements, along with Jesus’ “my peace, I give to you,” and his statement, “that my joy might be in you and your joy might be made full or complete,” and his commandment to love one another and his example of love *explain/reveal/describe* “Eternal Life” now, and especially, what *the feeling state* of eternal life now is. (Cf. 1:18)

In GoJ “eternal life” is a sharing in God’s own life.¹ This is ultimately what “grace” is, God giving us God’s life, God’s self (cf. 1:16-17, “grace upon grace”). Eternal life is not, therefore, just about quantity as in “forever,” it is about quality as in peace, joy, love, belonging, etc. It is resurrection life right here right now, the life of the age to come now.

The I AM statements with an object (predicate use)

The “Classic 7”

I am the bread of life (6:35, 51, 48)

I am the light of the world (8:12)

I am the (sheep) gate = entrance into the fold (10:7, 9)

I am the good shepherd (10:11, 14)

I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)

I am the way, and the truth, and the life (14:6)

I am the true vine (15:1, 5)

Two additional instances:

I am the one who bears witness concerning myself (8:18)

I am the one from above (8:23)

¹ *Zoe* is the Greek word GoJ uses for “eternal life.” When GoJ references natural life, the Greek word is *psyche*.

The I AM statements in the absolute sense, that is, without an object –

4:25-6 “The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” Jesus said to her, “I am, the one speaking to you.”

6:20 “I am; do not fear” (coming to the disciples walking on water).

8:24 “I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am.”

8:28 “When you have lifted up the Son of Humanity, then you will realize that I am”

8:58 “Truly, truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am

13:19 “I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am.

18:5-6 They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus replied, “I am.” ... They stepped back and fell to the ground.

These absolute use statements focus on pure being; perhaps they are directly linked to John 1:1. Perhaps they also invite us more fully into John 14:20 and 17:21.