

Jesus Affirms His Divinity with the Greek Words **ἐγώ εἰμί** (I AM)

Explanation

An important feature of the Greek Gospels is the use of the Greek words **ἐγώ εἰμί**, *ego eimi*, “I am.” These words are used predominantly in John, but they also occur at significant moments in Matthew, Mark, and Luke as well.

When Moses asked God on Mount Sinai, “When they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them?”, the answer was “I am that I am” (Ex 3:13–14). The Greek version of the Old Testament, widely used in Jesus’ day, rendered this text “**ἐγώ εἰμί ὁ ὢν**.” A similar divine usage is found several places in the Hebrew Bible and in Jewish messianic literature. Thus, when Jesus repeatedly identified himself with these words, his audiences could well have understood that he was affirming his divine identity as the Lord God of Israel.

This chart lists the passages in the Greek that contain the words **ἐγώ εἰμί**, most of which are in the Gospel of John. Interestingly, Matthew, Mark, and John record this phrase in connection with Jesus’ miraculous walking on the water and stilling the storm. Mark emphasizes these words in the pointed answer of Jesus to his accusers who had asked, “Are you the Messiah” (Mk 14:61), just as John preserves them in the open declaration of Jesus to the Samaritan woman at the well. Luke reserves it exclusively for Jesus’ final announcement when he appeared to his apostles after his resurrection and Paul consistently testifies that Jesus identified himself this way on the road to Damascus.

Reference

Raymond E. Brown, trans., *The Gospel According to John* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 1:533–38.

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It is I (ἐγώ εἰμί); be not afraid.	Mt 14:27; Mk 6:50; Jn 6:20
<i>I am</i> (ἐγώ εἰμί).	Mk 14:62; Mk 15:4 JST
Ye say that <i>I am</i> .	Lk 22:70
It is I (ἐγώ εἰμί) myself.	Lk 24:39
The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: Jesus saith unto her, <i>I</i> that speak unto thee <i>am he</i> (ἐγώ εἰμί).	Jn 4:25–26
<i>I am</i> the bread of life.	Jn 6:35
<i>I am</i> the light of the world.	Jn 8:12
<i>I am</i> one that bear witness of myself.	Jn 8:18
If ye believe not that <i>I am</i> he, ye shall die in your sins.	Jn 8:24
When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that <i>I am</i> he.	Jn 8:28
Before Abraham was born, <i>I am</i> .	Jn 8:58
<i>I am</i> the door of the sheep.	Jn 10:7
<i>I am</i> the good shepherd.	Jn 10:11
<i>I am</i> the resurrection and the life.	Jn 11:25
<i>I am</i> the way, the truth, and the life.	Jn 14:6
<i>I am</i> the true vine.	Jn 15:1
<i>I am</i> the vine.	Jn 15:5
<i>I am</i> he.	Jn 18:5, 8
And the Lord said, <i>I am</i> (ἐγώ εἰμί) Jesus.	Acts 9:5
And he said unto me, <i>I am</i> Jesus of Nazareth.	Acts 22:8
And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, <i>I am</i> Jesus.	Acts 26:15