

# Dr. Robert Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 6, Jesus's "I Am" Sayings, Part 1 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 6, Jesus's "I Am" Sayings, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Robert Peterson's lecture, "Jesus' I Am Sayings, Part 1," explores the initial three of Jesus' seven "I am" statements in the Gospel of John. The session begins by defining these sayings as Jesus' declarations of identity followed by a predicate nominative, focusing initially on "I am the bread of life." **Peterson connects this saying to the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, highlighting how the physical satisfaction foreshadows the spiritual sustenance Jesus provides.** He further examines the second "I am" statement, "I am the light of the world," linking it to the healing of the man born blind and the contrasting spiritual blindness of the Pharisees. **Finally, the lecture introduces "I am the gate/door of the sheep" and "I am the good shepherd," explaining how these metaphors illustrate Jesus as the exclusive way to God's people and the one who sacrificially provides eternal life for them.** The discussion also touches on related Old Testament prophecies, the nature of faith, and differing interpretations of these profound declarations.

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 6 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels → John).**



**Peterson\_JnTheology\_Session06.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 6, Jesus's "I Am" Sayings, Part 1

#### Briefing Document: Jesus' "I Am" Sayings in John's Gospel (Part 1)

**Overview:** This briefing document summarizes the first part of Dr. Robert A. Peterson's lecture on Jesus' seven "I Am" sayings in the Gospel of John. The session focuses primarily on the first three "I Am" sayings: "I am the bread of life" (John 6), "I am the light of the world" (John 8 & 9), and "I am the gate/door of the sheep" and "I am the good shepherd" (John 10). Peterson emphasizes the connection between Jesus' signs/miracles and these self-declarations, highlighting how they reveal his identity and purpose, primarily as the giver of eternal life and the revealer of God.

#### Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

##### 1. Definition and Significance of "I Am" Sayings:

- Peterson defines the "I Am" sayings as instances where Jesus says "I am" followed by a predicate nominative (e.g., bread of life, light of the world).
- He identifies the seven "I Am" sayings in John: "the bread of life," "the light of the world," "the gate," "the way, the truth, and the life," "the good shepherd," "the true vine," and "the resurrection."
- These sayings, along with the signs Jesus performs, serve to authenticate his message and point to his person.

##### 2. "I Am the Bread of Life" (John 6):

- This saying is connected to the sign of the feeding of the five thousand. Peterson refutes the idea that the miracle was merely inspirational, emphasizing its supernatural nature: "And this is definitely a supernatural multiplication of loaves and fish."
- The crowd initially seeks Jesus because of the signs they saw, leading Peterson to discuss the complex nature of seeking signs: while signs authenticate Jesus, seeking them apart from him is problematic.
- The discourse involves the theme of manna as a type pointing towards Jesus as the "true bread from heaven": "Types are Old Testament historical persons, events, or institutions that were historical and had a place to play and a role to play in Israel's history. At the same time, they were prophetic... here, manna points toward the heavenly manna, the bread from heaven, if you will."

- Jesus clarifies that he is not merely providing physical sustenance but spiritual life: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes after me shall not hunger; whoever believes in me shall never thirst."
- The discourse on eating his flesh and drinking his blood, though not the institution of the Lord's Supper, carries theological significance related to union with Christ. Peterson notes the misunderstanding and offense it caused: "Surely, these are hard words."
- The strong emphasis on divine sovereignty ("No one can come to me unless the father who sent me draws him") and the consequence of unbelief led to many disciples turning away: "After this, many of his disciples... turned back and no longer walked with him."
- Peter's response highlights the essence of faith: clinging to Christ even without full understanding: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know you are the Holy One of God."
- The "bread of life" saying emphasizes Jesus as the life-giver, sustaining spiritual life through faith: "He is the life-giver. He's the very bread of life. And one believes, one eats him by faith, by believing in him and his saving work..."

### **3. "I Am the Light of the World" (John 8 & 9):**

- This "I Am" saying is connected to the sign of healing the man born blind.
- Peterson points out the contrast between the disciples' and Jewish leaders' misunderstanding of the man's blindness and Jesus' explanation that it was "that the works of God might be displayed in him."
- The healing itself is described, including the unusual method of making mud and telling the man to wash in the Pool of Siloam.
- The Pharisees' reaction to the healing on the Sabbath reveals their hypocrisy and rejection of Jesus. Peterson notes the division caused by Jesus: "Boy, we see that in every one of the first 12 chapters... Two responses to Jesus... negative response... positive response. And episode after episode in the Book of Signs, the same thing happens."
- The encounter between Jesus and the healed man after he was cast out of the synagogue emphasizes the importance of belief and worship: "Lord, I believe, and he worshiped him."

- Jesus' statement that he came into the world "for judgment, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind" is explained as spiritual discernment. Those who acknowledge their spiritual blindness and turn to Jesus receive sight, while those who claim to see independently remain blind.
- The Pharisees' questioning ("Are we also blind?") and Jesus' response highlight their guilt due to their rejection of the light.

#### **4. "I Am the Gate" and "I Am the Good Shepherd" (John 10):**

- These two "I Am" sayings are discussed together, both illustrating Jesus as the way and bestower of eternal life.
- The imagery of the sheepfold and the shepherd is used to contrast Jesus with false leaders ("thieves and robbers").
- Jesus as the gate emphasizes that he is the only way into the "sheepfold," representing the people of God: "I am the door of the sheep. If anyone enters by me, he'll be saved and go in and go out and find pasture."
- The "good shepherd" imagery highlights Jesus' care for his sheep, his intimate knowledge of them ("I know my own and my own know me"), and his willingness to lay down his life for them.
- Peterson emphasizes that the good shepherd gives eternal life: "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand." He highlights the strength of the Greek phrasing to convey the certainty of this eternal security.
- The inclusion of "other sheep that are not of this fold" refers to the Gentiles and the unity of the church.
- Jesus' statement about laying down his life and taking it up again highlights his authority and deity, distinct from the Father raising him in other instances.
- The continued division among the Jews in response to these claims is noted.
- The reason for unbelief is discussed, with Jesus stating, "You do not believe because you are not among my sheep." Peterson acknowledges the theological complexity of this statement in relation to election and human responsibility but suggests the primary emphasis in John is on the necessity of belief.

**Concluding Thought:**

- Peterson concludes that the "I Am" sayings discussed in this session primarily portray Jesus as the giver of eternal life and the one who provides the true way to God. The signs serve to support these claims. The next session will cover the remaining "I Am" sayings.

## 4. Study Guide: Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 6, Jesus's "I Am" Sayings, Part 1

### Study Guide: Jesus' "I Am" Sayings (John 6-10)

#### Key Concepts:

- **"I Am" Sayings:** Declarations by Jesus in the Gospel of John where he identifies himself with a predicate nominative, often revealing aspects of his divine nature and his role in salvation.
- **Signs:** Miraculous acts performed by Jesus, intended to authenticate his message and point to his identity. However, seeking signs for their own sake is rebuked.
- **Types:** Old Testament persons, events, or institutions that foreshadow or prefigure aspects of the Messiah, the kingdom of God, or Jesus' person and work (e.g., manna as a type of Jesus the bread of life).
- **Revelation:** The act of God making himself and his will known to humanity. Jesus, as the Word and the Light, is the ultimate revealer of God.
- **Eternal Life:** The gift of unending life in fellowship with God, attained through faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Union with Christ:** The spiritual joining of believers to Jesus Christ through faith, a central theme related to the sacraments, particularly the Lord's Supper.
- **Divine Sovereignty:** God's ultimate authority and control over all things, including salvation.
- **Human Responsibility:** Humanity's obligation to respond to God's revelation and the consequences of their choices, particularly regarding belief and unbelief.
- **Election:** God's sovereign choice of individuals for salvation.
- **The Church as the New Israel:** The community of believers in Jesus Christ, seen as the continuation and fulfillment of God's covenant with Israel.

#### Quiz:

1. What are the seven "I Am" sayings mentioned in the excerpt, and in what format do they appear in the Gospel of John?
2. According to the text, what was the purpose of the signs performed by Jesus, and what caution is given regarding the seeking of these signs?

3. Explain how the manna in the Old Testament serves as a "type," and what does it foreshadow in relation to Jesus' "I Am the bread of life" saying?
4. How did some of Jesus' Jewish listeners misunderstand his claim to be the "bread of life," and what theological concept related to the Lord's Supper is connected to this discourse?
5. Describe the encounter between Jesus and the man born blind in John 9, and how does this event illustrate Jesus' claim to be the "light of the world"?
6. What contrasting reactions did people have to the healing of the blind man, and what does this reveal about the purpose and impact of Jesus' ministry?
7. In John 10, Jesus refers to himself as "the gate" and "the good shepherd." Explain the significance of these two metaphors in relation to the people of God.
8. How does the "good shepherd" discourse in John 10 connect to the concept of eternal life and the security of believers?
9. What does the text suggest about the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility in the context of belief and unbelief, particularly concerning Jesus' statement about his "sheep"?
10. How does the author interpret Jesus' ability to lay down his life and take it up again in John 10, and what theological truth does this highlight?

**Answer Key:**

1. The seven "I Am" sayings mentioned are: the bread of life, the light of the world, the gate, the way, the truth, and the life, the good shepherd, the true vine, and the resurrection. They appear in the format "I am the..." followed by a predicate nominative.
2. The purpose of Jesus' signs was to elicit faith in him, leading to eternal life. However, the text cautions against seeking signs for their own sake, apart from their significance in revealing Jesus.
3. The manna, a supernatural provision of food in the wilderness, serves as a type pointing towards Jesus, the heavenly manna or "true bread from heaven," who gives spiritual sustenance and eternal life.
4. Some Jewish listeners misunderstood Jesus' claim to be the "bread of life" by taking it to mean physical bread. This discourse is connected to the theology of

the Lord's Supper, representing union with Christ through feeding on his flesh and blood (spiritually understood).

5. Jesus heals a man born blind by making mud and telling him to wash, illustrating his role as the "light of the world" by bringing spiritual sight to those in darkness and revealing the works of God.
6. The healing of the blind man led to division, with some praising God and others, particularly the Pharisees, rejecting Jesus and his miracle. This reveals that Jesus' ministry brings both belief and unbelief, separating those who recognize their need from those who claim to see.
7. As "the gate," Jesus is the only way into the sheepfold, representing the people of God or the church. As "the good shepherd," he cares for his sheep, knows them, and ultimately lays down his life for them, contrasting with false shepherds.
8. The "good shepherd" discourse emphasizes that Jesus gives his sheep eternal life and promises they will never perish, and no one can snatch them out of his or the Father's hand, highlighting the security of believers.
9. The text suggests that while human unbelief is a present reality and individuals are responsible for their response, there is also a concept of divine sovereignty where some are identified as Christ's "sheep" prior to belief.
10. The author interprets Jesus' ability to lay down and take up his life as a unique display of his deity, occurring with the Father's authority and demonstrating his power over death, as also seen in his words about the temple of his body in John 2.

### **Essay Format Questions:**

1. Analyze the relationship between the signs and the "I Am the bread of life" discourse in John 6. How do these two elements work together to reveal Jesus' identity and purpose?
2. Discuss the significance of the "I Am the light of the world" saying in John 9, considering the miracle of the healing of the blind man and the reactions of both the healed man and the Jewish leaders.



3. Compare and contrast Jesus' self-identification as "the gate" and "the good shepherd" in John 10. What does each metaphor reveal about his role and relationship with his followers?
4. Explore the tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility as it is presented in the context of belief and unbelief in the passages discussed (John 6-10).
5. Evaluate the author's interpretation of the "I Am" sayings in John 6-10 as revelations of Jesus' identity and his provision of salvation and eternal life.

### Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Predicate Nominative:** A noun or pronoun that follows a linking verb and renames or identifies the subject of the sentence (e.g., in "I am the bread of life," "bread of life" is the predicate nominative).
- **Sign (in John's Gospel):** A miraculous event performed by Jesus with the purpose of pointing beyond itself to his identity and message.
- **Type (Biblical):** An Old Testament person, event, or institution that foreshadows or prefigures a New Testament reality, particularly related to Christ and salvation.
- **Revelation:** The act by which God communicates truth about himself and his will to humanity.
- **Union with Christ:** The spiritual bond and intimate relationship that believers have with Jesus Christ through faith.
- **Divine Sovereignty:** God's ultimate power and authority over all creation and history, including his plan for salvation.
- **Human Responsibility:** The obligation of individuals to respond to God's revelation and their accountability for their choices, especially regarding faith and obedience.
- **Election (Theological):** God's sovereign choice before creation of certain individuals to be saved.
- **New Israel:** A theological concept that views the Christian church as the continuation and spiritual fulfillment of God's covenant people, replacing or encompassing Old Testament Israel.

## **5. FAQs on Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 6, Jesus's "I Am" Sayings, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions: Jesus' "I Am" Sayings in John's Gospel (Part 1)**

#### **1. What are Jesus' "I Am" sayings in the Gospel of John, and why are they significant?**

Jesus' "I Am" sayings are a series of declarations in John's Gospel where Jesus says "I am" followed by a predicate nominative. The seven specific sayings discussed in this excerpt are: "I am the bread of life," "I am the light of the world," "I am the gate," "I am the good shepherd," "I am the true vine," "I am the resurrection and the life," and "I am the way, the truth, and the life." These sayings are significant because they reveal Jesus' identity and his role in salvation, often connected to signs or miracles he performs. They echo Old Testament language and point to his divine nature and unique relationship with the Father.

#### **2. How does the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand relate to Jesus' claim, "I am the bread of life"?**

The feeding of the five thousand in John 6 serves as a sign that precedes and illustrates Jesus' declaration, "I am the bread of life." After miraculously providing physical sustenance for the large crowd, Jesus delivers a sermon explaining that he is the true bread from heaven, unlike the manna their ancestors ate in the wilderness and died. He emphasizes that those who come to him and believe in him will never hunger or thirst spiritually and will receive eternal life. The physical act of feeding foreshadows the spiritual nourishment he offers.

#### **3. What is the significance of the Old Testament concept of a prophet like Moses in understanding Jesus?**

The people who witnessed the feeding of the five thousand recognized Jesus as "the prophet who was to come into the world," a reference to Deuteronomy 18 where Moses predicted God would send a prophet like him. This prophecy pointed to a culminating prophetic figure for Israel. Dr. Peterson explains that this prophetic institution of Israel finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who is seen as the great and final prophet of God. New Testament prophets serve as his emissaries under his divine prophetic ministry.

**4. Why does Jesus sometimes discourage the seeking of signs, even though the Gospel of John records many signs?**

While John's Gospel states that the signs were written to elicit faith leading to eternal life, Jesus rebukes those who seek signs merely for their own sake, apart from believing in him. He suggests that seeking signs without understanding their purpose—to authenticate Jesus' message and reveal his person—is wrong. The focus should be on Jesus himself, and the signs serve to point towards him and elicit faith in him.

**5. How does Jesus' statement about eating his flesh and drinking his blood in John 6 relate to the Lord's Supper?**

Although the Gospel of John does not explicitly record the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus' words about eating his flesh and drinking his blood in chapter 6 are deeply connected to its theology. This discourse emphasizes union with Christ and the reception of eternal life through faith in him. Dr. Peterson suggests that these "hard words" lay a theological foundation for the Lord's Supper, even without the narrative of its institution in this Gospel. The misunderstanding of these words by some even led to accusations of cannibalism against early Christians.

**6. What does Jesus mean when he says, "I am the light of the world," and how is this illustrated in chapter 9 with the healing of the blind man?**

Jesus' declaration, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12), signifies that he is the revealer of God and spiritual truth, dispelling darkness and offering spiritual illumination. This is vividly illustrated in chapter 9 when Jesus heals a man born blind. This sign demonstrates his power to bring sight to the physically blind, which serves as a metaphor for his ability to bring spiritual sight to those who are in darkness. The contrasting reactions of the healed man, who comes to believe and worship Jesus, and the Pharisees, who remain spiritually blind despite the miracle, further highlight this theme.

**7. How do the "I Am" sayings relate to the concepts of Jesus being the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)?**

Dr. Peterson explains that the seven "I Am" sayings can be summarized by the concepts presented in John 14:6. "The way" is represented by the "gate" (the entrance to God's people) and implicitly by Jesus as the savior leading to the Father's house. "The truth" is manifested in the saying itself ("I am the truth") and in Jesus being the "light of the world" (the revealer of God). "The life" is evident in the sayings "I am the bread of life," "I am the resurrection and the life," "I am the true vine" (giving life to the branches), and "I am the good shepherd" (bestowing eternal life).

**8. What are the implications of Jesus' statement, "I am the good shepherd," particularly regarding the salvation and security of his sheep?**

In John 10, Jesus declares, "I am the good shepherd," contrasting himself with the inadequate leaders of Israel. As the good shepherd, he knows his sheep, and they know him. He lays down his life for them and gives them eternal life, promising that they will never perish and no one can snatch them out of his hand or the Father's hand. This imagery emphasizes Jesus' role as the protector and provider of eternal security for those who belong to him, highlighting the unity between Jesus and the Father in preserving the salvation of believers.