

**1** Christ's charity—evident in complete loyalty to divine will—persisted and continues to persist.

**2** Consider this scene from the last week of Jesus's mortal life. A multitude had gathered, including Roman soldiers armed with staves and strapped with swords. Led by officers from the chief priests who had torches in hand, this earnest company was *not* off to conquer a city. Tonight they were looking for only one man, a man not known to carry a weapon, receive military training, or engage in physical combat at any time in His entire life.

**3** As the soldiers approached, Jesus, in an effort to protect His disciples, stepped forth and said, "Whom seek ye?" They replied, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said, "I am he. ... As soon ... as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground."

**4** To me, that is one of the most stirring lines in all of scripture. Among other things, it tells me straightforwardly that *just being in the presence* of the Son of God—the great Jehovah of the Old Testament and Good Shepherd of the New, who bears no weapons of any kind—that *just hearing the voice* of this Refuge from the Storm, this Prince of Peace, is enough to send antagonists stumbling into retreat, piling them in a jumble, making the whole group wish they had been assigned kitchen duty that night.

**5** Just a few days earlier, when He had entered the city triumphantly, "all the city was moved," the scripture says, asking, "Who is this?" I can only imagine that "Who is this?" is the question those muddled soldiers were now asking!

The *answer* to that question could not have been in His looks, for Isaiah had prophesied some seven centuries earlier that "he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." It certainly wasn't in His polished wardrobe or His great personal wealth, of which He had neither. It could not be from any professional training in the local synagogues because we have no evidence that He ever studied at any of them, though even in His youth He could confound superbly prepared scribes and lawyers, astonishing them with His doctrine "as one having authority."

From that teaching in the temple to His triumphant entry into Jerusalem and this final, unjustifiable arrest, Jesus was routinely placed in difficult, often devious situations in which He was always triumphant—victories for which we have no explanation except divine DNA.

**6** Yet down through history many have simplified, even trivialized our image of Him and His witness of who He was. They have reduced His righteousness to mere prudishness, His justice to mere anger, His mercy to mere permissiveness. We must not be guilty of such simplistic versions of Him that conveniently ignore teachings we find uncomfortable. This "dumbing down" has been true even regarding His ultimate defining virtue, His love.

## **A Roman Soldiers Knocked Flat by the Power of God!**

**[A1]** After Jesus received Judas' kiss of betrayal, He stepped forward and asked the crowd of militia, "...Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he.... As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, *they went backward, and fell to the ground*" (John 18:4-6). Notice how Jesus identified himself. He told them, "...I am he...." These mighty words come from the Greek words *ego eimi*, which is more accurately translated, "I AM!" It was not the first time Jesus used this phrase to identify Himself; He also used it in John 8:58 and John 13:19. When the hearers of that day heard those words *ego eimi*, they immediately recognized them as the very words God used to identify Himself when He spoke to Moses on Mount Horeb in Exodus 3:14.

**[A2]** But let's look at the two additional examples of the word *ego eimi* in the Gospel of John. In John 8:58, Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." Those final words in the verse, "I am," are the Greek words *ego eimi* and should be translated, "I AM!"

In John 13:19, Jesus said, "Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he." If you read the *King James Version*, you will notice the word "he" is italicized, meaning it was supplied by the *King James* translators and is not in the original. The Greek simply says, "...Ye may believe that I AM!" In both of these cited texts, Jesus strongly and boldly affirmed that He was the Great "I AM" of the Old Testament.

**[A3]** In John 18:5 and 6, Jesus uses the words *ego eimi* again. The soldiers wanted to know, "*Who are you?*" They probably expected him to answer, "Jesus of Nazareth" — but instead, He answered, "I AM!" John 18:6 tells us, "*As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.*" A more accurate rendering would be "*As soon then as he said unto them, I AM, they went backward and fell to the ground.*"

**[A4]** The words "went backward" come from the Greek word *aperchomai*. In this case, the words depict the soldiers and temple police *staggering and stumbling backward*, as if some force has hit them and is pushing them backward. The word "fell" is the Greek word *pipto*, which means *to fall*. It was used often to depict a *person who fell so hard, it appeared that he fell dead or fell like a corpse*.

The members of this militia that came to arrest Jesus were knocked flat by some kind of force! In fact, the verse says they went backward and fell "to the ground." The words "to the ground" are taken from the Greek word *chamai*, which depicts these soldiers falling abruptly and hitting the ground *hard*. Some force unexpectedly, suddenly, and forcefully knocked these troops and temple police flat!

**[A5]** Think of it — 300 to 600 Roman soldiers and a large number of trained temple police had all come laden with weapons, swords, and clubs to help them capture Jesus.

After they announced that they were searching for Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus answered them with the words, "I AM" — thus identifying Himself as the "I AM" of the Old Testament. And when Jesus spoke those words, a great blast of God's power was unleashed — so strong that it literally thrust the troops and police backward, causing them to stagger, wobble, and stumble as they hit the ground hard.

## 7 How did Jesus love?

First, He loved with “all [of His] heart, might, mind and strength,” giving Him the ability to heal the deepest pain and declare the hardest reality. In short, He is one who could administer grace and insist on truth at the same time.

**8** The second characteristic of Jesus’s divine charity was His obedience to every word that proceeded from God’s mouth, always aligning His will and behavior with that of His Heavenly Father.

When He arrived on the Western Hemisphere following His Resurrection, Christ said to the Nephites: “Behold, I am Jesus Christ. ... I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, ... in the which I have suffered the will of the Father ... from the beginning.”

Of the myriad ways He could have introduced Himself, Jesus did so *by declaring His obedience to the will of the Father*—never mind that not long before in His hour of greatest need, this Only Begotten Son of God had felt totally abandoned by His Father. Christ’s charity—*evident in complete loyalty to divine will*—persisted and continues to persist, not just through the easy and comfortable days but especially through the darkest and most difficult ones.

**9** Jesus was “a man of sorrows,” the scriptures say. He experienced sadness, fatigue, disappointment, and excruciating loneliness.

**10** So, if sometimes the harder you try, the more difficult it seems to get; if, just as you try to work on your limitations and your shortcomings, you find someone or something determined to challenge your faith; if, as you labor devotedly, you still feel moments of fear wash over you, remember that it has been so for some of the most faithful and marvelous people in every era of time. Also remember that there is a force in the universe determined to oppose every good thing you try to do.

**11** So, through abundance as well as poverty, through private acclaim as well as public criticism, through the divine elements of the Restoration as well as the human foibles that will inevitably be part of it, we stay the course with the true Church of Christ. Why? Because as with our Redeemer, we signed on for the whole term—not ending with the first short introductory quiz but through to the final exam. The joy in this is that the Headmaster gave us all open-book answers *before the course began*. Furthermore, we have a host of tutors who remind us of these answers at regular stops along the way. But of course, none of this works if we keep cutting class.

**E The Meaning of Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh** אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה (‘ehye ‘ăšer ‘ehye) is the first of three responses given to Moses when he asks for God’s name in the Book of Exodus. The word אֶהְיֶה (‘Ehyeh) is the first person singular imperfective form of הָיָה (hayah), ‘to be’, and owing to the peculiarities of Hebrew grammar means ‘I am’ and ‘I will be’. The meaning of the longer phrase ‘ehyeh ‘ăšer ‘ehyeh is debated, and might be seen as a promise (‘I will be with you’) or as statement of incomparability (‘I am without equal’).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I\\_Am\\_that\\_I\\_Am](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Am_that_I_Am)

<https://8ward.eu>

**[A6]** What a shock it must have been for those military men! They discovered that the mere words of Jesus were enough to overwhelm and overpower them! The tales they had heard about Jesus’ power were correct! Of course He really was strong enough to overcome an army. After all, He was the Great “I AM!” After Jesus proved He couldn’t be taken by force, He willfully surrendered to them, knowing that it was all a part of the Father’s plan for the redemption of mankind. But it’s important to understand that *no one took Him*. It was Jesus’ *voluntary choice* to go with the troops. **Rick Renner**

<https://renner.org/article/roman-soldiers-knocked-flat-by-the-power-of-god>

## B I AM ἐγώ εἰμι (ego eimi) – John 18.5

**[B1]** When the hearers of that day who knew their scripture heard the words ego eimi, they immediately recognized them as the very words God used to identify Himself when He spoke to Moses on Mount Horeb in Exodus 3:14: “And God said unto Moses, *I Am That I Am*: and he said, *Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you*.” **[B2]** These were words of awesome authority to the person writing this account of the Savior’s arrest in Gethsemane. Jesus was identifying himself as Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament, the God who liberated Israel from Egyptian slavery, the God who has the power to release us from the powers of darkness.

<https://www.ldsscriptureteachings.org/2019/10/i-am-ἐγώ-εἰμι-john-18-5/>

## C The Context and Significance of the Name I AM

**[C1]** Prior to this moment with Moses, the Israelites called their god Elohim or El – is a title, not a personal name – or “El Shaddai”, often translated as God Almighty. When God gives a name for His people to call Him it conveys His dominion over all things, the source of His power, and His eternal nature: I AM. He is the self-sufficient, self-sustaining God who was, who is, and who will be. This eternal nature is conveyed better in the Hebrew than in the English. **[C2]** The first time God says I AM (“I AM WHO I AM”), the Hebrew says, “Ehyeh asher Ehyeh”, which translates as “I will be what I will be.” When God then tells Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent you”, it is “Yahweh.” Yahweh is the third person version of Ehyeh, which is first person. Yahweh could also be translated as He will be.

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/why-does-god-call-himself-i-am-that-i-am.html>

**D Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh** No humans know the exact meaning of this name -- much less how to translate it into English or Japanese or any other language. We do know that the Hebrew word “Ehyeh” has an imperfective aspect meaning it has not yet been completed, it might already be completed, or might be completed in the future. Thus, even when frequently translated as “I am who I am,” there is a sense that God acts, not just that God is. It can also be translated as “I was who I was” and “I will be who I will be”, emphasizing the past or the future.

<https://theory.stanford.edu/~oldham/church/ehyeh-asher-ehyeh/index.html>

## F Heart, Might, Mind and Strength

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve him” (D&C 59:5). “Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your **heart, might, mind and strength**, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day.” (D&C 4:2)

They seem to relate to the following:

- Heart – our spiritual feelings and efforts
- Might – our social and emotional feelings and efforts
- Mind – our mental or intellectual thoughts and efforts
- Strength – our physical powers and efforts

When we serve or worship we are thus taught that we should do so with all of these faculties – with our entire being **Jeff Collyer Heart, Might, Mind and Strength**

<https://allthingswitness.com/2013/11/06/heart-might-mind-and-strength-1-of-5/>

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