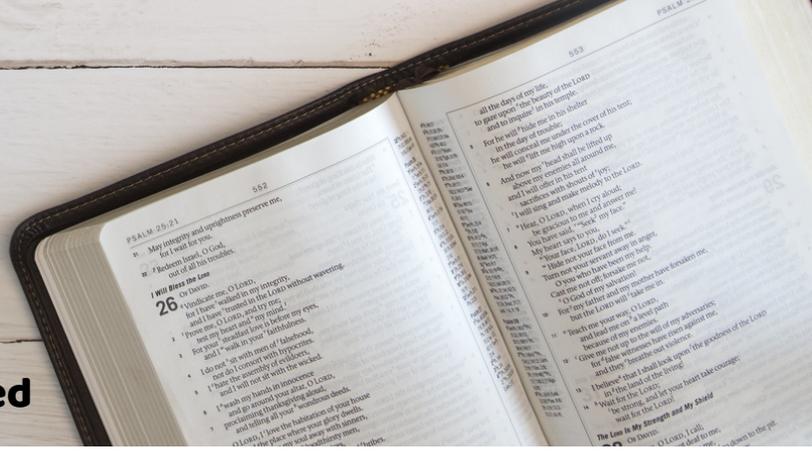


THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

John 18: Jesus is Arrested



As a child, were you ever blamed for something you didn't do? How did you react?

Into the Word

- Why do the Pharisees want to take advantage of the night to arrest Jesus (see 3:19-20; 12:35; 13:30)? What is "the cup" which Jesus must drink (v. 11)?
- What do you think Peter and the other disciple hoped to do (v. 15ff)? How do you account for the difference between Peter here (v. 17) and in the garden (v. 10)? How do Jesus' answers expose this trial as a mockery (v. 23)?
- Why are the Jewish leaders rushing this trial? What reason do they give Pilate for bringing Jesus to him (vv. 33-34)? Why would Pilate take this seriously? How are Pilate's fears like those of the Jewish leaders in John 11:48?

Into the Heart

- Have you ever tried to obey Jesus, only to be over-zealous and ending up hurting someone?
- How does the story of Peter both humble and encourage you?
- Do you see any of Pilate's qualities in yourself?

What is your greatest takeaway from this passage?

What specific life changes do you need to make?

How will you hold yourself accountable?

JESUS IS ARRESTED (John 18)

When the last meal was finished and Jesus' talk (John 14-16) and prayer (John 17) were finished, they headed to the Garden of Gethsemane and across the brook of Kidron. There is a symbolic thing happening. One census in 60 AD stated 256,000 lambs were slain at Passover. All that blood had to go somewhere...and it did. Down a temple drain, through an underground channel and into the Kidron brook, which swelled, flooded and flowed blood red throughout the week. Jesus crossed this flooded, bloody brook to get to Gethsemane.

Gethsemane, located on the Mount of Olives, means "oil press." Many rich people had olive gardens on this mount (because ceremonial prohibitions disallowed the use of manure on the soil inside the city). Gethsemane was one of those gardens, and that means he had a wealthy friend who owned a private garden and gave Jesus and his disciples a key. This is how Judas Iscariot knew where Jesus would go after the meal.

There is something astonishing about the force which came out to arrest Jesus. It was a company of soldiers, together with officers from the chief priests and Pharisees. The officers were the temple police--a private force that kept order in the temple. The Sanhedrin also had their own protective police force. However, there was a band of Roman soldiers present too. A "band" (spiera) has three meanings: 1) a Roman cohort (600 men) or 2) a cohort of auxiliary soldiers (1000 men) or 3) a detachment of 200 men called a "maniple." Even if we take the smallest number (200), that's quite a lot of Roman soldiers, plus temple police plus Pharisees. Easily hundreds of armed men to arrest Jesus!

JESUS BEFORE ANNAS (JOHN 18:12-14, 19-24)

For the sake of keeping the narrative continuous we will take together the two passages which deal with the trial before the **former high priest Annas**. Only John tells us that Jesus was brought before Annas and that's significant from a theological perspective. **Jesus is going to become the HIGH PRIEST** after he's exalted back into Heaven. The book of Hebrews speaks at length to this matter (chapters 7-10).

To understand this passage you have to know about Annas the High Priest, for he was a notorious character. No one is known more in contemporary Jewish history than Annas. **He was high priest from AD 6 - 15.** Four of his sons held the position of high priest. Caiaphas, the current high priest, was his son-in-law. It's literally a dynasty of high priests. In previous times of Jewish history, the high priestly position was a lifetime appointment but when Rome came to rule they found that tradition prone to bribery and corruption. In its place was a bidding war (to the man most willing to toe the line with Roman authority). The family of Annas was very wealthy thanks to its long friendship with Rome...and Annas was the power behind it all.

PETER'S DENIAL (John 18:15-18, 25-27)

When the other disciples fled at Jesus' arrest, Peter stood up to the police force. He grabbed a sword and cut off the ear of one of the Roman soldiers. Then he followed Jesus back into Jerusalem with "another disciple." Just who is the "other disciple?" Could it be Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea? Both of these men had connections to the high priest (Nicodemus was part of the Sanhedrin). The traditional view is its John. John's father ran a flourishing fish business in Galilee (Mark 1:20). One of the great Galilean industries was salt fish (which kept longer than unsalted fish). Salt was like gold...rare and valuable. John's dad was the one who supplied the high priest with salt fish. It's why John's well known to the high priest and his servants.

In the end, it's quite a night. And its only just beginning.