

Betrayal in the Garden

Jesus in John 18



Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. (John 18:2)

“When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it.” John 18:1)

- ✓ Jesus finished his teaching time with his disciples (John 13-17):
 - He taught them to serve (John 13)
 - He comforted and encouraged them (John 14)
 - He taught them to lean into him, abide in him, obey him and to love him (John 15)
 - He prepared them for what was about to take place with not just himself (death on a cross) but also the persecution they would face (John 16)
 - He taught them how to pray (John 17)
- ✓ After Jesus finished praying he and the disciples left Jerusalem

A few notable comments

- ✓ Although Jesus is about to be betrayed by one of his disciples (Judas Iscariot) and subsequently arrested, **it doesn't mean he was a victim**. Jesus was in complete control of his life. Judas, the religious leaders, Roman authorities and the people who will shout “crucify him” were all a part of the plan and will of God.

“The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

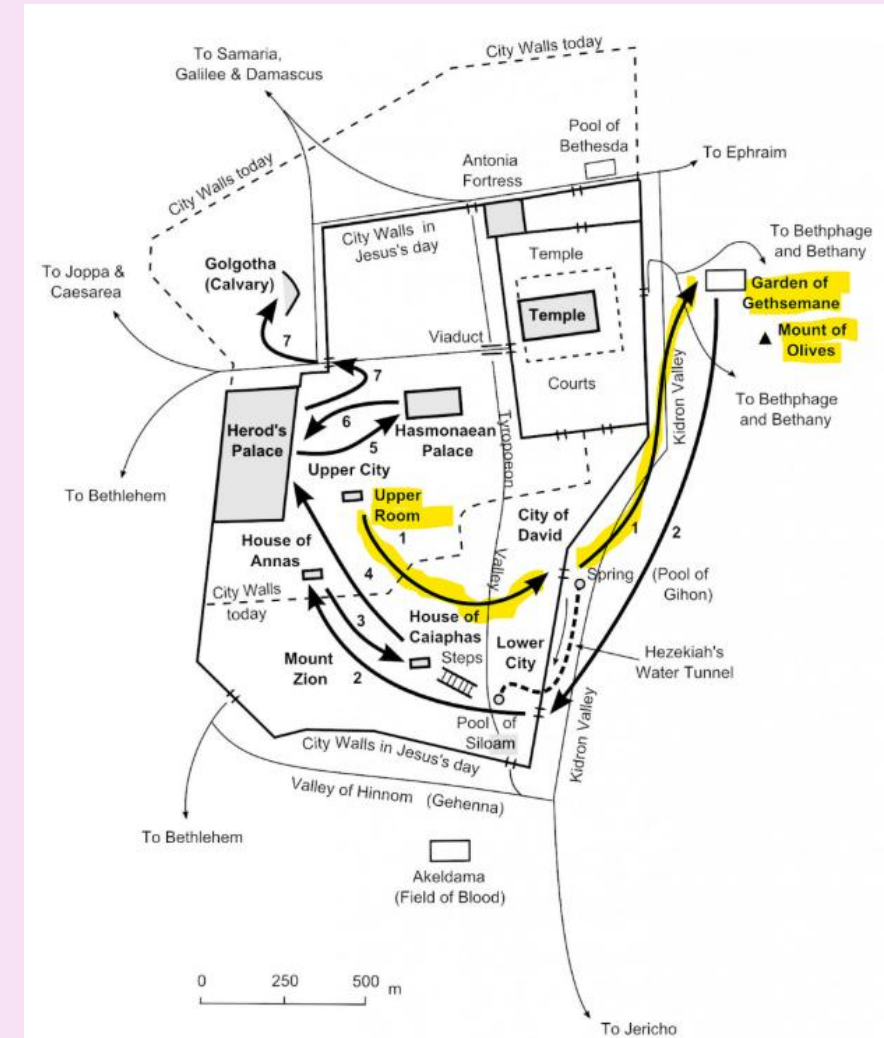
(John 10:17-18)

“Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. **This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge**; and **you, with the help of wicked men**, put him to death by **nailing him to the cross**. **But God raised him from the dead**, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him ” (Acts 2:22-24)

- ✓ Given the significance of Christ's death – John devoted nearly half of his gospel account to the events of Passion Week (John 12-20)
- ✓ John's emphasis on Christ's deity remains central even as he is betrayed and killed

“When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it.” John 18:1)

- ✓ Jesus and the disciples depart Jerusalem
- ✓ They cross the Kidron Valley (east of Jerusalem)
- ✓ Located on the western slope of the Mount of Olives was a garden.
- ✓ John doesn't name the garden but Matthew and Mark identify it as the Garden of Gethsemane. (Matthew 26:36, Mark 14:32)
- ✓ Gethsemane means “oil press” suggesting it was probably an olive orchard.



“When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it.” John 18:1)

✓ Why the Garden of Gethsemane?

“Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” (Matthew 26:36)

“They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” (Mark 14:32)

✓ Jesus frequented the Mount of Olives with his disciples throughout his ministry

✓ Gethsemane was well known to Judas as told by John in 18:2 – *“Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples.”*

✓ It was in the garden where Jesus would go to pour out his heart to the Father

“Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So, Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.” John 18:2-3)

- ✓ It is sad to think that Judas (a trusted friend) will betray Jesus in this sacred place where Jesus would pray to his Father.
- ✓ Judas was **clearly motivated by greed** and personal gratification:

“But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, “Why wasn’t this perfume sold, and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages. He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.” John 12:4-6)

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.” (I Timothy 6:10)

*“Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests and asked, **“What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?”** So **they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver.** From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.” (Matthew 26:14-16)*

A Noteworthy Comparison

- ✓ I can't help but think about another "garden" where a different kind of betrayal took place – The Garden of Eden.

*"Now **the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden**; and **there he put the man he had formed**. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (Genesis 2:8-9)*

"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die." (Genesis 2:15-17)

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:1-5)

A Noteworthy Comparison - Continued

“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, **she took some and ate it.** She also gave some to **her husband**, who was with her, and **he ate it.** **Then the eyes of both of them were opened,** and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. (Genesis 3:6-7)

- ✓ **The serpent (Satan) promised they would receive something he was incapable of giving them**; which was wisdom, and that they would be like God and able to discern good from evil.
- ✓ **Adam and Eve were betrayed by Satan**, and **in turn, Adam and Eve betrayed God**. Their lives and the lives of mankind would forever be changed as God would now banish them from the Garden that he had created for them. **They would now need a Savior!**

*“To the woman he said, “I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; **with painful labor you will give birth to children.** Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” (Genesis 3:16)*

*“To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ “**Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.** It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” (Genesis 3:17-19)*

A Noteworthy Comparison - Continued

“So, the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. **And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” (Genesis 3:14-15)**

- ✓ Who is this “serpent” anyway and how did he come to the Garden of Eden:
 - He was once an angel who himself desired to be equal with God (Isaiah 14:12-17, Ezekiel 28)
 - He was cast out of heaven and took a third of the angels with him (Revelation 12) and they constitute his “offspring” which are all the demonic forces that fight against man and his offspring hoping one day to defeat God but that will never be the case and Christ’s death on the cross sealed his fate.
- ✓ What does “enmity” mean and how does it apply to Satan and mankind?
 - It literally means a “deep animosity between morally responsible beings”
 - When God makes this judgement upon Satan, He is literally saying that Satan (although he thought he had) will not have control over the entire human race (mankind) but instead will face animosity with them
 - God instead will enable mankind (even in his sinful condition) to love God and hate Satan. This is made possible by a “new birth” (being born again, John 3:1-15) because Christ will willingly go to the cross, give his life, and rise from the dead so that those who believe can have eternal life with God. (John 3:16-21)

A Noteworthy Comparison - Continued

✓ The Garden of Eden

- A beautiful place where God walked and communed directly with Adam and Eve
- A perfect place of intimacy between God and his creation
- A place where Satan tempted Eve to betray God (commit sin) and led Adam to do the same

✓ The Garden of Gethsemane

- A sacred place where Jesus communed with his Father
- A quiet place where Jesus often taught his disciples and shared his deepest thoughts
- A place where Satan led Judas to betray Jesus

“They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” He took Peter, James and John along with him, and **he began to be deeply distressed and troubled.** **“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,”** he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.” Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. “Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. **Yet not what I will, but what you will.**” Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Simon,” he said to Peter, “are you asleep? Couldn’t you keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him. Returning the third time, he said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? **Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!**” (Mark 14:32-42)

“Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. **So, Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees.** They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.” John 18:2-3)

- ✓ The detachment of soldiers probably consisted of anywhere from 200-600 men
- ✓ There were members from the temple police force (they made the actual arrest)
- ✓ There were also an unidentified number of Pharisees
- ✓ Judas led this group to arrest Jesus because Judas knew that Jesus would be there in the garden
- ✓ All previous attempts to arrest/seize Jesus never came to be but now it was his time, and Jesus allowed himself to be taken into custody. (Luke 22:53, John 10:17-18)

“Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, “Whom are you seeking?” They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am He.” And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, “I am He,” they drew back and fell to the ground.” (John 18:4-6)

- ✓ The original Greek does not contain the word “He” so the text should simply read “I Am”. Jesus used this name at other times (John 8:24, 28, 58). The use of the name of God (Exodus 3:14) meant Jesus was claiming to be God
- ✓ Although the religious leaders considered it blasphemy for Jesus to make that claim – it doesn’t make it any less true and the resurrection will prove it.
- ✓ The fact that Judas fell to the ground just like the others, showed that he, nor the religious leaders, had any power over Jesus. They didn’t seize Jesus, he went with them willingly, which was the will of His Father.

“Then He asked them again, “Whom are you seeking?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus answered, “I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,” that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, “Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.” (John 18:7-9)

- ✓ The temple police only had orders to arrest Jesus and that may be why Jesus asked the question twice so that it was clear that the disciples were not included.
- ✓ Why did Jesus shield the disciples from arrest?
 - He was the good shepherd who protects his sheep *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”* (John 10:11)
 - He wasn't like the hired hand who would flee at the first sign of trouble. *“The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.”* (John 10:12-13)
- ✓ He kept them from arrest so they would not be lost (John 6:37-40, John 10:25-30)

“Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant’s name was **Malchus.) Jesus commanded Peter, “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?””** (John 18:10-11)

- ✓ It’s unclear what Peter thought he would gain from doing this and his impulsiveness will draw a stern rebuke from Jesus.
- ✓ All four gospels mention the incident but only John records the name of the servant
- ✓ This could have gone bad for Peter and the other disciples which is probably the reason Jesus commanded (rather abruptly) Peter to sheath his sword.
- ✓ Only Luke records the healing of Malchus’ ear (Luke 22:51)
- ✓ The “cup the Father has given me” that Jesus spoke of was the blood he would shed on the cross (Matthew 26:39)

Jesus On Trial

“Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled” (Matthew 26:57)



“Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.” (John 18:12-14)

- ✓ The arresting party consisted of both Jews and Gentiles
 - Soldiers
 - The Roman Tribune (commander)
 - Jewish official – temple police force
 - Other ranking Jewish leader (Luke refers to them as elders - Luke 22:52)
- ✓ This arrest (as far as the Romans and Jews were concerned) was potential volatile
- ✓ It was only a few days earlier that many common people hailed Jesus as the Messiah

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- ✓ This was a preliminary hearing, and the specifics of this hearing are only recorded by John and not the other Gospel writers.
- ✓ The other 2 “religious trials were:
 - Jesus appearing before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin (Luke 22:54, Mark 14:53-65, and Matthew 26:57-68)
 - When Jesus met with the elders the next morning where they affirmed the decision reached earlier (Luke 22:66-71, Matthew 27:1, Mark 15:1)
- ✓ The civil trial consisted of 3 parts; Jesus before Pilate (John 18:28-38), Jesus before Herod (Luke 23:6-12) and Jesus before Pilate again (John 18:39 - 19:16)

“Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. **They bound him and brought him first to Annas**, who was the **father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year**. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.” (John 18:12-14)

- ✓ If you recall, Jesus disrupted Annas’ “business operations” when he cleansed the temple not just once but twice. (John 2:13-16, Matthew 21:12-13). It’s entirely possible that Annas had Jesus brought to him first, in order to gloat over his capture of what he considered Jerusalem’s greatest troublemaker.
- ✓ I would not want to be in Annas’ shoes at Judgment Day for Annas clearly had no love for Jesus as we will see from each of the trials leading to Jesus’ crucifixion

“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is **the book of life**. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.
(Revelation 20:11-12)

“Anyone whose name was **not found** written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15)

“Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. **They bound him and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year.** Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.” (John 18:12-14)

- ✓ Although Annas didn't hold the office of high priest at this time – he was still the most powerful figure in the Jewish hierarchy.
- ✓ Annas served as high priest from A.D 6 when he was appointed by Quirinius (governor of Syria) until he was removed in A.D. 15 by Valerius Gratus (procurator of Judea). Though deposed, he remained the power behind the Judean throne.
- ✓ Although Jewish law considered the high priestly office a lifetime appointment, the Roman authorities frequently changed the position to weaken the power of the position.
- ✓ Caiaphas (the high priest that year) was the son in law to Annas, but it would be Annas who would conduct this initial preliminary hearing.

“Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest’s courtyard, but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in.” (John 18:15-16)

- ✓ After Jesus was arrested, we are told that the disciples had all fled (Matthew 26:56) but at some point, Peter and this “other disciple” (probably John) returned to observe the questioning between Annas and Jesus. (Matthew 26:58)
- ✓ Some consider this “other disciple” to possibly be Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea, but the consensus is that it was John, the author of this gospel.
- ✓ This “other disciple” was known by the high priest (although we aren’t told how he knew him) and he was allowed in and eventually gained entry for Peter as well.

“You aren’t one of this man’s disciples too, are you?” she asked Peter. He replied, “I am not.” It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.” (John 18:17-18)

- ✓ This is an interesting contradiction by Peter - after an earlier boast that he would lay down his life for Jesus; ***“Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” Then Jesus answered, “Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!”***. (John 13:37-38)
- ✓ It is also interesting that the “other disciple” was not asked the same question and if so, there is no record that the “other disciple” denied being a disciple of Jesus.
- ✓ Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself and serves as a warning to us all that thinking too highly of ourselves can be an invitation to fail. (Proverbs 16:18)

“Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. “I have spoken openly to the world,” Jesus replied. “I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely, they know what I said.” (John 18:19-21)

✓ This trial was anything, but fair for the verdict had already been predetermined:

“Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. What are we accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation.” Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, “You know nothing at all! **You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish. He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. So from that day on they plotted to take his life.” (John 11:47-53)**

✓ Nothing about this trial was morally or legally right – it would end in murder

✓ The questioning was designed in such a way to get Jesus to incriminate himself with the hope of uncovering a crime that would justify a death sentence that had already been decided on. It was a sham and Annas will one day see that!

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- ✓ Jesus had no ulterior motive and Annas knew that to be true
- ✓ Jesus had taught openly about his purpose, and he preached about the saving gospel, offering it to all who would believe.

“After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee. When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?” Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.” Matthew 11:1-5)

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

- ✓ This wasn't a snarky response by Jesus (“Ask those who heard me”), but a demand for Annas to present his case and to call his witnesses

“When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face. “Is this the way you answer the high priest?” he demanded. “If I said something wrong,” Jesus replied, “testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?” Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.” (John 18:22-24)

- ✓ Not only would I not want to be Annas at the Day of Judgement, I certainly would not want to be this official! It was bad enough that he struck a prisoner who had yet to be convicted of a crime, but to strike Jesus, who was God in human flesh, is not something I would want to answer to on Judgment Day.
- ✓ Jesus maintained his composure and although it was completely unfair and wrong for the official to strike him, Jesus gave them every opportunity to make it right. If he said something wrong, it was their duty to prove it. If he said nothing wrong, then they had no right to strike him.
- ✓ Annas had no authority (since he wasn't the reigning high priest) to bring formal charges against Jesus, so he referred the case to Caiaphas.

“Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So, they asked him, “**You aren’t one of his disciples too, are you?**” He denied it, saying, “I am not.” **One of the high priest’s servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, “Didn’t I see you with him in the garden?”** Again, Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.” (John 18:25-27)

- ✓ During the questioning by Annas, Peter was still warming himself by the fire in the courtyard of Annas’ home.
- ✓ This was Peter’s chance to redeem himself from his first denial, but he failed for a second and a third time.
- ✓ All four gospels record Peter’s 3 denials of Jesus showing its importance. Perhaps for us all to see our own personal weakness and total dependence on God
- ✓ Immediately the rooster crowed just as Jesus predicted, Jesus then looked at him (Luke 22:61) and Peter (remembering his words) went outside and wept bitterly (Luke 22:62). After the resurrection Jesus meets with Peter and will restore him.

“Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So **Pilate came out to them** and asked, **“What charges are you bringing against this man?”**

(John 18:28-29)

- ✓ John doesn't record the 2nd and 3rd phases of the “religious trials”
 - Jesus appearing before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin (Luke 22:54, Mark 14:53-65, and Matthew 26:57-68)
 - When Jesus met with the elders the next morning where they affirmed the decision reached earlier (Luke 22:66-71, Matthew 27:1, Mark 15:1)
- ✓ John picks up the sequence of events as they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium (Pilate's temporary headquarters). This would most likely have been Fort Antonius or Herod's palace.

“Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them but and asked, “What charges are you bringing against this man?”
(John 18:28-29)

- ✓ Since the Jewish council didn't have the authority to put Jesus to death, they had to bring the case before the Roman governor at the time which was Pontius Pilate
 - Normally the governor lived in his palace in Caesarea but during special feasts he would come to Jerusalem to bring calm when potential unrest was evident
 - Regardless of why Pilate was there, the religious leaders needed him so they could exercise their plan to put Jesus to death
- ✓ The trial that was about to take place was the **greatest sham trial** and the **most egregious miscarriage of justice** for the entirety of human history.

“None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Corinthians 2:8)

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- ✓ It is worthwhile to stop and remind ourselves that, despite the envy, hatred, jealousy and evil desires that the Jewish religious leaders had toward Jesus, they were only capable of pulling off this sham trial and ultimately the most vile and criminal death sentence ever brought against an innocent man, because God allowed it.
- ✓ This plot to kill Jesus had been in the works for some time (John 5:18) but now in God’s timing he permitted Judas to betray him and hand him over to the religious leaders so they could carry out their plans to silence Jesus.
- ✓ It is ironic that the Jewish leaders were more concerned with their ritual cleansing in preparation for the Passover yet planned to murder an innocent man – **what hypocrisy!** They needed Pilate to complete their plans and **now the civil trial begins**.

“If he were not a criminal,” they replied, “we would not have handed him over to you.” Pilate said, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.” “But we have no right to execute anyone,” they objected. This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.” (John 18:30-32)

- ✓ Pilate refused to do anything without a sufficient charge against Jesus

“For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him” (Matthew 27:18)

- It is interesting, given Rome’s lack of concern for non-Romans that he would care so much but he clearly didn’t want to be their executioner.
- History reveals Pilate to be an exceptionally cruel tyrant and hated by the Jews that he ruled over. So why care so much about the accuracy of the charges?
- ✓ The charge that the Jewish authorities made against Jesus was **blasphemy** and their method of execution, if found guilty, was **death by stoning**. Rome had no such law against blasphemy which is why Pilate requested they judge Jesus by their laws.

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- ✓ The conclusion we can draw here is that, perhaps (due to Roman law) the Jews lost their rights to execute the death penalty against their own with some exceptions. Such as the case with the stoning of Stephen. (Acts 6:8-7:60)
- ✓ Perhaps, the Sanhedrin had the authority to condemn someone but only the Romans could have them executed legally.
- ✓ The main reason why it would be the Romans who will perform the execution by crucifixion is because that is precisely what Jesus had predicted would happen.

“We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.” (Mark 10:33-34)

“Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?” “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?” Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place” (John 18:33-36)

- ✓ This looks to be a private interview between Pilate and Jesus and according to Luke 23:2, the Jews accused Jesus of 3 things:
 - Subverting their nation
 - Opposing the payment of taxes to Caesar
 - Claiming to be the Christ – a King
- ✓ The charges were of course false for Jesus said just the opposite in his teachings, and on the topic of taxes he said; “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” (Matthew 22:21)

“Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “**Are you the king of the Jews?**” “**Is that your own idea,**” Jesus asked, “**or did others talk to you about me?**” “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?” Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place” (John 18:33-36)

- ✓ The focus was drawn to the charge of Jesus claiming to be a king. Perhaps Pilate was probing to see if Jesus was some type of political threat to Rome.
- ✓ To which Jesus responds; **Is that your own idea,**” Jesus asked, “**or did others talk to you about me?**
 - Had Pilate asked this on his own, then Jesus’ answer would be no because Jesus was no threat to Rome in the military or political sense
 - Jesus was the true king of Israel but that doesn’t seem to be the intent of Pilate’s question. Had it been, then the answer would have been yes.

“Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?” **“Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied.** “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. **What is it you have done?**” Jesus said, **“My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders.** But now **my kingdom is from another place**” (John 18:33-36)

- ✓ It is a sad commentary that Pilate appears to have no idea who Jesus is and clearly doesn't understand the 2000+ year history of the Jewish people he now rules over.
- ✓ Equal to that, Pilate has no clue as to the accusation and meaning of the sin of blasphemy or any other crime committed by Jesus
- ✓ Jesus, knowing the outcome will be death on a Roman cross anyway (Pilate could not stop that), Jesus assures Pilate that he is no threat, for had he been, he never would have been arrested in the first place. As such, the kingdom that Jesus spoke of, in which he would reign as King was something Pilate lacked understanding of.

“Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?” Jesus answered, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all.” (John 18:37-38)

- ✓ Jesus’ reference to a “kingdom” prompted Pilate to probe further and he asks Jesus “Are you a king then”?
- ✓ Jesus responds in the affirmative but then clarifies that the kingdom of which he speaks is not like the kingdom of Rome – in fact, it is far from it!
- ✓ Jesus is “the way, **the truth** and the life”(John 14:6) and those who believe in him and follow him know the truth and in turn know God. It is the reason Christ was born; **to bear witness of that truth**. Sadly, Jesus stood in his midst, and Pilate still didn’t understand. Pilate was wise enough to recognize that Jesus posed no threat to Roman rule and was innocent of the charges of sedition and insurrection. (Luke 23:2)

“But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” Then they all cried again, saying, **“Not this Man, but Barabbas!”** Now Barabbas was a robber.” (John 18:39-40)

- ✓ Pilate seemed not to care about who Jesus truly was, he also lacked the courage of his convictions, and choosing to ignore any form of a commitment to justice, he takes the easy way out:
 - He learns that Jesus is from Galilee and decides to send Jesus to be judged by Herod (Luke 23:6-7) hoping to avoid Jesus’ death falling on his shoulders.
 - Thinking that the crowd would prefer Jesus over Barabbas (a robber, a murdered and an insurrectionist), he offered to release one of them (as an act of pardon) and the crowd cried out for the release of Barabbas over Jesus.
- ✓ Sadly, Pilate is unable to stop the vehement and vicious hatred the religious leaders had for Jesus, and as we will see in the next chapter, they will cry out – “crucify him”!