

JOHN

Lesson 17 w/Answers

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)
 - a. ANSWER 1: Note that Pharisees were present in the crowd. Since Paul referred to himself as the "Pharisee of Pharisees," it is highly likely that he was a part of the crowd arresting Jesus.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Additionally, when Caiaphas convened his court, the Pharisees were all present as an integral part of the Sanhedrin. As such, Saul—eventually Paul—would have been there at the conviction of Jesus by that court. He likely would have been at Annas' house as well. (Mark 14:55-64)
2. In addition to the Pharisees, who else came to arrest Jesus? (John 18:2-3)
 - a. ANSWER 1: Judas, who had sold out Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Officials from the Chief Priests.
 - c. ANSWER 3: A detachment of soldiers
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?
 - a. ANSWER: The Chief Priest was elected to that office for life, and the current Chief Priest was officially Annas (as noted in John 18:12). However, the Romans did not like this level of power remaining in one person, so they forced Annas to have other chief priests who would rotate each year. Caiaphas, his son-in-law, was one of those appointed priests; and this was his year, so officials came from both Annas and Caiaphas to witness the arrest and to make sure Jesus was taken back to them for trials.
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.
 - a. ANSWER: Consistent with John's account of Jesus' arrest, we also see in Matthew that Judas betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver. Further, we see that he made that deal with the Chief Priests, plural. This also explains why officials from the Chief Priests, also plural, would have been present at Jesus' arrest.
5. How many soldiers were in a "detachment?" Knowing this will help us understand the drama unfolding that evening.
 - a. ANSWER: A detachment of soldiers amounted to six hundred men. This was no small force coming for Jesus. Besides all of the officials from the two chief priests, the Pharisees who were present, and Judas; there was an armed force of six hundred trained soldiers.
6. What were the members of this large force coming to arrest Jesus carrying with them?
 - a. ANSWER: They were carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons. It is amazing that the Jewish leadership felt that it needed a six-hundred-man detachment and the accompanying weapons to arrest the Lamb of God—a rabbi and teacher, who came in peace to save the world. Absolutely incredible.

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)
 - a. ANSWER 1: First, he has to convince them he is Jesus. Once they understand that he is who he says he is, he then asks that they let his followers go. He tells them that he is the person that they have come for, so there is no need to arrest anyone else. He wants to ensure that they let his followers go free.
 - b. ANSWER 2: In doing so Jesus fulfills the prophecy from 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?
 - a. ANSWER 1: Peter has zeal without knowledge. Believing he knows better than God, he tries to inflict his will.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Today, we definitely still observe this behavior among the followers of Christ. So, before we try to take matters into our own hands, we need to understand what God's will is for a particular situation; and we need put on His righteousness before making any decisions. Peter thought that he knew better than Jesus, and today we need to remain watchful for this pitfall, lest it happen to us as well.
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.)
 - i. ANSWER 1: He was the High Priest for "that year," meaning that it was his turn in the rotation while Annas remained the permanent High Priest.
 - ii. ANSWER 2: Caiaphas was the son-in-law of Annas.
 - b. What political bias did Caiaphas bring to Jesus' trial? (See John 11:49-52.)
 - i. ANSWER: Caiaphas believed that it was better that one man die, i.e., Jesus, than that the nation of Israel perish. How ironic this is, considering the fact that, through Jesus' death and resurrection, the nation of Israel will one day be restored to the glory that God intended.
10. Review John 18:19-20. Based on these verses, what do you suppose that Annas was asking Jesus?
 - a. ANSWER: Based on Jesus' response, it is apparent Annas suspected that Jesus was teaching in secret and plotting the overthrow of the Sanhedrin. He also asked what Jesus was teaching, in spite of the fact that the Pharisees had heard Jesus speak on many occasions. Finally, he also wanted to know to whom he was teaching, again trying to catch Jesus doing something against the law and trying to foment a rebellious uprising in order to make himself king.
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)
 - a. ANSWER: This is another prophecy by Jesus which is now being fulfilled exactly as he foretold. It is yet another example, i.e., fulfilled prophecy, that Jesus is indeed the Messiah; thus making it a natural fit for John to include in his Gospel that written to us so that "you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God."
12. Now review John 18:28-32. What is the irony that we see depicted in this text?
 - a. ANSWER: It is tragically ironic that the Chief Priests and all of the Sanhedrin were concerned about being ceremonially clean for the Passover—while plotting the murder of an innocent man.
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?
 - a. ANSWER: Barabbas is a terrorist who would like to see the overthrow of the Romans, and is thus preferred over Jesus who came in peace to save the world. The Jews would rather have a zealot terrorizing the city than Jesus teaching in it. Absolutely amazing.

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)
- a. ANSWER: Jesus will not use the title King until he comes again to defeat Satan, sin and death itself, the final enemy. When he does come as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, all the world will recognize him. There will be no doubt, for "every knee will bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
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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,

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