

John 18:1-27

When Jesus left with His disciples (v. 1), Judas knew where Jesus would go based on past experience (v. 2).

The fact that Jesus didn't choose a more secretive, unpredictable place—what does that tell us? Jesus was not trying to avoid being arrested. He was ready to turn Himself in. He knew His time had now come. He willingly gave Himself up when the time was right. He was in control at all times. The soldiers could have left their weapons at home.

Why would the Jewish leaders send an entourage of officials from the chief priests and Pharisees and a detachment of Roman troops (around 200 soldiers) to arrest one man (v. 3)? They wanted to be sure that Jesus would not escape. They knew from past experience of the power and elusiveness of Jesus (John 7:30, 8:20, 8:59; Luke 4:30).

How did Jesus respond to their appearance (vv. 4-8)? Knowing their intentions, He voluntarily turned Himself over to them. Earlier in His ministry, Jesus had withdrawn from conflict with these officials because His hour had not yet come (10:40; 11:54), but now His hour had come (17:1).¹

Why did this entourage sent to arrest Jesus fall to the ground when He spoke (v. 6)? The power of the Word of God. "I AM He" was a claim to deity. The "I AM" of verse 5 is the same "I AM" as in Exodus 3:14.

Why did Jesus request that His men be let go (vv. 8-9)? To fulfill His own prophecy. "*And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day*" (John 6:39). Jesus was intent on protecting His disciples. They had a vital mission ahead of them.

Also, the words of John 17:12 were fulfilled. *While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.*

What did Peter's action of striking the high priest's servant tell us about Peter (v. 10)? His action was foolish and impulsive, but it illustrated his character qualities of courage, devotion, loyalty and commitment to Jesus.

Note: Peter's brave—though misdirected—act showed that he still failed to realize that Jesus' death was a necessary part of God's plan. Therefore Jesus rebuked Peter even though he showed remarkable loyalty to his teacher. Zeal without knowledge can be dangerous.

What does "drink the cup" mean (v. 11)? The cup refers to the wrath of God under which Jesus would suffer and die for the sins of the world. He had come to do the Father's will and now it was time to embrace the reality of it.

Who was Annas (v. 13)? The "unofficial" high priest of the Jews. He was supposed to serve until he died but he was basically fired by the Roman authorities and replaced by his son Caiaphas. The Romans did not like the concentration of power in one person so they frequently changed high priests. But many of the Jews continued to recognize Annas as their true high priest. That's why Jesus was led to Annas first.

What is important to see is that Jesus was first put on trial before the Jews in an attempt to prove Him guilty of blasphemy and heresy. That was what we might call a *religious* trial. Then He was taken to be tried before the Roman authorities, and here the attempt was made to prove that He was an enemy of Caesar. That was the *civil* trial. Since the Jews were under Roman rule, they had to work through the Roman courts. They could not carry out the death penalty, for instance. This had to be done by Pilate.²

NOTE: in v. 14, John reminded his readers that the high priest was the same Caiaphas who had unknowingly prophesied that one man should die for the nation, i.e., the death of Christ for the Jewish nation (11:49-52).

Who was "another disciple" (v. 15)? We don't know. Traditionally, commentators have understood the "other disciple" to have been John, the "one Jesus loved." The correct identification of the other disciple is not essential to a correct interpretation of the events, however.

The point is.....This disciple somehow knew the high priest and therefore had access into the high priest's courtyard. Thus he was in a unique position to know what was going on and to enable Peter to get into the courtyard.³

Why did Peter deny Christ three times (vv. 17, 25, 27)? It was not Peter's faith that failed, but his courage. He was unwilling to stand up in the face of adversity and claim to be a follower of Christ. After his failure he wept bitterly, because he really did love his Lord (Matthew 26:75).

Application: **What are some ways we can deny Christ? Have you ever denied Christ?** If so, God can restore you and use you in a mighty way just like He did with Peter.

What was the high priest concerned about as he questioned Jesus (v. 19)? His hypocrisy was evident with his vague concerns about Jesus' teachings, as if these posed a threat to the Mosaic Law and the Roman government. It is obvious that these people had no real case against the Lord, and so they were trying to make one up.⁴

How did Jesus respond to Annas' questioning (vv. 20-21)? Jesus rightly claimed that He had always taught openly and publicly. He was assuring Annas that His teachings were not subversive. He did not have two types of teaching: a harmless one for the multitudes, and a revolutionary one for His disciples. He invited Annas to question His hearers—not just His disciples—to determine if He had indeed taught anything for which someone might accuse Him of being disloyal. The testimony of witnesses was an indispensable part of any serious trial in Judaism.⁵

What was the response to Jesus' answer (v. 22)? One of the court officials slapped Jesus for speaking to the high priest in a supposedly disrespectful manner. The challenge of Jesus obviously irritated the Jews. It left them without a case. And so they resorted to abuse.

How did Jesus respond to the physical abuse (v. 23)? With perfect poise and unanswerable logic, the Savior showed the unfairness of their position. They could not accuse Him of speaking evil; yet they struck Him for telling the truth. Following this preliminary interview, Annas sent Jesus on to his son-in-law Caiaphas (cf. 18:13).

Jesus' response to this attack was logical rather than emotional or physical. He simply appealed for a fair trial (cf. Acts 23:2-5). The man who struck Him was not treating Him fairly. This was a case of police brutality. Jesus had shown no disrespect for Annas.⁶

Why did Annas send Jesus to Caiaphas (v. 24)? Annas could not find anything the Sanhedrin could use to condemn or even charge Jesus. So he deferred to Caiaphas, the current official high priest, who then became responsible to bring charges against Jesus before the Sanhedrin.

What was not right about the trials of Jesus? 1. Two independent witnesses were required before a person could go to trial. 2. Defense had to speak first. 3. No trials were allowed after dark. The Jews violated all of their own laws; they were so intent, so focused, so obsessed with killing Jesus. All told, in the four gospels, Jesus underwent six trials (John 18:12-14, 28-38; John 18:39-19:6; Matthew 26:57-68, 27:1-2; Luke 23:6-12).

¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on John, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 455.

² William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1560.

³ Edwin A. Blum, "John," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 335.

⁴ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1560.

⁵ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on John, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 464.

⁶ Ibid.