

When Moses approached the burning bush, he knew he was in the presence of God and asked for God to reveal his name. “God replied to Moses: I am who I am. Then he added: This is what you will tell the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you” (Exodus 3:14). God is the creator who has no beginning or end. He is always eternal.

When Jesus begins his bread of life discourse, he explains: “I am the bread of life” (Jn 6:35). “Jesus’ identification of himself as bread from God [the Father] develops biblical imagery for God’s wisdom and law, which were likened to food and drink. In this symbolism, to feed on God’s wisdom or Torah means to take it in, to learn from it and allow it to transform one’s life.”ⁱ As the bread of life, Jesus will feed us with the Eucharist and with God’s wisdom. “One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4, Dt 8:3).

Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus continues to reveal his identity with additional “I Am” statements. “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (8:12). Jesus offers us freedom from sin. As adopted brothers and sisters of Jesus through Baptism, we receive a share of that eternal light now as a foretaste of the eternal life to come.

“I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture” (Jn 10:9). As a gate, Jesus is the just judge. At life’s end, we will be judged for our acts of kindness in reaching out to the hungry, the sick and the imprisoned. “His claim to be the gate is very similar to his self-identification in 14:6, “I am the way... No one comes to the Father except through me.”ⁱⁱⁱ Jesus leads us to the pasture of eternal life.

“I am the good shepherd” (10:11, 14). Jesus is willing to lay down his life for our eternal salvation. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is an act of pure love. To help us overcome all of our sins and all that holds us back in life, Jesus willingly lays down his life for our eternal benefit. We are called to follow the example of Jesus the Good Shepherd. “Self-sacrificial love is the defining standard for all disciples of Jesus, and especially for those appointed to be shepherds of his flock.”ⁱⁱⁱ

“I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live” (Jn 11:25). We know that Jesus will rise from the dead, the first born of the dead. Jesus asks us to believe in him that we to may share in the promise of eternal life. “Jesus has promised to “raise up” on the last day those who believe in him and consume his eucharistic flesh and blood He is the “life” because through baptism he gives a new spiritual life, the living water of the Holy Spirit, to those who believe in him.”^{iv}

“I am the way and the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6) “Christ is the one Savior of all, the only one able to reveal God and lead to God.”^v

“I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). The 1st reading from the Acts of the Apostles bears this out. The apostles continued to preach during a period of great persecution. The paralyzed and crippled were cured. Unclean spirits came out of many possessed people.

Each human is created in the likeness and image of God. Jesus sheds his light on us and through him, we know that we are loved infinitely by God. As we try to better understand who Jesus is, we come to a much better understanding of our own identity.

ⁱ Martin, Francis; Wright, William M. IV. **The Gospel of John**. Pg. 124.

ⁱⁱ Ibid, 134.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid, 192.

^{iv} Ibid 205.

^v John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, #5.