

CCF Study Notes
Tuesday 7 AM Study
9 May 2006
John Chapter 18

Before beginning to read from John Chapter 18 let's spend time in prayer, considering why Jesus came and what He revealed of the Father. Let's ask God that we might:

1. **Cross over** with Jesus and not cross over against Jesus;
2. **Grasp** how safe we are in Christ;
3. **Know** Whom we are seeking, and why;
4. **Respond** appropriately to attacks on Christ;
5. **Judge** rightly concerning the things of God;
6. Enter the **Kingdom of God**, and
7. **Not** just go along with the crowd.

"When Jesus had spoken these words..." Notice the context of this chapter – the private ministry of Jesus and especially His prayer set the context for chapter 18. How prepared was Jesus for these events? Who was it crossed the Kidron Valley in the Old Testament, fleeing his betrayer? Key events leading to the fall of man took place in a garden. Key events leading to the salvation of many also took place in a garden. Notice further that Jesus often met with His disciples in this garden. There is something very beautiful and peaceful about that picture.

Jesus is clearly in command – even in the hour of His arrest. His haunting question fills the night air, searching hearts, "Whom are you seeking?" Perhaps we need answer that question ourselves! Notice their somewhat insulting answer, "Jesus of Nazareth!" Beware of those who insist on calling Jesus by this name. They reveal their own ignorance. At His answer, "I am!" they all fall back.

John's gospel differs from the others in **not** recording some of the incidents in Gethsemane, in particular, Jesus' prayer is not recorded. (Why not?) In fact there is a phrase which almost seems to contradict the other gospels. It is there in Jesus' reply to Peter. What is it? How can this account be harmonized with the others? Sometimes we don't understand the prayer in Gethsemane – and its outcome in particular. John records the outcome, but not the prayer.

Notice that **two** disciples went with Jesus to the house of Annas. There is general agreement as to who that other disciple is. (Which apostle is almost never named in this gospel?) This other disciple helped Peter gain admission to the house of Caiaphas. And it

was actually this very act of admitting Peter that brought Peter's first denial. Access to Jesus sometimes comes at a price!

The High Priest did not really want to know the truth. So when Jesus suggested that the truth was painfully obvious to even the masses, the answer was taken to be disrespectful – even though entirely true. Nor was Annas really the High Priest – he was acting in a role that was not His. Everything about this "trial" was illegal under the laws of the time. Trials were to be conducted in a public way, at specific places and times. The defendant was not obliged to incriminate himself. All these rules were waved in the rush to judgment. Do we not sometimes turn to vigilante justice in the face of someone more righteous than ourselves? We must be careful!

There is an emphasis in this gospel on the fact that Peter was warming himself at the enemy's fire. This is a place where no disciple belongs. How often do we find ourselves there? What should we do when we find ourselves in the wrong place at the wrong time?

Not only could the Sanhedrin not condemn Jesus according to their law. They couldn't even find Jesus guilty without breaking their own laws! Pilate presumed Jesus to be guilty, yet realized he must judge Jesus by Roman law. The only charge Pilate could come up with was the charge put in his mouth by the Sanhedrin. Jesus did not deny that He was a king. He did deny that His kingdom was any threat to Roman authority at that moment. Truth was the one thing missing all through the process of judging Jesus. There were no legitimate charges to be made. We return here to a theme that was woven throughout Jesus private ministry. There is a distinction made between those who are of the world and those who belong to Christ. What is that distinction? Why would those who are "of the world" want to put Jesus to death? Did they really prefer Roman authority?

The crowds preferred a robber, one who took what was not his, to the Son of God, the King of the Jews, who had every right to claim what was rightly His – even the title King of the Jews. Is that not the real issue today? We have problems with the idea of giving Jesus that which is rightly His. We have been bought with a price. Yet we quickly forget that fact and act as if our lives were our own, that we can do with them as we please.

Jesus was placed in the position of being presumed guilty. Yet none of the charges really stuck. The presumption was as far as possible from the reality. It is easy for us to pass judgment on one another. We put ourselves in the place of those who judged Jesus: We pass judgment on the One who will one day Judge all men!

P.S. MP3s of recordings of these studies in John and copies of these notes are now posted at <http://www.apu.edu/~jstoker>. The MP3s are not streamed, and are 13-14 Megabytes in size. These will easily download via DSL connections but not via dialup connections. These studies are now available via podcast as well, for the really trendy folk among us.