# The I AM declarations of John's gospel

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In the gospel of John, we encounter many I AM claims made by Jesus during the course of his public ministry.
***Egō eimi*** (= "I am") — the specific phrase Jesus employs — is an emphatic form of the verb "to be".
*Eimi*, by itself, is the standard way of saying "I am" in Greek.
*Egō* (Strong's G1473) is the 1st person Personal Pronoun, meaning "I" or "me".
Placing the pronoun *egō* before *eimi* adds emphasis.
It focuses attention on the person making the claim: "I, I am …", or "I myself am …".
It also has the effect of enhancing the assertion that is being made.
Thus, *egō eimi* serves as an <u>emphatic self-identification</u>.

However, it seems that with one particular class of these claims, Jesus is appropriating to himself the divine name, I AM.
God first revealed this name when he appeared to Moses at the burning bush.
Moses enquired about his name so that he could inform the Israelites just who it was who had sent him.
And God responded:
*"I AM who I AM." … "[tell the Israelites]: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"* (Exodus 3:14)

Here, the Hebrew for I AM is *ʾehyeh*, from the verb *hāyâ* — "to be".
This verb is linguistically related to God's personal name: Yahweh.
In Exodus 3:14, *ʾehyeh* underlies all three I AMs.
But in the Greek Septuagint translation, only the first I AM is rendered as *egō eimi*.
The second and third I AMs (*ʾehyeh*) are rendered as *ho ōn* — "the One who is."
One could paraphrase I AM who I AM thus: "I am he who is."
In other words, Yahweh is the self-existent One.

The Lord makes a similar claim in Deuteronomy 32:39 (Darby):

> *See now that **I, I am HE**, And there is no god with me; I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal, And there is none that delivereth out of my hand.*

Here, the Hebrew reads: *ki ani ani hu, …* (= that I, [even] I, [am] he, …)[1]
The Septuagint has: *hoti egō eimi, …* (= that I am [he], …

[1] *Ki* = that; *ani* = I; *hu* = he.

These and similar (Hebrew and Greek) phrases underly many comparable divine claims made in the latter chapters of Isaiah. These in turn seem to form the backdrop to Jesus' claims in the gospel of John.
Especially relevant are those (Hebrew and Greek) phrases that come at the end of their clause — where, as we see also in Deuteronomy 32:39, there is no subsequent subject complement (nominative predicate).[2]

## Used for self-identification

We find the phrase *egō eimi* employed by Gabriel (Lk 1:19), by the man born blind (Jn 9:9); by Peter (Ac 10:21), and by Paul (Ac 22:3; 26:29; Rom 11:13).
Jesus warns that false Messiahs will claim *egō eimi* — "I am he" (Mt 24:5; Mk 13:6; Lk 21:8).
The phrase is used negatively:
As a question ("not I, is it?") by the disciples and by Judas in Matthew 26:22, 25.
As a statement ("I am not") by John the Baptist in John 1:20; 3:28, and by Jesus in John 8:23; 17:14, 16.
In the Septuagint, *egō eimi* is used frequently:
By Jacob (Gen 27:32), Deborah (Jdg 5:3), Gideon (Jdg 6:15), and many others.
In Leviticus we find numerous references to *egō eimi kurios* — "I am the LORD."
Thus, the phrase can be a normal, if somewhat emphatic, form of self-identification.
Jesus' use of *egō eimi* in John 8:18 is probably just such a case: "*Egō eimi* the [One] bearing witness …"
The resurrected Lord Jesus stated in Luke 24:39:
"Look at my hands and my feet; [see] that *egō eimi autos* — I am he."
This is an even more emphatic form of self-identification than *egō eimi*: "It is I myself!"

## Jesus before Caiaphas

Perhaps the most significant use of *egō eimi* in the synoptic gospels is when Jesus responds to the question from Caiaphas concerning whether he is the Christ, the Son of God:
Mark 14:62 (BSB):

> *"**I am**," said Jesus, "and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven."*

(So also with the parallel account in Luke 22:69-70.)
A subject complement might not be expected here because Jesus is answering a question.
Yet the whole claim Jesus makes here is huge; he is effectively claiming deity for himself:
He is probably alluding to the divine name, I AM.
He claims to be Daniel's "Son of Man" figure — the one who having ascended on the clouds into God's presence receives great authority and is worshiped by all (Daniel 7:13-14).
He will return on those clouds as judge — indeed, to judge his accusers (Matthew 24:30).
And he is the One whom Yahweh invites to co-rule with him at his right hand — whose enemies will be totally crushed (Psalm 110).
"Blasphemy" was the only conclusion Caiaphas could come to!

We turn our focus now to the fourth gospel, authored by the apostle John.

[2] For an explanation of these parts of speech, see page 3.

## The metaphorical I AM declarations in John

The metaphorical I AMs in John's gospel all take the following form: *Egō eimi* + Subject Complement.
English translation: I am + Subject Complement.[3]
In each instance, the Subject Complement helps define or identify the subject (the "I").[4]
John records eleven of these statements, involving seven different identities:

| | **John:** | ***Egō eimi …*** |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | 6:35, 48, 51. | the Bread of Life. |
| 2. | 8:12. | the Light of the World. |
| 3. | 10:7, 9. | the Door of the Sheep. |
| 4. | 10:11, 14. | the Good Shepherd. |
| 5. | 11:25. | the Resurrection and the Life. |
| 6. | 14:6. | the Way, the Truth, and the Life. |
| 7. | 15:1. (15:5) | the True Vine. |

These seven claims should not necessarily be interpreted as implying deity; rather, the focus should be on the complement — on Jesus as the light, shepherd, vine, etc.[5]

But our main focus will be on those *egō eimi* declarations (in John) where there is no stated complement.
First we will examine three instances where a complement, while not stated, is implied by the context.
One involves the man who was born blind. The others, coming from Jesus' lips, are suggestive of deity.
Then we will examine five so-called "absolute" I AMs — where there is no complement either stated or implied.
Without a doubt, these last instances are intended to suggest deity.

## I AMs with an implied subject complement

There are three instances where a complement, while not stated, is implied by the context.
The first we examine concerns the man born blind, in John 9.
The second is from John 4: Jesus' discourse with the Samaritan woman at the well.
The third is found in John 18 with Jesus' arrest in the Garden: the threefold I AMs of 18:5-8.

In **John 9:9** we read that the (formerly) blind man kept saying, *egō eimi* — "I am."
Here we have an implied complement:
"I am that man — the one who was blind, the one you are talking about."
It would be right to translate *egō eimi* here as "I am he" — and indeed many Bible versions do just that.
We should note that the verb's imperfect tense implies that the man kept on affirming his identity.
The *egō eimi* perhaps adds to that emphasis.
The form of the man's response is interesting:
Coming as it does at the end of a clause, it closely resembles many of the declarations that Jesus himself makes.

[3] A Subject Complement is a word or phrase that follows a linking verb ("am" in the above instances) and provides more information about the subject, either by identifying it or by describing it. The Subject Complement does not include the verb itself.
[4] These subject complements in John are all predicate nominatives, consisting of a noun phrase that defines or identifies the subject.
[5] This is not to deny that when Jesus declares himself to be our good shepherd, we are to connect this claim with God's role and promises in the Old Testament: Just as Yahweh was (and promised to be) Israel's shepherd, so now also is Jesus our shepherd. Jesus is be identified as the shepherd of Psalm 23, etc. He also fulfills prophecies such as Ezekiel 34:11-16, 22-24; 37:24.

**John 4:25-26** (BSB) — Jesus' discourse with the Samaritan woman at the well:

> [25] *The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When He comes,*
> *He will explain everything to us."*
> [26] *Jesus answered, "**I who speak to you am He**."*

The original Greek has Jesus saying:
*"Egō eimi*, the [one] speaking to you."
The woman had just been speaking of the promised Messiah, and Jesus now claimed to be that very One.
Here too, a subject complement is implied: "I am <u>the Messiah</u>, — I, the One speaking to you."
Again, it would be right to translate *egō eimi* as "I am he." And again, many Bible versions do just that.

But here is a point that is often overlooked:
What Jesus says here strongly resembles a claim that Yahweh himself made in Isaiah 52:6.
Here is Isaiah 52:6 (BSB, based on the Hebrew text):

> *"Therefore My people will know My name; therefore they will know on that day*
> ***that I am He who speaks**. Here I am!"*

The Hebrew here is: *ki ani hu hamdabber; hinneni*.
Literally: "… that I [am] he that does speak: behold, [it is] I."

Compare the two Greek texts:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Isaiah 52:6 (Septuagint): | *… hoti egō eimi autos ho lalōn*. | (= for I AM he, the [one] speaking.) |
| John 4:26 (NT Greek text): | *Egō eimi, ho lalōn soi*. | (= I AM [he], the [one] speaking to you.) |

This is one of many *egō eimi* declarations found in the latter chapters of Isaiah in the Greek Old Testament.
The specific underlying Hebrew phrase here is *ani hu* (= I [am] he).
The Septuagint renders this as *egō eimi autos* (= I AM he) — an even more emphatic form of self-identification than *egō eimi*.
And as I hope to demonstrate, there's good reason to believe that the *egō eimi* claims made by Jesus as reported by John are based on these divine affirmations in Isaiah.
At least this is true of those claims (in John) with no subject complement.

In **John 18:5-8** — the account of Jesus' arrest — we find three I AM statements.
Those in verses 5 and 8 are Jesus' reply to those arresting him: they sought Jesus the Nazarene.
Here too, a subject complement is implied: "I am <u>the one you are seeking</u>."
So yet again, it would be right to translate *egō eimi* as "I am he." And again, many Bible versions do just that.

However, with the middle I AM in 18:6 John himself is drawing the reader's attention both to Jesus' reply and to the soldiers' response. They fell to the ground, stunned by his claim. For indeed, to Jewish ears — to those arresting Jesus — I AM sounded far too much like an appropriation of the divine name.
This seems to be John's intent; it's difficult to imagine why else he would want to emphasize these points.[6]

[6] Jesus' two I AM replies here stand in stark contrast with those of Simon Peter in John 18:17, 25: *Ouk eimi* ("I am not").
John is evidently contrasting Jesus and Peter, for in a way Peter is also on trial: three times he is questioned and three times he fails to acknowledge Jesus. John's point is this: Peter's failure is also our failure; he stands for mankind united in its opposition to Jesus. Jesus, alone and without any support, drank the Cup of God's wrath; he alone accomplished redemption for sinful humanity.

## The Isaiah connection

With those I AM claims we considered above, Jesus appears to be appropriating for himself the divine name revealed in Exodus 3:14.
We noted that his claim in John 4:26 also seems to be echoing a specific claim made by Yahweh in Isaiah 52:6.
In other words, it seems that in 4:26 a further identification with Yahweh is being made.

In the latter section of Isaiah we encounter numerous, emphatic, I AM declarations.
In context, the Lord is emphasizing his sovereignty over history and over the nations, and the fact that he alone is Israel's Savior.
Many (but by no means all) of these I AMs in the Greek Septuagint version of Isaiah utilize the phrase *egō eimi*.
We should note this was the Old Testament version that John's readers utilized and were familiar with.
(More often than not, New Testament authors who quote from the Old Testament cite from the Septuagint.)
Did Jesus have the prophecies of Isaiah in view when he made these claims?
Did John also intend for his readers to draw a connection between the *egō eimi* claims made by Jesus and those of Yahweh in Isaiah?
The answer to these is almost certainly Yes!

While we shall consider Jesus' remaining *egō eimi* claims individually and in more detail later in this article, we can make a few introductory comments in support of the contention that Jesus' claims are drawing on the divine declarations in Isaiah.
We need also to reference the table on the following page, which summarizes Jesus' *egō eimi* claims.

1. John was the human author of the book of Revelation.
   In Revelation 1:17 we find Jesus claiming that: "I am (*egō eimi*) the First and the Last."
   Comparison with the divine declaration in Revelation 1:8 and Jesus' further claim in 22:13 shows that Jesus' claim in 1:17 is without a doubt a claim to deity. All that belongs to God also belongs to Jesus.
   Yet Revelation 1:17 is drawing also on a virtually identical claim that Yahweh made in Isaiah 44:6 and 48:12.
   There is little doubt that Isaiah is the backdrop for Revelation 1:17. This strengthens our belief that Jesus (and John) are also drawing on Isaiah in the various *egō eimi* claims in John's gospel.
2. Jesus' claim in John 6:20 likely draws on Isaiah 41:10 and 43:5.
   Jesus' claim in John 13:19 likely draws on Isaiah 43:10.
3. The claims in John 8 and John 18 can be considered together:
   In these, I AM stands at the end of its clause or sentence, with no subject complement stated.
   The backdrop for all these is probably the Septuagint of Isaiah 41:4:
   *"I God, [the] first and into the future,* ***I AM****."* (*… egō eimi.*)
   In both the Hebrew original and the Greek translation the I AM stands at the end of its clause or sentence, just as we find in John.
4. The numerous I AMs in Isaiah have around 11 different underlying Hebrew phrases. (See Appendix 1.)
   Yet, the specific Hebrew phrases in the Isaianic verses that form the backdrop to the *egō eimi* claims in John boil down to just two (related) phrases: *ANI*, and *ANI HU*. This is quite remarkable. It shows that John considered these phrases to have special significance.
   Note that *ANI* = I, and *HU* = he. Hence, *ANI HU* = I [am] he.

Summary of Jesus' I AM Claims

| NT Reference | Literal translation from the Greek | End of Clause? | Subject Complement? | Echoing Isaiah? | Septuagint Text of Isaiah | Hebrew Text of Isaiah |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| John 4:26 | Jesus says to her, ***Egō eimi***, the [One] speaking to you. | Yes | Implied:<br>*Egō eimi* **Messiah**/**Christ** — I, the One speaking to you. | Likely:<br>52:6 | … for **I am he**, the one speaking; …<br>(… *egō eimi autos* …) | [they shall know] … that ***ANI HU*** that does speak.<br>(*ani* = I; *hu* = he; *ani hu* = I [am] he.) |
| John 6:20 | And he says to them, ***Egō eimi***; fear not. (*mē phobeisthe*) | Yes | No | Likely:<br>41:10, 43:5 | 41:10: Fear not; for with you **I am**. (*Mē phobou, meta sou gar eimi*.) | 41:10: Fear not, for with you ***ANI***. |
| John 8:24 | For if you believe not that ***egō eimi,*** you will die in your sins. | Yes | No | As for<br>Jn 8:58 | | |
| John 8:28 | Then you will know that ***egō eimi,*** and I do nothing from myself. | Yes | No | As for<br>Jn 8:58 | | |
| John 8:58 | Before Abraham was, ***egō eimi.*** | Yes | No | Possibly:<br>41:4 | I God, [the] first and into the future, **I AM**.<br>(… *egō eimi.*) | I Yahweh, the first, and with the last; ***ANI HU***. |
| John 13:19 | In order that you may believe when it comes to pass, that ***egō eimi.*** | Yes | No | Likely:<br>43:10 | … that ye may know, and believe, … that **I AM**.<br>(… *egō eimi.*) | … that you may know and believe me, and understand that ***ANI HU***. |
| John<br>18:5,6,8 | [5] He says to them, ***Egō eimi.***<br>[6] When therefore he said to them, ***Egō eimi,*** they drew back …<br>[8] Jesus answered, I have told you that ***egō eimi.*** If therefore you seek me, … | Yes x3 | Implied:<br>*Egō eimi* **the One you are seeking**. | As for<br>Jn 8:58 | | |
| Revelation<br>1:17 | … saying, Fear not; ***egō eimi*** the First and the Last. | No | Yes: stated. | Yes:<br>44:6; 48:12 | 48:12: *Egō eimi* first, and *egō* forever. | ***ANI HU***; ***ANI*** the First, also ***ANI*** the Last. |
| Mark<br>14:62 | And Jesus said, ***Egō eimi.***<br>And you will see … | Yes | Not needed, because an Answer to a Question. | | | |

## I AMs with no subject complement

We will now consider those I AM statements in John that have no subject complement — where a complement is neither stated nor implied. There are five such statements.

The first one is in **John 6:19-20** (BSB):

> [19] *When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the sea — and they were terrified.*
> [20] *But Jesus spoke up: "**It is I**; do not be afraid."*

The Greek text for John 6:20b is:
*Egō eimi; mē phobeisthe*. (= I AM; fear not.)

Three gospels record this incident. The disciples "were terrified" as they saw Jesus walking on the lake.
His approach, and his revealing of his identity clearly left an indelible mark on the disciples.
Matthew and John were eyewitnesses, and Mark reports what Peter witnessed.
See Matthew 14:27; Mark 6:50.
Since Matthew and Mark also witness to Jesus' use of *egō eimi*, we can rule out the notion that John has himself added the pronoun *egō* to make it more emphatic — that he has altered Jesus' words to fit his own theological narrative.
But we should remember that Jesus and his disciples probably spoke Aramaic as their mother-tongue, not Greek.

Significantly, Jesus identifies himself to the frightened disciples with words reminiscent of Yahweh in Isaiah.
There are two verses that might serve as the backdrop here: Isaiah 41:10 and 43:5.
Both in the Hebrew read: "Fear not; for with thee I [am]: …"
The Septuagint of both read: *Mē phobou*; [for] ***eimi*** [with thee]: …

We can see that neither employs the phrase *egō eimi*.
Only *eimi* is employed — the standard, non-emphatic form of "I am."
(The latter part of 41:10 employs the phrase *egō gar eimi ho Theos sou …* — "for I am thy God …")
To complicate matters further, the original Hebrew phrases here are non-standard as well:
Both have *ANI* (= I [am]) — not the *ANI HU* (= I [am] he) that lies behind the other I AMs of John's gospel.

We cannot with certainty claim that John has either verse (or both) in mind in John 6.
But an allusion to these verses would be altogether appropriate in view of the disciples' fear:
They need not fear, because: "I (Yahweh/Jesus) am with you."

We move on now to John 8, where we find three significant I AM (*egō eimi*) declarations.[7]
Jesus' discourse here with the Jews concerns his identity.
He castigates them for their stubborn unbelief.
**John 8:24, 28, 58** (Darby):

> [24] *I said therefore to you, that ye shall die in your sins; for unless ye shall believe that* ***I am [he]****, ye shall die in your sins.*
>
> [28] *Jesus therefore said to them, When ye shall have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that* ***I am [he]****, and [that] I do nothing of myself, but as the Father has taught me I speak these things.*
>
> [58] *Jesus said to them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was,* ***I am****.*

In all three verses, *egō eimi* comes at the end of the clause or sentence.
This is significant when we consider the Hebrew and Septuagint background to these declarations.

Note that with 8:24 and 8:28 it is possible, as in the Darby translations above, to add "he" or "the Messiah" or some such complement, but this cannot be done with 8:58.
In this last verse it makes absolutely no sense to render the final clause "I am he."
Nor was there any mistaking what Jesus meant here: the Jews picked up stones for his blatant blasphemy!
He was claiming, not mere pre-existence (before Abraham), but identity with Yahweh himself.
It shouldn't be necessary to point out that John, in his gospel, goes out of his way to show both Jesus' essential identity with Yahweh and his preexistence with him.[8]

The final verse is **John 13:19**:
Jesus is with his disciples at the Last Supper in the upper room, the night before his death.
He tells them beforehand about his imminent betrayal, so that when it happens, they might believe in him.
Jesus' declaration here appears to be a deliberate echo of Yahweh's claim in Isaiah 43:10:

> *Ye are my witnesses, says Yahweh, … <u>that ye may know and believe</u> me, and understand* ***that I [am] HE****: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.*
> (Isaiah 43:10, Darby, modified)
>
> *I tell you [it] now before it happens, that when it happens, <u>ye may believe</u>* ***that I am [he]****.*
> (John 13:19, Darby)

The Septuagint of Isaiah 43:10 has *hoti egō eimi* (= that I am [he]), identical to John 13:19.
In both, the phrase comes at the end of its clause, as does the underlying *ani hu* in the Hebrew text.

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[7] The earlier I AM in 8:18 is probably a case of simple self-identification.
[8] Jesus' pre-existence is affirmed in John 1:1-3, 14-15; 3:13, 16-17, 31; 6:38, 61-62; 8:38, 58; 13:1, 3; 16:27-28; 17:5.
His deity is affirmed in John 1:1; 1:18; 12:41; 20:28. In this last verse Thomas confesses Jesus to be his Lord and his God.
Thomas' confession is to be ours as well: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. … these are written that you [the reader] may believe …" (Jn 20:29, 31).
The NET version attempts to capture what John was intending in 1:1 with these words:
*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and <u>the Word was fully God</u>.*
See: https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=jn%201%3A1&version=NET. Note especially footnote c.

Throughout Isaiah 40 – 46 the Lord contrasts himself with idols, showing himself to be Israel's only Savior.
In Isaiah 41 we have the "trial of the false gods", where, as if in a court of law, Yahweh challenges these gods to do or predict something (cf. 41:1, 21-23).
In Isaiah 43:8-13 — the context of the above citation — Yahweh invites Israel and the nations to another trial.
He challenges their gods to match his proven ability to achieve his purposes in history.
Since he foreordains all things he can announce things in advance. But the idols can do no such thing!
This point is made several times: Yahweh alone controls and can announce and predict the future.
See Isaiah 41:22-23, 26; 42:9; 43:9-10; 44:7-8; 45:21; 46:10; 48:3-5.
And that divine prerogative is precisely what Jesus is claiming for himself in John 13:19.
He tells them beforehand about his betrayal, so that when it happens they might believe in him.

Why did Jesus make this claim (to deity) in the context of warning his disciples about his betrayal?
The answer is probably to be found in John 14:1, where Jesus says to them:
"Let not your hearts be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in me."
The disciples had just received disturbing news: Jesus was about to leave them (John 13:33, 36).
Add to that the traumatic events about to transpire — his arrest, trial, crucifixion, and death.
The disciples' faith in their Lord was about to be sorely tested.
Jesus warns them of his imminent betrayal so that when it happens they will recognize that he foreknows and has full control over all that is happening — something that John himself emphasizes (John 13:1, 3, 11; 18:4).
For he is none other than God himself.
They need to believe in him in the same way they already believe in and trust in the Father.
After the resurrection it is this very identification between Jesus and the Father which needs to be reaffirmed (John 20:24-29).

## The I AMs of Revelation

The apostle John was the human author of the book of Revelation, so it is perhaps not surprising that we come across several I AMs in this book too.
*Egō eimi* occurs five times in the book of Revelation: in 1:8, 17; 2:23; 21:6; 22:16.
Here are these verses, all from the Berean Standard Bible (BSB):
Revelation 1:8:

> *"**I am** the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and was and is to come — the Almighty.*

Revelation 1:17:

> *When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. But He placed His right hand on me and said, "Do not be afraid. **I am** the First and the Last."*

Revelation 2:23:

> *"Then I will strike her children dead, and all the churches will know that **I am** the One who searches minds and hearts, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds."*

Revelation 21:6:

> *And He told me, "It is done! **I am** the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. …"*

Revelation 22:16:

> *"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to give you this testimony for the churches.* ***I am*** *the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright Morning Star."*

Additionally, there are a couple of I AMs that use either *egō* or *eimi*, but not both together:
Revelation 1:18 (BSB):

> *"… I was dead, and behold, now* ***I am*** *[eimi] alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of Death and of Hades."*

Revelation 22:13 (BSB):

> *"****I am*** *[Egō] the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."*

God the Father speaks in Revelation 1:8 and 21:6.
Jesus is the One speaking in 1:17-18; 2:23; 22:13 and 22:16.

We can reasonably deduce from Revelation 1:17 that Jesus is none other than God, for two reasons:

1. To be the First and the Last (in 1:17) is the same as being the Alpha and Omega of 1:8.
2. Revelation 1:17 strongly echoes two verses from Isaiah (44:6 and 48:12) where Yahweh himself claims to be the First and the Last.

Then, at the close of Revelation (in 22:13) Jesus himself ties these notions together:
The very titles that God claims in 1:8 and 21:6 — Alpha and Omega; Beginning and End — Jesus appropriates for himself. The titles that belong to God the Father equally belong to God the Son!

**Further Reading:**

1. *Purpose and Meaning of "Ego Eimi" in the Gospel of John*. Author: James R. White.
   Via the Alpha and Omega Ministries website:
   https://www.aomin.org/aoblog/general-apologetics/purpose-and-meaning-of-ego-eimi-in-the-gospel-of-john/.
2. *Does "I Am" always refer to God in the Gospel of John?* Author: Gary Manning.
   Talbot School of Theology Faculty Blog, Biola University.
   https://www.biola.edu/blogs/good-book-blog/2015/does-i-am-always-refer-to-god-in-the-gospel-of-john.
3. *"I AM" Sayings in the Fourth Gospel*. Author: Felix Just.
   Via the Catholic Resources for Bible, Liturgy, Art, and Theology website:
   https://catholic-resources.org/John/Themes-IAM.htm.

## Appendix: The I AMs of Isaiah

What follows below is a listing of the emphatic I am he / I am God / I am the Lord declarations from the latter chapters of Isaiah, listed according to their underlying Hebrew phrases (*Ani hu, Anoki anoki hu,* etc.).
Note the following:

- Verse numbers in **bold** script are rendered as *egō eimi* in the Septuagint; these are listed first under each point.
- The Septuagint rendering is in parentheses:
  *Egō* (capital *E*) begins a new clause.
  *egō* (lower case *e*) occurs in the middle or end of a clause.
- Further verses employing the same Hebrew phrase but not rendered *egō eimi* in the Septuagint are included for comparison; the Septuagint translators were not always consistent.
  In these, the word for "I am" in the Septuagint is in bold: either *egō* or *eimi*.
- The English translations are from the Septuagint — not from the Hebrew text or contemporary English versions.[9] The text in bold reflects the Septuagint text within the parentheses.
- *ANI* = "I". It is a contraction of *ANOKI*, which also means "I". *HU* = "he".

1. *ANI HU* = I [am] he.[10]
   **41:4**: (… *egō eimi.*): "I God, [the] first and into the future, **I AM**."
   **43:10**: (… *hoti egō eimi.*): "… that ye may know, and believe, … **that I am [he]**."
   **46:4**: (… *egō eimi, …*): "[even] to old age **I am [he]**; …" [11]
   **52:6**: (… *egō eimi autos …*): "… that **I am he** that speaks …"
   43:13: (Present in the Hebrew text; missing from the Septuagint.)
   48:12: (Present in the Hebrew text; missing from the Septuagint. See footnote 12.)

2. *ANI ELOHEKA* = I [am] your God.
   **41:10**: (*Mē phobou, meta sou gar eimi: mē planō,* ***egō*** *gar* ***eimi*** *ho Theos sou …*):
   "**Fear not; for I am with thee: wander not; for <u>I am</u> thy God**, …"

3. *ANI* = I [am]. This is a contracted from of *ANOKI*.
   **48:12**: Hebrew text: *ANI HU;* ***ANI*** *rison,* ***ANI*** *ap aharon*. (*ANI HU* is not translated into the Greek.[12])
   (***Egō eimi*** *prōtos, kai* ***egō*** *eis ton aiōna*.): "**<u>I am</u> the first; and <u>I am</u> forever**."
   41:10: (*Mē phobou, meta sou gar* ***eimi****: mē planō, egō gar eimi ho Theos sou …*): "**Fear not; for <u>I am</u> with thee: wander not; for I am thy God**, …"
   43:5: (*Mē phobou, hoti meta sou* ***eimi***.): "**Fear not; for <u>I am</u> with thee**."
   44:6: Hebrew text: ***ANI*** *rison, wa-****ANI*** *aharon*.
   (***Egō*** *prōtos kai* ***egō*** *meta tauta.*): "**<u>I am</u> the first, and <u>I am</u> hereafter**."

4. *ANI EL* = I [am] God.[13]
   **45:22**: (*Egō eimi ho Theos, …*): "**I am God**, and there is none other."
   43:12: (… ***egō*** *Kurios ho Theos*.): "and **I am the Lord God**,"

[9] The English translations of the Septuagint presented here are, for the most part, from the Elpenor website: https://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/default.asp. Exceptions to this: Isaiah 41:4; 48:12.
[10] Full transliteration: *ʾănî hûʾ*.
[11] A second *egō eimi* later in this verse (In the Septuagint) does not seem to accurately reflect the original Hebrew text.
[12] Perhaps the *ANI HU* of Isaiah 48:12 has been included by translating the first *ANI* with the more emphatic *egō eimi*.
[13] Full transliteration: *ʾănî ʾēl.*

5. *ANOKI ANOKI HU* = I, [even] I, [am] he …[14]
   **43:25**: (*Egō eimi, …*): "**I, [even] I, am he** that blots out thy transgressions for mine own sake, …"
   **51:12**: (*Egō eimi, egō eimi …*): "**I, [even] I, am he** that comforts thee: …"

6. *ANOKI EL* = I [am] God.
   **46:9**: (… *hoti egō eimi ho Theos, …*): "… **for I am God**, and there is none other beside me."

7. *ANI YAHWEH* = I [am] the LORD.
   **45:8**: (*Egō eimi Kurios …*): "**I am the Lord** that created thee."
   **45:18**: (*Egō eimi Kurios, …*): "**I am the Lord**, and there is none beside."
   **45:19**: (*Egō eimi egō eimi Kurios …*): "**I, even I, am the Lord**, speaking righteousness, …"
   42:8: (***Egō*** *Kurios ho Theos, …*): "**I am the Lord God**: that is my name."
   43:15: (***Egō*** *Kurios ho Theos …*): "**I am the Lord God**, your Holy One, …"
   45:5: (*Hoti* ***egō*** *Kurios ho Theos, …*): "**For I am the Lord God**, and there is no other God beside me …"
   45:6: (***Egō*** *Kurios ho Theos, …*): "**I am the Lord God**, and there is none beside."
   45:7: (***Egō*** *Kurios ho Theos …*): "**I am the Lord God**, that does all these things."
   49:23: (… *hoti* ***egō*** *Kurios, …*): "and thou shalt know **that I am the Lord**, …"
   49:26: (… *hoti* ***egō*** *Kurios …*): "and all flesh shall perceive **that I am the Lord** that delivers thee, …"
   60:16: (… *hoti* ***egō*** *Kurios …*): "and [thou] shalt know **that I am the Lord** that saves thee and delivers thee, …"

8. *ANI YAHWEH ELOHEKA* = I [am] the LORD your God.
   **48:17**: (*Egō eimi ho Theos sou, …*): "**I am thy God**, I have shewn thee how …"
   41:13: (*Hoti* ***egō*** *ho Theos sou …*): "**For I am thy God**, who holdeth thy right hand, …"
   43:3: (*Hoti* ***egō*** *Kurios ho Theos sou …*): "**For I am the Lord thy God**, the Holy One of Israel, that saves thee."

9. *ANOKI YAHWEH* = I [am] the LORD.
   44:24: (***Egō*** *Kurios ho suntelōn panta, …*): "**I am the Lord that performs all things**: …"

10. *ANOKI YAHWEH ELOHEKA* = I [am] the LORD your God.
    51:15: (*Hoti* ***egō*** *ho Theos sou …*): "**For I am thy God**, …"

11. *ANOKI ANOKI YAHWEH* = I, [even] I, [am] the LORD.
    43:11: (***Egō*** *ho Theos, …* ): "**I am God**; and beside me there is no Savior."

There are, in the Septuagint, 14 verses with emphatic *egō eimi* (I AM) declarations (verse numbers in **bold**) in this section of Isaiah: 41:4, 10; 43:10, 25; 45:8, 18, 19, 22; 46:4, 9; 48:12, 17; 51:12; 52:6.
In each instance, God is emphasizing his sovereignty and the fact that he alone is Israel's Savior.
There are around 17 further verses with I AM declarations which similarly emphasize God's sovereignty.
These are rendered by either *ego* or *eimi* — but not both together.
Two employ *eimi* (41:10 and 43:5), and 15 use *egō*.[15]
A significant example is Isaiah 43:11 (*anoki anoki Yahweh*), which probably ought to have been translated as *egō eimi*.

[14] Full transliteration: *ʾānōḵî ʾānōḵî hû*ʾ.
[15] These are: 41:13; 42:8; 43:3, 11, 12, 15; 44:6, 24; 45:5, 6, 7; 49:23, 26; 51:15; 60:16. (This listing may be incomplete.)

The first three instances of *ani hu* (Isaiah 41:4; 43:10; 46:4) are especially pertinent:
In each verse *ani hu* comes at the end of its clause; so also, in the Septuagint each corresponding *egō eimi* appears at the end of its clause, similar to what we find in John.[16]
These *ani hu* declarations seem to form the backdrop to the I AMs of John's gospel:
Specifically, Jesus' claim in John 8:58 seems to echo Isaiah 41:4, and that in John 13:19 seems to echo Isaiah 43:10. (See the Table on page 6.)
The remaining *ani hu* in Isaiah 52:6 is rendered *egō eimi autos* in the Septuagint — an even more emphatic form of self-identification. But neither phrase comes at the end of its clause. However, as we saw earlier, this verse is likely to be behind Jesus' declaration to the Samaritan woman in John 4:26.[17]

We can summarize in this way:
Jesus' "I AM" claims in John's gospel — those without a stated subject complement — are intended to recall not only the divine name revealed in Exodus 3:14, but also the divine affirmations found in the latter part of Isaiah. Especially do they reflect the four *ani hu* claims found in Isaiah 41:4; 43:10; 46:4; 52:6.

[16] The Hebrew text of Isaiah 43:13 also has *ani hu* at the end of a clause, but this phrase seems to be missing in the Septuagint.
[17] See page 2 for comments on Jesus' use of this phrase *egō eimi autos* in Luke 24:39.