

18:1-40 | The Betrayal & Trial

The next section of John's account covers Jesus' betrayal, trial, and what is popularly referred to as the "Passion of the Christ" (18:1-19:42). However, as we did with the Farewell Discourse, we'll divide this larger section into two smaller segments: *The Betrayal & Trial* (18:1-40) and *the Passion* (19:1-42). Doing so will keep us from breezing through *the most important event in human history*. Jesus himself said that it was "for this cause [that he came] unto this hour" (12:27). His entire life, to say nothing of John's narrative up to this point, was building up to *this moment*—i.e., his enthronement via the crucifixion.¹ We mustn't miss what transpires in the coming chapters to understand this gospel.²

The Betrayal & Trail section of John's account can itself be divided into three subsections where each portion focuses on Jesus' interactions with three key individuals: *Jesus Faces Judas* (18:1-12), *Jesus Faces Annas* (18:13-27), and *Jesus Faces Pilate* (18:28-40). In contrast to *the Passion* portion, which is aimed at *describing* what takes place, *the Betrayal & Trial* section is heavy with *dialogue*. John wants us to listen intently to what is said as the betrayer finally ambushes the Word Incarnate. He wants us to pay close attention to the words spoken as the Messiah is taken into custody by the religious leaders. And he wants us to note the exchange between the Roman authorities and the King of Kings.

But as we'll see, whether he is confronted by an armed guard, disowned by the lead apostle, or exchanged for a convicted criminal, Jesus does not berate his opponents, nor does he panic, and never do we see him despair. Even as the tide shifts against him and he accepts the cup of his Father's wrath, the Lord always appears to be *in control* (cf. 18:4). And why not? As the Good Shepherd, no one could take his life from him if he did not willingly lay it down (cf. 10:18). The hour of his glorification had come. And so, Jesus does not avoid death but embraces it for the sake of his sheep. If there is one thing that is clear from John's version of these events it is that *the Son of God was no martyr but a voluntary sacrifice*.

Exegesis

Vs. 1-2 – "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples."

¹ Klink (2016), p. 732.

² Carson (1991), p. 571, "All the canonical Gospels move inexorably toward the passion and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah; indeed, without this climax, a 'Gospel' would not be a Gospel."

The phrase "these words" refers to Jesus' parting words (Ch. 14-17) and prayer (Ch. 17). In 14:31, Jesus initiated their departure from the Upper Room and now we find they've made their way "over the brook Cedron, where was a garden,"³ a reference to the famed 'Garden of Gethsemane' on the east side of Jerusalem. Admittedly, it might be better to call the place an *orchard* rather than a simple garden, as the area was more like a plantation situated on the side of Mount Olivet (cf. Matt. 26:30; Lu. 22:39).⁴ In fact, "Gethsemane" is a Hebrew word meaning "oil press," so, given that this was a place of business, it was likely this "garden" had a walled enclosure.⁵

Curiously, there is no mention of Jesus' lament in Gethsemane. Considering the Synoptics all record the event (cf. Mat. 26:36-46; Mar. 14:32-42; Lu. 22:39-46), perhaps John did not feel the need? Whatever his reasons for omitting it, we need not doubt John's account. The Beloved Apostle's focus for his account is *theological*, not exhaustive. While he does, indeed, convey facts, he's more concerned with *meaning* than with *minutia*, especially when others have done a thorough enough job already.

John does not specify the name of this garden locale except to say that Judas "knew the place." The betrayer knew exactly where to find Jesus because the Lord "ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples." Judas picked a favored spot that was known only to the disciples so that he might betray Jesus and get his reward. When a heart, driven by sinful desires, seeks to gratify itself, it will not hesitate to deface the sacred, defiling even the most important of spaces (cf. 12:6). In Eden, mankind betrayed their Creator at the behest of a snake, earning for themselves a death sentence (cf. Gen. 3).⁶ And here, once again, we find humanity in a garden, and, once again, they've been beguiled by the serpent (cf. 13:27). But this time, the betrayal will not only lead to the death of the betrayer (cf. Mat. 27:5-8), it will also mean the death of the God himself.

³ The past tense may imply the garden no longer existed at the time of John's writing.

⁴ Köstenberger (2008), p. 504.

⁵ Keener (2012), 2:1077.

⁶ Klink (2016), p. 733, points out that Jesus will also be crucified and buried in a garden (19:41).

VIDEO DESCRIPTION

Deep Dive: The Gospel of John | Week 78 | John 18:1-2

SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

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Pastor's manuscript can be found here:

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Grace Pointe Baptist Church

12029 Eastern Ave.

Baltimore, MD 21220

Contact: info@GracePointeLife.com

Website: <https://www.gracepointelife.com>

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