

SBCOD Bible Study Notes

10-29-25

John 18

Betrayal And Arrest In The Garden – Verses 1-6

¹ 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. ² Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. ³ 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. ⁴ Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?” ⁵ “Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “I am he,” Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) ⁶ When Jesus said, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

18:1-3 The Jewish religious leaders were given authority by the Romans to make arrests for minor infractions. The Roman soldiers may not have participated in the arrest but accompanied the temple guards to make sure matters didn't get out of control.

18:4-5 John does not record Judas's kiss of greeting (Matthew 26:49; Mark 14:45; Luke 2:47-48), but Judas's kiss marked a turning point for the disciples. With Jesus' arrest, each one's life would be radically different. For the first time, Judas openly betrayed Jesus before the other disciples. For the first time, Jesus' loyal disciples ran away from him (Matthew 26:56). The band of disciples would undergo severe testing before they were transformed from hesitant followers to dynamic leaders.

18:5-6 The men may have been startled by the boldness of Jesus' question or by the words “I am he,” a declaration of his divinity (Exodus 3:14). Or perhaps they were overcome by his obvious power and authority.

Jesus Willingly Goes With The Arresting Army – Verses 7-9

⁷ Again he asked them, “Who is it you want?” “Jesus of Nazareth,” they said. ⁸ Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go.” ⁹ This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: “I have not lost one of those you gave me.”

18:7 He asked them again: Jesus didn't want the soldiers to panic and injure the disciples. Jesus called their attention back to Him, and asked them again a question they were probably hesitant to answer. I have told you that I am: Jesus said the same words as before (I am, ego) yet Judas and the troops did not fall to the ground as before. This shows that these were not magic words, but previously they all fell at the conscious display of God's power.

18:8 If you seek Me, let these go their way: After the display of power described in John 18:6, Jesus did not continue to oppose His arrest. Jesus willingly gave Himself up to protect His disciples. This was the same sacrificial love that would find its ultimate peak at the cross. It also shows why Jesus knocked the soldiers to the ground; the show of power was to protect the disciples, not Jesus Himself.

Peter Attacks One Among The Party Arresting Jesus & Jesus Trial Before Annas – Verses 10-12

¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) ¹¹ Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" ¹² Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him ¹³ and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. ¹⁴ Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.

18:10-11 Trying to protect Jesus, Peter pulled a sword and wounded the high priest's servant. But Jesus told Peter to put away his sword and allow God's plan to unfold. At times it is tempting to take matters into our own hands, to force the issue. Most often such moves lead to sin. Instead, we must trust God to work out his plan. Think of it— if Peter had had his way, Jesus would not have gone to the cross, and God's plan of redemption would have been thwarted. Luke records that Jesus touched the man's ear and healed him (Luke 22: 51).

18:11 "The cup" refers to the suffering, isolation, and death that Jesus would have to endure in order to atone for the sins of the world.

18:12-13 Jesus was immediately taken to the high priest's residence, even though this was the middle of the night. The religious leaders were in a hurry— they wanted to complete the execution before the Sabbath and get on with the Passover celebration. This residence was a palace whose outer walls enclosed a courtyard where servants and soldiers could warm themselves around a fire.

18:13 Both Annas and Caiaphas had been high priests. Annas was Israel's high priest from A.D. 6 to 15, when he was deposed by Roman rulers. Caiaphas, Annas's son-in-law, was appointed high priest from A.D. 18 to 36/37. According to Jewish law, the office of high priest was held for life. Many Jews, therefore, still considered Annas the high priest and still called him by that title. But although Annas retained much authority among the Jews, Caiaphas made the final decisions. Both Caiaphas and Annas cared more about their political ambitions than about their responsibility to lead the people to God. Though religious leaders, they had become evil. As the nation's spiritual leaders, they should have been sensitive to God's revelation. They should have known that Jesus was the Messiah about whom the Scriptures spoke, and they should have pointed the people to him. But when deceitful men and women pursue evil, they want to eliminate all opposition. Instead of honestly evaluating Jesus' claims based on their knowledge of Scripture, these religious leaders sought to further their own selfish ambitions and were even willing to kill God's Son, if that's what it took, to do it.

Peter And John Follow Jesus To The House Of The High Priest – Verses 15-16

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

18:15-16 The other disciple is probably John, the author of this Gospel. He knew the high priest and identified himself to the girl at the door. Because of his connections, John got himself and Peter into the courtyard. But Peter refused to identify himself as Jesus' follower. Peter's experiences in the next few hours would change his life.

Peter Denies His Relationship To Jesus The First Time – Verses 17-18

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

18:17-18 You are not also one of this Man’s disciples, are you: A simple servant girl who minded the door to the courtyard of the high priest’s house questioned Peter. This first test of Peter’s loyalty seemed easy; he could have answered nothing, mumbled something, or said, “I know Him.” I am not: Peter responded to her negative statement with a negative of his own. Instead of being loyal to Jesus, he denied being His disciple.

The High Priest Questions Jesus – Verses 19-24

¹⁹ Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. ²⁰ “I have spoken openly to the world,” Jesus replied. “I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. ²¹ Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said.” ²² When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face. “Is this the way you answer the high priest?” he demanded. ²³ “If I said something wrong,” Jesus replied, “testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?” ²⁴ Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

18:19 During the night, Jesus had a pretrial hearing before Annas prior to being taken to Caiaphas and the entire Sanhedrin (Mark 14:53-65). The religious leaders knew they had no grounds for charging Jesus, so they tried to build evidence against him by using false witnesses (Mark 14: 55-59).

18:22-24 We can easily blame the Sanhedrin for their injustice in condemning Jesus, but we must remember that Peter and the rest of the disciples also contributed to Jesus’ pain by deserting and disowning him (Matthew 26:56,75). While most of us are not like the religious leaders, we are all like the disciples, for all of us have been guilty of denying that Christ is Lord in vital areas of our lives or of keeping secret our identity as believers in times of pressure. Don’t excuse yourself by pointing at others whose sins seem worse than yours. Instead, come to Jesus for forgiveness and healing.

Peter’s Second And Third Denials – Verses 25-27

²⁵ 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.” ²⁶ 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?” ²⁷ Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

18:25 The other three Gospels say that Peter’s three denials happened near a fire in the courtyard outside Caiaphas’s palace. John places the first denial outside Annas’s home and the other two denials outside Caiaphas’s home. This was very likely the same courtyard. The high priest’s compound was large, and Annas and Caiaphas undoubtedly lived near each other.

18:25-27 Imagine standing outside while Jesus, your Lord and Master, is questioned. Imagine watching this man, whom you have come to believe is the long-awaited Messiah, being abused and beaten. Naturally Peter was confused and afraid. It is a serious sin to disown Christ, but Jesus forgave Peter (21:15-17). No sin is too great for Jesus to forgive if you are truly repentant. He will forgive even your worst sin if you turn from it and ask his pardon.

Jesus Before Pilate – Verses 28-32

²⁸ 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. ²⁹ So Pilate came out to them and asked, “What charges are you bringing against this man?” ³⁰ “If he were not a criminal,” they replied, “we would not have handed him over to you.” ³¹ Pilate said, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.” “But we have no right to execute anyone,” they objected. ³² This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

18:28 By Jewish law, entering the house of a Gentile would cause a Jewish person to be ceremonially defiled. As a result, he could not take part in worship at the temple or celebrate the festivals until he was restored to a state of “cleanness.” Afraid of being defiled, these men stayed outside the house where they had taken Jesus for trial. They kept the ceremonial requirements of their religion while harboring murder and treachery in their hearts.

18:29 This Roman governor, Pilate, was in charge of Judea (the region where Jerusalem was located) from A.D. 26 to 36. Pilate was unpopular with the Jews because he had raided the temple treasuries for money to build an aqueduct. He did not like the Jews, but when Jesus, the King of the Jews, stood before him, Pilate found him innocent.

18:30 Pilate knew what was going on; he knew that the religious leaders hated Jesus, and he did not want to act as their executioner. They could not sentence him to death themselves— permission had to come from a Roman leader. But Pilate initially refused to sentence Jesus without sufficient evidence. Jesus’ life became a pawn in a political power struggle.

18:31 Pilate made four attempts to deal with Jesus: (1) He tried to put the responsibility on someone else (18:31); (2) he tried to find a way of escape so he could release Jesus (18:39); (3) he tried to compromise by having Jesus flogged rather than handing him over to die (19:1-3); and (4) he tried a direct appeal to the sympathy of the accusers (19:15). Everyone has to decide what to do with Jesus. Pilate tried to let everyone else decide for him— and in the end, he lost.

Pilate Questions, Jesus Clarifies – Verses 33-35

³³ Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” ³⁴ “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?” ³⁵ “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”

18:33-35 If Pilate was asking this question in his role as the Roman governor, he would have been inquiring whether Jesus was setting up a rebel government. But the Jews were using the word king to mean their religious ruler, the Messiah. Israel was a captive nation, under the authority of the Roman Empire. A rival king might have threatened Rome; a Messiah could have been a purely religious leader.

Jesus & Pilate Discussion – Verses 36-38

³⁶ 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.” ³⁷ “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to

me.” ³⁸ **“What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him.**

18:36-37 Pilate asked Jesus a straightforward question, and Jesus answered clearly. Jesus is a king, but one whose kingdom is not of this world. There seems to have been no question in Pilate’s mind that Jesus spoke the truth and was innocent of any crime. It also seems apparent that while recognizing the truth, Pilate chose to reject it. It is a tragedy when we fail to recognize the truth. It is a greater tragedy when we recognize the truth but fail to heed it.

18:38 Pilate was cynical; he thought that all truth was relative. To many government officials, truth was whatever the majority of people agreed with or whatever helped advance their own personal power and political goals. When there is no standard or acknowledgement of truth, there is no basis for moral right and wrong. Justice becomes whatever works or whatever helps those in power. In Jesus and his Word we have a standard for truth and for our moral behavior.

Pilate Tries To Release Jesus, But The Crowd Cries For Barabbas – Verses 39-40

³⁹ **But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release ‘the king of the Jews’?”** ⁴⁰ **They shouted back, “No, not him! Give us Barabbas!” Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.**

18:39-40 Barabbas was a rebel against Rome, and although he had committed murder, he was probably a hero among the Jews. The Jews hated being governed by Rome and paying taxes to the despised government. Barabbas, who had led a rebellion and failed, was released instead of Jesus, the only one who could truly help Israel.