

JOHN

Lesson 17

John 18:1-40

We continue our examination of the last hours of Jesus' life, as we move inexorably towards the crucifixion. Having completed a long period of teaching in the Upper Room, Jesus closes with a prayer, and then leads the disciples across the Kidron valley to the Garden of Gethsemane. There, he will be arrested and eventually turned over to Pilate—who will find no fault with Jesus—and yet, later that day, Jesus will be crucified.

As we have noted previously, John only spends one chapter each on the trial and crucifixion of Jesus, after having spent five chapters on the evening in the Upper Room. Clearly, John is focusing on providing enough information to show that Jesus was, and is, the Messiah. He accomplishes this by depicting all of the prophecy being fulfilled in these culminating events, while leaving it to the reader to examine the other gospel accounts for further details.

Let's read through John Chapter 18 and consider the following:

1. After reading Chapter 18, consider for a moment the crowd that came to arrest Jesus; there are several pieces of this event that you may not have noticed or thought about before. First, was Saul, the man who would become the Apostle Paul, present? Was he a part of the crowd that arrested Jesus, and was he a part of the courts that Annas and Caiaphas would use to convict Jesus? (John 18:1-3, Mark 14:55-64)
2. In addition to the Pharisees, who else came to arrest Jesus? (John 18:2-3)
3. Did you catch the fact that the officials were from the Chief Priests—plural—rather than officials from only the Chief Priest? Do have any idea why there was more than one Chief Priest?
4. Now read Matthew 26:14-15, and note what Judas asked for in exchange for betraying Jesus. Also note with whom he is bargaining with.
5. How many soldiers were in a "detachment?" Knowing this will help us understand the drama unfolding that evening.
6. What were the members of this large force coming to arrest Jesus carrying with them?

7. We now come to the trials of Jesus, as he would have a total of six trials altogether, if we consider all of the gospel accounts. However, for this study, we will only focus on the ones that John mentions. Jesus' arrest is described in John 18:4-9, and his first thought is the protection of his followers. What does he tell the large crowd that has come to arrest him? Why is this important? (See also John 6:39)

8. Following Jesus' arrest, Peter cuts off the ear of Malchus, a servant of the High Priests. Jesus immediately reprimands Peter, and again tells Peter that he, Jesus, is on a path that is in accordance with God's will, and not man's. (Read Romans 10:2-3) What is Peter guilty of? Do we still see (or do) this in the Christian world today?

9. In John 18:12-16, we observe Jesus being bound and taken back to Jerusalem to the house of Annas the High Priest. During this time, Peter is invited into the courtyard area because another disciple (probably John himself, who was allowed in) arranged for Peter to join him in the courtyard where the questioning of Jesus was happening. From there, Jesus will be sent to Caiaphas the High Priest. See if you can answer the following questions.
 - a. For what time frame does it say that Caiaphas was the High Priest, and what is his relationship to Annas? (See also Question 3 above.)

 - b. What political bias did Caiaphas bring to Jesus' trial? (See John 11:49-52.)

10. Review John 18:19-20. Based on these verses, what do you suppose that Annas was asking Jesus?

11. In John 18:17-27, John chronicles the three denials by Peter. Why would John be certain to include these in his Gospel? (John 13:38, John 20:31)

12. Now review John 18:28-32. What is the irony that we see depicted in this text?

13. Approaching mid-morning in the events timeline, Pilate is now wrestling with the case and the prisoner that the Jews have brought to him. He can actually find no fault with Jesus; and, as time goes on, he actually becomes fearful. (We see this in more detail in the next lesson.) He offers to spare one of the two prisoners that are being held, Barabbas or Jesus. The crowd of course shouts, "Give us Barabbas." What is the additional irony in this answer by the Jews?

14. Pilate has already asked Jesus if he is a king, but when will Jesus actually use that title (i.e., King)? (Revelation 17:14 and 19:16, Philippians 2:10-11)

In the next lesson, we will examine the crucifixion, and see what new insights that God will grant us. Given that we know regarding how all of this will turn out, let's rejoice in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and share his Good News whenever opportunities to do so present themselves.

In Christ,

Wes