



He Gave His Life

Part 1 - John 18:1-40

Jesus Arrested

- Read John 18:1-11. After he finished praying, Jesus and his disciples went out to a garden¹ on the Mount of Olives. Judas guided a group of Roman soldiers² and “officials from the chief priests and Pharisees” (temple police, probably) to the garden to arrest Jesus.
 1. How does Jesus respond to his arrest? How does Peter respond? (18:10) Why do you think they respond differently? (18:11)³

📖 “I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:15b)

- When Jesus identifies himself with the words, “I am he”⁴, the soldiers and officials “draw back and fall to the ground” (18:6). Jesus offers himself to his arresters, but tells them to let his disciples go (18:8).⁵

Jesus before Jewish Authorities

- Read John 18:12-27. After his arrest, Jesus is taken to Annas (the high priest emeritus), and then to Caiaphas (the “high priest that year”).⁶ Peter and another disciple follow Jesus and his arresters, and go into the high priest’s courtyard (18:15-16).⁷



2. Why do you think Peter denies his association with Jesus? (18:17, 25-27) In what ways, and why, might Christians today deny (or hide) their association with Jesus?

- While Jesus stands firm (18:19-23), Peter denies his association with Jesus three times, just as Jesus had predicted (13:37-38). While Peter fails, he will later be restored to fellowship and service. We too can fail, but like Peter, we can be restored to fellowship and service.

¹ “garden” (*kēpos*) – “olive grove”. Matthew 26:36 and Mark 14:32 call the garden “Gethsemane” (*place of the “oil press”*). They “went into it”. The garden was likely in a walled enclosure. John does not mention it, but this is where Jesus prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42).

² “detachment of soldiers” (*tēn speiran*) – cohort (or portion thereof) of Roman soldiers.

³ Jesus tells Peter, “Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?” (18:11). The “cup” often refers to suffering and the wrath of God (also see Luke 22:42 in footnote 1). Jesus is willing to suffer and die for the sins of the world, so that we can be forgiven and have eternal life with God. This is according to the Father’s plan. God is in control.

⁴ “I am he” (*egō eimi* – lit. “I am”) – This could be a simple self-identification, but may also point to Jesus’ divine nature (8:24, 28, 58, Ex. 3:14). In any case, the soldiers and officials are struck by Jesus’ authority and fearlessness.

⁵ This fulfills Jesus’ words in John 17:12. While 18:8-9 relates to the disciples’ physical protection, it symbolizes their spiritual protection, which is primary (John 6:39; 10:28). Mark writes, “then everyone deserted [Jesus] and fled” (14:50). However, Peter and another disciple (likely John) follow Jesus (John 18:15).

⁶ Only John mentions Jesus’ hearing before Annas. The other Gospels focus on his hearing before Caiaphas, who was the official high priest as recognized by the Roman government. Annas was high priest from AD 6-15 until Pilate’s predecessor Valerius Gratus disposed him. However, Annas was still influential. Under the Law of Moses, the high priest’s appointment was for life. Thus many Jews probably considered Annas to be the true high priest.

⁷ “another disciple” – traditionally believed to be the “disciple whom Jesus loved” (13:23), traditionally believed to be John, the author of this Gospel. Whoever the “other disciple” was, he had connections with the high priest.

- ❑ The high priest questions Jesus about his disciples and his teaching (18:19).⁸ Jesus speaks the truth, but the Jewish authorities do not want to hear it. After Jesus' hearings before the Jewish authorities, they lead him to the Roman authorities (18:28).

Jesus before Roman Authorities

- ❑ Read John 18:28-40. The Jews lead Jesus to “the palace of the Roman governor”.⁹ The governor (Pilate) is not convinced that Jesus has broken Roman laws, so he tells the Jewish authorities, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law” (18:31).



3. Why do the Jewish authorities want Jesus convicted by the Roman government?¹⁰

- ❑ In Jesus' trial before the Jewish authorities, he was charged with blasphemy¹¹ (Mark 14:60-64), but such charges do not matter to the Roman government. So the Jewish authorities accuse him of other crimes (Luke 23:2). They say that Jesus “claims to be Christ, a king” (Luke 23:2) hoping that Pilate will think Jesus is a dangerous rebel against the government.

4. Of course, Jesus *is* “Christ, a king”. But what does Jesus say about his kingdom? (18:36-37). How is it different from other kingdoms?

- ❑ Pilate understands enough of Jesus' words to know he is not a political rebel. Thus he tells the Jews, “I find no basis for a charge against him” (18:38). Pilate attempts to make a deal (18:39-40), but his plan does not work. While Pilate wants to release Jesus, he is pressured to release Barabbas instead.¹² A criminal is set free, while the innocent Jesus dies instead.¹³

The Life & You

- Jesus *is* the King. And his kingdom is the kingdom of truth. Jesus said, “Everyone on the side of truth listens to me” (18:37). Are you listening to Jesus? Do you need to trust in him?
- Jesus said, “I lay down my life for the sheep” and they “listen to my voice” (10:15b-16). If you are a believer, you are one of Jesus' sheep. This week, read John 10:1-18 & 18:1-19:16. Listen to Jesus' words and reflect on his special love for you. He gave his life for you.

⁸ In formal Jewish hearings, witnesses were supposed to be questioned first in order to establish the charges against the accused. Rather than answering their questions directly, Jesus refers them to witnesses who have heard his public teaching. His essential teaching has been done in public places.

⁹ The *praetorium* – the governor's headquarters. The NIV suggests the headquarters was at Herod's palace on the western wall, though some think it was at the Fortress of Antonia. Pilate's normal headquarters was in Caesarea, but he was in Jerusalem to control potential problems due to the large number of Jews who had come for the Passover.

¹⁰ The Jewish authorities want Jesus to die, but they do not have the authority to execute him. Even if they did, their method of execution is stoning, not crucifixion. Apparently, they want Jesus to die in a public and humiliating way. They may have been motivated by the verse, “anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse” (Deuteronomy 21:23). The method of execution was also consistent with Jesus' predictions (John 18:32). Jesus had earlier said, “But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself” (13:32) to which John added, “He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die” (13:33). Jesus was “lifted up” on the cross.

¹¹ “blasphemy” – speaking against God. The Jewish leaders condemned Jesus for equating himself with God, or at least associating himself too closely with Him. Of course, as God in the flesh (John 1:1, 14), Jesus was right.

¹² Barabbas was an insurrectionist (insurgent, rebel) and thief, who had committed murder in an uprising (John 18:40; Mark 15:7; Luke 23:19). Perhaps the two men crucified with Jesus were also insurgents and thieves, and the three crosses at Golgotha were intended for Barabbas and these two men.

¹³ This illustrates Christ's death for sinners like us (Romans 3:23; 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21). However, the analogy is limited. We know nothing of Barabbas' faith; but to be truly “set free,” we must trust in Jesus (Romans 8:1-2)