

John 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

Matthew 26, Mark 14, and Luke 22 give us the account of Jesus' time of sorrow and prayer in the garden. As they entered the garden, Jesus expressed His intent to go and pray and encouraged the disciples to pray themselves that they not yield to temptation. He evidently took Peter, James and John a bit further apart from the others for support as He prepared to face His destiny.

Three different times Jesus prayed for the cup to be taken from Him. Each time He expressed His desire that the Father's will be done over and above all. After each period of prayer, He found His three "supporters" fast asleep. I think the Lord was identifying with His disciples when He stated that the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak (Matthew 26:41). Luke tells us that the Father sent an angel to strengthen Him (22:43). I believe He will do the same for us as we face our own times of trial and testing since that is one of the purposes of the angels according to the Hebrews.

Hebrews 1:13-14 "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

John 18:2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.

John 18:3 Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

John takes us immediately to the encounter with Judas and the arresting officers. Notice that these officers were from the Jewish religious leaders—not the Romans. Although we have just been given the account of a beautiful prayer, it does not seem to fit into the other garden accounts where Jesus asked the disciples to watch with Him for a while. The prayer in chapter 17 happened before He had entered the garden.

The indication is that Judas knew right where to look for Jesus, because it was a favorite "hang out" for Him and His disciples. After being dismissed by Jesus, Judas had gone to the chief priests and Pharisees to connect with those that would take custody of Jesus. They came with Judas to the garden carrying lanterns and torches and weapons.

John 18:4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

John 18:5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

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

Jesus was ready to do the Father's will. He knew all that was going to happen to Him. He boldly stepped forth and asked the mob whom they were seeking. When they said, "Jesus of Nazareth," Jesus immediately identified Himself as the man they sought. In this account there is no record of Judas's betrayal with a kiss; we are just told that Judas was with the mob. As soon as Jesus identified Himself, the mob fell back and fell to the ground. Commentators seem to agree that this was a result of a force that Jesus used to show that He was not at their mercy though He would choose to allow them to arrest Him. It was probably this display of power that resulted in the disciples being allowed to escape.

John 18:7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

John 18:8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

John 18:9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

Again, Jesus asked them who they were seeking and identified Himself as the person being sought. Then He asks that they let the disciples go on their way since they were only looking for Him. Jesus was again conscious of the Father's promise that none of those that He had given Him would be lost. (Judas didn't fall into that category. He never truly put his faith in Jesus.) I believe this was a reference to what Jesus spoke in His prayer from the previous chapter.

John 18:10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

John 18:11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

Simon Peter had a sword and decided to use it. He was willing to fight to protect the Savior. He cut off the right ear of the high priest's servant, Malchus. Surprisingly to Peter I'm sure (but it shouldn't have been a surprise if he had been paying attention to all that Jesus had been telling them), Jesus told him to put his sword up. This time of testing was the "cup" that the Father had given Him. It was what He had been sent to earth as a human being to endure. He was so close to completing His mission obediently; "shall I not drink it?" He wasn't going to back out now. John doesn't tell us that Jesus healed Malchus's ear.

John 18:12 Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

John 18:13 And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

John 18:14 Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

Jesus was arrested and bound. First, He was taken to Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest. Caiaphas was the one who told the Jews that it would be good if one man died for the people. He actually believed he was doing what

was best for the people, because if Jesus became more popular, the Romans might feel it necessary to intervene. That would result in stricter, more oppressive rule from the Romans—plus it would jeopardize the authority now possessed by the Jewish leaders.

John 18:15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

John 18:16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

John 18:17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also *one* of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

Simon Peter and another disciple (probably John) followed Jesus. The other disciple was known by the high priest (John was from a wealthy family, a family of influence.) and went with Jesus into the high priest's palace, but Peter stayed outside. The other disciple came back and spoke to the girl at the door and brought Peter in. The girl at the door asked Peter if he was one of Jesus's disciples; he denied it (denial #1). It's interesting that she recognized Peter, but not John.

John 18:18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

We are told that it was cold and they warmed themselves by a fire. Peter was with a group of servants and officers around the fire. Evidently, the palace had an outside courtyard.

John 18:19 The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

John 18:20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

John 18:21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

The high priest questioned Jesus about His disciples and His teaching. According to Easton's Bible Dictionary, Annas was the high priest before Caiphas. Maybe once a high priest one continued to carry the title (like our presidents). Jesus answered that He had always taught in public (synagogue, temple, and other meeting places)—not in private or secret. They could ask anyone who had heard Him speak what He had said.

I have a note in my Bible that it is against Jewish law to have a man testify against himself. David Guzik provides more information: "Jesus wasn't being uncooperative, only asserting His legal right. There was to be no formal charge until witnesses had been heard and been found to be truthful. It was the High

Priest's duty to call forth the witnesses first, beginning with those for the defense. These basic legal protections for the accused under Jewish law were not observed in the trial of Jesus."

John 18:22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

John 18:23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

One of the officials standing by slapped Jesus and accused Him of being disrespectful to the high priest. Jesus asked him why He had been slapped for speaking the truth. He could understand being struck for lying.

John 18:24 Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

I guess Annas decides he is not going to get any incriminating evidence against Jesus, so he sends Him to Caiaphas, the high priest.

We are told in Matthew that when Jesus appeared before the High Priest, they couldn't get the necessary two witnesses to agree in testimony against Him. Finally, Caiaphas, as the High Priest, commands Him in the name of God to declare whether He is the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus answers that He is. Caiaphas pronounces Him guilty of blasphemy and tears his clothes as if to show grief for such blasphemy. Others responded by spitting in His face, slapping Him, and taunting Him to identify who had struck Him.

John 18:25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also *one* of his disciples? He denied *it*, and said, I am not.

John 18:26 One of the servants of the high priest, being *his* kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

John 18:27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

Peter is still warming himself by the fire and is asked again if he was one of Jesus disciples. Again, he denied it (denial #2). Then one of the servants who was a relative of the soldier whose ear Peter had cut off challenged him. He thought he recognized Peter from the garden. Peter again denied it (denial #3). At that moment the rooster began to crow. John doesn't tell us, but just imagine how awful Peter felt when he heard that rooster and remembered Jesus' words—and his own to Jesus.

Luke (22:61) tells us that "the Lord turned and looked at Peter" after the cock crew. Matthew (26:75) and Mark (14:72) tell us that Peter wept bitterly.

John 18:28 Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

John 18:29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

John 18:30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

Jesus is next seen being taken to the “hall of judgment.” This appears to be a part of the place where Pilate lived. It was early morning now, and the Jews did not enter the hall since it would have made them ceremonially unclean for the Passover. Again, this emphasizes that the “last supper” as we know it was not the Passover observance.

So, Pilate goes out to them to ask what the charge was against Jesus. They answered that He was a criminal; that is why they brought Jesus to him.

John 18:31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:

John 18:32 That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

So Pilate tells them to judge Him by their own law. They declared that they wanted Jesus executed, and they were not allowed to exercise capital punishment. Then we are reminded that the kind of death Jesus had predicted for Himself would be fulfilled.

Note from Chuck Smith: The right to put a man to death had been taken from the Jews two years before this. This was not to happen—“the scepter be taken”—until Messiah came. Many mourned when that happened because they didn’t recognize Jesus as the Messiah and they thought God had broken His promise. Also, under Jewish law Jesus would have been stoned—not crucified. The prophecies regarding the crucifixion were made long before crucifixion was invented as a punishment by the Persians.

John 18:33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

John 18:34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

John 18:35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

John 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

John 18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Pilate goes back in and asks Jesus if He is the King of the Jews. Jesus asked him if this question was his own or had it originated from others. Pilate basically

admits it was the accusation made by the Jewish leaders, the chief priests. Then he asks Jesus what He has done. Jesus affirms He is a king by answering that His kingdom is not of this world; if it were, His servants would fight to prevent His arrest. His kingdom is from another place. So Pilate deduces that He does claim to be a king; then he asks Jesus point blank, “Art thou a king then?” Jesus says He is. In fact, that is why He was born--to come into the world and testify to truth. Then He tells Pilate, “Everyone that is of the truth hears (listens, understands, gives heed to) my voice (what I say).”

“delivered to the Jews” – Because of the misuse of this terminology throughout history, people are quick to qualify this statement. The truth is that Jesus was rejected and killed by His own people in fulfillment of prophecy. It’s significant that this statement is preceded by a reference to the truth that His servants would fight for Him. Israel was chosen by God as unique among the nations and set apart to be His servants in ministry to the world. It was not a derogatory position they had been called to; it was a position of favor and blessing. It was their rejection of God’s promised Messiah that sent Him to the cross. It is, however, also true that we all had a part in the death of Jesus. Except for sin, the cross would never have been necessary. The Jews were uniquely blessed among the nations with the oracles of God. They had been given much, and the Lord is now holding them accountable for much.

John 18:38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault *at all*.

John 18:39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

John 18:40 Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

Then Pilate makes a typically human observation—“What is truth?” We explain truth from our own perspective. We decide what we choose to accept as truth. That is what the bottom line was with Adam and Eve—they chose to believe the serpent as the teller of truth. More often than not we choose to accept as true that which is comfortable or what we feel is more beneficial to us according to the desires of the flesh or human reasoning. When Jesus uses the word *truth*, it is as an absolute according to YHWH and His word with no wavering, bending, or stretching in any direction.

So Pilate goes back out to the crowd and tells them that he finds no basis for a charge against Jesus. Then he gives them a choice. It was customary for a prisoner to be released at the time of Passover. Do they want him to release “the King of the Jews?” (Matthew’s account tells us that Pilate gave them the choice of Jesus or Barabbas.) The crowd yells, NO. They want Barabbas (a murderer and insurrectionist) released; John just identifies him as a robber.

Luke 23:18-19 “And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)”