

John 18 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

([John Commentaries](#))

[John 18:1](#)

[John 18:2](#)

[John 18:3](#)

[John 18:4](#)

[John 18:5](#)

[John 18:6](#)

[John 18:7](#)

[John 18:8](#)

[John 18:9](#)

[John 18:10](#)

[John 18:11](#)

[John 18:12](#)

[John 18:13](#)

[John 18:14](#)

[John 18:15](#)

[John 18:16](#)

[John 18:17](#)

[John 18:18](#)

[John 18:19](#)

[John 18:20](#)

[John 18:21](#)

[John 18:22](#)

[John 18:23](#)

[John 18:24](#)

[John 18:25](#)

[John 18:26](#)

[John 18:27](#)

[John 18:28](#)

[John 18:29](#)

[John 18:30](#)

[John 18:31](#)

[John 18:32](#)

[John 18:33](#)

[John 18:34](#)

[John 18:35](#)

[John 18:36](#)

[John 18:37](#)

[John 18:38](#)

[John 18:39](#)

[John 18:40](#)

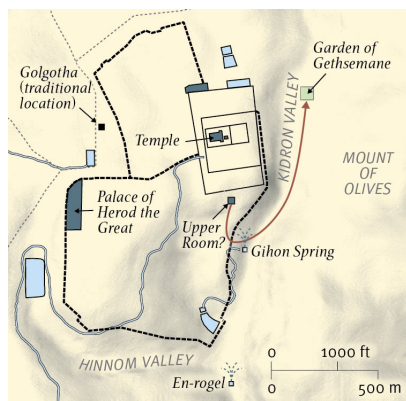
Click chart to enlarge

Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
Another Chart from Charles Swindoll

Click to enlarge

John 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these [words], He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples.

- **spoken:** John 13:31-35 14:1-17:26
- **he:** John 14:31 Mt 26:36 Mk 14:32 Lu 22:39,40
- **the brook:** 2Sa 15:23 1Ki 15:13 2Ki 23:6,12 2Ch 15:16 30:14 Jer 31:40, Kidron
- **a garden:** John 18:26 Ge 2:15 3:23
- [Alfred Edersheim - Gethsemane](#) - Matt. 26:30–56; Mark 14:26–52; Luke 22:31–53; John 18:1–11
- James Stalker's classic [Trial and Arrest of Jesus Christ - 1. THE ARREST](#) Matt. 26:47–56; Mark 14:43–50; Luke 22:47–53; John 18:1–11.



UPPER ROOM > KIDRON VALLEY > GARDEN
Source: ESV Study Bible

ACROSS THE KIDRON VALLEY TO THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

A SIMPLE OUTLINE:

- Jn 18:1-11 The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus
- Jn 18:12-14 Jesus before Anna and Caiaphas, high priest
- Jn 18:15-18 Peter's first denial of Jesus
- Jn 18:19-24 High priest questions Jesus
- Jn 18:25-27 Peter's second and third denial of Jesus
- Jn 18:28-38a Jesus before Pilate
- Jn 18:38b-19:7 Jesus sentenced to die

Recall the purpose of John's Gospel - "these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." (Jn 20:31+)

Rod Mattoon - The scarlet thread of God's redemption that flows through Old Testament pictures begins to puddle in John 18. In John 18, man will serve his worst to God and the Lord will respond with His best. Sin will abound, but grace will much more abound.....In John's account, several facts are omitted that are found in other Gospel accounts, because they are not necessary for the picture that the Holy Spirit wants to paint through John. 1. There is no mention made of Peter, James, and John watching with the Lord. 2. There is no mention of the tears and agony of the night, of Jesus praying to His Father, and the sweat of blood. John instead, focuses on the power and majesty of the Son of God. ([Treasures from Scripture](#))

When Jesus ([Iesous](#)) had spoken these words - What **words**? In the nearest context, the words of His high priestly prayer (Jn 17) and in the larger context the words He spoke to the disciples in The [Upper Room Discourse](#) (John 13-16).

Recall that in Jn 12:23 at the time of the arrival of the Greeks, Jesus declared ""The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." This is the hour that would complete Jesus' mission of providing redemption for the sinful world.

NET NOTE - **When he had said these things** appears to be a natural transition at the end of the Farewell Discourse (the farewell speech of Jesus to his disciples in John 13:31–17:26, including the final prayer in Jn 17:1–26). The author states that Jesus went out with His disciples, a probable reference to their leaving the upper room where the meal and discourse described in chaps. 13–17 took place (although some have seen this only as a reference to their leaving the city, with the understanding that some of the Farewell Discourse, including the concluding prayer, was given en route, cf. 14:31). They crossed the Kidron Valley and came to a

garden, or olive orchard, identified in Matt 26:36 and Mark 14:32 as Gethsemane. The name is not given in Luke's or John's Gospel, but the garden must have been located somewhere on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives.

*Jesus descends over the Kidron
as He begins His ascent to the Cross.*

He went forth ([exerchomai](#)) with His disciples ([mathetes](#)) over the ravine (cheimarros) **of the Kidron** - See the diagram above which depicts the **ravine** or cheimarros (from cheima = winter weather + rheo = to flow) literally described a winter flowing stream, which would flow because of the runoff of winter snows or rains but otherwise was dry (only NT use; Lxx - 2Sa 15:23, 1Ki 2:37, 15:13).

The **Kidron valley** (brook Kidron) was mentioned more often in the OT - 2 Sam. 15:23; 1 Ki. 2:37; 1 Ki. 15:13; 2 Ki. 23:4; 2 Ki. 23:6; 2 Ki. 23:12; 2 Chr. 15:16; 2 Chr. 29:16; 2 Chr. 30:14; Jer. 31:40. The Hebrew word **qidron** apparently meant something like "dusky" or "muddy stream." As shown in the map above the Kidron was the depression (valley, ravine, wadi) separating Jerusalem (the wall of the city) on the west from the Mount of Olives on the east. David crossed it to flee Jerusalem (2 Sam. 15:23). It seemed to mark the city limits in a sense for crossing it meant leaving Jerusalem (1 Ki. 2:37). Many foreign idols and shrines were built in this valley (1 Ki. 15:13; 2 Ki. 23:4, 6, 12; 2 Chr. 15:16; 29:16; 30:14). The good kings of Judah always attempted to destroy and remove them (1 Ki. 15:13). Josiah cleared the Temple of these abominations and burned or trashed them in the Kidron Valley (2 Ki. 23:4-12). God showed Jeremiah a time, however, when even the desecrated and polluted Kidron Valley will be made holy to the Lord (Jer. 31:38-40). After the death of his father, Solomon forbade Shimei to cross over the Brook of Kidron, and the king promised him he would die if he failed to heed his command. However, about three years later, Shimei disobeyed this order, and the avenger of blood was sent to kill him (1 Ki. 2:37).

Rod Mattoon on Kidron - When Jesus finishes speaking the words of John 13-17, He moves forward to change the destiny of mankind. He crosses over the brook Kidron which had significant meaning. The word "Kidron or Cedron" means "darkness or dark waters" giving it also the name "Black Brook." This area was also called the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The waters of this stream were darkened by the steep cliffs on both sides of the river and by abundant trees and vegetation which shadowed over the water like rain clouds ripe for showering tears. These waters were also darkened by the sewage of the city that flowed into it. This is why it was called the "Unclean Place." During times of revival, godly kings would reduce idols to ashes and cast them into the foul waters of the Kidron to be swept away. The waters of the Kidron were also darkened by blood. During the Passover, as many as 2 ½ million Jews were in Jerusalem. This would mean that over 250,000 lambs would be slain in the Temple in one week. The blood of those lambs was poured on the altar as a crimson offering to God. From the altar, there was a channel which led down to the Brook Kidron. The blood from the altar drained down this channel into the brook Kidron. ([Treasures from Scripture](#))

The description **went forth** is interpreted in two ways, some writers favoring that Jesus and the disciples had previously actually left the Upper Room because of Jesus' words in Jn 14:31 "let us go from here." They propose that the discourse in John 15-16 and the prayer in John 17 were given as the group journeyed out of the city to descend down and cross the Kidron. Other writers feel that Jesus' entire discourse and the prayer were given in the Upper Room. In any event this verse indicates they are now out of the city walls and crossing the ravine on the way to the garden.

It is notable that the Kidron was running with water only in the winter rainy season, but at the time of the Passover, the brook was actually running red with the blood of the sacrifices. In addition recall that the Kidron was between Mt Moriah (place of sacrifice) and Mt of Olives, the place where Jesus agonized in prayer with His Father on this fateful night.

William Barclay - From the altar there was a channel down to the brook Kedron, and through that channel the blood of the Passover lambs drained away. When Jesus crossed the brook Kedron it would still be red with the blood of the lambs which had been sacrificed.

Spurgeon - The very brook would remind him of his approaching sacrifice, for through it flowed the blood and refuse from the temple.

Where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples([mathetes](#)) - Mt 26:36+ and Mk 14:32+ identify the **garden** as Gethsemane (see map above for possible location on lower portion of Mt of Olives) which means "oil press". **Garden** (kepos) refers to a plot of land where vegetables or flowers are planted. These gardens often contained palms, fruit trees, flowers, even vegetables. Such gardens were forbidden in the confines of the city of Jerusalem because necessary fertilizer made it unclean so many residents especially the wealthy had vineyards, orchards and private gardens on the Mount of Olives. Obviously Judas knew

where this garden was and Jesus knew that he knew and that now His hour had come so He made no attempt to hide Himself.

Matthew 26:36+ Then Jesus *came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and *said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."

Mark 14:32+ They *came to a place named Gethsemane; and He *said to His disciples, "Sit here until I have prayed."

Luke 21:37 says "Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet." Yet, probably not only during that week but they often met there through the years.

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:1

Our Lord could not cross that "brook Cedron" without being reminded of the time when David went that way in the hour of his sorrow, though he knew that he had to face a far greater trial than that of David. The very brook would remind him of his approaching sacrifice, for through it flowed the blood and refuse from the temple.

A dark, foul brook, through which flowed the blood and refuse from the temple. King David crossed that brook one night in bitter sorrow; and now the Saviour crossed it when it was near to midnight: "He went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron."

From our Lord's example, we should learn, when trouble is near, to meet it with composure. Our Saviour did not sit still; but, as the hour approached for his betrayal and death, "he went forth with his disciples." The passing over the black brook of Cedron, through which flowed the filth of the temple, was very significant. King David had crossed that brook long before when he had been driven from his home by Absalom's rebellion, and now the greater David went "over the brook Cedron, where was a garden." He specially wanted solitude just then, for one of the best preparations for suffering is to get alone with God. Learn this lesson also from your Lord's example, and as he put Gethsemane before Calvary, if you can put an hour of prayerful contemplation before your expected suffering, it will be a great help to you.

Our Lord went there to pray, and Judas knew that this was his custom. Are we such men of prayer that others know where we pray? Have you some familiar place where you go to meet your Lord? I am afraid that many know where we trade, and many know where we preach, but perhaps, few know where we pray. God grant that we may be often at the mercy-seat! We should be better men and women if we were more frequently at the throne of grace.

Disciples (3101) **mathetes** from **manthano** = to learn which Vine says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". Gives us our English = "*mathematics*" - see [matheteuo](#)) describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. Another sources says mathetes is from from **math**- which speaks of "mental effort that thinks something through" and thus describes is a learner; a follower who learns the doctrines and the lifestyle of the one they follow. Discipleship includes the idea of one who intentionally learns by inquiry and observation (cf [inductive Bible study](#)) and thus **mathetes** is more than a mere pupil. A **mathetes** describes an adherent of a teacher. As discussed below **mathetes** itself has no spiritual connotation, and it is used of superficial followers of Jesus as well as of genuine believers. The Lord calls everyone to grow as a disciple (a learner of Christ; cf. also Mt 11:29,30), one who lives in faith, who lives in and by His Word in the power of the Holy Spirit. Note in the Great Commission that the implication is that the disciple is not just a hearer and a learner from another, but is a doer of what he learns for Mt 28:20 says "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Swindoll - A **mathētēs** is one who subjects himself or herself to a process of becoming familiarized with something by experiencing, learning, or receiving direction. This process usually implies the aid of another person, and as the term fully developed, it was inconceivable for one to be a learner without a guide or a master. The term is used to refer to the disciples of rabbis, and those of John the Baptizer, the Pharisees, and Moses (e.g., Mark 2:18; John 9:28). Although we often refer to the twelve apostles as the "twelve disciples," it is important to recognize that this term often refers to all (**ED: HOW MANY?**) of Jesus' followers (Luke 6:13, 17). ([Insights on Luke](#).)

There is a teaching (which I consider borders on a false teaching) that not all genuine believers are disciples of Christ. This is taught by a number of evangelicals, some of whom are very prominent. They teach that there are believers and then there is an "elite" group of believers who warrant the designation of "disciples." This is not correct! Every genuine believer is a disciple of Jesus Christ.

This location is associated in the Bible with sorrow, judgment, and death.

ANSWER - The Kidron Valley is a place just outside of Jerusalem, in between the city and the Mount of Olives (ED: SEE MAP ABOVE). The name *Kidron* (or *Cedron* in the KJV) is either a reference to the “darkness” or “murkiness” of the water that periodically flows in that place or to the cedars that grow in that area. The Kidron Valley is technically a [wadi](#), as a stream runs through it only after heavy rains. This location is associated in the Bible with sorrow, judgment, and death.

For example, 2 Kings 23:1–6 describes [King Josiah](#) commanding “the high priest, the priests next in rank and the doorkeepers to remove from the temple of the Lord all the articles made for Baal and Asherah and all the starry hosts.” Once removed from the temple, the idols were “burned . . . outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron Valley” (verse 4). King Josiah did the same with the [Asherah pole](#) (verse 6). Similar reforms were accomplished by [King Asa](#) and [King Hezekiah](#), both of whom disposed of idols in the Kidron Valley (1 Kings 15:13; 2 Chronicles 29:16; 30:14).

When David fled Jerusalem during Absalom’s rebellion, he crossed the Valley of Kidron (2 Samuel 15:23). When King Solomon confined the rogue [Shimei](#) to the city, he forbade him from going any farther than the Kidron Valley (1 Kings 2:36–37). From 2 Kings 23:6, it seems that, in the time of Josiah, the Valley of Kidron contained “the graves of the common people.” According to the historian [Josephus](#), Queen Athalia was executed in the Valley of Kidron (*Antiquities of the Jews*, ix. 7, § 3).

Jesus must have crossed the Valley of Kidron many times in His travels. On the night of His arrest, Jesus “went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden” (John 18:1). Once in the [Garden of Gethsemane](#), Jesus felt the full weight of His impending death, so much so that “his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood” (Luke 22:44, NLT).

The Bible speaks of an end-times judgment on the earth. As God is restoring the fortunes of His people, Israel, He says, “I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will put them on trial for what they did to my inheritance, my people Israel” (Joel 3:2). The Valley of Jehoshaphat, or the [Valley of Decision](#) (Joel 3:14), is thought by many to be a reference to the Valley of Kidron.

In each case, the Kidron Valley serves as backdrop to death and sorrow and judgment.

There is coming a day, however, when the Valley of Kidron will shed its sorrowful reputation. God promises that, one day, “I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they will be my people” (Jeremiah 31:1). “See, I . . . gather them from the ends of the earth. Among them will be the blind and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labor; a great throng will return. . . . I will lead them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble” (verses 8–9). Then, God says, “I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow” (verse 13). The Lord’s plans for a restored Jerusalem will include a change in the Valley of Kidron: “The whole valley where dead bodies and ashes are thrown, and all the terraces out to the Kidron Valley on the east as far as the corner of the Horse Gate, will be holy to the Lord. The city will never again be uprooted or demolished” (verse 40).

The Valley of Kidron, with its sad history of idolatry, impurity, and condemnation, will one day be “holy to the Lord,” and God “will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more” (Jeremiah 31:34).

Henry Morris - The Gardens of the Lord

“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” (John 18:1).

As Jesus, after the last supper with His disciples, walked out with them, they soon crossed over a small brook and entered the little garden called Gethsemane. Eventually He left the disciples and went farther into the garden alone for a time of solitary prayer.

Perhaps He remembered how, long ago, He had walked in His first garden with Adam and Eve in beautiful fellowship. Then they had rebelled against His word, and had to be expelled from the Garden of Eden, leaving Him alone there also (Gen. 3:8).

As He prayed in Gethsemane, He knew that it would be only a few hours before He would be buried in still another garden, one “wherein was never man yet laid” (John 19:41). He would be carried to a new tomb prepared in a newly planted garden by the loving hands of Joseph and Nicodemus, but then He would be alone once again.

He had walked alone in the first garden, seeking His own; then had knelt alone in the second garden, praying for His own; and finally, was buried alone in the third garden, after dying for His own.

Because He came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10), and because He now “ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25), after paying the awful price of “redemption through his blood” (Eph. 1:7), all those who believe and trust Him will

spend eternity in fellowship with Him in a beautiful garden city, where flows "a pure river of water of life" surrounded on both sides by "the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month" (Rev. 22:1-2), and all will be "very good" forever.

THE DARK BETRAYAL John 18:1-14. J H Jowett

OUR Master was betrayed by a disciple, "one of the twelve." The blow came from one of "His own household." The world employed a "friend" to execute its dark design. And so our intimacy with Christ may be our peril; our very association may be made our temptation. The devil would rather gain one belonging to the inner circle than a thousand who stand confessed as the friends of the world. What am I doing in the kingdom? Can I be trusted? Or am I in the pay of the evil one?

And our Master was betrayed in the garden of prayer. In the most hallowed place the betrayer gave the most unholy kiss. He brought his defilement into the most awe-inspiring sanctuary the world has ever known. And so may it be with me. I can kindle the unclean fire in the church. I can stab my Lord when I am on my knees. While I am in apparent devotion I can be in league with the powers of darkness.

And this "dark betrayal" was for money! The Lord of Glory was bartered for thirty pieces of silver! And the difference between Judas and many men is that they often sell their Lord for less! From the power of Mammon, and from the blindness which falls upon his victims, good Lord, deliver me!

Map of Jerusalem Retracing Christ's last footsteps on earth: Here is a map of "Passion Week". Here is another similar map of [Jesus' Arrest, Trial and Crucifixion](#)) **Hint:** Locate the "**Upper Room**" (found on left side of picture) in the diagram and then follow the arrows which retrace the footsteps of the Messiah, steps which had been foreordained in eternity past "by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23+, cp Acts 4:27-28+) taking Him from the Upper Room to the excruciating agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, to the tragic betrayal by a friend resulting in His unfair arrest, leading to 6 unjust trials (see table below) which culminate in the central event in all eternity, Christ on the Cross on Calvary. The numbers below correlate with the **numbers** on the map with the **arrows** on the lines signifying the direction of Jesus' movement)

- (1) Jesus left the **Upper Room** (see left side of picture just below [Caiaphas'](#) Residence) and walked with disciples out of the city, across the Kidron Valley and up to the **Mount of Olives** and from there to the nearby **Garden of Gethsemane** (see right upper side of picture)
- (2) He was arrested in the Garden and taken back into the city, first to an informal "trial" before Annas (who apparently lived next to [Caiaphas](#)) and then to [Caiaphas'](#) Residence (the location is an approximation) where the Jewish Council (Sanhedrin) were gathered.
- (3). After His first night time "trial" before the Sanhedrin at Caiaphas' residence, Jesus was tried at daybreak before the Sanhedrin, probably at the Temple (see Herod's Temple) as shown in the diagram above.
- (4) Jesus is taken from the trial before the Sanhedrin
- (5) Next, he was taken to Pontius Pilate (admittedly this is difficult to follow on the map above)
- (6), Pilate sent Jesus to the palace of Herod Antipas (location uncertain). Herod Antipas returned Jesus to Pilate (admittedly this is difficult to follow on the map above)
- (7), Pilate handed over Jesus for scourging (possibly at Fortress of Antonia but this is not depicted on the map) and then delivered over for crucifixion at Golgotha (note there are two possible locations - The "Traditional Golgotha" and "Gordon's Calvary")

See also (bottom of this page) Dr Darrell Bock's **SUMMARY OF DIFFERENCES FROM LUKE AND OTHER SYNOPTIC GOSPELS**

James Smith- REVELATIONS IN THE GARDEN JOHN 18:1-11

Every circumstance in which Jesus Christ was placed, somehow or other, became the occasion of a further revelation of His wondrous character. Wherever He was, He, in His unique Personality, could not be hid. In these few verses we see some rays of His heavenly glory breaking through the dark cloud of His earthly weakness. Here is a revelation of—

I. His Habit of Prayer. "Judas ... knew the place; for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with His disciples" (John 18:2).

Although Christ possessed the spirit of prayer, He believed also in the place of prayer. When one gets familiar with their

surroundings, the mind is more free for intercourse with the unseen and eternal. In the matter of frequent praying, as well as in suffering, the sinless Son of God has left us an example.

II. His Knowledge of the Future. "Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth" (John 18:4, R.V.).

He knew that "all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished," for the Scriptures must be fulfilled (Luke 18:31). Our knowledge of the future must be derived from the same source. If we had the faith that Jesus Christ had in those words uttered by men full of the Holy Ghost, then would we be among those wise men which discern the signs of the times.

III. His Confession Concerning Himself. "I am He" (John 18:5).

They declared that they were seeking Jesus of Nazareth. He confessed that He was that Nazarene. Reproach had been associated with that Name, and He willingly accepts it and bears it. It was as if they said, "Where is that despised and rejected One?" He answered, "I am He." This solemn "I AM HE" of the Son of God may be looked upon as His answer to all who seek Him, whether through love and mercy, or hate and derision. It is with Him all have to do.

IV. His Power Over His Enemies. "As soon as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground" (John 18:6).

It was good for them that they had the ground to fall on. The same power that drove them back might have as easily driven them into Hell. This manifestation of His power was His last convincing proof that, apart from His own will, they had no power at all against Him (**ED**: ACTUALLY I WOULD INCLUDE THE HEALING OF MALCHUS' EAR DEMONSTRATING HE WAS JEHOVAH RAPHA AS WELL AS THE CREATOR). "No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself" (John 10:18).

V. His Love for His Own. "If, therefore, ye seek Me, let these go their way" (John 18:8).

These words are full of solemn significance, as they reveal Christ's attitude toward the powers of darkness and the sheep of His pasture. He was no hireling to flee when the wolf cometh. What He here said to His enemies He could say with a deeper meaning to that "death and the curse" which was coming upon Him. "If, therefore, ye seek Me, let these go their way." As our Substitute and Surety, His chief desire was the salvation of His people. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

VI. His Submission to His Father's Will. "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11).

He knew the Father's love too well to refuse even that awful cup of suffering that was just now being put into His hands. He was so perfectly at one with the Father's purposes that His meat was to do His will and to finish His work. As the weapons of His warfare were not carnal, neither are ours, yet they are mighty, through obedience to God, to the pulling down of strongholds. By His surrender and obedience unto death, He triumphed in resurrection power. He hath left us an example that we should follow His steps.

James Smith - CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS AT THE HANDS OF MEN JOHN 18

He suffered by being—

I. Betrayed by the Hypocritical. "Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them" (John 18:5).

He who companied with Christ, and shared the fellowship of His disciples, now takes his stand among the enemies of his Lord, and lends his influence towards His downfall. "Woe unto you hypocrites."

II. Defended by the Passionate. "Simon Peter having a sword, drew it and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear" (John 18:10).

The Lord had as little need for Peter's passion as for his sword. The wrath of man works not for the praise of God. There is a zeal for Christ and His cause that must be more painful than pleasing unto Him.

III. Smitten by the Unreasonable. "Jesus answered, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou Me?" (John 18:23).

It is easier for pride and prejudice to sneer and to smite than to face the truth. Self-seeking men are ever ready to justify themselves if it should be at the cost of smiting the character of the Saviour. But the clouds that would hide the face of the sun cannot hinder its progress.

IV. Denied by the Cowardly. When Simon Peter was charged with being "One of His disciples, he denied it, and said, I am not" (John

18:25).

The Lord and His cause still suffers much through the cowardliness of His professed followers. There are other ways than Peter's in denying Christ. He did it with his tongue; we may do it with our feet, or by our general conduct. When the act or behaviour is more in keeping with the enemies of Christ than with His Word and teaching it is practically a denial of Him.

V. Shunned by the Self-righteous. "Then led they Jesus ... unto the hall of judgment ... and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover" (John 18:28).

Any thing or place was clean enough for Jesus, but they must preserve their (supposed) ceremonial holiness. "They strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." This is what one has called "putid hypocrisy." These, like all other self-righteous bigots, would seek the blessing without the Blessor; they would have the passover without Him who is the Passover (1 Cor. 5:7). They are like men crying for light and closing their eyes to the sun.

VI. Questioned by the Ambitious. Pilate asked three questions of Jesus, and profited nothing by them: (1) "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" (v. 33); (2) "What is truth?" (John 18:38); (3) "Whence art Thou?" (Jn 19:9).

By such questions the Christ was "oppressed and afflicted," so He "opened not His mouth." Men animated by selfish and impure motives still oppress Him, whose Divinity is clear as the sun, by their questionings regarding His character and teaching. He that doeth His will shall know of the teaching whether it be of God (John 7:17).

VII. Mocked by the Frivolous. "The soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head ... and said, Hail, King of the Jews" (John 19:2).

These men of war set Him who is the Prince of Peace at naught (Luke 23:11). To them the kingdom of Caesar is everything, the Kingdom of God nothing, material things important, but spiritual things ridiculed and laughed at. Truly they know not what they do, who trifle with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev 1:17, 18).

"I have seen the face of Jesus,
Tell me not of aught beside;
I have heard the voice of Jesus,
All my soul is satisfied."

John 18:2 Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples.

■ **for:** Mk 11:11,12 Lu 21:37 22:39

[Garden of Gethsemane](#)

JUDAS KNEW THE GARDEN LOCATION

Now - This is a parenthetical statement by John.

Judas also, who was betraying ([paradidomi](#) - present tense) **Him, knew** ([eido](#)) **the place** ([topos](#)) - **was betraying** ([paradidomi](#) - present tense) Notice how John repeatedly attaches the verb betray ([paradidomi](#)) to Judas to emphasize His depraved character which led to his dastardly deed (cf Jn 6:71, Jn 12:4, Jn 13:2, 27, Jn 18:2-3, Jn 18:5) **Was betraying** depicts Judas in the process of betraying, so that this was something he had considered for some time although exactly how long is uncertain.

Jesus knew all along **Judas** would betray Him (cf Jn 18:4), even declaring in Jn 6:64+ "there are some of you (12 DISCIPLES) who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him." He added in Jn 6:70+ "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?"

For (*hoti*) explains how Judas knew the place where verb for **knew** ([eido](#)) which speaks of knowledge which is beyond a shadow of a doubt. What is interesting is that he somehow knew Jesus would go there after the Passover meal, but the text does not explain how he knew this important detail.

*God's sovereignty mysteriously aligned
and perfectly agreeing with Man's responsibility!*

Jesus ([lesous](#)) **had often met there with** ([sunago](#) root of sunagoge = synagogue) **His disciples** ([mathetes](#)) - Apparently this garden was a favorite spot for Jesus to meet with His disciples, but even in that fact one can see His sovereignty for had He other gardens He could have met so that Judas would not have been able to accurately determine the location. Jesus clearly was in full control of every detail of the events in this final night before the Cross. Jesus Christ was not tricked, trapped or surprised by Judas' betrayal for He knew that the purpose He had come to this world was to die for the people of the world. And while God was sovereign over all the events on this fateful night, every human being that participated willingly in them as an adversary of Christ was guilty. In short, the plan was God's but the guilt was theirs! God's sovereignty mysteriously aligned and perfectly agreeing with Man's responsibility!

On the phrase **Jesus had often met there** Luke 22:39+ adds "And He came out and proceeded **as was His custom** to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him." In addition, Jesus apparently slept in the garden in His last week of life, Luke 21:37+ recording "Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet."

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:2

The place of our Lord's frequent retirement for private prayer was well known to Judas, who had often gone there with his Lord and his fellow disciples.

That dark and gloomy olive garden was no pleasure garden that night. It had often been a place of retirement and of prayer for the Master. What happy memories his disciples must have had of being with him there for a season of prayer! It was a very choice privilege for them to be with him when he preached, but it must have been, if possible, a still greater privilege to be with him when he prayed. It is not recorded that his disciples ever said to him, "Lord, teach us how to preach;" but at least one of them was so struck with his prayers that he said, "Lord, teach us to pray." We may well ask him to do that for us now. Perhaps some of you would like to be taught how you can become great; it is much more important for you to be taught to become prayerful.

Betraying ([3860](#)) **paradidomi** from **para** = alongside, beside, to the side of, over to + **didomi** = to give) conveys the basic meaning of to give over from one's hand to someone or something, especially to give over to the power of another. **Paradidomi** is used in legal parlance to describe handing someone into the custody of the police, authorities, etc. To deliver up one to custody, to be judged, condemned, punished, scourged, tormented, put to death. **Paradidomi** can describe the "illegal", treacherous or unjustified handing of someone over to someone as in a **betrayal**. Thus it describes the delivering over of an individual to an enemy who will presumably take undue advantage of the victim. Paul uses **paradidomi** in describe delivering over rebellious, God and truth rejecting individuals to suffer the consequences of their sins (Ro 1:24, 26, 28)

Friberg summarizes the nuances - from a basic meaning give over from one's hand to someone or something; (1) of authoritative commitment of something to someone entrust, commit, give or hand over, deliver (Mt 11.27 ; 25.20); (2) of a self-sacrificial love give up, yield up, risk (one's life) (Acts 15.26); (3) as a legal technical term for passing someone along in the judicial process hand over, turn over, deliver up (Mk 15.1); of an unjustified act of handing someone over to judicial authorities betray (Mt 10.4); of God's judicial act of handing someone over to suffer the consequences of his wrongdoing deliver up, hand over, give up (to) (Ro 1.24); of the church's authoritative disciplining deliver over, hand over to the control of (1Co 5.5); (4) as a religious technical term for passing along traditions, decisions, teachings hand down, transmit, pass on (Acts 16.4); (5) permit, allow; of a crop whose ripeness "hands it over" to harvesting (Mk 4.29) (BORROW [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

PARADIDOMI IN GOSPEL OF JOHN -Jn. 6:64; Jn. 6:71; Jn. 12:4; Jn. 13:2; Jn. 13:11; Jn. 13:21; Jn. 18:2; Jn. 18:5; Jn. 18:30; Jn. 18:35; Jn. 18:36; Jn. 19:11; Jn. 19:16; Jn. 19:30; Jn. 21:20;

The Garden of Eden	The Garden of Gethsemane
1. All was delightful.	1. All was dreadful & despicable
2. Adam parleyed with Satan.	2. The Last Adam, Jesus, prays with the Father.
3. Adam disobeyed and sinned.	3. The Savior suffered ad obeyed.

4. Adam is conquered by sin.	4. The 2nd Adam, Jesus is a conqueror.
5. The struggle took place by day.	5. The struggle took place by night.
6. Adam fell before Satan.	6. Soldiers fell before the Savior
7. Adam took fruit from Eve's hand.	7. Christ took the cup from His Father's hand.
8. Adam hid himself from God.	8. Christ exposed Himself to the dangers of Satan's workers.
9. God sought for Adam	9. The Last Adam sought God His Father.
10. Adam was driven out of the garden.	10. Christ was led out of the garden.
11. The sword was drawn in Eden's entrance.	11. The sword was sheathed.
Source: Rod Mattoon Treasures from Scripture	

Two Gardens

The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. —Genesis 2:8

Today's Scripture : John 18:1-11

Two gardens are mentioned prominently in the Bible: the garden of Eden and the garden of Gethsemane. God placed the first man, Adam, in the garden of Eden; Jesus went into Gethsemane to restore what the first man had lost.

The first Adam sinned in the garden; the last Adam took this sin upon Himself. The garden of Eden had the tree of life, which man could have enjoyed forever had he not broken fellowship with God. The garden of Gethsemane was a step toward the tree of death (Acts 5:30; 1 Peter 2:24). By Adam's transgression, he forfeited his right to the tree of life and brought death to all mankind. He who hung on the tree of Calvary conquered death and by His glorious resurrection restored the tree of life to all who believe.

The garden where Adam fell is gone from the earth, but there is a glad day coming when He who suffered alone in Gethsemane will restore all things. The curse will be lifted from the earth, the animals will again be docile (Isaiah 11:6-8), the deserts will disappear (Isaiah 35:6), the earth will yield her increase abundantly (Amos 9:13), and Jesus will be here personally to bless His people (Revelation 21:3).

What Adam lost, Jesus will restore. By: M.R. DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Adam was God's first man in creation—
He through sin brought death to all mankind;
Jesus came to earth to bring salvation:
Trusting Him, eternal life we'll find.
—Hess

*God formed us;
sin deformed us;
Christ transforms us.*

QUESTION - [Who was Judas Iscariot? | GotQuestions.org](#)

ANSWER - Judas Iscariot is typically remembered for one thing: his betrayal of Jesus. He was one of the twelve disciples who lived with and followed Jesus for three years. He witnessed Jesus' ministry, His teaching, and His many miracles. He was the treasurer for the group and used this trusted position to steal from their resources (John 12:6).

Judas was a common name in that era, and there are several other Judases mentioned in the New Testament. One of the other disciples was named Judas (John 14:22), and so was one of Jesus' own half-brothers (Mark 6:3). To differentiate, John

6:71 and John 13:26 refer to Christ's betrayer as "Judas, son of Simon Iscariot."

Scholars have several ideas about the derivation of the surname. One is that *iscariot* refers to Kerioth, a region or town in Judea. Another idea is that it refers to the Sicarii, a cadre of assassins among the Jewish rebels.

The possible association with the Sicarii allows for interesting speculation about [Judas' motives](#) for his betrayal, but the fact that he made a conscious choice to betray Jesus (Luke 22:48) remains the same. The surname Iscariot is useful, if for no other reason, in that it leaves no doubt about which Judas is being referred to.

Here are some of the facts we glean from key verses about Judas and his betrayal:

Money was important to Judas. As already mentioned, he was a thief, and, according to Matthew 26:13–15, the chief priests paid him "thirty silver coins" to betray the Lord.

Jesus knew from the very beginning what Judas Iscariot would do. Jesus told His disciples, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" (John 6:70). And at the Last Supper, Jesus predicted His betrayal and identified the betrayer: "Jesus answered, 'It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.' Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon" (John 13:26).

Jesus said that Judas Iscariot was not "clean"; i.e., he had not been born again and was not forgiven of his sins (John 13:10–11). In fact, Judas was empowered to do what he did by the devil himself: "As soon as Judas took the bread [that Jesus had given him], Satan entered into him" (John 13:27).

The other disciples had no clue that Judas Iscariot harbored treacherous thoughts. When Jesus mentioned a betrayer in their midst, the other disciples worried that it was *they* who would prove disloyal (John 13:22). No one suspected Judas. He was a trusted member of the Twelve. Even when Jesus told Judas, "What you are about to do, do quickly," (John 13:27), and Judas left the Last Supper, the others at the table simply thought Judas had been sent to buy more food or to give something to charity (verses 28–29).

Judas Iscariot betrayed the Lord with a kiss, perfectly in keeping with his brazen duplicity (Luke 22:47–48). After committing his atrocious act, Judas "was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders" (Matthew 27:3). But we learn that remorse does not equal repentance—rather than make amends or seek forgiveness, "he went away and hanged himself" (Matthew 27:5).

Judas Iscariot fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 41:9, "Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me" (cf. John 13:18). Yet Judas was fully responsible for his actions. Jesus said, "The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born" (Matthew 26:24).

Matthew 27:6–8 reports that the chief priests took the "blood money" from Judas and bought a potter's field as a place for burying foreigners (thus fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 11:12–13). Acts 1:18–19 continues the story of what happened after Judas' death and gives some additional information. Luke reports, "With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood." The additional detail we learn from Luke is that, after [Judas hanged himself](#), his dead body fell into the very field purchased with his ill-gotten gains.

Given the fact of Judas' close proximity to Jesus during three years of ministry, it is hard to imagine how he could follow through on such a dastardly betrayal. Judas' story teaches us to guard against small, gradual failings that gain strength and power in our lives and that could open the door to more deadly influences. His story is also a great reminder that appearances can be deceiving. Jesus taught, "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" (Matthew 7:22–23).

Related Resources:

- [Why did Jesus choose Judas?](#)
- [How did Judas die? Do the accounts of Judas' death contradict?](#)
- [What is the gospel of Judas?](#)
- [Was Judas Iscariot forgiven / saved?](#)
- [Why did Judas betray Jesus?](#)

John 18:3 Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, *came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

- **Judas:** John 13:2,27-30 Mt 26:47,55 Mk 14:43,44,48 Lu 22:47-53 Ac 1:16
- **cohort:** John 18:12 Ps 3:1,2 22:12

Related Passages:

Matthew 26:47-50+ While He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came up accompanied by a large crowd with swords and clubs, who came from the chief priests and elders of the people. 48 Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him." 49 Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. 50 And Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him. =

Mark 14:43-48+ Immediately while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, *came up accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs, who were from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders 44 Now he who was betraying Him had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him and lead Him away under guard." 45 After coming, Judas immediately went to Him, saying, "Rabbi!" and kissed Him. 46 They laid hands on Him and seized Him. 47 But one of those who stood by drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. 48 And Jesus said to them, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me, as you would against a robber?"

Luke 22:47-53+ While He was still speaking, behold, a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. 48 But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" 49 When those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" 50 And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. 51 But Jesus answered and said, "Stop! No more of this." And He touched his ear and healed him. 52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber? 53 "While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours."

THE ADVERSARIES DESCEND ON THE SON OF MAN

They come swooping in like flesh hungry buzzards and vultures ready to pounce on their prey.

Judas (possessed by Satan - Lk 22:3+) **then** ([oun](#)), **having received** ([lambano](#)) **the Roman cohort** ([speira](#)) - This was a cosmic confrontation of Light versus darkness, of good versus evil. Keep in mind that Pilate would have most likely the one who approved this arrest and may have sent such a large number to prevent an uprising, which he knew would have been potentially detrimental to his tenure as governor. **Having received** refers to the antecedent act which was necessary for the consummation of his evil deed. Judas received the payment to betray and then **received** the Roman squad of up to 600 soldiers, a tenth of a legion, who during feast times were stationed in the Fortress of Antonio next to the Temple to impede riots during these crowded festival times.

NET NOTE on "a cohort." - The word [σπεράν](#) ([speiran](#)) is a technical term for a Roman cohort, normally a force of 600 men (one tenth of a legion). It was under the command of a [χιλίαρχος](#) ([chiliarchos](#), Jn 18:12). Because of the improbability of an entire cohort being sent to arrest a single man, some have suggested that [σπεράν](#) here refers only to a maniple, a force of 200. But the use of the word here does not necessarily mean the entire cohort was present on this mission, but only that it was the cohort which performed the task (for example, saying the fire department put out the fire does not mean that every fireman belonging to the department was on the scene at the time). These Roman soldiers must have been ordered to accompany the servants of the chief priests and Pharisees by Pilate, since they would have been under the direct command of the Roman prefect or procurator. It is not difficult to understand why Pilate would have been willing to assist the Jewish authorities in such a way. With a huge crowd of pilgrims in Jerusalem for the Passover, the Romans would have been especially nervous about an uprising of some sort. No doubt the **chief priests and Pharisees** had informed Pilate that this man Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, or in the terms Pilate would understand, king of Israel.

William Barclay on cohort ([speira](#)) - That word, if it is correctly used, can have three meanings. It is the Greek word for a Roman cohort and a cohort had six hundred men. If it was a cohort of auxiliary soldiers, a

[speira](#) had one thousand men, two hundred and forty cavalry and seven hundred and sixty infantry. Sometimes, much more rarely, the word is used for the detachment of men called a maniple which was made up of two hundred men.

Related Resource: BORROW [Roman society and Roman law in the New Testament](#) by A N Sherwin-White

And officers ([huperetes](#)) **from the chief priests** ([archiereus](#)) **and the Pharisees** - CSB = "temple police from the chief priests." NLT = "temple guards." NRS = "police from the chief priests" There is some disagreement on the identity of the **Officers from the chief priests** as some feel this another way to describe the "[temple police](#)," Jews who the Romans allowed as the only Jewish armed corps (see [note](#)). The Temple Police were at the disposal of the Sanhedrin. The Temple police were apparently the officers who had already failed to arrest Jesus once (see John 7:32, 45, 46) Luke alludes to the Temple police in Acts 4:1-3 and Acts 5:22-27

Philo describes the duties of the temple police "Some of these are stationed at the doors as gatekeepers at the very entrances, some within [the temple area] in front of the sanctuary to prevent any unlawful person from setting foot thereon, either intentionally or unintentionally. Some patrol around it turn by turn in relays by appointment night and day, keeping watch."

NET NOTE The phrase "**officers of the chief priests and Pharisees**" was not the temple police but was "a comprehensive name for the groups represented in the ruling council (the Sanhedrin) as in John 7:32, 45; 18:3, 12, 18, 22; 19:6. They are different from the Levites who served as "temple police" according to K. H. Rengstorf (TDNT 8:540). In John 7:32ff. these officers had made an unsuccessful attempt to arrest Jesus, and perhaps this is part of the reason why their leaders had made sure they were accompanied by Roman soldiers this time. No more mistakes were to be tolerated.

Came there with lanterns and torches and weapons ([hoplon](#)) - It is interesting that at Passover there would have been a full moon allowing considerable visibility at night. Regardless of this fact, the evil band felt they needed more light. And not only did they feel a need for light but for weapons in case there was opposition (which there actually was by one named Peter!)

At that time Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as you would against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me. (Matthew 26:55+)

NET NOTE "Mention of the **lanterns and torches** suggests a detail remembered by one who was an eyewitness, but in connection with the light/darkness motif of John's Gospel, it is a vivid reminder that it is night; the darkness has come at last (cf. Jn 13:30)."

Adam Clarke on significance of the **lanterns and torches** - "With these they had intended to search the corners and caverns, provided Christ had hidden himself; for they could not have needed them for any other purpose, it being now the fourteenth day of the moon's age, in the month Nisan, and consequently she appeared full and bright."

Utlej on **weapons**" The swords were carried by Roman soldiers (cf. Jn 6:64; 13:1, 11) and the clubs were carried by the Temple police (cf. Mt. 26:47; Mark 14:43; Luke 22:52).

Cohort (4686) [speira](#) was a Roman military technical term for the tenth part of a legion, normally containing 600 troops (Acts 10.1). **Speira** also could refer to a detachment of soldiers as in a troop, band or company (Jn 18.3)

Bob Utlej on **Italian cohort** - Usually a Roman cohort is made up of 600 men. This particular one was made up of a thousand Roman volunteers who were stationed in Syria. We know from historical evidence that they were called an auxiliary cohort

John Phillips on **Italian cohort** - The Italian cohort would have been a cohort levied (caused to enlist) in Italy.

Larkin - A cohort had ten centuries and was the equivalent of a modern military battalion. This battalion was an auxiliary unit, not part of a regular Roman legion. Such a battalion of archers was first made up of Roman soldiers and then filled out in the provinces. ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

Wikipedia - A **cohort** (from the Latin *cohors*, plural *cohortes*) was a standard tactical military unit of a Roman legion, though the standard changed with time and situation, and was composed of between 360-800 soldiers. A cohort is considered to be the equivalent of a modern military [battalion](#).

Gilbrant - In its earliest occurrences in classical Greek **speira** described anything "twisted or wound around or together" (Liddell-Scott). Thus it could be used of a "band" of men, a tactical unit of soldiers. In classical usage it can also denote the coils of a serpent, a mode of hairdressing, a knot in wood, etc. However, a "cohort" is its only meaning in the New Testament, a translation of the Latin *cohors*. (In other Greek literature *speira* also represents manipulus, one-third of a cohort.) The "cohort" in the regular Roman legions typically had 600 men

but could number as many as 1,000 in the auxiliary forces (all New Testament references, apparently; see Bruce, New International Commentary on the New Testament, Acts, p.202). One “cohort” was stationed in Jerusalem while Judea was a Roman province. This cohort was active in the arrest of Jesus (John 18:3,12), in His crucifixion (Matthew 27:27; Mark 15:16), and in the arrest of Paul (Acts 21:31). Two other “cohorts” are mentioned by name: one originally made up of volunteers recruited in Italy (Acts 10:1), the other (Acts 27:1) wearing the name of Emperor Augustus, “a title of honor bestowed on select cohorts of auxiliary troops” (ibid., p.477). ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

Zodhiates adds **speira** was “Spoken of a band from the guards of the temple (John 18:3, 12). These were Levites who filled the menial offices of the temple and kept watch by night (Sept.: Ps. 134:1 [cf. 2 Kings 12:9; 25:18; see especially 1 Chr. 9:17, 27ff.]). They were under the command of officers called *stratēgōs* <G4755>, temple wardens ([Luke 22:52](#)), or *chilārchos* <G5506>, colonels or chief captains, commanders of one thousand soldiers.” (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:3

How completely the traitor must have been in the power of Satan, and how hardened and callous he must have grown, that he could lead “thither” the men who were going to arrest the Saviour! Truly it was by wicked hands that Christ was taken, and crucified, and slain; yet, unconsciously, these evil men were carrying out “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” How strangely were they equipped for their deed of darkness! “With lanterns and torches and weapons.” They were coming to the Light of the world bearing “lanterns and torches”; and armed with “weapons” that they might use against “the Lamb of God.” If he had wished to deliver himself, all their “weapons” would have been in vain, and their “lanterns and torches” would not have revealed him, even with the help of the full moon, which was probably shining at the time.

It does not matter much about the band of men and officers with lanterns and torches and weapons, but the dreadful part of the narrative is that they were led by one who had been a disciple of Christ, one who had been numbered with the apostles. Is Christ still betrayed by his professed friends? Yes, it is so, but may you and I never be guilty of that terrible crime! Yet why should we not unless the grace of God should prevent it? We are of the same flesh and blood as Judas; and although we might not be tempted by a sum of money, we may be tempted by a sinful pleasure or by a sinful shame. Lest we should be led astray, let us pray that we may not enter into temptation, and especially ask that we may be preserved from betraying our Lord, as Judas did.

“Lanterns” to give light to the Sun, “torches” to find out the Light of the world; “Weapons” with which to fight with the Lamb of God, the unarmed Sufferer. Strange treatment this for him who came to save and bless!

Pharisees (5330)([pharisaïos](#)) is transliterated from the Hebrew **parash** (06567 - to separate) from Aramaic word **peras** (06537) (“Peres” in Da 5:28-note), signifying to separate, owing to a different manner of life from that of the general public. After the resettling of the Jewish people in Judea on their return from the Babylonian captivity, there were two religious groups among them. One party contented themselves with following only what was written in the Law of Moses. These were called **Zadikim**, the righteous. The other group added the constitutions and traditions of the elders, as well as other rigorous observances, to the Law and voluntarily complied with them. They were called **Chasidim** or the pious. From the Zadikim the sects of the Sadducees and Karaites were derived. From the Chasidim were derived the Pharisees and the Essenes. The Pharisees were the most influential of the three major Jewish sects (the other two being the [Sadducees](#) and the [Essenes](#)).

PRINCIPLE TENETS OF PHARISEES: In opposition to those of the Sadducees, and the former group maintained the existence of angels and spirits and the doctrine of the resurrection (Acts 23:8), which the latter party denied (Mt 22:23; Mk 12:18; Lu 20:27). The Pharisees made everything dependent upon God and fate (Josephus, The Jewish Wars, ii.8.14). However, they did not deny the role of the human will in affecting events (Josephus, Antiquities, xviii.1.3).

ZEAL FOR TRADITION: The Pharisees distinguished themselves with their zeal for the traditions of the elders, which they taught was derived from the same fountain as the written Word itself, claiming both to have been delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai (Mt 15:1-6; Mk 7:3-5). See also *parádosis* (3862), tradition, and *éntalma* (1778), a religious precept versus *entole* (1785), commandment. ([See more detailed notes from William Barclay](#))

There were **more Pharisees than Sadducees** (according to [Josephus, Ant. 17.2.4](#) there were more than 6,000 Pharisees at this time). Ironically, it was their zeal for the law that caused the Pharisees to become focused on rituals and externally keeping the law. They abandoned true religion of the heart for mere outward behavior modification and ritual (cf. Mt. 15:3–6). Despite their zeal for God’s law, they were “blind guides of the blind” (Mt. 15:14), who made their proselytes doubly worthy of the hell to which they themselves were headed

(Mt. 23:15). The complex set of man-made rules and regulations was a crushing, unbearable burden (Mt. 23:4; Acts 15:10). In any case, keeping the law could never save anyone, "because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified" (Ro 3:20; cf. 3:28; Gal. 2:16; 3:11, 24; 5:4)—a truth that the zealous Pharisee Saul of Tarsus eventually realized (Phil 3:4–11).

Temple Police ([Jewish Encyclopedia](#)). The Temple had a police force of its own, most of its officers being Levites. These were the gatekeepers ("sho'arim"; I Chron. ix. 17, 24-27, xxvi. 12-18), the watchmen that guarded the entrance to the Temple mount, and those that had charge of the cleaning of its precincts (Philo, ed. Cohn, iii. 210). Levites were stationed at twenty-one points in the Temple court; at three of them priests kept watch during the night. A captain patrolled with a lantern, to see that the watchmen were at their posts; and if one was found sleeping, the captain had the right to beat him and to set fire to his garments (Mid. i. 1, 2). The opening and the closing of the gates, considered to be a very difficult task, and requiring, according to Josephus ("B. J." vi. 5, § 3; "Contra Ap." ii. 10), the services of at least twenty men, was also one of the watchmen's duties; and a special officer was appointed to superintend that work (Sheḳ. v. 1; comp. Schürer, "Gesch." Eng. ed., division ii., i. 264-268; see Temple).

The Mishnah (Ket. xiii. 1) mentions two judges of "gezerot" (lit. "prohibitions," "decrees"; see Gezerah), Admon ben Gaddai and Hanan ben Abishalom (Hanan the Egyptian), who were in Jerusalem during the latter part of the second commonwealth, and the baraita quoted in the Gemara (Ket. 105a) adds one more, named Nahum the Mede. The meaning of the term "gezerot" in this connection, and the significance and functions of these judges, have been variously explained by modern scholars (see Frankel, "Darke ha-Mishnah," p. 61; idem, in "Monatsschrift," 1852, p. 247, note 5; Weiss, "Dor," i. 193; Sidon, "Eine Magistratur in Jerusalem," in Berliner's "Magazin," 1890, pp. 198 et seq.; Grünwald, ib. 1891, p. 60); but it is safe to assume that the functions of these judges were similar to those of modern police magistrates (comp. Yer. Ket. xiii. 1), although they may have had also some judicial authority in petty cases. These, unlike the judges of courts of justice, received a stipulated salary from the Temple treasury ("Terumat ha-Lishkah," Sheḳ. iv. 2). Each of them was allowed ninety-nine manahs per annum, which sum, if not sufficient for his support, might be increased (Ket. 105a; comp. "Yad," Sheḳalim, iv. 7, where the annual salary is given as ninety manahs).

David Black says "The [historical present](#) describes a past event as though it were actually taking place: λέγουσιν α τ περ α τ ς, they spoke to him about her (Mark 1:30). Here the present is a pictorial tense, displaying the action vividly before our eyes. In English we often use the historical present when recounting personal experiences ("then he says to me"). (BORROW [It's Still Greek to Me page 106](#))

Historical presents in John 18 - Jn 18:3 - came; Jn 18:4 - said; Jn 18:17 - said; Jn 18:26 - said; Jn 18:29 - said; Jn 18:38 - said

John 18:4 So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and *said to them, "Whom do you seek?"

- **knowing:** John 10:17,18 13:1 19:28 Mt 16:21 17:22,23 Mt 20:18,19 Mt 26:2,21,31 Mk 10:33,34 Lu 18:31-33 Lk 24:6,7,44 Ac 2:28 4:24-28 20:22-23
- **Whom:** 1Ki 18:10,14-18 Ne 6:11 Ps 3:6 27:3 Pr 28:1 1Pe 4:1

Related Passages:

John 13:11 For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean."

Mark 8:31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

John 2:24 But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,

THE OMNISCIENCE AND ACCEPTANCE BY THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL

So Jesus ([Iesous](#)), **knowing** ([eido](#)- beyond a shadow of a doubt) **all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and *said** ([historical present](#)) **to them**, "Whom do you seek? - **Knowing** ([eido](#)) indicates Jesus' question was rhetorical. He knew because in His [divine omniscience](#) He knew every detail of the plot being played out against Him. Jesus went forth and did not draw back in fear. This was His hour and this was the cup He was to drink to the dregs! Jesus **went forth** rather than shrinking back and He spoke the words **Whom do you seek?** which focuses the danger on Himself and not on His disciples.

THOUGHT- Jesus had no fear for He knew He was in the center of God's will. That can be our mindset also when we know we are in the center of the Father's will even though we are in difficult circumstances!

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:4

Because of his divinity, he knew all that would come upon him, but what a wondrous manhood his was that, although he knew all that would befall him, he went forth calm and composed, resigned to his Father's will and said to those who had come to seize him, "Whom seek ye?" I think he is saying to some of us, "whom seek ye?" We have not come here to slay him; we have not come here to fight against him, and lead him away to crucify him; yet I hope that we can truly say that we have come seeking Jesus. If this be really your heart's desire, it shall surely be fulfilled to you.

Stephen Olford - What grace is this! What love! "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13). But this Man handed himself over to His enemies, not His friends. They had come with lanterns and torches and weapons – they were His enemies.

It was night when this greatest of incidents took place. Judas knew that the Lord Jesus resorted to the garden, but probably could not distinguish Him right away in the dim light of the torches and lanterns. But the blessed Master, with His face set to do His Father's will, never flinched, but walked out to meet His enemies, saying, "I am He" (John 18:5).

Lord, give me the love that knows no fear– the perfect Love.

John 18:5 They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He *said to them, "I am *He*." And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them.

- **Jesus:** John 1:46 19:19 Mt 2:23 21:11
- **stood:** Isa 3:9 Jer 8:12

ANOTHER DRAMATIC "I AM" STATEMENT

They answered Him, "Jesus ([lesous](#)) the [Nazarene](#)." He *said to them, "**I am *He***." - The name **Nazarene** recalls Nathanael question in Jn 1:46 "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" And of course the answer is "Yes!" Note the "*He*" in italics indicates it is not in the original Greek. Using the [ego eimi](#) Jesus is equating Himself with Yahweh in Ex 3:14+ were "God said to Moses, "I AM (Lxx - [ego eimi](#)) WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

I am (ego eimi) in Gospel of John - Jn. 4:26; Jn. 6:20; Jn. 6:35; Jn. 6:41; Jn. 6:48; Jn. 6:51; Jn. 8:12; Jn. 8:18; Jn. 8:24; Jn. 8:28; Jn. 8:58; Jn. 9:9; Jn. 10:7; Jn. 10:9; Jn. 10:11; Jn. 10:14; Jn. 11:25; Jn. 13:19; Jn. 14:6; Jn. 15:1; Jn. 15:5; Jn. 18:5; Jn. 18:6; Jn. 18:8;

NET NOTE - The author does not state precisely who from the group of soldiers and temple police replied to Jesus at this point. It may have been the commander of the Roman soldiers, although his presence is not explicitly mentioned until 18:12. It may also have been one of the officers of the chief priests. To the answer given, "Jesus the Nazarene," Jesus replies "I am [he]."

John Trapp on Jesus the Nazarene - "They called him Jesus of Nazareth by way of reproach. He takes it upon him, and wears it for a crown. And should not we do likewise?"

And [Judas](#) also, who was betraying ([paradidomi](#)) Him, was standing with them - I love this description. Judas was **standing with them**, but not for long! He would soon be falling with them! Jesus was trying to get his attention, but to no avail. Also keep in mind who was possessing Judas. It was Satan and here we in the "power encounter" a devil possessed man is no match for the omnipotent God!

NET NOTE - This is a parenthetical note by the author. Before he states the response to Jesus' identification of himself, the author inserts a parenthetical note that Judas, again identified as the one who betrayed him (cf. Jn 18:2), was standing with the group of soldiers and officers of the chief priests. Many commentators have considered this to be an awkward insertion, but in fact it heightens considerably the dramatic effect of the response to Jesus' self-identification in the following verse, and has the added effect of informing the reader that along with the others the betrayer himself ironically falls down at Jesus' feet (Jn 18:6).

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:4-5

Or, "I am." It is remarkable that Jesus should, in his betrayal, twice use this expression, thus uttering the very name of Jehovah.

Notice, dear friends, that the word "he" is in italics, showing that it is not in the original. Our Lord here twice used the name of Jehovah, I AM,— as he did on certain other memorable occasions. It was most fitting that, as he was going out to die, he should declare that it was no mere man who was about to suffer on the cross, but that, while he was truly man, he was also "very God of very God."

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:5

What a hardened wretch he must have been to be able to stand with them! One would have thought that, having betrayed his Master, he would have hidden himself away for shame, but no, "Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them." His heart must have been steeled.

Or, rather, "I Am," pronouncing the words with a divine dignity which had a startling effect upon them.

It seems as if our Lord intended to let them realize something of his divine power and glory, for the utterance of that august expression, I am which is his Father's name, staggered them, and they fell to the ground. Do you not wonder that they did not rise up, and go away and leave him after they had fallen at his feet and asked his forgiveness? They did not so act, for the power of fear when it is not accompanied by love is very small. There was enough power in it to make them fall down to the ground, but there was not power enough in it to make them fall at Christ's feet confessing their sin.

James Smith - CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS AT THE HANDS OF MEN JOHN 18

1. Betrayed by the Hypocritical, Jn 18:5
2. Defended by the Passionate, Jn 18:10–11
3. Smitten by the Unreasonable, Jn 18:21–23
4. Denied by the Cowardly, Jn 18:25
5. Shunned by Self-righteous Jn 18:28
6. Questioned by the Ambitious Jn 18:33–38; ch. 19:1
7. Mocked by the Frivolous, Jn 18:19–23

Greg Laurie - A TERRIBLE, HOLY MOMENT - John 18:4-6 (borrow [Every day with Jesus](#))

YOU WOULDN'T EXPECT God and the devil ever to be working toward the same objective, but for one, brief moment, in a sense they were.

Two forces in the Garden of Gethsemane moved simultaneously toward the same destination. On one hand marched the devil with his cronies; on the other side moved God. That's right: God.

We don't often think of it this way, but God was at work to bring Jesus to the cross. Acts 2:23 says, "Him, being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death." It's a curious thing that God and the devil would ever work toward the same goal. But here, for a moment, they did just that.

Obviously, they had two vastly different purposes. The devil wanted to destroy Jesus. The Lord had made havoc of the devil's kingdom and Satan wanted to stop Him in His tracks.

God the Father had a different purpose. He too wanted to see Jesus die, but only because of what His death would accomplish. Through Jesus' death, countless millions would live. Those who had been separated from Him by sin would now have free access into His presence. Through Jesus' death, God would take up residence in the hearts of all who turned from their sin and trusted in Christ.

At last, all the players had been assembled. The devil had gathered a mob to arrest Jesus. But before He was taken away, we are given one last glimpse of Jesus' true nature. He said to the crowd, "Whom are you seeking?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth," and He replied, "I am."

You may have noticed I did not use the word "He," though it may be printed in your Bible. That's because it is not there in the original Greek text. Jesus did not say, "I am He." He said, "I am." Jesus spoke the same words that thundered from the burning bush to Moses when God said, "Tell them 'I am that I am' " (see Exodus 3:14). This was a claim of deity.

When Jesus spoke those two words, He demonstrated His power one last time. In an instant, everyone in the mob fell backward. There was chaos—torches, spears, and swords went flying. People were falling on top of each other—all at the mighty words of the God-man.

Some might be tempted to think, Poor Jesus—they were taking Him away, but their concern would be misplaced. Jesus could have said, "I am and you were. Bye!" and that would have been it. The same God who spoke creation into existence could certainly have

taken care of an angry rabble. But He didn't. He came to die for those people, the very ones who were intent on nailing Him to a cross.

Judas delivered the last insult by betraying Jesus with a kiss. And there's one little element in Matthew's Gospel that we often miss. As Judas was betraying Him, Jesus said, "Friend, why have you come?" (Matthew 26:50). Imagine—He called him "friend." But Judas was so blinded by his own sin he missed that Jesus was giving him one last chance to repent.

Peter stood by watching all of this and growing frustrated and angry. He couldn't stand it. Finally he pulled out his sword, took a wild swing, and an ear went flying. He cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, a man named Malchus. Jesus immediately touched the man's ear and healed him. It is worth noting the last miracle Jesus performed during His earthly ministry was to heal the ear of a man who had come to crucify Him.

Jesus then said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?" (John 18:11). So they took Jesus away. But He was not taken against His will. He purposefully went. It would not have been hard for Him to put a stop to this at any moment He chose. He Himself said to Peter, "Do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53).

That must have been a hard day for the angels. Here was the One they loved so dearly, and they could not come and deliver Him. Angels are powerful beings. One move and they could have airlifted Jesus out of this dilemma quicker than you could blink an eye. I'm sure those angels were ready with swords drawn, saying, "Please say the word. Let us lop off some Roman heads. We would gladly comply. Let us deliver You. Call out to us." You might say the angels were on red alert, ready to go.

But Jesus would not use His executive privilege. Jesus would not call upon them. They were under orders not to intervene at this terrible, holy moment. They had to wait. He had to go through with this. If He had called for their help, you and I could not have been saved. He had to go through this for us.

Nothing happened in this garden by accident. This was no interruption in an otherwise incredibly successful ministry. It was Jesus' goal and purpose from the very beginning.

And at last, the stage had been set for the final act.

Jesus came at just the right time to save you. Read Romans 5:1–11. Remember, you are precious to God!

John 18:6 So when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.

- **they drew back:** Doubtless by the interposition of Divine power; and it was thus shown that Jesus voluntarily resigned himself into their hands. 2Ki 1:9-15 Ps 27:2 40:14 70:2,3 129:5 Lu 9:54-56 Ac 4:29,30

THE POWER OF "I AM"

So when He said to them, "I am (ego eimi) He," they drew back ([aperchomai](#)) and fell ([pipto](#)) to the ground - Jesus spoke and His enemies **fell to the ground**. What did He speak? **"I AM"**! He is telling them He is God, just like He did in Jn 8:58 where, like this crowd, they also sought to kill Him (Jn 8:59+)! Imagine the encouraging effect this display of Jesus' [omnipotence](#) would have on the eleven disciples cowering in the background! And one was perhaps a bit too zealous and encouraged as we watch him act in the flesh in Jn 18:10! This large contingent of men was overwhelmed by the Word speaking the Words "I Am!"

THOUGHT - There are many men who fell to the ground when they had a supernatural encounter with the Lord (Moses - Ex 3:5-6, Josh 5:13-14, Ezekiel - Ezek 1:28, 3:23, Paul - Acts 9:3-5, John - Rev 1:17). The difference is that these men fell voluntarily. Falling as a reverential response was a their volitional choice. The men in the garden had no choice to not fall because of the supernatural power of God manifest in the voice of Jesus' "I AM." This is Jesus' first of two incredible miracles at the time of His arrest, this one demonstrating His omnipotence. What should have been the response of His antagonists? They should have stayed on the ground, gotten on their knees, and acknowledged He was God. It was their "golden opportunity" to repent and believe and avoid eternal punishment! So even in this dark moment, Jesus demonstrates His compassion via this miracle so that men might see and believe. Sadly, as far as we know none did. Could some of those witnesses of this miracle in the garden have been among the 3000 Jews that believed after Peter's sermon in Acts 2:41+? We'll find out in Heaven!

Rod Mattoon - When you oppose Christ, you go backwards and spiritually fall. These men fell backward in fear, not forward in fervency, in love, and adoration for Him. ([Treasures from Scripture](#))

NET NOTE - When Jesus said to those who came to arrest him "I am," they retreated and fell to the ground. L. Morris says that "it is

possible that those in front recoiled from Jesus' unexpected advance, so that they bumped those behind them, causing them to stumble and fall" (John [NICNT], 743–44). Perhaps this is what in fact happened on the scene; but the theological significance given to this event by the author implies that more is involved. The reaction on the part of those who came to arrest Jesus comes in response to his affirmation that he is indeed the one they are seeking, Jesus the Nazarene. But Jesus makes this affirmation of his identity using a formula which the reader has encountered before in the Fourth Gospel, e.g., Jn 8:24, 28, 58. Jesus has applied to himself the divine Name of Ex 3:14, "I AM." Therefore this amounts to something of a theophany which causes even his enemies to recoil and prostrate themselves, so that Jesus has to ask a second time, "Who are you looking for?" This is a vivid reminder to the reader of the Gospel that even in this dark hour, Jesus holds ultimate power over his enemies and the powers of darkness, because he is the one who bears the divine Name.

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:6

The simple utterance of his name drove them from him, and smote them to the earth; what would have happened if he had put forth his almighty power?

Christ's almighty power cast them down at once. He needed not to lift his hand or even his finger; he only said, "I am," and "they went backward, and fell to the ground."

Robert Hawker —John 18:4, 5, 6.

WHAT a glorious Scripture is this! Ponder it well, my soul; for of all the miracles of thy Jesus, there is not one more sweet and satisfactory to contemplate. Yesterday thou wert looking at thy Redeemer under a heavy cloud. Look at him as he is here represented, for he is still, in this transaction, in the same garden of Gethsemane; and behold how the Godhead shone forth with a glory surpassing all description. Observe what a willing sacrifice was Jesus. He knew the hour was come; for he had said so. He doth not wait to be taken, and by wicked hands to be crucified and slain; but he goeth forth to surrender himself. Yes! Jesus did not go to the garden of Gethsemane for nothing: he knew Judas would be there: he knew the powers of darkness would be there: he knew how his whole soul would be in an agony; but there Jesus would go. He had said at the table to his disciples, "Arise, let us go hence." Precious, precious Jesus! how endearing to my poor soul is this sweet view of thy readiness and earnestness to become a sacrifice for the sins of thy people. Thou hadst this baptism, Lord, to be baptized with; and how wast thou straitened until it was accomplished! There was a time, dear Lord, when the multitudes sought for thee to make thee a king, so convinced were they, for the moment, who thou wert; and then thou didst hide thyself from them. But now, when thine enemies come to make thee king with a crown of thorns, and to nail thy sacred body to the cross, thou didst hasten to meet them. Well might the Prophet say, thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people! Look at this scripture again, my soul. "Whom seek ye?" said Jesus. Did they not know him? It was a light night, most probably, for the moon was then at the full: beside, the seekers of Christ had lanterns and torches. How was it they did not know him? Didst thou for the moment, dearest Lord! do by them as thine angels at the gate of Lot by the Sodomites, so cause their eyes to be holden that they should not know thee? Was there somewhat of a miracle in this also? But, my soul, behold the wonder of wonders that followed: no sooner had Jesus said to their inquiry, Whom seek ye? "I am he," than they went backward and fell to the ground. Was there indeed some sudden overpowering emanation of the Godhead, breaking through the vail of Jesus's flesh, which induced this effect? Was it ever known, ever heard of, in any age or period of the world, of such an effect before? Supposing all the monarchs of the earth, with the mightiest armies of men, could be assembled together, how should such an event be induced by the breath of their mouth? Contemplate this, my soul! again and again. Rejoice, my soul! in this view of thy Saviour; for never, surely, was a greater miracle of thy Redeemer's wrought: and remember how soon it took place after his agony. Never go to Gethsemane in meditation, without taking the recollection of it with thee. Behold the Man; behold the God! Here was nothing exercised by Jesus; no weapon, no threat, no denunciation, no appeal to the Father. Jesus only simply said, "I am he," and they fell to the earth. Precious Jesus! what a volume of instruction doth it afford. If such was the effect in the day of thy flesh, how sure is that Scripture concerning the day of thy power, in which it is said, "The Lord shall consume the wicked with the breath of his mouth, and destroy them with the brightness of his coming." 2 Thess. 2:8. And if, my soul, there was such power in the word of thy Saviour, when he only said to his enemies, "I am he," why shouldest thou not feel all the sweetness and gracious power of his love, when he saith, "Fear not, I am he," behold I am with thee: it is I, be not afraid." Ponder, my soul, in this view also, the awful state of a soul hardened by sin. The enemies of Jesus, though they fell to the ground at his mere word, felt no change, no compunction at the display of it. Judas also was with them. Yes! he fell also; but Satan had entered into him, and a reprobate mind marked him as the son of perdition. Oh! precious Jesus! how fully read to thy people, in every part of thy word, is the solemn truth, that grace makes all the difference between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. Oh! keep me, Lord, and I shall be well kept; for unto thee do I lift up my soul.

There are seven great I AMs in this gospel of the Son of God. In these He couples the divine title I AM with metaphors that elucidate His relationship to the world and particularly to the redeemed. We see the expression first in Exodus chapter 3, verse 14, where God reveals Himself to Moses as 'I AM that I AM'. In our present context, the title 'I AM' is found in 18:5 and 18:8. In 18:4, Jesus asked Judas' assembled band of men and officers, 'Whom seek ye?' When they replied, 'Jesus of Nazareth', He said 'I am He' or, more literally, 'I am'. Again, in 18:8, He said, 'I have told you that I am'. He was responding to questions that assumed His humanity. His answers were attestations of His Deity.

It is interesting that John, the beloved disciple, stated his purpose in writing the book in these words, 'But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name', 20:30–31. The one they knew as Jesus was indeed a man, but He was not merely a man. Jesus was not only the Christ, but He was also the Son of God. The Jewish audiences of the Lord Jesus recognized that the title Son of God was a statement of His deity, John 19:7; Matt. 26:63. His deity was pronounced by the prophet when he wrote, 'Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel ... God with us', Matt. 1:23; Isa. 7:14. His humanity was complete, sin apart. His deity was absolute for He was God and He was with us.

The first few verses of John's Gospel are a statement of the character of the 'I AM'. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God', John 1:1. He was not created. He was the Creator. He had no beginning. He was the beginning. But, John says, 'the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us', 1:14. The Word did not cease to be the Word when He became flesh. His glory was not laid aside. However, the outward manifestation of that glory was temporarily veiled.

He is God. He is the ever-existing One. He is the unchanging One

TRAGEDY AT GETHSEMANE (See [NIV, Once-A-Day: Walk with Jesus: 365 Days in the New Testament](#))

Jesus ... asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said ... [Then] they drew back and fell to the ground.

JOHN 18:4–6

"Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out" (John 18:4).

He—and he alone—knew every step on the road to the cross.

The soldiers coming to seize him thought he was no more than a dangerous rebel who needed to be silenced. But they were unsuspecting participants in a divine drama, as G. Campbell Morgan explains.

WALK WITH G. CAMPBELL MORGAN

"There and then a remarkable thing happened, which was a supreme evidence of his majesty.

"He faced the soldiers and said, 'Who is it you want?' They replied, 'Jesus of Nazareth.'

"He then said, 'I am.' Our versions render it 'I am he.' Quite literally he simply said, 'I am.'

"When he did so, a cohort of Roman soldiers, the temple police, the rulers themselves, and Judas guiding them, drew back and fell to the ground.

"I think that something in the bearing of Jesus as he stood confronting his enemies caused their shrinking and fall. They could not lay a hand on him.

"Right to the very end he revealed the fact that no man could lay hands upon him until his hour was come.

" 'I am,' he said, and they drew back and fell. Thus the majesty of Jesus was revealed."

WALK CLOSER TO GOD

Sovereign.

It's a big word to describe a majestic God. The God who knows the end from the beginning.

Human perception could see only tragedy in Gethsemane. Yet the plan of God was unfolding in all its perfection.

The soldiers came to Jesus to arrest him. Instead, his "I am" drove them to fall on their faces.

Let the thought of his "I am" cause you to fall before him as well.

John 18:7 Therefore He again asked them, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus the Nazarene."

- Nazarene: Jn 18:5, Jn 19:18

SAME QUESTION SAME ANSWER

Therefore He again asked them, “Whom do you seek?” And they said, “Jesus the Nazarene.”- One can imagine they were a bit hesitant to answer again after their initial answer brought an “I Am” power encounter! The fact that they have to ask again suggests that they do not know the Lord which makes sense for men without Christ do not know the Lord (cf 2Co 4:3-4).

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:7

Do they return again to the fray? Having once felt Christ’s divine power, do they summon courage enough to attack him again? Yes, for there is no limit to the malice and impudence of the human heart.

QUESTION - [Why is Jesus often referred to as Jesus of Nazareth? | GotQuestions ...](#)

ANSWER - Jesus was referred to as “Jesus of Nazareth” for several reasons. For one thing, in Bible times people were often identified by their native area or place of residence. The man who carried Jesus’ cross when He was no longer able to, for example, was called Simon of Cyrene, noting his name and his place of residence (Luke 23:26). This distinguishes him from all other Simons and from all other residents of Cyrene who were not named Simon. Although Bethlehem was the place of Jesus’ birth, Nazareth was the place where Jesus had lived until He began His public ministry, and therefore He is said to be “of Nazareth.”

Matthew 2:23 tells us that Joseph settled his family in Nazareth—after returning from Egypt where he had fled to protect Jesus from Herod—in order to fulfill “what was said through the prophets: ‘He will be called a Nazarene.’” The words here are not found in any of the books of the Old Testament, and there has been much difficulty in ascertaining the meaning of this passage. Most commentators agree that the prophecies respecting the coming Messiah were that He was to be of humble origin and would be despised and rejected (Isaiah 53; Psalm 22) and that the phrase “he shall be called” means the same as “He shall be.” When Matthew says, therefore, that the prophecies were “fulfilled,” his meaning is that the predictions of the prophets that the Messiah would be of a low and despised condition and would be rejected, were fully accomplished in His being an inhabitant of Nazareth.

The phrase “Jesus of Nazareth” is first used in the Bible by Phillip who, after being called by Jesus to follow Him, told Nathanael, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (John 1:45). By calling Him Jesus of Nazareth, Phillip may also have been making a statement about the lowliness of His birth. The character of the people of Nazareth was such that they were despised and condemned. Nathanael’s response, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” (John 1:46) would seem to indicate such. To come from Nazareth, therefore, or to be a Nazarene, was the same as to be despised, or to be esteemed of low birth. The Messiah who would come to save His people would be “a root out of dry ground, having no form or comeliness” (Isaiah 53:2). He would be “despised and rejected of men” from whom men hid their faces and “esteemed him not” (Isaiah 53:3).

Jesus of Nazareth was born and grew up in humble circumstances, but His impact on the world has been greater than anyone ever born before or since. He came to “save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21), a feat that could be accomplished by none other than God incarnate.

Related Resource:

- [What prophecy is Matthew 2:23 referring to regarding Jesus being a Nazarene?](#)

John 18:8 Jesus answered, “I told you that I am *He*; so if you seek Me, **let these go their way,”**

- **if you seek Me:** Isa 53:6 Eph 5:25
- **let these go their way:** John 10:28 13:1,36 16:32 Mt 26:56 Mk 14:50-52 1Co 10:13 2Co 12:9 1Pe 5:7

Related Passages:

Matthew 26:31+ Then Jesus *said to them, “You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, ‘I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK SHALL BE SCATTERED.’”

John 16:32+ “Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.



Betrayed By A Kiss - Mt 26:48-49

ONE LAST "EGO EIMI"

Jesus ([lesous](#)) answered, "I told you that I am *He*; so if you seek ([zeteo](#)) Me, **let** ([aphiemi](#)) these go their way ([hupago](#)) - If you seek ([zeteo](#)) Me is a first class condition which assumes this is true and could be translated "Since you seek Me." Jesus then issues a command ([aorist imperative](#) - Do this now!) to let the eleven go. This is not a suggestion but an authoritative command. **Go their way** ([hupago](#)) in the sense of to go away unimpeded, without being arrested. The fact that they had just experienced Jesus' power certainly would have predisposed the arresting party to be willing to hear and heed His command to let the disciples go, for fear of what might happen if they disobeyed! It is interesting that John does not describe his or the other 10 disciples departure, but clearly that event transpired (after the ear episode with Peter).

The preservation of the 11 fulfilled His earlier words...

John 6:39+ "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

John 17:12+ "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished (NOTE THE CERTAINTY JESUS EXPRESSES BECAUSE THIS IS STATED IN PAST TENSE BEFORE THE ACTUAL ARREST). but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.

Letting the eleven go would fulfill the prophecy from Zech 13:7+ which says "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, And against the man, My Associate," Declares the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd **that the sheep may be scattered**; And I will turn My hand against the little ones."

NET NOTE - A second time Jesus replied, "I told you that I am *he*," identifying Himself as the one they are seeking. Jesus also added, "If you are looking for me, let these men go." Jesus successfully diverted attention from his disciples by getting the soldiers and officers of the chief priests to admit (twice) that it is only Him they were after. Even in this hour Jesus still protected and cared for his own, giving himself up on their behalf. By handing himself over to his enemies, Jesus ensured that his disciples went free. From the perspective of the author, this is acting out beforehand what Jesus will actually do for his followers when he goes to the cross.

Spurgeon Study Bible - 'So if you're looking for me, let these men go.' This was to fulfill the words he had said: 'I have not lost one of those you have given me.' " After the words "to fulfill," we naturally expect some Old Testament text—something said by David in the Psalms or by one of the prophets—but it is "to fulfill the words he had said." It was but an hour or two since Jesus uttered this sentence, but it is already among the inspired Scriptures, and it had begun to take effect and to be fulfilled at once. It is not the age of God's Word but the truth of it that constitutes its power. What Christ had said that night in prayer was as true and as much the Word of the King as what God had spoken by his Spirit through holy men ages before.

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:8

It is very cheering to us to think of our Lord meeting all the enemies of his people, gathering up all their weapons into his own heart that his people might go free. You and I, if we had been in such a case, would have been hurried and worried, and our fears would have made us selfish. We should have forgotten our poor friends who were with us; but Jesus thought not of himself, he thought of his poor trembling disciples, and therefore he said, "If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way."

C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening - John 18:8

Mark, my soul, the care which Jesus manifested even in his hour of trial, towards the sheep of his hand! The ruling passion is strong in death. He resigns himself to the enemy, but he interposes a word of power to set his disciples free. As to himself, like a sheep before her shearers he is dumb and opened not his mouth, but for his disciples' sake he speaks with almighty energy. Herein is love, constant, self-forgetting, faithful love. But is there not far more here than is to be found upon the surface? Have we not the very soul and spirit of the atonement in these words? The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, and pleads that they must therefore go free. The Surety is bound, and justice demands that those for whom he stands a substitute should go their way. In the midst of Egypt's bondage, that voice rings as a word of power, "Let these go their way." Out of slavery of sin and Satan the redeemed must come. In every cell of the dungeons of Despair, the sound is echoed, "Let these go their way," and forth come Despondency and Much-afraid. Satan hears the well-known voice, and lifts his foot from the neck of the fallen; and Death hears it, and the grave opens her gates to let the dead arise. Their way is one of progress, holiness, triumph, glory, and none shall dare to stay them in it. No lion shall be on their way, neither shall any ravenous beast go up thereon. "The hind of the morning" has drawn the cruel hunters upon himself, and now the most timid roes and hinds of the field may graze at perfect peace among the lilies of his loves. The thunder-cloud has burst over the Cross of Calvary, and the pilgrims of Zion shall never be smitten by the bolts of vengeance. Come, my heart, rejoice in the immunity which thy Redeemer has secured thee, and bless his name all the day, and every day.

C H Spurgeon - The captive Saviour freeing his people (Sermon [The Captive Saviour Freeing His People](#))

'Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.' John 18:8-9

When you suffer tribulation, affliction and adversity, do not think that God is punishing you for your sins, for no child of God can be punished for sin penally. Let me not be misunderstood. A man is brought before God first of all as a criminal before a judge. You and I have stood there. Through Christ's blood and righteousness we have been absolved and acquitted as before God the Judge, and it is not possible for the law to lay so much as the weight of a feather upon us since we have been perfectly acquitted. In all the pains and sufferings which a Christian may endure, there is not so much as a single ounce of penal infliction. God cannot punish a man whom he has pardoned and who is then adopted into God's family. Now, if he shall as a child offend against his father's rule, he will be chastened for it. Everyone can see the distinction between chastening by a father and punishment by a judge. If your child were to steal, you would not think of punishing that child in the light in which the judge would do it, who would commit him to imprisonment for having broken the law; but you chasten your child yourself, not so much to avenge the law as for the child's good, that he may not do this evil thing again. So our heavenly Father chastens his people with the rod of the covenant, but he never punishes them with the sword of vengeance. There is a difference between chastening and punishing. Punishing is from a judge; Christ has suffered all such punishment, so that no penal infliction can fall upon a soul that believes in him; but we may have chastisement which comes to us as the result of a father's love, and not as the result of a judge's anger; we have felt such chastisement, and have reason to bless God for it.

John Bennett [Day by Day: Bible Commands](#) **LET THESE GO THEIR WAY**

The hour of our Lord's betrayal and arrest had arrived. In Gethsemane, Jesus and the eleven confronted Judas and the band of soldiers. The Lord, John emphasises, was fully aware of all that was about to befall Him, yet He stood in regal dignity facing the armed arresting party. He was the One in full control of the situation. At His word, His would-be captors fell back. They recovered themselves and approached Him once more. Again He asked them who they sought. At their reply, 'Jesus of Nazareth', He reminded them that He had already identified Himself.

Then, speaking with authority, the Lord told the detachment, 'If therefore you seek me, let these go their way'. This command reveals 'the caring heart of Jesus', MILNE. With unspeakable horrors ahead of Him, He did not forget the little band of disciples around Him. He thought more of them than of Himself. If He is to be taken, then let the eleven be freed. He well knew their weakness. He spared them the fiery trial of the judgement halls of Caiaphas and Pilate. Over the last few hours the Lord had counselled and comforted the disciples. Now, 'He mercifully makes for them a way of escape', RYLE. He draws the full hatred of His foes to Himself and deflects it from His disciples. The Shepherd was taken, the sheep escaped unharmed.

This is a vivid picture of what was to transpire in a few hours on the cross. There the Saviour would stand in our place, taking the full brunt of our guilt upon Him so that we might go free.

On the throne, the Lord still watches over His people with the deepest affection. His tender heart still beats for us all. He preserves us and protects us in all the onslaughts made against us by our spiritual enemies. It is His care for us that grants us eternal security and maintains us through all our trials and difficulties. John specifically emphasises for us that this command of Christ fulfils His saying, spoken shortly before in His prayer of consecration, that of all whom the Father had given Him He had lost none, John

John 18:9 to fulfill the word which He spoke, “Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one.”

- **Of those whom You have given Me:** John 17:12

Related Passages:

John 16:32+ “Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

John 17:9+ “I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of **those (ELEVEN) whom You have given Me**; for they are Yours;

JESUS FULFILLS PROPHETIC PROMISE TO PROTECT THE ELEVEN

To fulfill ([pleroo](#)) the word ([logos](#)) which He spoke, “Of those whom You have given Me I lost ([apollumi](#)) (absolutely) **not one** ([oudeis](#)) - As in His prayer Jesus acknowledges the eleven as the gift of the Father to Him. Jesus' protection of the eleven had been foretold in His high priestly prayer where He declared "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled." (Jn 17:12+)

ESV Study Bible ([BORROW](#)) - Jesus' statement summarizes Jn 17:12, which in turn refers back to Jn 6:39 and Jn 10:28. Jesus is portrayed as the “good shepherd” who voluntarily chooses death to save the life of his “sheep” (cf. Jn 10:11, 15, 17–18, 28). Their physical preservation symbolizes their spiritual preservation.

NET NOTE - This action of Jesus on behalf of his disciples is interpreted by the author as a fulfillment of Jesus' own words: “I have not lost a single one of those whom you gave me.” Here it is Jesus' own words, rather than the OT scriptures, which are quoted. This same formula will be used by the author again of Jesus' words in Jn 18:32, but the verb is used elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel to describe the NT fulfillment of OT passages (Jn 12:38, 13:18, 15:25, 17:12, 19:24, and Jn 19:36). It is a bit difficult to determine the exact referent, since the words of Jesus quoted in this verse are not an exact reproduction of a saying of Jesus elsewhere in John's Gospel. Although some have identified the saying with John 6:39, the closest parallel is in Jn 17:12, where the betrayer, Judas, is specifically excluded. The words quoted here in Jn 18:9 appear to be a free rendition of Jn 17:12.

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:9

He had only said that just a little while before, but this verse shows us that the New Testament is as sure to be fulfilled as the Old Testament. It was a new saying, not then written, yet it had all the life and power of God in it; so it must live, and must be fulfilled.

John 18:10 Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus.

- John 18:26 Mt 26:51-54 Mk 14:30,47 Lu 22:33,49-51

Related Passages:

Matthew 26:51+ And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear.

Mark 14:46-47+ They laid hands on Him and seized Him. 47 But one of those who stood by drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear.

Luke 22:38+ (LUKE RECORDS THEY ACTUALLY HAD 2 SWORDS) They said, “Lord, look, here are two swords.” And He said to them, “It is enough.”

Luke 22:49-51+ When those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?” 50 And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. 51 But

Jesus answered and said, "Stop! No more of this." And **He touched his ear and healed him.**

PETER AIMS FOR HEAD SEVERS EAR

Simon Peter then, having a sword ([machaira](#)), drew ([helko](#)) it and struck ([paio](#)) the high priest's ([archiereus](#)) slave ([doulos](#)), and cut off ([apokopto](#)) his right ear - All the gospels record this event but only John mentions the name of the instigator. It is possible that Peter's earlier statement that served as motivation for he said "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You." All the disciples said the same thing too." (Mt 26:35+) This event is surely evidence of God's intervention to save Malchus and save Peter, for Peter was clearly not just seeking to remove an ear but was seeking to stab him in the head and had he done so, he may have lost his head! While Peter's action cannot be condoned, it does indicate that he was willing to die on Jesus' behalf. On the other hand, the fact that he acted in the flesh to try to defend Jesus shows that he still not understand (or believe) what Jesus had repeatedly told the disciples -- that He must die!

*Loyalty may be commendable,
but God's battles cannot be won with man's weapons!*
-- Larry Richards

John Calvin quips "It is exceedingly thoughtless in Peter to try to prove his faith by the sword, while he could not do so by his tongue."

And the slave's ([doulos](#)) name ([onoma](#)) was Malchus - Only John gives us this detail. Presumably the identification of Malchus suggests John's eyewitness account. The fact that John knew the name Malchus is another connection with the household of the high priest, an association that comes into play in John 18:16.

D L Moody - Peter's rashness in smiting the man helped to identify him, and led to his denial of Christ. (see Jn 18:26-27).

Larry Richards - Loyalty may be commendable, but God's battles cannot be won with man's weapons! The ultimate example is, of course, Christ's own death on the cross. The world tries to conquer with swords and spears, with bombs and machine guns. Christ conquers with a cross. Victory is not found in superiority, but in sacrifice. Conquest is not killing, but making alive. We make a terrible mistake if we take up the world's weapons to fight our spiritual battles. (BORROW [The 365 day devotional commentary PAGE 806](#))

John Calvin - If we see nothing faulty in the zeal of Peter, we still ought to be dissatisfied with it on the single ground that Christ declares that he is displeased with it. But we see that it is not because of Peter that Christ does not turn aside from death, and that his name is not exposed to perpetual disgrace. In offering violence to the captain and the soldiers, Peter acts the part of a ruffian because he resists the power that God has appointed. Christ already is hated by the world more than enough, so this single deed of Peter might give further plausibility to all the accusations that Christ's enemies falsely bring against him. Besides, it is exceedingly thoughtless of Peter to attempt to prove his faith by the sword, while he cannot do so by his tongue. When called to confess Christ, Peter denies his Master, yet now, without his Master's authority, Peter raises a tumult with his sword. Warned by so striking an example, let us learn to keep our zeal within proper bounds. As the wantonness of our flesh is always eager to attempt more than God commands, let us learn that our zeal will fail to succeed whenever we venture to undertake anything contrary to the Word of God. Sometimes the commencement of our venture gives us flattering promises, but we shall at length be punished for our rashness. Let obedience, therefore, be the foundation of all that we undertake. We are also reminded here that those who have resolved to plead the cause of Christ do not always conduct themselves so skillfully that they do not commit some fault. Therefore, we ought to more earnestly entreat the Lord to guide us in every action by the spirit of prudence.

NET NOTE - The account of the attack on the high priest's slave contains details which suggest eyewitness testimony. It is also mentioned in all three synoptic gospels, but only John records that the disciple involved was Peter, whose impulsive behavior has already been alluded to (John 13:37). Likewise only John gives the name of the victim, Malchus, who is described as the high priest's slave. John and Mark (Jn 14:47) both use the word ὀτρίον (ōtarion, a double diminutive) to describe what was cut off, and this may indicate only part of the right ear (for example, the earlobe).

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:10

Peter struck at his head; he was not content with trying to wound, he meant to kill Malchus, and he did "cut off his right ear."

Here is every prospect of a fight. Simon Peter has begun it, and the armed men will be eager to continue it. We always have our Simon Peters about, — men of emotion, men of impulse, men of impetuosity. They are not a bad sort of Christians, and I do not know what we should do without them. Our cold, frozen thinkers would not do much without our warmhearted Peters to help to thaw

them. Still, Peter was only one of the twelve apostles; and though they call him the head of the church, he made a very poor head of the church just then. He drew a sword, and began to use that carnal weapon by cutting off the right ear of Malchus. It was a great mercy that the Lord was there to heal the ear, and to forbid the use of the sword in his defense.

Sword (3162) **machaira** from **mache** = a knife, sword) refers to a relatively short sword (even dagger) for cutting and stabbing. It was extremely difficult to approach a soldier well trained in the use of the **machaira** for it was short and could be moved rapidly. The fact that it was two-edged made it possible to strike on either side without changing its position in the hand, and its razor-sharp point could pierce armor. Proper use of Scripture in spiritual warfare enables the Christian to stand fast "against the wiles of the devil".

QUESTION - [Why did Peter cut off the ear of Malchus, one of the people trying to arrest Jesus?](#)

ANSWER - The [Synoptic Gospels](#) detail one of the most dramatic events during Jesus' arrest in Gethsemane: a disciple cutting off the right ear the high priest's servant (Matthew 26:51; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:50). John's account then fills in the details: [Peter](#) is the one who struck and cut off the ear of the servant, whose name was Malchus (John 18:10).

It was a late night after a full day, and Peter was thoroughly exhausted. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter had dozed off several times while he was supposed to be praying, and each time Jesus roused him. Then a mob led by Judas—a fellow disciple and friend—appeared in Gethsemane to arrest Jesus. Peter, shocked and scared, acted on impulse to defend his Lord. He swung his sword and cut off Malchus' ear in the chaos. Jesus rebuked Peter: "Put your sword back in its place, . . . for all who draw the sword will die by the sword" (Matthew 26:52). Jesus then let Himself be taken.

It is strange that Peter would cut off someone's ear in this situation. It is unlikely that he was aiming for Malchus' ear and nothing else; he wanted to cause a more serious injury. There are two ways Malchus' ear could have been hit: 1) Peter swung his sword down vertically, aiming to cleave Malchus' skull, or 2) Peter swung his sword horizontally, aiming for the head or neck. In either case, Malchus moved his head out of the way of the swinging sword, which grazed the right side of his head and removed his ear. Dodging the sword probably saved Malchus' life.

Why did Peter engage in swordplay in the first place? It seems the rash and tired apostle believed that Jesus needed help to prevent His arrest, but Jesus corrected him. Jesus had all kinds of help available to Him: "Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?" (Matthew 26:53–54). This arrest was not an accident. Jesus knew it was coming. If Christ had really wanted to prevent His crucifixion, He would not have needed Peter's little sword; all the angels of heaven would have come in an instant if summoned. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled (Mark 14:49), and Jesus had to go to the cross and "drink the cup the Father has given Me" (John 18:11). After halting the violence, Jesus reattached and healed Malchus' ear (Luke 22:51). Amazingly, even after witnessing that miracle of mercy, the mob proceeded to arrest the Lord.

Jesus submitted to His Father's plan and let Himself be apprehended and crucified to fulfill Scripture and pay for the sins of the world. Peter, who at that time had "merely human concerns" in mind (Matthew 16:23), tried to prevent the arrest with violence. Peter's earth-bound perspective, fear, and exhaustion clouded his judgment the rest of that night (see Matthew 26:69–75; Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:54–62; John 18:15–18, 25–27).

John 18:11 So Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"

- **Put the sword into the sheath:** John 18:36 2Co 6:7 10:4 Eph 6:11-17
- **the cup:** Ps 75:8 Eze 23:31 Mt 20:22 Mt 26:39,42 Mk 10:38,39 Mk 14:35,36 Lu 22:42 Heb 12:2
- **the Father:** John 11:41,42 Jn 12:27,28 15:10 17:24 20:17 Lu 12:30 Ro 8:15-18 Heb 12:5-10

Related Passages:

Psalm 75:8+ For **a cup** is in the hand of the LORD, and the wine foams; It is well mixed, and He pours out of this; Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs.

Matthew 26:51-54+ And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. 52 Then Jesus *said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. 53 "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? 54 "How then will the

Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?"

Matthew 20:22+ But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They *said to Him, "We are able."

Matthew 26:39; 42+ And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." 42 He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done."

Mark 10:38-39+ But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" 39 They said to Him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized."

Mark 14:35, 36+ And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. 36 And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will."

Luke 22:42 saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

JESUS FOCUS ON DRINKING THE FATHER'S CUP

So Jesus ([lesous](#)) said to Peter, "Put the sword ([machaira](#)) into the sheath - Jesus issues a sharp command **put the sword in the [aorist imperative](#)** (Do it now!) Matthew adds that after Jesus had commanded Peter to put the sword away, He warned him that "all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? "How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?" " (Mt 26:52-54+) Notice that last question. His point is that His arrest, trial and crucifixion were prophesied and must be fulfilled.

As alluded to earlier, Peter still does not fully understand why Jesus must die on the Cross. Recall Peter's rebuke of Jesus in Mt 16:21-22+ which prompted Him to say to Peter **Get** behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." (Mt 16:23+)

The cup ([poterion](#)) which the Father ([pater](#)) has given Me, shall I not drink it? - The Greek structure expects an affirmative reply, a "yes" answer. **The cup** is a metaphor which refers to Jesus' suffering, agony and death on the Cross (cf Lk. 22:42+). Note that His **Father** gave His Son this **cup** which ultimately was "filled with" the wrath of God poured out against sin. Jesus drank **the cup** that we should have drunk and in so doing He became the [substitutionary sacrifice](#) for all who would receive His free gift of eternal life by grace through faith. Jesus' drinking of the cup of God's wrath would propitiate the Father (See [propitiation](#) or [here](#))

Utley on the cup - This is a metaphor used in the OT as a symbol of person's destiny, usually in a negative sense (cf. Ps. 11:6; 60:3; 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15, 16, 27-28).

NET NOTE - Jesus continues with what most would take to be a rhetorical question expecting a positive reply: "Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?" The cup is also mentioned in Gethsemane in the synoptics (Mt 26:39, Mk 14:36, and Lk 22:42). In connection with the synoptic accounts it is mentioned in Jesus' prayer; this occurrence certainly complements the synoptic accounts if Jesus had only shortly before finished praying about this. Only here in the Fourth Gospel is it specifically said that the cup is given to Jesus to drink by the Father, but again this is consistent with the synoptic mention of the cup in Jesus' prayer: It is the cup of suffering which Jesus is about to undergo.

Cup (4221)([poterion](#)) refers to a literal cup (Mt 10:42; Mt 26:27; Mk 7:4; 9:41; 14:23; Lk 11:39; 22:17, 20; 1 Cor 10:16, 21; 11:25a, 27f; Rev 17:4). The cup stands, by metonymy, for what it contains (Lk 22:20b; 1 Cor 11:25b, 26. Figuratively it referred to undergoing a violent death (Mt 20:22f; 26:39, 42; Mk 10:38f; 14:36; Lk 22:42; Jn 18:11; Rev 14:10; 16:19; 18:6)

W E Vine - [poterion](#) = " (a) literal, as, e.g., in Matt. 10:42. The "cup" of blessing, 1 Cor. 10:16, is so named from the third (the fourth according to Edersheim) "cup" in the Jewish Passover feast, over which thanks and praise were given to God. This connection is not to be rejected on the ground that the church at Corinth was unfamiliar with Jewish customs. That the contrary was the case, see 1 Cor. 5:7;

(b) figurative, of one's lot or experience, joyous or sorrowful (frequent in the Psalms; cp. [Psa. 116:18](#), "cup of salvation"); in the NT it is used most frequently of the sufferings of Christ, Matt. 20:22, 23; Matt. 26:39; Mark 10:38, 39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42; John 18:11; also of the evil deeds of Babylon, Rev. 17:4; Rev.

18:6; of Divine punishments to be inflicted, Rev. 14:10; Rev. 16:19. Cp. Ps. 11:6; Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:17; Jer. 25:15; Ezek. 23:32-34; Zech. 12:2. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

Gilbrant - This noun can be found in classical Greek from the Fifth Century B.C. denoting a "cup, or drinking vessel" (Bauer). Potērion is the diminutive form of potēr, a "drinking cup." Potērion corresponds with the Old Testament Hebrew word for "cup" (kôṣ) which means a container for holding fluid. It may be used with either a literal or symbolic meaning. In both the Old and New Testaments the cup may represent figuratively the portion that God measures out to man whether it be good or ill. Thus "cup" can represent either salvation and blessing (Psalm 116:13 [LXX 115:4]; 1 Corinthians 10:16) or divine judgment (Isaiah 51:17; Revelation 16:19).

New Testament Usage - In the New Testament the cup represents the sufferings of Christ—the divinely appointed portion of sufferings which were necessary to bring about man's redemption (Matthew 20:22; 26:39 and parallel passages; John 18:11). The cup of Holy Communion is called "the cup of blessing" (1 Corinthians 10:16). Some Bible scholars identify the cup of blessing with the third or fourth cup of the Passover Feast over which thanks and praise to God were spoken (Luke 22:17). This understanding imparts to the observance of Holy Communion the idea of celebration in thanks and praise to God for Jesus Christ. This cup also represents the fellowship of believers with Christ and with one another as being distinctly different and separate from the evil "cup" (companionship) of sinners (1 Corinthians 10:21). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Zodhiates adds " Metonymically cup as used for the contents of a cup, a cupful, cup of wine, spoken of the wine drunk at the Eucharist or communion (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 10:16, "The cup of blessing"; 11:25, "this cup is the new testament"). To drink the cup (1 Cor. 10:21, "the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils," i.e., both the cups, whether consecrated to the Lord or devoted to idols; 11:26-28 [cf. John 4:14]).

Metaphorically from the Hebr. meaning lot, portion, under the emblem of a cup which God presents to be drunk, either for good (Sept.: Ps. 16:5; 23:5) or for evil (Sept.: Ps. 11:6; 75:8; Ezek. 23:31ff.). In the NT the cup of sorrow, meaning the bitter lot which awaited the Lord in His sufferings and death (Matt. 20:22, 23; 26:39, 42; Mark 10:38, 39; 14:36; Luke 22:42; John 18:11). Spoken also of the cup from which God in His wrath causes the nations to drink so that they reel and stagger to destruction (Rev. 14:10; 16:19; 18:6). (BORROW [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament PAGE 1204](#))

POTERION IN NT - 31X/28V - cup(30), cups(1). Matt. 10:42; Matt. 20:22; Matt. 20:23; Matt. 23:25; Matt. 23:26; Matt. 26:27; Matt. 26:39; Mk. 7:4; Mk. 9:41; Mk. 10:38; Mk. 10:39; Mk. 14:23; Mk. 14:36; Lk. 11:39; Lk. 22:17; Lk. 22:20; Lk. 22:42; Jn. 18:11; 1 Co. 10:16; 1 Co. 10:21; 1 Co. 11:25; 1 Co. 11:26; 1 Co. 11:27; 1 Co. 11:28; Rev. 14:10; Rev. 16:19; Rev. 17:4; Rev. 18:6

POTERION IN THE SEPTUAGINT - Gen. 40:11; Gen. 40:13; Gen. 40:21; 2 Sam. 12:3; 1 Ki. 7:26; 2 Chr. 4:5; Est. 1:7; Ps. 11:6; Ps. 16:5; Ps. 23:5; Ps. 75:8; Ps. 116:13; Prov. 23:31; Isa. 51:17 "the LORD'S hand the **cup** of His anger"; Isa. 51:22 "I have taken out of your hand the **cup** of reeling, The chalice of My anger; You will never drink it again. "; Jer. 16:7 = "nor give them a cup of consolation to drink"; Jer. 25:15 = " "Take this **cup** of the wine of wrath from My hand and cause all the nations to whom I send you to drink it."; Jer. 25:17; Jer. 25:28; Jer. 35:5; Jer. 49:12; Jer. 51:7; Lam. 2:13; Lam. 4:21; Ezek. 23:31; Ezek. 23:32; Ezek. 23:33; Hab. 2:16 = "The **cup** in the LORD'S right hand will come around to you, And utter disgrace will come upon your glory"

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:11

Here is another helpful lesson for any of you who have a trial before you. Do not seek to set the trial aside, use no wrong means to escape from affliction; drink your ordained cup. Though Peter's sword is handy, put it up into its sheath, and do not use it. Bear and forbear, on and on and on to the end of the chapter. Drink the cup that your Father gives you. However bitter it is, it is sweetened by the fact that he gives it to you. Shall not a true son of God drink the cup that his Father presents to him? There can be no harm in it, and it must work you some real good; so put up your sword, and lift the cup to your lips, and drink it to the dregs.

Streams in the Desert - "Shall I refuse to drink the cup of sorrow which the Father has given me to drink?" (John 18:11.) (Weymouth.)

GOD takes a thousand times more pains with us than the artist with his picture, by many touches of sorrow, and by many colors of circumstance, to bring us into the form which is the highest and noblest in His sight, if only we receive His gifts of myrrh in the right spirit.

But when the cup is put away, and these feelings are stifled or unheeded, a greater injury is done to the soul that can ever be

amended. For no heart can conceive in what surpassing love God giveth us this myrrh; yet this which we ought to receive to our souls' good we suffer to pass by us in our sleepy indifference, and nothing comes of it.

Then we come and complain: "Alas, Lord! I am so dry, and it is so dark within me!" I tell thee, dear child, open thy heart to the pain, and it will do thee more good than if thou wert full of feeling and devoutness.—Tauler.

"The cry of man's anguish went up to God,
'Lord take away pain:
The shadow that darkens the world Thou hast made,
The close-coiling chain
That strangles the heart, the burden that weighs
On the wings that would soar,
Lord, take away pain from the world Thou hast made,
That it love Thee the more.'

"Then answered the Lord to the cry of His world:
'Shall I take away pain,
And with it the power of the soul to endure,
Made strong by the strain?
Shall I take away pity, that knits heart to heart
And sacrifice high?
Will ye lose all your heroes that lift from the fire
White brows to the sky?
Shall I take away love that redeems with a price
And smiles at its loss?
Can ye spare from your lives that would climb unto Me
The Christ on His cross?"

Streams in the Desert - "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11.)

THIS was a greater thing to say and do than to calm the seas or raise the dead. Prophets and apostles could work wondrous miracles, but they could not always do and suffer the will of God. To do and suffer God's will is still the highest form of faith, the most sublime Christian achievement. To have the bright aspirations of a young life forever blasted; to bear a daily burden never congenial and to see no relief; to be pinched by poverty when you only desire a competency for the good and comfort of loved ones; to be fettered by some incurable physical disability; to be stripped bare of loved ones until you stand alone to meet the shocks of life—to be able to say in such a school of discipline, "The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?"—this is faith at its highest and spiritual success at the crowning point. Great faith is exhibited not so much in ability to do as to suffer.—Dr. Charles Parkhurst.

To have a sympathizing God we must have a suffering Saviour, and there is no true fellow-feeling with another save in the heart of him who has been afflicted like him.

We cannot do good to others save at a cost to ourselves, and our afflictions are the price we pay for our ability to sympathize. He who would be a helper, must first be a sufferer. He who would be a saviour must somewhere and somehow have been upon a cross; and we cannot have the highest happiness of life in succoring others without tasting the cup which Jesus drank, and submitting to the baptism wherewith He was baptized.

The most comforting of David's psalms were pressed out by suffering; and if Paul had not had his thorn in the flesh we had missed much of that tenderness which quivers in so many of his letters.

The present circumstance, which presses so hard against you (if surrendered to Christ), is the best shaped tool in the Father's hand to chisel you for eternity. Trust Him, then. Do not push away the instrument lest you lose its work."

"Strange and difficult indeed
We may find it,
But the blessing that we need
Is behind it."

The school of suffering graduates rare scholars.

I. The Cup of Suffering offered to Christ (John 18:11).

1. Its CONTENTS. "Betrayal." False accusations, mockery, desertion, death, curse.
2. Its NATURE "A cup." Not a well or spring.
3. The GIVER. "My Father."
4. Its ACCEPTANCE. "Shall I not drink it?"

II. The Cup of Salvation offered to us (Psalm 116:12, 13).

1. Its CONTENTS. Pardon, peace, paradise, salvation.
2. Its GIVER. "Gift of God."
3. Its ACCEPTANCE. "I will take the cup of salvation."

John Bennett [Day by Day: Bible Commands](#) PUT UP THY SWORD INTO THE SHEATH

No sooner had the Lord Jesus commanded the soldiers who were sent to arrest Him to let the eleven go free, than Peter lunged forward with a drawn sword in his hand. He cut off the right ear of Malchus, one of the high priest's servants. No doubt he aimed at his victim's head or neck, intending to kill him. Peter's thrust failed in its aim. Whether, at the human level, this was due to inexperience or excitement, it was ultimately due to God's providence that Malchus was not killed. Luke tells us that the Lord Jesus healed the wound and restored the ear, Luke 22:51.

The Master then ordered Peter to sheath his sword. Jesus used 'the language of firm and decided rebuke', RYLE. He was really telling Peter that He did not need the protection of physical force, however well intentioned; Peter's zeal was wholly misplaced. The gospel of Christ was not to be spread at the point of the sword. His cause was not to be maintained by worldly power. How much happier the history of the church would have been if that lesson had been taken to heart.

A deeper reason for this command is given in the rhetorical question which follows: 'the cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?' v. 11. These are 'great and momentous words', KRUMMACHER. They show that Peter's impulsive action closely paralleled His impetuous words at Caesarea-Philippi, where he attempted to rebuke the Lord Jesus, Matt. 16:22-23. On both occasions, he was trying to thwart the purpose of God that His Son should suffer and die. In doing so he was unknowingly acting as an agent of Satan. The Lord could easily have asked His Father to send more than twelve legions of angels to His aid. He did not do so. He had fully submitted Himself to drink the cup of suffering to its dregs. 'The awesome submission of Jesus', MILNE, shines out in this saying.

John does not record the agony of Gethsemane. Uniquely he does narrate this tremendous statement of its final result. The Lord Jesus was utterly committed to go all the way to the cross. There He would empty the awful cup of God's wrath against our sins. Not a drop remains for us!

Henry Morris - The Cup of the Lord

"Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (1 Cor. 10:21).

The "cup" is often used in the Bible as a figure of speech denoting some important spiritual doctrine. For example, there is the cup of sin and wickedness. "Ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter," Jesus told the hypocrites, "but within they are full of extortion and excess" (Matt. 23:25). Religious Babylon, the false church, is said to have "a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (Rev. 17:4).

God, however, has a cup of wrath. "For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them" (Ps. 75:8). "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation" (Rev. 14:10).

Yet, in His grace, His cup of wrath became the cup of His own sufferings, as He drank the cup in substitution for those who deserved it. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20).

Our own cup thereby becomes a glorious cup, imparting everlasting life. "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD" (Ps. 116:13). We can then testify, "My cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever" (Ps. 23:5-6).

At the Lord's table, as we remember His shed blood and broken body, we should reflect on all the cup symbolizes. "For as often as

ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26).

G Campbell Morgan - The cup which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it!—John 18.11 These words were spoken to Peter, in the moment when in love for his Master, and in mistaken zeal, he had struck a blow in order to attempt to deliver Him from the hands of His enemies. They are revealing words. They show us how the one dominant passion of all our Lord's life was still triumphant as He passed to death. He had but one passion, and that was to do His Father's will. The other Evangelists tell us how the question of this cup had just been raised in communion with His Father, and always under the constraint of that same master-passion. That hour of inquiry was over. The cup had been given Him to drink. Therefore there was no further question. In the form of the statement we discover His perfect rest; the cup had been given Him by His Father, by the One Who loved Him, by the One Who confided in Him. Therefore there could be no further question. The question raised and settled in communion could not be raised in any other form, or with any other beings. And once more, we see how the highest love, the love of God, must ever qualify, and often cancel, the suggestions made by other loves, however loyal and well-intentioned they may be. The love of God is always wise. The loves of men are often unintelligent. Of course, in our Lord we see all these things superlatively, but there are profound values in them for us, to which we do well to take heed. (BORROW [Life applications from every chapter of the Bible PAGE 324](#))

John 18:12 So the Roman cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him,

- **Roman cohort:** John 18:3 Mt 26:57 Mk 14:53 Lu 22:54
- **the commander:** Ac 21:31,37 22:24-28 23:10,17-22
- **bound:** Ge 22:9 40:3 Judges 16:21 Ps 118:27 Mt 27:2 Mk 15:1
- James Stalker's classic [Trial and Arrest of Jesus Christ](#) - 2. **THE ECCLESIASTICAL TRIAL** Matt. 26:57–68; Mark 14:51–65; Luke 22:54–71; John 18:12–14, 19–24.

Related Passages:

Matthew 26:56-57 But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets." Then all the disciples left Him and fled. 57 Those who had seized Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together.

John 16:32 "Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

Matthew 27:2 and they bound Him, and led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate the governor.

Mark 14:53 They led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes *gathered together.

Mark 15:1 Early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole Council, immediately held a consultation; and binding Jesus, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate.

Luke 22:54 Having arrested Him, they led Him away and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance.

JESUS ARRESTED AND BOUND

So the Roman cohort and the commander ([chiliarchos](#)) and the officers of the Jews ([Ioudaios](#)), arrested ([sullambano](#)) Jesus ([Iesous](#)) and bound ([deo](#)) Him - There was a concerted effort between the Romans and Jews in Jesus' arrest. Jews refers to the antagonistic Jewish leaders who "tasted blood" and wanted Jesus' life!

John Trapp has an interesting note on **bound** - "This was done as Irenaeus hath it, while the Deity rested; for he could as easily have delivered himself as he did his disciples, but this sacrifice was to be bound with cords to the altar (cf Ps 118:27); he was pinioned and manacled, as a malefactor."

NET NOTE - **Commander** - Greek "their chiliarch" (an officer in command of a thousand soldiers). In Greek the term *χιλίαρχος* (*chiliarchos*) literally described the "commander of a thousand," but it was used as the standard translation for the Latin *tribunus militum* or *tribunus militaris*, the military tribune who commanded a cohort of 600 men. Greek "**the Jews**." In NT usage the term *οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι* (*Ioudaioi*) may refer to the entire Jewish people, the residents of Jerusalem and surrounding territory, the authorities in Jerusalem, or merely those who were hostile to Jesus. (For further information see R. G. Bratcher, " 'The Jews' in the Gospel of

John,” Bible Translator 26 [1975]: 401–9.) Here the phrase refers to the Jewish leaders, who were named as “chief priests and Pharisees” in John 18:3.

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:12

When you are bound with sickness, or bound with weakness, or bound in any other way, do not complain. Your Master was bound, and I think we ought to be willing to be anything that Christ was. What was good enough for him is good enough for us. “They took Jesus, and bound him,” —

Annas had been high priest before, and he seems to have been regarded still as high priest and to have been a leading spirit amongst the adversaries of Christ. The old sinner would not go to bed that night until he had seen the man whom he hated brought bound before him. Sometimes hatred becomes a more powerful passion than even love; and here, while the disciples of Jesus all fled in terror, Annas, the Saviour’s bitter foe, was wide awake, and awaiting his arrival with those who had taken him captive.

J J Knapp - And Bound Him John 18:12

Just a moment earlier Jesus had thrown the whole band of soldiers to the ground by the calm word of self revelation: “I am he,” and now we read that those sent out to Him laid their hands on Him and bound Him. They did not take Him prisoner but He surrendered Himself to be bound, because He had just made them to feel His power and His majesty. It is this bound Jesus that demands our attention.

His hands were bound on His back with sturdy ropes; what hands? Hands that cleansed the lepers, fed the hungry, blessed the children. Hands that had wrought miracles, had opened blind eyes, had awakened the dead. Almighty, caring, helping, faithful hands that He had stretched out all the day long to a rebellious people. This was the reward of the world for the many benefits that had descended to it from these liberal hands; the binding of the Christ of God. It still happens today; people try to limit His influence, to bind His Word, to put bounds to the exercise of His power as much as possible. He enriched the world by teaching it the service of love towards the sick, the homeless and the fallen ones; however, many are the houses of mercy where His comforting gospel may not openly refresh the hearts... they bind Him. He sanctified labour by personally handling the tools, but who can count the labour unions where He is completely denied all jurisdiction... they bind Him. He honoured family life but in many families there is no place for His gospel; He made the light to shine above the graves but many descend into the womb of the earth without having His Name sound across the cemetery as the Resurrection and the Life... they bind Him.

However painful the sight of the bound Jesus may be, we should thank God that He did not break His bands like threads of flax. In the bands that He accepted lies the secret of our freedom as children of God. Hear how the prophet prophesied already ages earlier: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” In this manner the bound Jesus becomes more precious than anything to us. These were our bands that He accepted voluntarily to rescue us from them. Indeed, whoever is His, feels and experiences how He releases the bands of sin, unties the knots of unrighteousness, breaks the cuffs of the love of the world, yes, how He has even triumphantly broken the bands of darkness that would have awaited us in eternity!

John 18:13 and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.

- **led:** Mt 26:57
- **Annas:** Lu 3:2 Ac 4:6
- **that:** John 11:51

Related Passages:

Matthew 26:57 Those who had seized Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together.

JESUS ARRESTED (#1) & TAKEN TO ANNAS (#2)
Source: [ESV Global Study Bible](#)

**JESUS' FIRST TRIAL
BEFORE ANNAS**

and led ([apago](#)) Him to [Annas](#) first; for he was father-in-law of [Caiaphas](#), who was high priest that year - Only the Gospel of John describes this "pretrial" of Jesus. [Annas](#) the former High Priest still maintained some degree of power behind the scenes and thus was the first to "try" Jesus. Matthew 26:57 bypasses the pre-trial with Annas and says that "Those who had seized Jesus led Him away to [Caiaphas](#), the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together." As this dark night unfolds and merges into day, we will see that Jesus would be subjected to 6 "trials," three Jewish and three Roman.

Led ([apago](#)) is the word used to picture a shepherd who ties a rope about the neck of his sheep and then leads it down the path to where it needs to go. This word pictures exactly what happened to Jesus that night in the Garden of Gethsemane. He wasn't gagged and dragged to the high priest as one who was putting up a fight or resisting arrest. Instead, the Greek word [apago](#) plainly tells us that the soldiers lightly slipped a rope about Jesus' neck and led Him down the path as He followed behind, just like a sheep being led by a shepherd. Thus, the Roman soldiers and temple police led Him as a sheep to slaughter, just as Isaiah 53:7 had prophesied many centuries earlier. Specifically on that night, however, the soldiers led Jesus to Caiaphas the high priest.

Utley - According to Flavius Josephus, Annas was the High Priest from A.D. 6–15. He was appointed by Quirinius, governor of Syria and removed by Valerius Gratus. His relatives (5 sons and 1 grandson) succeeded him. Caiaphas (A.D. 18–36), his son-in-law, was his immediate successor. Annas was the real power behind the office. John depicts him as the first person to whom Jesus is taken (cf. 18:13, 19–22).

William Barclay on Annas - "There is a passage in the Talmud which says: 'Woe to the house of Annas! Woe to their serpent's hiss! They are High Priests; their sons are keepers of the treasury; their sons-in-law are guardians of the Temple; and their servants beat the people with staves.' Annas and his household were notorious."

Spurgeon adds "'At any rate, the Lord is led to Annas first, and we feel sure that there was a motive for that act. Annas, in some sense, had a priority in the peerage of enmity to Jesus; he was malignant, cruel, and unscrupulous enough to be premier in the ministry of persecutors."

NET NOTE - Jesus was taken first to [Annas](#). Only the Gospel of John mentions this pretrial hearing before Annas, and that Annas was the father-in-law of [Caiaphas](#), who is said to be high priest in that year. Caiaphas is also mentioned as being high priest in John 11:49. But in Jn 18:15, 16, 19, 22 Annas is called high priest. Annas is also referred to as high priest by Luke in Acts 4:6. Many scholars have dismissed these references as mistakes on the part of both Luke and John, but as mentioned above, John 11:49 and Jn 18:13 indicate that John knew that Caiaphas was high priest in the year that Jesus was crucified. This has led others to suggest that Annas and Caiaphas shared the high priesthood, but there is no historical evidence to support this view. Annas had been high priest from A.D. 6 to A.D. 15 when he was deposed by the Roman prefect Valerius Gratus (according to Josephus, Ant. 18.2.2 [18.34]). His five sons all eventually became high priests. The family was noted for its greed, wealth, and power. **There are a number of ways the references in both Luke and John to Annas being high priest may be explained.** Some Jews may have refused to recognize the changes in high priests effected by the Roman authorities, since according to the Torah the high priesthood was a lifetime office (Num 25:13). Another possibility is that it was simply customary to retain the title after a person had left the office as a courtesy, much as retired ambassadors are referred to as "Mr. Ambassador" or ex-presidents as "Mr. President." Finally, the use of the title by Luke and John may simply be a reflection of the real power behind the high priesthood of the time: Although Annas no longer technically held the office, he may well have managed to control those relatives of his who did hold it from behind the scenes. **In fact this seems most probable and would also explain why Jesus was brought to him immediately after his arrest for a sort of "pretrial hearing" before being sent on to the entire Sanhedrin.**

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:13-14

Christ could not die without the question of expediency turning up. I never knew any great sin in the world, nor any great heresy, nor any great combination of men to maintain it without the question of expediency coming under consideration. Expediency is the great Christ-killer. Many nowadays say to us, "Do not preach against error; it is not expedient to do so. Do not break away from evil associations; it is not expedient." How many there are of even good men who do certain things, not because they are right, but because they are expedient! But, believers in Jesus, in the name of your Lord I implore you to hate expediency, since it put Christ to death. It was a wicked expediency that would murder Christ in order to save a nation; but it did not really do so after all, for the guilt of slaying Christ brought upon the nation the glaring crime of deicide.

Led (bring, conduct, lead away or astray) ([520](#)) [apago](#) from **apó** = from + **ágō** = to carry, lead) means to carry or lead away, leading from one place to another. Leading an ox or donkey to water (Lk 13:15). In the figurative sense (passive voice) it meant to be deceived or be influenced "by mute idols" before they became believers (1 Cor 12:2) **Apago** was used as a legal term meaning to lead one from one point to another in legal proceedings (to trial, punishment, prison or execution), just as Jesus was "**led...away** to Caiaphas, the high priest." (Mt 26:57), "to Pilate" (Mt 27:2) and finally to be crucified (Mt 27:31, cf prison guards who were led away

[to execution] Acts 12:19). **Apago** meant to lead away a prisoner or condemned man (Mk 14:44; 15:16; Rev 13:10). **Apago** (intransitively) is used by Jesus to refer to a way which leads either to eternal punishment or eternal life (Mt 7:13-14-[note](#)).

Its range of definition extends from the simple idea of “to lead” or “to carry away” to the more technical notions of “to arrest” and “to bring before a magistrate.” It can describe God’s “driving” Israel into other lands (as punishment; Deuteronomy 28:36,37). In the Septuagint agago may refer to someone “escorting” (leading) another (e.g., 1 Ki 1:38) or “abducting” another (2 Chr 36:6; Jer 40:1 of being led away to Babylon; cf. Ps 125:5). But positively the Psalmist relied upon God to lead him (Ps 60:9; 108:10).

SUMMARY OF THE TRIALS OF JESUS

THE SIX MOCK TRIALS OF THE MESSIAH				
JESUS' THREE RELIGIOUS TRIALS				
	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Before Annas (Nighttime)				Jn 18:12-14,19-24
Before Caiaphas (Nighttime)	Mt 26:57-68	Mk 14:53-65	Lk 22:54, 63-65	-
Before Sanhedrin (Daytime)	Mt 27:1	Mk 15:1	Lk 22:66-71	-
JESUS' THREE CIVIL TRIALS				
Before Pilate	Mt 27:2, 11-14	Mk 15:1-5	Lk 23:1-5	Jn 18:28-38
Before Herod Antipas			Lk 23:6-12	
Before Pilate	Mt 27:15-26	Mk 15:6-15	Lk 23:13-25	Jn 18:39-19:16
<p>The following time-table has been suggested by James Smith (obviously these are estimates):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arrested and taken before Annas (John 18:13), 1–5 to 1.46 a.m. 2. Trial before Caiaphas (John 18:19), 1.46 to 2 a.m. 3. Taken before Sanhedrin (Matt. 26:59), about 2 a.m. 4. Trial before Sanhedrin (Luke 22:66–71), 5.6 a.m. to 5.50 a.m. 5. Taken before Pilate (Luke 23:1), 5.51 a.m. 6. Taken before Herod (Luke 23:7), 6 a.m. 7. Condemned and scourged (Matt. 27:26), after 6 a.m. 8. Crucified, 9 a.m. 				

QUESTION - [Who was Annas in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

ANSWER - Annas in the Bible was a powerful high priest who played key roles in the execution of Jesus Christ and in the persecution of the early church. Annas was appointed [high priest](#) of the Jerusalem temple around AD 6 by Quirinius, the Roman governor of Syria. He officially served as high priest until AD 15, when he was removed from office by Valerius Gratus, procurator of

Judea. However, Annas continued to exercise considerable influence as head over the high priestly clan for many years after that, including the time of John the Baptist's and Jesus Christ's public ministries: "During the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness" (Luke 3:2).

Five of Annas' sons, the most notable being Eleazar, and his son-in-law, [Joseph Caiaphas](#), succeeded Annas in the office of high priest. Caiaphas was, in fact, the official Roman-appointed high priest at the time of Jesus Christ's arrest, trial, and execution: "Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas" (Matthew 26:3).

Annas was born into an affluent and influential family. His name in Greek is Hannas, meaning "the Lord is gracious." As leader of the Sanhedrin, Annas sat at the height of Jewish aristocracy. He was wealthy, well-educated, and in league with the ruling Roman authorities. Even when he no longer formally held the title of high priest, Annas continued to command the power of the office.

After Jesus was arrested, He was taken first to Annas for a preliminary investigation, proving that Annas's high priestly status stretched beyond the official position: "Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year" (John 18:13). When Annas had finished questioning Jesus about "his disciples and his teaching," he sent Him to Caiaphas (John 18:19–24).

Later, Annas was involved in the persecution of the early church and appeared at the trial of Peter and John in Acts 4:1–22. After the healing of a lame beggar, Peter and John preached boldly in Jerusalem. The two disciples were arrested by the Sadducees and held in custody overnight. The next day, several members of the high priest's family, including [Annas and Caiaphas](#), were gathered with other Jewish rulers, elders, and teachers. They had Peter and John brought before them for questioning:

"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: 'Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone." Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved'" (Acts 4:8–12).

Peter and John spoke so boldly against Annas and the other religious leaders that the witnesses were astonished by their courage. The Jewish officials commanded them to stop speaking or teaching in the name of Jesus, but Peter and John replied,

"Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.' After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened" (Acts 4:19–21).

While Annas and other Jewish leaders tried to intimidate the early believers and prevent the spread of Christianity, their opposition only served to fan the flames of the gospel. With all the people praising God for the wonderful works being done, the Sanhedrin's threats did no good. Any further punishment of the disciples would have been a lost cause. Like these early believers, we, too, can stand against even the most difficult opposition with holy courage and proclaim God's message of salvation.

QUESTION - [What is the account of Annas and Caiaphas? | GotQuestions.org](#)

ANSWER - [Annas](#) and [Caiaphas](#) are two high priests mentioned during Jesus' public ministry (Luke 3:2). In that period of history, high priests were installed and removed by Roman rulers. While it is not recorded in the Bible, the tradition is that the Romans had deposed Annas and made Caiaphas the high priest. So, officially, Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas, was high priest during Jesus' ministry, but Annas, the former high priest, still held significant sway and was still called a high priest (John 18:13).

When Jesus was arrested in Gethsemane, He was brought before Annas to be questioned (John 18:13; 19–23). Annas sent Him to Caiaphas (John 18:24). The Sanhedrin was also involved in this questioning (Matthew 26:57). Jesus was led away from Caiaphas' house to stand before Pilate (John 18:28), who then sent Jesus to Herod (Luke 23:6–7), who returned Him to Pilate (Luke 23:11). Pilate eventually condemned Jesus to death by crucifixion, after declaring Him innocent three times (John 18:38; 19:4, 6).

[Jesus' trial](#) before Annas and Caiaphas was marked by false testimony and conflicting reports of what Jesus had done and said (Mark 14:56). Through it all, "Jesus remained silent and gave no answer" (verse 61). Caiaphas began to despair of finding enough evidence to put Jesus to death, but then he asked Him directly, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" (verse 61). Jesus answered, "I am. . . . And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (verse 62). At this, Caiaphas tore his clothes, decreed Jesus to be a blasphemer, and turned Him over to a mob who beat Him (verses 63–65).

Annas and Caiaphas are also mentioned in Acts 4:6 when Peter and John were questioned before the Jewish rulers: "Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family." Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter responded boldly. He gave credit to Jesus Christ of Nazareth for the healing of a lame man (Acts 3:1–10; 4:9–10), reminded the rulers that they had crucified Jesus, and proclaimed that God raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 4:10). Peter also declared that salvation is found in no one but Jesus (Acts 4:12). The Jewish authorities were astonished by the disciples' demeanor, particularly given that they were ordinary men, and recognized the disciples had been with Jesus. The rulers had been "greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 4:2) and wanted to halt the spread of the movement. So, despite the obvious work of God, they charged Peter and John to stop teaching in Jesus' name. The disciples refused. The rulers threatened them further, but could not punish them "because all the people were praising God for what had happened. For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old" (Acts 4:21–22).

Significantly, Caiaphas had unwittingly prophesied regarding Jesus' death. When the Sanhedrin was plotting to kill Jesus, Caiaphas "spoke up, 'You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.' He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one" (John 11:49–51; cf. John 18:14).

Though both Annas and Caiaphas plotted against Jesus and sought to inhibit the spread of the gospel, both were used of God to further His plan. Caiaphas was right; it was good for one man to die for all people. Because that Man died on our behalf, we can be granted eternal life through faith in Him (Ephesians 2:8–10; Romans 5:12–20; Hebrews 7:27).

QUESTION - [Who was Caiaphas in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

ANSWER - Joseph Caiaphas was the Jewish high priest during the time of Jesus' ministry and a few years afterwards. He was a strong opponent of Jesus and His message.

Caiaphas was the son-in-law of [Annas](#), the former high priest, which may have accounted for his own rise to power. Caiaphas was also a member of one of the ruling Jewish sects, the Sadducees. Sadducees were often wealthy men of high position and, as they sought to appease their Roman rulers, were heavily involved in politics. They held the majority seat in the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court, over which Caiaphas ruled for the 18 years he served as high priest. In terms of theology, Sadducees denied the afterlife and any existence of the spiritual world (angels, demons, etc.). Because of these things, they were often at odds with Jesus due to His teachings about humility, heaven, and His own deity.

After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, both the [Pharisees and the Sadducees](#) met at Caiaphas's palace to express their concern that Jesus' growing number of followers would incite the anger of the Roman Empire (Matthew 26:2; John 11:47). They were unsure how to proceed until Caiaphas spoke: "You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish" (John 11:50). This statement calling for Jesus' death was a cold, calculating move of political expediency; at the same time, Caiaphas was unknowingly prophesying about God's plan for Jesus' death. Through the Sanhedrin's wicked actions, God would save both the Jewish nation and anyone else who would believe in Christ (verses 51–52).

When the Jewish leaders had Jesus arrested at Passover, they first brought Him before Annas (John 18:13). After he had questioned Jesus, Annas sent Jesus to his son-in-law Caiaphas, who as the high priest would be the one to rule on Jesus' fate. When Jesus stood before Caiaphas and the entire Sanhedrin, many false witnesses were brought forward, but nothing was found to warrant a death sentence (Matthew 26:59–60). Finally, Caiaphas stood up and addressed Jesus directly,

"I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God" (Mt 26:63). Jesus replied just as directly, "You have said so. . . . But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Mt 26:64).

Caiaphas had what he was looking for; he tore his robe and cried, "Blasphemy!" (Mt 26:65). The result of the sham trial was that Jesus was pronounced "worthy of death" and beaten and mocked (Mt 26:66–67). However, since the Jews could not legally execute prisoners, Caiaphas sent Jesus to the Roman governor [Pontius Pilate](#).

Jesus endured another [series of trials](#) that night under Roman jurisdiction. Caiaphas and the other religious leaders stirred up the crowd against Jesus. When Pilate attempted to release Jesus by giving them a choice between Him and the convicted felon Barabbas, "the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed" (Matthew 27:20). Pilate acquiesced, and Jesus was sentenced to die, beaten, led outside the city, and crucified (Mt 27:26–35). It's what Caiaphas wanted all along. It's important to note that these things did not happen at the whim of Caiaphas, the priests, or Pilate, for it was all part of God's plan to save the world through the death of His Son. As Jesus had said, "No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (John 10:18).

Three days later, Jesus rose again from the grave, fulfilling prophecy, defeating death, and emboldening His followers to share the good news of salvation with thousands throughout the known world. Caiaphas continued to persecute the followers of Christ, being present at the trial of Peter and John (Acts 4:1–22), but his opposition did nothing to stop the spread of the gospel.

Caiaphas's story is a tragic one. Caiaphas was faced with the reality of who Jesus is and yet denied the Truth that literally stood before him. As high priest Caiaphas had wealth, an honorable position, and the respect of the people, but he was deficient in the one area that truly matters: saving faith in Jesus Christ.

QUESTION - What trials did Jesus face before His crucifixion?

ANSWER - The night of Jesus' arrest, He was brought before [Annas](#), [Caiaphas](#), and an assembly of religious leaders called the Sanhedrin (John 18:19-24; Matthew 26:57). After this He was taken before Pilate, the Roman Governor (John 18:28), sent off to Herod (Luke 23:7), and returned to Pilate (Luke 23:11-12), who finally sentenced Him to death.

There were six parts to Jesus' trial: three stages in a religious court and three stages before a Roman court. Jesus was tried before Annas, the former high priest; Caiaphas, the current high priest; and the Sanhedrin. He was charged in these "ecclesiastical" trials with blasphemy, claiming to be the Son of God, the Messiah.

The trials before Jewish authorities, the religious trials, showed the degree to which the Jewish leaders hated Him because they carelessly disregarded many of their own laws. There were several illegalities involved in these trials from the perspective of Jewish law:

- (1) No trial was to be held during feast time.
- (2) Each member of the court was to vote individually to convict or acquit, but Jesus was convicted by acclamation.
- (3) If the death penalty was given, a night must pass before the sentence was carried out; however, only a few hours passed before Jesus was placed on the Cross.
- (4) The Jews had no authority to execute anyone.
- (5) No trial was to be held at night, but this trial was held before dawn.
- (6) The accused was to be given counsel or representation, but Jesus had none.
- (7) The accused was not to be asked self-incriminating questions, but Jesus was asked if He was the Christ.

The trials before the Roman authorities started with Pilate (John 18:23) after Jesus was beaten. The charges brought against Him were very different from the charges in His religious trials. He was charged with inciting people to riot, forbidding the people to pay their taxes, and claiming to be King. Pilate found no reason to kill Jesus so he sent Him to Herod (Luke 23:7). Herod had Jesus ridiculed but, wanting to avoid the political liability, sent Jesus back to Pilate (Luke 23:11–12). This was the last trial as Pilate tried to appease the animosity of the Jews by having Jesus scourged. The Roman scourge was a terrible whipping designed to remove the flesh from the back of the one being punished. In a final effort to have Jesus released, Pilate offered the prisoner Barabbas to be crucified and Jesus released, but to no avail. The crowds called for Barabbas to be released and Jesus to be crucified. Pilate granted their demand and surrendered Jesus to their will (Luke 23:25). The trials of Jesus represent the ultimate mockery of justice. Jesus, the most innocent man in the history of the world, was found guilty of crimes and sentenced to death by crucifixion.

John 18:14 Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people.

- **Caiaphas:** John 11:49-52

Related Passages:

John 11:49-52+ But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, 50 nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish." 51 Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

RECALLING CAIAPHAS' PROPHECY OF JESUS' DEATH

Now **Caiaphas** was the one who had advised ([sumbouleuo](#)) the Jews ([Ioudaios](#) ~ Jewish leaders, including Sanhedrin) that it was expedient ([sumphero](#)) for one man to die on behalf of ([huper](#)) the people - God had used this non-believing high priest to prophesy Jesus' death. **Caiaphas** was Annas' son-in-law and was High Priest from A.D. 18–36. The phrase **on behalf of** ([huper](#)) the people means as a substitute and was an unwitting allusion to Jesus' [substitutionary atonement](#) for sins of the Jews and the world.

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:14

Therein uttering a prophecy which he did not himself fully understand, speaking like another Balaam, through whom God spoke the truth, as once he did through the ass that Balaam rode. Sometimes, God makes the basest men the unconscious utterers of truth which they do not themselves comprehend.

John 18:15 Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest,

- **Simon Peter:** Mt 26:58-68 Mk 14:54 Lu 22:54
- James Stalker's classic [Trial and Arrest of Jesus Christ - 3. THE GREAT DENIAL](#) Matt. 26:69–75; Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:54–62; John 18:15–18, 25–7.

Related Passages:

Matthew 26:58-68+ But Peter was following Him **at a distance** as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and entered in, and sat down with the officers to see the outcome. 59 Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death. 60 They did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on two came forward, 61 and said, "This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.'" 62 The high priest stood up and said to Him, "Do You not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?" 63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." 64 Jesus *said to him, "You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." 65 Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; 66 what do you think?" They answered, "He deserves death!" 67 Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him, 68 and said, "Prophecy to us, You Christ; who is the one who hit You?"

Mark 14:54+ Peter had followed Him **at a distance**, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers and warming himself at the fire.

Luke 22:54+ Having arrested Him, they led Him away and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following **at a distance**.

TWO DISCIPLES FOLLOWED THEIR ARRESTED LORD

Simon Peter was following ([akolouthéo](#)) **Jesus** ([Iesous](#)), **and so was another disciple** ([mathetes](#)) - There is a bit of a play on words (in my opinion) as the verb **following** ([akolouthéo](#)) is the verb often used to characterize those who followed Jesus as disciples (cf [akolouthéo](#) uses in Mt 4:20, 22, Mk 1:18, Mk 2:14). Who is **another disciple**? The consensus is that this was John the author of this Gospel, who never mentions his own name, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (Jn 20:2; Jn 21:24). The three synoptic Gospels add the detail that this brash fisherman "Peter was following Him **at a distance** (Greek - makrothen = from far away)." (Mt 26:58, Mk 14:54, Lk 22:54)

Now that disciple ([mathetes](#)) **was known** ([gnostos](#)) **to the high priest** ([archiereus](#)), **and entered with Jesus** ([Iesous](#)) **into the court of the high priest** ([archiereus](#)) - The word for **known** is the adjective [gnostos](#) which functions here as a noun which means acquaintance, friend or even intimate. It is hard to imagine John the apostle being an intimate friend of the corrupt high priest, so he

is more likely simply known to him. In any event, this relationship gained him entrance into the court of the high priest and Peter came along for the ride so to speak.

Note that the text can be somewhat confusing because Jesus was first taken to Annas and he is referred to as **high priest** even though Jn 18:13 says Caiaphas "was **high priest** that year." Most writers agree that Annas while not officially high priest, nevertheless continued to exercise considerable power behind the scenes and thus was treated as if he were a high priest. It would be like a former president of the US still being called "president" even after he was out of office. Luke 3:2 links both of these men with the phrase "in the high priesthood of **Annas** and **Caiaphas**." And in Acts 4:6 Luke records "and **Annas** the high priest was there, and **Caiaphas** and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent."

Henry Morris on with Jesus. At this point, John was still "**with Jesus**" while Peter elected to be "with them" outside (John 18:18)--that is, with the servants of the high priest. (ED: Although in fairness, Peter did not have entree into the court without John's influence.)

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:15

Here is John's usual modesty, he will not mention his own name, but simply speaks of "another disciple."

That is John, of course; he never mentions his own name if he can help it.

Following (190) **akoloutheo** from **a** = expresses union with, likeness + **keleuthos** = a road, way) means to walk the same road (Ponder that simple definition dear believer - Am I willing to walk the same road as Jesus?) Literally to follow (like the crowds followed Jesus) and in a figurative sense to follow Jesus as a disciple. To follow (closely) and was used of soldiers, servants and pupils. To go after someone or something (not as a true disciple however as we see with the crowds who physically followed Jesus, following however without a willingness to commit wholly to Him! cf John 6:60-65, 66) Early in the history of the Greek language **akoloutheo** came to mean to imitate or follow someone's example. This dual meaning colored the New Testament use of our word **akoloutheo**.

*it seems most probable that the disciple who accompanied Peter
and gained entry into the courtyard for him was John son of Zebedee*

WHO IS THE "another disciple"? Many have associated this unnamed other disciple with the beloved disciple, that is, John son of Zebedee, mainly because the phrase the other disciple which occurs here is also used to describe the beloved disciple in John 20:2, 3, 4, 8. Peter is also closely associated with the beloved disciple in 13:23–26, 20:2–10, 21:7, and 21:20–23. But other identifications have also been proposed, chiefly because Jn 18:16 states that this disciple who was accompanied by Peter was known to the high priest. As C. K. Barrett (St. John, 525) points out, the term γνῶστος (gnōstos) is used in the LXX to refer to a close friend (Ps 54:14 LXX [55:14 ET]). This raises what for some is an insurmountable difficulty in identifying the "other disciple" as John son of Zebedee, since how could the uneducated son of an obscure Galilean fisherman be known to such a powerful and influential family in Jerusalem? E. A. Abbott (as quoted in "Notes of Recent Exposition," Exp Tim 25 [1913/14]: 149–50) proposed that the "other disciple" who accompanied Peter was Judas, since he was the one disciple of whom it is said explicitly (in the synoptic accounts) that he had dealings with the high priest. E. A. Tindall ("Contributions and Comments: John xviii.15," Exp Tim 28 [1916/17]: 283–84) suggested the disciple was Nicodemus, who as a member of the Sanhedrin, would have had access to the high priest's palace. Both of these suggestions, while ingenious, nevertheless lack support from the text of the Fourth Gospel itself or the synoptic accounts. W. Wuellner (The Meaning of "Fishers of Men" [NTL]) argues that the common attitude concerning the low social status and ignorance of the disciples from Galilee may in fact be a misconception. Zebedee is presented in Mark 1:20 as a man wealthy enough to have hired servants, and Mark 10:35–45 presents both of the sons of Zebedee as concerned about status and prestige. John's mother appears in the same light in Matt 20:20–28. Contact with the high priestly family in Jerusalem might not be so unlikely in such circumstances. Others have noted the possibility that John came from a priestly family, some of which is based upon a statement in Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History 3.31.3) quoting Polycrates that John son of Zebedee was a priest. For further information on possible priestly connections among members of John's family see L. Morris (John [NICNT], 752, n. 32). None of this is certain, but on the whole it seems most probable that the disciple who accompanied Peter and gained entry into the courtyard for him was John son of Zebedee. (**NET NOTE**)

John 18:16 but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in.

PETER GAINS ENTREE IN ORDER THAT PROPHECY MIGHT BE FULFILLED

but Peter was standing at the door outside ~~so~~ the other disciple ([mathetes](#)), who was known ([gnostos](#)) to the high priest ([archiereus](#)), went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in. Of course, God had sovereignly arranged that Peter would be front and center at this time in order for Jesus' prediction of his denial being fulfilled. Known to the high priest presumably refers to Annas in this context ([see note above](#)).

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:16

John boldly followed Jesus, and so was safe, Peter stood at a distance from his Lord, and so was in danger.

I always fancy that John had a greater tenderness for Peter because he was the means of getting him into the palace of the high priest. Peter could not have got in if he had been alone, but John was known to the high priest, and so secured his admission. He must always have felt sorry that he took Peter into a place where he was so strongly tried. Hence John sought him out after his great fall; when perhaps the other apostles were inclined to leave him by himself, John cheered him up, and brought him back to the faith.

It would have been better for him if he had kept there, he would probably have been more out of the way of temptation than he was inside the palace of the high priest.

John doubtless acted thus out of kindness to Peter, but he was the means of bringing his friend into a place where he was not strong enough to keep his feet. You and may act like that, perhaps, in perfect innocence, and even with commendable kindness; yet we may be unintentionally doing our friends a great wrong. I notice that John seems to have been the first of the apostles to associate with Peter after that terrible fall of his; and in his record of Peter's denial of his Lord he does not mention his cursing and swearing as Matthew and Mark do. He appears to have felt great tenderness towards Peter; perhaps all the more so because he had been the innocent means of getting him into the place of temptation.

John 18:17 Then the slave-girl who kept the door *said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He *said, "I am not."

- **Then the slave-girl** : John 18:16 Mt 26:69-70 Mk 14:66-68 Lu 22:54-57
- **I am not**: John 18:5,8 21:15 Mt 26:33

Related Passages:

Matthew 26:69-70 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." 70 But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about."

Mark 14:66-68 As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest *came, 67 and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and *said, "You also were with Jesus the Nazarene." 68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about." And he went out onto the porch.

Luke 22:54-57 Having arrested Him, they led Him away and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance. 55 After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them. 56 And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too." 57 But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him."

PETER'S FIRST DENIAL OF JESUS

Then the slave-girl who kept the door *said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples ([mathetes](#)), are you?" - In Greek, questions prefaced with the negative "mē" anticipate a negative answer. And Peter responded accordingly. Mark 14:67 explains the slave-girl was able to identify Peter in the darkness because he was warming himself by a fire which would have provided light on his face. John gives this same fact in Jn 18:18. Her designation **this man's** is a contemptuous gesture and this made it even easier for Peter to answer negatively!

He said, “I am not. - In Jn 18:10 Peter was prepared to die for Jesus, but here he has faith failure and was not prepared to even respond truthfully to question of a **slave girl**! The contrast is dramatic between boldly cutting off a slave's ear to now responding like a coward to a slave girl!

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:17

Peter was in bad company; while he was warming his body, his soul was growing cold to his Master. Men cannot go into bad company without getting some hurt. It is said by a quaint old writer that, if men go to Ethiopia, they may not become Ethiopians, but by the scorching of the sun they will grow blacker than they were before. It is always better to keep out of harm's way if we can. He that would not fall into a ditch should take care not to walk near the edge of it; so, if Peter wanted to stand fast, he should not have gone where he would be sure to be tempted.

As, Peter! Ah, myself! If anyone is trusting in himself, he may soon utter a falsehood concerning his Lord, as Peter did. Keep us, O God, by thy grace, or else it will be so with us. It was nothing but a poor maidservant that cowed this brave Peter; the man whose sword was drawn just now in his Master's defense is not able truthfully to answer the maid's question, “Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.”

That was a very dangerous place for Peter to be in; he would have been safer out in the cold.

Norman Geisler - Parallel accounts in the Gospels - PETER'S DENIALS - [When Skeptics Ask](#) - page 120 ([See related discussion by Gleason Archer](#))

Many critics have blasted the Gospels because of variations in their records of the same events. Some even insist that it is impossible to harmonize all of the accounts into a cohesive whole. The existence of such harmonies as A.T. Robertson's should suffice to quiet these complaints, but some still persist. A common objection is found in Peter's denials. All accounts agree that Christ told Peter he would deny Him three times, but there appear to be more than three denials recorded. Also, Mark 14:30 says that the cock will crow twice and proceeds to mention two crows (Mk 14:68, 72), but there is only one crow spoken of in the other Gospels. There are, however, possible solutions which account for all the evidence without contradiction.

First, as to the number of cock crows, there is no real problem if we understand that Mark simply included a detail that the others omitted. Since Peter himself was probably the source of Mark's information (they are related in 1 Peter 5:13), there is no reason to doubt his word. It is reasonable to think that Peter might have noticed a cock crowing after the first denial and that he would include such details that the other disciples ignored because it had more personal relevance to him.

The number of denials can be harmonized as follows:

HARMONIZING PETER'S DENIALS		
FIRST DENIAL	SECOND DENIAL	THIRD DENIAL
Mt. 26:69–70; Mk 14:66–68; Lk 22:55–57; Jn 18:17–18	Mt. 26:71–72; Mk 14:69–70a; Lk 22:58; Jn 18:25	Mt. 26:73–74; Mk 14:70b–72; Lk 22:59–60; Jn 18:26–27
Peter is warming himself by a fire in the court and a servant of the high priest brings the accusation, knowing that he entered with John. John's description of the scene follows his account of the denial. A cock crows, noted by Mark.	Peter has moved to a different fire on the porch when a second servant brings the same accusation.	A relative of Malchus first recognizes Peter, then others note that his accent is Galilean. A second cock crows, noted by all.

Second, it is possible that there is a copyist's mistake in Mark 14:68, 72. The statement “and a cock crowed” may have been

inadvertently written into verse 68 when it was originally only in verse 72. The word "second" would have been inserted later by someone seeking to clarify it. One of the very best Greek manuscripts supports this and a few other copies agree.

As long as it is possible to reconcile alleged contradictions in one of these ways, there is no real contradiction. Since there are possible solutions, the Bible should be given the benefit of the doubt.

John 18:18 Now the slaves and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself.

- **having made a charcoal fire:** John 18:25 Mk 14:54 Lu 22:55-56
- **Peter:** Ge 49:6 1Ki 19:9 Ps 1:1 26:4-10 Pr 13:20 Ac 4:23 1Co 15:33 2Co 6:15-17 Eph 5:11,12

Related Passages:

Mark 14:54 Peter had followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers and warming himself at the fire.

Luke 22:55-56 **After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard** and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them. 56 And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too."

PETER PREPARED FOR SECOND DENIAL

Now the slaves and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself - It was cold because it was still spring and Jerusalem is elevated to 2,474 ft above sea level. This description shows God's providence in the unfolding events for the fire would provide light and allow Peter's face to be seen and recognized. The account in Mark says "As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest *came, and **seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and *said**, "You also were with Jesus the Nazarene." But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about." And he went out onto the porch." (Mark 14:66-68)

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:18

While his Lord and Master was being maltreated and abused over yonder at the end of the hall, Peter was warming himself at the servant's fire. Ah! he was getting cold spiritually while warming himself physically; and it sometimes happens that, when men are warming their bodies, they are at the same time cooling their hearts. I have known a man warm himself at a very big fire through coming into possession of a large amount of property, but he has also grown very cold spiritually for these coals of fire do not warm the heart.

John 18:19 The high priest then questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching.

- **questioned Jesus:** Lu 11:53,54 Lk 20:20

ANNAS QUESTIONS JESUS

John shifts the scene from outside in the courtyard to inside the house of Annas.

The high priest (Annas) **then questioned** ([erotao](#)) **Jesus** ([lesous](#)) **about His disciples** ([mathetes](#)), **and about His teaching** ([didache](#)) - Note this is not Caiaphas but Annas. Annas wanted to know first about Jesus' followers, presumably to have some idea of how many had begun to follow him. Recall that there was a crowd of thousands that had welcomed Jesus into the city with loud "Hosannas," and doubtless this was on the mind of Annas. Annas hypocritically asked about His teaching, but clearly was not interested in the Truth.

Spurgeon - "Annas bore a very promising name, for it signifies clement or merciful, yet he was the man to begin the work of

ensnaring the Lord Jesus in his speech, if he could be ensnared.”

Utley on **Annas** - Annas was the power behind the throne. He reigned from A.D. 6 to A.D. 15. He was immediately followed by his son-in-law and later his five sons and a grandson. Annas, who owned the commercial rights in the temple area, was probably anxious to interrogate the one who cleansed the Temple twice. It is interesting that Annas was concerned about Jesus’ disciples as well as His teachings.

NET NOTE - The nature of this hearing seems to be more that of a preliminary investigation; certainly normal legal procedure was not followed (SEE [NOTE ON ILLEGALITIES OF JEWISH "TRIALS"](#)), for no indication is given that any witnesses were brought forth at this point to testify against Jesus. True to what is known of Annas’ character, he was more interested in Jesus’ disciples than in the precise nature of Jesus’ teaching, since he inquired about the followers first. He really wanted to know just how influential Jesus had become and how large a following he had gathered. This was of more concern to Annas that the truth or falsity of Jesus’ teaching.

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:19

This was a sort of preliminary examination before the Sanhedrin should try him officially.

James Butler - EXAMINATION John 18:19 - [Sermon Starters](#)

“The high priest then asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine” (John 18:19).

Our text comes from one of the trials of Christ which preceded His crucifixion. The trials basically were unjust and full of fraud. The people doing the examination had made up their minds that Christ should be put to death (Matthew 27:1) and would not take any testimony to the contrary. In fact they even sought “false” witnesses (Matthew 26:59) to help their case. Our text records an examination of Christ by the High Priest. The comment about the High Priest’s examination is most instructive. We note three aspects of this examination.

FIRST—THE DEFICIENCY OF THE EXAMINATION

“Asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine.” The High Priest interrogated Christ about two different things. First, the examined Christ regarding His disciples. Second, he examined Christ regarding His doctrine. This is ever the way the world examines things, but it is the wrong way. You should first examine the doctrine then the disciples about any movement. It is true that we can, by looking at the followers of some creed to sometimes tell the character of that creed or movement, but that is not the best way. To examine a movement we must examine their doctrine. What do they believe. Examine something by examining the facts, not just the followers. Radio, newspapers, magazines, TV and now the internet all try to get the endorsement of famous people for their product. But if you listen to the words of these famous people, you learn nothing substantial about the product. To examine the product you should examine the truth, the facts, not what some follower or paid endorser says.

SECOND—THE DISCIPLES IN THE EXAMINATION

“Asked Jesus of His disciples.” While it is not the best way to examine the Gospel, asking about the disciples is a good exhortation to disciples to live a godly life. You are a representative of the Gospel and people watch your every move. How you act affects whether or not a person will respond positively or negatively to the Gospel. We should not base our acceptance or rejection on who is the follower of a creed, but men do this which means those who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ need to live consistent godly lives.

THIRD—THE DOCTRINE IN THE EXAMINATION

“Asked Jesus ... of His doctrine.” Truth is truth no matter who believes it or rejects it. Christ is Christ no matter who rejects Him or receives Him. If the religious leaders had examined the doctrine/teaching of Christ with honesty they would have had to say “Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46). The problem with the leaders of the people was that they were not interested in facts/doctrine but in popularity. That’s why the investigation began with the disciples not the doctrine of Christ. Examine the facts of any movement, look at the truth and make your decision according. The facts favor Christ. ([Sermon Starters](#))

John 18:20 Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret.

- **I have spoken openly:** John 7:14,26,28 Jn 8:2 Jn 10:23-39 Ps 22:22 40:9 Mt 4:23 9:35 21:23-27 Mt 26:65 Lu 4:15 19:45-47

Related Passages:

John 6:59 These things **He said in the synagogue** as He taught in Capernaum.

John 7:14 But when it was now the midst of the feast **Jesus went up into the temple, and began to teach.**

John 7:26 "Look, **He is speaking publicly**, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they?

John 7:28 Then Jesus **cried out in the temple, teaching** and saying, "You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know.

John 8:2 Early in the morning **He came again into the temple**, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and **began to teach them.**

John 8:20 These words **He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple**; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.

Matthew 4:23 Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, **teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom**, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.

JESUS' ANSWERS HE IS GUILTY OF ONLY SPEAKING OPENLY

Jesus ([lesous](#)) answered him, "I have spoken openly ([parrhesia](#) - frankly, plainness of speech) **to the world** ([kosmos](#)); I always taught ([didasko](#)) in synagogues ([sunagoge](#)) and in the temple ([hieron](#) - entire Temple complex), **where all the Jews** ([loudaios](#)) **come together** ([sunerchomai](#)); and I spoke nothing ([oudeis](#) absolutely nothing) **in secret** ([kruptos](#) ~ "cryptic") - Of course even when Jesus taught in parables it was not in **secret**. The hearers simply could not understand because they lacked the eyes to see and ears to hear His truths (Mk 4:10–12+). And of course Jesus had private conversations with His disciples (e.g., the entire Upper Room Discourse was in private) but His message was the same in private as it was in public. He was not trying to hide truth but to reveal truth because He is the Truth.

Jesus' testimony reminds us of the words of Isaiah...

Isaiah 45:19 "I **have not spoken in secret**, In some dark land; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek Me in a waste place'; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, Declaring things that are upright.

Isaiah 48:16 "Come near to Me, listen to this: **From the first I have not spoken in secret**, From the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord GOD has sent Me, and His Spirit."

[Utley](#) has an interesting remark on Jesus' teaching - It is certainly true that Jesus taught publicly. However, it is also true that many of His teachings were veiled to the public (cf. Mk 4:10–12+). The real issue was spiritual blindness on the part of His hearers.

John Trapp - "Truth is bold and barefaced; when heresy hides itself, and loathes the light."

Larry Richards - Openness and utter honesty are the most powerful spiritual defenses we possess. If we are open and honest, the only charges others can bring against us will be false charges. (BORROW [The 365 day devotional commentary PAGE 806](#))

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:20

Our Lord's teaching was never deceptive, he did not say one thing and mean another. He could truly appeal to his hearers concerning his teaching. It is a great thing for a preacher to be able to feel that his hearers know what he has said to them. We cannot always say that, for some of them forget, and some of them do not understand what we say. Some of them do not give sufficient attention to know what it is that is said, but Christ's preaching was so clear and plain that he could truly say, "Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said."

What an admirable answer that was! Whatever he might have said about his doctrine, they would have twisted into a ground of accusation against him, so he simply said, "Mine has been public teaching, open to all. I was not found in holes and corners, secretly fomenting sedition. I spoke in the streets; I spoke in the synagogue; I spoke in the temple; ask those who heard me to tell you what I said." What more convincing answer could he have given?

Openly (3954) **parrhesia** from **pás** = all + **rhesis** = speech, act of speaking) is literally all speech or speaking all things and thereby conveys the idea of freedom to say all. The basic idea in the word is freedom of speech, when the word flowed freely. It is that attitude of openness that stems from freedom and lack of fear ("shaking" fear - godly, reverential fear is always appropriate) means in essence the freedom to say all. Greeks used **parrhesia** of those with the right to speak openly in the assembly. Speaking with plainness, openness and confidence (Acts 2:29). Speaking publicly or in the open (Jn 7:13, 11:54, 18:20) and then something done in public (Jn 7:26, Col 2:15+)

George Morrison (from sermon [The Candor of Christ](#) click for full 11 page sermon) - **John 18:20**

In our text our Lord lays claim to a great openness, and it is a claim that cannot be disputed. The whole impression made by the life of Jesus is that of a teacher who was frank and bold; of one who would not hesitate to speak, whatever the consequences to himself might be.

Of course this candor of our Lord and Master was always at the service of his love. It was the instrument of a pure and perfect sympathy that knew that there were seasons to be silent. The perfect candor of our Redeemer's talk was ever subservient to that noblest love which dares to speak when other lips are silent and to be silent when other voices speak. There is a candor that is the child of ignorance, for fools rush in where angels fear to tread. There is a candor that betrays the bitter heart, for it speaks the truth—but does not speak in love. But the candor of Jesus goes hand in hand with reticence, and both look up to catch their inspiration from the most loving and sympathetic eyes that ever beamed on a sinful world.

Now there are times in every life when it takes a certain courage to be quiet. To every man and woman there come seasons when the path of duty is the path of silence. All that is basest in us bids us speak, for there is a candor that is the child of hell; but all that is noblest in us checks our speech, lest to someone we do irreparable harm. But remember if it takes courage to be quiet, it also may call for courage to be frank.

John 18:21 "Why do you question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; they know what I said."

- ask: Mt 26:59,60 Mk 14:55-59 Lu 22:67 Ac 24:12,13,18-20

JESUS CALLS FOR WITNESSES TO TESTIFY TO THE TRUTH OF HIS WORDS

Why do you question (erotao) Me? Question (erotao in aorist imperative) those who have heard what I spoke to them; they know (eido) what I said - Jesus was in His legal right to call for witnesses who were necessary before a formal charge could be issued. Jesus is basically commanding Annas the high priest to call for witnesses who had heard Him speak, and of course there would have been thousands of such witnesses. His point was they would **know (eido)**, this verb for know signifying that these witnesses would know beyond a shadow of a doubt that His teaching was truth.

Utley - "why do you question Me" In v. 20 Jesus asserts the public nature of His teaching ministry. Jesus was pointing out to Annas that his questions were illegal according to Jewish law.

Adam Clarke on the illegal aspects of the trial - "For the Talmud states, Sanhedrin. C. iv. S. 1, that-'Criminal processes can neither commence nor terminate, but during the course of the day. If the person be acquitted, the sentence may be pronounced during that day; but, if he be condemned, the sentence cannot be pronounced till the next day. But no kind of judgment is to be executed, either on the eve of the Sabbath, or the eve of any festival (ED: BOTH OF WHICH WERE TRUE IN THIS CASE).'"

John 18:22 When He had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying, "Is that the way You answer the high priest?"

BGT John 18:22 τατα δ ατο επ ντος ες παρεστηκς τν πηρεν δωκεν πισμα τ ησο επ ν· οτως ποκρ ν τ ρχιερε ;

NET John 18:22 When Jesus had said this, one of the high priest's officers who stood nearby struck him on the face and said, "Is that the way you answer the high priest?"

CSB John 18:22 When He had said these things, one of the temple police standing by slapped Jesus, saying,

"Is this the way you answer the high priest?"

ESV John 18:22 When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?"

NIV John 18:22 When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby struck him in the face. "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" he demanded.

NLT John 18:22 Then one of the Temple guards standing nearby slapped Jesus across the face. "Is that the way to answer the high priest?" he demanded.

NRS John 18:22 When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?"

NJB John 18:22 At these words, one of the guards standing by gave Jesus a slap in the face, saying, 'Is that the way you answer the high priest?'

- **struck:** Job 16:10 30:10-12 Isa 50:5-7 Jer 20:2 Mic 5:1 Mt 26:67-68 Mk 14:65 Lu 22:63-64 Ac 23:2,3
- **Is that the way You answer.** Ac 23:4-5

Related Passages:

Matthew 26:67 (THIS WAS AT HIS SECOND RELIGIOUS TRIAL BEFORE CAIAPHAS) Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him,

Luke 22:63-64 (THIS WAS AT HIS THIRD RELIGIOUS TRIAL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN AT DAYBREAK) Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him and beating Him, 64 and they blindfolded Him and were asking Him, saying, "Prophecy, who is the one who hit You?"

Isaiah 50:6 I gave My back to those who strike Me, And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.

JESUS STRUCK BY AN OFFICER

When He had said this, one of the officers ([huperetes](#)) **standing nearby struck** ([rhapisma](#) lit. "gave a blow") **Jesus** ([lesous](#)) - **NET** = "struck him on the face" **NLT** - "slapped Jesus across the face" The KJV adds "with the palm of his hand" (Jn 18:22KJV). **officers** ([huperetes](#)) could have been one of the temple police (same Greek word used for "officers" in Jn 18:2). **Struck** is two Greek words, *didomi* which means to give and *rhapisma* which means a blow as with a stick or the palm of the hand. Have you ever been slapped across your face? I was slapped by my step father when I was 10yo and from that day on we never had a cordial relationship (I was not a believer at the time). There is something utterly demeaning about being slapped in the face and that was surely the officers intent toward Jesus (cf Isa 50:6). Striking a bound man made it even more inappropriate. If this officer never became a believer, can you imagine his horror when he realizes one day Who he had struck and is judged accordingly!

Saying, "Is that the way You answer the high priest([archiereus](#))" - One is reminded of the high priest Ananias commanding that Paul be struck on the in Acts 23:1-5+ for reviling "God's high priest." Of course the irony is that Jesus was the true and great High Priest, not Annas or Caiaphas. And also Paul apologized for his words. Jesus had no need to apologize.

Spurgeon Study Bible - When he had said these things, one of the officials standing by slapped Jesus, saying, 'Is this the way you answer the high priest?' 'If I have spoken wrongly,' Jesus answered him, 'give evidence about the wrong; but if rightly, why do you hit me?' " Here we get an exposition of one of Christ's own sayings: "If anyone slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also" (Mt 5:39). Of course, Christ would carry out his own command, so we see that he did not mean that his disciples were literally to turn the other cheek to those who struck them but that they were to bear such treatment patiently and not to give a railing answer. See how Jesus himself turned the other cheek. Nothing could have been more calm or more dignified and, at the same time, more full of the spirit of forgiveness.

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:22

Here we get an exposition of one of Christ's own sayings. You know that he said, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Of course, Christ would carry out his own precept, so we see that he did not mean that his disciples were literally to turn the other cheek to those who struck them, but that they were to bear such treatment patiently, and not to give a railing answer. See how Jesus himself turned the other cheek.

Jesus answered him, Not as Paul did, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall." The Master is superior to the disciple at all points.

Struck (4475)(rhapisma from [rhapizo](#) - to strike with a rod, hence to strike with the palm of the hand) means a blow (with a stick or the palm of the hand). To give a blow with the open hand, especially on the face or ear slap, cuff (Jn 18:22; possibly Mk 14:65 and Jn 19:3). A strike with a club or stick blow, hit (possibly Mk 14:65 and Jn 19:3).

Only 3x in NT - Mk. 14:65; Jn. 18:22; Jn. 19:3 slaps(2), struck*(1).

Once in Lxx - Isaiah 50:6 a Messianic prophecy of Jesus' suffering = "I gave My back to those who strike Me, And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard (Lxx = "my cheeks to blows"); I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting. "

Robert Hawker —John 18:22.

THOSE are sweet views of Jesus which point to our oneness and union with him, by which alone we derive an interest in him, and are made partakers both in his grace and glory. By virtue of this it is, that the glory the Father gave Jesus, as Mediator, all his people are interested in, and truly enjoy. For though, like the heir of the kingdom, when an infant, the babe is unconscious of his dignity, yet is not the less entitled to his high birth and rank; so the seed of Jesus, while in this childhood of existence, though they do not live up to their high privileges through the weakness of their faith, yet their claim in Jesus is not the less. Jesus hath given them the glory of being brought within the covenant; the glory of redemption; the glory of the Holy Ghost's gifts and influences; and, in short, all the glory which a state of grace implies, and which is the earnest of the future fulness of glory. And, my soul! dost thou ever pause over this account of present glory as if thou didst now truly know thine interest in and enjoyment of it? Look at it only under these two considerations, and then bow down under a sense of it in the dust before God. In the first, put forth thy utmost faculties to calculate that glory which, if thou art one of Jesus' redeemed people, thou now truly hast in having union with Christ! Who shall undertake to describe that glory imparted to a poor worm of the earth, who is brought into union with God's dear Son? Paul speaks of it as an high privilege, when he said, "Ye are come to an innumerable company of angels." But what is the society of angels, compared to an union with Jesus? Moreover, angels have no such privilege: for while Jesus is to them their Lord and Sovereign, and governs them by his supreme command, yet is he not to them as he is to his church, the glorious head of that church, which is his body, and by which he perpetually communicates to all his members a source of gracious and glorious influences, according to what he hath said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Hence what the Redeemer said to the Father is explained on this sure testimony—"The glory thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one." Look at the subject under another consideration. Hath not Jesus given present glory to all his redeemed in that communication which is perpetually passing and repassing between him and them, by virtue of this oneness, and unity, and interest, into which they are actually brought? My soul! what saith thine experience to this precious truth? Dost thou really and truly partake of what is Jesus'; and doth he not really and truly partake of what is thine? Is there not an exchange, a barter, a fellowship, carried on between thy glorious head and thyself? Surely thou hast communion in whatever belongs to Christ as Mediator, in his righteousness, in his grace, his redemption, his glory. And doth not Jesus manifest continual tokens that he takes part in all that concerns thee; thy sorrows, thy wants, thine afflictions? Was it not said of him, ages before his incarnation, when speaking of his people, "in all their affliction he was afflicted?" And is it not said now, that whosoever toucheth his people, touched the apple of his eye? Oh! unparalleled grace! Oh! matchless love! that the Son of God should thus manifest his affection. What will you call this, my soul, but what thy God and Saviour hath called it—the glory which the Father gave him he hath given to his people? And all this on purpose to prove that they are one with him. Hallelujah!

John 18:23 Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?"

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

BGT John 18:23 περὶ θη ἂν ἡσο ῥ· ε· κακ ῥ λήσῃ, μαρτ ρήσον περ το κακο· ε· ὃ καλ ῥ, τ με ὀ ρεις;

NET John 18:23 Jesus replied, "If I have said something wrong, confirm what is wrong. But if I spoke correctly, why strike me?"

CSB John 18:23 "If I have spoken wrongly," Jesus answered him, "give evidence about the wrong; but if rightly, why do you hit Me?"

ESV John 18:23 Jesus answered him, "If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?"

NIV John 18:23 "If I said something wrong," Jesus replied, "testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?"

NLT John 18:23 Jesus replied, "If I said anything wrong, you must prove it. But if I'm speaking the truth, why are you beating me?"

NRS John 18:23 Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"

NJB John 18:23 Jesus replied, 'If there is some offence in what I said, point it out; but if not, why do you strike me?'

NAB John 18:23 Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"

YLT John 18:23 Jesus answered him, 'If I spake ill, testify concerning the ill; and if well, why me dost thou smite?'

MIT John 18:23 Jesus replied to him, "If I spoke something wrong, indicate what was wrong. If I spoke on the level, why did you strike me?"

GWN John 18:23 Jesus replied to him, "If I've said anything wrong, tell me what it was. But if I've told the truth, why do you hit me?"

- If: 2Co 10:1 1Pe 2:20-23

JESUS QUESTIONS THE ONE WHO STRUCK HIM

Jesus ([lesous](#)) answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly ([kakos](#)), **testify** ([martureo](#) - [aorist imperative](#)) of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike ([dero](#)) Me - Jesus does not back down but challenges Annas to bring forth the evidence that He is in "contempt of the court" so to speak. All Jesus is doing at this point is asking for a fair trial, which He knew they would not give Him.

[Utley](#) - These are two FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCES which are assumed to be there from the author's perspective or for his literary purposes. Here it is not true to reality.

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:23

Let us pray that, whenever we are despitefully treated, we may keep our temper, and be as composed as our Lord was; and if we must make an answer to our accusers, let it be as discreet and as justifiable as this answer of our Lord was.

Nothing could have been more calm or more dignified, and, at the same time, more full of the spirit of forgiveness.

John 18:24 So Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

- **Annas**: John 18:13 Mt 26:57
- **bound**: John 18:13

Related Passages:

Matthew 26:57-68+ (**JESUS BEFORE CAIAPHAS - NOT RECORDED IN GOSPEL OF JOHN**) Those who had seized Jesus led Him away to [Caiaphas](#), the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. 58 But Peter was following Him at a distance as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and entered in, and sat down with the officers to see the outcome. 59 Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death. 60 They did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on two came forward, 61 and said, "*This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.'*" 62 The high priest stood up and said to Him, "*Do You not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?*" 63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "*I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.*" 64 Jesus *said to him, "**You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter**

you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." 65 Then the high priest tore his robes and said, *"He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; 66 what do you think?"* They answered, *"He deserves death!"* 67 Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him, 68 and said, "Prophecy to us, You Christ; who is the one who hit You?"

FOR JESUS BEFORE CAIAPHAS SEE ALSO Mk 14:53-65+ and Lk 22:54, 63-65+

ANNAS "PASSES THE BUCK" TO SECOND "TRIAL" BEFORE CAIAPHAS

So ([oun](#)) probably signifies progression in the narrative and is not a term of conclusion in this context. Annas knows he has a problem which is the absence of any legitimate charge the Jews could use to justify bringing Jesus before Pilate. So he ships Jesus to Caiaphas to solve this dilemma.

Annas sent Him bound to **Caiaphas** the high priest ([archiereus](#)) - **Annas** having found nothing of which He could justify a charge sends Jesus to **Caiaphas** but John has no record of this second of three Jewish religious trials. John does not have a record of this trial (see Matthew passages above).

NET NOTE - Where was Caiaphas the high priest located? Did he have a separate palace, or was he somewhere else with the Sanhedrin? Since Augustine (4th century) a number of scholars have proposed that Annas and Caiaphas resided in different wings of the same palace, which were bound together by a common courtyard through which Jesus would have been led as he was taken from Annas to Caiaphas. This seems a reasonable explanation, although there is no conclusive evidence.

John 18:25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You are not also one of His disciples, are you?" He denied it, and said, "I am not."

- **was standing and warming himself.:** John 18:18 Mk 14:37,38,67 Lu 22:56
- **They:** Mt 26:69,71 Mk 14:68-70 Lu 22:58
- **He:** Ge 18:15 Pr 29:25 Ga 2:11-13

Related Passages:

John 13:38+ Jesus *answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.

THE SECOND DENIAL BY PETER

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself - Where? In the courtyard (Jn 18:15-18). A fire would have made his face visible.

So (presumably because they recognized him) **they said to him**, "**You are not also one of His disciples** ([mathetes](#)), **are you?**" - Again this Greek sentence begins with a negative (me) thus expecting a negative response just as Peter gave them in his reply.

He denied ([arneomai](#)) **it, and said**, "**I am not**" - Peter absolutely (Gk = ouk) denies being one of Jesus' disciples. Strike two!

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:25

We know that the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. He did not speak a word, perhaps lest Peter should fall into the hands of those who were round about him; but his look was sufficient to kindle in Peter the fires of repentance, and he went out to weep bitterly over his shameful denial of his Lord.

Two or three or more of them speaking at a time said to him: —

Twice over, we are told that, while his Master was being buffeted, Peter stood in the midst of the ribald throng, and warmed himself.

Denied ([720](#)) [arneomai](#) from "a" = negation + **rheo** = say) literally means "to say no", to **say** one does **not** know about or is in any

way related to some person or something. Webster says that to **deny** implies a firm refusal to accept as true, to grant or concede or to acknowledge the existence or claims of. It means in relation to a question or demand to deny. Under certain conditions other shades of meaning appear, such as “to reject” or “to decline”; the word can even mean “to deny something or someone.” It was during the Hellenistic period that *arneomai* first denoted the meaning so dominant in the New Testament— “to renounce, to deny.” *Arneomai* means to disclaim association with a person or event (repudiate, disown, verbally or non-verbally).

ARNEOMAI - 30V - Matt. 10:33; Matt. 26:70; Matt. 26:72; Mk. 14:68; Mk. 14:70; Lk. 8:45; Lk. 9:23; Lk. 12:9; Lk. 22:57; Jn. 1:20; Jn. 13:38; Jn. 18:25; Jn. 18:27; Acts 3:13; Acts 3:14; Acts 4:16; Acts 7:35; 1 Tim. 5:8; 2 Tim. 2:12; 2 Tim. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:5; Tit. 1:16; Tit. 2:12; Heb. 11:24; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 Jn. 2:22; 1 Jn. 2:23; Jude 1:4; Rev. 2:13; Rev. 3:8

John 18:26 One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, *said, “Did I not see you in the garden with Him?”

- **being:** John 18:10
- **Did:** Pr 12:19 Mt 26:73 Mk 14:70-71 Lu 22:59-60

Related Passages:

Matthew 26:73+ (THIRD ACCUSATION) A little later the **bystanders** came up and said to Peter, “Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you talk gives you away.”

Mark 14:70+ But again he denied it. (THIRD ACCUSATION) And after a little while the **bystanders** were again saying to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too.”

Luke 22:59+ (THIRD ACCUSATION) After about an hour had passed, **another man** began to insist, saying, “Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too.”

PETER RECOGNIZED AS IN THE GARDEN WITH JESUS

One of the slaves (*doulos*) of the high priest (*archiereus*), being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, said- This slave was in the crowd that arrested Jesus and witnessed Malchus' "acute hearing loss." Peter panicked, because the accusation by the slave of the high priest who was a relative of Malchus was the most dangerous accusation. Being a disciple of Jesus was not a crime at this time, but assaulting a man with a sword was a crime. And this would have been an eye witness to the crime! Peter's impulsive action had come back on him like a boomerang (isn't that what many of our foolish acts/actions/words do in our lives? Rhetorical of course!)

Luke 22:59+ says "**another man** began to insist" while Matthew and Mark describe the questioners as "**bystanders**." (Mt 26:73+, Mk 14:70+)

“Did I not see you in the garden with Him?” This question, prefaced with the negative "ouk", anticipates a "YES" answer. The slave has Peter in the proverbial corner.

Utley - There is some discrepancy among the four Gospels as to who asked the questions of Peter: (1) in Mark, it is a maid who asked the first question (cf. Mark 14:69); (2) in Matthew it is another servant girl (cf. Matt. 26:71); and (3) in Luke 22:58 it is a man. It is obvious from the historical setting that one person asked the question around the fire and the others joined in (cf. Jn 18:18).

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:26

Ah, me! they who lie once will be all too apt to lie again; those who deny Christ once will be apt to go to still greater lengths in their denial of him. May they be stopped as Peter was!

C H Spurgeon - In the garden with him' (Full sermon - [In the Garden with Him](#))

‘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 18:26

Talking the other evening with a young girl who has, I trust, escaped from the grosser sin into which she might soon have fallen, I

said to her: 'There are three things you can do, and those three things I will set before you by an illustration. When you get outside the Tabernacle, there will be a tramcar. Now, go up to the car, put one foot on the car and keep the other foot on the ground, and if you do not come down with a smash I am very much mistaken. Yet many people try to keep in with the world and keep in with Christ, and they will never do it, but will make a terrible fall of it before long. Now, the second thing that you can do is that you can keep standing in the road in the mud and not get into the car at all. You can stop there and let the tramcar go by: that is all fair and straight. If you want to live in the world and be of the world, well, live in the world and be of the world, take what pleasure it can give you and reap the fruit of it at last. But there is a third thing you can do, namely, get right off the road into the car and let the car take you right away where it is going. Now, it is this third thing that I commend to you. Get right into Christ and let the Lord Jesus, by the power of his Holy Spirit, carry you right away from the unclean place where you now stand, bearing you in safety along the tram-lines of holiness till he brings you to the terminus of glory at his own right hand. May the Lord deliver you from halting 'between two opinions', or choosing the wrong opinion; may he now decide you to leap into the gospel chariot and leave all sinful company and doubtful ways that you may own the Lord Jesus and be his true disciple!'

John 18:27 Peter then denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed.

- **and:** John 13:38 Mt 26:34,74,75 Mk 14:30,68,71,72 Lu 22:34,60-62
- [Excellent Diagram/Map of Jesus' Arrest, Trial and Crucifixion](#)
- [Youtube of Peter's Denial](#) - not perfectly Biblical but still very dramatic.

Related Passages:

Mark 14:71-72+ (THIRD DENIAL) But **he began to curse and swear**, "I do not know this man you are talking about!" 72 Immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, "Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And he began to weep.

Luke 22:60-62+ (THIRD DENIAL) But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. 61 The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." 62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

Matthew 26:74 (THIRD DENIAL) Then **he began to curse and swear**, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, "Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

PETER'S THIRD DENIAL SIGNAL'S ROOSTER'S CROW

Peter then denied ([arneomai](#)) it again, and immediately a rooster crowed - Peter's third denial fulfilled Jesus' prophetic words "Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times." (Jn 13:38+). Mk 14:71 and Mt. 26:74 add that Peter's denial included cursing and swearing.

Utley - "**immediately a rooster crowed**" The chronology of events from all four Gospels implies this occurred between 12:00 and 3:00 o'clock in the morning. The Jews did not allow chickens inside the city limits of Jerusalem so it must have been a Roman rooster. Luke 22:61 asserts at this point that Jesus looked at Peter. It is assumed that Annas and Caiaphas lived in the same house and the guards were moving Jesus from His meeting with Annas to His meeting with Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. It was in this movement when Jesus looked at Peter. This is all conjecture because we do not have enough historical information to be dogmatic about the sequence of events of these night trials.

NET NOTE - It seems most likely that this refers to a real rooster crowing, although a number of scholars have suggested that "cockcrow" is a technical term referring to the trumpet call which ended the third watch of the night (from midnight to 3 a.m.). This would then be a reference to the Roman gallicinium (λεκτοροφωνία, alektorophōnia; the term is used in Mark 13:35 and is found in some MSS [37vid,45 f1] in Matt 26:34) which would have been sounded at 3 a.m.; in this case Jesus would have prophesied a precise time by which the denials would have taken place. For more details see J. H. Bernard, St. John (ICC), 2:604. However, in light of the fact that Mark mentions the rooster crowing twice (Mark 14:72) and in Luke 22:60 the words are reversed (φώνησεν λέκτωρ, ephōnēsen alektōr), it is more probable that a real rooster is in view. In any event natural cockcrow would have occurred at approximately 3 a.m. in Palestine at this time of year (March–April) anyway. No indication is given of Peter's emotional state at this third denial (as in Matt 26:74 and Mark 14:71) or that he remembered that Jesus had foretold the denials (Matt 26:75, Mark 14:72

and Luke 22:61), or the bitter remorse Peter felt afterward (Matt 26:75, Mark 14:72, and Luke 22:62).

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:27

May the cock crow for some who have been asleep up till now, and warn them that the night is far spent, and that it is time for them to awake out of sleep, and wash their eyes with tears, and repent of having denied their Lord!

The passages, which we are about to read from three of the Evangelists, make up a continuous narrative of our Lord's trial before the high priest. First, John gives us an account of our Saviour's appearance before Annas, of which I need not say much, as I recently preached upon it.

Thus was Christ's prediction literally fulfilled, and thus, by what seems the humble instrumentality of a cock crowing, was Peter brought to repentance. There is many an eloquent divine who has missed the mark when he has been preaching, but God has spoken by a very humble voice. You, dear friend, though you have no gifts of speech, may go and tell the story of Jesus Christ to someone, and God may bring him to repentance through you, as he brought Peter back to himself through the agency of this bird. May God make us all useful, and keep us from falling into transgression as Peter did! Amen.

PETER'S DENIAL

One of the servants of the high priest . . . said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?" Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed (John 18:26-27).

DEFEAT Thinking about the muddled mess of mankind, Gordon DePree lamented in his book *A Time to Grow*,

"People sometimes disappoint me, and there are times when I disappoint others. This hurts. Ideals fall. Dreams fade. The concepts of life I was carefully constructing suddenly crumble into a rubble-heap at my feet . . . and I sit in the ruins, wondering if there is anything right about life, or if I even care."

After Peter had denied Jesus three times, He knew that nothing was right about life. He had become a blunder mouth beyond belief. With a few foolish words he had wrecked his life, becoming a heap of twisted metal at the feet of his fellow disciples. He had failed Jesus.

How Jesus dealt with Peter afterward is an example straight from God's body shop. Following the resurrection, Jesus reaffirmed His love for Peter. He evidently met with Peter alone (1 Corinthians 15:5) and later reminded him that He had a job for him—caring for God's children (John 21:17). No wonder Peter would later write that we can cast our cares upon Him because He really cares for us (1 Peter 5:7).

Even though we may be abandoned at the junkyard, Jesus is calling for a wrecker. He will lovingly restore us to mint condition.

James Smith - The Biography of Peter is singularly instructive for every follower of Christ.

1	His Call. The first of the Twelve	Matt. 10:2
2	His Courage	Matt. 14:28
3	His Confession	Matt. 16:15–16
4	His Impulsiveness	Matt. 17:4; John 18:10
5	His Self-Confidence	Mark 14:29–31
6	His Indifference	Mark 14:37
7	His Cowardliness	Mark 14:54
8	His Denial	Mark 14:68–71
9	His Repentance	Mark 14:72
10	His Forgiveness	Mark 16:7
11	His Faith	John 20:2–4
12	His Love	John 21:7
13	His Devotion	John 21:15
14	His Boldness	Acts 2:14; 4:19–20
15	His Power	Acts 3:6; 5:3

He was a man of like passions as we are: Be of good cheer.

THE FEAR OF MAN John 18:15-27. J H Jowett

AND this is the disciple who had been surnamed “The Rock”! Our Lord looked into the morrow, and He saw Simon’s character, compacted by grace and discipline into a texture tough and firm as granite. But there is not much granite here! Peter is yet loose and yielding; more like a bending reed than an unshakable rock. A servant girl whispers, and his timid heart flings a lie to his lips and he denies his Lord.

Peter denied the Master, not because he coveted money, but because he feared men. He was not seeking crowns, but escaping frowns. He was not clutching at a garland, but avoiding a sword. It was not avarice but cowardice which determined his ways. He shrank from crucifixion! He saw a possible cross, and with a great lie he passed by on the other side.

But the Lord has not done with Peter. He is still “in the making.” Some day he will justify his new name. Some day we shall find it written: “When they saw the boldness of Peter, they marvelled”! Once a maid could make him tremble. Now he can stand in high places, “steadfast and unmovable”!

From the spirit of cowardice and from all temporizing, and from the unholy fear of man, deliver me, good Lord!

Failure Is Not Fatal

You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. — John 6:69

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 18:15-27

Prime Minister Winston Churchill knew how to bolster the spirits of the British people during World War II. On June 18, 1940, he told a frightened populace, “Hitler knows that he will have to break us . . . or lose the war. . . . Let us therefore brace . . . and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire [lasts] for a thousand years, men will still say, ‘This was their finest hour!’ ”

We would all like to be remembered for our “finest hour.” Perhaps the apostle Peter’s finest hour was when he proclaimed, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:69). Sometimes, however, we let our failures define us. After Peter repeatedly denied that he knew Jesus, he went out and wept bitterly (Matt. 26:75; John 18).

Like Peter, we all fall short—in our relationships, in our struggle with sin, in our faithfulness to God. But “failure is not fatal,” as Churchill also said. Thankfully, this is true in our spiritual life. Jesus forgave the repentant Peter for his failure (John 21) and used him to preach and lead many to the Savior.

Failure is not fatal. God lovingly restores those who turn back to Him. By: Cindy Hess Kasper (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Dear Father, thank You for Your forgiveness. Thank You that Your mercy and grace are given freely through the shed blood of Your Son, Jesus.

*When God forgives,
He removes the sin and
restores the soul.*

-- Ps 32:1-2+

QUESTION - [What was the reason behind Peter's denial of Jesus? | GotQuestions](#)

ANSWER - The story of Peter’s threefold denial of Christ is found in all four Gospel accounts: Matthew 26:69–74, Mark 14:66–72, Luke 22:55–62, and John 18:15–18, 25–27. But why would the chief of the disciples deny even knowing Him? There were two main reasons why Peter denied Jesus: weakness and fear.

Peter’s denial was based partially on weakness, the weakness born of human frailty. After the Last Supper, Jesus took His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane to await His arrest. He told them to stay awake and pray while He went off to pray alone. When He returned to them, He found them sleeping. He warned Peter to stay awake and pray because, although his spirit might be willing, his flesh was weak. But he fell asleep again, and, by the time the soldiers had come to arrest Jesus, it was too late to pray for the strength to endure the ordeal to come. No doubt his failure to appropriate the only means to shore up his own weakness—prayer—occurred to him as he was weeping bitterly after his denials. But Peter learned his lesson about being watchful, and he exhorts us in 1 Peter 5:8, “Be on the alert, because your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” Peter’s weakness had caused him to be “devoured” momentarily as he denied his Lord because he hadn’t been prepared through prayer and he underestimated his own weakness.

A second reason for Peter’s failure was fear. To his credit, although all the others had fled (Mark 14:50), Peter still followed Jesus

after His arrest, but he kept his distance so as not to be identified with Him (Mark 14:54). There's no question that fear gripped him. From the courtyard, he watched Jesus being falsely accused, beaten, and insulted (Mark 14:57–66). Peter was afraid Jesus would die, and he was fearful for his own life as well. The world hated Jesus, and Peter found that he was not prepared to face the ridicule and persecution that Jesus was suffering. Earlier, Jesus had warned His disciples as well as us today, "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first" (John 15:18; cf. Matthew 24:9). Peter quickly found he wasn't nearly as bold and courageous as he had proclaimed, and in fear he denied the One who had loved him.

We might well wonder why Jesus allowed Peter to fail so miserably and deny his Lord three times that night. Jesus revealed to Peter that Satan had asked for permission to [sift Peter like wheat](#) (Luke 22:31). Jesus could have easily protected Peter and not allowed Satan to sift him, but Jesus had a higher goal. He was equipping Peter to strengthen his brothers (Luke 22:32). Not only did Peter strengthen the other disciples, but he became the pillar of the early church in Jerusalem, exhorting and training others to follow the Lord Jesus (Acts 2). And he continues to this day to strengthen us through his epistles, 1 and 2 Peter. As with all our failures, God used Peter's many failures, including his three denials of Christ, to turn him from Simon, a common man with a common name, into Peter, the Rock.

QUESTION - [What is the significance of the rooster crowing in regards to Peter denying Jesus three times?](#)

ANSWER - Matthew 26:34, Luke 22:34, and John 13:38 all record Jesus telling Peter, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." Mark words it differently, which has led to some confusion. Mark 14:30 says, "And Jesus said to him, 'Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows *twice*, you will deny me three times'" (emphasis added). Then, when the first servant girl questioned Peter about his relationship to Jesus, "he denied it, saying, 'I neither know nor understand what you mean.' And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed" (Mark 14:68). Later, after Peter's third denial, "immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.' And he broke down and wept" (Mark 14:72).

***Did the rooster crow once or twice,
and what is the significance of that crowing?***

Since we know that all Scripture is God-breathed and therefore accurate (2 Timothy 3:16), we can rest assured that there are always explanations for seeming inconsistencies. In biblical days, roosters were common within the towns and cities. The first crowing often occurred around midnight. The second crowing could be expected before daybreak. Jesus' prediction about Peter's denials meant that Peter would have opportunities all night long to repeat the validating claim he made when he told Jesus, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). However, despite three opportunities, the overconfident Peter denied His Lord every time. When daylight came, Jesus' mock trial was over, and Peter lost his opportunities to defend Jesus as he had claimed he would do (Mark 14:29).

Jesus did not say that Peter would deny Him before *any* rooster's crow. So the report of a first crowing does not negate the validity of Jesus' words. In those days, when someone made the comment "before the rooster crows," it would have been commonly understood to mean the crowing at daybreak. But morning was not the only time roosters crowed. As anyone who has lived on a farm can attest, roosters crow whenever they feel like it. A rooster can crow when he senses danger, when another rooster threatens his flock, or simply because he got his days and nights mixed up. So it is perfectly understandable that Jesus would have been precise in prophesying to Peter that a rooster would actually crow twice during the time Peter was denying Him.

The first crowing would not have been noticed by Peter at that moment, since people were used to hearing roosters at random times. It is similar to how people living near train tracks get used to hearing the noise of trains and stop noticing the sound. But when the morning rooster crowed, Peter was struck with the accuracy of Jesus' words, and he went out and wept bitterly.

It is also noteworthy that Mark was a close associate of Peter's (1 Peter 5:13) and would have obtained many details for his Gospel from Peter himself. After the fact, Peter would have considered the first crowing more significant than he did at the time. Jesus' prophetic words must have played over and over in his head as he then recalled the first crowing and then the second. It seems likely that, in his retelling of that night to Mark, Peter would have made mention of both crowings. Mark does not in any way contradict the other accounts, which only mention the second crowing. The second crowing was the most important one, since it marked the end of Peter's testing.

Because of the prominence of the story of Peter and the rooster, recorded in all four Gospels, the rooster, or cock, has at times been used as a Christian symbol. Some churches even place a rooster atop their steeples. Used as a symbol, the rooster represents the weakness of man and the grace of Christ in forgiving sinners. Peter three times denied his Lord and Savior, but he was forgiven, restored, and sent out to live for the glory of God (John 21:15–19). The rooster reminds us that Christ extends hope to sinners everywhere.

The rooster, used as a Christian symbol, can also represent watchfulness. Before His arrest, Jesus prayed in the garden and asked His disciples to do the same. But He found them sleeping, and He said to Peter, "Are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation" (Mark 14:37–38). Later that night, Peter did indeed fall into temptation, and the rooster's crow served as his spiritual wake-up call. The rooster can still be a reminder today that we must watch and pray and live as children of light: "You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness" (1 Thessalonians 5:5).

The rooster could also be seen as proclaiming the start of a new day. In Christ, all things become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). A new day of forgiveness and grace has dawned, and believers, saved by grace, proclaim the good news to a world in need of light.

Jesus is never impressed with our fleshly bravado such as Peter expressed in Matthew 26:35. Jesus knows our hearts better than we do (Matthew 9:4; Luke 9:47). But, even though He knows the ways we will fail Him, our Lord does not stop loving us or using us to further His message. Those rooster crowings must have haunted Peter for many years and may have helped him stay humble, watchful, and committed to his calling. Our past failures can be battle scars in our lives as well, propelling us toward greater devotion and stricter loyalty to Jesus when we recall how much we have been forgiven (see Luke 7:47).

Gleason Archer - How can the various accounts of Peter's denial of Christ be reconciled? -[Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties page 343](#) ([See related discussion by Norman Geisler](#))

Concerning Peter's denial, Christ is quoted in Matthew 26:34 as stating, "Truly I tell you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will three times deny Me." Mark 14:30 quotes Jesus a little more fully: "And Jesus says to him, 'Truly I tell you that today, this very night, before the rooster crows twice you will three times deny Me.' " (Luke 22:34 substantially follows Matthew's wording, though in a somewhat briefer version.) Is this a real discrepancy, as some critics allege? Hardly, since we may be very sure that if the rooster crows twice, he has at least crowed once.

Apparently Jesus did specify that the cock would crow a second time by the time the third denial had been expressed by Peter. The important part of the prediction, however, lay not in the number of times the rooster would sound out but in the number of times Peter would basely deny to his interrogators that he belonged to Jesus—or even that he was acquainted with Him. To add or include additional information does not amount to a contradiction of the testimony of a witness who has given a somewhat briefer account. Such variation is observed in the lecture notes taken by students in a classroom: some include more details than others. But that does not mean they are not all equally valid witnesses to what their instructor said.

The same observation applied to the account of the triple denial itself. Each synoptist includes some items of information not included by the others, and John furnishes many details not found in the Synoptics at all. But it is perfectly clear that none of the statements are actually contradictory. When they are lined up in parallel columns, their rich wealth of information gives us a fuller account than could be gathered from any single one of them. Such a comparison yields the following composite narrative of Peter's miserable experience during Christ's trial before Caiaphas.

Peter was admitted to the outer court of the high priest after John had spoken to the doorkeeper (thyrocros is probably masculine here) who guarded the approach from the street (John 18:15–16). After Peter entered, he sat down by a fire to warm himself on that chilly night (Luke 22:56). But a girl who served as a doorkeeper on the inner side of the gate began looking intently at him and finally blurted out, "You too were with Jesus, the Galilean from Nazareth!" (Mark 14:67) (Luke 22:56 reads "You too were with him!"). Then she asked him point blank, "Aren't you one of His disciples?" (John 18:17). To this Peter uttered his first denial, "I am not!" He added, "I don't know or understand what you are talking about" (Matt. 26:70; Mark 14:68). Then he stoutly affirmed, "I don't know Him, woman!" (Luke 22:57).

After this brush with danger, Peter wandered off to the portico of the building itself; but even there he attracted some unwelcome attention. Another servant girl, who may well have been tipped off by the female gatekeeper, remarked to one of the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus the Nazarene" (Matt. 26:71). "He certainly was one of them," she insisted (Mark 14:69).

At this point, one of the men in the group leveled an accusing finger at Peter and declared, "You are one of them!" (Luke 22:58). Peter had by this time joined some men standing around a charcoal fire (apparently not the same fire he had stopped by in the outer court); they also picked up the accusation: "You too were with Jesus the Galilean!" (Matt. 26:73; Mark 14:70). They followed this charge with a forthright question: "Are you one of His disciples?" (John 18:25). With mounting intensity Peter replied, "Man, I am not!" (Luke 22:58). "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about!" (Matt. 26:72).

Somewhat later, perhaps as long as an hour after the second denial (Luke 22:59), a relative of the servant Peter had wounded at Gethsemane spotted him and shouted out, "Didn't I see you in the garden with Him? You certainly must have been with Him, for you are a Galilean" (Luke 22:59). At this the bystanders chimed in; "You are certainly one of them, for you are a Galilean" (Mark 14:70).

“You must be, for you talk with Galilean accent” (Matt. 26:73). At this, Peter began to panic; so he broke out into cursing and swearing: “By God, I don’t even know the man you’re talking about!” (Mark 14:71).

As soon as he had uttered this lie, Peter heard a rooster crowing. Suddenly he remembered how he had boasted the night before that he was ready to go to his death rather than deny his Lord. It was at that moment that Jesus Himself, who was still standing before Caiaphas under trial, looked over in Peter’s direction—and their eyes met (Luke 22:61). Covered with shame and full of self-loathing, Peter hurried out of the high priestly palace into the darkness of the night, now graying into dawn; and he sat down to weep and sob out his contrition before God.

In conclusion, then, the four testimonies of the Evangelists contain no contradictions, even though the information they yield may be somewhat diverse. As in any properly conducted court hearing, it is the task of the judge and jury to piece together the full account of the occurrence under investigation on the basis of the report of their individual witness. Much of their testimony will, of course, be identical; but in each case there will be some details recalled or thought worth mentioning that are forthcoming from the other witnesses. There is under the laws of legal evidence no good grounds for concluding, as some biased scholars mistakenly do, that the difference between the Gospels involve genuine discrepancies and unresolvable contradictions. Critics such as these would be utterly incompetent to sit in judgment in any court of law.

John 18:28 Then they *led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.

KJV 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.

BGT John 18:28 γουσιν ο ν τ ν ησο ν π το Καϊ φα ε ς τ πραι τριον· ν δ πρω · κα α το ο κ ε σ λθον ε ς τ πραι τριον, να μ μιανθ σιν λλ φ γωσιν τ π σχα.

NET John 18:28 Then they brought Jesus from Caiaphas to the Roman governor's residence. (Now it was very early morning.) They did not go into the governor's residence so they would not be ceremonially defiled, but could eat the Passover meal.

CSB John 18:28 Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They did not enter the headquarters themselves; otherwise they would be defiled and unable to eat the Passover.

ESV John 18:28 Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover.

NIV John 18:28 Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover.

NLT John 18:28 Jesus' trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the morning. Then he was taken to the headquarters of the Roman governor. His accusers didn't go inside because it would defile them, and they wouldn't be allowed to celebrate the Passover.

NRS John 18:28 Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover.

NJB John 18:28 They then led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the Praetorium. It was now morning. They did not go into the Praetorium themselves to avoid becoming defiled and unable to eat the Passover.

NAB John 18:28 Then they brought Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium. It was morning. And they themselves did not enter the praetorium, in order not to be defiled so that they could eat the Passover.

YLT John 18:28 They led, therefore, Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium, and it was early, and they themselves did not enter into the praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the passover;

- led: Mt 27:1,2-10 Mk 15:1-5 Lu 23:1-5 Ac 3:13
- to: John 18:33 19:9 Mt 27:27 Mk 15:16 *Gr:

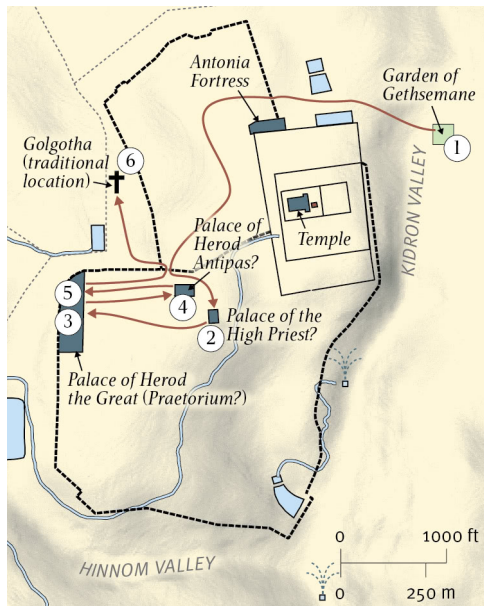
- **early:** Pr 1:16 4:16 Mic 2:1 Lu 22:66
- **and they:** Ps 35:16 Isa 1:10-15 Jer 7:8-11 Am 5:21-23 Mic 3:10-12 Mt 23:23-28 27:6 Ac 10:28 11:3
- **eat the Passover:** John 18:39 19:14 De 16:2 2Ch 30:21-24 35:8-14,17,18 Eze 45:21
- James Stalker's classic [Trial and Arrest of Jesus Christ - 4. THE CIVIL TRIAL](#) Matt. 27:11; Mark 15:2; Luke 23:2-4; John 18:28-38.

Related Passages:

Matthew 27:1-2; 11-14+ Now **when morning came**, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus to put Him to death; and they bound Him, and led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate the governor.....27:11-14) 11 Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor questioned Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And Jesus said to him, "**It is as you say.**" 12 And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He did not answer. 13 Then Pilate *said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" 14 And He did not answer him with regard to even a single charge, so the governor was quite amazed.

Mark 15:1-5+ Early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole Council (SANHEDRIN), immediately held a consultation; and binding Jesus, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate. 2 Pilate questioned Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He *answered him, "**It is as you say.**" 3 The chief priests began to accuse Him harshly. 4 Then Pilate questioned Him again, saying, "Do You not answer? See how many charges they bring against You!" 5 But Jesus made no further answer; so Pilate was amazed.

Luke 23:1-5+ Then the whole body of them (**Sanhedrin**) got up and brought Him before Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." 3 So Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He answered him and said, "**It is as you say.**" 4 Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man." 5 But they kept on insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee even as far as this place."



See #2 ==> #3
Source: [ESV Study Bible](#)

JESUS FIRST ROMAN "TRIAL" AT THE PRAETORIUM

Then they *led Jesus ([lesous](#)) from [Caiaphas](#) into the Praetorium ([praitorion](#)), and it was early ([proi](#)) - NET = Now it was very early morning." **Early** is the Greek adverb of time ([proi](#)) which means "early in the morning." So by "**early**" apparently John means it was now daybreak (shortly after sunrise), for the third Jewish religious trial before the Sanhedrin was convened at daybreak to get around the illegality of the first two "trials" which were at night. It would probably have been sometime around 6-6:30 AM.

Night trials were strictly forbidden, so these hypocrites wait for the crack of dawn to carry out their third religious trial [SEE CHART comparing the 4 Gospel accounts of the THIRD trial](#)), thinking this would make their trial legal and legitimate. When a person is

deceived, by definition they don't even know they are deceived. These Jewish men may have had worldly wisdom, but they were woefully deceived! Their daylight religious trial was still illegal, but now they felt they could quickly "legally" shuttle Jesus to Pilate (cf Mt 27:1-2+) for the first of three Roman trials (see [chart of all six trials](#)).

Vine on it was **early** ([proi](#)) - The significance of the statement in verse 28, "and it was early," is as follows. A Roman court could be held after sunrise. The occasion being critical, Pilate would be ready to open the court, say, between 4:00 and 5:00 A.M. The Sanhedrin officials were in a difficulty, as a whole day must intervene between their sentence and execution. Hence they go at once to Pilate. If he agrees to execute he can fix the time. So they transferred the breach of their law from themselves to him. Their supercilious adherence to the Law prevented their entering a polluted house, uncleansed from leaven (Ex. 12:15). "Pilate therefore went out unto them," lit., "went out ... outside unto them," with emphasis on the verb "went out," marking his concession to their religiousness and his anxiety to avoid disturbance.

J R Miller - The religious rulers carried their pious scruples even to the palace of Pilate. Amazingly, they had no scruples about their wicked treatment of an innocent man—but they were scrupulously conscientious about matters of mere ceremonial requirement! They would not set their feet on the Gentile's floor—for that would have defiled them! Yet meanwhile their hearts were full of evil and murderous thoughts and resolves!

There will always be people who are most punctilious in their religious rituals—but who in practical life, are little better than heathen! We should learn well, that God is grieved more by our bitter feeling, our lack of love, our hate and envy—than He is with little omissions in religious ceremonies and formalities.

NET NOTE - The permanent residence of the Roman governor of Palestine was in Caesarea (Acts 23:35). The governor had a residence in Jerusalem which he normally occupied only during principal feasts or in times of political unrest. The location of this building in Jerusalem is uncertain, but is probably one of two locations: either (1) the fortress or tower of Antonia, on the east hill north of the temple area, which is the traditional location of the Roman [praetorium](#) since the 12th century, or (2) the palace of Herod on the west hill near the present Jaffa Gate. According to Philo (Embassy 38 [299]) Pilate had some golden shields hung there, and according to Josephus (J. W. 2.14.8 [2.301], 2.15.5 [2.328]) the later Roman governor Florus stayed there.

*Nothing is more common than for persons
overzealous about rituals to be remiss about morals.*
--Matthew Poole

And they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium([praitorion](#)) **so that**(term of purpose) **they would not be defiled** ([miaino](#)), **but might eat the Passover** ([pascha](#)) - These legalistic Jews could go inside a Gentile courtyard open to the sky, but taught they could not go into a Gentile building or home with a roof on it without becoming ceremonially unclean! This was tantamount to their hypocritical straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! (Mt 23:24+) **The Praetorium** ([praitorion](#)) was a residence for Gentiles and for a Jew to enter such a domicile would defile them for the Passover. These men were the worst of all hypocrites, for they would willingly kill the Passover Lamb of God, but would not ceremonially defile themselves so they could eat the passover lamb that foreshadowed the true Passover Lamb (1Co 5:7)!

Augustine - O impious blindness! They would be defiled, forsooth, by a dwelling which was another's, and not be defiled by a crime which was their own. They feared to be defiled by the praetorium of an alien judge, and feared not to be defiled by the blood of an innocent brother.

John Trapp - "Putrid hypocrisy! they stand upon legal defilements, and care not to defile their consciences with innocent blood. What is this, but to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel?"

Matthew Poole "Nothing is more common than for persons overzealous about rituals to be remiss about morals."

Spurgeon - For the passover had not yet been celebrated. Our Lord observed a kind of paschal feast one day before the usual time, but the real passover he kept in a higher manner, being then made to be the Lamb of God, whose blood procures the salvation of the chosen. The Jewish counsellors little knew that they were already far too defiled to have any real fellowship with God's passover, and were unconsciously slaughtering the true Lamb, whose flesh they were not privileged to eat. (The Interpreter)

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:28

They were very eager to prove their enmity to Christ; they had spent the night, and the earliest moments of the dawn, in examining their illustrious prisoner, condemning him, and abusing him, and now they were off to Pilate.

What could defile such wretches at these? Yet they were afraid of ceremonial defilement, though neither afraid nor ashamed to imbrue their hands in the blood of Jesus.

Praetorium (governor's palace) (4232) **praitorion** from Latin **praetorium**) refers to a detachment of soldiers serving as the palace guard. Praetorium was originally the praetor's tent in camp, with its surroundings. Some commentators interpret praetorian in [Philippians 1:13](#) as the barracks of the praetorian guard. But the next phrase **and to everyone else** indicates persons, not a place.

Wikipedia on [praetorium](#) - The [Latin](#) term *praetorium* — or *praetorium* or *pretorium* — originally signified a general's tent within a Roman [castra](#), [castellum](#), or encampment. It derived from the name of one of the chief [Roman magistrates](#), the [praetor](#). *Praetor* (Latin, "leader") was originally the title of the highest-ranking civil servant in the [Roman Republic](#), but later became a position directly below the rank of [consul](#).

Zodhiates on **praetorium** - Originally the general's tent in a camp, the house or palace of a governor of a province. Any large house, palace. In the NT a governor's house, palace. Spoken of:

(I) The great and magnificent palace of Herod at Jerusalem built at the northern part of the upper city, westward of the temple and overlooking it, to which there was also access from the palace over the open place called Xystus, and a bridge across the Cheesemongers' Valley or Tyropoieion Valley. With the palace were connected the three towers Hippas, Phasael, and Mariamne. In this palace the Roman procurators, whose headquarters were probably at Caesarea Maritime (Acts 23:23; 25:1), took up their residence when they visited Jerusalem. This was their tribunal (bēma [968]) which was set up in the area of the open court before it (John 18:28, 33; 19:9). In Matt. 27:27; Mark 15:16, it seems to refer to the court or part of the palace where the procurator's guards were stationed.

(II) The palace of Herod at Caesarea Maritime, perhaps in like manner the residence of the procurator (Acts 23:35).

(III) The praetorian camp at Rome, meaning the camp or quarters of the praetorian cohorts (Phil. 1:13). These were a body of select troops instituted by Augustus to guard him and to have charge of the city. (BORROW [The complete word study dictionary : New Testament page 1206](#))

Early (4404) **proi** from **pro** = before) is an adverb of time closely paralleling our English word early or the phrase in the morning. Proi means early, in the (early) morning; in Jewish time reckoning, the last watch of the night. Mark 13:35+ used the term **proi** to refer to the fourth watch of the night, the hours from 3 a.m. to 6 a.m. (reflects Jewish time reckoning).

PROI - 12V - early(4), early morning(1), morning(7). Matt. 16:3; Matt. 20:1; Matt. 21:18; Mk. 1:35; Mk. 11:20; Mk. 13:35; Mk. 15:1; Mk. 16:2; Mk. 16:9; Jn. 18:28; Jn. 20:1; Acts 28:23

PILATE'S MOVEMENTS DURING JESUS' TRIAL

One aspect of Jesus' trial before Pilate that can be confusing is that Pilate moved in and out of the Praetorium in various phases of the trial.. Here is a summary of Pilate's movements into the Praetorium (where Jesus was) and out of the Praetorium (where the Jewish accusers stood). You will notice that Pilate's movement are keyed to John's account, as John reports far more details of this trial before Pilate than do the three Synoptists combined.

1. Jesus led **INSIDE** the Praetorium or judgment hall (John 18:28).

While all four Gospels record that Jesus is delivered to Pilate, only John includes the detail that Jesus is taken INSIDE the Praetorium while His accusers remained outside. This fact sets up multiple movements by Pilate as he addressed the two parties involved in the trial.

D A Carson comments that the failure of the Jews to enter the Praetorium "sent Pilate scuttling back and forth, acting on two stages as it were, a front stage and a rear stage. This simultaneously enhances the drama of the narrative, ensures that the Jews do not hear Jesus' self-disclosing claims before Pilate, and 'portrays the human predicament in which one must choose between Jesus and the world'. (Pillar Commentary - John)

2. **Movement 1:** Pilate comes **OUTSIDE** of the Praetorium to Jesus' accusers to hear their charges. This begins the formal trial. (John 18:29-32).

John records their more general charges against Jesus and tells them to take Jesus and judge Him themselves. This forces them to concoct three specific charges recorded only in Lk 23:2.

3. **Movement 2:** Pilate goes back **INSIDE** the Praetorium to Jesus to hear His defense (John 18:33-38).

All four Gospels record that Pilate focuses on the third charge that Jesus is a King and asks Him "Are You the King of the Jews?" (Mt 27:11, Mk 15:2, Lk 23:3, Jn 18:33).

Only John 18:34-38 records the details of this phase of Pilate's interrogation of Jesus.

4. **Movement 3:** Pilate goes back **OUTSIDE** to the people to declare Jesus' innocence (John 18:38).

Only John 18:38 and Luke 23:5 record Pilate's **FIRST** of 3 not guilty verdicts (Jn 19:4, 6, cf Lk 23:22).

Pilate's not guilty verdict incites the Jews to a barrage of accusations at Jesus. Only Mt 27:12-14 and Mk 15:3-5 record Jesus' refusal to answer the accusations by the chief priests and elders against Jesus.

Only Luke 23:5 records the Jew's accusation that Jesus stirred up the people in Galilee, which prompts Pilate to send Jesus to the wicked ruler Herod (Antipas) who had jurisdiction over Galilee and was in Jerusalem at the time.

Only Luke 23:6-12 records the transfer of Jesus from Pilate to Herod and the mistreatment Jesus received in the second phase of the civil trial.

Only Luke 23:11 records that Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate.

Only Luke 23:13 records that "Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people." Apparently the gathering before the Praetorium had either broken up or decreased in size while Jesus was before Herod. And it is clear that the religious leaders followed Jesus and spoke out again when He appeared before Herod (Lk 23:10). Note that since Pilate summoned the religious leaders and began to sp

Only Luke 23:14-15 record Pilate's statement before the Jews (who had been summoned) that he found no guilt in Jesus nor did Herod.

Only Luke 23:16 records Pilate's conclusion "Therefore I will punish Him and release Him." The Gospels do not record the reaction of the Jews to this announcement, but Pilate's subsequent mention of the custom of releasing a prisoner implies that their reaction prevented him from following through and forced him to try another ploy.

John 18:39 records Pilate's attempt to release Jesus "But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover; do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?" The interchange regarding Barabbas is recorded in John 18:39-40, Matthew 27:15-18, 20-21, and Mk 15:6-11.

5. **Movement 4:** Pilate goes back **INSIDE** the Praetorium to scourge Jesus (John 19:1-3).

6. **Movement 5:** Pilate goes back **OUTSIDE** to the Jews to offer a compromise (John 19:4-7).

7. **Movement 6:** Pilate goes back **INSIDE** to Jesus to investigate the possibility of a supernatural being (John 19:8-11).

8. **Movement 7:** Pilate goes back **OUTSIDE** to the Jews to release Jesus (John 19:12).

9. **Movement 8:** Pilate brings Jesus **OUTSIDE**, sits on the Judgment Seat and gives his verdict of crucifixion (John 19:13-15).

Larry Richards - DEVOTIONAL "Free Barabbas!"(John 18:28–40) - (BORROW [The 365 day devotional commentary PAGE 808](#))

The word that John used to describe Barabbas is lestes. It does not mean thief, but outlaw: an insurrectionist. In our day we'd probably call Barabbas a "freedom fighter." He was one of those people who chafed under Roman rule, found a contributor or two, and with freshly armed companions set out to cause as much trouble as he could.

It would be a shame if a few innocent bystanders got killed. But the cause was just. What are a few lives measured against advancement of the cause?

So Pilate made a grave miscalculation when he asked the crowd to choose between Jesus, the miracle worker and healer, and Barabbas, the terrorist. The crowd shouted for Barabbas, and undoubtedly the TV cameras and reporters crowded around, and Barabbas was invited to speak to the United Nations, firmly gripping his swords and knives.

What amazes me is the number of Third World movements that pass themselves off as Christian—and are lauded by churchmen. Have you ever noticed that, when Christians cry out against injustice, all too many shout for the release of Barabbas rather than

Jesus? They call for the sword and spear, the arming of the oppressed, rather than the spiritual armory of Jesus.

Real victories are never achieved by Barabbas, who mutilates and kills. Real victories, of the spirit over the flesh, of love over hate, of patient faith and goodness over brutality and evil, are won as Jesus won His victory over Satan. By taking up the cross; by bearing witness; by dying if need be. And by resurrection.

Personal Application

When faith adopts unbelief's weapons, evil has already won.

Quotable

"What will it profit a man if he gains his cause, and silences his adversary, if at the same time he loses that humble tender frame of spirit in which the Lord delights, and to which the promise of His presence is made!"—John Newton

Abraham Kuyper - from Honey from the Rock: Daily Devotions from Young Kuyper

IN THE JUDGMENT HALL They led Jesus into the judgment hall. John 18:28

Our Savior allowed himself to be led into the judgment hall.

What's this all about?

Isn't the judgment hall the house of his Father? Isn't all justice from God? Isn't God the one who preserves justice? When a nation develops to the point that it opens a hall of justice, isn't that also a blessing to them?

You know that in days of turmoil and anarchy, when violence reigns and the blind passions of the heart have a free hand, the judgment hall is on lockdown. The judge isn't sitting on the bench. That's when the fires of hell rise to the surface. Remember Paris in 1870.¹ The devils were turned loose!

But as soon as the uproar had subsided, the power of mutiny broken, and brute force clipped, the doors of the courthouse were opened again. The judge resumed his place of honor on the bench, and the scales of justice tipped in his hands once more.

And when light and life had been restored in the courtroom, the better citizens could breathe again, and the criminal element trembled at the prospect of retribution.

A judgment hall in human society is certainly a godly thing! It's a divine institution that reflects something of God's presence and honor. "Gods" are seated in a court of justice, says Scripture, and God is in their midst.

With God, it's all about justice.

It's not just about making us pure and holy and blessed. It's not only about treating us medically and healing us. It's not even about dealing with us on the ethical level and fostering a new and holier life in us. No, more than all of this, the issue of justice is at the heart of the living God's dealing with his creatures.

It's about establishing justice.

This is because the Lord God is a God who is aware. He knows what he wants. For this reason he has established his will and expressed his life in ordinances, commandments, and directives. He drew boundaries through the entire creation. He determined every limit and restriction. For each of his creatures, he has determined the way in which they are to serve him and exist in his presence.

If the Lord God were a being who is simply unaware of things and has no will or issues no commands about them, it would be enough for us merely to receive new life from him or to be healed of our wounds by him.

But God possesses a self-conscious will about all things. This will governs his ordinances. So there are laws and regulations that determine what God expects of his creatures. And they will be realized just as surely and definitely as a star follows the course that God has defined for it.

As far as God is concerned, those laws cannot be annulled. His lordship through those laws extends so far that he even has control over Satan, the fallen angels, and those who will ultimately be lost. While he is capable of winning strictly through the exercise of sheer power because he is God, he chooses not to do so. He chooses to win only by means of his laws. And in this reality we have the only real key for explaining the suffering of Jesus.

The world into which Jesus entered is governed by laws, as distorted and falsified as they may be. Yet these are laws that always have their place and always have their advocates. The deeply fallen world always has a stake in upholding them. Its honor is involved in doing so. And now Jesus definitely wants to capture that world as his prize and to win back those entrusted to him by the Father. But according to the ordinances governing this earth, that had to be done lawfully.

God had determined that one standard exists for all people. He had also determined that there was nevertheless one nation where law had achieved a greater, purer development. That nation was not that of the Jews but that of the Romans.

The right of condemning to death had not been granted to Jewish law, therefore.

Israel was in possession of a God-given law as well as of a humanly developed system of justice based on it.

This divine law was sacred, and according to it the Man of Sorrows was Israel's Lord and King.

But according to its humanly developed system of justice, Jesus could definitely be apprehended, but not justly condemned. This is

why God had arranged it that the masters of law, that is, the Romans, were in control in Jerusalem precisely at that time. That's why he also determined that they alone had the authority and competence to impose the death penalty.

So in Jerusalem there was not only one judgment hall but also the best courthouse on earth available at that time. It was a court with a Roman as presiding judge. This is why we profess in the Apostles' Creed "suffered under Pontius Pilate." Pilate was that Roman in the judgment hall. "Suffered under Pontius Pilate" expresses faith in God's divine leading and guidance.

So the One who bore our sins entered that judgment hall in the full awareness that the sentence of death awaited him there.

Dead or alive, Jesus wanted justice.

Justice in the hall where the man sat who held power because the Father had given it to him! Jesus loves the Father everlastingly. Because God is just, because he lives by justice, because he acts justly, and because he administers justice, Jesus could not escape justice even though that justice would condemn him to death.

He did this so that he might lead you into the eternal judgment hall, namely, into his Father's house.

He did this in order to establish a judgment hall in your own heart, your dwelling place, and to seat the Judge of Every Thought back on the judgment seat there, which is his place of honor.

Yes, he did this to create a refuge for justice in his church here on earth.

So let me know, my good reader. Is your heart that kind of judgment hall? Is your home? Is the congregation to which you belong?

Do you love justice? With a deep, pervasive drive to do God's will, even when it doesn't go your way?

Horatius Bonar - RITUALISM AND THE CROSS—JOHN 18:28.

THESE "rulers of the Jews" and the multitude that followed them, were thorough "Ritualists." It was their Ritualism that urged them on to crucify the Son of God. For Christ and Ritualism are opposed to each other as light is to darkness. The true cross in which Paul gloried, and the cross in which modern ceremonialists glory, have no resemblance to each other. The cross and the crucifix cannot agree. Either ritualism will banish Christ, or Christ will banish ritualism. They cannot possibly co-exist.

It is the ritualism of these Jews,—Pharisees, and Scribes, and Priests,—that comes out here. It was this that kept them out of Pilate's hall,—for the touch of a Gentile, or anything belonging to a Gentile, would pollute them. They could not, in that case, eat the Passover. And the Passover was simply to them a rite by which they thought to recommend themselves to God and pacify their own consciences. It was their God, their Messiah, their Saviour, their religion.

Ritualism, or sacerdotalism, or externalism, or traditionalism, are all different forms of self-righteousness; man's self-invented ways of pleasing or appeasing God, or paying for admittance into the kingdom. And these forms of self-righteousness are also forms of religious materialism, devout externalism. They are a human apparatus or machinery for performing a certain thing called worship, or procuring a thing called pardon; they are the means by which the performer of them hopes to win God's favour,—perhaps, also, man's praise,—most certainly, his own esteem.

If there could be a righteousness or merit from any kind of human performances, it would have been under the Old Testament, for then all the ceremonies were divine. Man did not originate or invent them. They were all ordained by God. Awful as was the mistake of the Jew in making a saviour or a righteousness of these, it was not half so awful or so unnatural as making a saviour or a righteousness out of the performance of certain rites called Christian, invented wholly by man, without God's command, nay, in defiance of it. And every act, or performance, or ceremony, that honours self, exalts self, gives prominence to self, is an accursed thing; an abomination in the sight of God, however religious, or sacred, or solemn, or devout, it may seem to man.

It is to self-righteousness in some form or other that man is always tending; under Christianity no less than under Judaism. On the one hand, we see men trying to believe that human nature is not so very bad after all; and on the other, men professing to believe that it is bad, trying to make up for this badness, or to cover it over, by works, and devotions, and ceremonies. All this is pure self-righteousness.

The touch-stone of this ritualism, or religionism, or self-righteousness, is the true cross of Christ. Let us look at it in this light; especially as exhibited in the narrative under notice; for here it is that, for the first time, self-righteousness comes in direct contact with the cross.

I. The religion of self-righteousness. In the case of these Jews it was keeping the passover; observing a feast. That was religion! It was all the religion they had: it was their all for acceptance with God; their all for eternity. Their answer to the Judge at the judgment-seat would be, "I kept your passovers." As if there were any religion in eating and drinking! The religion of self-righteousness in our day is like this;—works, feelings, fancies, music, rites, festivals, fasts, gestures, postures, garments;—that is religion! It is something which gratifies self; which pleases the natural man; which makes a man think well of himself; which gives a man something to do or to feel in order to earn pardon and merit heaven.

II. The scruples of self-righteousness. These Jews would not enter a Gentile hall. The touch of its floor or walls would be pollution. Religion and irreligion were to them something outward; something with which the body, not the soul, had to do. After touching

these, or breathing such air, they would themselves be defiled. Their scruples all turned on their own self-esteem. Pride, religious pride, was at the root. They were thoroughly blind to all that constituted real pollution, and saw only the false. They were scrupulous about entering a Gentile hall, when yet they were seeking to slay a righteous man, nay, to crucify the Lord of glory. What was the value of such scruples? What was their meaning? These men could swallow the camel while they were straining out a gnat. They could murder the innocent; yet they were too holy to set their foot on a Gentile floor. Such is the way in which self-righteousness acts itself out! Such is the pride of ecclesiastical caste!

III. The deeds of self-righteousness. These were many. Some looked very religious,—fasting, praying, almsgiving, Others not so. In the present case, the great deed of self-righteousness is the crucifying of the Lord of glory. That cross was the monument of self-righteousness. It was this that cried, Away with him; crucify him; not this man but Barabbas. So with modern self-righteousness in every form; especially in the form of ritualism and formalism. It is ever against Christ that self-righteousness shews its hatred, and aims its strokes. Ritualism is man's expression of dislike to Christ. It is the modern way of crucifying Christ afresh, and putting Him to an open shame.

IV. The connection between this deed and the religion. Christ and self-righteousness cannot be on terms of friendship, for Christ, in his grace and finished work and free salvation, is wholly antagonistic to all forms of self-righteousness. The Jews felt that He was crossing their path, that He was hewing down their temple, that He was utterly making void all their religion; and hence they hated Him; hence they crucified Him. It was self-righteous religion that crucified the Son of God.

All rites and ceremonies, whether old or new, are man's ways of getting rid of Christ. They get rid of real religion by means of that which looks like religion, but which is not religion at all. What can all these things do? Can they save? Can postures save? Can dresses save? Can candles, lighted or unlighted, save? Can music save? Can architecture save? Can cathedrals save? Nay, can they even point the way to Jesus? Do they not lead away from Him? Do they not make void the cross, and trample on the blood?

Greg Laurie - POSERS (borrow [Every day with Jesus page 275](#))

“They led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning.”—JOHN 18:28

SUPPOSE SOMEONE VISITED A SURF STORE, bought a surfboard, a wet suit, and a few bars of wax, picked up some surf stickers to put on his car, and started speaking in surf lingo. Would that make him a surfer? Hardly. To be a surfer, you need to surf. Surfers have a name for people who try to pass themselves off as the real thing: posers. Posers stand around on the beach showing off their stuff. They have a great board, the right wet suit, perfect sticker placement, and speak flawless surf lingo. But they don't surf—they just talk about it. While they watch others surf, they never get out in the water themselves.

When I was younger, we didn't use the word “posers.” We called them “gremmies” if they were kids and “hodads” if they were old guys. The name doesn't matter—posers, gremmies, hodads—they all describe people who go through the motions but stay on the shore. All talk but no performance.

There are a lot of posers in church. They bring a Bible like everybody else. Their cars flash Christian bumper stickers. They've got the lingo down and they talk eloquently about the Christian life. But they don't live it.

To be a surfer you must surf. To be a Christian you must follow Jesus Christ. You must come humbly before God, admit your sinfulness, turn away from it, and follow His Son Jesus Christ with everything that's in you.

Posers won't do that, and there are a lot of them around. This provokes a question: Why is it that so often we're willing to spend huge amounts of time and energy on things that don't matter, but so little time serving God? How is it that we can convincingly play at the Christian life, but not fully live it?

This has been a problem for a long time. Just before the Lord was taken away to be crucified, Jesus asked three of His most trusted disciples to watch with Him for one hour in the garden (see Matthew 26:36–45). They didn't do it. It's ironic that while Peter, James, and John fell asleep, the servants of the devil were working overtime. They were up late at night and early the next morning to do their evil work.

I wish that all Christians would serve the Lord as energetically as they used to serve the devil! Once we served the devil with everything we had. We lived for ourselves, for pleasure, for the buck, for power. Do we serve Jesus Christ with the same fervency? We should serve Him with more!

Jesus once forgave a woman with the words, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little” (Luke 7:47). Later He told His disciples, “To whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more” (Luke 12:48).

So often we give God our leftovers. We have time for television but no time for the Bible. Time for movies but no time for church. Time for what interests us while God gets the last few minutes of the day—after we've watched all the programs we wanted to watch, read all the magazines we wanted to read, and finally dropped into bed exhausted. “Oh yeah, God. The Creator of the universe. The One who died for me. Oh, Him. That's right.” We give Him those last moments as we're ready to drift off into sleep. We collapse with our faces in the Bible.

If only we would serve God with the same zeal that we once reserved for the devil!

I look at what's happening in our world and I see how evil society has become. These are satanically energized times. Blatant evil stares back at us wherever we look. Each year's crime statistics seem to outstrip those of the year before. Deadly epidemics spawned by widespread immorality frighten the population. Television and music both reflect and create a culture on the brink. Evil permeates our society.

It's reached the point where people are getting an appetite for evil. It's harder to shock us, so we have to raise the stakes a little higher. TV has to be a little more violent, a little more gory, a little more sexually titillating, a little more radical. Detestable things are done in the name of artistic freedom. It seems as if there are no more boundaries. Anyone who dares to stand up for morality is mocked and ridiculed.

As we watch this world go down the tubes in hyper speed, how much more should we who are believers pull out the stops and give our all for the Lord! The devil is working overtime. What about us?

It's time for us to get moving. We must work while it is day, for "the night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4). Romans 13:11–12 says, "Do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." How true that statement rings even today—especially today!

Once and for all, soldiers, cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Get out of your foxhole and start marching. It's time to quit griping and complaining. It's time to stop losing ground and start regaining ground. Many years ago the enemies of the Lord were up early while His people were in hiding. There's no reason to repeat their mistake today.

"Dim eyes cannot read fine print. Let your testimony for Christ be written in large letters that the world may see."—William Ward Ayer

John 18:29 Therefore Pilate went out to them and *said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?"

- **What:** Mt 27:23 Ac 23:28-30 25:16

PILATE SEEKS AN ACCUSATION AGAINST JESUS

Therefore Pilate went out to them (see [Pilate's movements](#)) - Since the Jews would not enter Pilate's dwelling, Pilate came out to meet them.

And *said, "What accusation ([kategoria](#)) do you bring against this Man - As stated above, the Jews knew that in order to get Pilate to rule on their case, they had to come with a prepared accusation against Jesus.

J R Miller - It would have been easy to bring a thousand witnesses to testify to the good things Jesus had done—the works of mercy, the deeds of kindness, the miracles of compassion; but in all the country—not one person could have been found to testify to the smallest wrong thing that He had ever done to any being! His life had been a perpetual blessing wherever He had gone. His lips had ever been speaking words of comfort and love. He was hurried to death—by men's hate, without reason or charge of any kind. The rulers assumed an air of dignity, in answer to Pilate's demand to know what charge they brought against Jesus, saying that if He were not an evildoer, they would not have brought Him before Pilate. Their bearing was haughty, and Pilate was offended by it.

NET NOTE - In light of the fact that Pilate had cooperated with them in Jesus' arrest by providing Roman soldiers, the Jewish authorities were probably expecting Pilate to grant them permission to carry out their sentence on Jesus without resistance (the Jews were not permitted to exercise capital punishment under the Roman occupation without official Roman permission, cf. v. 31). They must have been taken somewhat by surprise by Pilate's question "What accusation do you bring against this man," because it indicated that he was going to try the prisoner himself. Thus Pilate was regarding the trial before Caiaphas and the **Sanhedrin** as only an inquiry and their decision as merely an accusation.

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:29

Pilate then went out unto them, He loathed and detested them, yet, for his own evil purposes, he would yield to their wishes and whims.

Accusation (2724) **kategoria** from verb **kategoreo**, to accuse -- [click use](#) <> in turn from **kata** = against + **agora** = the assembly, a place of public speaking) refers to a speaking against a person before a public tribunal or bringing an accusation in court. **Kategoria**

was a legal technical term that refers to the content of the accusation or charge made against someone. However the use in Titus 1:6 does not refer to judicial punishment, but public condemnation.

Kategoria - 3x in NT Jn. 18:29; 1Tim. 5:19; Titus 1:6

Pilate - 53v in NT - Matt. 27:2; Matt. 27:13; Matt. 27:17; Matt. 27:22; Matt. 27:24; Matt. 27:58; Matt. 27:62; Matt. 27:65; Mk. 15:1; Mk. 15:2; Mk. 15:4; Mk. 15:5; Mk. 15:9; Mk. 15:12; Mk. 15:14; Mk. 15:15; Mk. 15:43; Mk. 15:44; Lk. 3:1; Lk. 13:1; Lk. 23:1; Lk. 23:3; Lk. 23:4; Lk. 23:6; Lk. 23:11; Lk. 23:12; Lk. 23:13; Lk. 23:20; Lk. 23:24; Lk. 23:52; Jn. 18:29; Jn. 18:31; Jn. 18:33; Jn. 18:35; Jn. 18:37; Jn. 18:38; Jn. 19:1; Jn. 19:4; Jn. 19:6; Jn. 19:8; Jn. 19:10; Jn. 19:12; Jn. 19:13; Jn. 19:15; Jn. 19:19; Jn. 19:21; Jn. 19:22; Jn. 19:31; Jn. 19:38; Acts 3:13; Acts 4:27; Acts 13:28; 1 Tim. 6:13

QUESTION - [Who was Pontius Pilate?](#) | [GotQuestions.org](#)

ANSWER - Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea from A.D. 26-36, serving under Emperor Tiberius. He is most known for his involvement in condemning Jesus to death on a cross.

Outside of the four Gospels, Pontius Pilate is mentioned by [Tacitus](#), Philo, and Josephus. In addition, the “Pilate Stone,” discovered in 1961 and dated c. A.D. 30, includes a description of Pontius Pilate and mentions him as “prefect” of Judea. Pilate is also mentioned in the apocryphal writings, but these were all written at much later dates.

In the Bible, Pontius Pilate is mentioned solely in connection with the trials and crucifixion of Jesus. The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) portray Pilate as reluctant to crucify Jesus. Pilate calls the charges against Jesus “baseless” (Luke 23:14) and several times declares Jesus to be not guilty: “What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty” (Luke 23:22).

Pilate’s conscience was already bothering him when his wife sent him an urgent message concerning Jesus. The note begged him, “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him” (Matthew 27:19).

John’s Gospel offers some more detail of the trial, including an additional conversation between Pilate and Jesus. Jesus acknowledges Himself as a king and claims to speak directly for the truth. Pilate responds with the famous question, “What is truth?” (John 18:38). The question intentionally communicated multiple meanings. Here was a situation in which truth was compromised in order to condemn an innocent man. Pilate, who is supposedly seeking the truth, asks the question of the One who is Himself “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). A human judge, confused about the truth, was about to condemn the Righteous Judge of the world.

In the end, Pilate sought a compromise. Knowing Jesus had been handed over by the religious leaders out of envy, he appealed to the crowds at the Passover, asking which “criminal” should be set free, Jesus or Barabbas? The leaders convinced the crowd to cry out for Barabbas (Matthew 27:20–21). Giving in to political pressure, Pilate authorized both the flogging and crucifixion of Jesus: “Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified” (Mark 15:15).

Pilate had the charge against Jesus posted on the cross above Jesus’ head: “THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS” (Matthew 27:37). As soon as Jesus died, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus in order to bury Him, and Pilate granted the request (John 19:38). The last glimpse we have of Pontius Pilate is when he assigns guards for Jesus’ tomb (Matthew 27:64-66).

Pontius Pilate’s brief appearance in Scripture is full of tragedy. He ignored his conscience, he disregarded the good advice of his wife, he chose political expediency over public rectitude, and he failed to recognize the truth even when Truth was standing right in front of him. When given an opportunity to evaluate the claims of Jesus, what will we decide? Will we accept His claim to be the King, or will we follow the voice of the crowd?

Related Resources:

- [Multiple Dictionary Articles](#)
- [Pilate in Wikipedia](#)

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN

THE THIRD RELIGIOUS TRIAL OF JESUS

Mt 27:1+ Now when morning came , all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus to put Him to death;	Mk 15:1+ Early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole Council, immediately held a consultation.	Lk 22:66+ When it was day , the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council chamber, saying.	NOTE: JOHN DOES NOT DISCUSS THE SECOND AND THIRD RELIGIOUS TRIALS
		Lk 22:67+ "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe; 68 and if I ask a question, you will not answer. 69 "But from now on THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND of the power OF GOD." 70 And they all said, "Are You the Son of God, then?" And He said to them, "Yes, I am." 71 Then they said, "What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."	

THE JEWS DELIVER JESUS TO PILATE FOR FIRST ROMAN TRIAL

Mt 27:2 and they bound Him, and led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate the governor. (N1)	Mk 15:1b and binding Jesus, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate.	Lk 23:1+ Then the whole body of them got up and brought Him before Pilate	Jn 18:28 Then they led Jesus from <u>Caiaphas</u> I N T O the <u>Praetorium</u> ,
			Jn 18:28b and it was early ; and they themselves DID NOT ENTER into the <u>Praetorium</u> so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.

COMMENTS ON MATTHEW

Note 1 on "delivered Him to Pilate" - **Delivered** is paradidomi which means to give one over to the power or authority of another. This was a clear fulfillment of prophecies by Jesus Himself Who had predicted **"The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day...Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered (paradidomi) into the hands of men."** (Lk 9:22, 44+, Lk 18:32+)

John 18:30 They answered and said to him, “If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you.”

- If: John 19:12 Mk 15:3 Lu 20:19-26 23:2-5
- delivered: Mk 10:33 Lu 24:7 Ac 3:13

THE JEWISH
"TWO STEP"

They answered and said to him, “If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered ([paradidomi](#)) Him to you - Instead of giving Pilate a specific charge they fall back on the thought of why would they even brought Jesus to him if He were not guilty of some evil.

Utlej - This is a SECOND CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE often called “contrary to fact.” Jesus was not an evil doer. This was a sarcastic remark to Pilate who refused to indulge in the “nit-picking” religious charges of Jews. This verb “delivered” is the same one usually translated “betrayed” when used of Judas (cf. 6:68, 71; 12:4; 13:2, 11, 21; 18:2, 5). The term literally means “to hand on over to an authority” or “to pass on a tradition.” In connection with Judas, the term has intensified among English translators.

Spurgeon - They would hurry Pilate to pronounce sentence without a trial, as if the mere fact of their bringing a charge was quite enough. In what a hurry man is to do despite to his God! (The Interpreter)

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:30

As much as to say, “You may take that for granted. We would not have brought him if he had not done wrong. You need not examine into the matter, we have already heard the evidence, and convicted him, and so saved you all the trouble of trying him; we only bring him here for you to condemn him.”

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
JESUS' FIRST CIVIL TRIAL BEFORE PILATE INSIDE THE PRAETORIUM			
Mt 27:1 Now when morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus to put Him to death; 2 and they bound Him, and led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate the governor. (N2)	Mk 15:1 Early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole Council, immediately held a consultation; and binding Jesus, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate.		John 18:28 Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium , and it was early;
			Jn 18:28b and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium , so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. (N1)

<p>Mt 27:3-10 PARENTHESIS</p> <p>ONLY MATTHEW DESCRIBES THE FATE OF JUDAS (N)</p>			
			<p>Jn 18:29 Therefore Pilate went out to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?” (N1) (see pix)</p> <p>30 They answered and said to him, “If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you.”</p> <p>31 So Pilate said to them, “Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law.” The Jews said to him, “We are not permitted to put anyone to death,” 32 to fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die, (N3)</p>
		<p>Lk 23:2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, “We found this man (#1) misleading our nation (#2) and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, (#3) and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.”</p> <p>(See notes on three false accusations against Jesus.)</p>	
<p>THE FIRST TRIAL CONTINUES WITH PILATE'S FIRST QUESTION OF JESUS INSIDE THE PRAETORIUM</p>			
<p>Mt 27:11+ Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor questioned Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?” And Jesus said to him, “It is as you say.”</p>	<p>Mk 15:2+ Pilate questioned Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” And He answered him, “It is as you say.”</p>	<p>Lk 23:3+ So Pilate asked Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?” And He answered him and said, “It is as you say.”</p>	<p>Jn 18:33 Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” (N4)</p>

			<p>Jn 18:34+ Jesus answered, “Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?” 35 Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?” (N5) 36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.” 37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” 38 Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” (Pix)</p>
--	--	--	---

**THE FIRST CIVIL TRIAL CONCLUDES:
PILATE REACHES HIS VERDICT INSIDE THE PRAETORIUM.
THEN HE GOES OUT TO THE JEWS
TO ANNOUNCE HIS FIRST "NOT GUILTY" VERDICT**

		<p>Lk 23:4+ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no guilt in this man.”</p>	<p>Jn 18:38b And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, “I find no guilt in Him. (N6)</p>
--	--	--	--

<p>Mt 27:12 And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He did not answer . 13 Then Pilate said to Him, “Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?” 14 And He did not answer him with regard to even a single charge, so the governor was quite amazed. (N7)</p>	<p>Mk 15:3 The chief priests began to accuse Him harshly (repeatedly). 4 Then Pilate questioned Him again, saying, “Do You not answer?” See how many charges they bring against You!” 5 But Jesus made no further answer; so Pilate was amazed.</p>	<p>Lk 23:5+ But they kept on insisting, saying, “He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee even as far as this place.”</p>	
--	--	--	--

**THE SECOND RELIGIOUS TRIAL
BEFORE HEROD ANTIPAS
(Only in Luke)**

FRIDAY - [EARLY MORNING](#)

Lk 23:6+ When Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. **7** And when he learned that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, **he sent Him to Herod**, who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time....

Lk 23:8+ Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him. **9** And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing. **10** And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently. **11** And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate. **12** Now Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been enemies with each other.

**THE THIRD CIVIL TRIAL
JESUS' SECOND APPEARANCE BEFORE PILATE**

Luke 23:13-16+ Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people, **14** and said to them, "You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, **I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him.** **15** "No, nor has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by Him. **16** "Therefore I will punish Him and release Him." ([See Note](#))

**[CLICK HERE](#) TO GO TO NEXT SECTION
WHO DO YOU WANT ME TO RELEASE?**

GOSPEL OF JOHN

Note 1 - John 18:28 says the Jews **'themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled'**. When the Jews brought Jesus to Pilate, it seems clear that Jesus Himself was taken inside the Praetorium to face Pilate, while the Jews remained outside. When Pilate went out to them he formally commenced the legal proceedings (the first civil trial) as he asked **"What accusation do you bring against this Man?"** (Jn 18:29). It is interesting that the Jews did not at first give a specific accusation declaring "If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you." (Jn 18:30) The presumed this would be sufficient for Pilate to condemn Jesus to death. For after all Pilate would have had to give the order for a Roman cohort to go with the Jews to arrest Jesus (Jn 18:3). Probably to their shock Pilate told them to judge Him (Jn 18:31). Of course their problem was they wanted Him dead and had no authority to carry out capital punishment. Therefore they came up with three accusations calculated to force Pilate to condemn Jesus to death, for high treason and insurrection. Pilate was a weak man of fickle character but he was still smart enough to discern that the reason the Jews had delivered Jesus into his hand was because of **envy!** (Mt 27:18). So the Jews in essence forced Pilate's hand with their triple accusation in Lk 23:2.

How tragically deceived (and hypocritical) were these "religious" Jewish leaders who regarded **ceremonial defilement** a much more serious matter than **moral defilement!** (cf Lk 11:39+)

THOUGHT - Are we not often like them, maintaining a "spiritual" exterior, while at the same time internally harboring unclean thoughts, unrepentant sins, etc? O Lord, acquit us of hidden faults and keep us from presumptive sins, lest they come to rule over us. Amen (Ps 19:12-13).

Note 3 on **to fulfill the word of Jesus** (Jn 18:32) - Specifically Jesus had predicted **"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."** (Jn 12:32) In John's Gospel the Greek word **lifted up** ([hupsoo](#)) always refers to the cross (Jn 3:14; 8:28, 12:34, Mt 20:19, cf OT prophecy in Ps 22:16). On the cross He became a curse (Dt 21:23, Gal 3:13). Notice also that Pilate's response in John 18:31 (for them to **"take Him yourselves..."**) forces the Jews to offer up the three specific charges recorded only in Lk 23:2.

Note 4 - **John 18:33** on **"Are You the King of the Jews?"** - [See comments](#) on John 18:33.

Note 5 on **what have You done?** - The Roman laws allowed the accused to be questioned in detail. So while Pilate understands why the Jewish leaders had delivered Him over (i.e., envy - Mt 27:18), he is uncertain what Jesus has done to stir up such anger and hostility.

Note 6 on **I find no guilt in Him** - **MacArthur** explains that "In this context, **"find"** represented a judicial verdict. Pilate acquitted Jesus of any civil or criminal wrongdoing. In modern parlance, He threw the case out of court for lack of evidence. He exercised **"summary judgment."** (Ibid)

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Note 7 - Mt 27:12-14 (parallel with Mk 15:3-5, Lk 23:5) - Although Matthew and Mark **do not record Pilate's first not guilty verdict** against Jesus, they do record a barrage of repeated accusations against Jesus in an attempt to force Pilate to reverse his verdict. In stark contrast to the angry lying accusations of the Jews, Jesus is majestically silent! And Pilate's reaction was that he was **amazed** ([thaumazo](#))! Pilate is marveling that the Jews are falsely accusing Him of crimes that would warrant the death penalty and yet He offered no self-defense! In truth, He did not have to because Pilate had already declared Him not guilty (Lk 23:4, Jn 18:38). In His silence Jesus fulfilled OT prophecies

Isaiah 42:1-2 "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. 2 **"He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street.**

Isaiah 53:7+ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is **silent before its shearers**, So **He did not open His mouth.**

Comment: In Acts 8:32+ Luke records the last part of Isaiah's passage **"HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH."** This was a portion of the passages of Scripture the Ethiopian Eunuch was reading which led to his salvation as Phillip preached Jesus to him beginning with Isaiah's prophecy (Acts 8:34, 35+)

John 18:31 So Pilate said to them, **"Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law."** The Jews said to him, **"We**

- **Take:** John 19:6,7 Ac 25:18-20
- It: John 19:15 Ge 49:10 Eze 21:26,27 Ho 3:4,5

TAKE HIM YOURSELVES!

So **Pilate** said to them “**Take** (aorist imperative) Him yourselves, and **judge** (krino in aorist imperative) Him according to your law - Pilate does not accept their failure to give him a specific charge and quickly attempts to wash his hands of what he perceives as the Jewish miscarriage of justice. The problem of course is that the Jews wanted to kill Jesus, which was out of their purview, so they could not take Him and judge Him and kill Him as a blasphemer.

Marvin Vincent on **Take Him yourselves** - Pilate's words display great practical shrewdness in forcing the Jews to commit themselves to the admission that they desired Christ's death. “Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law.” “By our law,” reply the Jews, “he ought to die.” But this penalty they could not inflict. “It is not lawful,” etc.

J R Miller - As Pagan as Pilate was, and heartless—the presence of Jesus before him as prisoner, filled his heart with dread. There was something about this prisoner which awed him. Ordinarily he cared nothing for justice—but now he sought to evade the responsibility of sentencing this man. Instead of refusing to have anything to do with the sentencing of an innocent man, Pilate sought all that morning by evasion, simply to get clear of the case. Each time, however, Jesus came back and stood before him, waiting for His decision.

Life Application Study Bible has an interesting summation - Pilate made four attempts to deal with Jesus: (1) He tried to put the responsibility on someone else (Jn 18:31); (2) he tried to find a way of escape so he could release Jesus (Jn 18:39); (3) he tried to compromise by having Jesus flogged rather than handing him over to die (Jn 19:1-3); and (4) he tried a direct appeal to the sympathy of the accusers (Jn 19:15). Everyone has to decide what to do with Jesus. Pilate tried to let everyone else decide for him—and in the end, he lost. (BORROW [Life Application Study Bible: Old Testament and New Testament: New Living Translation PAGE 1664](#))

The Jews (Ioudaios) said to him, “**We are** (absolutely) **not permitted** (exesti) **to put anyone** (oudeis) **to death** (apokteino) - The **Jews** (clearly Jewish leaders) respond to Pilate with a strong double negative statement. The Jews could condemn a man to death but under the Romans they were not allowed to put the condemned man to death. And death is what they wanted with Jesus!

ESV Study Bible - The **Sanhedrin** clearly desired that Jesus' execution be done officially in keeping with Roman law. Therefore the Jewish leaders had to get approval from Pilate. But this presented a problem for them, since Pilate would not be interested in condemning someone for a religious crime such as blasphemy or claiming to be God (see Matt. 26:64; Luke 22:69–71; John 8:58–59; 10:33; 19:7). This meant they needed to bring a political charge against Jesus, so they essentially accused him of treason by saying that he claimed to be king in opposition to Caesar (see Jn 18:33, 37; Jn 19:3, 12, 15, 19). (BORROW [ESV Study Bible page 2062](#))

In summary, Pilate's response for them to “**Take Him yourselves...**” forces the Jews to offer up the three specific charges recorded only in Lk 23:2+.

And they began to accuse Him, saying, “We found (1) this man misleading our nation and (2) forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that (3) He Himself is Christ, a King.”

Utley - The Jewish leadership had condemned Jesus for blasphemy, but they used the charge of insurrection to have Him executed by the Romans. It was very important to the Jewish leaders that Jesus be crucified because of Deuteronomy 21:23. Jesus had predicted this in v. 32; 3:14; 8:28; 12:32, 33 & Gal. 3:13.

NET NOTE - **Pilate**, as the sole representative of Rome in a troubled area, was probably in Jerusalem for the Passover because of the danger of an uprising (the normal residence for the Roman governor was in Caesarea as mentioned in Acts 23:35). At this time on the eve of the feast he would have been a busy and perhaps even a worried man. It is not surprising that he offered to hand Jesus back over to the Jewish authorities to pass judgment on him. It may well be that Pilate realized when no specific charge was mentioned that he was dealing with an internal dispute over some religious matter. Pilate wanted nothing to do with such matters, as the statement “Pass judgment on him according to your own law!” indicates. As far as the author is concerned, this points out who was really responsible for Jesus' death: The Roman governor Pilate would have had nothing to do with it if he had not been pressured by the Jewish religious authorities, upon whom the real responsibility rested.

NET NOTE - The historical background behind the statement **We cannot legally put anyone to death** is difficult to reconstruct. Scholars are divided over whether this statement in the Fourth Gospel accurately reflects the judicial situation between the Jewish authorities and the Romans in 1st century Palestine. It appears that the Roman governor may have given the Jews the power of capital punishment for specific offenses, some of them religious (the death penalty for Gentiles caught trespassing in the inner courts of the temple, for example). It is also pointed out that the Jewish authorities did carry out a number of executions, some of them specifically pertaining to Christians (Stephen, according to Acts 7:58–60; and James the Just, who was stoned in the 60s according to Josephus, Ant. 20.9.1 [20.200]). But Stephen's death may be explained as a result of "mob violence" rather than a formal execution, and as Josephus in the above account goes on to point out, James was executed in the period between two Roman governors, and the high priest at the time was subsequently punished for the action. Two studies by A. N. Sherwin-White (Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament, 1–47; and "The Trial of Christ," Historicity and Chronology in the New Testament [SPCKTC], 97–116) have tended to support the accuracy of John's account. He concluded that the Romans kept very close control of the death penalty for fear that in the hands of rebellious locals such power could be used to eliminate factions favorable or useful to Rome. A province as troublesome as Judea would not have been likely to be made an exception to this.

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:31

"That is your way of doing such things, but it is not a method into which we shall fall. Our law does not condemn a man before it hears the evidence against him. I am not going to be your tool, to put this man to death without hearing what is laid to his charge, and the proofs of his guilt. If you want that done, you must do it yourselves."

"You Romans have taken from us the power of life and death, and we want him put to death." There was a clear confession that nothing short of Christ's death would satisfy them.

Permitted (lawful)(1832) **exesti** from **ek** = out + **eimí** = to be) is an impersonal verb, signifying "it is permitted, it is lawful" (or interrogatively, "is it lawful?") and that there are no hindrances to an action. **Exesti** occurs most frequently in the synoptic Gospels and the Acts, especially in Jesus' conflicts with the Pharisees over His actions (and those of His disciples) on the Sabbath (Mt. 12:2; 12:4; 12:10; 12:12, etc). It means to be authorized for the doing of something.

TDNT on **exesti** - "It is free," denoting a. an action that is possible because there is occasion for it or no obstacle to it, b. an action that is not prevented by a higher norm or court, and c. an action to which there is no psychological or ethical block. In the NT the term mostly refers to God's law or will with its specific demands, especially the OT law.

Exesti - 30v - lawful(26), may(3), permissible(1), permitted(2). Matt. 12:2; Matt. 12:4; Matt. 12:10; Matt. 12:12; Matt. 14:4; Matt. 19:3; Matt. 20:15; Matt. 22:17; Matt. 27:6; Mk. 2:24; Mk. 2:26; Mk. 3:4; Mk. 6:18; Mk. 10:2; Mk. 12:14; Lk. 6:2; Lk. 6:4; Lk. 6:9; Lk. 14:3; Lk. 20:22; Jn. 5:10; Jn. 18:31; Acts 2:29; Acts 8:37; Acts 16:21; Acts 21:37; Acts 22:25; 1 Co. 6:12; 1 Co. 10:23; 2 Co. 12:4

Norman Geisler - JOHN 18:31 —Was it lawful for the Jews to exercise capital punishment? [When Critics Ask Page 358](#)

PROBLEM: In this verse, the Jews of Jesus' day claimed that "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death." However, in the very next chapter, they insisted that "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die" (John 19:7). Which was correct?

SOLUTION: Both statements are correct. According to the Jewish Law of Moses, anyone who blasphemes God was to be given capital punishment (see Lev. 24:16). However, when speaking to Pilate, the Roman governor, the Jews correctly noted that the Romans did not allow their subjects to exercise capital punishment, but retained that right for themselves. Thus, the Jews correctly said to Pilate, "it is not lawful [according to Roman law] for us to put anyone to death" (John 18:31).

John 18:32 to fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.

- **the word:** John 3:14 Jn 10:31,33 Jn 12:32-33 Mt 20:19 26:2 Lu 18:32,33 24:7,8 Ac 7:59
- **what kind of death:** Dt 21:22-23 Ps 22:16 Ga 3:13

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 21:22-23+ "If a man has committed a sin worthy of death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, 23his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed of God), so that you do not defile your land which the LORD your God gives

you as an inheritance.

Psalm 22:16 For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet.

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"

ROMAN DEATH BY CRUCIFIXION FULFILLS PROPHECY

To fulfill ([pleroo](#)) the word ([logos](#)) of Jesus ([Iesous](#)) which He spoke - John recorded the prophetic word of Jesus on two occasions.

The first was in John 3:14+ which says "As Moses **lifted up** the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be **lifted up**." The second prophecy was in John 12:32-33+ "And I, if I am **lifted up** from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die." Clearly the verb "**lifted up**" was a prediction of Jesus being **lifted up** on the Cross. Note also that in John's Gospel the Greek word **lifted up** ([hupsoo](#)) always refers to the cross (Jn 3:14; 8:28, 12:34, Mt 20:19, cf OT prophecy in Ps 22:16).

This kind of death for Jesus was not just His NT prophecy, but had also been foreshadowed by the words of Moses in Numbers 21:7-9+

So the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and you; intercede with the LORD, that He may remove the serpents from us." And Moses interceded for the people. 8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live." 9 And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived. (See [Why is a bronze serpent used to save the Israelites in Numbers 21:8](#))

Signifying ([semaino](#) from sema - a sign) by what kind of death ([thanatos](#)) He was about ([mello](#)) to die ([apothnesko](#)) - John's point is that if the Jews had killed Jesus for blasphemy, it would have been by stoning which would not have fulfilled prophecy. In God's plan of redemption, Jesus had to die at the hands of the Romans who had mastered the "art" of crucifixion.

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:32

Crucifixion was a Roman, not a Jewish method of capital punishment, so God overruled the wanton wickedness of the worst of men for the accomplishment of his own eternal purposes, without, however, diminishing their responsibility and guilt in the least degree. It was "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" that Christ was put to death, yet it was "with wicked hands" that they took him, and crucified him.

John 18:33 Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

- **and said:** John 18:37 Mt 27:11 Mk 15:2 Lu 23:3,4 1Ti 6:13
- **the king:** John 1:49 12:13,15 19:3,19-22 Ps 2:6-12 Isa 9:6,7 Jer 23:5 Zep 3:15 Zec 9:9 Lu 19:38-40 Ac 2:34-36

Related Passages:

Matthew 27:11+ Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor questioned Him, saying, "**Are You the King of the Jews?**" And Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Mark 15:2+ Pilate questioned Him, "**Are You the King of the Jews?**" And He *answered him, "It is as you say."

Luke 23:2-3+ (JEWS BRING SPECIFIC CHARGES AGAINST JESUS) "We found this man(1) misleading our nation and (2) forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and (3) saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." 3 So Pilate asked Him, saying, "**Are You the King of the Jews?**" And He answered him and said, "It is as you say."

THE FIRST CIVIL TRIAL

PILATE'S FIRST QUESTION TO JESUS

While Jesus was being tried by Pilate, ultimately it was really Pilate who was on trial!

Therefore **Pilate** entered again (See [Pilate's movements](#)) into the Praetorium ([praetorium](#)), and summoned Jesus ([Iesous](#)) and said to Him, “**Are You the King of the Jews** ([Ioudaios](#))?” - Pilate succumbs to the wishes of the Jews and now understands they felt this Man had committed a crime worthy of the death penalty. First note that Pilate “**entered again into the Praetorium**” from which he had come out initially to address the Jews (See [Pilate's Movements during this time](#)). Now Pilate goes back inside apparently this time taking Jesus with him. In the Greek text, the “**You**” is emphatic and so more literally it reads “*You, are You the King of the Jews?*” Clearly of the three Jewish accusations against Jesus (recorded only in Luke 23:2+), the one that aroused Pilate's attention was the statement that Jesus claimed to be a King, because the last thing Pilate wanted was a political revolt against Rome.

Pilate's question is recorded in all four Gospels (Mt 27:11, Mk 15:2, Lk 23:3). Note also that this is the FIRST question Pilate asked Jesus. And while the synoptic Gospels all record Jesus' answer as “**It is as you say,**” John adds a more lengthy interchange in Jn 18:34-38a an extended discourse found only in John's Gospel, in private within Pilate's residence, the Praetorium, and it represents Jesus' explanation to Pilate that He is not a King in the usual sense that Pilate might expect of a typical earthly king. In view of this revelation, Pilate interpreted Jesus as no threat to the Roman empire and for that reason found **no guilt in Him**. (Jn 18:38b, Lk 23:4).

NET NOTE - It is difficult to discern Pilate's attitude when he asked, “**Are you the king of the Jews?**” Some have believed the remark to be sarcastic or incredulous as Pilate looked at this lowly and humble prisoner: “So you're the king of the Jews, are you?” Others have thought the Roman governor to have been impressed by Jesus' regal disposition and dignity, and to have sincerely asked, “Are you really the king of the Jews?” Since it will later become apparent (Jn 18:38) that Pilate considered Jesus innocent (and therefore probably also harmless) an attitude of incredulity is perhaps most likely, but this is far from certain in the absence of clear contextual clues.

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:33

He did not look much like it. There was little enough about his appearance or his apparel to suggest the idea of royalty.

THE KING OF KINGS John 18:28-38. J H Jowett

WHAT a strange King our Lord appears, claiming mystic sovereignty, and yet betrayed by a false friend!

And yet, even in His apparent subjection His majestic kingliness stands revealed. When I watch the demeanours of Pilate and Jesus, I can see very clearly who it is who is on the throne; Pilate wears the outer trappings of royalty, but my Lord's is “the power and the glory.” Pilate fusses about in a little “brief authority,” but my Lord stands possessed of a serene dominion. Even at Pilate's judgment bar Jesus is the King.

But His kingdom is “not of this world.” And therefore this King is unlike every other King. He seeks His possessions not by fighting, but by “lighting”; not by coercion, but by constraint. His servants do not go forth with swords, but with lamps; not to drive the peoples, but to lead them. His visible throne is a cross, and His conquests are made in the power of sacrifice.

And so His armaments are the Truth, and the Truth alone. “For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth.” When the Truth wins and woos, the triumph is lasting. Garlands won by the sword perish before the evening. To be one of the King's subjects is to share His nature. “Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice.”

PILATE'S MOVEMENTS DURING JESUS' TRIAL

One aspect of Jesus' trial before Pilate that can be confusing is that Pilate moved in and out of the Praetorium in various phases of the trial.. Here is a summary of Pilate's movements into the Praetorium (where Jesus was) and out of the Praetorium (where the Jewish accusers stood). You will notice that Pilate's movement are keyed to John's account, as John reports far more details of this trial before Pilate than do the three Synoptists combined.

1. Jesus led **INSIDE** the Praetorium or judgment hall ([John 18:28](#)).

While all four Gospels record that Jesus is delivered to Pilate, only John includes the detail that Jesus is taken **INSIDE** the Praetorium while His accusers remained outside. This fact sets up multiple movements by Pilate as he addressed the two parties involved in the trial.

D A Carson comments that the failure of the Jews to enter the Praetorium "sent Pilate scuttling back and forth, acting on two stages as it were, a front stage and a rear stage. This simultaneously enhances the drama of the narrative, ensures that the Jews do not hear Jesus' self-disclosing claims before Pilate, and 'portrays the human predicament in which one must choose between Jesus and the world'. (BORROW [Pillar Commentary - John](#))

2. **Movement 1:** Pilate comes **OUTSIDE** of the Praetorium to Jesus' accusers to hear their charges. This begins the formal trial. ([John 18:29-32](#)).

John records their more general charges against Jesus and tells them to take Jesus and judge Him themselves. This forces them to concoct three specific charges recorded only in [Lk 23:2](#).

3. **Movement 2:** Pilate goes back **INSIDE** the Praetorium to Jesus to hear His defense ([John 18:33-38](#)).

All four Gospels record that Pilate focuses on the third charge that Jesus is a King and asks Him "Are You the King of the Jews?" ([Mt 27:11](#), [Mk 15:2](#), [Lk 23:3](#), [Jn 18:33](#)).

Only [John 18:34-38](#) records the details of this phase of Pilate's interrogation of Jesus.

4. **Movement 3:** Pilate goes back **OUTSIDE** to the people to declare Jesus' innocence ([John 18:38](#)).

Only [John 18:38](#) and [Luke 23:5](#) record Pilate's **FIRST** of 3 not guilty verdicts ([Jn 19:4](#), 6, cf [Lk 23:22](#)).

Pilate's not guilty verdict incites the Jews to a barrage of accusations at Jesus. Only [Mt 27:12-14](#) and [Mk 15:3-5](#) record Jesus' refusal to answer the accusations by the chief priests and elders against Jesus.

Only [Luke 23:5](#) records the Jew's accusation that Jesus stirred up the people in Galilee, which prompts Pilate to send Jesus to the wicked ruler Herod (Antipas) who had jurisdiction over Galilee and was in Jerusalem at the time.

Only [Luke 23:6-12](#) records the transfer of Jesus from Pilate to Herod and the mistreatment Jesus received in the second phase of the civil trial.

Only [Luke 23:11](#) records that Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate.

Only [Luke 23:13](#) records that "Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people." Apparently the gathering before the Praetorium had either broken up or decreased in size while Jesus was before Herod. And it is clear that the religious leaders followed Jesus and spoke out again when He appeared before Herod ([Lk 23:10](#)). Note that since Pilate summoned the religious leaders and began to sp

Only [Luke 23:14-15](#) record Pilate's statement before the Jews (who had been summoned) that he found no guilt in Jesus nor did Herod.

Only [Luke 23:16](#) records Pilate's conclusion "Therefore I will punish Him and release Him." The Gospels do not record the reaction of the Jews to this announcement, but Pilate's subsequent mention of the custom of releasing a prisoner implies that their reaction prevented him from following through and forced him to try another ploy.

[John 18:39](#) records Pilate's attempt to release Jesus "But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover; do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?" The interchange regarding Barabbas is recorded in [John 18:39-40](#), [Matthew 27:15-18](#), [20-21](#), and [Mk 15:6-11](#).

5. **Movement 4:** Pilate goes back **INSIDE** the Praetorium to scourge Jesus ([John 19:1-3](#)).

6. **Movement 5:** Pilate goes back **OUTSIDE** to the Jews to offer a compromise ([John 19:4-7](#)).

7. **Movement 6:** Pilate goes back **INSIDE** to Jesus to investigate the possibility of a supernatural being ([John 19:8-11](#)).

8. **Movement 7:** Pilate goes back **OUTSIDE** to the Jews to release Jesus ([John 19:12](#)).

9. **Movement 8:** Pilate brings Jesus **OUTSIDE**, sits on the Judgment Seat and gives his verdict of crucifixion ([John 19:13-15](#)).

- **Saying:** John 18:36

JESUS QUERIES PILATE

NOTE: With the exception of Jesus answering Pilate's question about whether He was a king [See related passages](#)- "It is as you say" ~ "You say correctly that I am a king"), John 18:34-38a ("What is truth?") describes a dialogue between the two which is found only in the Gospel of John.

Jesus ([lesous](#)) answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me- NLT = "Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?" In response to Pilate's question Jesus poses a counter question. Jesus is referring to Pilate's question whether Jesus is the King of the Jews. The idea "Is your knowledge of Me second-hand or is it your own?" What does Jesus mean by asking "is this your own question?" If the question was initiated by Pilate's desire to know whether was king or not, he is approaching Jesus from an earthly, political perspective. That of course was Pilate's greatest fear, that Jesus might be an earthly king and if that were true He would definitely be a treat not only to him but to the Roman Empire. If that was indeed Pilate's intent then Jesus would reply with a definitive "No." However, the way Pilate responds in the next verse indicates he is simply repeating the charge of the Jews.

MacArthur adds that "Jesus could not answer Pilate's question with an unqualified "Yes" or "No" without first defining exactly what His kingship entails. His counter question, "**Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?**" was intended to clarify the issue (I.E., TO CLARIFY PILATE'S QUESTION). If Pilate was saying this on his **own initiative**, he would be asking if Jesus was a king in the **political sense** (and hence a threat to Rome). Jesus' answer in that case would be 'no,' He was not a king in the sense of a military or political leader. He had earlier rejected the crowd's attempt to make Him such a king (Jn 6:15). But neither could the Lord deny that as the Messiah He was Israel's true king. (See [John Commentary](#))

Spurgeon - I EXPLAINED, this morning,* why our Saviour put that question to Pilate. The Roman governor had asked him. "Art thou the King of the Jews?" And Jesus as good as said to him, "Have you, of your own knowledge, seen anything in me that looks like setting up to be a king in opposition to Cæsar? You intend, by asking me that question, to enquire whether I have led a rebellion against your government, or the imperial authority which you represent. Now, has there been anything which you have observed which would have led you to make this enquiry, or do you only ask it because of what the Jews have been saying in their enmity against me?" You will see, dear friends, that our Lord asked this question in order that he might get from Pilate's own lips the acknowledgment that he had not seen any sign of sedition or rebellion in him, and that it might be proved that the charge had been brought to Pilate by those outside, and had not come from the Roman governor himself. (Sermon [Second-hand](#) - John 18:34)

Life Application Study Bible - If Pilate was asking this question in his role as the Roman governor, he would have been inquiring whether Jesus was setting up a rebel government. But the Jews were using the word **king** to mean their religious ruler, the Messiah. Israel was a captive nation, under the authority of the Roman Empire. A rival **king** might have threatened Rome; a Messiah could have been a purely religious leader. (BORROW [Life Application Study Bible: Old Testament and New Testament: New Living Translation PAGE 1664](#))

Utley - If Pilate was asking the question in reference to a political kingship, Jesus would have denied it. If the Jews had suggested it, then it referred to His Messiahship and Jesus would have affirmed it. Pilate was obviously not ready to discuss the intricacies of Jewish religious thought (cf. v. 35).

James Stalker adds that Jesus "desired to learn in what sense the question was asked—whether from the standpoint of a Roman or from that of the Jews; because of course His answer would be different according as He was asked whether He was a king as a Roman would understand the word or according as it was understood by the Jews....Jesus at once proceeded, however, to answer Pilate's question on both sides, both on the Roman political and then on the Jewish religious side. First, He answered negatively, "My kingdom is not of this world!" He was no rival of the Roman emperor....It was not a kingdom of force and arms and worldly glory He had in view....Yet, even in making this denial, Jesus had used the words, "**My kingdom.**" And Pilate broke in, "**Art Thou a king then?**" "**Yes,**" replied Jesus; "**to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.**" This was His kingdom—the realm of Truth. It differs widely from that of Caesar. Caesar's empire is over the bodies of men; this is over their hearts. The strength of Caesar's empire is in soldiers, arms, citadels and navies; the strength of this kingdom is in principles, sentiments, ideas. The benefit secured by Caesar to the citizens is external security for their persons and properties; the blessings of Christ's kingdom are peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost (**ED: "[ETERNAL SECURITY!](#)"**). The empire of

Caesar, vast as it was, yet was circumscribed; the kingdom of Christ is without limits, and is destined to be established in every land. Cæsar's empire, like every other earthly kingdom, had its day and passed out of existence; but the kingdom of Truth shall last for evermore.”([THE TRIAL AND DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST: A DEVOTIONAL HISTORY OF OUR LORD'S PASSION](#) - see III)

Stalker - In the silence, then, of this interior hall He (Jesus) and Pilate stood face to face—He in the prisoner's lonely place, Pilate in the place of power. Yet how strangely, as we now look back at the scene, are the places reversed! **It is Pilate who is going to be tried**—Pilate and Rome, which he represented. **All that morning Pilate was being judged and exposed**; and ever since he has stood in the pillory of history with the centuries gazing at him. In the old pictures of the Child Christ by the great masters a halo proceeds from the Babe that lights up the surrounding figurae, sometimes with dazzling effect. And it is true that on all who approached Christ, when He was in the world, there fell a light in which both the good and the evil in them were revealed. It was a search-light, that penetrated into every corner and exposed every wrinkle. Men were judged as they came near Him. Is it not so still? We never show so entirely what is in us as by the way in which we are affected by Christ. We are judging ourselves and passing sentence on ourselves for eternity by the way in which we deal with Him.

C H Spurgeon - Our Lord's first appearance before Pilate (SERMON - [Our Lord's First Appearance Before Pilate](#))

‘Pilate ... saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.’ John 18:38

‘I find in him no fault at all.’ Pilate, you have spoken well. Your verdict is typical of the verdict of all who have ever examined Christ. Some have examined him with an unfriendly eye, but in proportion as they have been candid in the observation of facts, they have been struck with his life and spirit. It is a very rare thing to hear even the infidel rail at the character of Jesus; in fact, some of the foremost sceptics as to our Lord's teaching have been remarkably impressed with admiration of his life. No character like that of Jesus is to be seen in history, no, not even in romance. If anyone says the four gospels are forgeries, let him try to write a fifth, which shall be like the other four. Why, you cannot add an incident to the life of Christ; its details are unique; the fancy cannot imagine a fresh incident which could be safely joined on to that which is recorded. Every critic would cry out, ‘This is not genuine.’ The life of Jesus is a roll of cloth of gold, of the manufacture of which the art is utterly lost. His spotless character stands alone and by itself, and all true critics are compelled to say they find no fault at all in him. Let me add that this verdict of Pilate is the verdict of all that have ever associated with Christ. One disciple who was with Christ betrayed him, but he spoke nothing against him. No, the last witness of Judas before he hanged himself was this, ‘I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.’ If there had been a fault in Jesus, the traitor would have spied it out; his unquiet conscience would have been glad enough to find therein a sedative, but even he was compelled to say, ‘I have betrayed the innocent blood.’ ‘Which of you convinceth me of sin?’ is the challenge of Jesus, to which there is no reply.

John 18:35 Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?”

- **I am not a Jew, am I:** Ezra 4:12 Ne 4:2 Ac 18:14-16 Acts 23:29 Acts 25:19,20 Ro 3:1,2
- **Your own nation:** John 18:28 Jn 19:11 Ac 3:13
- **what:** John 19:6 Ac 21:38 22:22-24

PILATE SEEKS TO KNOW JESUS' CRIME

NOTE: With the exception of Jesus answering Pilate's question about whether He was a king [See related passages](#) - “It is as you say” ~ “You say correctly that I am a king”), John 18:34-38a (“What is truth?”) describes a dialogue between the two which is found only in the Gospel of John.

Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew ([Ioudaios](#)), am I? This expects a “NO” response. This question is an expression of his contempt for the Jewish religion.

Spurgeon - Well might he ask this. What, indeed, hadst thou done, O blessed Master, that men should clamour for thy blood?(The Interpreter)

Your own nation ([ethnos](#)) and the chief priests ([archiereus](#)) delivered ([paradidomi](#)) You to me; what have You done - Pilate is still confused as to why the Jews have brought Jesus to him and so he continues to seek the reason for the Jewish rancor over this Man.

NET NOTE - Many have seen in Pilate's reply “I am not a Jew, am I?” the Roman contempt for the Jewish people. Some of that may

indeed be present, but strictly speaking, all Pilate affirms is that he, as a Roman, has no firsthand knowledge of Jewish custom or belief. What he knows of Jesus must have come from the Jewish authorities. They are the ones (your own people and your chief priests) who have handed Jesus over to Pilate.

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:35

I can imagine him throwing all the scorn and contempt possible into the question. It was characteristic of the Romans, as we learn from the works of their great writers, that they utterly despised and detested the Jews.

John 18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

- **Jesus:** 1Ti 6:13
- **My kingdom is:** John 6:15 8:15 Ps 45:3-7 Isa 9:6,7 Da 2:44 7:14 Zec 9:9 Lu 12:14 Lu 17:20,21 Ro 14:17 Col 1:12-14
- **then:** John 18:11

JESUS' KINGDOM NOT OF THIS WORLD

NOTE: With the exception of Jesus answering Pilate's question about whether He was a king [See related passages](#) - "It is as you say" ~ "You say correctly that I am a king"), John 18:34-38a ("What is truth?") describes a dialogue between the two which is found only in the Gospel of John.

Jesus ([Iesous](#)) answered, "My kingdom ([basileia](#)) is not of this world ([kosmos](#)) - Now Jesus answers Pilate's question in Jn 18:33 "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus does not deny His is King of the Jews, but simply says His kingdom is not of this earth. This would allay Pilate's fears over a rebel earthly kingdom that might threaten the sovereignty of Rome. ([What is the kingdom of God?](#))

If My kingdom ([basileia](#)) were of this world ([kosmos](#)), then My servants ([huperetes](#) same word of "temple police" Jn 18:3) would be fighting ([agonizomai](#)) so that ([2443](#)) [hina](#)) I would not be handed over ([paradidomi](#)) to the Jews ([Ioudaios](#)) - In the New Testament, Jesus was born to be King of the Jews (Matt. 2:2), but He refused any attempt by people to try to make him an earthly king with earthly military and political power (John 6:15).

Utley "It should be translated "If My kingdom were of this world, and it is not, then My servants would be fighting, which they are not.""

Spurgeon - Thus our Lord witnessed a good confession, and showed Pilate that his claims were spiritual, and that he was no rival of Cæsar (The Interpreter)

*We see that everything which is earthly and of the world
is temporary and soon fades away
-- John Calvin*

Calvin goes on to say "The kingdom is spiritual, not material.....We must therefore know that the happiness which is promised to us in Christ does not consist in external advantages—such as leading a joyful and tranquil life, abounding in wealth, being secure against all injury, and having an affluence of delights, such as the flesh is wont to long for—but properly belongs to the heavenly life." (Institutes of the Christian Religion -Beveridge translation, 2.15.3.)

But as it is, My kingdom ([basileia](#)) is (ouk - absolutely) **not of this realm** (from here) - Jesus doubles down on the fact that His kingdom is "other worldly." Note that Jesus unabashedly takes Ownership of this Kingdom with the possessive pronoun **My**. It belongs to Him and we are called to be His loyal, loving subjects and servants.

Larry Richards - Again notice that Jesus refused to rely on any but spiritual resources. Christ admitted His kingship, but affirmed that "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, My servants would fight" (v. 36). The real conflict was not between Jesus and the Jews who accused Him, but between the forces of evil and of God. Spiritual warfare only appears to be fought on earthly battlegrounds. And spiritual victories are never won using mankind's destructive weapons. (Borrow [365 Day Devotional Commentary page 808](#))

Spurgeon - When the time has come for the truth to be spoken, our Lord is not backward in declaring it. Truth has her times most

meet for speech, and her seasons for silence. We are not to cast our pearls before swine, but when the hour has come for speech we must not hesitate, but speak as with the voice of a trumpet, giving forth a certain sound, that no man may mistake us. So, though a prisoner given up to die, the Lord boldly declares his royalty, though Pilate would pour derision upon him in consequence thereof. O, for the Master's prudence to speak the truth at the right time, and for the Master's courage to speak it when the right time has come. Soldiers of the cross, learn of your Captain. (Sermon [Jesus, The King of Truth](#))

Strong Conqueror

My kingdom is from another place. John 18:36

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 18:10–14, 36–37

Most of us hope for good government. We vote, we serve, and we speak out for causes we believe are fair and just. But political solutions remain powerless to change the condition of our hearts.

Many of Jesus's followers anticipated a Messiah who would bring a vigorous political response to Rome and its heavy-handed oppression. Peter was no exception. When Roman soldiers came to arrest Christ, Peter drew his sword and took a swing at the head of the high priest's servant, lopping off his ear in the process.

Jesus halted Peter's one-man war, saying, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" (John 18:11). Hours later, Jesus would tell Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders" (v. 36).

The Lord's restraint in that moment, as His life hung in the balance, astonishes us when we ponder the scope of His mission. On a future day, He will lead the armies of heaven into battle. John wrote, "With justice he judges and wages war" (Rev. 19:11).

But as He endured the ordeal of His arrest, trial, and crucifixion, Jesus kept His Father's will in view. By embracing death on the cross, He set in motion a chain of events that truly transforms hearts. And in the process, our Strong Conqueror defeated death itself. By: Tim Gustafson (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Father, how prone I am to reacting quickly rather than wisely. Show me Your will for my life so that I will purposefully choose the path You have for me.

Real restraint is not weakness, for it arises out of genuine strength.

CHILD OF TWO WORLDS

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. John 18:36

In the kingdom of God, the surest way to lose something is to try to protect it, and the best way to keep it is to let it go. This was the word of our Lord Jesus Christ: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross" (Luke 9:23).

Christ turned from the fallen world of Adam and spoke about another world altogether, a world where Adam's philosophy is invalid and his technique inoperative. He spoke of the kingdom of God whose laws are exactly opposite to those of the kingdom of men.

So, the true Christian is a child of two worlds. He lives among fallen men, but when he is regenerated, he is called to live according to the laws and principles that underlie the new kingdom. He may, then, find himself trying to live a heavenly life after an earthly pattern—and this is what Paul called "carnal" living. That is why it is vitally important to move up into the life of the Spirit of God. Give up your earthly "treasures" and the Lord will keep them for you unto life eternal! (BORROW [Mornings with Tozer : daily devotional readings PAGE 324](#))

Jonathan Bagster - [Daily Light on the Daily Path](#) - "My kingdom is not of this world."

But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.—"From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."—He must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.—He raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.—which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

John MacArthur - WHAT IS GOD'S KINGDOM? (See [Daily Readings From the Life of Christ Volumes 1-3 - Page 20](#))

Your kingdom come.—MATT. 6:10A

*What will you miss the least about earthly life
when the fullness of His kingdom becomes your forever reality?*

“Kingdom” is not so much a geographical territory as it is a sovereign dominion. When Christians pray “Your kingdom come,” they are asking God to rule through Christ’s future enthronement, His coming reign over the earth. The Greek for “come” indicates a sudden, instantaneous coming and here refers to the coming millennial kingdom (Rev. 20:4). Jesus is not speaking of some indirect effort by human good works to create a godly society on earth.

God’s coming kingdom will be a kingdom on earth but not a kingdom of this present world system. Jesus told Pontius Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). No human kingdom fits with God’s, which is why even the best measures to improve society are mere holding actions that only retard sinful corruption until Christ returns to establish His perfect kingdom.

Jesus came to “preach the kingdom of God” (Luke 4:43), and there is no other gospel but the good news of His kingdom. Even during His final days on earth He was faithful to teach the apostles things concerning that kingdom (Acts 1:3).

Yes, the kingdom has a past element that encompasses the Old Testament patriarchs (Matt. 8:11). The kingdom was also present during Jesus’ earthly ministry because He, its king, was “in [people’s] midst” (Luke 17:21). In a sense that is true today as believers are members of God’s invisible kingdom. But the particular focus of our prayers regarding the kingdom should be future, as we hope for the visible one to come.

ASK YOURSELF - What will you miss the least about earthly life when the fullness of His kingdom becomes your forever reality? Doesn’t that give you something to really look forward to? Let the genuine hope of this occurrence bolster your hope as you live through the coming day

Related devotional by Dr MacArthur - [GOD'S KINGDOM IS NOT SUPERFICIALLY VISIBLE](#)

Rob Morgan - Gregory the Great [Borrow On this Day page 261](#)

“My kingdom doesn’t belong to this world. ... I was born into this world to tell about the truth. And everyone who belongs to the truth knows my voice.” John 18:36

None of us are all good, and few of us are all bad. We often struggle with decisions, sometimes finding our well-intended efforts producing unfortunate results. Thus with Gregory. Born in Rome about 500 years after Christ, his family provided wealth and rank, and he became mayor of Rome at 33. After his father’s death, Gregory gave his inheritance to the church and the poor, turned his mansion into a monastery, and became a monk.

He was consecrated as Pope Gregory I on September 3, 590, and did much good. He had been burdened for the evangelization of England since seeing blond, blue-eyed British boys being sold in the Roman slave markets. “They are Anglos,” he reportedly said. “Let them become angels.” He sent Augustin to evangelize the British Isles.

Gregory also appointed wise and competent men as church leaders, and he fought apostasy. He encouraged the Visigoths to turn from heresy to orthodox doctrine. He wrote evangelistic tracts to barbarian tribes, and upheld biblical morality. He prepared a training manual for clergy. He wrote liturgy and popularized the Gregorian chant.

But Gregory also established the dogmas of purgatory and the Mass. He encouraged the worship of relics (the remains of deceased Christians), and popularized unlikely legends about the saints. He glorified the past and held tradition equal with Scripture. He drew wild, allegorical lessons from the pages of the Bible. And he claimed universal jurisdiction over Christendom.

With Western Europe in chaos and the Roman Empire shattered, Gregory assumed broad civil control. He ruled most of Italy. He raised an army and defeated the Lombards. He negotiated treaties to avoid Rome’s destruction. He ransomed captured individuals. He collected taxes and supplied food and services to the poor. He, in effect, turned the church into the state.

In so doing, Gregory became the father of the medieval papacy—with all the good and bad that that entailed. **(ED: IN SO DOING HE CLEARLY MISSED JESUS' INTENT THAT HIS KINGDOM WAS NOT OF THIS WORLD!)**

Oswald Chambers - Aspect of Social Authority (John 18:36) (BORROW [Approved Unto God PAGE 18](#))

Christianity is in its essence social. When once we begin to live from the otherworldly standpoint, as Jesus Christ wants us to live, we shall need all the fellowship with other Christians we can get. Some of us can do without Church fellowship because we are not Christians of the otherworldly order. Immediately a man dares to live on Jesus Christ's line, the world, the flesh and the devil are dead against him in every particular. "The only virtue you will have in the eyes of the world as My disciples," says Jesus, "is that you will be hated." That is why we need to be knit together with those of like faith; and that is the meaning of the Christian Church.

In the old days the ecclesiastics used to dictate, now they are ignored, and instead we have a society of men as they are. In the present day we have to face a brotherhood of men apart from Jesus Christ. If a man stands on the present system of civilisation as one of the general brotherhood of men, and yet proclaims a different brotherhood, that of the disciples of Jesus Christ, John 16:2 will be the result, "they shall put you out of the synagogues." According to Jesus Christ, Christianity is a society based on the brotherhood of men who have been lifted into a right relationship with God by regeneration. "My kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus, and yet we are more inclined to take our orders from the world than from Jesus Christ.

Max Lucado - JOHN 18:36 (BORROW [Grace for the Moment page 24](#))

Unhappiness on earth cultivates a hunger for heaven. By gracing us with a deep dissatisfaction, God holds our attention. The only tragedy, then, is to be satisfied prematurely. To settle for earth. To be content in a strange land....

We are not happy here because we are not at home here. We are not happy here because we are not supposed to be happy here. We are "like foreigners and strangers in this world" (1 Pet. 2:11)....

And you will never be completely happy on earth simply because you were not made for earth. Oh, you will have your moments of joy. You will catch glimpses of light. You will know moments or even days of peace. But they simply do not compare with the happiness that lies ahead.

Billy Graham - Ruling in Your Heart John 18:36 and Lk 17:21

Too many people think God is to be found by looking within their own minds and souls, and they often cite these words of Jesus in support of their claim.

Jesus, however, wasn't teaching that God is within us and that all we need to do is look inward to find God. Instead, Jesus was talking to people who believed that the Messiah would establish an Earthly, political kingdom—and Jesus said that wasn't His goal. "My kingdom is not of this world," Jesus told Pilate (John 18:36). His goal instead was to rule in the hearts of men and women.

And that is exactly what happens when we give our life to Christ. When we turn to Him in repentance and faith, He cleanses us of our sins, and He comes to live within us by His Holy Spirit. Once that happens, He begins to rule in our lives. In other words, He sets up His Kingdom—His rule—within us.

More and more each day, may your life clearly reflect the Christ's kingship over every area of your life!

A W Tozer - Child of Two Worlds (BORROW [Mornings with Tozer page 324](#))

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. (John 18:36)

In the kingdom of God, the surest way to lose something is to try to protect it, and the best way to keep it is to let it go. This was the word of our Lord Jesus Christ: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross!"

Christ turned from the fallen world of Adam and spoke about another world altogether, a world where Adam's philosophy is invalid and his technique inoperative. He spoke of the kingdom of God whose laws are exactly opposite to those of the kingdom of men.

So, the true Christian is a child of two worlds. He lives among fallen men, but when he is regenerated, he is called to live according to the laws and principles that underlie the new kingdom. He may, then, find himself trying to live a heavenly life after an earthly pattern—and this is what Paul called "carnal" living. That is why it is vitally important to move up into the life of the Spirit of God. Give up your earthly "treasures" and the Lord will keep them for you unto life eternal!

Oswald Chambers - The Unheeded Secret - Borrow [My Utmost of His Highest page 310](#)

My kingdom is not of this world. John 18:36.

The great enemy to the Lord Jesus Christ in the present day is the conception of practical work that has not come from the New Testament, but from the systems of the world in which endless energy and activities are insisted upon, but no private life with God. The emphasis is put on the wrong thing. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; ... for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you," a hidden, obscure thing. An active Christian worker too often lives in the shop window. It is the innermost of the innermost that reveals the power of the life.

We have to get rid of the plague of the spirit of the religious age in which we live. In Our Lord's life there was none of the press and rush of tremendous activity that we regard so highly, and the disciple is to be as his Master. The central thing about the kingdom of Jesus Christ is a personal relationship to Himself, not public usefulness to men. It is not its practical activities that are the strength of this Bible Training College, its whole strength lies in the fact that here you are put into soak before God. You have no idea of where God is going to engineer your circumstances, no knowledge of what strain is going to be put on you either at home or abroad, and if you waste your time in over-active energies instead of getting into soak on the great fundamental truths of God's Redemption, you will snap when the strain comes; but if this time of soaking before God is being spent in getting rooted and grounded in God on the un-practical line, you will remain true to Him whatever happens. (See also [Oswald Chambers, Abandoned to God](#))

N D Hillis - Facts of the Matter: Daily Devotionals

Two Kingdoms

GOD'S - John 18:36

SATAN's - John 8:44; Matthew 4:8

One represents the spiritual, the other the material.

TWO CHOICES:

Between the eternal, and the temporal

One choice offers a life of peace and purpose.

The other choice leads to a life of self-centeredness and emptiness.

Actually, you and I have already made our choice:

"I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live." (Deuteronomy 30:19)

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." (Matthew 6:24)

Indecision is not an option:

"The person who vacillates [between faith and unbelief] is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind; for let not that individual be supposing that he will receive anything from the ... Lord, [being] a dubious, undecided man, vacillating in all his ways." (James 1:6b-9—Wuest Translation)

Actually, you and I have already made our choice—either by:

Design, or

Default

TWO CONSEQUENCES:

Eternal life leading to heaven, or eternal death leading to hell.

In making decisions of a spiritual nature, the battlefield is not the intellect, but the will.

H A Ironside - John 18:36 - see [Continual Burnt Offering August 21](#)

Jesus did not deny that He would have a kingdom in this world. The prophets of old predicted the triumph of the kingdom of God, administered by the Son of man (Daniel 7:13, 14) in this lower universe. But when that day dawns it will not be a dominion of the present world order. It will be a heavenly kingdom set up on earth. Not by man's power, as through armies and carnal weapons, will His authority be set up and maintained. God the Father will give Him the throne of David when the appointed hour shall strike. Then He will rule the nations with the inflexible rod of righteousness, and His saints will reign with Him, thus sharing His glory.

Lo! He comes, from heaven descending,
Once for favored sinners slain!
Thousand thousand saints attending
Swell the triumph of His train!
Hallelujah!
Jesus comes, and comes to reign!

See the Saviour, long expected,
Now in solemn pomp appear!
And His saints, by man rejected,
All His heavenly glory share.
Hallelujah!
See the Son of God appear!
—C. Wesley

F B Meyer -

John 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world.

Well might Pilate ask if Jesus was a king. Thou poor, weary, rejected Nazarene, art Thou a king? A strange contrast, surely, to the Herod that built those halls of judgment! Thy people, at least, fail to recognize thy royalty! But Jesus did not abate his claims. "Thou sayest that I am," He answered, "a king." And as the ages have passed they have substantiated his claim.

The origin of his kingdom. — "My kingdom is not of this world." The Lord did not mean, as his words have been too often interpreted, that his kingdom had nothing to do with this world; but that it did not originate here. The "of" means out of. Jesus is King, not by earthly descent, or human right, but by the purpose and counsel of the Father, who said, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee: yet will I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion."

The method of its promulgation. — It is not spread by armed force. His servants do not fight. They are priests clad in the white robes of immaculate purity, and bearing aloft their banner with the inscription, "Blessed are the peacemakers." Like their Master, they bear witness to the truth; and as they do so those who are of the truth are attracted to the Lord, as steel filings to the magnet.

There is true royalty in bearing witness to the Truth. — Humbly we may appropriate our Master's words: to this end were we born, and of this cause are we left in the world, that in every act and word we might bear witness to the Truth. As we do so, we manifest a royalty which is not of human gift or descent, but which has been communicated by the reception of the Christ — nature, through the regenerating grace of the Holy Ghost.

QUESTION - [What is the significance of Jesus saying, "My kingdom is not of this world" \(John 18:36\)?](#)

ANSWER - During Jesus' trial before [Pontius Pilate](#), the Roman governor asked the Lord, "Are you the king of the Jews?" (John 18:33). Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world" (John 18:36, ESV).

As Roman governor in Judea, Pilate's primary responsibility was to maintain peace and order. The Jewish high council wanted to put Jesus to death, so they sent Him to Pilate because he alone held the power to pronounce a death sentence (John 19:10). The high priest Caiaphas had to convince Pilate that Jesus was a troublemaker and a threat to Roman stability. He accused Christ of claiming to be a king—a charge that would insinuate Jesus in the crime of recruiting rebel forces to launch a revolution against Roman authority (Luke 23:2–5). Caiaphas hoped that, to avoid a rebellion, Pilate would determine to put Jesus to death.

When Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world," He was, in essence, telling Pilate that He needed no earthly defense because His kingdom wasn't from the world. Christ admitted He was head of an empire, but not one that Rome needed to fear as a political rival. If His kingdom were of this world, His servants would have been fighting to defend Him. But Jesus had restrained His disciples from preventing His arrest (John 18:10–11).

Pilate realized that Jesus had no interest in stirring up a rebellion. He posed no threat to Rome. Directly following this conversation, Pilate told the Jewish leaders, "I find no basis for a charge against him" (John 18:38).

"My kingdom" refers to a spiritual kingdom of truth where Jesus reigns as Lord over the lives of His people. Jesus told Pilate, "You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true" (John 18:37). Jesus did not come to earth to rule over a mortal empire. He came to bear witness to the truth of who He is—the

Messiah, Savior of the world. Everyone who loves and recognizes this truth is a citizen of Christ's kingdom.

The Jewish high council wanted Pilate to condemn Jesus under the pretense that He was raising a rebellion against Rome and proclaiming Himself "king of the Jews." But that scenario was inaccurate, and Jesus cleared up the distortion, saying, "My kingdom is not of this world." The Lord hit on the word *truth* as if to say, "The real truth is this, Pilate: they want me dead because they are horrified by the truth of my claim—that I am 'I Am,' the promised [Jewish Messiah](#)."

Jesus offers the truth of intimate fellowship with the only true God. He was born into this world for this purpose: "And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth" (John 17:3, NLT). His kingdom presents the opportunity to know the truth that sets us free from sin and death (Romans 8:2; John 8:32). Only those who are born again can see Christ's kingdom (John 3:3). And only those who are born of water and spirit can enter His kingdom (John 3:5).

Once, Jesus told the Pharisees, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world" (John 8:23). To His disciples, the Lord explained that the world and the "prince of this world" held no power over Him (John 14:22–30). The world hates Christ and His followers, "for they are not of the world" (John 17:14, 16).

The statement, "My kingdom is not of this world," relates to the origin and nature of Christ's kingdom, not the location. The authority and power of Christ's kingdom are drawn from a source outside of this world—from God, our heavenly Father. Christ's headship is not of human origin but divine.

Christ's kingdom is unlike any on this earth: "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). Other kingdoms are rooted in the realm of this world, but Christ's is unique. His kingship is spiritual. It comes down to us from heaven and gives life to the world (John 6:33).

While *not of this world*, the Lord's kingdom is most certainly *in* this world, exercising authority over this world and impacting this world. Jesus Christ and all of His disciples take orders from above, not from below. We are to set our minds "on things above, not on earthly things" (Colossians 3:2). When it comes to obeying the law, the apostle Peter said, "We must obey God rather than any human authority" (Acts 5:29, NLT).

As believers in Jesus, we are subjects of Christ's kingdom. This world is not our home (Hebrews 13:14; Philippians 3:20; 1 John 2:15–17). We are citizens of heaven, and we owe our highest allegiance to our ultimate authority—King Jesus. Just as He declared, we, too, can say, "My kingdom is not of this world."

Greg Laurie - NOT OF THIS WORLD - Borrow [For Every Season, Volume Three page 52](#)

"Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.'" (John 18:36NIV)

So often the world misconstrues what Christians say. It draws erroneous conclusions because it never takes the time to really listen carefully to the gospel message.

The early Christians were insulted and criticized for what they were doing—and even accused of treason. It was suggested they were actually advocating the overthrow of Caesar—which really wasn't the case. It was a complete misunderstanding of what the objectives of these Christians really were. Anyone who would have given them even a brief hearing would have realized that these followers of Jesus weren't seeking to establish an Earthly kingdom—and they certainly weren't plotting to overthrow Caesar or Rome.

Yet it's worth noting that the first-century Christians made no attempts to conquer paganism by reacting blow by blow. Instead, they outthought, outprayed, and outlived the unbelievers. Their weapons were positive, not negative. They prayed, preached, and proclaimed the message of the gospel.

As a result, these Christians dramatically impacted their world. In the end, they prevailed. In retrospect, where is Rome today? It's no longer a world power. Do we remember the names of more than a few of the great emperors of Rome? For the most part, no.

There have been numerous attempts throughout history to destroy the Christian faith. But those efforts will always fail for one simple reason: Christianity is Christ. He will prevail in the end and establish His kingdom. And because we are with Him, we will win in the end, too.

John 18:37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My

- **So You are a king:** Mt 26:64 27:11 Mk 14:62 15:2 Lu 23:3 1Ti 6:13
- **that I should:** John 8:14 14:6 Isa 55:4 Rev 1:4 3:14
- **Everyone:** John 7:17 8:47 10:26,27 1Pe 1:22 1Jn 3:14,19 4:6 5:20

Related Passages:

Matthew 27:11 Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor questioned Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?” And Jesus said to him, “**It is as you say.**”

Mark 15:2 Pilate questioned Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” And He *answered him, “**It is as you say.**”

Luke 23:3 So Pilate asked Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?” And He answered him and said, “**It is as you say.**”

JESUS AFFIRMS HE IS A KING

NOTE: With the exception of Jesus answering Pilate's question about whether He was a king [See above](#) - “It is as you say” ~ “You say correctly that I am a king”), John 18:34-38a (“What is truth?”) describes a dialogue between the two which is found only in the Gospel of John.

Therefore ([oun](#)) shows that Pilate's question is a result of Jesus' reply.

Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” - One would like to have heard Pilate's tone with this question. He is clearly puzzled as to what kind of king He is and what is His kingdom. It would seem that Pilate finally accepts that Jesus is a King.

A T Robertson on **So You are a king?** - Compound of ο κ [ouk] and ο υ [oun] and is clearly ironical expecting an affirmative answer, only here in the N. T.

*Let us add, that our Lord's claim to be a king
shall be acknowledged one day by all mankind*
-- Php 2:9-11

Spurgeon - Our Lord's claim to royalty must have sounded very singularly in Pilate's ear. Jesus was, doubtless, very much careworn, sad, and emaciated in appearance. He had spent the first part of the night in the garden in an agony; in the midnight hours he had been dragged from Annas to Caiaphas, and from Caiaphas to Herod; neither at daybreak had he been permitted to rest, so that, from sheer weariness, he must have looked very unlike a king. If you had taken some poor ragged creature in the street, and said to him, “Art thou a king, then?” the question could scarcely have been more sarcastic. Pilate, in his heart, despised the Jews as such, but here was a poor Jew, persecuted by his own people, helpless and friendless; it sounded like mockery to talk of a kingdom in connection with him. Yet never earth saw truer king! (Sermon [Jesus, The King of Truth](#))

Life Application Study Bible - There seems to have been no question in Pilate's mind that Jesus spoke the truth and was innocent of any crime. It also seems apparent that while recognizing the truth, Pilate chose to reject it. It is a tragedy when we fail to recognize the truth. It is a greater tragedy when we recognize the truth but fail to heed it. (BORROW [Life Application Study Bible: Old Testament and New Testament: New Living Translation PAGE 1664](#))

Spurgeon Study Bible - ‘You are a king then?’ Pilate asked. ‘You say that I'm a king,’ Jesus replied. ‘I was born for this, and I have come into the world for this: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.’ ” Christ is a king—a king by force of truth in a spiritual kingdom. For this purpose he was born; for this cause he came into the world. Our Lord, in effect, tells us that the truth of God is the preeminent characteristic of his kingdom and that his royal power over men's hearts is through the truth of God. He dealt not with fiction but with facts—not with trifles but with infinite realities. He speaks not of opinions, views, or speculations but of infallible truths. Jesus is King in his people's souls because his preaching has set us at rest on points of boundless importance; he has not given us well-chiseled stones but real bread. There are a thousand things you may not know, and you will be little the worse for not knowing them; but if you do not know what Jesus has taught, it will not go well with you. If you are taught of the Lord Jesus, you will have rest for your cares, balm for your sorrows, and satisfaction for your desires. Jesus gives sinners who believe in him the truths of God they need to know—the assurance of sin forgiven through his blood, favor ensured by his righteousness, and heaven secured by his eternal life.

James Smith - Look at His Answer to Pilate. “Art Thou a King then?” (John 18:37). If ever there was a moment when Christ might

desire to deny His Kingship it is now, as He stands a prisoner. Mocked and helpless, crowned with thorns before Pilate, when this question was put what is His answer? "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world" (John 18:37). In giving this answer our Lord looks right into the future, and for the joy that is set before Him He endures the cross. Just now His kingdom is not of this world (this present state of things); it is within you. But He shall yet put down all authority, and reign from sea to sea. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied" (Isa. 53:11). He was "born a Saviour," but He was also "born King of the Jews." He had not where to lay His head; but He shall yet be King of kings. He appears as a "wayfaring man" to put away sin; when He comes again it will be the glorious appearing of our Great God and Saviour. He shall come whose right it is to reign. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

Jesus ([lesous](#)) answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice - Jesus affirms Pilate's assertion that He is a king. One wonders what went through Pilate's mind upon hearing that reply! Keep in mind that Jesus has just clearly stated that His kingdom is "other worldly." Now He explains that not only is He is a king but this is why He was born and came into the world. **Came into the world** is an allusion to His incarnation, something Pilate would not have been able to grasp. Jesus goes on to say that His reason for coming into the world was to be a witness of the truth.

He then adds the important point that those who are **of the truth** (those who believe in Him) truly hears what He is saying, meaning they can truly understand His voice and also implying that they obey what they hear. He is referring to spiritual truth and implying it can only be spiritually discerned or understood. One is reminded of Jesus' words in John 10 about who can truly hear His voice which is those who are His sheep...

I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and **they will hear My voice**; and they will become one flock with one shepherd....²⁷ **"My sheep hear My voice**, and I know them, and they follow Me. (John 10:16, 27+)

As MacArthur says "Jesus' words were an implied invitation to Pilate to hear and obey the truth about Him. But they were lost on the governor, who abruptly ended his interrogation of Christ with the cynical, pessimistic remark, "What is truth?"

Spurgeon - He claimed to be a king, and the truth which he revealed, and of which he was the personification, is, therefore, the sceptre of his empire. He rules by the force of truth over those hearts which feel the power of right and truth, and therefore willingly yield themselves to his guidance, believe his word, and are governed by his will. It is as a spiritual Lord that Christ claims sovereignty among men; he is king over minds that love him, trust him, and obey him, because they see in him the truth which their souls pine for. Other kings rule our bodies, but Christ our souls, they govern by force, but he by the attractions of righteousness; theirs is, to a great extent, a fictitious royalty, but his is true, and finds its force in truth. ([Jesus, The King of Truth](#))

Spurgeon on For this I have been born - To set up his kingdom was the reason why he was born of the virgin. To be King of men, it was necessary for him to be born. **and for this I have come into the world** that is, he came out of the bosom of the Father that he might set up his kingdom, by unveiling the mysteries which were hid from the foundation of the world. No man can reveal the counsel of God, but one who has been with God; and the Son who has come forth of the ivory palaces of gladness, announces to us tidings of great joy! ([Jesus, The King of Truth](#))

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:37

We might have expected that he would have said, "I came into the world that I might be a king." But he explains that, as a Witness to the truth, he was a King.

GOD HAS A PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE

"For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world" (John 18:37).

God has a plan for our lives that is complete in every detail. The Sovereign of the universe cannot allow any of His plans to be executed haphazardly. He leaves nothing to happenstance. The life of Jesus is a prime example. His coming as a Babe in Bethlehem, His earthly ministry, His death, and His resurrection all took place according to God's purpose. To show that Jesus was determined to do His father's will, Luke wrote, "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51) . Jesus' death was no turn of fate—it was a fulfillment of God's plan. He had come to give His life a ransom for the sins of the world.

It is also true that the life of every Christian has been designed by the heavenly Father to fulfill a specific purpose.

-- See [Believers Are God's Masterpiece, His Poema](#)

C. H. Spurgeon said, "There is not a spider hanging on the king's wall but has its errand; there is not a nettle that grows in the corner

of the churchyard but has its purpose. . . . And I will never have it that God created any man, especially any Christian man, to be a blank, and to be a nothing. He made you for an end. Find out what that end is; find out your niche and fill it."

We must learn to view the events of our life from the divine perspective. God has a plan for our lives. Knowing this will cause us to look for ways to serve Him and glorify Him in everything we do. We have a sense of destiny because we know that God has placed us where we are for a purpose. —P.R.V. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Duties belong to us;
results belong to God.

Vance Havner - PILATE'S DECISION

Pilate faced three alternatives. He asked Jesus, "Art Thou a king?" and our Lord answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (See John 18:36, 37.) I think Pilate must have shrugged his shoulders as he asked, "What is truth?" But let us be patient with Pilate. He had listened to Greek philosophers and Roman lawyers and Oriental jugglers, all ranting about truth. Little did he dream that standing before him was One who not only knew the truth but was the Truth.

1. At any rate, the issue Pilate faced was Christ or cynicism.

We live in the age of the cynic who sees the price of everything and the value of nothing. Our hearts, homes, schools, and churches are filled with it, in a generation of animated question marks. There are no reasons for being a cynic. There are excuses, but an excuse is only the skin of a reason, stuffed with a lie.

2. Pilate's second alternative was Christ or criminality.

Pilate released Barabbas instead of Christ; the world has had Barabbas ever since. If we do not choose the best, we choose the beast.

3. Pilate's third alternative was Christ or Caesar

He was told by the howling multitude: "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend," and later they declared, "We have no king but Caesar." (See John 19:12, 15.) We have had Caesar ever since, just as we have had Barabbas. We asked for it.

Will you crown the cynic, the criminal, Caesar, or Christ? You cannot leave Him alone. You cannot be a disinterested spectator, an innocent bystander. You cannot wash your hands of this decision.

Bob Gass - Your Destiny

For this reason I was born. (John 18:37, NIV)

"Without purpose, your life is just an experiment! Jesus could say, "For this reason I was born." Can you say that your present circumstances don't disqualify you? When God called Gideon "a mighty man of valor" he was hiding in a cave. (See Judges 8:12.) But God wasn't speaking to his circumstances; He was speaking to the destiny that was inside him!

You say, "How can I recognize my destiny?" First, it's a desire that won't let you go. Paul cried, "Woe unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16). Being a queen was Esther's position, but saving God's people was her destiny. That's why she risked everything and said, "If I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16). We're not what's important—God's purpose is!

Second, your destiny will be more than a job, it'll be a joy. Sure there'll be sacrifices, but through it all you'll say like David, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God" (Psalm 40:8). What a way to live!

Third, your destiny will unlock your creativity. It will open doors and bring the right people to you. God's purpose always carries with it God's favor! Finally, your destiny fulfilled is the only thing you'll want to face God with.

HE WON'T SAY "WELL DONE" OVER THE MONEY YOU'VE MADE OR THE REPUTATION YOU'VE BUILT. HE'LL ONLY SAY IT BECAUSE YOU FOUND AND FULFILLED HIS PURPOSE. (BORROW [Fresh Word for Today: 365 Insights for Daily Living PAGE 170](#))

James Butler - TESTIMONY OF CHRIST John 18:37 - [Sermon Starters](#)

"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. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John 18:37).

Christ is being examined by Pilate in one of the trials prior to the crucifixion of Christ. Christ gave Pilate a mouthful in this answer, but Pilate, though an astute politician was spiritually a dunce and didn't "get it." Pilate had a great privilege but blew it. Through all eternity he will pay for this spiritual failure. We look at the answer Christ gave to Pilate about the charge that He claimed to be a king. The answer shows us at least three important things about Christ.

FIRST—THE PERSON OF CHRIST

"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." Here is a great statement which speaks of the due-nature of Jesus Christ. "Born" speaks of his humanity, while "came" speaks of His Deity, for it speaks of His pre-existence. As in this text, often times the Deity of Christ and the humanity are placed side by side. As an example in Luke 8:22–25 is the report of Christ sleeping on the boat (which speaks of His humanity) and of His waking and stopping the storm on the sea by His word (which certainly shows His Deity). You may not believe in the Deity of Jesus Christ but you cannot deny the fact that the Bible teaches it. Christ was both God and man.

SECOND—THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST

"That I should bear witness unto the truth." Christ's purpose was to give witness to the truth about the most important matters of life, such as heaven, hell, salvation, God, and holy conduct. No witness is more important than the witness of Jesus Christ. Man needs to know the truth about these matters more than he needs to know anything else. Christ is the Greatest Witness of the truth to be given to mankind.

THIRD—THE PEOPLE OF CHRIST

"Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice." The people of Christ are attracted to spiritual truth. The world is not listening to what Jesus says. They will listen to every Tom, Dick, and Harry who has worthless character but they will not listen to Christ Who has impeccable character. But God's people will listen. In my experience as a pastor it was easy to pick out the real saints of God from the phony ones by noting who was really interested in the Word of God (which is demonstrated by their interest in the sermons). The real saints are attracted to the Word but the phony saints are not and need suppers and ball games and other secular events to interest their attendance at church. Their interest in church is not in the spiritual. They may look like real Christians and talk like real saints but they give away their falseness by what they are interested in which is not the Word of God. Where are your interests? Are you genuinely interested in the Word of Christ or are you more interested in the secular at church.

Life's Defining Moment

Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice. — John 18:37

Today's Scripture : John 18:28-38

Several law students at Duke University were seated around a table discussing ethics with federal Judge William Hoeveler. According to an article in US News & World Report, the judge warned, "I guarantee that sometime you will be asked to do something dishonest. Your future lies in that moment. Even if you have kids and a big mortgage, there's only one answer: 'No!'"

We will all face similar life-defining moments during the course of our lives. No decision will ever be more important than how we respond to the claims of the One who said to a judge, "For this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (Jn. 18:37). That person was Jesus Christ.

Jesus was truthful in word and deed, but more than that, He was God's unique expression of the truth (Jn. 14:6). Only He can expose the subtle lies of our hearts and create within us a longing to be true to ourselves, to others, and to God. Sooner or later all of us must decide whether we will commit ourselves to the One who is the truth—Jesus Christ.

Will we acknowledge the truth that we have broken God's law and accept by faith Jesus' offer of salvation? That is life's defining moment. By: Dennis J. DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Yes, Jesus is the Truth, the Way,
That leads you into rest;
Believe in Him without delay
And you are fully blest. —Stockton

Your eternal destiny lies in your response to the truth.

John 18:38 Pilate *said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and *said to them, “I find no guilt in Him.

- What: Ac 17:19,20,32 24:25,26
- I find: John 19:4,6,21,22 Mt 27:18,19,24 Mk 15:14 Lu 23:4,14-16 1Pe 1:19 1Pe 2:22,23

Related Passages:

Mark 15:14 But Pilate said to them, **Why, what evil has He done?** But they shouted all the more, “Crucify Him!”

Luke 23:4 Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no guilt in this man.”

Lk 23:14-16 and said to them, “You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him. 15 “No, nor has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by Him. 16 “Therefore I will punish Him and release Him.”

John 19:4 Pilate came out again and *said to them, “Behold, I am bringing Him out to you so that you may know that **I find no guilt in Him.**”

John 19:6 So when the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out saying, “Crucify, crucify!” Pilate *said to them, “Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for **I find no guilt in Him.**”

Mt 27:24 When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this Man’s blood; see to that yourselves.”

THE TRUTH IS THAT THERE IS NO GUILT IN HIM!

NOTE: With the exception of Jesus answering Pilate’s question about whether He was a king ([See passages above](#) - “It is as you say” ~ “You say correctly that I am a king”), John 18:34-38a (“What is truth?”) describes a dialogue between the two which is found only in the Gospel of John.

Pilate said (was saying) **to Him**, “**What is truth** ([aletheia](#))?” - **Said** is [historical present tense \(see note\)](#). Pilate gives the response of all skeptical people who despair of ever discovering true truth. Pilate has missed his golden opportunity to be saved by **the truth** spoken by the one who is **the truth** and the only way Pilate would ever get to heaven (Jn 14:6). To say it another way Pilate completely misses the obvious -- **The Truth** is standing in front of him at this very moment! The key phrase Pilate should have sought more information is “**Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice**” Jesus would have explained that those who are **of the truth** are His sheep (true believers, disciples) and thus can truly **hear** His **voice**, where “hear” also implies heed.

Spurgeon - Poor Pilate! he was interested and favourably impressed, and went out to try and clear his prisoner, towards whom he had a mingled feeling of wonder, pity, and awe. (The Interpreter)

D L Moody - Here is a curious anagram on Pilate’s question, “What is truth?” In Latin this is “Quid est veritas?” The letters can be arranged so as to read, “Est vir, qui adest,” meaning, “It is the man who is before you.”

Life Application Study Bible - Pilate was cynical; he thought that all truth was relative. To many government officials, truth was whatever the majority of people agreed with or whatever helped advance their own personal power and political goals. When there is no standard or acknowledgement of truth, there is no basis for moral right and wrong. Justice becomes whatever works or whatever helps those in power. In Jesus and his Word we have a standard for truth and for our moral behavior. (BORROW [Life Application Study Bible: Old Testament and New Testament: New Living Translation PAGE 1664](#))

NET NOTE - With his reply “**What is truth?**” Pilate dismissed the matter. It is not clear what Pilate’s attitude was at this point, as in Jn 18:33. He may have been sarcastic, or perhaps somewhat reflective. The author has not given enough information in the narrative to be sure. Within the narrative, Pilate’s question serves to make the reader reflect on what truth is, and that answer (in the narrative) has already been given (Jn 14:6).

QUID EST VERITAS?

A T Robertson - Quid est veritas? The answer in Latin is *Vir est qui adest* as has been succinctly said by the use of the same

letters. Pilate turned with indifference from his own great question and rendered his verdict

D L Moody - "What is truth?" In Latin this is "Quid est veritas?" The letters can be arranged so as to read, "Est vir, qui adest," meaning, "It is the man who is before you."

Larry Richards - We have no way of knowing Pilate's tone of voice as he spoke these words. Was he scoffing? Or did he perhaps speak with longing, or despair? We do know that truth is discovered only by those who abandon worldly moral compasses, and chart a course by the Word of God. Only those willing to do God's will can know it, and only those who do God's will discover truth. Again the spiritual battlefield is defined. Let's set our course in life by the compass of God's Word, and ignore the advice and the "wisdom" of mere men. (Borrow [365 Day Devotional Commentary page 808](#))

And when he had said this, he went out again (See [Pilate's movements](#)) **to the Jews** ([Ioudaios](#)) and ***said to them, "I find no guilt ([aitia](#)) in Him** - After Pilate asks the question of the ages and of all the sages of the ages, he apparently does not even wait for Jesus to reply. He turns to now confront the Jews outside the Praetorium. Perhaps Jesus was silent, but John often tells us when Jesus is silent. It seems more likely that Pilate has had enough talk about kings, kingdoms and truth and seeks to "get on" with his day. He was convinced Jesus was not guilty of any crime against Rome. So he goes back outside the Praetorium to face the raucous Jews and renders a "Not guilty" verdict to the utter chagrin of the Jewish leaders.

NET NOTE on the Jews - Or "the Jewish authorities"; Grk "the Jews." Here the phrase refers to the Jewish leaders, especially members of the **Sanhedrin**. See the note on the phrase "Jewish leaders" in v. 12. The term also occurs in v. 31, where it is clear the Jewish leaders are in view, because they state that they cannot legally carry out an execution. Although it is likely (in view of the synoptic parallels) that the crowd here in 18:38 was made up not just of the Jewish leaders, but of ordinary residents of Jerusalem and pilgrims who were in Jerusalem for the Passover, nevertheless in John's Gospel Pilate is primarily in dialogue with the leadership of the nation, who are expressly mentioned in Jn 18:35 and Jn 19:6.

Vance Havner - If life's true valuation is not to be found in things, thrills, and theories, then where shall we look? The other way is the way of truth. Our Lord, on trial before Pilate, said, "My kingdom is not of this world [that is, it is not a kingdom of things, thrills, and theories].... To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John 18:36-37). Pilate asked wearily, "What is truth?" Men still are asking, "What is truth?" but truth is a Whom; Christ is the truth, not merely a truth-teller, and when Paul said, "For me to live is Christ," he was giving us life's true estimate. It is not to live for Christ or like Christ, mind you, but to live is Christ.

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:38

He did not want an answer. He merely thought it such an unnecessary piece of trifling to talk about truth, he himself had so slight an idea of what the word might mean, that when he had said, "What is truth?" "he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all." That was the truth about the Truth, from the lips of a man who cared nothing about truth, yet who was compelled to bear this testimony, "I find in him no fault at all."

Truth (225) **aletheia** from **a** = indicates following word has the opposite meaning ~ without + **lanthano** = to be hidden or concealed, to escape notice, cp our English "*latent*" from Latin = to lie hidden) has the literal sense of that which contains nothing hidden. **Aletheia** is that which is not concealed. **Aletheia** is that which that is seen or expressed as it really is.

The basic understanding of **aletheia** is that it is the **manifestation** of a hidden reality (eg, click discussion of Jesus as "the Truth"). For example, when you are a witness in a trial, the court attendant says "Raise your right hand. Do you swear that you will tell the truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?" And you say, "I do" and you sit down. The question the court attendant is asking is "Are you willing to come into this courtroom and manifest something that is hidden to us that only you know so that you will bear evidence to that?" Therefore when you speak the truth, you are manifesting a "hidden reality". Does that make sense? An parallel example in Scripture is the case of the woman in the crowd who had touched Jesus (Read context = Mk 5:24-25, 26-27, 28-29, 30, 31-32), but when she became "aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him the whole truth" (Mk 5:33) and nothing but the truth. She did not lie. She spoke no falsehoods.

Truth then is the correspondence between a reality and a declaration which professes to set forth or describe the reality. To say it another way, words spoken or written are true when they correspond with objective reality. Persons and things are true when they correspond with their profession (which we describe with words like integrity, sincerity, non-hypocritical, etc). In other words, "what you see is what you get". Hence a truth is a declaration which has corresponding reality, or a reality which is correctly set forth.

David Black says "The **historical present** describes a past event as though it were actually taking place: λέγουσιν α τ περ α τ ς, they spoke to him about her (Mark 1:30). Here the present is a pictorial tense, displaying the action vividly before our eyes. In

English we often use the historical present when recounting personal experiences ("then he says to me"). (BORROW [It's Still Greek to Me page 106](#))

Historical presents in John 18 - Jn 18:3 - came; Jn 18:4 - said; Jn 18:17 - said; Jn 18:26 - said; Jn 18:29 - said; Jn 18:38 - said

QUESTION - [What is truth?](#) (WATCH WELL DONE VIDEO)

ANSWER - Almost two thousand years ago, Truth was put on trial and judged by people who were devoted to lies. In fact, Truth faced six trials in less than one full day, three of which were religious, and three that were legal. In the end, few people involved in those events could answer the question, "What is truth?"

After being arrested, the Truth was first led to a man named Annas, a corrupt former high priest of the Jews. Annas broke numerous Jewish laws during the trial, including holding the trial in his house, trying to induce self-accusations against the defendant, and striking the defendant, who had been convicted of nothing at the time. After Annas, the Truth was led to the reigning high priest, Caiaphas, who happened to be Annas's son-in-law. Before Caiaphas and the Jewish Sanhedrin, many false witnesses came forward to speak against the Truth, yet nothing could be proved and no evidence of wrongdoing could be found. Caiaphas broke no fewer than seven laws while trying to convict the Truth: (1) the trial was held in secret; (2) it was carried out at night; (3) it involved bribery; (4) the defendant had no one present to make a defense for Him; (5) the requirement of 2-3 witnesses could not be met; (6) they used self-incriminating testimony against the defendant; (7) they carried out the death penalty against the defendant the same day. All these actions were prohibited by Jewish law. Regardless, Caiaphas declared the Truth guilty because the Truth claimed to be God in the flesh, something Caiaphas called blasphemy.

When morning came, the third trial of the Truth took place, with the result that the Jewish Sanhedrin pronounced the Truth should die. However, the Jewish council had no legal right to carry out the death penalty, so they were forced to bring the Truth to the Roman governor at the time, a man named Pontius Pilate. Pilate was appointed by Tiberius as the fifth prefect of Judea and served in that capacity A.D. 26 to 36. The procurator had power of life and death and could reverse capital sentences passed by the Sanhedrin. As the Truth stood before Pilate, more lies were brought against Him. His enemies said, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King" (Luke 23:2). This was a lie, as the Truth had told everyone to pay their taxes (Matthew 22:21) and never spoke of Himself as a challenge to Caesar.

After this, a very interesting conversation between the Truth and Pilate took place. "Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?' Pilate answered, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.' Therefore Pilate said to Him, 'So You are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.' Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?'" (John 18:33–38).

Pilate's question, "What is truth?" has reverberated down through history. Was it a melancholy desire to know what no one else could tell him, a cynical insult, or perhaps an irritated, indifferent reply to Jesus' words?

In a postmodern world that denies that truth can be known, the question is more important than ever to answer. **What is truth?**

A Proposed Definition of Truth

In defining truth, it is first helpful to note what truth is not:

- Truth is *not* simply whatever works. This is the philosophy of pragmatism—an ends-vs.-means-type approach. In reality, lies can appear to "work," but they are still lies and not the truth.
- Truth is *not* simply what is coherent or understandable. A group of people can get together and form a conspiracy based on a set of falsehoods where they all agree to tell the same false story, but it does not make their presentation true.
- Truth is *not* what makes people feel good. Unfortunately, bad news can be true.
- Truth is *not* what the majority says is true. Fifty-one percent of a group can reach a wrong conclusion.
- Truth is *not* what is comprehensive. A lengthy, detailed presentation can still result in a false conclusion.
- Truth is *not* defined by what is intended. Good intentions can still be wrong.
- Truth is *not* how we know; truth is what we know.
- Truth is *not* simply what is believed. A lie believed is still a lie.
- Truth is *not* what is publicly proved. A truth can be privately known (for example, the location of buried

treasure).

The Greek word for “truth” is *aletheia*, which refers to “divine revelation” and is related to a word that literally means “what can’t be hidden.” It conveys the thought that truth is always there, always open and available for all to see, with nothing being hidden or obscured. The Hebrew word for “truth” is *emeth*, which means “firmness,” “constancy” and “duration.” Such a definition implies an everlasting substance and something that can be relied upon.

From a philosophical perspective, there are three simple ways to define truth:

1. Truth is that which corresponds to reality.
2. Truth is that which matches its object.
3. Truth is simply telling it like it is.

First, truth corresponds to reality or “what is.” It is real. Truth is also correspondent in nature. In other words, it matches its object and is known by its referent. For example, a teacher facing a class may say, “Now the only exit to this room is on the right.” For the class that may be facing the teacher, the exit door may be on their left, but it’s absolutely true that the door, for the professor, is on the right.

Truth also matches its object. It may be absolutely true that a certain person may need so many milligrams of a certain medication, but another person may need more or less of the same medication to produce the desired effect. This is not relative truth, but just an example of how truth must match its object. It would be wrong (and potentially dangerous) for a patient to request that their doctor give them an inappropriate amount of a particular medication, or to say that any medicine for their specific ailment will do.

In short, truth is simply telling it like it is; it is the way things really are, and any other viewpoint is wrong. A foundational principle of philosophy is being able to discern between truth and error, or as Thomas Aquinas observed, “It is the task of the philosopher to make distinctions” (quoted by Drewlo, E. F., in *Thoughtful Adaptations to Change: Authentic Christian Faith in Postmodern Times*, Friesen Press, 2017, p. 155).

Challenges to Truth

Aquinas’ words are not very popular today. Making distinctions seems to be out of fashion in a postmodern era of relativism. It is acceptable today to say, “This is true,” as long as it is not followed by, “and therefore that is false.” This is especially observable in matters of faith and religion where every belief system is supposed to be on equal footing where truth is concerned.

There are a number of philosophies and worldviews that challenge the concept of truth, yet, when each is critically examined it turns out to be self-defeating in nature.

The philosophy of relativism says that all truth is relative and that there is no such thing as absolute truth. But one has to ask: is the claim “all truth is relative” a relative truth or an absolute truth? If it is a relative truth, then it really is meaningless; how do we know when and where it applies? If it is an absolute truth, then absolute truth exists. Moreover, the relativist betrays his own position when he states that the position of the absolutist is wrong—why can’t those who say absolute truth exists be correct too? In essence, when the relativist says, “There is no truth,” he is asking you not to believe him, and the best thing to do is follow his advice.

Those who follow the philosophy of skepticism simply doubt all truth. But is the skeptic skeptical of skepticism; does he doubt his own truth claim? If so, then why pay attention to skepticism? If not, then we can be sure of at least one thing (in other words, absolute truth exists)—skepticism, which, ironically, becomes absolute truth in that case. The agnostic says you can’t know the truth. Yet the mindset is self-defeating because it claims to know at least one truth: that you can’t know truth.

The disciples of postmodernism simply affirm no particular truth. The patron saint of postmodernism—Frederick Nietzsche—described truth like this: “What then is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms ... truths are illusions ... coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins” (from *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense*, quoted by Mann, D., in *Structural Idealism: A Theory of Social and Historical Explanation*, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2002, p. 138). Ironically, although the postmodernist holds coins in his hand that are now “mere metal,” he affirms at least one absolute truth: the truth that no truth should be affirmed. Like the other worldviews, postmodernism is self-defeating and cannot stand up under its own claim.

A popular worldview is pluralism, which says that all truth claims are equally valid. Of course, this is impossible. Can two claims—one that says a woman is now pregnant and another that says she is not now pregnant—both be true at the same time? Pluralism unravels at the feet of the law of non-contradiction, which says that something cannot be both “A” and “Non-A” at the same time and in the same sense. As one philosopher quipped, anyone who believes that the law of non-contradiction is not true (and, by default, pluralism is true) should be beaten and burned until they admit that to be beaten and burned is not the same thing as to not be beaten and burned (Avicenna, *Metaphysics I*, quoted by John Duns Scotus, *Philosophical Writings*, Wolter, A., trans., Bobbs-Merrill,

1962, p. 10). Also, note that pluralism says that it is true and anything opposed to it is false, which is a claim that denies its own foundational tenet.

The spirit behind pluralism is an open-armed attitude of tolerance. However, pluralism confuses the idea of everyone having equal value with every truth claim being equally valid. More simply, all people may be equal, but not all truth claims are. Pluralism fails to understand the difference between opinion and truth, a distinction Mortimer Adler notes, “Pluralism is desirable and tolerable only in those areas that are matters of taste rather than matters of truth” insert (*Truth in Religion: The Plurality of Religions and the Unity of Truth*, Macmillan, 1990, p. 4).

The Offensive Nature of Truth

When the concept of truth is maligned, it is usually for one or more of the following reasons:

One common complaint against anyone claiming to have absolute truth in matters of faith and religion is that such a stance is “narrow-minded.” However, the critic fails to understand that, by nature, truth is narrow. Is a math teacher narrow-minded for holding to the belief that $2 + 2$ only equals 4?

Another objection to truth is that it is arrogant to claim that someone is right and another person is wrong. However, returning to the above example with mathematics, is it arrogant for a math teacher to insist on only one right answer to an arithmetic problem? Or is it arrogant for a locksmith to state that only one key will open a locked door?

A third charge against those holding to absolute truth in matters of faith and religion is that such a position excludes people, rather than being inclusive. But such a complaint fails to understand that truth, by nature, excludes its opposite. All answers other than 4 are excluded from the reality of what $2 + 2$ truly equals.

Yet another protest against truth is that it is offensive and divisive to claim one has the truth. Instead, the critic argues, all that matters is sincerity. The problem with this position is that truth is immune to sincerity, belief, and desire. It doesn't matter how much one sincerely believes a wrong key will fit a door; the key still won't go in and the lock won't be opened. Truth is also unaffected by sincerity. Someone who picks up a bottle of poison and sincerely believes it is lemonade will still suffer the unfortunate effects of the poison. Finally, truth is impervious to desire. A person may strongly desire that their car has not run out of gas, but if the gauge says the tank is empty and the car will not run any farther, then no desire in the world will miraculously cause the car to keep going.

Some will admit that absolute truth exists, but then claim such a stance is only valid in the area of science and not in matters of faith and religion. This is a philosophy called logical [positivism](#), which was popularized by philosophers such as [David Hume](#) and A. J. Ayer. In essence, such people state that truth claims must either be (1) tautologies (for example, all bachelors are unmarried men) or (2) empirically verifiable (that is, testable via science). To the logical positivist, all talk about God is nonsense.

Those who hold to the notion that only science can make truth claims fail to recognize is that there are many realms of truth where science is impotent. For example:

- Science cannot prove the disciplines of mathematics and logic because it presupposes them.
- Science cannot prove metaphysical truths such as, minds other than my own do exist.
- Science is unable to provide truth in the areas of morals and ethics. You cannot use science, for example, to prove the Nazis were evil.
- Science is incapable of stating truths about aesthetic positions such as the beauty of a sunrise.
- Lastly, when anyone makes the statement “science is the only source of [objective truth](#),” they have just made a philosophical claim—which cannot be tested by science.

And there are those who say that absolute truth does not apply in the area of morality. Yet the response to the question, “Is it moral to torture and murder an innocent child?” is absolute and universal: No. Or, to make it more personal, those who espouse relative truth concerning morals always seem to want their spouse to be absolutely faithful to them.

Why Truth Is Important

Why is it so important to understand and embrace the concept of absolute truth in all areas of life (including faith and religion)? Simply because life has consequences for being wrong. Giving someone the wrong amount of a medication can kill them; having an investment manager make the wrong monetary decisions can impoverish a family; boarding the wrong plane will take you where you do not wish to go; and dealing with an unfaithful marriage partner can result in the destruction of a family and, potentially, disease. Nowhere are the consequences more important than in the area of faith and religion. Eternity is an awfully long time to be wrong.

God and Truth

During the six trials of Jesus, the contrast between the truth (righteousness) and lies (unrighteousness) was unmistakable. There

stood Jesus, the Truth, being judged by those whose every action was bathed in lies. The Jewish leaders broke nearly every law designed to protect a defendant from wrongful conviction. They fervently worked to find any testimony that would incriminate Jesus, and in their frustration, they turned to false evidence brought forward by liars. But even that could not help them reach their goal. So they broke another law and forced Jesus to implicate Himself.

Once in front of Pilate, the Jewish leaders lied again. They convicted Jesus of blasphemy, but since they knew that wouldn't be enough to coax Pilate to kill Jesus, they claimed Jesus was challenging Caesar and was breaking Roman law by encouraging the crowds to not pay taxes. Pilate quickly detected their superficial deception, and he never even addressed the charge.

Jesus the Righteous was being judged by the unrighteous. The sad fact is that the latter always persecutes the former. It's why Cain killed Abel. The link between truth and righteousness and between falsehood and unrighteousness is demonstrated by a number of examples in the New Testament:

- For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged *who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness* ([2 Thessalonians 2:11–12](#), emphasis added).
- “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who *suppress the truth in unrighteousness*” ([Romans 1:18](#), emphasis added).
- “who will render to each person according to his deeds; to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and *do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness*, wrath and indignation” ([Romans 2:6–8](#), emphasis added).
- “[love] does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, *does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth*” ([1 Corinthians 13:5–6](#), emphasis added)

What Is Truth? - Conclusion

The question Pontius Pilate asked centuries ago needs to be rephrased in order to be completely accurate. The Roman governor's remark “What is truth?” overlooks the fact that many things can have truth, but only one thing can actually be the Truth. Truth must originate from somewhere.

The stark reality is that Pilate was looking directly at the Origin of all Truth on that early morning almost two thousand years ago. Not long before being arrested and brought to the governor, Jesus had made the simple statement “I am the truth” (John 14:6), which was a rather incredible statement. How could a mere man be the truth? He couldn't be, unless He was more than a man, which is actually what He claimed to be. The fact is, Jesus' claim was validated when He rose from the dead (Romans 1:4).

There's a story about a man who lived in Paris who had a stranger from the country come see him. Wanting to show the stranger the magnificence of Paris, he took him to the Louvre to see the great art and then to a concert at a majestic symphony hall to hear a great symphony orchestra play. At the end of the day, the stranger from the country commented that he didn't particularly like either the art or the music. To which his host replied, “They aren't on trial, you are.” Pilate and the Jewish leaders thought they were judging Christ, when, in reality, they were the ones being judged. Moreover, the One they convicted will actually serve as their Judge one day, as He will for all who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

Related Resource:

- [Is all truth God's truth?](#)

What Is Truth?

Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” — John 18:38

Today's Scripture : John 18:28-38

It was the closest Pilate would come to life's greatest discovery. Jesus had just told him that He had come into the world to bear witness to the truth. This prompted Pilate to ask, “What is truth?” (John 18:38). The shrewd Roman politician had asked the right question of the right Person, and his answer was standing before him. But instead of falling to his knees in repentance, confession, and faith, he could only pass off the answer by concluding, “I find no fault in Him.”

Sooner or later, all of us find ourselves in Pilate's position, where we must decide about the unusual Man who claims what no other

can claim—that He is the truth.

Throughout history many religious leaders have come and gone, but not one has claimed to be the truth and then proved it by rising from the dead. Millions of people down through the centuries have found Jesus' life, His words, and His resurrection to be convincing evidence of His credibility. And they have concluded that knowing the truth must begin with a personal relationship with Christ.

Have you found the answer to life's most important question: "What is truth?" If not, consider Jesus' statement in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." By: Dennis J. DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Not all roads lead to God,
As many people claim;
There's only one true way—
Christ Jesus is His name.
—Sper

To know Christ is to know the truth.

Oswald Chambers - "What Is Truth?" John 18:38 (BORROW [God's Workmanship page 32](#))

The Personality of Truth is the great revelation of Christianity—"I am . . . the Truth." Our Lord did not say He was "all truth" so that we could go to His statements as to a text-book and verify things; there are domains, such as science and art and history, which are distinctly man's domains and the boundaries of our knowledge must continually alter and be enlarged; God never encourages laziness. The question to be asked is not, "Does the Bible agree with the findings of modern science?" but, "Do the findings of modern science help us to a better understanding of the things revealed in the Bible?"

Again, the Bible has much to say about truth of speech, e.g., "speak ye truth each one with his neighbour" (Ephesians 4:25 rv): but this aspect, important as it is, is not what our Lord means when He says, "I am . . . the Truth." However, it is well, bearing in mind the deceitfulness and subtlety of the human heart, for us to remember that

The truth that's told with bad intent
Beats all the lies you can invent.

And none of us ever gets beyond the need of the warning that "lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." But we would not have needed the Bible, or the illumination of the Holy Spirit, or our Lord Himself to come and tell us about these things, our own human wisdom and ingenuity would have taught us.

1. Truth Incarnate

"And the Word became flesh" (rv)—that means not only the expression of the Mind of God, but the expression of the Mind of God Incarnate. God gave His final revelation in Jesus Christ; then He set processes at work for the re-organisation of the whole of humanity. Jesus Christ is the Truth, an Incarnate Ideal; to be "in Christ" means that through regeneration and sanctification that Ideal can become a reality, so that in my mortal flesh there is manifested that which is easily discerned to be "the life also of Jesus." We are to be incorporated into the truth. The ideal is not a vague end into which we evolve more or less blindly, we "grow up in all things into Him." There is a danger of seeing the truth and the true clearly with our minds, while the life and character lag woefully behind. In Christian work who has not met with clearness in verbal doctrine, almost dictatorial clearness, and wrong, almost quite wrong, attitudes in life and conduct? "He that doeth truth cometh to the light" (John 3:21). "Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice" (John 18:37). ". . . that we know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 5:20). These passages make it clear that being "of the truth" refers to a condition of character. Much is written about our Lord speaking so simply that anyone could understand, and we forget that while it remains true that the common people heard Him gladly, no one, not even His own disciples, understood Him until after the Resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the reason being that a pure heart is the essential requirement for being "of the truth." "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

2. Truth Interpreted

. . . no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. (2 Peter 1:20 rv)

We are never left with a revelation without an interpretation of it. A revelation fact needs a corresponding revelation to interpret it. Just as Jesus Christ is the final revelation of God, so the Bible is the final revelation interpreting Him. Our Lord Jesus Christ (The Word of God) and the Bible (the accompanying revelation) stand or fall together, they can never be separated without fatal results.

The words of the Bible apart from being interpreted by the Word of God, are worse than lifeless, they kill (2 Corinthians 3:6). But when a soul is born from above (rv mg) and lifted to the atmosphere of the domain where our Lord lives, the Bible becomes its native air, its words become the storehouse of omnipotence, its commands and prophecies become alive, its limitless horizons brace the heart and mind to a new consciousness, its comforts in Psalms† and prayers and exhortations delight the whole man. And better than all, the Lord Jesus Christ becomes the altogether Lovely One, it is in His light that we see light , it is in Him that we become new creatures. He who is the Word of God unfolds to us the revelation of God until we say in sacred rapture, “I hold in my hands the Thought of God.”

What is needed is a final court of appeal, and this we have in the Bible. It is not a question of the infallibility of the Bible, that is a side issue; but of the finality of the Bible. The Bible is a whole library of literature giving us the final interpretation of the Truth, and to take the Bible apart from that one supreme purpose is to have a book and nothing more; and further, to take our Lord Jesus Christ away from the revelation of Him given in the Bible is to be left with one who is open to all the irreverent slanders of unbelief.

“The Truth” is our Lord Himself; “the whole truth” is the inspired Scripture interpreting the Truth to us; and “nothing but the truth” is the Holy Spirit, “the Spirit of truth,”efficaciously regenerating and sanctifying us, and guiding us into “all the truth” (rv).

John 18:39 “But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover; do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?”

- **have:** Mt 27:15-18 Mk 15:6,8 Lu 23:17,20
- **release:** John 18:33
- James Stalker’s classic [Trial and Arrest of Jesus Christ](#)- **6. BACK TO PILATE** Matt. 27:15–23; Mark 15:6–14; Luke 23:13–25; John 18:39, 40.

**PILATE ATTEMPTS
A COMPROMISE**

But - Term of contrast. Since he finds Jesus "Not Guilty" he seeks to appease the Jews with a compromise. He surely must have sensed their displeasure (that’s speaking euphemistically) to his not guilty verdict. Like a sly politician, he quickly seeks to extricate himself from this tense encounter by proposing another plan.

You have a custom ([sunetheia](#)) **that I release** ([apoluo](#) - to set free or pardon) **someone for you at the Passover** ([pascha](#)) - Pilate alludes to a custom, which is not known outside of this text, that he had the right to carry out a gesture of goodwill by releasing a prisoner held by the Romans at Passover.

Spurgeon - By this he hoped to succeed in delivering Jesus, but vain was the attempt. His enemies meant to put him to death, and would not be turned from their purpose. (The Interpreter)

Do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews ([Ioudaios](#))?” - Pilate offers to release the**King of the Jews** which is a surprising offer in light of the fact that he really had no crime that would have even warranted Jesus imprisonment. Furthermore this designation would further inflame the Jewish leaders. This is a sad moment. He was their King. But they vehemently refused His reign which would bring about their eternal ruin (unless some later repented and believed in Him - cf Acts 6:7+).

NET NOTE - **Pilate** then offered to release Jesus, reminding the Jewish authorities that they had a custom that he release one prisoner for them at the Passover. There is no extra-biblical evidence alluding to the practice. It is, however, mentioned in Matthew and Mark, described either as a practice of Pilate (Mark 15:6) or of the Roman governor (Matt 27:15). These references may explain the lack of extra-biblical attestation: The custom to which Pilate refers here (18:39) is not a permanent one acknowledged by all the Roman governors, but one peculiar to Pilate as a means of appeasement, meant to better relations with his subjects. Such a limited meaning is certainly possible and consistent with the statement here.

Spurgeon Exposition John 18:39

Now, Pilate may have thought, if Christ was their King, they would certainly prefer him to a thief and a robber; so he was putting before himself an opportunity of escaping from judging Christ, and before them a test as to whether there really was in them any liking for the Christ, or any possibility of his becoming their King.

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
---------	------	------	------

WHOM DO YOU WANT ME TO RELEASE?			
<p>Mt 27:15 Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the people any one prisoner whom they wanted.</p> <p>16 At that time they were holding a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas.</p> <p>17 So when the people gathered together, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?”</p> <p>18 For he knew that because of envy they had handed Him over.</p>	<p>Mk 15:6+ Now at the feast he used to release for them any one prisoner whom they requested.</p> <p>7 The man named Barabbas had been imprisoned with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the insurrection.</p> <p>8 The crowd went up and began asking (present tense) him to do as he had been accustomed to do for them.</p> <p>9 Pilate answered them, saying, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?”</p> <p>10 For he was aware that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.</p>	<p>Lk 23:17 [<i>Now he was obliged to release to them at the feast one prisoner.</i>]</p> <p>LUKE DOES NOT RECORD THIS INTERCHANGE BETWEEN PILATE & THE JEWS</p>	<p>Jn 18:39 But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover; Do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?</p>
<p>19 While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him a message, saying, “Have nothing to do with that righteous Man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him.”</p> <p>(Picture)</p>			

<p>20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to put Jesus to death. 21 But the governor said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." 22 Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all *said, "Crucify Him!" 23 And he said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they kept shouting all the more, saying, "Crucify Him!" 24 When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves." 25 And all the people said, "His blood shall be on us and on our children!"</p>	<p>11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to ask him to release Barabbas for them instead. 12 Answering again, Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?" 13 They shouted back, "Crucify Him!" 14 But Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify Him!"</p>	<p>Lk 23:18+ But they cried out all together, saying, "Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!" 19 (He was one who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection made in the city, and for murder. 20 Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again. 21 but they kept on calling out, saying, "Crucify, Crucify Him!" 22 And he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt demanding death; therefore I will punish Him and release Him."</p>	<p>Jn 18:40 So they cried out again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber." Jn 19</p>
<p>26 Then he released Barabbas for them; but after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified.</p>	<p>15 Wishing to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified.</p>	<p>23 But they were insistent, with loud voices asking that He be crucified. And their voices began to prevail. 24 And Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand be granted.</p>	<p>John 19:1 Pilate then took Jesus and scourged Him.</p>
<p align="center"><u>SEE NEXT TABLE</u> <u>BARABBAS RELEASED</u></p>			

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

The warning dream of Pilate's wife (? [Procla or Procula](#)) is not found in any other Gospel. She had the message of her dream sent to Pilate who seated on the judgment seat (bema - SAME WORD USED OF THE PLACE BEFORE WHICH EVERY BELIEVER MUST STAND SOME DAY - 2 Cor 5:10+) at "**The Pavement**" ([Gabbatha](#)) ([See picture](#)). Both Romans and Greeks viewed dreams as an important way their false gods spoke (e.g., viewing them as "[omens](#)"), albeit in this case the dream may have originated from the true and living God (but we cannot be dogmatic, cf warning in a dream in Mt 2:12). Whatever the content of the dream was, it was sufficient to convince Pilate's wife that Jesus was righteous and presumably innocent. One can only imagine Pilate's thoughts (and fears) at that moment. Notice that Pilate's wife does not say release Jesus, but **have nothing to do with Him**, something he was already actively trying to do! This pagan woman dreaming of Jesus does raise the question [Is God giving people in closed countries dreams and visions to bring them to faith in Christ?](#) ([see discussion](#)) (See also [Christian dream interpretation? Are our dreams from God?](#))

Can you imagine the pressure intensifying on Pilate to release or to condemn Jesus? Apparently while Pilate was being warned, the chief priests were persuading the crowd to ask for Barabbas' life and Jesus death! (Mt 27:20)

John MacArthur comments on Pilate ritually washing his hands in **Mt 27:24** - It was ironic, and doubtlessly intentional, that the governor chose a Jewish ritual to depict his renunciation of responsibility for Jesus' fate. If the ruling elders of a city were not able to determine the identity of a murderer, the Mosaic law provided that they could publicly wash their hands, pray to God, and thereby absolve themselves of any guilt regarding their inability to render justice (Dt 21:6,7). Using a modified form of that Jewish ceremony which he had heard of, Pilate proclaimed he was innocent of this innocent Man's blood. Doubtlessly with a tone of both dismay and disgust, the governor then said, "See to that yourselves." And when he gave them what they wanted, the people gave him what he wanted. If he would permit Jesus' death, they would assume all blame. "His blood be on us and on our children!" they shouted. That declaration did not, of course, absolve Pilate of guilt, but it did proclaim for all time the people's acknowledgment of their own guilt. They soon forgot that assumption of guilt, however, and not many months later the Sanhedrin self-righteously rebuked the apostles for holding them accountable for Christ's blood (Acts 5:28). The multitude of perhaps several thousand Jews who stood outside the Praetorium made their verdict in behalf of all Israel. It was that verdict, acknowledged by all the other unbelieving Jews through their silence, that caused the branch of Israel to be broken off the tree of God's redemptive blessing (Ro 11:17). It is no wonder that since that fearful day, as a nation and as individuals, unredeemed Jews have been under the chastening hand of God. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Matthew)

GOSPEL OF MARK

Mark 15:8 records that the Jews were asking Pilate to release a prisoner as was the custom **at the Passover** (cf Jn 18:39, Mt 27:15). John MacArthur comments that "Each year, the governor would grant amnesty to one sentenced criminal of the people's choice as a way to cultivate goodwill and to demonstrate Rome's mercy. Pilate thought the crowd would select Jesus, thereby solving his dilemma." (As an aside, this "tradition" is not recorded in any extra-Biblical source.) This "tradition" gave Pilate another opportunity to avoid executing an innocent Man and so he asked the Jews if they would like him to release **the King of the Jews** (Mk 15:9), **Jesus Who is called Christ** (Messiah) (Mt 27:17).

GOSPEL OF JOHN

John 18:39 - King of the Jews - Pilate is mocking the Jewish leaders for he knew they had vehemently rejected Jesus as their **King**. Another consideration (but only speculative) is that Pilate hoped to play off the sympathies of those in the crowd who had proclaimed Him as King in His triumphal entry.

John 18:40 calls **Barabbas** a **robber** which is the Greek word *lestes* a word that describes one who steals openly and with violence in contrast to a thief or [kleptes](#) who steals primarily by stealth. Judas **was a thief** ([kleptes](#) - John 12:6) but was not violent, while **Barabbas** was a robber (*lestes*) who "had committed murder" (Mk 15:7). It is also notable that the word **lestes** is used to describe the **two thieves** who were crucified with Jesus (Mt 27:38, 44, Mk 15:27). The irony is that Luke had just used the word *lestes* when Jesus was arrested in the Garden and had addressed "the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him," asking "**Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber** (*lestes*)?" (Lk 22:52+) In fact it was the Jewish leaders who had made the Temple Court of the Gentiles into a **robber's** (*lestes*) **den** (Lk 19:46+), and who now compounded their sin by asking Pilate to release the real **robber** Barabbas and crucify the innocent Jesus!

Fruchtenbaum summarizes Pilate's attempts to release Jesus -

Once again Pilate attempted to release Yeshua. He offered the people a choice between Yeshua and Barabbas. This is recorded in Mark 15:6–10. Pilate attempted to have the Messiah released by offering the crowd a choice between Jesus and Barabbas. The irony of the situation must not be missed! Barabbas was guilty of the very crime of which Jesus was accused: sedition or rebelling against Rome. Furthermore, we know from other contemporary sources that the entire name of the guilty one was Jesus Barabbas. The name Barabbas means “son of the father.” So the prisoner who was going to be released was “Jesus, son of the father.” But the Lord Jesus, the Son of the Father, was being accused of sedition and would die on the other’s behalf.

At this point in the proceedings, Pilate received a message from his wife. We find this recorded in Matthew 27:17–19:

When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him up. And while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have you nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

According to tradition, Pilate’s wife’s name was Claudia. She apparently was more sensitive to spiritual things and had received a troubling dream concerning the person of Jesus. In this dream, He was clearly revealed as a righteous man. She also had a sense of impending doom that if Pilate gave in and condemned Jesus to death, dire consequences would result upon the family. Apparently, she had already gone through a night of suffering, realizing that the decision Pilate would make would determine their destiny also.

After Pilate received the warning from his wife, he gave the people the choice between Yeshua and Barabbas. This is recorded in Matthew 27:20–22: Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. But the governor answered and said unto them, Which of the two will ye that I release unto you? And they said, Barabbas. Pilate said unto them, What then shall I do unto Jesus who is called Christ? They all say, Let him be crucified.

The Jewish leaders in the meantime had moved through the crowd, inciting the people to ask for Barabbas’ release and to demand the Crucifixion of Yeshua (Mt 27:20). Pilate’s second attempt to have Yeshua released was foiled.

Pilate attempted a third time to release Jesus. We see this in John 19:1–6. Pilate’s third attempt in verse 1 was another compromise, for he had Jesus **scourged**. Pilate’s apparent hope was that when the people saw Jesus after His scourging, they would be sympathetic toward Him and would call for His release. (Ibid)

John 18:40 So they cried out again, saying, “Not this Man, but Barabbas.” Now Barabbas was a robber.

- Mt 27:16,26 Mk 15:7,15 Lu 23:18-19,25 Ac 3:13,14

Related Passages:

Matthew 27:16 At that time they were holding a **notorious prisoner**, called Barabbas.

Mark 15:7 The man named Barabbas had been imprisoned with the insurrectionists **who had committed murder in the insurrection**.

Luke 23:18-19 But they cried out all together, saying, “Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!” 19 (He was one who had been thrown into prison for an **insurrection** made in the city, and for **murder**.)

THE JEWS CRY OUT FOR BARABBAS

So they cried out ([kraugazo](#)) again, saying, “Not this Man, but (a fateful term of contrast) [Barabbas](#).” - Pilate had underestimated

the vitriol of the Jewish leaders who strongly rejected the offer of Jesus and instead put forth the name of Barabbas, a Roman prisoner who was well known as a "notorious prisoner" (Mt 27:16) guilty of insurrection and murder (Mk 15:7, Lk 23:19).

It is interesting to note that this same verb ([kraugazo](#)) was used to describe the crying out of demons. Here we see these demonically influenced Jews (whose father was Satan - Jn 8:44+) crying out for the blood of Jesus. Little did these ignorant Jews know that His precious blood would atone for the sins of the world.

Now Barabbas was a robber ([lestes](#)) - John adds this parenthetical note. There is a bit of an ironic twist in the Jews shouting for release of Barabbas a **robber** ([lestes](#) - speaks of violence) for Jesus had been betrayed to the Jews by Judas **thief** ([kleptes](#) - speaks of stealth). Another ironic twist is that Barabbas' name is derived from the Hebrew words **bar** meaning son and **ab** meaning father. Thus the Jews were in effect crying out for "son of abba" instead of "Son of God!" Even here we see a foreshadowing of Jesus' life for a sinner who should have died on the Cross instead of Jesus!

John 18:40 calls **Barabbas** a **robber** which is the Greek word [lestes](#) a word that describes one who steals openly and with violence in contrast to a thief or [kleptes](#) who steals primarily by stealth. Judas **was a thief** ([kleptes](#) - John 12:6) but was not violent, while **Barabbas** was a robber ([lestes](#)) who "had committed murder" (Mk 15:7). It is also notable that the word **lestes** is used to describe the **two thieves** who were crucified with Jesus (Mt 27:38, 44, Mk 15:27). The irony is that Luke had just used the word [lestes](#) when Jesus was arrested in the Garden and had addressed "the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him," asking "**Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber** ([lestes](#))?." (Lk 22:52+) In fact it was the Jewish leaders who had made the Temple Court of the Gentiles into a **robber's** ([lestes](#)) **den** (Lk 19:46+), and who now compounded their sin by asking Pilate to release the real **robber** Barabbas and crucify the innocent Jesus!

NET NOTE - The name [Barabbas](#) in Aramaic means "son of abba," that is, "son of the father," and presumably the man in question had another name (it may also have been Jesus, according to the textual variant in Matt 27:16, although this is uncertain). For the author this name held ironic significance: The crowd was asking for the release of a man called Barabbas, "son of the father," while Jesus, who was truly the Son of the Father, was condemned to die instead. "**Robber.**" It is possible that Barabbas was merely a robber or highwayman, but more likely, given the use of the term [ληστής](#) ([lēstēs](#)) in Josephus and other early sources, that he was a guerrilla warrior or revolutionary leader. See both R. E. Brown (John [AB], 2:857) and K. H. Rengstorff (TDNT 4:258 - see [TDNT PAGE 532](#)) for more information. The word [λῆστές](#) ([lestes](#)) was used a number of times by Josephus (J. W. 2.13.2–3 [2.253–254]) to describe the revolutionaries or guerrilla fighters who, from mixed motives of nationalism and greed, kept the rural districts of Judea in constant turmoil.

Steven Cole - The character here is Barabbas, the robber, murderer, and rebel who was freed instead of Jesus. While at first you may not see yourself in Barabbas at all, he represents each of us in at least three ways (several sources make these points, but I first read them in Leonard Griffith, [Gospel Characters \[Eerdmans\]. pp. 166–170](#)):

First, Barabbas should have been on the cross instead of Jesus because he was guilty and deserved to die. You may protest, "But I'm not a robber!" But we've all robbed God of His rightful glory and lordship over our lives. You may come back, "But at least I'm not a murderer!" But Jesus said that if we're wrongfully angry with our brother, we have murdered him in God's sight (Matt. 5:21–22). "But," you still protest, "I've never led an armed rebellion against the government." True, but we're all rebels against the King of the universe. We've all sinned many times over against God and His rightful rule.

Second, Barabbas did nothing to earn his pardon. He wasn't pardoned because of his good behavior or promises to reform. If anything, he was pardoned because of how notoriously evil he was. He couldn't brag after he got out about how he deserved to be pardoned. He couldn't claim that he was pardoned for his exemplary behavior. In the same way, Paul says (Rom. 4:4–5) that God justifies the ungodly not through their good works, but by faith alone.

Third, Jesus died in Barabbas' place. Barabbas, whose name means "son of the father," should have been on the cross that day. Instead, one who is the eternal Son of the eternal Father hung there in Barabbas' place. Jesus died in his place—and in your place. ([What Will You Do With Jesus? John 18:28-19:16](#))

Spurgeon (The Interpreter) - By this he hoped to succeed in delivering Jesus, but vain was the attempt. His enemies meant to put him to death, and would not be turned from their purpose. Thus having valued the Lord Jesus at the price of a slave, they now prefer a robber to him, and are anxious to see him die a felon's death. Well does Herbert put it:—

"Pilate, a stranger, holdeth off; but they,

Mine own dear people, cry 'away, away,'
With noise confused frightening the day.
Was ever grief like mine?")

Rejected and despised of men,
Behold a man of woe!
And grief his close companion still
Through all his life below!

Yet all the griefs he felt were ours,
Ours were the woes he bore;
Pangs, not his own, his spotless soul
With bitter anguish tore.

We held him as condemn'd of heaven,
An outcast from his God;
While for our sins he groaned, he bled,
Beneath his Father's rod.

His sacred blood hath wash'd our souls
From sin's polluting stain;
His stripes have heal'd us, and his death
Revived our souls again.

Cried out (shouted)(2905) **kraugazo** from **krauge** - outcry from **krazo** = clamor or cry = a word like "croak" ~ suggests a rough and guttural sound = croaking of ravens = croak or cry out with a loud, raucous voice like donkey in Job 6:5, childbirth Is 26:17, war cry in Josh 6:16) means to cry out loud, to clamor, yell loudly, to shout with intensity, to make an outcry, in some contexts to scream or howl (one especially thinks of the demons screaming, croaking and howling! What a scene!) Term was used of a dog's barking, a raven's squawking and even a drunk's bawling.

Kraugazo describes the cry of the demons (Lk 4:41), the cry of Jesus for Lazarus to "come forth" (Jn 11:43 - in utter irony for Jesus' cry to give life to Lazarus results in cries for His life!), as Jesus entered Jerusalem on Psalm Sunday the crowds cried out "Hosanna" (Jn 12:13), the Jewish mob crying to Pilate to release Barabbas (Jn 18:40, 19:12), and finally the Jewish mob escalating their cry to "Crucify! Crucify!" (Jn 19:6). Notice all of these are emotion filled, tense moments.

KRAUGAZO - 10v - cried(5), cry(1), crying(2), shout(1), shouting(1). Matt. 12:19; Lk. 4:41; Lk. 18:39; Jn. 11:43; Jn. 12:13; Jn. 18:40; Jn. 19:6; Jn. 19:12; Jn. 19:15; Acts 22:23

Robber (3027) **lestes** from **lizoma** = to plunder, seize) means one who steals openly and by violence in contrast to **kleptes** which denotes one who steals by stealth. A robber, highwayman, bandit (Mt 27:38; Mk 11:17; 15:27; Lk 10:30, 36; J 10:1, 8; 2 Cor 11:26). A revolutionary, insurrectionist, one who favors the use of force (Jn 18:40). Figuratively **lestes** speaks of unscrupulous, greedy, or overambitious leaders (Jn 10:8)

See [NIDNTT article on Rob. Steal](#) - Robbing implies the idea of violence, but the distinction from stealing, with its overtone of secrecy, is not always preserved. λ στής G3334 (lēstēs), robber, highwayman, bandit, revolutionary; κλέπτω G3096 (kleptō), steal; κλέπτεις G3095 (kleptēs), thief.

Zodhiates - Judas was a **thief** (**kleptes** [John 12:6]) doing no violence to anyone. He stole secretly. **Barabbas** was a **robber** (lēstēs [Jn 18:40 {cf. Mk 15:7}]). Palestine was infested by **robbers** to whom its walks and **caves** afforded a great deal of cover and shelter (cf. Jdg. 9:25; Hos. 6:9; 7:1), hence, the expression "**den of robbers**" (Jer. 7:11; Mt. 21:13). **The temple became a haunt of robbers.** The dealers in the temple market were notorious for their extortion, but it gave them fancied security in their evildoing. It is probable that some of these robbers were really zealots in rebellion against the authority of Rome, so that there was an element of misplaced patriotism and even religion in their proceedings. Josephus identified robbers with zealots. (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

Larry Richards - "Free Barabbas!" (John 18:28–40)

The word that John used to describe Barabbas is **lestes**. It does not mean thief, but outlaw: an insurrectionist. In our day we'd probably call Barabbas a "freedom fighter." He was one of those people who chafed under Roman rule, found a contributor or two, and with freshly armed companions set out to cause as much trouble as he could.

It would be a shame if a few innocent bystanders got killed. But the cause was just. What are a few lives measured against advancement of the cause?

So Pilate made a grave miscalculation when he asked the crowd to choose between Jesus, the miracle worker and healer, and Barabbas, the terrorist. The crowd shouted for Barabbas, and undoubtedly the TV cameras and reporters crowded around, and Barabbas was invited to speak to the United Nations, firmly gripping his swords and knives.

What amazes me is the number of Third World movements that pass themselves off as Christian—and are lauded by churchmen. Have you ever noticed that, when Christians cry out against injustice, all too many shout for the release of Barabbas rather than Jesus? They call for the sword and spear, the arming of the oppressed, rather than the spiritual armory of Jesus.

Real victories are never achieved by Barabbas, who mutilates and kills. Real victories, of the spirit over the flesh, of love over hate, of patient faith and goodness over brutality and evil, are won as Jesus won His victory over Satan. By taking up the cross; by bearing witness; by dying if need be. And by resurrection.

Personal Application - When faith adopts unbelief's weapons, evil has already won.

Quotable - "What will it profit a man if he gains his cause, and silences his adversary, if at the same time he loses that humble tender frame of spirit in which the Lord delights, and to which the promise of His presence is made!"—John Newton (Borrow [365 Day Devotional Commentary page 808](#))

QUESTION - [Who was Barabbas in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Answer - Barabbas is mentioned in all four gospels of the New Testament: Matthew 27:15–26; Mark 15:6–15; Luke 23:18–24; and John 18:40. His life intersects that of Christ at the trial of Jesus.

Jesus was standing before [Pontius Pilate](#), the Roman governor who had already declared Jesus innocent of anything worthy of death (Luke 23:15). Pilate knew that Jesus was being railroaded and it was "out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him" (Mark 15:10), so he looked for a way to release Jesus and still keep the peace. Pilate offered the mob a choice: the release of Jesus or the release of Barabbas, a well-known criminal who had been imprisoned "for an insurrection in the city, and for murder" (Luke 23:19).

The release of a Jewish prisoner was customary before the [feast of Passover](#) (Mark 15:6). The Roman governor granted clemency to one criminal as an act of goodwill toward the Jews whom he governed. The choice Pilate set before them could not have been more clear-cut: a high-profile killer and rabble-rouser who was unquestionably guilty, or a teacher and miracle-worker who was demonstrably innocent. The crowd chose Barabbas to be released.

Pilate seems to have been surprised at the crowd's insistence that Barabbas be set free instead of Jesus. The governor stated that the charges against Jesus were baseless (Luke 23:14) and appealed to the crowd three times to choose sensibly (verses 18–22). "But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed" (verse 23). Pilate released Barabbas and handed over Jesus to be scourged and crucified (verse 25).

In some manuscripts of Matthew 27:16–17, Barabbas is referred to as "Jesus Barabbas" (meaning "Jesus, son of Abba [Father]"). If Barabbas was also called "Jesus," that would make Pilate's offer to the crowd even more spiritually loaded. The choice was between Jesus, the Son of the Father; and Jesus, the Son of God. However, since many manuscripts do not contain the name "Jesus Barabbas," we cannot be certain that was his name.

The story of Barabbas and his release from condemnation is a remarkable parallel to the story of every believer. We stood guilty before God and deserving of death (Romans 3:23; 6:23a). But then, due to no influence of our own, Jesus was chosen to die in our stead. He, the Innocent One, bore the punishment we rightly deserved. We, like Barabbas, were allowed to go free with no condemnation (Romans 8:1). And Jesus "suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18, ESV).

What happened to Barabbas after his release? The Bible gives no clue, and secular history does not help. Did he go back to his life of crime? Was he grateful? Did he eventually become a Christian? Was he affected at all by the prisoner exchange? No one knows. But the choices available to Barabbas are available to us all: surrender to God in grateful acknowledgment of what Christ has done for us, or spurn the gift and continue living apart from the Lord.

Related Resources:

- [Dictionary Articles](#)

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

Barabbas was a murderer, a felon, and a traitor. This fact is very significant. There is more teaching in it than at first sight we might imagine. Have we not here in this act of the deliverance of the sinner and the binding of the innocent, a sort of type of that great work which is accomplished by the death of our Saviour? You and I may fairly take our stand by the side of Barabbas. We have robbed God of his glory; we have been seditious traitors against the government of heaven: if he who hates his brother be a murderer, we also have been guilty of that sin. Here we stand before the judgment seat; the Prince of life is bound for us and we are suffered to go free. The Lord delivers us and acquits us, while the Saviour, without spot or blemish, or shadow of a fault, is led forth to crucifixion. Two birds were taken in the rite of the cleansing of the leper. The one bird was killed, and its blood was poured into a basin; the other bird was dipped in this blood, and then, with its wings all crimson, it was set free to fly into the open field. The bird slain well pictures the Saviour, and every soul that has by faith been dipped in his blood, flies upward towards heaven singing sweetly in joyous liberty, owing its life and its liberty entirely to him who was slain. It comes to this—Barabbas must die or Christ must die; you the sinner must perish, or Christ Immanuel, the Immaculate, must die. He dies that we may be delivered. Have we all a participation in such a deliverance today? Though we have been robbers, traitors and murderers, yet we can rejoice that Christ has delivered us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us.

James Butler - CHOICE John 18:40 - [Sermon Starters](#)

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

When Christ was on trial before Pilate, it was evident to Pilate that Christ was not guilty as charged and He certainly was not worthy of death. But Pilate did not have the character to speak the truth. He was a politician and wanted to keep his position. So he resorted to a trick of the Roman government. Every year at Passover time they would release a well-known prisoner to try and placate the people. So Pilate thought he would let them choose between Christ and Barabbas. Christ was a much better person than Barabbas so Pilate thought for sure that the people would choose Christ and as a result get Pilate off the hook and not force his hand about Christ. But to his great shock, the people chose Barabbas. People are still choosing Barabbas over Christ.

FIRST—THE CHARACTER OF BARABBAS

Pilate did not know humanity well enough to realize that unregenerate mankind will seldom chose character but will chose something without character. That the folk before him were not inclined to choose character was evident in their attack upon Christ. Character does not attack Christ but adores Him.

- He was a revolutionists. Barabbas had tried to overthrown the government. He was therefore guilty of insurrection (Mark 15:7). Barabbas rebelled against authority. So were the Christ rejectors. They only choose according to their own character.
- He was a robber. Not only did Barabbas gain the people hearts by his insurrection activities but he was also a crook. He was a thief. He robbed. He would steal you blind. Barabbas was a typical politician of our day, he rebelled against the authority of decency, (such as homos getting married) and he made laws that taxed (or robbed) the people. Yet he was chosen over Jesus Christ. The unregenerate do not make it a habit to choose according to character.

SECOND—THE CHOICE OF BARABBAS

The choice of Barabbas was a revelation of the people's hearts and resulted in some very uncomfortable results.

- The rejection in the choice. To choose Barabbas meant the people had to reject Christ. Many young people reject Christ by whom they choose as a marriage partner. If it is Christ or someone or something else, mankind will frequently reject Christ for the someone or something else.
- The results of the choice. Every choice brings consequences. The people choosing Barabbas brought results they could not live with. God in judgment brought horror and bloodshed to the land as a result of people rejecting Christ. Barabbas was no Savior. He was a stealer (). The people got robbed of peace and joy and worst their soul. Christ gives, Barabbas takes. When you make a choice make sure you are choosing Christ, not a Barabbas.