

# John 18 Commentary

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Another Chart from Charles Swindoll

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# NOTE: THIS PAGE IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

**John 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples.**

- spoken: John 13:31-35 14:1-17:26
- he: John 14:31 Mt 26:36 Mk 14:32 Lu 22:39,40
- the brook: 2Sa 15:23 1Ki 15:13 2Ki 23:6,12 2Ch 15:16 30:14 Jer 31:40, Kidron
- a garden: John 18:26 Ge 2:15 3:23

## When Jesus had spoken these words

**NET NOTE** - When he had said these things appears to be a natural transition at the end of the Farewell Discourse (the farewell speech of Jesus to his disciples in John 13:31–17:26, including the final prayer in 17:1–26). The author states that Jesus went out with his disciples, a probable reference to their leaving the upper room where the meal and discourse described in chaps. 13–17 took place (although some have seen this only as a reference to their leaving the city, with the understanding that some of the Farewell Discourse, including the concluding prayer, was given en route, cf. 14:31). They crossed the Kidron Valley and came to a garden, or olive orchard, identified in Matt 26:36 and Mark 14:32 as Gethsemane. The name is not given in Luke's or John's Gospel, but the garden must have been located somewhere on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives.

**He went forth with His disciples** ([mathetes](#)) **over the ravine** (wadi) **of the Kidron** - A wadi flows during the rainy season and is dry during the dry season.

## where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples

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**Disciples** (3101) [mathetes](#) from [manthano](#) = to learn which Vine says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". Gives us our English = "*mathematics*" - see [matheteuo](#)) describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. Another sources says mathetes is from from **math**- which speaks of "mental effort that thinks something through" and thus describes is a learner; a follower who learns the doctrines and the lifestyle of the one they follow. Discipleship includes the idea of one who intentionally learns by inquiry and observation (cf [inductive Bible study](#)) and thus **mathetes** is more than a mere pupil. A **mathetes** describes an adherent of a teacher. As discussed below **mathetes** itself has no spiritual connotation, and it is used of superficial followers of Jesus as well as of genuine believers. The Lord calls everyone to grow as a disciple (a learner of Christ; cf. also Mt 11;29,30), one who lives in faith, who lives in and by His Word in the power of the Holy Spirit. Note in the Great Commission that the implication is that the disciple is not just a hearer and a learner from another, but is a doer of what he learns for Mt 28:20 says "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

**Swindoll** - A **mathētēs** is one who subjects himself or herself to a process of becoming familiarized with something by experiencing, learning, or receiving direction. This process usually implies the aid of another person, and as the term fully developed, it was inconceivable for one to be a learner without a guide or a master. The term is used to refer to the disciples of rabbis, and those of John the Baptizer, the Pharisees, and Moses (e.g., Mark 2:18; John 9:28). Although we often refer to the twelve apostles as the "twelve disciples," it is important to recognize that this term often refers to all (**ED**: HOW MANY?) of Jesus' followers (Luke 6:13, 17). ([Insights on Luke](#).)

There is a teaching (which I consider borders on a false teaching) that not all genuine believers are disciples of Christ. This is taught by a number of evangelicals, some of whom are very prominent. They teach that there are believers and then there is an "elite" group of believers who warrant the designation of "disciples." This is not correct! Every genuine believer is a disciple of Jesus Christ.

**John 18:2 Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples.**

- for: Mk 11:11,12 Lu 21:37 22:39

**Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples**

**John 18:3 Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, \*came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.**

- Judas: John 13:2,27-30 Mt 26:47,55 Mk 14:43,44,48 Lu 22:47-53 Ac 1:16
- a band: John 18:12 \*Gr: Ps 3:1,2 22:12

**Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons**

**NET NOTE** - Grk “a **cohort**.” The word σπε ραν (speiran) is a technical term for a Roman cohort, normally a force of 600 men (one tenth of a legion). It was under the command of a χιλίαρχος (chiliarchos, v. 12). Because of the improbability of an entire cohort being sent to arrest a single man, some have suggested that σπε ραν here refers only to a maniple, a force of 200. But the use of the word here does not necessarily mean the entire cohort was present on this mission, but only that it was the cohort which performed the task (for example, saying the fire department put out the fire does not mean that every fireman belonging to the department was on the scene at the time). These Roman soldiers must have been ordered to accompany the servants of the chief priests and Pharisees by Pilate, since they would have been under the direct command of the Roman prefect or procurator. It is not difficult to understand why Pilate would have been willing to assist the Jewish authorities in such a way. With a huge crowd of pilgrims in Jerusalem for the Passover, the Romans would have been especially nervous about an uprising of some sort. No doubt the **chief priests and Pharisees** had informed Pilate that this man Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, or in the terms Pilate would understand, king of Israel. The phrase “officers of the chief priests and Pharisees” is a comprehensive name for the groups represented in the ruling council (the Sanhedrin) as in John 7:32, 45; 18:3, 12, 18, 22; 19:6. They are different from the Levites who served as “temple police” according to K. H. Rengstorf (TDNT 8:540). In John 7:32ff. these officers had made an unsuccessful attempt to arrest Jesus, and perhaps this is part of the reason why their leaders had made sure they were accompanied by Roman soldiers this time. No more mistakes were to be tolerated.

**NET NOTE** - Mention of the **lanterns and torches** suggests a detail remembered by one who was an eyewitness, but in connection with the light/darkness motif of John’s Gospel, it is a vivid reminder that it is night; the darkness has come at last (cf. Jn 13:30).

**John 18:4 So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and \*said to them, “Whom do you seek?”**

- knowing: John 10:17,18 13:1 19:28 Mt 16:21 17:22,23 20:18,19 26:2,21,31 Mk 10:33,34 Lu 18:31-33 24:6,7,44 Ac 2:28 4:24-28 20:22-23
- Whom: 1Ki 18:10,14-18 Ne 6:11 Ps 3:6 27:3 Pr 28:1 1Pe 4:1

**So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and \*said to them, “Whom do you seek?”**

**John 18:5 They answered Him, “Jesus the Nazarene.” He \*said to them, “I am He.” And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them.**

- Jesus: John 1:46 19:19 Mt 2:23 21:11
- stood: Isa 3:9 Jer 8:12

**They answered Him, “Jesus the Nazarene.” He \*said to them, “I am He.”**

**NET NOTE** - The author does not state precisely who from the group of soldiers and temple police replied to Jesus at this point. It may have been the commander of the Roman soldiers, although his presence is not explicitly mentioned until 18:12. It may also have been one of the officers of the chief priests. To the answer given, “Jesus the Nazarene,” Jesus replies “I am [he].”

**And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them.**

**NET NOTE** - This is a parenthetical note by the author. Before he states the response to Jesus’ identification of himself, the author inserts a parenthetical note that Judas, again identified as the one who betrayed him (cf. 18:2), was standing with the group of

soldiers and officers of the chief priests. Many commentators have considered this to be an awkward insertion, but in fact it heightens considerably the dramatic effect of the response to Jesus' self-identification in the following verse, and has the added effect of informing the reader that along with the others the betrayer himself ironically falls down at Jesus' feet (18:6).

**John 18:6 So when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.**

- they went: Doubtless by the interposition of Divine power; and it was thus shown that Jesus voluntarily resigned himself into their hands. 2Ki 1:9-15 Ps 27:2 40:14 70:2,3 129:5 Lu 9:54-56 Ac 4:29,30

**So when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.**

**NET NOTE** - When Jesus said to those who came to arrest him "I am," they retreated and fell to the ground. L. Morris says that "it is possible that those in front recoiled from Jesus' unexpected advance, so that they bumped those behind them, causing them to stumble and fall" (John [NICNT], 743-44). Perhaps this is what in fact happened on the scene; but the theological significance given to this event by the author implies that more is involved. The reaction on the part of those who came to arrest Jesus comes in response to his affirmation that he is indeed the one they are seeking, Jesus the Nazarene. But Jesus makes this affirmation of his identity using a formula which the reader has encountered before in the Fourth Gospel, e.g., 8:24, 28, 58. Jesus has applied to himself the divine Name of Exod 3:14, "I AM." Therefore this amounts to something of a theophany which causes even his enemies to recoil and prostrate themselves, so that Jesus has to ask a second time, "Who are you looking for?" This is a vivid reminder to the reader of the Gospel that even in this dark hour, Jesus holds ultimate power over his enemies and the powers of darkness, because he is the one who bears the divine Name.

**John 18:7 Therefore He again asked them, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus the Nazarene."**

- Nazarene: Jn 18:5, Jn 19:18

**Therefore He again asked them, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus the Nazarene."**

**John 18:8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am He; so if you seek Me, let these go their way,"**

- if: Isa 53:6 Eph 5:25
- let: John 10:28 13:1,36 16:32 Mt 26:56 Mk 14:50-52 1Co 10:13 2Co 12:9 1Pe 5:7

**Jesus answered, "I told you that I am He; so if you seek Me, let these go their way,**

**NET NOTE** - A second time Jesus replied, "I told you that I am he," identifying himself as the one they are seeking. Jesus also added, "If you are looking for me, let these men go." Jesus successfully diverted attention from his disciples by getting the soldiers and officers of the chief priests to admit (twice) that it is only him they were after. Even in this hour Jesus still protected and cared for his own, giving himself up on their behalf. By handing himself over to his enemies, Jesus ensured that his disciples went free. From the perspective of the author, this is acting out beforehand what Jesus will actually do for his followers when he goes to the cross.

**John 18:9 to fulfill the word which He spoke, "Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one."**

- Of: John 17:12

**to fulfill the word which He spoke, "Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one**

**NET NOTE** - This action of Jesus on behalf of his disciples is interpreted by the author as a fulfillment of Jesus' own words: "I have not lost a single one of those whom you gave me." Here it is Jesus' own words, rather than the OT scriptures, which are quoted. This same formula will be used by the author again of Jesus' words in 18:32, but the verb is used elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel to describe the NT fulfillment of OT passages (12:38, 13:18, 15:25, 17:12, 19:24, and 19:36). It is a bit difficult to determine the exact referent, since the words of Jesus quoted in this verse are not an exact reproduction of a saying of Jesus elsewhere in John's

Gospel. Although some have identified the saying with John 6:39, the closest parallel is in 17:12, where the betrayer, Judas, is specifically excluded. The words quoted here in 18:9 appear to be a free rendition of 17:12.

**John 18:10 Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus.**

- John 18:26 Mt 26:51-54 Mk 14:30,47 Lu 22:33,49-51

**Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus.**

**NET NOTE** - The account of the attack on the high priest's slave contains details which suggest eyewitness testimony. It is also mentioned in all three synoptic gospels, but only John records that the disciple involved was Peter, whose impulsive behavior has already been alluded to (John 13:37). Likewise only John gives the name of the victim, Malchus, who is described as the high priest's slave. John and Mark (14:47) both use the word τῶριον (ōtarion, a double diminutive) to describe what was cut off, and this may indicate only part of the right ear (for example, the earlobe).

**John 18:11 So Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"**

- Put: John 18:36 2Co 6:7 10:4 Eph 6:11-17
- the cup: Ps 75:8 Eze 23:31 Mt 20:22 26:39,42 Mk 10:38,39 14:35,36 Lu 22:42 Heb 12:2
- my: John 11:41,42 12:27,28 15:10 17:24 20:17 Lu 12:30 Ro 8:15-18 Heb 12:5-10

**So Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"**

**NET NOTE** - Jesus continues with what most would take to be a rhetorical question expecting a positive reply: "Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?" The cup is also mentioned in Gethsemane in the synoptics (Matt 26:39, Mark 14:36, and Luke 22:42). In connection with the synoptic accounts it is mentioned in Jesus' prayer; this occurrence certainly complements the synoptic accounts if Jesus had only shortly before finished praying about this. Only here in the Fourth Gospel is it specifically said that the cup is given to Jesus to drink by the Father, but again this is consistent with the synoptic mention of the cup in Jesus' prayer: It is the cup of suffering which Jesus is about to undergo.

**John 18:12 So the Roman cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him,**

- the band: John 18:3 Mt 26:57 Mk 14:53 Lu 22:54
- the captain: Ac 21:31,37 22:24-28 23:10,17-22
- bound: Ge 22:9 40:3 Judges 16:21 Ps 118:27 Mt 27:2 Mk 15:1

**So the Roman cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested (seized) Jesus and bound Him**

**NET NOTE** - Grk "a cohort" (but since this was a unit of 600 soldiers, a smaller detachment is almost certainly intended). Commander - Greek "their chiliarch" (an officer in command of a thousand soldiers). In Greek the term χιλιάρχος (chiliarchos) literally described the "commander of a thousand," but it was used as the standard translation for the Latin tribunus militum or tribunus militaris, the military tribune who commanded a cohort of 600 men. Greek "the Jews." In NT usage the term οὗδαίαι (Ioudaioi) may refer to the entire Jewish people, the residents of Jerusalem and surrounding territory, the authorities in Jerusalem, or merely those who were hostile to Jesus. (For further information see R. G. Bratcher, "The Jews" in the Gospel of John," Bible Translator 26 [1975]: 401-9.) Here the phrase refers to the Jewish leaders, who were named as "chief priests and Pharisees" in John 18:3.

**John 18:13 and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.**

- led: Mt 26:57

- Annas: Lu 3:2 Ac 4:6
- that: John 11:51 "And Annas sent Christ bound unto Caiaphas the high priest, ver. 24."

**and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.**

**NET NOTE** - Jesus was taken first to Annas. Only the Gospel of John mentions this pretrial hearing before Annas, and that Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who is said to be high priest in that year. Caiaphas is also mentioned as being high priest in John 11:49. But in 18:15, 16, 19, and 22 Annas is called high priest. Annas is also referred to as high priest by Luke in Acts 4:6. Many scholars have dismissed these references as mistakes on the part of both Luke and John, but as mentioned above, John 11:49 and 18:13 indicate that John knew that Caiaphas was high priest in the year that Jesus was crucified. This has led others to suggest that Annas and Caiaphas shared the high priesthood, but there is no historical evidence to support this view. Annas had been high priest from A.D. 6 to A.D. 15 when he was deposed by the Roman prefect Valerius Gratus (according to Josephus, Ant. 18.2.2 [18.34]). His five sons all eventually became high priests. The family was noted for its greed, wealth, and power. There are a number of ways the references in both Luke and John to Annas being high priest may be explained. Some Jews may have refused to recognize the changes in high priests effected by the Roman authorities, since according to the Torah the high priesthood was a lifetime office (Num 25:13). Another possibility is that it was simply customary to retain the title after a person had left the office as a courtesy, much as retired ambassadors are referred to as "Mr. Ambassador" or ex-presidents as "Mr. President." Finally, the use of the title by Luke and John may simply be a reflection of the real power behind the high priesthood of the time: Although Annas no longer technically held the office, he may well have managed to control those relatives of his who did hold it from behind the scenes. In fact this seems most probable and would also explain why Jesus was brought to him immediately after his arrest for a sort of "pretrial hearing" before being sent on to the entire Sanhedrin.

**John 18:14 Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people.**

- Caiaphas: John 11:49-52

#### **Related Passages:**

John 11:49-52 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish." 51 Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

**Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews (Jewish leaders) that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people**

**John 18:15 Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest,**

- Simon: Mt 26:58-68 Mk 14:54 Lu 22:54

**Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest,**

**NET NOTE** - Many have associated this unnamed other disciple with the beloved disciple, that is, John son of Zebedee, mainly because the phrase the other disciple which occurs here is also used to describe the beloved disciple in John 20:2, 3, 4, and 8. Peter is also closely associated with the beloved disciple in 13:23–26, 20:2–10, 21:7, and 21:20–23. But other identifications have also been proposed, chiefly because v. 16 states that this disciple who was accompanied by Peter was known to the high priest. As C. K. Barrett (St. John, 525) points out, the term γνωστός (gnōstos) is used in the LXX to refer to a close friend (Ps 54:14 LXX [55:14 ET]). This raises what for some is an insurmountable difficulty in identifying the "other disciple" as John son of Zebedee, since how could the uneducated son of an obscure Galilean fisherman be known to such a powerful and influential family in Jerusalem? E. A. Abbott (as quoted in "Notes of Recent Exposition," ExpTim 25 [1913/14]: 149–50) proposed that the "other disciple" who accompanied Peter was Judas, since he was the one disciple of whom it is said explicitly (in the synoptic accounts) that he had

dealings with the high priest. E. A. Tindall ("Contributions and Comments: John xviii.15," ExpTim 28 [1916/17]: 283–84) suggested the disciple was Nicodemus, who as a member of the Sanhedrin, would have had access to the high priest's palace. Both of these suggestions, while ingenious, nevertheless lack support from the text of the Fourth Gospel itself or the synoptic accounts. W. Wuellner (The Meaning of "Fishers of Men" [NTL]) argues that the common attitude concerning the low social status and ignorance of the disciples from Galilee may in fact be a misconception. Zebedee is presented in Mark 1:20 as a man wealthy enough to have hired servants, and Mark 10:35–45 presents both of the sons of Zebedee as concerned about status and prestige. John's mother appears in the same light in Matt 20:20–28. Contact with the high priestly family in Jerusalem might not be so unlikely in such circumstances. Others have noted the possibility that John came from a priestly family, some of which is based upon a statement in Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History 3.31.3) quoting Polycrates that John son of Zebedee was a priest. For further information on possible priestly connections among members of John's family see L. Morris (John [NICNT], 752, n. 32). None of this is certain, but on the whole it seems most probable that the disciple who accompanied Peter and gained entry into the courtyard for him was John son of Zebedee.

**John 18:16 but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in.**

but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple([mathetes](#)), who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in.

**John 18:17 Then the slave-girl who kept the door \*said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He \*said, "I am not."**

- the damsel: John 18:16 Mt 26:69,70 Mk 14:66-68 Lu 22:54,56,57
- I am not: John 18:5,8 21:15 Mt 26:33

**Then the slave-girl who kept the door \*said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?"**- In Greek, questions prefaced with the negative "mē" anticipate a negative answer.

**He said, "I am not.**

**John 18:18 Now the slaves and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself.**

- who: John 18:25 Mk 14:54 Lu 22:55,56
- for: Lu 22:44
- Peter: Ge 49:6 1Ki 19:9 Ps 1:1 26:4-10 Pr 13:20 Ac 4:23 1Co 15:33 2Co 6:15-17 Eph 5:11,12

**Now the slaves and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself.**

**John 18:19 The high priest then questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching.**

- asked: Lu 11:53,54 20:20

**The high priest then questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching**

**NET NOTE** - The nature of this hearing seems to be more that of a preliminary investigation; certainly normal legal procedure was not followed, for no indication is given that any witnesses were brought forth at this point to testify against Jesus. True to what is known of Annas' character, he was more interested in Jesus' disciples than in the precise nature of Jesus' teaching, since he inquired about the followers first. He really wanted to know just how influential Jesus had become and how large a following he had gathered. This was of more concern to Annas than the truth or falsity of Jesus' teaching.

**John 18:20 Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret.**

- I spake: John 7:14,26,28 8:2 10:23-39 Ps 22:22 40:9 Mt 4:23 9:35 21:23-27 Mt 26:65 Lu 4:15 19:45-47 20:1-8 21:37
- and in: John 7:4 Isa 45:19 48:16 Mt 24:26 Ac 26:26

**Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret.**

**John 18:21 “Why do you question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; they know what I said.”**

- ask: Mt 26:59,60 Mk 14:55-59 Lu 22:67 Ac 24:12,13,18-20

**Why do you question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; they know what I said**

**John 18:22 When He had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying, “Is that the way You answer the high priest?”**

- struck: Job 16:10 30:10-12 Isa 50:5-7 Jer 20:2 Mic 5:1 Mt 26:67,68 Mk 14:65 Lu 22:63,64 Ac 23:2,3
- the palm of his hand: or, a rod
- Answerest: Ac 23:4,5

**When He had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying, “Is that the way You answer the high priest**

**John 18:23 Jesus answered him, “If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?”**

- If: 2Co 10:1 1Pe 2:20-23

**Jesus answered him, “If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me**

**John 18:24 So Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.**

- Annas: Annas was dismissed from being high priest, A.D. 23, after filling that office for fifteen years; but, being a person of distinguished character, and having had no fewer than five sons who had successively enjoyed the dignity of the high-priesthood, and the present high priest Caiaphas being his son-in-law, he must have possessed much authority in the nation. It was at the palace of Caiaphas where the chief priests, elders, and scribes were assembled the whole of the night to see the issue of their stratagem. John 18:13 Mt 26:57
- bound: John 18:13

**So Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest**

**NET NOTE** - Where was Caiaphas the high priest located? Did he have a separate palace, or was he somewhere else with the Sanhedrin? Since Augustine (4th century) a number of scholars have proposed that Annas and Caiaphas resided in different wings of the same palace, which were bound together by a common courtyard through which Jesus would have been led as he was taken from Annas to Caiaphas. This seems a reasonable explanation, although there is no conclusive evidence.

**John 18:25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, “You are not also one of His disciples, are you?” He denied it, and said, “I am not.”**



- stood: John 18:18 Mk 14:37,38,67 Lu 22:56
- They: Mt 26:69,71 Mk 14:68-70 Lu 22:58
- He: Ge 18:15 Pr 29:25 Ga 2:11-13

**Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself** - Where? In the courtyard (Jn 18:15-18).

**So they said to him, “You are not also one of His disciples, are you?”**- Again this Greek sentence begins with a negative (me) thus expecting a negative response.

**He denied it, and said, “I am not**

**John 18:26 One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, \*said, “Did I not see you in the garden with Him?”**

- being: John 18:10
- Did: Pr 12:19 Mt 26:73 Mk 14:70,71 Lu 22:59,60

**One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, said,**

**“Did I not see you in the garden with Him?”** This question, prefaced with the negative "ouk", anticipates a positive answer.

**John 18:27 Peter then denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed.**

- and: John 13:38 Mt 26:34,74,75 Mk 14:30,68,71,72 Lu 22:34,60-62

**Peter then denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed.**

**NET NOTE** - It seems most likely that this refers to a real rooster crowing, although a number of scholars have suggested that “cockcrow” is a technical term referring to the trumpet call which ended the third watch of the night (from midnight to 3 a.m.). This would then be a reference to the Roman gallicinium ( λεκτοροφωνία, alektorophōnia; the term is used in Mark 13:35 and is found in some MSS [ 37vid,45 f1] in Matt 26:34) which would have been sounded at 3 a.m.; in this case Jesus would have prophesied a precise time by which the denials would have taken place. For more details see J. H. Bernard, St. John (ICC), 2:604. However, in light of the fact that Mark mentions the rooster crowing twice (Mark 14:72) and in Luke 22:60 the words are reversed ( φώνησεν λέκτωρ, ephōnēsen alektōr), it is more probable that a real rooster is in view. In any event natural cockcrow would have occurred at approximately 3 a.m. in Palestine at this time of year (March–April) anyway. No indication is given of Peter’s emotional state at this third denial (as in Matt 26:74 and Mark 14:71) or that he remembered that Jesus had foretold the denials (Matt 26:75, Mark 14:72 and Luke 22:61), or the bitter remorse Peter felt afterward (Matt 26:75, Mark 14:72, and Luke 22:62).

**John 18:28 Then they \*led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.**

- led: Mt 27:1,2-10 Mk 15:1-5 Lu 23:1-5 Ac 3:13
- unto: John 18:33 19:9 Mt 27:27 Mk 15:16 \*Gr:
- hall of judgment: or, Pilate’s house
- early: Pr 1:16 4:16 Mic 2:1 Lu 22:66
- and they: Ps 35:16 Isa 1:10-15 Jer 7:8-11 Am 5:21-23 Mic 3:10-12 Mt 23:23-28 27:6 Ac 10:28 11:3
- eat: John 18:39 19:14 De 16:2 2Ch 30:21-24 35:8-14,17,18 Eze 45:21

**Then they \*led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early;**

**NET NOTE** - The permanent residence of the Roman governor of Palestine was in Caesarea (Acts 23:35). The governor had a

residence in Jerusalem which he normally occupied only during principal feasts or in times of political unrest. The location of this building in Jerusalem is uncertain, but is probably one of two locations: either (1) the fortress or tower of Antonia, on the east hill north of the temple area, which is the traditional location of the Roman praetorium since the 12th century, or (2) the palace of Herod on the west hill near the present Jaffa Gate. According to Philo (Embassy 38 [299]) Pilate had some golden shields hung there, and according to Josephus (J. W. 2.14.8 [2.301], 2.15.5 [2.328]) the later Roman governor Florus stayed there.

**and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover**

**John 18:29 Therefore Pilate went out to them and \*said, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?”**

- What: Mt 27:23 Ac 23:28-30 25:16

**Therefore Pilate went out to them and \*said, “What accusation do you bring against this Man**

**NET NOTE** - In light of the fact that Pilate had cooperated with them in Jesus' arrest by providing Roman soldiers, the Jewish authorities were probably expecting Pilate to grant them permission to carry out their sentence on Jesus without resistance (the Jews were not permitted to exercise capital punishment under the Roman occupation without official Roman permission, cf. v. 31). They must have been taken somewhat by surprise by Pilate's question "What accusation do you bring against this man," because it indicated that he was going to try the prisoner himself. Thus Pilate was regarding the trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin as only an inquiry and their decision as merely an accusation.

**John 18:30 They answered and said to him, “If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you.”**

- If: John 19:12 Mk 15:3 Lu 20:19-26 23:2-5
- delivered: Mk 10:33 Lu 24:7 Ac 3:13

**They answered and said to him, “If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you**

**John 18:31 So Pilate said to them, “Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law.” The Jews said to him, “We are not permitted to put anyone to death,”**

- Take: John 19:6,7 Ac 25:18-20
- It: John 19:15 Ge 49:10 Eze 21:26,27 Ho 3:4,5

**So Pilate said to them “Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law.”**

**NET NOTE** - Pilate, as the sole representative of Rome in a troubled area, was probably in Jerusalem for the Passover because of the danger of an uprising (the normal residence for the Roman governor was in Caesarea as mentioned in Acts 23:35). At this time on the eve of the feast he would have been a busy and perhaps even a worried man. It is not surprising that he offered to hand Jesus back over to the Jewish authorities to pass judgment on him. It may well be that Pilate realized when no specific charge was mentioned that he was dealing with an internal dispute over some religious matter. Pilate wanted nothing to do with such matters, as the statement "Pass judgment on him according to your own law!" indicates. As far as the author is concerned, this points out who was really responsible for Jesus' death: The Roman governor Pilate would have had nothing to do with it if he had not been pressured by the Jewish religious authorities, upon whom the real responsibility rested.

**The Jews said to him, “We are not permitted to put anyone to death,**

**NET NOTE** - The historical background behind the statement We cannot legally put anyone to death is difficult to reconstruct. Scholars are divided over whether this statement in the Fourth Gospel accurately reflects the judicial situation between the Jewish authorities and the Romans in 1st century Palestine. It appears that the Roman governor may have given the Jews the power of capital punishment for specific offenses, some of them religious (the death penalty for Gentiles caught trespassing in the inner courts of the temple, for example). It is also pointed out that the Jewish authorities did carry out a number of executions, some of them specifically pertaining to Christians (Stephen, according to Acts 7:58–60; and James the Just, who was stoned in the 60s according to Josephus, Ant. 20.9.1 [20.200]). But Stephen's death may be explained as a result of "mob violence" rather than a

formal execution, and as Josephus in the above account goes on to point out, James was executed in the period between two Roman governors, and the high priest at the time was subsequently punished for the action. Two studies by A. N. Sherwin-White (Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament, 1–47; and “The Trial of Christ,” Historicity and Chronology in the New Testament [SPCKTC], 97–116) have tended to support the accuracy of John’s account. He concluded that the Romans kept very close control of the death penalty for fear that in the hands of rebellious locals such power could be used to eliminate factions favorable or useful to Rome. A province as troublesome as Judea would not have been likely to be made an exception to this.

**John 18:32 to fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.**

- the saying: John 3:14 10:31,33 12:32,33 Mt 20:19 26:2 Lu 18:32,33 24:7,8 Ac 7:59
- what: De 21:23 Ps 22:16 Ga 3:13

**to fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die**

**John 18:33 Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”**

- and said: John 18:37 Mt 27:11 Mk 15:2 Lu 23:3,4 1Ti 6:13
- the king: John 1:49 12:13,15 19:3,19-22 Ps 2:6-12 Isa 9:6,7 Jer 23:5 Zep 3:15 Zec 9:9 Lu 19:38-40 Ac 2:34-36

**Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”**

**NET NOTE** - It is difficult to discern Pilate’s attitude when he asked, “Are you the king of the Jews?” Some have believed the remark to be sarcastic or incredulous as Pilate looked at this lowly and humble prisoner: “So you’re the king of the Jews, are you?” Others have thought the Roman governor to have been impressed by Jesus’ regal disposition and dignity, and to have sincerely asked, “Are you really the king of the Jews?” Since it will later become apparent (v. 38) that Pilate considered Jesus innocent (and therefore probably also harmless) an attitude of incredulity is perhaps most likely, but this is far from certain in the absence of clear contextual clues.

**John 18:34 Jesus answered, “Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?”**

- Sayest: John 18:36

**Jesus answered, “Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me**

**John 18:35 Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?”**

- Am I: Ezr 4:12 Ne 4:2 Ac 18:14-16 23:29 25:19,20 Ro 3:1,2
- Thine: John 18:28 19:11 Ac 3:13
- what: John 19:6 Ac 21:38 22:22-24

**Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done**

**NET NOTE** - Many have seen in Pilate’s reply “I am not a Jew, am I?” the Roman contempt for the Jewish people. Some of that may indeed be present, but strictly speaking, all Pilate affirms is that he, as a Roman, has no firsthand knowledge of Jewish custom or belief. What he knows of Jesus must have come from the Jewish authorities. They are the ones (your own people and your chief priests) who have handed Jesus over to Pilate.

**John 18:36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would**

**be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.”**

- Jesus: 1Ti 6:13
- My kingdom is: John 6:15 8:15 Ps 45:3-7 Isa 9:6,7 Da 2:44 7:14 Zec 9:9 Lu 12:14 Lu 17:20,21 Ro 14:17 Col 1:12-14
- then: John 18:11

**Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm**

**John 18:37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”**

- Thou: Mt 26:64 27:11 Mk 14:62 15:2 Lu 23:3 1Ti 6:13
- that I should: John 8:14 14:6 Isa 55:4 Rev 1:4 3:14
- Every: John 7:17 8:47 10:26,27 1Pe 1:22 1Jn 3:14,19 4:6 5:20

**Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice**

**John 18:38 Pilate \*said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and \*said to them, “I find no guilt in Him.**

- What: Ac 17:19,20,32 24:25,26
- I find: John 19:4,6,21,22 Mt 27:18,19,24 Mk 15:14 Lu 23:4,14-16 1Pe 1:19 1Pe 2:22,23

**Pilate \*said to Him, “What is truth?”**

**NET NOTE** - With his reply “What is truth?” Pilate dismissed the matter. It is not clear what Pilate’s attitude was at this point, as in 18:33. He may have been sarcastic, or perhaps somewhat reflective. The author has not given enough information in the narrative to be sure. Within the narrative, Pilate’s question serves to make the reader reflect on what truth is, and that answer (in the narrative) has already been given (14:6).

**And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and \*said to them, “I find no guilt in Him.**

**NET NOTE** on **the Jews** - Or “the Jewish authorities”; Grk “the Jews.” Here the phrase refers to the Jewish leaders, especially members of the Sanhedrin. See the note on the phrase “Jewish leaders” in v. 12. The term also occurs in v. 31, where it is clear the Jewish leaders are in view, because they state that they cannot legally carry out an execution. Although it is likely (in view of the synoptic parallels) that the crowd here in 18:38 was made up not just of the Jewish leaders, but of ordinary residents of Jerusalem and pilgrims who were in Jerusalem for the Passover, nevertheless in John’s Gospel Pilate is primarily in dialogue with the leadership of the nation, who are expressly mentioned in Jn 18:35 and Jn 19:6.

**John 18:39 “But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover; do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?”**

- ye have: Mt 27:15-18 Mk 15:6,8 Lu 23:17,20
- I release: John 18:33

**But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover; do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?”**

**NET NOTE** - Pilate then offered to release Jesus, reminding the Jewish authorities that they had a custom that he release one prisoner for them at the Passover. There is no extra-biblical evidence alluding to the practice. It is, however, mentioned in Matthew and Mark, described either as a practice of Pilate (Mark 15:6) or of the Roman governor (Matt 27:15). These references may explain

the lack of extra-biblical attestation: The custom to which Pilate refers here (18:39) is not a permanent one acknowledged by all the Roman governors, but one peculiar to Pilate as a means of appeasement, meant to better relations with his subjects. Such a limited meaning is certainly possible and consistent with the statement here.

**John 18:40 So they cried out again, saying, “Not this Man, but Barabbas.” Now Barabbas was a robber.**

- Mt 27:16,26 Mk 15:7,15 Lu 23:18,19,25 Ac 3:13,14

**So they cried out again, saying, “Not this Man, but Barabbas.” Now Barabbas was a robber.**

**NET NOTE** - The name **Barabbas** in Aramaic means “son of abba,” that is, “son of the father,” and presumably the man in question had another name (it may also have been Jesus, according to the textual variant in Matt 27:16, although this is uncertain). For the author this name held ironic significance: The crowd was asking for the release of a man called Barabbas, “son of the father,” while Jesus, who was truly the Son of the Father, was condemned to die instead. **“Robber.”** It is possible that Barabbas was merely a robber or highwayman, but more likely, given the use of the term ληστής (lēstēs) in Josephus and other early sources, that he was a guerrilla warrior or revolutionary leader. See both R. E. Brown (John [AB], 2:857) and K. H. Rengstorf (TDNT 4:258 - see [TDNT](#)) for more information. The word λστής was used a number of times by Josephus (J. W. 2.13.2–3 [2.253–254]) to describe the revolutionaries or guerrilla fighters who, from mixed motives of nationalism and greed, kept the rural districts of Judea in constant turmoil.

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**Robber** (3027) [lestes](#) from **lizoma** = to plunder, seize) means one who steals openly and by violence in contrast to [kleptes](#) which denotes one who steals by stealth. A robber, highwayman, bandit (Mt 27:38; Mk 11:17; 15:27; Lk 10:30, 36; J 10:1, 8; 2 Cor 11:26). A revolutionary, insurrectionist, one who favors the use of force (Jn 18:40). Figuratively lestes speaks of unscrupulous, greedy, or overambitious leaders (Jn 10.8)

See [NIDNTT article on Rob. Steal](#) - Robbing implies the idea of violence, but the distinction from stealing, with its overtone of secrecy, is not always preserved. λστής G3334 (lēstēs), robber, highwayman, bandit, revolutionary; κλέπτω G3096 (kleptō), steal; κλέπτης G3095 (kleptēs), thief.

**Zodhiates** - **Judas** was a **thief** ([kleptes](#) [John 12:6]) doing no violence to anyone. He stole secretly. **Barabbas** was a **robber** (lēstēs [Jn 18:40 {cf. Mk 15:7}]). Palestine was infested by **robbers** to whom its walks and **caves** afforded a great deal of cover and shelter (cf. Jdg. 9:25; Hos. 6:9; 7:1), hence, the expression **"den of robbers"** (Jer. 7:11; Mt. 21:13). **The temple became a haunt of robbers.** The dealers in the temple market were notorious for their extortion, but it gave them fancied security in their evildoing. It is probable that some of these robbers were really zealots in rebellion against the authority of Rome, so that there was an element of misplaced patriotism and even religion in their proceedings. Josephus identified robbers with zealots. (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))