

¹ After Jesus had said these things, He went out with His disciples across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden, and He and His disciples went into it. ² Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with His disciples. ³ So Judas took a company of soldiers and some temple police from the chief priests and the Pharisees and came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

⁴ Then Jesus, knowing everything that was about to happen to Him, went out and said to them, "Who is it you're looking for?"

⁵ "Jesus the Nazarene," they answered.

"I am He," Jesus told them.

Judas, who betrayed Him, was also standing with them. ⁶ When He told them, "I am He," they stepped back and fell to the ground.

⁷ Then He asked them again, "Who is it you're looking for?"

"Jesus the Nazarene," they said.

⁸ "I told you I am He," Jesus replied. "So if you're looking for Me, let these men go." ⁹ This was to fulfill the words He had said: "I have not lost one of those You have given Me."

¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)

¹¹ At that, Jesus said to Peter, "Sheathe your sword! Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given Me?"

¹² Then the company of soldiers, the commander, and the Jewish temple police arrested Jesus and tied Him up. ¹³ First they led Him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. ¹⁴ Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was advantageous that one man should die for the people.

Great attention has been given throughout the book to show that Jesus is in full control of events. How does the description of this location contribute to this fact?

- Jesus has specifically chosen the location He will be arrested. The arrest takes place on His terms.
- He feels a certain level of comfort in this place and knows that Judas will find Him there.
- Note that He is not hiding; He is waiting for events to play out (vs 4a).

Company of soldiers – or, "cohort, detachment"

- Since Roman soldiers are accompanying the temple guard, the Sanhedrin seems to have already consulted Pilate about the matter.
- The term "cohort" is normally used in a military sense to describe a tenth of a legion (6000 men), thus a group of up to 600 men.
 - Although we're probably not dealing with that many, the sheer numbers of soldiers versus disciples is almost comical.

Knowing everything that was about to happen to Him – Jesus is the one person here who has a complete understanding of the situation.

- He is not being taken unwillingly or by surprise.
- He even takes the initiative to engage the soldiers before they have a chance to inquire which one of them is Jesus.
 - Note that John omits Judas' signal, but rather emphasizes Jesus' own words to .

I AM He – again, Jesus repeats the phrase so prominent in this gospel

- The soldiers falling down is a curious detail, but again it emphasizes His superiority.
 - Some have speculated that they can't stand in the face of Jesus' moral superiority.
 - Others, that His calm demeanor and commanding presence unnerved the soldiers.

I have not lost one of those You have given Me – see 17:12

- Part of the reason Jesus has taken the initiative in His own arrest is to protect His disciples.
- The request to let the disciples go is found only in John. Other gospels (particularly Mark) seems to indicate that they escaped by fleeing once Jesus was taken.

Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it

- Peter's willingness to die for Jesus is well-documented, but we can see the absurdity that he believed He, a Galilean fisherman, could prevent Jesus' arrest by fighting back against a large group of trained soldiers.
- It seems apparent that Peter was aiming for Malchus' neck... and missed.

Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given Me? – "cup" (see Mt. 20:22; 26:39; Mk. 10:38; 14:36; Lk. 22:42)

- Jesus' rebuke of Peter shows two things:
 - He is still aware of the necessity of His suffering
 - He is still committed to the fulfillment of the Father's plan

Annas – Only John's gospel includes this meeting...

Appointed high priest by the Romans in 6 AD; deposed by the Roman Procurator Gratus in 15 AD, yet still exercised significant influence over the office.

- High priesthood was a sham, purchased via bribery by influential Jews.
 - Four of Annas' sons held the office within three year period after his deposition, followed by his son-in-law, Caiaphas (11:49; 18:24).
 - [read Barclay's contextual commentary for more context]

How does this contextual information lend itself to showing the authority of Jesus, in contrast to the Jewish leaders?

¹⁵ Meanwhile, Simon Peter was following Jesus, as was another disciple. That disciple was an acquaintance of the high priest; so he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard. ¹⁶ But Peter remained standing outside by the door. So the other disciple, the one known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the girl who was the doorkeeper and brought Peter in.

¹⁷ Then the slave girl who was the doorkeeper said to Peter, "You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?"

"I am not!" he said. ¹⁸ Now the slaves and the temple police had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold. They were standing there warming themselves, and Peter was standing with them, warming himself.

¹⁹ The high priest questioned Jesus about His disciples and about His teaching.

²⁰ "I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus answered him. "I have always taught in the synagogue and in the temple complex, where all the Jews congregate, and I haven't spoken anything in secret. ²¹ Why do you question Me? Question those who heard what I told them. Look, they know what I said."

²² When He had said these things, one of the temple police standing by slapped Jesus, saying, "Is this the way you answer the high priest?"

²³ "If I have spoken wrongly," Jesus answered him, "give evidence about the wrong; but if rightly, why do you hit Me?"

²⁴ Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

²⁵ Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said to him, "You aren't one of His disciples too, are you?"

He denied it and said, "I am not!"

Meanwhile, Simon Peter was following – Here we have a momentary aside from the main narrative, showing events happening at the same time as Jesus' "trial".

- Many commentaries address these events separately, which is good for connecting the action associated with each point of view, but our perception of chronology suffers.

Another disciple – Traditionally thought to be John, based on other instances of self-reference (13:23-26; 20:2; 21:7, 20-23).

- Interesting to note that John's intervention on behalf of his friend directly leads to Peter's first denial (cf 13:38).
- Also interesting to note that Peter also effectively distances himself from John with this answer, since John's association with Jesus is apparently well-known.

The high priest – still refers to Annas at this point, not Caiaphas (see verse 24)

- Since the Jews had already determined to kill Jesus (11:50), what do you think is the purpose of this questioning?
 - To pick apart Jesus' words and devise a plausible excuse for asking Rome to execute him.

I have spoken openly to the world

- It's possible that Annas was hoping to discover some "secret" teaching that Jesus had given His followers.
- In answer to this, Jesus says that He did not teach in secret, but openly.

Question those who heard

- According to the law, proper judicial procedure demanded that "two or three witnesses" must be brought forth in order to charge someone with a crime.
 - Even if Annas had brought truthful witnesses, Jesus is unafraid of what they would say (vs 23).
 - His innocence is underlined by the unnecessary abuse from the temple guard.

²⁶One of the high priest's slaves, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said, "Didn't I see you with Him in the garden?"

²⁷Peter then denied it again. Immediately a rooster crowed.

²⁸Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They did not enter the headquarters themselves; otherwise they would be defiled and unable to eat the Passover.

²⁹Then Pilate came out to them and said, "What charge do you bring against this man?"

³⁰They answered him, "If this man weren't a criminal, we wouldn't have handed Him over to you."

³¹So Pilate told them, "Take Him yourselves and judge Him according to your law."

"It's not legal for us to put anyone to death," the Jews declared. ³²They said this so that Jesus' words might be fulfilled signifying what kind of death He was going to die.

³³Then Pilate went back into the headquarters, summoned Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

³⁴Jesus answered, "Are you asking this on your own, or have others told you about Me?"

³⁵"I'm not a Jew, am I?" Pilate replied. "Your own nation and the chief priests handed You over to me. What have You done?"

³⁶"My kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus. "If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I wouldn't be handed over to the Jews. As it is, My kingdom does not have its origin here."

³⁷"You are a king then?" Pilate asked.

Peter's denial – More details about these last two denials are provided in the synoptics, but John simply includes these to complete Jesus' prophetic statement from 13:38.

- Identifying the last questioner – Malchus' relative - is particularly insightful, showing that John had extensive first-hand knowledge of this event.

From Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters – There is a significant jump in time here, with John omitting the part of the trial covered in Mt 26, Mk 14 and Lk 22.

- John instead skips right to the conversation with Pilate, presumably because he has already proven Jesus' moral superiority over the Jews.

Otherwise they would be defiled – Their hypocrisy apparently knows no bounds.

- They have no qualms about defiling themselves by giving false reports and not acting according to the law.

If this man weren't a criminal – apparently they had been hoping that Pilate would simply ratify the death sentence with no questions asked.

- Essentially: "Just take our word for it and sign the paper, man."

Signifying what kind of death He was going to die –

- Consider: how does this conversation address this detail?
 - Jewish law prescribed stoning for blasphemy or rebellion, but Jesus said He would be "lifted up" (3:14). This will be accomplished through Rome's chosen method of execution: crucifixion.
 - Again, Jesus shows His foreknowledge...

Are you the King of the Jews? – Whether from curiosity or frustration, Pilate proceeds to question Jesus himself, beginning with the only accusation for which he could allow execution: leading a rebellion.

- Since the Jews had already determined to kill Jesus, what do you think is the

Are you asking...?

- The answer to this question determines the nature of Pilate's question:
 - If Jesus is merely seeking a place of prominence among His own people, this is a religious matter and Rome doesn't care about it.
 - However, if Jesus claims the title for political reasons as Pilate has been told, a death sentence is justified by Rome.

“You say that I’m a king,” Jesus replied. “I was born for this, and I have come into the world for this: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice.”

³⁸ “What is truth?” said Pilate.

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, “I find no grounds for charging Him. ³⁹ You have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at the Passover. So, do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”

⁴⁰ They shouted back, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a revolutionary.

What is truth?

- Throughout this conversation, Pilate has shown little understanding of - or concern for - the spiritual side of things.
- It also serves an ironic purpose, showing that no-one on the prosecuting side has any regard for actual truth. All are doing what they want to attempt to achieve their own ends.

I find no grounds... you have a custom... –

- It is the judge’s responsibility to release a man determined to be innocent.
- Pilate, in his cowardice, attempts to place the sentencing back on the mob.
 - His plan backfires, as the crowds shout for a true insurrectionist: Barabbas.

“Annas was the power behind the throne in Jerusalem. He himself had been High Priest from A.D. 6 to 15. Four of his sons had also held the high priesthood and Caiaphas was his son-in-law. That very fact is itself suggestive and illuminating. There had been a time, when the Jews were free, when the High Priest had held office for life; but when the Roman governors came, the office became a matter for contention and intrigue and bribery and corruption. It now went to the greatest sycophant and the highest bidder, to the man who was most willing to toe the line with the Roman governor. The High Priest was the arch-collaborator, the man who brought comfort and ease and prestige and power not with bribes only but with close cooperation with his country's masters. The family of Annas was immensely rich and one by one they had intrigued and bribed their way into office, while Annas remained the power behind it all.

Even the way in which Annas made his money was most probably disgraceful. In the Court of the Gentiles there were the sellers of [animals] for the sacrifices, those sellers whom Jesus had driven out. They were not traders; they were extortioners. Every [animal] offered in the Temple had to be without spot and blemish. There were inspectors to see that it was so. If a victim was bought outside the Temple it was certain that a flaw would be found. The worshipper was then directed to buy at the Temple booths where the [animals] had already been examined and where there was no risk of rejection. That would have been convenient and helpful but for one thing... The whole business was sheer exploitation; and the shops where the Temple [animals for sacrifice] were sold were called The Bazaars of Annas. They were the property of the family of Annas; it was by the exploitation of the worshippers, by trading on the sacred sacrifices that Annas had amassed a fortune. The Jews themselves hated the household of Annas. There is a passage in the Talmud which says: "Woe to the house of Annas! Woe to their serpent's hiss! They are High Priests; their sons are keepers of the treasury; their sons-in-law are guardians of the Temple; and their servants beat the people with staves." Annas and his household were notorious.

Now we can see why Annas arranged that Jesus should be brought first to him. Jesus was the man who had attacked Annas' vested interest; he had cleared the Temple of the sellers of victims and had hit Annas where it hurt--in his pocket. Annas wanted to be the first to gloat over the capture of this disturbing Galilaean”.

“John 18:12-14, The Gospel of John, Vol. 2, William Barclay