

John 18:1-23
December 21, 2025

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: Using your voice to protect others can be bold and scary. Can you think of a time when you spoke up to protect others, or when you chose to keep quiet instead? [Let people engage]

Q: In what situations are you tempted to hide your faith to protect yourself? [Let people engage]

Transition: John 18 begins a new section in the Gospel of John. This section starts the path to the cross for Jesus, His resurrection, and His reinstatement of Peter. In today's text, Jesus is arrested by the religious leaders in the Garden of Gethsemane. It must have been frightening for the disciples to witness the arrest of Jesus, yet during His arrest, Jesus intentionally *protected His disciples to keep them safe*. Then, while Jesus is in an unfair, unjust, midnight courtroom, we see Peter's first denial of three that Jesus predicts. Let's read the storyline, and then we'll process it.

BOOK:

Jesus Arrested

18 When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive grove, and he and his disciples went into it.

² Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. ³ So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

⁴ Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, **“Who is it you want?”**

⁵ “Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied.

“I am he,” Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) ⁶ When Jesus said, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

⁷ Again he asked them, **“Who is it you want?”**

And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

⁸ **“I told you that I am he,”** Jesus answered. **“If you are looking for me, then let these men go.”** ⁹ This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: “I have not lost one of those you gave me.” (John 6:39)

¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)

¹¹ Jesus commanded Peter, **“Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?”**

Jesus Taken to Annas

¹² Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him ¹³ and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. ¹⁴ Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it would be good if one man died for the people.

Peter's First Denial

¹⁵ Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, ¹⁶ but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the girl on duty there and brought Peter in. ¹⁷ "You are not one of his disciples, are you?" the girl at the door asked Peter. He replied, "I am not." ¹⁸ It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.

The High Priest Questions Jesus

¹⁹ Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

²⁰ **"I have spoken openly to the world,"** Jesus replied. **"I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. ²¹ Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said."**

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.

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?"**

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What stood out to you? What questions do you have? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about man? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit? [Let people engage]

Q: What is your takeaway? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

This is a good lesson to us: we need never fear the cups that the Father hands to us. To begin with, our Savior has already drunk the cup before us, and we are only following in His steps. We need never fear what is in the cup because the Father has prepared it for us in love. If we ask for bread, He will never give us a stone; and the cup He prepares will never contain anything that will harm us. We may suffer pain and heartbreak, but He will eventually transform that suffering into glory.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary (Vol. 1, pp. 372-375). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.*

The private ministry of our Lord with His disciples has now ended, and the public drama of redemption is about to begin. Man will do his worst, and God will respond with His very best. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20).

Perhaps the best way to see the truths in John 18:1–27, and grasp the lessons they convey, is to pay attention to the symbolism that is involved. John's Gospel is saturated with symbols, some more obvious than others; and these symbols convey some important spiritual truths. There are five such symbols in this section.

The Garden—Obedience (John 18:1)

The Kidron Valley is located east of Jerusalem, between the city wall and the Mount of Olives; and the Garden of Gethsemane is on the western slope of Olivet. Jesus often went to this Garden with His disciples, no doubt to rest, meditate, and pray (Luke 22:39). Jerusalem was filled with pilgrims attending the Passover, and Jesus would want to get away from the crowded city to a private place. He knew that Judas would come for Him there, and He was ready.

Human history began in a Garden (Gen. 2:8ff), and the first sin of man was committed in that Garden. The first Adam disobeyed God and was cast out of the Garden, but the Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45) was obedient as He went into the Garden of Gethsemane. In a Garden, the first Adam brought sin and death to mankind; but Jesus, by His obedience, brought righteousness and life to all who will trust Him. He was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8).

History will one day end in another garden, the heavenly city that John describes in Revelation 21 and 22. In that garden, there will be no more death and no more curse. The river of the water of life will flow ceaselessly and the tree of life will produce bountiful fruit. Eden was the Garden of disobedience and sin; Gethsemane was the Garden of obedience and submission; and heaven shall be the eternal garden of delight and satisfaction, to the glory of God.

The name *Gethsemane* means "oil press." Even today there are ancient olive trees in Gethsemane, though certainly not the ones that were there in Jesus' day. The olives would be picked and put into the press for their oil. What a picture of suffering! So our Lord would go through the "oil press" and the "winepress" (Isa. 63:3) and taste our judgment for us.

The Brook Kidron is also significant. The name means "dusky, gloomy," referring to the dark waters that were often stained by the blood from the temple sacrifices. Our Lord and His disciples were about to go through "dark waters," and Jesus would experience the "waves and billows" of God's wrath (Ps. 42:7; also note Jonah 2:3).

The Kidron had special historical significance, for King David crossed the Kidron when he was rejected by his nation and betrayed by his own son, Absalom (2 Sam. 15; also note John 18:23). Jesus had been rejected by His people and at that very moment was being betrayed by one of His own disciples! It is interesting that David's treacherous counselor Ahithophel hanged himself (2

Sam. 17:23), and David's treacherous son Absalom was caught in a tree and killed while hanging there (2 Sam. 18:9–17). Judas, of course, went out and hanged himself (Matt. 27:3–10).

Jesus fully knew what lay before Him, yet He went to the Garden in obedience to the Father's will. He left eight of the men near the entrance, and took Peter, James, and John and went to another part of the Garden to pray (Matt. 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42). His human soul longed for the kind of encouragement and companionship they could give Him at this critical hour; but, alas, they went to sleep! It was easy for the men to boast about their devotion to Christ, but when the test came, they failed miserably. Before we judge them too severely, however, we had better examine our own hearts.

The Kiss—Treachery (John 18:2–9)

Judas had lived with the Lord Jesus for perhaps three years, and had listened to Him teach; yet he knew very little about Him. The traitor actually brought a company of temple guards, armed with swords and clubs! (Matt. 26:55) Just think of the privileges Judas despised and the opportunities he wasted! The word *band* in John 18:3 could be translated “cohort.” A Roman cohort was a tenth of a legion, and this would be 600 men! It is not likely that Judas brought that many to the Garden, but apparently a full cohort was made available to him had he needed it. Did he not realize that the Lamb of God would meekly submit and that there would be no need to battle?

Jesus was in full control; He knew what would happen (see John 13:1, 3, 11; 16:19). Judas expected some kind of deception, so he arranged to identify Jesus by kissing Him (Matt. 26:48–49). But Jesus shocked both Judas and the arresting officers by boldly presenting Himself to them. He had nothing to fear and nothing to hide; He would *willingly* lay down His life for His sheep. Furthermore, by surrendering to the officers, Jesus helped to protect His disciples. He kept them safe not only spiritually (John 17:11–12) but also physically.

Why did the arresting soldiers draw back and fall to the ground when Jesus told them, “I am He”? The Jews present would be struck by His “I AM” statement, an affirmation of Deity. The Romans, who were in the majority, would be struck by His bearing, for it was obvious that He was in command. It was an emotionally charged situation, and we do not know what Judas had told them about Jesus to help prepare them for this confrontation. The Jewish leaders had tried to have Jesus arrested before and always without success. The band was prepared for conflict, and when they met with surrender and calm, they were overwhelmed.

Perhaps it was a manifestation of divine power, or an exhibition of the majesty of Jesus Christ. “When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell” (Ps. 27:2).

Judas' kiss, which was given repeatedly to the Lord, was certainly one of the basest acts of treachery recorded anywhere in sacred or secular history. In that day, a kiss was a sign of affection and devotion. Members of the family kissed each other in meeting and in parting, but Judas was not a member of God's family. Disciples greeted a rabbi by kissing him; it was a sign of devotion and obedience. But Judas was not truly a disciple of Jesus Christ, though he belonged to the disciple band. In the Garden, Judas stood with the enemy, not with Jesus' friends!

When people today pretend to know and love the Lord, they are committing the sin of Judas. It is bad enough to betray Christ, but to do it with *a kiss*, a sign of affection, is the basest treachery of all. It was born in the pit of hell.

The Sword—Rebellion (John 18:10)

All of the disciples had courageously affirmed their devotion to Christ (Matt. 26:35), and Peter decided to prove it; so he quickly drew out a small sword and started to fight! He certainly misunderstood what Jesus had said about swords earlier that evening (Luke 22:35–38). He had warned them that from now on the situation would change, and men would treat them as transgressors. He was not suggesting that they use material swords to fight spiritual battles, but that they get a new mind-set and expect opposition and even danger. He had provided for them and protected them while He was with them on earth, but now He was returning to the Father. They would have to depend on the Holy Spirit and exercise wisdom. Peter apparently took His words literally and thought he was supposed to declare war!

Peter's sword symbolizes rebellion against the will of God. Peter should have known that Jesus would be arrested and that He would willingly surrender to His enemies (Matt. 16:21ff; 17:22–23; 20:17–19). Peter made every mistake possible! He fought the wrong enemy, used the wrong weapon, had the wrong motive, and accomplished the wrong result! He was openly resisting the will of God and hindering the work that Jesus came to accomplish! While we admire his courage and sincerity, it was certainly a demonstration of zeal without knowledge.

Why did Peter fail so miserably? For one thing, he had argued with the Lord when Jesus warned him that he would deny his Master that very night. Peter had slept when he should have been praying, and he talked when he should have been listening. He imitated the very enemies who came to arrest Jesus, for they too were armed with swords. Peter would discover that the sword of the Spirit is the weapon God's servants use in fighting their spiritual battles (Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17). He would use that sword at Pentecost and "slay" 3,000 souls!

Jesus did not need Peter's protection. He could have summoned legions of angels had He wanted to be delivered (Matt. 26:52–54). Luke tells us that Jesus healed Malchus' ear (Luke 22:51), which was certainly an act of grace on His part. It was gracious from Peter's point of view; for had He not healed Malchus, Peter might have been arrested and crucified! Peter was acting like one of the Jewish "zealots" and not like a disciple of Jesus Christ.

But it was also an act of grace toward Malchus. After all, he was only a servant; and why worry about what happens to a servant? He was also an enemy, standing with the men who came to arrest Jesus; so he ought to suffer! Is it possible that Malchus had actually laid hold of Jesus? We do not know; but if he did, he laid hands on the holy Son of God. However, our Lord did not judge Malchus, though he was a sinner deserving the wrath of God. Instead, He healed him! It was our Lord's last public miracle before the cross.

Keep in mind that this miracle reveals His grace toward us. If Jesus had the power to stun an armed mob and heal a severed ear, He could have saved Himself from arrest, trial, and death. *But He willingly submitted!* And He did it for us!

It is a sad thing when well-meaning but ignorant Christians take up the sword to “defend” the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter hurt Malchus, something no believer should do. Peter hurt the testimony of Christ and gave the false impression that His disciples hate their enemies and try to destroy them. (Note our Lord’s reply to Pilate in John 18:36.)

The Cup—Submission (John 18:11–14)

Peter had a sword in his hand, but our Lord had a cup in His hand. Peter was resisting God’s will but the Savior was accepting God’s will. Earlier, Jesus had prayed, “O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39). The cup represented the suffering He would endure and the separation from the Father that He would experience on the cross. He prayed this prayer three times, evidence that His whole being was sensitive to the price He would pay for our salvation. His holy soul must have been stirred to the depths when He contemplated being made sin!

The drinking of a cup is often used in Scripture to illustrate experiencing suffering and sorrow. When Babylon captured Jerusalem, the city had “drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling” (Isa. 51:17). Jeremiah pictured God’s wrath against the nations as the pouring out of a cup (Jer. 25:15–28). There is also a cup of consolation (Jer. 16:7) and the overflowing cup of joy (Ps. 23:5).

Jesus had compared His own sufferings to the drinking of a cup and the experiencing of a baptism (Matt. 20:22–23). When He instituted the supper, He compared the cup to His blood, shed for the remission of sins (Matt. 26:27–28). The image was a familiar one to His disciples, and it is not an unfamiliar image today. To “drink the cup” means to go through with a difficult experience; and “not my cup of tea” means saying no to a certain course of action. The fact that some trophies are designed like cups suggests that winners have been through demanding experiences and had to “swallow a lot.”

Jesus was able to accept the cup because it was mixed by the Father and given to Him from the Father’s hand. He did not resist the Father’s will, because He came to do the Father’s will and finish the work the Father gave Him to do. “I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart” (Ps. 40:8). Since the Father had mixed and measured the contents of the cup, Jesus knew He had nothing to fear.

This is a good lesson to us: we need never fear the cups that the Father hands to us. To begin with, our Savior has already drunk the cup before us, and we are only following in His steps. We need never fear what is in the cup because the Father has prepared it for us in love. If we ask for bread, He will never give us a stone; and the cup He prepares will never contain anything that will harm us. We may suffer pain and heartbreak, but He will eventually transform that suffering into glory.

Jesus deliberately gave Himself to His enemies. They bound Him and led Him to the house of Annas, which was not too far away. Annas had served as high priest until he was deposed by the Romans; now his son-in-law Caiaphas was the high priest. God had ordained that one man should serve as high priest for a lifetime, so it is easy to see that the Jewish religious

establishment was in sad condition. It is generally believed that the high priest's family was in charge of the temple "business," and the fact that Jesus twice cleansed the temple must have aroused their anger against Him.

The "trial" before Annas was more like an informal hearing. It was illegal and it was brutal. Imagine a guard being allowed to strike a prisoner! Imagine a man not holding an office interrogating a prisoner!

Annas, of course, was looking for some kind of evidence on which to base an accusation that would lead to a verdict of capital punishment. What doctrine was Jesus teaching? Was it subversive? Jesus told him to ask the people who listened to Him, because He had said nothing secretly. In fact, Annas himself could have come and listened!

What about our Lord's disciples? Were they organized to overthrow the government? Did not one of them use his sword in the Garden? Jesus was careful to say nothing about His disciples. Think of it: while Peter was in the courtyard denying his Lord, Jesus was on trial protecting Peter!

Jewish law demanded that witnesses be called before a prisoner was questioned. Annas defied this law, and eventually the council hired *false* witnesses. Jesus knew His rights ("bear witness of the evil"—John 18:23), but He did not insist on them. He is an example to us when we suffer wrongfully (1 Peter 2:19–25; 4:12–19).

The Fire—Denial (John 18:15–23)

Jesus had predicted that Peter would deny Him three times (Matt. 26:34; John 13:38), but that he would be restored to fellowship and service (Luke 22:32). Peter followed the crowd when he should have been fleeing (John 18:8; and see Matt. 26:30–32). Had he gone his way, he would never have denied the Lord. While we certainly admire his love and courage, we cannot agree with his actions; for he walked right into temptation. This is what Jesus warned him about in the Garden (Matt. 26:41).

We do not know who the other disciple was who went with Peter into the courtyard of the home of the high priest. It was probably John, though it is difficult to understand how a fisherman could be acquainted with the high priest and his household. Was this "other disciple" possibly Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea? They would certainly have access to this home.

As you watch Peter, you see him gradually moving into the place of temptation and sin; and his actions parallel the description in Psalm 1:1. First, Peter walked "in the counsel of the ungodly" when he followed Jesus and went into the high priest's courtyard. Peter should have followed the counsel of Jesus and gotten out of there in a hurry! Then, Peter *stood* with the enemy by the fire (John 18:16, 18); and before long, he *sat* with the enemy (Luke 22:55). It was now too late and within a short time, he would deny his Lord three times.

Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 334-336) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

A. The arrest of Jesus (18:1–11)

18:1. **Jesus left** the room where He ate the Last Supper **with His disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley**, to the east. The Kidron, the modern Wodi en-Nar, is a valley or torrent bed which starts north of Jerusalem and passes between the temple mount and the Mount of Olives on its way to the Dead Sea. David was betrayed by a friend (Ahithophel) while crossing the Kidron and going up to the Mount of Olives (2 Sam. 15:23, 30–31). So too Jesus was betrayed by His “trusted friend” Judas while crossing the Kidron and going to the Mount of Olives. The **olive grove** was a place where Jesus **and His disciples** came each night to bivouac when they were in Jerusalem (Luke 21:37). During festival times (e.g., the Passover) thousands of Jews flocked to the Holy City and most of them had to stay in tents or other temporary shelters.

18:2–3. “The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Tim. 6:10). So it is not surprising that **Judas ... betrayed** Jesus for money (John 12:4–6; Matt. 26:14–16). Judas was not an unusual monster, but a common man caught in a common sin (greed) which Satan used to accomplish his purpose. Judas knew the habits of **Jesus**, and his deed stands out in black contrast with Jesus’ unselfish love. **The soldiers ... officials from the chief priests, and Pharisees** united in their hostility toward Jesus. The **detachment of Roman soldiers** was a cohort (*speiran*, 10th part of a legion), which here included about 600 men. They were probably commanded to pick up this insurrectionist who claimed to be some kind of king.

18:4. **Jesus** was conscious of **all** the events coming on Him. He was not taken by surprise, but was a willing voluntary sacrifice (10:14, 17–18). Earlier in His ministry Jesus was unwilling to be made a popular king (6:15). The scene in 18:4 is one of intense drama and irony. Judas came with soldiers and religious leaders to take Jesus by force. But Jesus stood alone (the disciples had fallen asleep; Luke 22:45–46); though unarmed, He was in command. In the darkness of the night, He could have fled as all the disciples would soon do (cf. Mark 14:50). But instead He gave Himself up.

18:5–6. His words **I am He** (lit., “I Am”) startled them and **they ... fell backward to the ground**, struck no doubt by the majesty of His words (cf. 7:45–46). The phrase **I am** is ambiguous and could refer to Jesus’ deity (Ex. 3:14; John 8:58). Or it may simply have been Jesus’ way of identifying Himself (as in 9:9).

18:7–9. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus laid down His life for the sheep (10:11). His protection of the apostles was a perfect illustration of His substitutionary atonement. He died not only for them but instead of them. As the Good Shepherd He did not lose any of His sheep but fulfilled His Father’s will for the apostles (6:38) and fulfilled His own prophetic Word (6:39).

18:10. **Peter** had promised that he would die for Jesus (Matt. 26:33–35) and he thought he perhaps could save Jesus or at least go down fighting. Undoubtedly he was better at fishing than at swordplay, for he no doubt tried to take off the head of **the high priest’s servant ... Malchus**

not just his ear. Both Luke (22:50) and John recorded that it was his **right ear** which is an incidental evidence of the historical reliability of these Gospel books. (Luke added that Jesus healed the man's ear [Luke 22:51], an amazing touch of love for His enemies!) Peter's blind loyalty was touching, but it missed God's plan. Zeal without knowledge in religion often leads men astray (cf. Rom. 10:2).

18:11. Earlier that same night **Jesus** had rebuked **Peter** (13:6–11). Now He rebuked him again, this time for not understanding God's will. In spite of constant teaching about His approaching death (3:14; 8:28; 12:32–33; cf. Luke 9:22) the disciples did not understand its need (cf. Luke 24:25). The cup which the Father had given Jesus refers to the suffering and death He would experience under God's wrath against sin (Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15; Ezek. 23:31–33). The words **the cup the Father has given Me** indicated that Jesus saw all the things coming on Him as part of God's sovereign plan. His rhetorical question to Peter was designed to prod Peter's thinking. Jesus had come to do the Father's will and so He must now embrace it.

B. The religious trial and Peter's denials (18:12–23)

18:12–14. When **Jesus** was **arrested**, it was dark and late at night. Jesus had already had a long day. His disciples were so exhausted by the schedule and the pressures that they had fallen asleep. But for Jesus, the time while they were sleeping was a deep crisis in prayer and agony (Mark 14:33–41; Luke 22:44). Now Jesus was **bound** and in the hands of His enemies. He was alone since His disciples had been scattered (Matt. 26:56; John 16:32).

The religious trial began (cf. the list of Jesus' six trials at Matt. 26:57). The words, **They ... brought Him first to Annas**, provide information not given in the other Gospels. Annas had been appointed high priest by Quirinius, governor of Syria, in a.d. 6 and remained until he was deposed by Valerius Gratus, procurator of Judea, in a.d. 15. According to the Jewish law the high priestly office was for life, but the Romans did not like the concentration of power in one person so they frequently changed high priests. Annas was succeeded by five of his sons and by his son-in-law **Caiaphas** (see the chart at Acts 4:6; cf. Luke 3:2). Evidently Annas remained the power behind the throne; a preliminary investigation was carried out by him before Jesus' formal religious trial. **Caiaphas** was **the high priest that year**, that is, that fateful year of Jesus' death. John reminded his readers of Caiaphas' unconscious prophecy (John 11:49–52).

18:15–16. After the immediate fright in the olive grove, when the mob took **Jesus** and the disciples ran, two disciples returned and followed the Lord and His enemies back across the Kidron and into the city. They were **Simon Peter and another disciple**. The other disciple is unknown, but he may well have been John, son of Zebedee (cf. 20:2; 21:20, 24). **This disciple** knew **the high priest** and therefore had access **into the high priest's courtyard**. Thus, he was in a unique position to know what was going on and to enable **Peter** to get into the courtyard.

18:17–18. Peter's denial before the servant **girl** was a striking contradiction to his earlier boast to lay down his life for Jesus (13:37), and his show of offense in cutting off Malchus' ear (18:10). Evidently the other disciple was also in danger (perhaps greater) but he did not deny Jesus. **Peter** stood by the **fire ... warming himself** in the **cold** spring evening, Jerusalem being about 2,500

feet above sea level. This little detail about the cold evening is another indication that the author of this book was an eyewitness.

18:19. The events in the narrative in verses 12–27 are like a drama presented on two stages. Stage one was set (vv. 12–14) while the action on stage two went on (vv. 15–18). Then the action shifted back to stage one (vv. 19–24), and then returned to the other stage (vv. 25–27). The preliminary investigation of Jesus may be likened to what might happen today when an arrested person is first brought into a police station. Annas **questioned Jesus about** people who held His views and about the nature of **His teaching**. If an insurrection was feared (cf. 11:48), these would be normal questions.

18:20–21. **Jesus** responded that He had no secret cult or organization. He had an inner circle of disciples, but the character of His teaching was not private. He **taught** in the open and in public places (**in synagogues or at the temple**). The people knew **what** He taught so if there was a **question** concerning what He taught, answers were readily available. Jesus did not have two kinds of truths or teaching. He was innocent unless proven guilty. Therefore they should produce witnesses if they had something substantial against Him. Of course, they had no clear accusation so they sought some way to trick Him or catch Him in a trap.

18:22–23. **One of** Annas' assistants did not like Jesus' answer so he **struck Him in the face**. The preliminary hearing had several illegalities, and this was one of them. It was improper to try to induce self-accusation, and it was wrong to hit an unconvicted person. Jesus' response concerned not the manner of His speech (**Is that any way ...?**) but the substance of His teaching (**If I said something wrong ...**). It was easier to evade **the truth** or to silence the One who spoke the truth than to attempt to answer the truth. Truth has a self-evident power of persuasion and those who oppose it find it difficult to deny. **Jesus** pressed this point and exposed their hypocrisy. They knew the truth but loved error. They saw the light but loved darkness (cf. 3:19; Rom. 1:18).

White, J. E. (1998). *John*. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman Concise Bible Commentary* (p. 486). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Embracing the Cup (18:1–11)

John is the only Gospel that records that the attack on the servant of the chief priest was carried out by Simon Peter on a man named Malchus (18:10). Luke recorded Jesus' healing of the man's wound (Luke 22:51).

His concern for the disciples at the moment of His own arrest is evident (18:8). Peter's effort at defending Jesus was rebuked by Jesus Himself, for despite Peter's good intentions, the "cup" that was before Jesus had to be embraced. It should be noted that "cup" was often used as a reference to suffering (Ps. 75:8; Ezek. 23:31–34), as well as the wrath of God (Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15; Rev. 14:10; 16:19).

Peter's Denial (18:12–18)

The two interrogations may have been enacted to give the semblance of a fair trial for Jesus, though it was far from just by any stretch of the imagination. Peter's first denial, all four Gospels

report, came as the result of the challenge of a slave girl. She asked Peter if he was one of the disciples of Jesus, which Peter promptly denied (18:17).

The Jewish Trial (18:19–24)

The interrogation of Jesus by the high priest brought out Jesus' response that what He had taught had been taught publicly and that nothing had been taught in private that was not openly said to the crowds. This brought a blow to the face as if such a reply was improper when answering the high priest (18:22). This blow was illegal for such questionings. Jesus' reply was that what He had said was simply the truth and should not be rejected or reacted to with such violence. Note that John treated the Jewish trial with great brevity, devoting the majority of his narrative to the Roman trial.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). John 18:1-23. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

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