

# The Trinity Delusion

An exposé of the doctrine of the Trinity

## John 18:6

As he said to them, "I am," they drew back and fell down to the ground.

### The Trinitarian Claim

Some Trinitarians claim that the soldiers fell down to the ground because Jesus had identified himself as Yahweh. Beyond this, the Trinitarian claims are rather confused. Some also imagine that the soldiers had been involuntarily driven to the ground.

### The Claim vs. The Facts

The Scriptural facts show us that these soldiers fell to the ground because they had heard claims that Jesus was God's Christ, their King who had been chosen by God.

### The Problems with the Claim

#### 1. Identifying Yourself with the words "Ego Eimi."

This Trinitarian interpretation is the product of their own fanciful musings. These soldiers were looking for a man whose name was Jesus.

Judas then, having received the cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon him, went forth and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" They answered him, "Jesus the Nazarene."

Jesus' words are in response to the soldiers' enquiry. Jesus asked who they were seeking and they responded by saying they were looking for Jesus. In the Koine Greek language, the words *ego eimi* ("I am") are used to identify yourself in the same manner we use the words "It is I" in English. A key example is from the same Gospel where the blind man identifies himself with the words "I am."

Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?" Others were saying, "This is he," still others were saying, "No, but he is like him." He said, "**I am**" (*ego eimi*). John 9:8-9

Jesus identified himself to the disciples in the same manner when they saw him walking on water and were frightened.

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, **I am**, do not be afraid." Matthew 14:27; see Mark 6:50; John 6:20

When Jesus was asked if he was the Christ, he used the same language.

Again the High Priest was questioning him, and saying to him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" And Jesus said, "**I am** and you shall see the son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."  
Mark 14:61-62

Many will come claiming to be the Christ. Note the language used.

And he said, "See to it that you are not misled; for many will come in my name, saying, "**I am**," and, "The time is near." Do not go after them. Luke 21:8 (see Mark 13:6).

The above statement only makes sense if people come in the name of Christ and are saying "I am" to mean, "It is me."

## 2 Samuel 2:20

Then Abner looked behind him and said, "Is that you, Asahel?" And he answered, "*ego eimi*."

Then Abner looked behind him and said, "Is that you, Asahel?" And he answered, "**I am**."

Then Abner looked behind him and said, "Is that you, Asahel?" And he answered, "**It is I**." NASB

And again, when he speaks to the Samaritan women, Jesus uses the same language to identify himself as the Christ.

The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when that one comes, he will declare all things to us." Jesus said to her, "**I am** he who speaks to you."  
John 4:25-26; see Acts 10:21.

There is plenty of evidence from the New Testament to show that *ego eimi* was used by Greek speakers to identify one's self in a similar manner to English speakers who say, "It is I." At John 18:8, Jesus repeats himself by saying, "I told you that I am." The meaning is clear. They were searching for Jesus of Nazareth and Jesus responds by saying, "I am" to identify himself as the person they are seeking. They were seeking Jesus, Jesus asks them who they were seeking and when they said they were looking for him he says, "I am." It was the Greek way of saying, "I am [the one you seek]."

## 2. John 8:58?

Trinitarians also need to ask themselves why the Jews did not fall to the ground at John 8:58. But not only at John 8:58. Why didn't they fall to the ground at John 8:24 and 8:28?

## 3. A Roman Cohort?

The Trinitarian claim is also sometimes based upon the notion that Roman soldiers came to arrest Jesus. Any thinking person will realize this is not going to make any sense. Roman soldiers wouldn't be the least bit concerned with the God of Israel or the

divine name of Israel's God. To suggest Roman soldiers heard God's divine name and then fell backward upon hearing Jesus say God's name is simply ridiculous.

The NASB translation and some commentators have seen fit to identify the detachment of soldiers as Roman soldiers. They attempt to justify this by insisting the Greek word *speira* necessarily refers to a Roman military unit. However, this claim is simply false as the following evidence shows:

And joined with himself his own brethren, leaders of each detachment, Simon, and Joseph, and Jonathan, giving each one fifteen hundred men. Also he appointed Eleazar to read the holy book and when he had given them this watchword, The help of God; himself leading the first **band**  
2 Maccabees 8:22-23

And as soon as the morning arose, they hanged the head of Holofernes upon the wall, and every man took his weapons, and they went forth by **bands** unto the straits of the mountain.  
Judith 14:11

The above examples of *speira* do not refer to Roman soldiers but to Jews.

Roman soldiers would not fall down to the ground before a Jewish man. The language of falling down to the ground is also common language in the Bible and does not indicate someone has involuntarily fallen down. It refers to those who prostrate themselves in subjection to a higher authority. Roman soldiers would not be the least bit concerned about arresting a Jewish man much less suppose he was claiming to be the God of Israel by using God's divine name. Not only so, these soldiers delivered Jesus to the High Priest indicating they were the Jewish temple soldiers. Additionally, we also read that Pilate needed to be informed of Jesus. He knew nothing about this arrest.

The Jewish Encyclopedia indicates that there were 15 officers appointed to manage the affairs of the Temple. The Temple guard consisted of 3 priests and 21 Levite guardsman. It was also the Feast of the Passover. During the feasts, numerous extra men would be required to keep order. An examination of the Scriptural facts shows us that the soldiers were Jewish.

Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve; he went away and conferred with **the chief priests and officers** how he might betray him to them.  
Luke 22:3-4

Then Jesus said to **the chief priests and officers of the temple** and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."  
Luke 24:52-53.

John 18:3 also explicitly says they came from the chief priests and Pharisees, "So Judas, procuring a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees." The Synoptic Gospel accounts also confirm this fact.

While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

Matthew 26:47; see Mark 14:43; Luke 22:47

Luke indicates the chief priests and Pharisees were with them (Luke 22:52-53) and all four Gospels tell us that Peter had sliced off the ear of the High Priest's servant (Matthew 26:51; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:50; John 18:10). These were certainly not Roman soldiers. Romans soldiers were not at the disposal of the temple priests and the Romans were not yet involved with this affair. This was a Jewish conspiracy not a Jewish-Roman conspiracy. These were Jewish soldiers sent by the Jewish religious rulers with Judas who had made an agreement with them to betray Jesus. The chief priests handed Jesus over to the Roman authorities after they arrested him and interrogated him. Since Pilate knew nothing about the arrest of Jesus, the Jews had to inform Pilate of their charges against him when they handed him over to Roman authority (Luke 23:1-5).

## Analysis of the Facts

### 1. The Reluctance of the Jewish Soldiers to Arrest Jesus

The chief priests and Pharisees had previously sent officers to arrest Jesus (7:32). However, they returned without Jesus and when they were questioned as to why they did not bring him, they responded, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks" (7:45). Here it is very clear that these men were reluctant to arrest Jesus because they perceived he just might be God's Christ, His Anointed One, and as such, their King, the King of Israel. What Jewish soldier wants to arrest his own King? Notice the context of John 7:32-46.

So some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill? Look, he is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to him. **Do the rulers really know that this is truly the Christ?** However, we know where this man is from; but whenever **the Christ** may come, no one knows where he is from.... When **the Christ** comes, will he do more signs than this man has done?" The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize him... Some of the people therefore, when they heard [his] words, were saying, "**This certainly is the Prophet.**" Others were saying, "**This is the Christ.**" Still others were saying, "Surely **the Christ** is not going to come from Galilee, is He? Has not the Scripture said that **the Christ** comes from the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" So a division occurred in the crowd because of him. **Some of them wanted to seize him, but no one laid hands on him.** The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "**Why did you not bring him?**" The officers answered, "**Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.**" The Pharisees then answered them, "You have not also been led astray, have you?" John 7.

There was indecision among the people. Some thought Jesus was the Christ, God's Anointed One, the King of the Jews. It is within this context that the Temple officers chose not to arrest Jesus. They clearly have reservations about arresting him because they think he just might be God's Christ and their King.

Because of the promise God had made to David (2 Samuel 7:11-14), every Jew understood that the coming Messiah would be like David (as the context of John 7 also mentions). David was God's Anointed, God's Messiah, God's Christ. He was God's

chosen King for the people of Israel. The expected Messiah would be the King of Israel like David had been and would sit on the throne of his father David (Luke 1:32). Every Jew knew that the Messiah was the King chosen by God to be their King. If indeed, Jesus was the expected Messiah, these Jewish officers knew very well it would mean they would be arresting their own King and ever worse, they would be arresting God's Anointed, His Chosen King, which meant they were ultimately defying God Himself. They knew that one simply does not do such things to God's Anointed King. The fact that they also go on to arrest him also shows this was an act to their own doubts. Jesus' bold response unnerves them and they fall to the ground because they are not yet sure whether he is the Christ their King or not.

## 2. The Davidic King: God's Christ/Anointed

God ruled over ancient Israel by means of His Anointed, lit. His "Christ." The Bible tells us explicitly that Saul, David, and Solomon, were God's Anointed One, His Christ. Jesus was rumored to be God's Anointed, His Christ. Honestly regard the following:

So he said to his men, "Far be it from me because of the LORD that I should do this thing to my Lord, the LORD's Anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the LORD's Anointed....I will not stretch out my hand against my Lord, for he is the LORD's Anointed. 2 Samuel 24:6,10.

Do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD's Anointed and be without guilt?.... The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD's Anointed.... As the LORD lives, all of you must surely die, because you did not guard your Lord, the LORD's anointed.... refused to stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. 1 Samuel 26:9,11,16,23.

How is it you were not afraid to stretch out your hand to destroy the LORD's Anointed?.... Your blood is on your head, for your mouth has testified against you, saying, "I have killed the LORD's Anointed." 2 Samuel 1:14,16.

You just don't mess with God's Christ, His Anointed One. Every Jew, including these soldiers who came to arrest Jesus, would have known about these accounts from their sacred writings and the severity of coming against God's Christ, His Anointed One.

The Jews expected their coming Messiah to be like King David in this manner. God chose the King for Israel and anointed him with His Spirit to rule over the Kingdom of God (1 Chronicles 28:5). Indeed, David sat on the throne of God (1 Chronicles 29:23). Because of this all the people of Israel bowed down to David as if to God because David executed God's authority having been seated on God's throne by God himself (1 Chronicles 29:20).

David said to all the assembly, "Now bless Yahweh your God." And all the assembly blessed Yahweh, the God of their fathers, and fell down low and **bowed down to Yahweh and the King...** Then Solomon sat on **the throne of Yahweh as King** instead of David his father; and he prospered, and all Israel obeyed him. 1 Chronicles 29:20,23.

The word translated as "bowed down" in the above passage is the same word in both Hebrew and Greek to refer to **worship** of God (Hebrew: *shachah*; Greek: *proskyneo*). Notice how Israel bows down before God and King David in response to David's command to bless Yahweh their God. David was God's representative to the people of Israel because he was God's anointed King, God's Christ. He executed God's authority over Israel; David was the means by which God Himself ruled and judge Israel (see Acts 17:30-31). Because of this, bowing down to David meant bowing down to Israel's God Yahweh since David sat on God's throne and executed God's authority.

The language of falling down to the ground in John 18 is not therefore unusual. First, it does not mean that the falling was involuntary. Joseph's brothers fell to the ground before him (Genesis 44:14). A man falls to the ground prostrating himself before David (2 Samuel 1:2). No soldier would attempt to arrest King David, God's chosen King much less the promised son of David, the expected Messiah and King of Israel. Also note how Jesus did not attempt to hide from them but boldly identified himself.

## Conclusion

Jesus was asked to identify himself. Greek speakers, like the blind man at John 9:9, identified themselves with the words "I am" just English speakers say, "It's me." When he identified himself, the soldiers fell down to the ground. The facts in John's Gospel show us these soldiers had reservations about arresting Jesus because they thought he just might be the expected Messiah, God's Christ and their King. If he was indeed the Christ, that would mean they were arresting God's Chosen King, God's Anointed/Christ. And that meant they would not only be arresting their own King but blaspheming God who had chosen this King. When asked to identify himself, Jesus boldly stepped forward, just as an Anointed King of Israel might do. All Israel fell down low and bowed down to David just as they were bowing down to God because David was God's representative. How much more then would these soldiers, who thought he just might be he Christ, fall to the ground before their King who had been chosen by God.

**Created:** March 12, 2016

**Last Update:** March 12, 2016

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