

Jesus is Betrayed and Arrested

John Chapter 18

Read John 18:1-11

v.1 - The Kidron Valley was also the setting of David's flight from Absalom (2 Sam 15:23). David was betrayed by his counselor Ahithophel, who later hangs himself (2 Sam 17:23), the only person in Scripture apart from Judas who does so.

v. 3- The group that came to arrest Jesus was made up of Jewish temple guards (who were given authority by the Pharisees/Sanhedrin to make arrests for minor infractions) and Roman soldiers. Both Jew and Gentile are present. They brought torches and lanterns to search for the Light of the World; and weapons against the Prince of Peace.

v.4 - This is not a question out of ignorance. It is like other questions asked by God that are intended to reveal a situation, the heart of man, and to bring people to action and accountability. Look up: Genesis 3:9

John does not mention Judas's kiss (Luke 22:47), which would have taken place just before or after Jesus' question. Judas here takes his place with those who have come out against Jesus.

v. 6-7- The ones falling are not his worshipers but opponents. This reaction is a reflection not of their hearts, but of Jesus' majesty. Here is a little preview of the moment in the future when every knee will bow to Jesus (Philippians 2:10) and all things be brought into submission to him. Look up: 1 Corinthians 15:27

The impression given by this passage is that Jesus must allow the events to proceed and he grants them permission to arrest him. "Whom do you seek?" (ESV) is also a question that searches the soul. The very first thing Jesus said in this Gospel was, literally, "What are you seeking?" (1:38). Here we see people seeking Jesus, but they do so not for their soul's sake. There are ways of seeking Jesus that do not bring life.

v.10-11- Jesus had demonstrated that he had complete power over the situation, but Peter still thinks he has to resist with force. Peter is not at all in sync with God's will, and this isn't the first time. Look up: Matthew 16:22-23

The image of the cup is used in the Old Testament to indicate the wrath of God (Psalm 75:8, Jeremiah 25:15-29). The Gospel of John does not include the prayer of agony in the garden where Jesus asked that, if possible, the cup be removed from him (Mt 26:39; Lk 22:42). But John includes this reference to the cup, which reveals the conclusion of the earlier agony. The struggle in Gethsemane is over. Jesus no longer prays that the cup may pass from him. The Son is full of humility and obedience to his Father's will.

Read John 18:12-14

v.12-14 - They took Jesus first to Annas, he was the most respected of the Jewish authorities at that time. He had held the office of high priest earlier (A.D. 6-15), and his influence continued through his son-in-law Caiaphas, who was the current high priest. Earlier Caiaphas instructed that it would be better if Jesus died rather than the whole Jewish nation be disciplined by the Romans because of Jesus' dividing-disturbances (John 11:48-50).

Read John 18:15-24

v.15-16 – The *other disciple* is most likely and commonly agreed to be John (the author of this Gospel). He knew the high priest and because of his connections got himself and Peter into the courtyard.

v.17 - John was known by the girl (and high priest) as a follower of Christ, and he came back to get Peter in. While Peter's attack with the sword (18:10) may have made him fearful of being recognized, he is not in a position of legal vulnerability, since there was no attempt to arrest him in the garden, and Jesus healed the ear (Lk 22:51). He has no excuse for his denial. A few hours earlier Peter had said he would die for Jesus (13:37); now he denies any association with him purely out of fear of what people would think.

v.21 – This is basically a request for a fair trial (revealing the Pharisee's corruption), since in Jewish law two witnesses are required (Deuteronomy 17:6, Matthew 18:16). It is now up to those who have heard Jesus to bear witness to him. This remains the case today. Those who claim Christ are to bear witness to him before the world.

v.22 – John does not describe the more severe abuse that Jesus suffers later before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin (Mt 26:67-68).

v.24 - Annas does not accept the truth of Jesus. Instead he sends Jesus, still bound, to Caiaphas. Jesus was taken before Caiaphas and a quorum of the Sanhedrin at night (Mt 26:57-75), then to a more formal trial at dawn before the full Sanhedrin (Mt 27:1), and then He was taken to Pilate (the Roman Governor). In John's Gospel however, this scene before Annas is the final encounter between Jesus and his Jewish opponents. From this point on in John's Gospel, all contact between Jesus and his opponents is conducted through the authority of Pilate.