

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

THE ARREST, TRIAL, DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS, JOHN 18 - 21:25

INTRODUCTION

- Warren Wiersbe, *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).*
- B. F. Westcott, *John emphasized three things in his account of Jesus' Passion: (1) The voluntariness of Christ's sufferings (cf. 18:4, 8, 11; 36; 19:28, 30). (2) The fulfillment of a divine plan in His sufferings (cf. 18:4, 9, 11, 19:11, 24, 28). (3) The majesty that shone through His sufferings (cf. 18:6, 20–23, 37; 19:11, 26–27, 36–37).*
- Edward Klink, ... *the concern of this commentary is not to conjecture about the shared (or lack of shared) material or to reconstruct an event in light of the four accounts so as to align them into one, but to interpret the trial and death of Jesus (and eventually the resurrection) through the interpretive lens of the Fourth Gospel ...*
- Grant Osborne, *John's portrayal of the crucifixion itself is decidedly different. Gone is the horror of putting to death the Son of God (Matthew and Luke) and the death of Jesus as the innocent, righteous martyr with a worshipful atmosphere (Luke). Instead, the cross is Jesus' exaltation, the culmination of his glory. Jesus is sovereign over his own death, and the cross is his throne as he becomes royal Messiah and Lord of Glory. John gives more space to the role of both the Romans and the Jews. Only John tells us of the presence of a Roman cohort at the arrest, and Pilate has a much more extensive role. Still, at the core is still the Jewish demand for Jesus' death ("the Jews" occurs twenty-two times in chapters 18–19). There is no anti-Semitism, as some have charged, but rather equal guilt for the death of Jesus. It is "the world," all of us, who put Christ on the cross.*

THE ARREST OF JESUS, JOHN 18:1-14

- A. The setting of Jesus' arrest (1-3), ***When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. 2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples.***
1. Jesus took the disciples to Gethsemane (1-2)
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) Matthew 26:30, *And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*
 - 2) Mark 14:32, *And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."*
 - 3) Luke 22:39, *And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him.*
 - 4) 2 Samuel 15:23, *And all the land wept aloud as all the people passed by, and the king crossed the brook Kidron, and all the people passed on toward the wilderness.*
 - 5) Luke 21:37, *And every day he was teaching in the temple, but at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet.*
 - 6) Luke 22:39, *And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *"These words" evidently refer to all of what Jesus had said in chapters 13–17, all of which He may have spoken in the upper room. The Kidron Valley formed the eastern boundary of Jerusalem. The Kidron ("Cedars") was also a wadi, or dry streambed, that contained water only when it rained hard. The Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane lay across the Kidron to the east. John simply mentioned Gethsemane as being the site of Jesus' arrest ... John apparently recorded this detail because it shows that Jesus was not trying to avoid arrest. Instead, He deliberately went to a place where Judas evidently anticipated that He would go (cf. Luke 21:37; 22:39).*

- 2) Edwin Blum, *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.*
 - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
 - 4) Leon Morris, *It is John alone who tells us that they went to a garden, though he does not name the place (as do Matthew and Mark). He does, however, give its location, namely on the further side of the Kidron ... Judas is characterized, as elsewhere, by the betrayal. John uses the present participle, which conveys the meaning “who was betraying him (i.e., at that moment).” The information that Jesus and the disciples often went to the Garden is found here only, though Luke tells us that Jesus lodged “on” the Mount of Olives every night during passion week (Luke 21:37).*
 - 5) William Hendriksen, *It was here that devout king Asa had burned the abominable image which his wicked mother had set up (1 Kings 15:13). At the command of another pious ruler, Josiah, idolatrous vessels had been burned in this vicinity (2 Kings 23:4). And under King Hezekiah the Levites had carried to this valley the unclean things that had been left in the temple by the former administration (2 Chron. 29:16; cf. 30:14). This was “the valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes” (Jer. 31:40) ... But the one outstanding event which had occurred here was David’s passing over this same brook, while fleeing before his rebellious son Absalom (2 Sam. 15:23). Was he not, in this act of humiliation and suffering, a type of Christ?*
 - 6) William Barclay, *The number of lambs slain for the Passover was immense ... We may imagine what the Temple courts were like when the blood of all these lambs was dashed on to the altar. 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; and as he did so, the thought of his own sacrifice would surely be vivid in his mind.*
2. Judas took the soldiers and religious leaders to Gethsemane (3), ***So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.***
- a. Related verses, see Matthew 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-50; Luke 22:47-53.
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *Only John mentioned the presence of Roman soldiers in the crowd that came to arrest Jesus. A Roman cohort (Lat. cohors) normally consisted of 600 soldiers. However, sometimes the Greek word speira, translated “cohort” or “detachment,” referred to a smaller group of only 200 men. John did not use a precise term to describe the number of soldiers that Judas brought, and it is possible that less than 200 soldiers were present ... The officers of the Jewish temple police accompanied the Roman soldiers. Thus John presented both Gentiles and Jews as playing a part in Jesus’ arrest. They carried lanterns and torches in order to find Jesus. Apparently they thought that He might try to hide ... They also had weapons to restrain anyone who might oppose their plan to arrest Jesus. Judas served as their guide. He had no authority over them.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *The detachment of Roman soldiers ... probably commanded to pick up this insurrectionist who claimed to be some kind of king.*
 - 3) F. F. Bruce, *The fact that Roman troops were there as well as temple police implies that the Jewish authorities had already approached the military command, probably indicating that they expected armed resistance to be offered. That it was the Jewish authorities and not the Romans who took the initiative is shown by the fact that, after the arrest, the Jewish authorities were allowed to take Jesus into their custody.*

- 4) William Hendriksen, *At the request of the Sanhedrin* (cf. Matt. 27:62–66) a cohort had been secured, probably from the tower of Antonio. This fortress was situated at the north-west corner of the temple-area. It had been repaired and strengthened by Herod the Great. In this castle the Roman government kept a number of soldiers. During the Jewish festivals, when Jewish patriots streamed to Jerusalem in great numbers and enthusiasm ran high, the garrison was enlarged, in order to be ready for all emergencies.
- 5) Edward Klink, *The implication is that Jesus had been an obvious problem long enough that both the Jews and Romans were willing to cooperate for his demise. Thus, the high priests and the Pharisees sent their subordinates to officially arrest and detain him.*
- 6) Charles Swindoll, *The fact that these troops were combined with officers of the temple guard is no insignificant detail. The authority of the temple enforced its will through the might of Rome.*

B. Confrontation by an armed band (4-9)

1. Jesus identified Himself (4-5), **Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, “Whom do you seek?” 5 They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.**

- a. Related verse, John 13:1, *Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *John noted that when Jesus approached the leaders of the soldiers He knew their intentions* (cf. 10:14, 17–18). *He consistently presented Jesus’ death as a voluntary self-sacrifice. Earlier in His ministry, Jesus had withdrawn from conflict with these officials because His hour had not yet come* (10:40; 11:54), *but now His hour had come* (17:1) ... *John stressed Jesus’ complete control of the situation: Jesus identified Himself as the person being sought. John did not identify Jesus as being betrayed with a kiss ... Jesus responded with the clause, “I am He” (Gr. ego eimi). As we have noted elsewhere, this was a claim to deity when Jesus uttered it in certain situations* (e.g., 8:24, 28, 58). *However, it was also a normal way to answer the soldiers here* (cf. 9:9).
- 2) Edwin Blum, *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.*
- 3) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
- 4) Leon Morris, *Jesus knows all the things that are coming upon him, and in the light of this knowledge goes out to meet the soldiers. He is not “arrested” at all. He has the initiative and he gives himself up. First he asks whom they are seeking. When they say, “Jesus of Nazareth,” he replies, “I am” ... This must have been a most unexpected move on his part. The soldiers had come out secretly to arrest a fleeing peasant. In the gloom they find themselves confronted by a commanding figure, who so far from running away comes out to meet them and speaks to them in the very language of deity.*
- 5) William Hendriksen, *The agony of Gethsemane* (the prayer that the cup might be taken away, the bloody sweat, etc.) *was past. Now there is nothing but calm resolution, sublime majesty. So Jesus came out ... out of relative darkness he stepped into the light, into the open, striding forward until he stood right in front of the band ... He was standing in full view of everyone. He was giving his soul as a ransom in exchange for many. The Master of winds and waves was also fully in control of the present situation.*
- 6) George Beasley-Murray, *It was the hour ordained by the Father—hence he takes the initiative; Judas’ betrayal by a kiss is not mentioned, and Jesus himself advances toward the soldiers and the police to ask whom they want.*

- 7) John Hart, *Jesus, even though He knew all the things that were coming upon Him, did not retreat from the impending dangers. Instead, He went forth to meet His enemies. By asking Whom do you seek? and gaining the reply Jesus the Nazarene (v. 5), Christ effectively prepared for His disciples' release. His reply I am He ("He" is not in the Gk.) recalls Jesus' use of the same term to claim deity (see comments on 4:26; 6:35; 8:58).*
- 8) Edward Klink, *The approaching crowd (and Peter; cf. v. 10) may be thinking that the issue to be faced was a military confrontation or a political or legal battle, but Jesus knows that it is the sins of the world and the wrath of God that are shortly to be placed "upon him" ... The connection made earlier between Judas and Satan (13:2) allows Judas to represent a third authority: the spiritual forces of darkness (cf. Eph 6:11–12). Jesus is opposed here by the authorities and powers of Jerusalem, Rome, and the spiritual forces of darkness ... This is one of several informal "I am" statements in the Gospel ... While all the "I am" statements locate Jesus in the divine identity of God, the informal statements serve to give insight to the particular qualifications of Jesus. This informal "I am" statement depicts Jesus' sovereign control over the situation. Jesus not only "knew" their intentions (v. 4) but had also already ordained the situation in such a way that it was not the religious leaders or Roman authorities but he, the "I am," who asked the questions and "sanctified" himself for this moment and his purposes ...*
- 9) William Barclay, ... *the enemies of Jesus had come with lamps and torches. Why? They did not need them to see the way. They must have thought that they would have to search among the trees and in the hillside nooks and crannies to find Jesus. So far from hiding, when they arrived, Jesus stepped out. 'Who are you looking for?' he demanded. 'Jesus of Nazareth,' they said. Back came the answer: 'I am he.' The man they had thought they would have to search for as he skulked in the trees and the caves was standing before them with glorious defiance. Here is the courage of the man who will face things out.*
- 10) Charles Swindoll, *The soldiers surrounded the garden perimeter wall to prevent any from escaping, but Jesus wasn't running; He knew they were coming for Him long before they arrived.*
- 11) Grant Osborne, *Because of its strong supernatural elements, many doubt the historical reliability of this scene, which is found only in John's Gospel. We begin with omniscience—"Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him." This is a frequent emphasis in John (1:42, 47–48; 4:17–18; 13:1). The stress throughout the next chapters is his complete authority over all that is to transpire, including his death and resurrection (10:18). So he takes the initiative and goes out of the grove to meet his fate head-on ... John omits Judas's kiss of greeting, probably to continue Jesus' control of the situation ... Jesus' "I am he" seems innocuous at first, equaling "I am that person." However, this is not the case in John, where this becomes an "I am" saying (see 6:35), especially equivalent to an absolute "I am" saying (6:20; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19), almost equivalent to "I, Yahweh, am here.*

2. Jesus revealed Himself (6), **When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.**

- a. J. Vernon McGee, *It was the glorious effulgence of the majesty of Christ which overpowered them.*
- b. Warren Wiersbe, *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).*
- c. William Hendriksen, ... *the would-be captors lose their footing. They lurch backward and fall to the ground. The unexpectedness of Christ's behavior (the fact that of his own accord he strode forward), the manner in which he had taken the entire situation into his own hands, the majesty of his voice and of the look in his eyes, all this may have helped to produce the effect that is here pictured. Nevertheless, these factors cannot account for it. Here is another sign (see on 2:11). Here is Christ Jesus, the King!*
- d. John Hart, *The collapse of the soldiers came in reaction to a small taste of the divine power of Jesus. If He had chosen to do so, He could have exercised this divine power sufficiently to escape His arrest and crucifixion. But he withheld this power and thereby demonstrated that He was going to the cross willingly (10:17–18).*

- e. Edward Klink, *At the sound of his voice, they fell to the ground* “as if vanquished by a greater army.” The depiction here is not a defensive position, as if Jesus and his band of eleven were about to attack between two to six hundred armed men; the narrator describes an act of fear and reverence, even worship. While this response by the crowd accompanied by a detachment of soldiers makes little sense from a historical perspective, in the cosmological context of the Gospel this was a fitting response, even better than they fully realized (cf. 11:49–52). Hundreds came to take his life, and they could make no claim on him: “They are hopelessly outnumbered by one.”
- f. Charles Swindoll, *Jesus again employed the highly significant self-designation, ego eimi, “I AM”* (4:26; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; cf. Ex. 3:14). John rarely includes details unless they have theological significance. The enemies of God shrank before the presence of the Almighty, foreshadowing their posture at the end of time (Isa. 45:23; Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10–11; Rev. 3:9).
- g. Grant Osborne, *As soon as Jesus says ego eimi, “I am,” the entire arresting party of temple police and Roman soldiers “drew back and fell to the ground”* (v. 6). The words of Jesus throughout John hold extraordinary power, since he is the voice of God, and this is strongly emphasized when John repeats the ego eimi in both verses 5 and 6. Some think this is little more than several soldiers clumsily tripping over one another due to their surprise at Jesus’ boldness. I find that very doubtful. It is far more likely that John was creating an ironic scene of theophany—people fall to the ground when confronted with God’s manifest presence (Judg 13:20–21; Ezek 1:28; Acts 9:4; Rev 1:17).
3. Jesus responded again to their repeated request with a request (7-9), **So he asked them again, “Whom do you seek?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” 8 Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go.” 9 This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: “Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.”**
- a. Related verse, *While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.*
- b. Comments
- 1) Thomas Constable, *The repetition of the soldiers’ question and Jesus’ answer underlines Jesus independence and authority ...*
 - 2) Kenneth Gangel, *In verse 9 John offered another of his famous hermeneutical helps. He told us how Jesus requested the release of the disciples and then emphasized that this happened because of the prophecy of John 6:39. Surely it would have been easy to take Jesus’ words purely in the physical realm. After all, he was the one they sought; let the other disciples escape. But not John. He saw the clear spiritual connection.*
 - 3) Leon Morris, *Jesus repeats his declaration of identity (retaining the same mystical words), but this time he adds a request that the soldiers permit his followers to go away. The Good Shepherd takes thought for his sheep at the very hour in which he faces arrest, trial, and death. It may be that this is behind his request for them to repeat that it is “Jesus of Nazareth” that they are looking for. Out of their own mouth he leads them to declare twice over that their business is with him, which means that it is not with the disciples.*
 - 4) William Hendriksen, *The question was the same as before. And so was the answer. But now Jesus brings home the purpose of his inquiry. Having twice compelled them to repeat their orders, he by the sound of their own voice and by the contents of their own answers, has impressed upon them the fact that Jesus, the Nazarene, he indeed, but also he alone, must be led away. “If you are looking for me—as, of course, you are—then let these men (the disciples) go their way” (or: withdraw themselves). The High priest lovingly protects his own ... had the disciples at this time been captured by these soldiers and temple-guards, it would have been too severe a test for their faith. They were not ready for this extreme ordeal, this torture. Jesus knew this. Hence, he sees to it that they are not arrested.*
 - 5) Charles Swindoll, *Jesus, ever the selfless leader, asked for the release of His disciples, which John noted was a literal fulfillment of the Lord’s earlier statement to the Father (17:12; see also 6:39).*
 - 6) Grant Osborne, *Their acquiescence to his sovereign order is not stated but is implied, and in its place John restates the fulfillment of Jesus’ prophetic words from 17:12: “I have not lost one of those you gave me” (18:9) ... Jesus as the Good Shepherd is watching over and protecting his sheep from the wolves (10:3, 12). Soon he will also lay down his life for them (10:11, 15).*

C. Peter interfered with God's plan (10-11)

1. He attacked the high priest's servant (10), **Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)**
 - a. Thomas Constable, *All the Gospels record this incident, but John is the only one that names Peter and Malchus. The mention of their names makes the story more concrete. John was an eyewitness of Jesus' sufferings, so it is not unusual that he would mention these names. The small sword (Gr. machaira) that Peter used was probably little more than a dagger. His action was foolish, but it illustrates his courage and commitment to Jesus (cf. 13:37).*
 - b. Edwin Blum, *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 ... (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).*
 - c. Warren Wiersbe, *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 ... 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!*
 - d. Leon Morris, *The use of the definite article (the servant of the high priest, not a servant) marks Malchus out, but our ignorance of the man and his position prevents us from knowing just what the significance of this is.*
 - e. Charles Swindoll, *Because John typically includes details for their symbolic value, it's likely that Peter aimed for the man's right ear for the express purpose of leaving an insulting injury. Malchus was an emissary of the high priest and therefore represented his authority. Cutting off an ear or a nose was considered particularly humiliating, especially since Jews barred maimed individuals from serving in the temple. Moreover, Jewish tradition prescribed higher restitution for organs and extremities on the right side of the body.*
 - f. Grant Osborne, *It seems a reckless act with a company of Roman soldiers present, but we must remember that the disciples had no idea of Jesus as Isaiah's Suffering Servant. (They thought Isa 52–53 spoke of the nation.) Peter was thinking of the Messiah initiating the final war to destroy the nations. He undoubtedly expected the armies of heaven to appear as he drew his sword and wipe out the Roman soldiers, so Peter took to the offensive.*
2. Jesus commanded him to stop (11), **So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"**
 - a. Related verse, Matthew 26:39, *And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *Jesus' response, as John recorded it, focuses the reader's attention on Jesus. The Cross was necessary, and Jesus had committed Himself to enduring it. Peter's brave, though misdirected act, showed that he still failed to realize that Jesus' death was necessary. Zeal without knowledge is dangerous. Therefore Jesus rebuked Peter, even though this disciple showed remarkable loyalty to his Teacher. The cup to which Jesus referred was the symbol of His lot in life (cf. Matt. 20:22–23), which in this case involved bearing God's wrath (cf. Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15; Ezek. 23:31–33; Matt. 26:42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42; Rev. 14:10; 16:19).*
 - 2) Warren Wiersbe, *Peter had a sword in his hand, but our Lord had a cup in His hand. Peter was resisting God's will but the Saviour was accepting God's will.*
 - 3) Kenneth Gangel, *The last phrase of this section is important for us, since the rhetorical question gives the motive for Jesus' behavior on this occasion. The Father has given a cup of suffering and death. The Son, in obedience and subjection, will drink it.*

- 4) Grant Osborne, *Peter has unwittingly placed himself in opposition to God's will, and Jesus will have none of that.*
- 5) Edwin Blum, *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.*
- 6) Leon Morris, *Then Jesus speaks of the cup that the Father has given him and his question indicates the necessity of drinking it. There are references to the cup in the other Gospels (Matt. 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42), though in them it occurs in the prayer in the Garden. This is the only passage which assigns the origin of the "cup" to the Father.*
- 7) Edward Klink, *... Jesus' statement dictates to Peter not only the true authority behind his arrest but also its true nature. The "cup" that he must drink is the cup of suffering, for the Son is the Suffering Servant whose self-sacrifice allows for the wrath of God to be placed upon him for the salvation of the world (see 3:36).*
- 8) Charles Swindoll, *Jesus rebuked Peter for behaving like a nonbeliever and for failing to see God's plan unfolding, despite Jesus' many predictions. The "cup" of which Jesus spoke was a well-known expression for His crucifixion (see Matt. 20:22; 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42).*
- 9) F. F. Bruce, *Peter's impulsive action was more likely to get himself and his companions into serious trouble than to do his Master any good, but even if it had a better chance of success, Jesus would now allow nothing to stand in the way of his bringing to completion the work which his Father had given him to do. Any other course would have rendered his prayer of consecration meaningless. Provided his disciples' safety was assured, he would not seek his own.*

D. Jesus was arrested (12-14)

1. He was bound by the soldiers (12), ***So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him.***
 - a. Thomas Constable, *The commander (Gr. chiliarchos, cf. Acts 22:24, 26, 27, 28; 23:17, 19, 22) in view was the officer in charge of the Roman cohort of soldiers. He was evidently the person with the most official authority on the scene. However, the Jewish officers (i.e., temple police) also played a part in Jesus' arrest. Perhaps John noted that they bound Jesus in view of Isaiah's prophecy that Messiah's enemies would lead Him like a lamb to the slaughter (Isa. 53:7). Jesus' disciples abandoned Him when His enemies took Him into custody (cf. Matt. 26:56; Mark 14:50).*
 - b. Edwin Blum, *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).*
 - c. William Hendriksen, *The man who in all likelihood was in command of the entire band (not only of the soldiers) is now mentioned for the first time ... At his order some of the soldiers now seized Jesus. The verb employed is the technical term for making an official arrest (cf. Matt. 26:55; Mark 14:48). In doing so, they actually took hold of him, and then bound him. He, the One who had come into the world to bring freedom, and apart from whom freedom is absolutely impossible (see on 8:31–36), was himself bound. He was bound, however, in order that we might be loosed from our sins.*
 - d. Edward Klink, *The correct interpretation of this historical scene understands that this binding is the binding of a sacrifice, the self-sacrifice of Jesus (like the binding of Isaac in Gen 22:9). For the reader of the Gospel, therefore, the conflict has become the conquest.*
 - f. Charles Swindoll, *To arrest Jesus, the soldiers undoubtedly followed Roman procedure by pulling His arms behind His back and placing them in irons or binding them tightly with rope. Throughout His ordeal, we may assume He remained bound with a noose around His neck. Then Jesus was taken to the highest Jewish power in Israel, Annas.*

2. He was taken to the Jewish leader Annas (13-14), *First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. 14 It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.*

a. Related verses

- 1) John 18:24, *Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.*
- 2) 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.*
- 3) John 11:50, *Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.*

b. Comments

1) Concerning Annas

- a) Thomas Constable, *The soldiers evidently led Jesus to the residence of the high priest. The location of this building is uncertain, though the traditional site is in the southern part of old Jerusalem just west of the Tyropoeon Valley ... Both high priests evidently occupied the same building ... Annas, the former high priest whom the Jews still regarded as the legitimate high priest, since the high priesthood under the Mosaic Law was for life. Annas served as the official high priest from A.D. 6 to 15, when the Roman procurator Valerius Gratus deposed him. Five of Annas' sons, plus his son-in-law Caiaphas, succeeded him in this office.*
- b) George Beasley-Murray, *The Fourth Evangelist alone reports that Jesus was taken first to Annas. In all probability it will have been the temple police who delivered him; their task will have been to make the arrest, that of the Roman soldiers to prevent trouble at the arrest; the latter will have returned to the Antonia barracks after seeing Jesus safely handed over. That Jesus should have been delivered to Annas need occasion no surprise. Naturally the procedure must have been agreed on between Caiaphas and Annas, but the latter was clearly an immensely influential person among the Jewish leadership.*
- c) Edwin Blum, *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 ... Evidently Annas remained the power behind the throne; a preliminary investigation was carried out by him before Jesus' formal religious trial.*
- d) Warren Wiersbe, *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! ... 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).*
- e) Leon Morris, *There is little doubt but that through these changes the astute old man at the head of the family exercised a good deal of authority. He was in all probability the real power in the land, whatever the legal technicalities.*
- f) William Hendriksen, *Annas was the man who was responsible, to a large extent, for the actions of the Jewish Sanhedrin. Someone else might be the presiding officer of the Sanhedrin, Annas was the man to consult. One can imagine how, whenever a priest would come up with a plan or idea, and would broach it, another would immediately reply, "Have you cleared this with Annas?" ... He was very proud, exceedingly ambitious, and fabulously wealthy. His family was notorious for its greed. The main source of his wealth seems to have been a goodly share of the proceeds from the price of sacrificial animals, which were sold in the Court of the Gentiles. See on 2:14. By him the house of prayer had been turned into a den of robbers.*

- g) William Barclay, *Now we can see why Annas arranged that Jesus should be brought first to him. Jesus was the man who had attacked Annas' vested interest; he had cleared the Temple of the sellers of victims and had hit Annas where it hurt—in his pocket. Annas wanted to be the first to gloat over the capture of this disturbing Galilaeen ... Jesus never had any hope of justice. The self-interest of Annas and his colleagues had been touched; and Jesus was condemned before he was tried. When people are engaged on evil ways, their only desire is to eliminate anyone who opposes them. If they cannot do it by fair means, they are compelled to resort to foul.*
- 2) Concerning Caiaphas
- a) Thomas Constable, *The other high priest was Caiaphas, who was Annas' son-in-law. The Romans had placed him in office in A.D. 18, where he remained until A.D. 36. Annas was the first of the two men to interview Jesus. "That year" refers to the fateful year of Jesus' death (i.e., A.D. 33) ... John doubtless identified Caiaphas the way he did here in order to remind his readers of Caiaphas' prediction of Jesus' substitute sacrifice (11:50), not just to mention his name. This identification also makes unnecessary a full recording of the deliberations that led to the Sanhedrin's verdict. That record was already available in the Synoptics and was therefore unnecessary in John's Gospel.*
- b) Edwin Blum, *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).*
- c) Leon Morris, *In John's mind the thing that marked out Caiaphas was his unconscious prophecy that Jesus would die for the people (11:49–50). So here he distinguishes him by referring back to this prophecy. His recall of those words may also be meant to indicate that Jesus might expect little from such a judge. Here was no idealist ready to see that justice was done, but a cynical politician who had already spoken in favor of Jesus' death.*
- d) Grant Osborne, *John reminds us of Caiaphas's inadvertent prophecy that "it would be good if one man died for the people" (from 11:49–50). He is both identifying Caiaphas for the reader and reminding us of the significance of the events to come as well as God's complete control over those events. Even the evil high priest is a tool of God and is led by him to witness to the substitutionary nature ... of Jesus' coming death.*
- e) John Hart, *That year refers to the prophesied year of Christ's death (Dn 9:24–26). Since Caiaphas foresaw the prudence of one man dying on behalf of the people (v. 14; cf. 11:49–52), God sovereignly placed him in the position of high priest (cf. Rm 13:1) during the year foreordained for Christ's death. That year refers to the prophesied year of Christ's death (Dn 9:24–26). Since Caiaphas foresaw the prudence of one man dying on behalf of the people (v. 14; cf. 11:49–52), God sovereignly placed him in the position of high priest (cf. Rm 13:1) during the year foreordained for Christ's death.*
- f) Edward Klink, *By this introduction the reader is not only reminded of the political maneuvering of Caiaphas and the Jewish authorities but of the cosmological maneuvering of God so that the decision of Caiaphas was and continues to be facilitated by the preordained will of God ...*

PETER'S FIRST DENIAL OF JESUS, JOHN 18:15-18

- A. Peter denied Jesus (15-18)
1. Peter and another disciple followed behind Jesus(15-16), ***Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, 16 but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in.***
- a. Related verses
- 1) Matthew 26:58, *And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end.*
 - 2) Mark 14:54, *And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire.*
 - 3) Luke 22:54, *Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance.*
 - 4) Related verses for 16-18, Matthew 26:69-70; Mark 14:66-68; Luke 22:55-57.

b. Comments

- 1) Charles Swindoll, *The disciples scattered immediately after the arrest in the garden (Matt. 26:56), although Peter and John returned to follow the Lord's movements from a safe distance. When the soldiers had taken Jesus to the residence of Annas—around three or four o'clock in the morning—John was permitted inside. His acquaintance with Annas most likely came by way of his family's wealth and social status ... As Peter entered the great hall of Annas's residence, the doorkeeper recognized him as a disciple.*
- 2) William Barclay, *When the other disciples forsook Jesus and fled, Peter refused to do so. He followed Jesus, even after his arrest, because he could not tear himself away. So he came to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest; and he was in the company of another disciple who had the right of entry to the house, because he was known to the high priest.*
- 3) Thomas Constable, *Evidently Peter and another disciple had followed the arresting party from Gethsemane back into Jerusalem to the high priest's palace ... Traditionally commentators have understood the other disciple to have been John, the "beloved disciple" (cf. 13:23; 19:26–27; 20:2–9; 21:1, 20–23, 24–25). However, because John described this other disciple as someone who had a close relationship with the high priest (Gr. gnostos, cf. 2 Kings. 10:11; Ps. 55:13; Luke 2:44), many modern interpreters question the traditional view ... Nevertheless, it is entirely possible that John, as the son of a supposedly prosperous fisherman (cf. Mark 1:19–20), did indeed have such a relationship ... The correct identification of the other disciple is not essential to a correct interpretation of the events, however.*
- 4) Edwin Blum, *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.*
- 5) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
- 6) Kenneth Gangel, *In John's narrative it becomes necessary to pick up two different segments of text to understand Peter's role on this fateful night. John first showed us how his friend was at the wrong place at the wrong time. The military and religious intruders had dismissed the eleven disciples, as Jesus asked. But Peter and another disciple followed their Lord and his captors. Almost every reputable scholar agrees this second disciple was John himself. His family had ties to the priesthood through Salome and Elizabeth. His influence allowed both men into the courtyard.*
- 7) John Hart, *In the trial narrative, only two disciples are mentioned: Peter and another disciple—probably John. He was known to the high priest (mentioned twice; vv. 15, 16), Annas. John's father, Zebedee, seemed to have been affluent (e.g., he had servants, Mk 1:20). This may have brought John into contact with Annas and Caiaphas since they were also wealthy. So John freely entered with Jesus into the court of Annas, but had to negotiate for Peter's admittance (v. 16).*
- 8) Grant Osborne, *We see the extent to which Jesus faces these terrible hours completely alone. Even those closest to him fail utterly. Peter begins well, following after Jesus as he tries to remain faithful. The "other disciple," possibly the Beloved Disciple, John (see comments on 13:23), is able to get Peter into the courtyard because he is "known to the high priest" ... Annas and Caiaphas both lived in the Hasmonean palace on the west hill of the city, which had an extensive courtyard.*

2. A servant girl asked Peter if he was a disciple of Jesus and he denied it (17), ***The servant girl at the door said to Peter, “You also are not one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.”***
 - a. Thomas Constable, *She asked Peter if he was not one of “this Man’s disciples” too, expecting a negative reply, as the Greek text makes clear. Her question reflected some disdain for Jesus ... Peter succumbed to the pressure of the moment and denied his association with Jesus (13:37). Peter denied that he was one of Jesus’ disciples (“I am not”), not that Jesus was the Messiah. Perhaps what he had done to Malchus made him more eager to blend into his surroundings.*
 - b. Edwin Blum, *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.*
 - c. Leon Morris, *He may well have been nerving himself to face some stiff opposition. But instead he was asked a simple question by a little slave girl. Her question incidentally implies that the answer will be “No.” “You aren’t one of the disciples of this man, too, are you?” is the force of it, And Peter went along with this. “I am not,” he said. The question suggested a line of escape and Peter gratefully took it up. Almost certainly he did not reflect where it would lead him. Once committed, he must have found it hard to go back on his denial.*
 - d. William Hendriksen, *Peter, shocked by the suddenness and the boldness of the question, to which he must give an immediate reply, is caught off guard. In spite of all his loud boasts of a few hours ago (see on 13:37), he is now thoroughly frightened. “I am not,” he blurts out.*
 - e. Edward Klink, *In one sense Peter was on the inside, having been given special access to the court of the high priest. Yet when asked about the true High Priest, the one to whom he had also (and more astoundingly) been given access, Peter acts like an outsider, which the next verse makes dramatically clear.*
 - f. William Barclay, *Things could not have been easy for him. The story of his denial would soon get about, for people love a malicious tale. It may well be, as legend has it, that people imitated the crow of the cock when he passed. But Peter had the courage and the tenacity of purpose to redeem himself, to start from failure and attain to greatness ... The essence of the matter was that it was the real Peter who protested his loyalty in the upper room; it was the real Peter who drew his lonely sword in the moonlight of the garden; it was the real Peter who followed Jesus, because he could not allow his Lord to go alone; it was not the real Peter who cracked beneath the tension and denied his Lord. And that is just what Jesus could see.*
 - g. Grant Osborne, *We should note that while Peter does fail Jesus here, he and John are the only two brave enough to come this far. The rest are hiding behind closed doors back in the upper room (20:19), unwilling even to go out into the light of day.*
 - h. F. F. Bruce, *The servant girl presumably knew the “other disciple” to be a follower of Jesus, and when she saw him ... Unlike the “other disciple,” he was not accustomed to entering the headquarters of persons in high society, and the unfamiliarity of these surroundings added to the general sense of uneasiness that made him lose his nerve. For all the confidence with which, in the upper room, he had declared his readiness to lay down his life for his Master (13:37), the event was to prove that his Master knew Peter better than Peter knew himself (13:38).*

3. Peter chose to be outside instead of inside with his Savior (18), ***Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.***
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) John 18:25, *Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, “You also are not one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.”*
 - 2) Mark 14:54, *And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire.*

b. Comments

- 1) Edwin Blum, *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.*
- 2) Thomas Constable, *Peter not only denied Jesus, but he also stood with Jesus' enemies as they warmed themselves in the courtyard of the high priest's large residence. The detail that the fire was a charcoal (Gr. anthrakia) fire will feature later in John's narrative (21:9). Such a fire would not have generated much light or heat, so those who wanted to stay warm had to stand close together around it.*
- 3) Lon Morris, *Now we have a little detail about the circumstances. It was evidently a cold night, and the slaves and officers of the high priests had made a charcoal fire in the courtyard. They were standing around it warming themselves and Peter joined them. There was possibly danger in this, but then there would probably have been danger in not doing it. It would have been conspicuous to stay in the courtyard, but away from the group. And in any case Peter was cold. He warmed himself with the others.*
- 4) John Hart, *John's comment that it was cold marks out both the physical and the spiritual climate.*
- 5) Charles Swindoll, *Take note of John's detail concerning the fire—a charcoal fire. John includes this seemingly insignificant feature to imprint on the readers' minds the image of Peter looking across a fire and denying His Master.*
- 6) Grant Osborne, *It almost looks like an intimate scene of friends waiting together, until we realize the sinister cast in which most are enemies of Jesus. Peter is standing among enemies, afraid for his freedom. There is a turnaround coming at another "charcoal fire" in 21:9, where Peter will receive forgiveness and be reinstated by Jesus.*

JESUS BEFORE ANNAS, JOHN 18:19-24

A. He was questioned concerning His ministry (19), ***The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.***

1. Related verses for 19-24, Matthew 26:59-68; Matthew 14:55-65; Luke 22:63-71.

2. Introductory notes

- a. William Hendricksen, *By combining the Gospel-accounts it becomes clear that Jesus had to undergo two trials. The first has been called the ecclesiastical; the second the civil. The first contained three stages, and so did the second ... 1. Ecclesiastical Trial, a. Preliminary hearing before Annas ... b. Trial before Caiaphas and "all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes" (Mark 14:53 ... Trial before Caiapha and the Sanhedrin (Luke 22:66) ... 2. Civil Trial ... a. Trial before Pilate ... b. Jesus before Herod (Luke 23:6-12) ... c. Trial before Pilate resumed ... Greedy, serpent-like, vindictive Annas (see on 18:13), rude, sly, hypocritical Caiaphas (see on 11:49, 50), crafty, superstitious, self-seeking Pilate (see on 18:29); and immoral, ambitious, superficial Herod Antipas; these were his judges!*
- b. Thomas Constable, *John's version of Peter's denial is quite similar to those of the other Gospel writers, but his revelation of Jesus' interrogation by Annas is unique. None of the other evangelists mentioned it.*

3. Comments

- a. Thomas Constable, *Clearly Annas was the (unofficial) high priest who conducted this initial questioning and informal inquiry (cf. v. 24). He probably asked Jesus about His disciples in order to ascertain the size of His following, since one of the religious leaders' chief concerns was the power of Jesus' popularity. Annas' interest in His teachings undoubtedly revolved around who Jesus claimed to be (cf. 7:12, 47; 19:4). Both subjects were significant, since many of the Jews suspected Jesus of being a political revolutionary.*
- b. Edwin Blum, *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.*

- c. Leon Morris, *The high priest interrogated Jesus. In a trial this was not legal, for Jewish law provided safeguards for the accused. He was not to be called upon to incriminate himself. The case had to be established by witnesses. It was the responsibility of Jesus' accusers to bring forth their witnesses; it was not his responsibility to demonstrate his innocence. Perhaps Annas regarded this as an informal inquiry, where the rules of court procedure would not apply. His question about the disciples is puzzling. One would have thought that they would have been known (though we must bear in mind that apparently those of the household did not know Peter by sight). But possibly the high priest was inquiring as to what they did, what was expected of them, rather than as to who they were. This is rendered all the more likely in that the other topic of his questioning was Jesus' teaching.*
 - d. William Hendriksen, *The day of judgment will reveal some startling matters! But among all the travesties of justice, none even begins to compare with the one in which the heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, stood before the earthly high priests, Annas and Caiaphas. For the spotlessly Holy One to be arrayed before such wicked scoundrels, that was suffering!—And in the courtyard stood a man for whom he suffered all this. And that man—Simon Peter—was saying again and again that he had never heard of Jesus!*
 - e. John Hart, *The interrogation before the high priest, Annas, was an unofficial pretrial. In hopes of finding blame, Annas questioned Jesus about His disciples to discern if there were sufficient numbers for a charge of insurrection. He also questioned Him about His teaching in hopes of finding grounds for blasphemy.*
 - f. Edward Klink, *Nothing in this "trial" looks official, for this interrogation functions more like a preparatory verdict than a legitimate legal procedure. This "trial" seems less like a proceeding that determines shameful behavior and more like an opportunity to deliver shame. The subject matter of this interrogation is quite general; the high priest questions Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Particulars are not in view here; this court is evaluating the entire person and work of Jesus.*
 - g. William Barclay, *Annas violated the principles of Jewish justice when he questioned Jesus. It was precisely of this that Jesus reminded him. Jesus said: 'Don't ask me questions. Ask those who heard me.' He was, in effect, saying: 'Take your evidence about me in the proper and legal way. Examine your witnesses, which you have every right to do; stop examining me, which you have no right to do.'*
 - h. Grant Osborne, *John has decided not to narrate the main trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin but rather to focus on the preliminary questioning by Annas, who gathers information for Caiaphas to use in the main trial ... He and the others assume Jesus' guilt and only want material to use against him to prove blasphemy and to implicate him in a plot with his disciples. The hope is that Annas can become a key witness at the forthcoming trial.*
2. Jesus wondered why Annas questioned Him since He had taught openly(20-21), ***Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. 21 Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said."***
- a. Related verses
 - 1) John 7:26, *And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ?*
 - 2) John 8:26, *I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him."*
 - 3) Isaiah 45:19, *I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek me in vain.' I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right.*
 - 4) Isaiah 48:16, *Draw near to me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there."* And now the Lord GOD has sent me, and his Spirit.

b. Comments

- 1) Tomas Constable, *Jesus affirmed that He had always taught openly. He had no secret teaching to hide. Obviously He was not denying that He had taught His disciples privately. He was assuring Annas that His teachings were not subversive. He did not have two types of teaching: a harmless one for the multitudes, and a revolutionary one for His disciples. He invited Annas to question His hearers, not just His disciples, to determine if He had indeed taught anything for which someone might accuse Him of being disloyal.*
- 2) Edwin Blum, *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.*
- 3) Leon Morris, *Jesus' reply does not mention the disciples. He is clearly determined to protect them to the end. This may be the significance of the fact that three times he uses the emphatic "I": "I have spoken openly ... I always taught ... they know what I said." He takes attention away from his followers and fixes it on himself. From our standpoint we might perhaps incline to regard his answer as uncooperative. It is not. Jesus is not refraining from any attempt to help the high priest or to let him know what he stood for. He is making the point that the high priest is not proceeding in the correct legal form. It was his duty to produce his witnesses (and in Jewish law witnesses for the defense should be called first). Jesus is saying that should not be at all difficult. He had always spoken openly in places like the synagogues and the Temple. The Jews had heard him often. He had not taught in secret. There was no reason accordingly for addressing questions to him. The law has been set in motion. An arrest has been made. The right way to continue was to bring the witnesses and let them tell their story.*
- 4) William Barclay, *Annas violated the principles of Jewish justice when he questioned Jesus. It was precisely of this that Jesus reminded him. Jesus said: 'Don't ask me questions. Ask those who heard me.' He was, in effect, saying: 'Take your evidence about me in the proper and legal way. Examine your witnesses, which you have every right to do; stop examining me, which you have no right to do.'*
- 5) Charles Swindoll, *Annas broke Sanhedrin rules by asking Jesus directly about His followers and His teaching, hoping to hear something incriminating. At first blush, Jesus' response appears insolent; however, He was merely pointing out the proper procedure. In a present-day American courtroom, counsel for the defense might have said, "Objection! According to Mishnah: Sanhedrin 3:3-4, the accused may not be compelled to present evidence against himself; furthermore, the presiding judge may not examine a witness (or the accused)" ... He did not object to the proceedings in order to escape conviction and execution; He had accepted His destiny in the garden. Jesus raised each objection to establish—for the record and all of history—His innocence and the Sanhedrin's corruption.*
- 6) William Hendriksen, *His speaking had been open and non-secretive. Whoever wanted to listen, whether at synagogue or in the temple, was welcome. What a contrast between his open teaching and the strictly executive sessions and secret plottings of the Sanhedrin! ... Jesus demands that information with reference to his teaching should be obtained from those who heard it. It is as if today someone under investigation would answer: "I decline to be a witness against myself, and I demand that you produce honest witnesses as the law requires."*
- 7) George Beasley-Murray, *The mark of the false prophet is that he "secretly entices" or "leads astray" the people to apostatize from the God of Israel, the punishment for which is death (see Deut 13:1-10). It looks as if Annas was endeavoring to make Jesus incriminate himself on this issue. Jesus sees through this attempt and declares that his teaching of the people has been in public places, in the temple, and in synagogues, not in secret with a view to promoting apostasy among the people (observe that the charge that Jesus "leads astray" the people appears earlier in the Gospel, e.g., 7:12, 47).*

3. He was struck by an officer for His response to Annas (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?”**
 - a. Related verse, Acts 23:4, *Those who stood by said, “Would you revile God’s high priest?”*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) C. K. Barrett, *The truth is always objectionable to those who are concerned to establish a case at all costs. It is easier and more effective to answer it with blows than with arguments.* a) Thomas Constable, *The officer (Gr. hypereton) who struck Jesus was probably one of the Jewish temple police (cf. v. 3). He interpreted Jesus’ response as discourteous and used it as an excuse to strike Him. The Greek word rhapsima, translated “struck,” refers to a sharp blow with the palm of the hand.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *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.*
 - 3) Leon Morris, *One of the high priest’s retainers did not like this independent tone, so he struck Jesus with his hand. He does not appear to have been a person of any importance, being simply described as “one of the officials nearby.” His action was, of course, a further illegality.*
 - 4) Kenneth Gangel, *For his defense, Jesus received a blow on the face. Whether this was ordered by Annas or not we do not know.*
 - 5) Edward Klink, ... *“Is that how you treat the true High Priest?” It is remarkable that this one question is the only statement any character representing the Jewish authorities and high priest makes ... In his interrogation, Jesus asked the questions.*
 - 6) F. F. Bruce, *The incident is quite similar to that recorded in Acts 23:2–5, where Paul appears before the Sanhedrin; in both places the correct way to address the high priest is brought up. Paul apologized (to the official, if not to the man) for calling Ananias a “white-washed wall,” admitting that his language contravened the law which forbade insulting words towards a judge or ruler (Exodus 22:28). But Jesus had used no insulting language in addressing the emeritus high priest; he had made a straightforward declaration of right.*

4. He asked why was he hit for telling the truth (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?”**
 - a. Edwin Blum, *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).*
 - b. Leon Morris, *Jesus brings out the wrongness of this action by inviting the man to bear witness of any evil he has spoken. That is surely the right course of action. Incidentally it is worth noting that throughout this Gospel there is a stress on witness. It accords with this that now at the climax Jesus demands that his enemies bear witness ... And if they cannot bear witness to any evil he has spoken, the question remains: “why did you strike me?”*
 - c. William Hendriksen, *The deed of the officer was completely unjustified. He had not even been ordered to strike Jesus. It is exactly as the Lord points out: if he had spoken wrongly, this should have been proved by adequate testimony. Now that he had spoken rightly, the blow in the face was all the more reprehensible.*
 - d. Charles Swindoll, *Jesus maintained perfect composure and responded with a reasonable request. He said, in effect, “If My objection should be overruled, state the legal precedent. If it should be sustained, I should not be punished for being right.”*
 - e. Grant Osborne, *We must also remember that Jesus is fighting a cosmic war against the powers of darkness (12:31; 14:30; 16:11), and these officials are tools of Satan.*
 - f. F. F. Bruce, ... *instead of apologizing, he protests against the temple policeman’s rude action. If he had spoken amiss, then a formal charge of contempt of court should have been lodged against him. If there was nothing wrong with what he said, then the slap in the face which he had received was an unjustified assault.*

5. He was bound and taken to Caiaphas (24), **Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.**
 - a. Thomas Constable, *Annas could not produce anything for which the Sanhedrin could condemn or even charge Jesus. Therefore he sent Jesus to Caiaphas ... It seems clear, therefore, that Annas and Caiaphas lived and interviewed Jesus in different parts of the same large residence (or palace). Caiaphas had to interview Jesus in order to legally bring charges against Him before the Sanhedrin, since Caiaphas was the current official high priest. John noted that Jesus remained bound like a criminal, even though He had done nothing to deserve physical restraint.*
 - b. Leon Morris, *Annas apparently decided that he would get nothing from such a prisoner, and sent him on. Caiaphas would have to be the one to take action before Pilate, so to him Jesus must go ... The appearance before Annas was a preliminary inquiry after which more formal (though still not strictly legal) proceedings were taken before the Sanhedrin. That John does not say what this meeting did may perhaps be accounted for because he has already recorded a condemnation of Jesus by the Sanhedrin (11:47–53).*
 - c. William Hendriksen, *From the point of view of Annas the preliminary investigation had been unsuccessful. No incriminating evidence had been presented. The investigation had merely served the purpose of allowing time for the members of the Sanhedrin to hurry to the palace of the high priest ... In complete consistency with the verses which precede, we now read that Annas sends Jesus, still bound, to Caiaphas; not, of course, to him as an individual but to him as president of the Sanhedrin, which by this time is ready to receive him.*
 - d. Charles Swindoll, *He had hoped Jesus would make things easier by implicating Himself, but the Lord deftly applied the Sanhedrin's own rules of jurisprudence—and He had the truth on His side. Convicting Jesus of a capital crime and making it credible for the sake of popular opinion would not be easy.*
 - e. Grant Osborne, *Here John shows his knowledge of the Synoptic story of this trial (Mark 14:53–65); those who argue that the Synoptics and John contradict each other are wrong. John centers on the Annas story to highlight Jesus' control of the proceedings. However, the Annas interrogation had to be an unofficial questioning, for only Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin could deliver Jesus to Pilate.*
 - f. Edward Klink, *... Who is the high priest? After watching the narrative unfold, neither Annas nor Caiaphas qualify. Rather it is Jesus, the one bound, arrested, and under interrogation who alone qualifies, not merely because of this scene but because of what the reader has long been told about him (e.g., 5:22–27).*
6. Note: Thomas Constable, *John did not record what happened when Jesus appeared before Caiaphas and, later, before the Sanhedrin (cf. Matt. 26:57–68; Mark 14:53–65; Luke 22:66–71). Perhaps he omitted these aspects of Jesus' three-part religious trial because the previously written Synoptic Gospels contained adequate accounts of them. Maybe John considered the meeting of the Sanhedrin, which he had described in 11:47–53, as Jesus' official condemnation.*

PETER'S SECOND AND THIRD DENIALS OF JESUS, JOHN 18:25-27

- A. Peter's second denial (25), **Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You also are not one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not."**
 1. Related verses
 - a. Matthew 26:71-75, *And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72 And again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man." 73 After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you." 74 Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately the rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.*
 - b. Mark 14:69-72, *And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." 70 But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." 71 But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know this man of whom you speak." 72 And 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.*

- c. Luke 22:58-62, *And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." 59 And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean." 60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." 62 And he went out and wept bitterly.*

2. Comments

- a. Thomas Constable, *Under pressure again, Peter denied for a second time that he, like the other disciple, was one of Jesus' disciples (cf. Matt. 10:33; Luke 12:9). The person who voiced the question was another slave woman (Matt. 26:71; Mark 14:69).*
- b. R. E. Brown, *John has constructed a dramatic contrast wherein Jesus stands up to his questioners and denies nothing, while Peter cowers before his questioners and denies everything.*
- c. Edwin Blum, *Peter's betrayal is reported in all four Gospels, which indicates something of the importance the Gospel writers saw in this defection of the disciples' leader. Since all men fail and even many noted Christians stumble greatly, the record of Peter's denials (and his subsequent restoration; cf. chap. 21) is of great pastoral comfort.*
- d. Leon Morris, *With a group of servants talking informally around a fire in the courtyard, when one asked whether Peter were a disciple it is almost certain that others would take the question up, especially if there were any hesitation about the answer. Matthew and Mark do not say that their girls addressed Peter. They said, "This fellow was..." Clearly the servants, more especially the maidservants, were talking among themselves. Luke's "man" and John's "they" specifically address Peter. It is perhaps significant that Luke says Peter replied to the questioner ("Man, I don't know what you're talking about!"), whereas in the other three the denial is quite general and is not said to be addressed to the girls or to the crowd. What certainly happened was that somebody posed the question and it was taken up by others. This is perfectly natural and seems implied by Mark.*
- e. William Hendriksen, *How it must have grieved the Master, much more even than the hypocritical behavior of Caiaphas and the blows which he received from the guards.*
- f. John Hart, *According to the Synoptics, they said to him included the servant girl who kept the door (v. 17; Mk 14:69), another servant girl (Mt 26:71), and another unidentified person (Lk 22:58). Others may have joined in the question You are not also one of His disciples, are you?*
- g. Grant Osborne, *This was definitely the worst moment of Peter's life and his greatest failure, but in all the Gospels there is hope for the future. He will be reinstated (21:15-17) and fulfill Jesus' prophetic promise that he will indeed become Peter, "the rock" (1:42). We are so much like him, and we too must realize that in spite of our failures God is faithful and gives us a similar hope in the future, so long as we keep turning to him.*

B. Peter's third denial (26-27a), ***One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" 27 Peter again denied it,***

1. Related verses

- a. John 18:10, *Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)*
- b. John 18:1, *When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.*

2. Comments

- a. Thomas Constable, *The third questioner was a relative of Malchus, whose ear Peter had cut off in Gethsemane (v. 10). Only John recorded the relationship. This fact supports the view that the other disciple was John. He knew the relationships of people within the high priest's household.*
- b. Edwin Blum, *Just after Peter denied Jesus the third time, the Lord looked on him (Luke 22:61) and he went out weeping bitterly (Luke 22:62).*

- c. Warren Wiersbe, ... *Peter's resistance broke down completely. He began to "curse and swear" (Matt. 26:74). This does not mean that Peter let loose a volley of blasphemies, but rather that he put himself under a curse in order to emphasize his statement. He was on trial, so he put himself under an oath to convince his accusers that he was telling the truth.*
- d. Leon Morris, *The last questioner was different, and his question looks for an affirmative answer. He was related to Malchus (only John tells us this), and therefore would have had a peculiar interest in the man who had struck out with a sword. But it had been done in an uncertain light, and the relative could not be absolutely sure that it was Peter that he had seen.*
- e. William Hendriksen, *The third denial ... was an outgrowth of the second. The two belong together, and pertain to the same situation, namely, to the time after Simon had returned from the archway and was again standing with the guards and servants, warming himself. The particular incident recorded now is found only in John's Gospel. It must be borne in mind that the beloved disciple was acquainted with the highpriest, and apparently also with his servant, whose very name he knew (Malchus) ...*

C. A rooster crowed immediately (27b), **and at once a rooster crowed.**

- 1. Related verse, John 13:38, *Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.*
- 2. Comments
 - a. William Barclay, *After the third watch [12:00 midnight to 3:00 a.m.] the guard was changed and to mark the changing of the guard there was a trumpet call at 3 a.m. That trumpet call was called in Latin gallicinium and in Greek alektorophonia, which both mean cockcrow. It may well be that Jesus said to Peter: 'Before the trumpet sounds the cockcrow you will deny me three times.'*
 - b. Edwin Blum, ... a rooster began to crow (cf. Matt. 26:72–74), which fulfilled Jesus' prophecy (John 13:38) ... A rooster crowing and Baalam's donkey speaking reveal God's sovereignty and the movement of all things in His plan and timing.
 - c. Warren Wiersbe, *The crowing of the cock reminded Peter of the Lord's words, and he went out and wept bitterly ... The crowing of the cock was assurance to Peter that Jesus was totally in control of the situation, even though He was bound and being harassed by the authorities ... the cockcrowing was also an invitation to repentance. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32). Luke tells us that Jesus turned and looked at Peter (Luke 22:61), and this look of love broke Peter's heart. Peter had been a witness of Christ's sufferings (1 Peter 5:1), and by his own denials he added to those sufferings ... Keep in mind that the crowing of the cock was the announcement of the dawning of a new day! "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Ps. 30:5).*
 - d. Kenneth Gangel, *For the third time Peter denied Christ, and the prophetic rooster began to crow (13:38). One legend that grew up around this event indicates that wherever Peter went for years after this night, people would make the sound of a rooster to harass and humiliate him.*
 - e. William Hendriksen, *Suddenly he recalled the words which Jesus had spoken in predicting the three denials (see on 13:38). He went out and wept as one would expect Peter to weep, bitterly, intensely (Luke 22:62).*
 - f. F. F. Bruce, *The crowing of the cock which immediately followed brought to his mind Jesus' reply in the upper room to his confident assertion that he was prepared to die for him—"Will you lay down your life for me? Indeed and in truth I tell you, Before the cock crows you will deny me three times" (13:38).*

THE ROMAN TRIAL OF JESUS, JOHN 18:28-19:16

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

- Thomas Constable, *John reported much more about Jesus' trial before Pilate than did any of the other Gospel writers. He omitted referring to Jesus' appearance before Herod Antipas, which only Luke recorded (Luke 23:6–12). He stressed Jesus' authority, particularly His authority as Israel's King (cf. v. 36; 19:11, 14), but also His universal kingship.*
- Edwin Blum, *Each of the Gospel writers had a special emphasis in his presentation of Jesus' trial, death, and resurrection. John seems to supplement the material of the first three Gospels. Only he reported the interview with Annas, and he reported the interview with Pilate in much more detail and psychological insight. John did not report the trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin (Mark 14:55–64) with the charge of blasphemy.*
- Warren Wiersbe, *As you read John's account, you see Pilate seeking to find some "loophole" that would please both sides. He was afraid of the crowd, but then he grew more and more afraid of the prisoner! At least three times he announced that Jesus was not guilty of any crime (Luke 23:14; John 19:4; Luke 23:22; John 19:6). Yet he refused to release Him!*
- Leon Morris, *This opening paragraph of the Roman trial shows us Jesus in the hands of the Romans, and the Jews unwilling either to see him freed or to enter the Romans' residence lest they be defiled.*

BEFORE PILATE, JOHN 18:28-40

- A. Jesus was taken before Pilate (28-32)
1. Jewish leaders refused to enter the Praetorium (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.***
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) Matthew 27:2, *And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor.*
 - 2) Mark 15:1, *And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate.*
 - 3) Luke 23:1, *Then the whole company of them arose and brought him before Pilate.*
 - 4) Matthew 27:27, *Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him.*
 - 5) Acts 10:28, *And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean.*
 - b. *Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters.*
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *"They" refers to the Jewish authorities (cf. Matt. 27:1–2; Mark 15:1; Luke 23:1). They brought Jesus from Caiaphas, who was the head of the Sanhedrin that had passed sentence on Jesus, into the Praetorium (cf. Matt. 27:1–2; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66–71). The Sanhedrin had condemned Jesus for blasphemy (Matt. 26:63–66; Mark 14:61–64), which was a capital offense in Israel (Lev. 24:16). However, the Sanhedrin could not pass the death sentence for this offense without Roman agreement, and there was little hope of Pilate giving it. Therefore the Jewish leaders decided to charge Jesus with rebellion against Rome ... The word Praetorium is Latin (praetorium). It identified either the headquarters of the commanding officer of a Roman military camp, or a Roman military governor's headquarters.*
 - 2) Leon Morris, *John inserts a characteristic time note: "it was early" ... there was a Jewish law that cases involving the death sentence could not be held during the night. The chief priests may well have held a session of the Sanhedrin after daybreak in order to give a semblance of legality to the proceedings ...*

- 3) Edwin Blum, *Since the Jewish council did not have the legal right to put Jesus to death, the case had to be brought before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate (A.D. 26–36). Normally the governor lived in Caesarea, but during the great feasts it was prudent for him to come to Jerusalem in case a riot or insurrection took place. Passover was particularly dangerous because emotions ran high as the Jews remembered their deliverance from bondage.*
 - 4) William Hendriksen, *The Sanhedrin had the right to decree death, but did not have the right to execute such a decree. If it was to be carried out, the Romans must make that decision.*
- c. *They themselves did not enter the governor’s headquarters, so that they would not be defiled ...*
- 1) Thomas Constable, *The Jews who brought Jesus to Pilate stayed outside the Praetorium because they wanted to avoid ceremonial defilement. The Jews thought that merely entering a Gentile’s dwelling made them ceremonially unclean (cf. Acts 10:28). This was because the Gentiles did not take precautions to guarantee kosher (i.e., proper) food like the Jews did. Specifically, Gentiles might have yeast in their homes, which would have made participation in the Passover Feast unlawful for any Jew who entered a Gentile home just before Passover (cf. Exod. 12:19; 13:7).*
 - 2) Leon Morris, *We owe to this Evangelist the information that the Jewish leaders would not enter the Praetorium lest they contract defilement and render themselves unable to keep the feast. It was the rule that “The dwelling-places of gentiles are unclean.” Any Jew who entered such a dwelling would immediately contract defilement, a defilement that lasted seven days. This would effectively prevent him from observing the feast. It is a curious commentary on human nature that they were scrupulous about contracting a defilement that would prevent them from keeping the feast on the due date, but they were not at all concerned about taking part in an act of judicial murder.*
 - 3) Edwin Blum, *The location of the palace of the Roman governor is disputed. It could have been at the Antonia Fortress on the north side of the temple area or at one of Herod’s two palaces on the west of the city. The Jews would not enter a Gentile house (in this case the governor’s palace), but they could go into the courtyard or under the colonnades. It is ironic that the Jewish leaders were concerned with ritual uncleanness while they planned murder!*
 - 4) William Hendriksen, *... members of the Sanhedrin who were in the procession which delivered up their prisoner had religious scruples against entering the dwelling-place of a heathen! They did not desire to be defiled. They apparently regarded ceremonial defilement to be a much more serious matter than moral defilement.*
 - 5) George Beasley-Murray, *No more eloquent example than this can be found of the ability of religious people to be meticulous about external regulations of religion while being wholly at variance with God. One result of this decision of the Jewish leaders, however, should be noted: by remaining outside the praetorium they occasion the interchange of scenes wherein Pilate goes into his residence to speak with Jesus and comes out to confer with them. The trial of Jesus before the governor thus is played out like a drama on two stages, front and back ... The effect of this is not only to enhance the dramatic quality of the narrative, but to exclude the Jewish leaders from the revelation of truth given to the Roman governor.*
 - 6) Edward Klink, *the Jews have ironically prepared for the arrival of the true Passover by leading Jesus to the praetorium to be put to death.*
2. Pilate went out to them and asked the charge against Jesus(29-30), ***So Pilate went outside to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this man?” 30 They answered him, “If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you.”***
- a. Related verses for 29-32, see Matthew 27:11-14; Mark 15:2-5, Luke 23:2,3.
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *Pilate evidently addressed the Jews who had assembled outside his headquarters, or perhaps in its courtyard, from a balcony or overlook. He wanted to know their formal charge (“accusation”) against Jesus ... The spokesmen for the Jews eventually evaded Pilate’s question ... they assumed it was serious, and implied that Pilate should trust them and “rubber stamp” their decision.*

- 2) Richard Lenski, *They want no retrial of Jesus under a Roman judge; they want Pilate to accept their verdict and on the strength of this verdict to order the execution of Jesus.*
 - 3) Leon Morris, *It is possible that they were taken by surprise at Pilate's indication that he would try the case himself [v. 29]. They had had his cooperation in making the arrest; now they apparently expected that he would take their word for it that the man the Romans had helped to arrest was dangerous and should be executed.*
 - 4) Edwin Blum, *The Jews' reply to Pilate revealed the hostility between them. (Pilate was hated by them for his harshness and the fact that he was a Gentile ruling over them. Pilate despised them and eventually in the year A.D. 36 they were able to get Pilate recalled to Rome.) At this time Pilate refused to be their executioner. He knew what was going on. He had seen the Triumphal Entry a few days earlier. He knew that envy was the cause of their accusation against Jesus (Matt. 27:18).*
 - 5) Edward Klink, *Pilate's question formally initiates the judicial proceedings. The question is directed at the local subordinates, the accusers, upon whom the Roman officials would consult. In essence, Pilate's question is a request for a charge. And by the response of the Jews in v. 30, it is probably to be interpreted as more demand than request. Pilate may be mocking their decision regarding Jesus as a mere accusation. Thus the trial has begun, with Pilate serving as the judge, the Jews serving as the prosecutor, and Jesus, the accused, without defense ... The scene depicts two worldly authorities fighting over a claim to power that ultimately belongs to neither.*
 - 6) Charles Swindoll, *The exchange between the Jewish officials and their governor illustrates the animosity that existed between them. Their sarcastic reply said, in effect, "If this man were not guilty of something serious, we wouldn't be here, Pilate." Moreover, they appeared to expect his unquestioned cooperation. Romans were not opposed to killing an individual in exchange for civil peace, and Pilate certainly didn't mind killing Jews. He already had two strikes against him, however, so he proceeded with caution.*
 - 7) Grant Osborne, *He begins with a formal question to determine the actual charges against Jesus (18:29–30). The Jewish authorities are defensive and sound somewhat insolent: "If he were not a criminal, ... we would not have handed him over to you." It is possible that they had a preliminary agreement with Pilate (he had sent soldiers to arrest Jesus) and expected him to rubber-stamp their judgment and order the execution. So when he asks for charges, they are nonplussed.*
 - 8) F. F. Bruce, *An outline of the case had probably been conveyed to Pilate in advance, and they hoped that he would be satisfied with this and conduct no further inquiry. But a Roman governor had complete discretion in deciding how to exercise his imperium, and if Pilate decided to investigate the case de novo, they had to accept his decision. It was necessary, therefore, that they should state their charge formally, and the terms in which they did so are made clear in the sequel. Pilate's question in verse 33 implies that they charged Jesus with claiming to be "king of the Jews." Before they formulated their charge, however, Pilate and they engaged in a little further fencing.*
3. Pilate ordered them to judge Him (31), ***Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." The Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death."***
- a. Thomas Constable, *Since the Jews did not charge Jesus formally, there was nothing Pilate could do except hand Him back to them for discipline in their courts. The Jews' response explained why that was an unacceptable alternative: "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." The Jews did stone fellow Jews (cf. Acts 6:11; 7:58–60), but the Jewish leaders wanted Jesus crucified.*
 - b. F. F. Bruce, *Pilate knew very well that they were bringing a capital charge against Jesus, but they had not said so formally thus far, and he pretended not to know this. Since they had found this man to be a criminal, a lawbreaker, then, said Pilate, they should pass judgment on him as their law provided. But they protested that they were unable to do so, since their law provided for capital punishment in a case like this, and the right to inflict the death penalty had been taken away from them ... Their statement, "We are not allowed to put any one to death," is certainly in accordance with Roman provincial practice, in which capital jurisdiction was the governor's prerogative. When Judaea became a Roman province in AD 6 and a Roman prefect was appointed by the emperor to govern it, this prerogative was expressly reserved to him.*
 - c. Leon Morris, *Pilate's attitude brings out into the open the Jews' intention and their difficulty. They are out for an execution, and nothing less will suffice them. But they have difficulty in bringing this about and they look to Pilate to resolve their dilemma.*

- d. George Beasley-Murray, *Pilate's reply, accordingly, was both ironic and humiliating for the Jewish leaders. If by their answer they wished to give the impression that Jesus was offending against their laws, let them judge him according to those laws. If however they wanted to bring about his death they must speak up and state their case clearly, for, as they themselves acknowledged, they had no power to carry out the death penalty; that authority lay in the hands of the governor alone.*
4. John explained that it was a fulfillment of how Jesus was to die (32), ***This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.***
- a. Thomas Constable, *John noted that the Jews' admission that they could not put anyone to death was in harmony with the sovereign plan of God. Jesus had predicted that He would die by crucifixion, not by stoning (cf. 12:32–33). The Romans were the only ones who could condemn a person to death by crucifixion. The Jewish leaders probably also wanted Jesus crucified because the Mosaic Law regarded such a death as proof of God's curse (Deut. 21:22–23).*
- b. F. F. Bruce, *John sees a special significance of another kind in the deprivation of this right ... He means that the whole situation was providentially overruled by God to bring about this result. John has already stated that Jesus' saying about his being "lifted up from the earth" presaged the manner of his death (John 12:32 f.)—presaged, in other words, death by crucifixion. If the Jews had not lost the right of capital jurisdiction, their rulers could have carried out the death sentence in accordance with precedent, which would have been (as later in Stephen's case) by stoning, the penalty prescribed for blasphemy.*
- c. Merrill Tenney, *Ironically, the death that the Jewish hierarchy regarded as a final negation of Jesus' claims became the means of justification apart from the law (Gal 3:13).*
- d. Edwin Blum, *It was necessary for three reasons for Jesus to be crucified by the Romans at the instigation of the Jews: (a) to fulfill prophecies (e.g., that none of His bones be broken; cf. 19:36–37); (b) to include both Jews and Gentiles in the collective guilt for the deed (cf. Acts 2:23; 4:27); (c) by crucifixion, Jesus was 'lifted up' like 'the snake in the desert' [3:14] ...*
- e. Leon Morris, *Just as is the case with Scripture, a word of Jesus cannot lack fulfillment. The saying John has in mind is evidently "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (12:32), for he uses exactly the same expression to describe that saying as he uses here. In view of the extreme rarity of exact repetitions in this Gospel this must be held to be significant. Jesus' prophecy was that he would be crucified, and John now records its fulfillment. Caiaphas's determination to secure a crucifixion fulfills the divine purpose. This perhaps supports the view that the question at issue was not whether the Jews could execute a man, but the way in which he should die. John sees it as necessarily (and the Jews as demanding) a death by crucifixion. I do not understand how this is to be explained other than by reference to the curse: "anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse" (Deut. 21:23). Caiaphas would see this as a way of discrediting Jesus, John as the way Jesus took away the sin of the world.*
- f. George-Beasley Murray, *The chief priests clearly wished to ensure that Jesus was not viewed as a martyr for God's cause, but as an impostor who died under the curse of God. By contrast the Evangelist sees in the death of Jesus by crucifixion God's way of fulfilling his purpose to "lift up" Jesus in the glory of divine love to enthronement with himself; thereby the saving sovereignty is opened for all the world, and the exalted Lord can draw all who will into the eternal life of the kingdom of God.*
- B. Pilate's examination of Jesus (33-38a)
1. He asked Jesus if He was the King of the Jews (33), ***So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"***
- a. Related verses
- 1) John 19:9, *He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.*
 - 2) John 19:12, *From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar."*

b. Comments

- 1) Edwin Blum, *According to Luke (23:2) they accused Jesus of three things: subverting the nation, opposing payment of taxes to Caesar, and claiming to be "Christ, a King."*
- 2) Thomas Constable, *The Jews' accusations motivated Pilate's question. He asked Jesus if He was claiming to be the King of the Jews. Messianic expectation was running high in Jesus' day, and many people were saying that Jesus was the Messiah. The Jewish leaders had charged Jesus with claiming to be this king (Luke 23:2). Now Pilate wanted to hear if Jesus Himself claimed to be this king.*
- 3) Warren Wiersbe, *The question asking Jesus if He was King of the Jews is recorded by each of the Gospel writers. As Roman governor, Pilate would certainly be interested in the claims of any king. Messianic expectations always ran high at Passover season, and it would be easy for a Jewish pretender to incite the people into a riot or a rebellion against Rome. Pilate no doubt felt himself on safe ground when he asked about Christ's kingship.*
- 4) Leon Morris, ... "Are you the king of the Jews?" *In all four Gospels this is Pilate's first question to Jesus (Matt. 27:11; Mark 15:2; Luke 23:5), and in all four his "you" is emphatic. Pilate was incredulous. This man a king? From what he had been told he had clearly been expecting a revolutionary, one who set himself up as a monarch and who had styled himself "King of the Jews." One glance at his prisoner was enough for the governor to discern that it was fantastic to see Jesus in this role. Hence his incredulous question.*
- 5) Kenneth Gangel, *The incredulous Pilate could not imagine this broken and beaten man before him was the king of the Jews.*
- 6) William Hendriksen, *There may have been a touch of ridicule in this question, ridicule not directed at Jesus but at those who had brought such charges against such a prisoner. It is as if Pilate is saying, as he looks intently upon this prisoner: "Are you the king of the Jews? How utterly ridiculous such a charge!" But at the same time, he asked the question, and it required an answer. However, before it could be answered, it would have to be explained.*
- 7) John Hart, *Pilate likely had been informed that Jesus claimed to be the King of Jews. If this were political, the emperor would hold Pilate responsible. So he reentered the Praetorium, and asked Jesus directly, Are You the King of the Jews?*
- 8) Edward Klink, *The clear issue confronting both Jerusalem and Rome, however, is the messianic activities and claims of Jesus. While Jesus rarely spoke in such terms, he did refer to the kingdom of God in his dialogue with Nicodemus (see comments on 3:3; cf. 3:5) and did receive the treatment and attention of a king from both his disciples (see 12:1–11) as well as the Jerusalem crowd (see 12:12–19). Thus to the Jews and to Pilate, Jesus was a kingly claimant in both word and deed.*
- 9) Grant Osborne, *This is the actual charge the Sanhedrin will use in presenting their case to the Romans, that Jesus believes he not Caesar is the true king of the Jewish people and thus remains a threat to Rome (Luke 23:2).*
- 10) F. F. Bruce, *Pilate's question, "Are you the king of the Jews?" shows that Jesus' accusers had by now formulated their charge against him. The accused man was now asked, in effect, whether he pleaded Guilty or Not Guilty.*

2. Jesus asked Pilate how he heard of His kingship (34), **Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?"**

- a. Thomas Constable, *Jesus asked Pilate His question in order to determine how He would answer him. If his question had arisen from his own understanding and curiosity, Jesus presumably would have dealt with him as a sincere inquirer. But if Pilate was merely echoing the Sanhedrin's charge, Jesus would need to answer differently. If Pilate meant: Are You a political king conspiring against Caesar? the answer would be no. If he meant: Are You the messianic King of Israel? the answer would be yes.*
- b. Edwin Blum, *Jesus asked Pilate if he had that idea on his own or if others (Jews) talked to him. Jesus here asked Pilate if he was concerned that He was some political threat to Rome, that is, a revolutionary.*
- c. Warren Wiersbe, *What was our Lord really asking? "What kind of a king do you have in mind? A Roman king or a Jewish king? A political king or a spiritual king?" Jesus was not evading the issue; He was forcing Pilate to clarify the matter for his own sake. After all, it was not Jesus that was on trial; it was Pilate!*

- d. Edward Klink, *Similar to the Jewish “trial,” Jesus again has reversed roles so that the interrogator receives the interrogation and the accuser becomes the accused ... The very foundation of Pilate’s rule is being challenged by the probing counter-question of Jesus.*
- e. Grant Osborne, ... *in verse 34 Jesus shows his political acumen, challenging the source of Pilate’s question, “Is that your own idea, ... or did others talk to you about me?” If it is indeed his own idea, Jesus can probe as to whether Pilate perceives him as a threat and instruct him more deeply. If it comes from the Jews (as Jesus suspects), then it is antagonistic and stems from the leaders’ misconception of the true nature of Jesus’ kingship.*
3. Pilate deferred by asking Jesus what He had done (35), ***Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?”***
- a. Thomas Constable, *Pilate’s reply clarified that he had no personal interest in Jesus’ kingship, and he was indignant that Jesus would suggest such a thing. He simply wanted to understand what Jesus was claiming in view of the Sanhedrin’s accusation. Beyond that he wanted to discover why the Jewish leaders were so intent on doing away with Jesus. His question, “I am not a Jew, am I?” sarcastically denied that Jewish matters such as Jesus’ kingship were of any interest to him personally ... Pilate’s comment about Jesus’ own nation handing Him over to him confirmed John’s introductory statement that Jesus came unto His own, but His own did not receive Him (1:11).*
- b. Edwin Blum, *Pilate sarcastically replied with a question as to whether he was a Jew or not. Of course he was not interested in Jewish questions, but only in matters pertaining to civil government. It must have hurt Jesus deeply to have Pilate press the point that it was the Jews, His own people, and their own religious leaders who had accused Him.*
- c. Leon Morris, ... *Pilate inquires what Jesus has done. That, for Pilate, is the important thing. He is not prepared to accept the accusation of the chief priests at its face value. But something lies behind all this. What is it? Jesus has done something to arouse the hostility of the chief priests. Pilate wishes to drag this out into the open in order to see whether it is something that offends against Roman law or not.*
- d. William Hendriksen, *Although Pilate knew very well that envy (on the part of the Jewish leaders) was the power which had brought Jesus to his residence for judgment, he was not certain that this explained everything. Had the prisoner committed any crime at all? And if so, what was it?*
- e. George Beasley-Murray, *Both persons in this confrontation wish to get behind the façade. Jesus wants to know whether Pilate has any insight of his own which he can lead on to further understanding; if he has merely received the complaints of the Jewish leaders, he is already on the wrong track and has no understanding of what kingship in its ultimate sense (i.e., as applied to Jesus) means. Pilate, on the other hand, by his further statement about Jesus’ being handed over to him by the representatives of his nation and his further question, indicates that he is dissatisfied with the Jewish accusations. What has Jesus done to make the rulers so intent on his execution?*
- f. William Barclay, *How do you expect me to know anything about Jewish affairs?’ He was too proud to involve himself in what he regarded as Jewish squabbles and superstitions. And that pride was exactly what made him a bad governor. No one can govern a people without making an attempt to understand them and to enter into their thoughts and minds.*
- g. Grant Osborne, *He wants only to find out why he has been stuck with this troublesome situation. It is clear that the Jewish leaders are violently opposed to Jesus, and there has to be a reason for that. The one thing he knows is that he has no clue what it could be. Like all Romans, he is completely mystified with it all. Clearly Jesus is no military man or insurrectionist. What has he done to so inflame the leaders? That’s all he cares about.*

4. Jesus declared His kinship as other-worldly (36), **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.”**
- a. Related verses
- 1) John 8:23, *He said to them, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.*
 - 2) John 17:16, *They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.*
 - 3) Matthew 26:53, *Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?*
- b. Comments
- 1) Thomas Constable, ... *Jesus explained that the kingship which he claimed was nothing like the forms of kingship—whether sacral or secular—which were current in the world; it was not the sort of kingship of which Roman law took cognizance.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *Jesus replied that Rome need not fear a political insurrection. He was not a zealot or a revolutionary guerrilla leader. His kingdom is not like that. It is not of this world; it is from another place, that is, heaven. Therefore it comes not by rebellion but by submission to God. Its source was not from men’s acts of violence but from a new birth from heaven which transferred a person out of Satan’s kingdom into God’s kingdom (cf. Col. 1:13; John 3:3).*
 - 3) Warren Wiersbe, ... *He admitted that He is a King; but His kingdom (reign) does not come from the authority of the world. The Jews were under Roman authority, and Pilate was under the authority of the emperor; but Jesus derived His authority from God. His kingdom is spiritual, in the hearts of His followers; and He does not depend on worldly or fleshly means to advance His cause. If His kingdom were from the world, by now His followers would have assembled an army and fought to release Him.*
 - 4) Leon Morris, *Jesus’ reply admits that there is a sense in which he has a “kingdom.” But he stresses that it is not a kingdom as the world understands kingdoms. It does not take its origin from this world, and it is not basically connected with this world. To demonstrate his point Jesus points out that his followers are not engaging in any military activity. Had he been interested in what this world calls a “kingdom” a necessary first step would have been to recruit soldiers. His servants would be fighting men. But now, as things are, it is plain to all that he looks for no kingdom from this world.*
 - 5) Edward Klink, *This kingdom has an authority “from above,” above and beyond the authority of Jerusalem and Rome. It is a difference in the kind of kingdom and not the degree of kingdom, which stands in sharp contrast to the trifling kingdom challenge between Jerusalem and Rome. In short, “the world” and all its kingdoms are a subset of Jesus’s kingdom ... He does not say that this world is not the sphere of his authority, but that his authority is not of human origin.*
 - 6) Grant Osborne, *Jesus has earlier defined his origin as “from above” rather than of this world (8:23; see also 3:31). He now defines his kingship in the same way, and by “kingdom” he means his kingly reign. So he is no threat to Pilate or Rome and at the same time is revealing to him an entire realm of reality he never knew existed. There is somewhat of an evangelistic attempt in this.*
 - 7) Charles Swindoll, *The kingdom of heaven is founded on truth, and the arrival of the Messiah on a lonely Bethlehem night was nothing short of an invasion. Now, sometime before death and before Christ returns in power, each individual must choose which kingdom he or she will serve: the kingdoms of earth or the kingdom of God, kingdoms founded on power or the kingdom founded on truth.*
5. Jesus responded to Pilate’s repeated question by declaring His position and purpose (37), **Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”**
- a. Related verses
- 1) John 16:28, *I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.”*
 - 2) John 8:14, *Jesus answered, “Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.*

- 3) John 8:18, *I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.*"
- 4) 1 John 4:6, *We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.*
- 5) 1 John 2:21, *I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.*
- 6) 1 John 3:19, *By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him;*
- 7) John 10:16, *And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.*
- 8) John 10:27, *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *Pilate did not understand the distinctions between Jesus' kingdom and Caesar's kingdom that Jesus was making. But He did understand that Jesus was claiming to have a kingdom. Consequently he next tried to get Jesus to claim unequivocally that He was a king. Jesus admitted that He was a king, but He needed to say more about His reign if Pilate was to understand His kingship ... The main reason that Jesus had come into the world was to bear witness to the truth. By this He meant that He came to reveal God (cf. 14:6). Jesus produced subjects for His kingdom by revealing God, by calling on people to believe on Him, and by giving them eternal life. This prepared them to participate in His kingdom. Everyone who truly wanted the truth followed Jesus because His teachings had the ring of truth. Jesus' words were an invitation for Pilate to listen to Him and to learn the truth. Jesus showed more interest in appealing to Pilate than in defending Himself. This desire for the welfare of others marks all of Jesus' interviews in the fourth Gospel.*
- 2) Richard Lenski, *Jesus lays hold of Pilate's heart. The hour of grace has come for Pilate, the blessed hour when the King of grace draws his heart, yet a fatal hour if that King's grace is spurned.*
- 3) Edwin Blum, *Since Jesus spoke of a kingdom, Pilate seized on the word "king." You are a king, then? Jesus answered that question in the affirmative, and then clarified that His kingdom is not like Rome's. It is a kingdom of truth which overshadows all kingdoms. He said, Everyone on the side of truth listens to Me. Jesus in a few words asserted His divine origin (I was born ... I came into the world) and ministry (to testify to the truth). Later He became Pilate's judge.*
- 4) Warren Wiersbe, *But Jesus not only told Pilate of His origin; He also explained His ministry: to bear witness unto the truth. His was a spiritual kingdom of truth; and He won people to His cause, not through force, but through conviction and persuasion. He spoke the truth of God's Word, and all who were His people would respond to His call (see John 8:47; 10:27). Rome's weapon was the sword; but our Lord's weapon was the truth of God, the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17).*
- 5) Kenneth Gangel, *Once again Jesus set truth as the dividing standard for right and wrong. But if truth was all he cared about, he posed no threat to Rome. Pilate would have to weasel out of this situation in some other way.*
- 6) Leon Morris, *Jesus goes on to speak of himself as having been born and as having come into the world, a most unusual statement. Both affirmations can be paralleled elsewhere, but the combination is unusual, and in this situation, unexpected. The governor might not have understood all the meaning that Jesus put into the expression but at least it would impress him with the fact that Jesus was an unusual person and, further, that he was speaking of an unusual entry into this world. It is difficult to see how the implication that Jesus is claiming preexistence is to be avoided. He is saying that he had a purpose in coming into the world in the first place.*
- 7) William Hendriksen, *... he was born for the very purpose of being a king! "Born" not only, as any other person might be born, but "come into the world" from another realm, namely, from heaven. From the ivory palaces of heaven he had descended into this sin-cursed world in order there to take upon himself his mediatorial task, his saving ministry ... For the idea that Jesus came to testify to the things which he had seen and heard while in the Father's presence see 3:11, 32; 8:28, 38; 12:49; 14:10; cf. also 17:8 ... Very significantly Jesus adds, "Whoever is of the truth listens to my voice." This was, of course, an implied invitation that Pilate, too, might listen!*

- 8) George Beasley-Murray, *Jesus therefore, having explained what his kingdom is not, now declares what it is: his kingdom is the Kingdom of Truth ... He came among men with a mission from God to bear witness to the truth of God's saving sovereignty, and to reveal it in word and deed.*
- 9) Edward Klink, ... *for Jesus is "the truth," which means that he is the reality through which participation in God and even (human) existence is confirmed and finds its meaning ...*
- 10) William Barclay, *Pilate felt that for him the truth was still a mystery—and that now he had got himself into a situation where there was no chance to learn it. It may be he jested, but it was the jest of despair ... Into his life there came Jesus, and suddenly he saw what he had missed. That day he might have found all that he had missed; but he had not the courage to defy the world in spite of his past, and to take his stand with Christ and a future which was glorious.*
- 11) Grant Osborne, ... *Pilate is being challenged to choose truth over falsehood. He is challenging Pilate in this sense to become his follower and turn to the side of truth.*
- 12) Charles Swindoll, *Jesus presented Pilate with a choice—the same choice He offers us: compromise truth and advance your status in the kingdom of Tiberius, or walk in the light of truth and receive unseen rewards of God's kingdom.*

6. Pilate responded by asking "What is truth?" (38a), **Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"**

- a. Thomas Constable, *Obviously Pilate was not one who truly sought the truth. He turned away from Jesus' offer to reveal it with a cynical comment that implied that the truth was unknowable ... Undoubtedly, Pilate's experience as a Roman official to whom others constantly lied, and his personal desire to use truth and falsehood to accomplish his own ends, accounted for his cynicism. The very idea that someone would aim his whole life at revealing truth was, from his perspective, both foolish and improbable ... Pilate turned away from the One who not only claimed to reveal the truth but was in fact "the Truth" in Person, plus the Way and the Life—without waiting for an answer.*
- b. Leon Morris, ... *Pilate's question was not an attempt to add to his store of knowledge; it was no more than a way of dismissing the subject. Pilate has learned what he wants to know. Jesus is no revolutionary. He represents no danger to the state.*
- c. John Hart, *Pilate asked sarcastically, What is truth? and went out again to the Jews. What is truth? is typically viewed as a profound theological or philosophical question, but Pilate was simply asking a rhetorical question about the truth related to the case against Jesus, and could be translated, "What is the truth?" Although he now told them, I find no guilt in Him (the first of three times; cf. 19:4, 6), he would soon sidestep the truth about Christ's innocence.*
- d. Edward Klink, *Pilate's question is itself his answer to the issue surrounding the person and work of Jesus ... By concluding the interrogation in this abrupt manner, the narrator wants the question to do more than offer insight into the person of Pilate; it is intended to echo in the mind of the readers.*
- e. Grant Osborne, *He doesn't even give Jesus a chance to respond but turns abruptly and dismisses Jesus' offer, leaving the praetorium and going outside to address the Jews gathered there. He knows Jesus poses no threat to Rome and that the charges of the Sanhedrin do not concern Rome and thus are invalid. At the same time, he wants no more of Jesus' message of truth and so sadly joins the legion of unbelievers, ironically in this way becoming an ally of the Jews against Jesus. This reply is justly famous and is the heart-cry of all seekers of truth. With this John asks his readers to search their hearts for any openness to truth, especially the truth of Jesus.*
- f. Edwin Blum, *Pilate's question, What is truth? has echoed down through the centuries ... the significant thing is that he suddenly turned away from the One who is "the Truth" (14:6) without waiting for an answer. Pilate's declaration of Jesus' innocence is important. He would die like a Passover lamb, a male in its prime without blemish (Ex. 12:5).*
- g. F. F. Bruce, *Jesus' words might be lost on Pilate, but John hopes and believes that many of his readers will take them to heart, and come to know him who is not only "a witness to the truth" but the truth in person—the truth that makes men and women free.*

TO BE CONTINUED, LORD WILLING!