

The Gospel of John

Believe and Live!

Lesson 19

John 18:1–40

Arrest in the Garden

As He so often did with His disciples, Jesus retreated into seclusion, this time to an olive grove. There He would await those who would come shortly to arrest Him and take Him to the cross. The three synoptic gospels record the familiar details of the story before us, but John shares a specific eyewitness account of the events leading to the arrest and trial of Jesus. John omits many of the details the other writers covered and, instead, focuses on aspects that the others leave out.

At a glance ~ **Read John 18:1–40.**

On this particular night, decisions would be made that would forever alter the lives of several individuals. In your initial reading through this chapter, who stands out to you at first glance? Why?

From John's account of the story we learn that Jesus is in complete control of everything; He isn't hiding from anyone (a fact John apparently wants the reader to know). The garden was a familiar place to Jesus and His disciples; even Judas knew well of its whereabouts. But on this particular night this quiet refuge would become lit with the torches of the enemy who were led by the betrayer. Swords would be drawn and words exchanged and, in the end, Jesus would be led away for trial.

1. John paints a graphic picture here in chapter 18:1–11. Who came along with Judas?

The appearance of a uniformed detachment of troops means that the Jewish authorities had most likely obtained permission to bring them along to assist with the arrest.

2. John relates that Jesus knew all things and yet He asks a simple question of His pursuers. What is it?

3. Two times Jesus asks the same question and two times He receives the same answer. The second time He answers, what happens? v. 6

a. What request does Jesus make of the authorities present? v. 8

b. Why was this request significant? v. 9 (See John 6:39 for help.)

4. What impulsive act does Peter commit on the Lord's behalf? v. 10

Luke reports that Jesus touched the servant's ear and healed him. Jesus admonished Peter, telling him that He willingly offered Himself up to the authorities in complete submission to the Father's will. He would drink of the cup of suffering and death.

Picture it ~

Take a look at the other parallel passages in Scripture and write down what you observe from Matthew 26:36–56; Mark 14:32–50; and Luke 22:39–53.

Take a closer look ~ John 18:37

(Memorize and meditate on the memory verse each time you open your lesson.)

“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.’”

What does this verse reveal to you about Jesus? Are you listening?

In focus ~ (Key words) “I Am”

Jesus used this description in 18:5–6 to establish His deity, equating Himself with the God (Jehovah) of the Old Testament. His use of the term was one of the last recorded uses of His power before His death. Do your best to search these words using the resources you have on hand (Bible translations, dictionary, concordance) and write a definition.

Denial by Fire

Outlook ~ Read John 18:12–27.

Jesus is bound and brought to the house of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest (vv. 12–14). As a trial is being planned, Peter and one other disciple (believed to be that of John) follow Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. Here John draws the reader’s attention to the actions of Peter, who is about to make the unforgettable mistake of a lifetime.

1. Who first notices Peter and how does she address him? vv. 16–17
 - a. How does Peter respond in the first of a series of denials? v. 17

- b. Peter was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Who was he accompanying?

- c. Again, what does one of these men ask Peter for the second time? How does Peter respond? v. 25

- d. Who else does John mention that saw Peter warming himself by the fire? What does he ask Peter? v. 26

- e. What does Peter immediately hear following this denial?

2. Read the account in Matthew 26:31–35 and 69–75, as well as Luke 22:54–62, to better understand why this was an extraordinarily difficult moment for Peter. Do you notice anything in these accounts that John does not mention?

3. Annas had previously served as high priest before the position was passed to his son-in-law, Caiaphas. As Annas proceeds to question Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine (vv. 19–23), what critical question does Jesus ask of Him?

If Annas truly wanted to know about Jesus' teaching, he could have asked any number of people, for Jesus taught openly in public before the people.

- a. Receiving a blow from one of the officers standing nearby, what additional question does Jesus pose to Annas? vv. 22–23 (Notice that Jesus does not return evil for evil; He confronts the injustice with the truth, setting forth a model for us to do likewise)

Truth on Trial

Outlook ~ Read John 18:28–40.

While Peter warms himself next to the enemies' fire, Jesus is sent bound to Caiaphas, the present high priest. Early in the morning, He was moved to the Praetorium for further questioning by the Sanhedrin (the Jewish ruling council). John clearly makes mention here of the fact that the Jews would not enter the place of a Gentile, lest they become ceremonially unclean. John makes the distinction between their piousness about personal defilement and their egregious error in sending an innocent man to a cruel death.

Pilate had absolutely no intention of making it easy for the Jewish leaders to accomplish their mission.

1. According to verses 29–32, what does Pilate tell the Jews to do?

Selah ~

"If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you" (v. 30). Do some investigating on your own through the gospels to see if you can identify the charges made against Jesus and note your findings in the space below. Use Matthew 26:61, Luke 23:2, and John 18:30 and 19:7 as your reference points.

If the Jews had directly taken Jesus and delivered Him up to His death, they would have stoned Him by their law. But Jesus repeatedly had spoken of being "lifted up to die," which was a Roman form of execution.

In the verses that follow, Pilate seems curious about who Jesus is but He does not give Pilate a direct answer to his questions. As a result, Pilate concludes the whole matter amounts to petting bickering among the Jews under his authority.

2. What two key questions does Pilate ask of Jesus?
 - a. v. 33
 - b. v. 35

c. What detail does Jesus put forth regarding His kingdom?

Pilate had no doubt witnessed much injustice and suffering in his own time, and so it is with more cynicism than sincerity that he forms the pivotal question: “*What is truth?*” But Jesus had just uttered the answer: “*Everyone who is on the side of truth listens to Me.*”

3. Following his interrogation of Jesus, what conclusion does Pilate make? v. 38

4. Had Pilate been a man of truth himself, he would have released Jesus. Instead, according to the custom of releasing a prisoner at Passover, he offers them Jesus, the King of the Jews. But who do they demand instead?

Betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, forsaken by all the disciples, and condemned by sinners; yet Jesus—the Truth—was not alone, the Father was with Him. And fortunately, the story does not end here.

5. Personal: Why do *you* think the Father would allow Jesus to endure such personal suffering and humiliation *before* going to the cross?

More like Jesus ~

Are *you* becoming more like Jesus? Absolutely! Every time you open the Word and spend time getting to know Him more intimately, you partake in the life-long process of drawing near—going deeper—bearing fruit—becoming more like Him. As you close your lesson today, determine to put into practice what you’ve learned by noting it below.

- Recite your memory verse _____

- Reflect on a lesson you received _____

- Respond with prayer and praise to God _____

Notes