



International Bible Lesson
International Bible Study Commentary
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The Night They Arrested God
John 18:1-11

As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground (John 18:6—KJV).

So when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground (John 18:6—NASB).

When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground (John 18:6—NRSV).

The religious authorities tried to arrest Jesus at various times during His ministry. In John 5:18, we learn they wanted to kill Jesus because "he was calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God." Using the divine name "I Am" to refer to himself, in John 8:58, Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am." In John 7:30, we learn they failed to arrest Jesus because His hour (or time) had not yet come. In John 7:45-46, when the chief priests and Pharisees asked the temple police why they had not arrested Jesus, they replied, "Never has anyone spoken like this!" In John 10:38-39, after Jesus said, "the Father is in me and I am in the Father," they tried to arrest Him again, but they failed. In John 11:27, the religious authorities ordered that anyone knowing where Jesus was should tell them so they could arrest Jesus. Because His time had finally come, Judas betrayed Jesus and led Roman soldiers and temple police to the garden where Jesus could be found. On the one hand it was easy to arrest Jesus, for Jesus stepped forward to tell them who He was. On the other hand it was difficult, for when they asked for Jesus of Nazareth Jesus told them that He was Jesus of Nazareth, but He again referred to himself using the divine name "I Am." Then, they experienced so much of His glory they stepped back and fell to the ground.

[Note: some translations of John 18:6, add "he" in italics or in a footnote indicating "he" was added to the verse.

]Thinking Further

1. Who came to arrest Jesus? Why do you think so many came?
2. Why do you think they asked to see "Jesus of Nazareth"?
3. In John 17, what prayer or words of Jesus did the Father and He fulfill when He was arrested?
4. What are some character traits that we learn from Simon Peter's actions?
5. What did Jesus say to Simon Peter about His actions? What do Jesus' statements mean to you?