

# John 18

Jesus' Betrayal and Arrest;  
Investigation by Annas; Trial by Pilate

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## Day 1

### Read John 18:1-11

#### Jesus' betrayal and arrest

1. Where did Jesus and the disciples go? 18:1

- What happened there? Matthew 26:36-46; See also Luke 22:43,44

2. Who came to arrest Jesus? How well were they armed? 18:3 (See also Matthew 26:47)

**For Your Information:** " The presence of both the armed Roman cohort (typically 1000 soldiers) and Jewish officials (the temple police) makes it evident that there had already been some agreement between the two regarding the capture and interrogation of Jesus."  
- Mike Calvert

3. What reason is given for Jesus' surrender? 18:4a (Compare Luke 18:31-32)

**Food for Thought:** "Between the dismissal of Judas from the upper room and the actual arrest in the garden, at least two hours must have elapsed. In that time Jesus could have left Jerusalem and have been well on His way across the river to Perea, or to some hiding place where the Jewish leaders could not have found Him. Judas' betrayal would have recoiled on himself, since he would have failed to produce Jesus, and undoubtedly the priests would have wreaked the vengeance of their disappointment on him. At one stroke Jesus could have saved Himself and could have disposed of the traitor. Why should He have gone deliberately to the place where Judas would surely look for Him, and wait until the traitor came to capture Him?"  
- Merrill Tenney (254,255)

4. Compare the attitude and actions of Judas (18:2,3,5b; Matthew 26:48,49) with Jesus' (18:4,5a).

- What happened to Judas after the arrest? Matthew 27:3-10

5. What name did the soldiers use to refer to Jesus? 18:5,7 (What connotation did that have? John 1:46)

6. What name did Jesus reply with? 18:5 (Cf. 4:26, 6:20, 8:24,28, 58; 13:19)

- How did the people respond? 18:6

7. From Matthew 26:53-54, what control did Jesus have over the circumstances?

8. Even in this dark hour, how did Jesus show his love for:

- The disciples? 18:7-9
- His enemies? 18:10,11 (See Luke 22:51)
- The Father? 18:11

**Optional Digging Deeper**  
What other details about the arrest do you find in Matthew 26:55,56?

**For Your Information:** "Take Me, let these go" is the same sacrificial love that takes Jesus to the cross for us all. In bearing our judgment for sin, He said the same thing to the Father's justice."  
- David Guzik

9. What adjectives would you use to describe Peter's state of mind and the action he took? 18:10

- What didn't he understand? 18:11 (See Matt. 26:52; John 18:36)

**For Your Information:** "In the Old Testament the "cup" often has associations of suffering and of the wrath of God (Leon Morris)' (Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17,22; Ezekiel 23:31-33).  
- Life Change Series on Romans (171)

...At some point before He died...an awesome spiritual transaction took place. God the Father laid upon God the Son all the guilt and wrath our sin deserved, and He bore it in Himself perfectly, totally satisfying the wrath of God for us. As horrible as the physical suffering of Jesus was, this spiritual suffering - the act of being judged for sin in our place - was what Jesus really dreaded about the cross. This was the *cup* - the cup of God's righteous wrath - that He trembled at drinking (Luke 22:39-46, Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:15). On the cross, Jesus became, as it were, an enemy of God who was judged and forced to drink the cup of the Father's fury. He did it so we would not have to drink that cup."  
- David Guzik

**Applying the Word:** The world uses fear and force to try to control lives. God uses the power of love to change lives. How is this confrontation a picture of these two forces? (What principles can you draw from it? Who seems to win? Who really wins? Who seems in control? Who is really in control?...)

## Day 2

### Read John 18:12-24

#### Examination by Annas

10. Where did they take Jesus first? 18:13

- What does 18:14 indicate about their intent? (Compare Mark 14:1,2)

**For Your Information:** "The trial before Annas took place at his private lodgings, in which Caiaphas may or may not have participated. Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, had been high priest between the years 7 and 14, and following him at intervals, five of his sons and his son-in-law held the office. He wielded a powerful influence, and was regarded as high priest emeritus. In this case he was consulted that he might render a preliminary opinion to establish the nature of the accusation which should be ratified by the Sanhedrin in a formal meeting on the following morning." - Merrill Tenney (256)

11. Who followed Jesus after His arrest? 18:15 (Where had the other disciples gone? Matt. 26:56)

- Why were they able to enter the courtyard? 18:15,16 (What danger were they facing? 18:19)

12. How do you account for Peter's cowardice with the slave girl versus his bravery in the garden? 18:17

**Optional Digging Deeper**  
What happened later when Peter and John took a stand for Jesus? Acts 4:1-21;5:12-42

13. What was Jesus questioned about and on what did He focus? 18:19,20

**For Your Information:** "**Questioned**" (18:19) "Not legal, since witnesses were supposed to be brought in first to establish guilt. The accused was not required to prove his innocence." - NIV Study Bible (1632)

- What does Jesus' response in 18:20 say about the nature of the questioning? Compare Matthew 26:55-60

14. What legal issue did Jesus point to 18:21? (See Deuteronomy 17:6; Exodus 23:1-3)

**For Your Information:** "**Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them**"  
"In saying this, Jesus wasn't being uncooperative, only asserting His legal right. There was to be no formal charge until witnesses had been heard and been found to be truthful. It was the High Priest's duty to call forth the witnesses first, *beginning with those for the defense*. These basic legal protections for the accused under Jewish law were not observed in the trial of Jesus." - David Guzik

15. What does their response to Jesus' correction say about their attitude? 18:22

16. What adjectives would you use to describe Jesus' response to being struck? 18:23 (Compare Paul's response to being struck: Acts 23:2,3)

- How did they respond to Jesus' challenge? 18:24 (Who else was there? Mark 14:53)

**Food for Thought:** "The few words of this hearing showed that the trial would be unfair because unbelief had already condemned Jesus, and was merely seeking testimony to justify its attitude."  
- Merrill Tenney (258)

17. What did they attempt to do at this inquiry? What problems did they have? Mark 14:55-56

- What false charge did they focus on? Mark 14:57-60 (Compare John 2:19-21)
- What charge did they switch to? Mark 14:61-64

18. What other abuses did Jesus suffer? Matthew 26:67,68; Mark 14:65

**Applying the Word:** *Have you ever been falsely accused? What comfort do you find in this passage?*

### Day 3

#### Read John 18:25-32

#### Peter's denials

19. List what Peter denied and to whom.

- 18:17
- 18:25
- 18:26,27 (What impact does the word "immediately" have?)

**Food for Thought:** "The sudden collapse of Peter's inflated purpose [John 13:37] revealed the inherent weakness of the flesh apart from supernatural grace."  
- Merrill Tenney (258)

20. From the gospels of Mark and Luke:

- How strong were Peter's denials? See Mark 14:71
- What other interesting detail do you learn from Luke 22:60-62?
- What comforting words was Peter able to rely on even when he had failed? Luke 22:31,32

### **Jesus before Pilate**

21. When did they take Jesus to Pilate? 18:28 What condition do you think Jesus would have been in at this point emotionally and physically.



- What was one of the reasons Jesus' trial was being carried out so secretly? Mark 12:12; 14:1,2

22. What adjective would you use to describe the Jews' "religious" restraint in 18:28?

23. In answer to Pilate's question, what charge did the Jews bring against Jesus? 18:30

- What charges did they come up with apparently when pressured? See Luke 23:1,2,5. (Compare Matthew 27:12-14; Mark 15:3)

**For Your Information:** "It is clear that Jesus' accusers were not looking for a fair trial that followed the proper legal process. They wanted the Roman governor to rubber-stamp the sentence that they had already passed...Further evidence of the lack of interest in a fair trial is the fact that after Jesus' first session with Pilate, the chief priests and their officials did not ask Pilate what his verdict was, but told him what verdict they wanted (19:6a)." - Africa Bible Commentary (1290)

(Luke 23:1,2) "*subverting our nation*. Large crowds followed Jesus, but he was not misleading them or turning them against Rome. *Opposes payment of taxes*. Another untrue charge (see Luke 20:25). *Claims to be Christ, a king*. Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, but not a political or military king, the kind Rome would be anxious to eliminate." - NIV Study Bible (1585)

"Jesus went through an unfair trial in our place so that we would not have to face a fair one." - NIV Life Application Study Bible

24. How did Pilate feel about the Jews' intentions? 18:31a

- What did Pilate know about their motives? Matthew 27:17-18

**For Your Information:****PILATE, PONTIUS**

"The fifth Roman procurator of Judea (ruled A.D. 26-36)...The Jewish historian Josephus provides what little information is known about Pilate's life before A.D. 26, when Tiberius appointed him procurator of Judea. The sketchy data suggests that Pilate was probably an Italian born Roman citizen whose family was wealthy enough for him to qualify for the middle class. Probably he held certain military posts before his appointment in Judea. He was married (Matt 27:19), bringing his wife, Claudia Procula, to live with him at Caesarea, the headquarters of the province. Pilate governed the areas of Judea, Samaria, and the area south as far as the Dead Sea to Gaza. As procurator he had absolute authority over the non-Roman citizens of the province. He was responsible to the Roman governor who lived in Syria to the north (Luke 2:2). Pilate never became popular with the Jews. He seemed to be insensitive to their religious convictions and stubborn in the pursuit of his policies. But when the Jews responded to his rule with enraged opposition, he often backed down, demonstrating his weakness. He greatly angered the Jews when he took funds from the Temple treasury to build an aqueduct to supply water to Jerusalem. Many Jews reacted violently to this act, and Pilate's soldiers killed many of them in this rebellion. It may be this or another incident to which Luke refers in Luke 13:1-2. In spite of this, Pilate continued in office for ten years, showing that Tiberius considered Pilate an effective administrator." - Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

"Pilate was characterized in his day as 'naturally inflexible and ruthless in his conceit' and he was charged with corruption, violence, and extortion. In times past he had shown great insensitivity to Jewish religious traditions and concerns, and the Jews had complained to Rome about him before. The emperor Tiberius was suspicious of conspiracy, and not in any mood to tolerate any kind of disloyalty, so Pilate the governor was on thin ice." - David Guzik

25. Why did the Jews want Pilate to convict Jesus? 18:31b (Note: Stoning was allowed on occasion. For examples see Acts 7:58.)

26. What was the real reason for Jesus' death by the Roman official and by crucifixion? 18:32 (Cf. 12:32,33)

- Why did Jesus choose to die that way? Galatians 3:13; Deuteronomy 21:22-23

**Applying the Word:** Consider Jesus foreknowledge of Peter's denial. What does this say about God's forgiveness and His grace for new beginnings?

**Day 4****Read John 18:33-40****Jesus testifies to Pilate**

27. Which of the charges concerned Pilate? John 18:33 (Cf. Luke 23:2)

**For Your Information:** "The opening interrogation, 'Art thou the King of the Jews?' (1833) was evoked by the charges which the chief priests had transmitted to him. From their standpoint it was the most damaging accusation possible, because it would be regarded by the Roman governor as tantamount to treason." - Merrill Tenney (260,261)

28. Why do you think Jesus asked Pilate a question in return? 18:34

- How did Pilate defend himself? 18:35

**For Your Information:** “[Jesus] was encouraging Pilate to reflect on what he had just said. Did Pilate believe that Jesus was the king of the Jews? If he did he was on the right track. But Pilate waved away the question (18:35a)...he distanced himself from what was happening by labeling it a religious matter.”  
- Africa Bible Commentary (1290)

John’s portrayal of this incident was designed to bring the personalities of Pilate and Jesus into sharp relief...It was a trial of Pilate before Christ instead of Christ before Pilate...

The dignified reply of Jesus...took Pilate by surprise. The defendant vouchsafed no violent protestations of innocence, nor was He sullenly defiant. He treated Pilate as an equal, not as a superior; and questioned him in turn. Jesus politely but firmly asked him whether he were acting on his own initiative, or whether the charge were secondhand. He challenged directly both his motives and his justice.”  
- Merrill Tenney (258,259,261)

29. What did Jesus say about:

- His Kingdom: 18:36
- His Mission: 18:37

**Optional Digging Deeper**

Review the claims in John that Jesus has made about truth:

1:14

1:9

6:32-33

7:18

8:32

8:45-47

14:6

15:1

**Food for Thought:** “Augustine observed from this verse that earthly kingdoms are based upon force, pride, the love of human praise, the desire for domination, and self interest - all displayed by Pilate and the Roman Empire... The heavenly kingdom, exemplified by Jesus and the cross, is based on love, sacrifice, humility, and righteousness... The key to living in Jesus’ kingdom is not found in trying to rule over others or things, but in being more fully ruled by God. ‘This is the crucial point. While human politics is based on the premise that society must be changed in order to change people, in the politics of the Kingdom it is people who must be changed in order to change society. (Charles Colson - *Kingdoms In Conflict*)”  
- David Guzik

30. What was Pilate’s verdict? 18:38 (See also Luke 23:13-15)

**Optional Digging Deeper**

For an additional investigation by Herod in the middle of Pilate’s investigation see Luke 23:6-12. What answers did Jesus give? What kind of treatment did He receive?

**For Your Information:**

**“What is truth”**

“With a few words, Jesus had confronted [Pilate] with the real issue at stake; his attitude toward truth. Had he realized it, the answer to his question, whether prompted by cynicism, scorn, or sincere desire, was within arm’s reach of him, for Jesus was the Way, *the Truth* and the Life (14:6). Pilate was facing the opportunity of a lifetime.”  
- Merrill Tenney (262)

31. Why do you think Pilate tried to offer the people a compromise? 18:39

32. From Mark 15:6-7, what else do you learn about Barabbas?

33. From Luke 23:18-24, how persistent was the crowd? (What was going on behind the scenes? Mark 15:11)

**For Your Information:** "It is a strange, almost insane scene: a cruel, ruthless Roman governor trying to win the life of a miracle-working Jewish teacher against the efforts of both the Jewish leaders and the crowd. How could the crowd turn so quickly against Jesus? There are many possible explanations. First, many of them were probably disappointed that this Messiah who rode into Jerusalem didn't do what they wanted a Messiah to do. Second, there is a tendency in many people to tear down the very heroes they have built up; we see this in our culture today."  
 – David Guzik

34. Review the accusations made against Jesus:

Matthew 26:63-65	
John 18:30	
John 18:33	
John 19:7	
Luke 23:2	
Luke 23:5	

**Applying the Word:** How does Jesus' statement "Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" or "Everyone on the side of truth listens to Me" impact you?