

IV. EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST (18,19)
John Chapter 18

A. THE THINGS WHICH OCCURRED IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE (18:1-11)

1. Firstly, we note that Jesus and His disciples had crossed the brook Kidron into a garden (1). This garden is identified as Gethsemane (Matt. 27:36). Notice Jesus' agony and prayers in the garden followed before His arrest (Matt. 26:36-46).
2. Then Judas came with a band of men to take Jesus (2-9).
 - a. Notice this band came with lanterns and torches to find the One who is the light of the world (3).
 - b. When Jesus asked whom they sought He identified Himself, not only as Jesus of Nazareth, but also as the eternal "I Am". This resulted in a glimpse of His glory which literally knocked them off their feet (4-6).
 - c. Then Jesus asked them and identified Himself a second time (7). He then asked that His disciples might go free (8,9).
3. Thirdly, we are told that Peter rose up to resist this mob, drew his sword, and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest whose name was Malchus (10).
 1. This action brought a rebuke from the Lord and an explanation of what this all was leading up to. (11).
 2. This action also resulted in one more final demonstration of Jesus' miraculous power which authenticated His deity. Note Jesus touched his ear and healed him (Lk. 22:50,51).

B. THE THINGS WHICH OCCURRED WHEN JESUS WAS BROUGHT BEFORE ANNAS (18:12-14,24).

1. Notice only John's gospel records this preliminary hearing before Annas and it is not clear for what purpose. Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas. He had served as high priest and so had five of his sons. At this time his son-in-law, Caiaphas held the office. Annas was somewhat of a high priest emeritus whose opinion was valued and sought.
2. This occurrence before Annas may have been to secure his opinion about Jesus and establish some grounds upon which to accuse Him. One thing is clear, this marked the beginning of the religious trials brought about by the Jews which led to the civil trials by the Romans and the crucifixion of Jesus.

C. THE THINGS WHICH OCCURRED OUTSIDE THE JUDGMENT HALL (18:15-18; 18:25-27).

1. Firstly, one of the disciples, known to the high priest, spoke to the maid who kept the door and this gained Peter entrance into the courtyard outside the judgment hall (18:15-17). When this maid who

kept the door asked Peter if he was one of Jesus' disciples, he denied Jesus the first time (18:17).

2. Then we are told that Peter mingled with the servants and officers by a fire to conceal his identity (18:18). Some of these then asked Peter if he was a disciple of Jesus and he denied a second time (18:25).
3. Finally, one of the servants of the high priest related to Malchus asked Peter, "did not I see thee in the garden with Him?" Peter replied by denying the Lord a third time (18:26; Mk. 14:70,71). This fulfilled what the Lord had said earlier in response to Peter's words of loyalty (Lk. 22:31-34) Matthew's gospel account says that Peter left the courtyard at this time and went out and wept bitterly (Matt. 26:76).

D. THE THINGS WHICH OCCURRED WHEN JESUS WAS BROUGHT BEFORE CAIAPHAS (18:19-23).

1. First, the high preist questioned Jesus about His disciples and His teaching. Jesus replied by saying that he should ask His disciples whom He had openly talked (18:19-21).
2. At this point one of the officers smote Him for answering the high priest in such a manner (18:22).
3. Jesus then replied pointing out their inconsistency. They could not accuse Him of speaking evil but they had smote Him for declaring the truth (18:23).
4. Jesus was then led to the judgment hall and Pilate went out and questioned them about the accusations against Him (18:28-32). Note that John does not record the third stage of the Jewish trial which involved Jesus before the Sanhedrin in a formal trial (Matt. 27:1,2; Mk. 15:1). Notice the details of what was involved in this trial are recorded in Mark 14:53-65.

E. THE THINGS WHICH OCCURRED WHEN JESUS WAS BROUGHT BEFORE PILATE (18:28-40).

1. Pilate questioned Jesus about being the King of the Jews and what He had done. Jesus replied that His kingdom was not of this world. He had come to bear witness of the truth and everyone who knew the truth would hear Him (18:33-37).
2. Pilate then asked Jesus, "What is truth?" He then went out to the Jews and reported Jesus' innocence (18:38). Someone has said, "This was a trial of Pilate before Jesus, instead of Jesus before Pilate." And rightly so, because Pilate was looking at the *Truth incarnate* and was faced with making a personal decision about Him.
3. Pilate then gave the Jews a choice based on a custom of the Jews at the Passover Feast. Thus, he tried to appease the Jews and in the process release Jesus. They responded by crying out for Barabbas, a robber, to be released instead of Jesus (18:39-40). Notice Matthew and Mark record how the priest stirred up the people on this occasion to ask for Barabbas (Matt. 27:20; Mk. 15:11).

QUESTIONS WHICH WE MAY APPLY TO OUR LIVES

1. What evidence do you find in this chapter which proves that Jesus was the Son of God? Note 18:6,10.

2. What do you think led Judas to betray the Lord Jesus? Name some other things which have led others to betray Him and give some examples. _____

3. What lesson can we learn about religion and one's relationship with God from this chapter?

4. What truth about the flesh and the spirit do we see revealed in Peter's denials?

5. This chapter deals with making choices and taking sides. How does this apply to us and others?

6. How many things recorded in this chapter can you find that were direct fulfillments of the Scriptures?

7. What personal application can we make from verse 18:37?

8. What lesson about zeal and knowledge can we learn from 18:22?

9. Name an outstanding zealot for the Jews' religion who was religious but wrong.

10. What is the one thing that we see which blinded the different religious and civil authorities mentioned in this chapter? _____

EXPOSITORY NOTES

- 18:1** The name "Kidron" means "*dark or gloomy.*" The waters of this brook were often stained and darkened by the temple sacrifices. This no doubt speaks symbolically of the dark waters of suffering which Jesus was about to enter.
- 18:1** The garden of Gethsemane is not named in John's gospel account, but the other accounts identify this garden as Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36; Mark 14:32). This word means "*olive press.*" This no doubt speaks symbolically of the olive press of sufferings which Jesus would suffer when God's wrath was poured out upon Him for judgment of our sins (II Cor. 5:21).
- 18:3** The band or cohort of men may have been massive. A Roman cohort was a tenth of a legion or 600 men. They had come in force to seize the One who was the meekest of men who would submit Himself as the Lamb of God (Isa. 53:7).
- 18:5** Notice Jesus had given seven "I Am's" in this gospel (6:35; 8:12; 10:9; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:5). But here He uses it without a predicate complement. This identified Him with Jehovah of the Old Testament (Ex. 3:14) which was the covenant name of God which expressed His relationship with His people.
- 18:13** Notice the order of events following Jesus' arrest. There was a Jewish trial involving three stages. These began with a hearing before Annas (Jn. 18:12-14; 19-23). Secondly, there was an informal trial before Caiaphas (Jn. 18:24; Matt. 26:57-68). Thirdly, there was a formal trial before the Sanhedrin (Matt. 27:1; Lk. 22:66-71). These were followed by the Roman trials involving three stages as well. Firstly, Jesus was brought before Pilate (Matt. 27:2, 11-14; Jn. 18:28-38). Secondly, Pilate sent Jesus to Herod (Lk. 23:6-12), then finally Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate (Matt. 27:15-26; Lk. 23:13-25).