



I Am...

Not so long ago [I wrote](#) about themes that disturb me in “super-hero” movies. One of the things I mentioned was that these movies have a warped theology. Super-heroes aren’t gods yet in some cases they seem to make the claim. One of the less obvious claims made by a “super-hero” was made by the Vision in the movie Avengers: Age Of Ultron.

Vision: I am not Ultron. I am not J.A.R.V.I.S. I am... I am.

By “less obvious”, I mean that many people would simply take this statement as merely saying that the Vision exists. However there’s one who already claims “I am” as his name. And, to borrow a phrase from Steve Rogers, “I’m pretty sure he doesn’t dress like that.”

I noted that by saying “I am... I am.” the Vision saying that he was God, quoting Exodus 3:13-14.

Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I am has sent me to you.’”

There is another that made the claim to be God, and he made it legitimately. In fact, on several occasions he used the words “I am” to make the claim. For those who say that Jesus never made the claim to be God, I’d like to list several times where he *did* make the claim.

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” - John 6:35

That’s the first of several times in the Gospel of John that we hear Jesus claiming to be “I am”. It’s not so obvious from just this one passage what he was saying. Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament says “He desired that people should receive him, not simply for what he might give them, but for what he might be to them.”

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." - John 8:12

This is the second claim of Jesus to be "I am".

Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple. - John 8:58-59

This is the third claim of Jesus to be "I am". This one is noteworthy because of the reaction of the Jews. "[T]hey picked up stones to throw at him" because this was a direct claim to deity. The Jews knew it immediately and reacted.

So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father." - John 10:7-18

"I am the door" and "I am the good shepherd". Two more "I am" statements. At this point (maybe even earlier) you might be thinking it's a bit of a stretch to take a statement like this and equate it with a claim to deity. After all, it's easy enough to use the words "I am" without claiming deity. For example, I am the author of this post. I'm not claiming deity there. But how about moving down a little further?

Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God." Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken— do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. - John 10:25-39

If Jesus wasn't claiming to be God, why were the Jews saying that he was claiming that? Why else try to stone him and arrest him? There are still more claims to examine.

Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world." - John 11:21-27

There it is again... "I am". Martha understood what he was saying. Who else but God could make the claim "I am the resurrection and the life" and then prove it by raising the dead?

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. -

John 14:1-11

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Here again, is another “I am” statement. This time Jesus is claiming he is the *only* way to God.

One more...

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. - John 15:1-11

So, what are we to make of all this? Simply this. Jesus is God. He claimed on multiple occasions to be God. That he was making this claim was attested to even by those who didn’t believe it. He claimed that his authority came from the Father. He claimed that it wasn’t just his words that demonstrated who he was, but also the things that he did.

We can know him through his word and through the things he did. By knowing him, we know the Father. By trusting in him, by abiding in him while he abides in us, we will bear fruit glorifying the Father and proving to be his disciples.

Jesus had a right to say of himself “I am” and to mean it in the eternal sense. No one else can make that claim.