

and invite all such to sit down around it as our brethren. We should call upon all of them, recognize and regard them as children of our Father.

It is time for us to throw off the childish attitude which has characterized the brotherhood and start acting like men. The idea of categorizing those who differ with us as "brethren in error," with the implication that we are wholly free from error and know all there is to know, is a little silly when you think about it seriously. The truth is that we are all brethren in error. Not one of us is perfect in knowledge and we all have a great deal to learn. We do not accept one another because we are free from error but because we are free in Christ—free to receive one another even while we try to work out our problems together and seek to arrive at a greater understanding. The brethren who accept me will have to overlook a lot of things just as God had to make allowances in order to receive me. I am willing to receive others on the same basis as he received me.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

There is no more time for private counsel with the disciples. The hour of darkness has come. Between chapters 17 and 18 of John's gospel, the agony of Gethsemane transpires and is recorded in the Synoptics. And now in chapters 18 and 19 of John's gospel the darkest deeds ever perpetrated by man are recorded for all men to feel for all time their shame.

Simeon the aged prophet told Mary, the mother of Jesus, some thirty-three years before this night, "Behold, this child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." (Lk. 2:34-35).

In other words, Jesus was born to be a "sign spoken against" or a spectacle. The spectacle is about to begin. He will be betrayed by one of His closest friends. He will be arrested, mocked, ridiculed, falsely and illegally tried and condemned. He will be denied by the one closest to Him and the same one who swore that he would never let Him down. Then, declared innocent at first, He will, because of political expediency, be given over to His murderers. But through it all it was not the Son of God on trial—it was mankind on trial that black night. At the end of this chapter we have a sermon entitled "Mankind on Trial."

Isaiah, some 700 years before this night, had prophesied, "He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers

is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." (Isa. 53:7). Now it is about to come to pass.

Instead of the usual paraphrase we have chosen to follow the regularly printed text with a "harmony" or "unification" of all the gospel accounts of this section (Trials, Crucifixion and Resurrection). This unification will be a quotation from *The Gospels; The Unification of the Four Gospels*, by Thomas G. Deitz, published by Eerdmans.

We continue with our outline of the third section of this gospel:

III. The Word Manifested To The Disciples and Their Acceptance of Him, 13:1—20:31

B. Public Spectacle of His Passion, 18:1—20:31

1. The Arrest and Trials, 18:1-40

a. Betrayal and Arrest, 18:1-11

b. Tried by the Jewish authorities, 18:12-27

c. Tried by Pilate, the Roman authority, 18:28-40

### BETRAYAL AND ARREST

*Text:* 18:1-11

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden, into which he entered, himself and his disciples.

2 Now Judas also, who betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples.

3 Judas then, having received the band of soldiers, and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

4 Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon him, went forth, and saith unto them, Whom seek ye?

5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, who betrayed him, was standing with them.

6 When therefore he said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

7 Again therefore he asked them, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

8 Jesus answered, I told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

9 that the word might be fulfilled which he spake, Of those whom thou hast given me I lost not one.

10 Simon Peter therefore having a sword drew it, and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. Now the servant's name was Malchus.

11 Jesus therefore said unto Peter, Put up the sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

### *Queries*

- a. Where was the "garden" into which Jesus entered with his disciples?
- b. Why did the crowd "go backward" when Jesus identified Himself?
- c. Why the boldness of Peter here when later he fled with the others?

### *Paraphrase (Harmony)*

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden, into which he entered, himself and his disciples; a place which was named Gethsemane: (all the Gethsemane experience falls between John 18:1 and John 18:2; cf. Matt. 26:37-46; Mk. 14:32-41; and Lk. 22:40-46). And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, who betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples came, and with a great multitude with swords and staves, with lanterns and torches, and weapons from the chief priests and the scribes, and elders of the people. And Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and elders, that were come against him, Are ye come out, as against a robber, with swords and staves to seize me? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched not forth your hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness. Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon him, went forth, and saith unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When therefore he said unto them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground. Again therefore he asked them, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the word might be fulfilled which he spake, Of those whom thou has given me I lost not one. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he: take him, And lead him away safely, And straightway he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Rabbi; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, do that for which thou art come, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

Simon Peter therefore having a sword drew it, and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. Now the servant's name was

Malchus. And when they that were about him saw what would follow, they said, Lord shall we smite with the sword? Jesus therefore said unto Peter, Put up the sword into the sheath; all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Suffer ye them thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? How then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? But all this is come to pass, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples left him, and fled.

And a certain young man followed with him, having a linen cloth cast about him, over his naked body; and they lay hold on him; but he left the linen cloth, and fled naked.

### Summary

The Son of man, with legions of angels ready to answer His slightest beckoning, surrenders to betrayal by one of His disciples and arrest by the murderous rulers in order that the purpose of the Father may be fulfilled.

### Comment

When Jesus finished His intercessory prayer (somewhere in Jerusalem), He beckoned the disciples to follow Him and He left the city. It is pure conjecture to try to establish the exact spot of the Upper Room and to guess which gate Jesus used to go out to the garden. In fact, it is equally uncertain just where Gethsemane was located. The most probable location for Gethsemane is on the brow of the Mt. of Olives. The word "Gethsemane" means *oil press*. The word John uses is *chorion*, or "garden" which is literally, "a place enclosed, a farm." It was an olive orchard which was probably enclosed with a stone fence having within it an olive press. Jesus left the city of Jerusalem by one of the eastern gates and crossed the valley Kedron. This valley runs north and south along the eastern wall of Jerusalem, separating the city from the Mount of Olives. Most of the year the valley is bone dry. Only during the winter rainy season is there any water in the valley and then only during heavy rainfall. This valley seems to have been a favorite dumping place (cf. I Ki. 15:13; II Ki. 23:4; II Chron. 29:16; 30:14; Jer. 31:40). It was over the same dry stream bed that David, a royal type of The King of Israel, fled before his rebellious son Absalom (cf. II Sam. 15:23).

The account of the Lord's experience in Gethsemane is recorded in the other three gospels (cf. Matt. 26:37-46; Mk. 14:32-41; Lk. 22:40-46), and John, led by the Holy Spirit, deemed it unnecessary to repeat the account.

The warning of Jesus to Judas at the Passover supper, "What thou doest, do quickly" (Jn. 13:27) forced Judas to do immediately what he had not planned to do until after the feast was over. Judas may have taken the warning to mean that Jesus would leave the city the next day. We do not know the movements of Judas after he left the upper room but Samuel J. Andrews in "The Life Of Our Lord Upon The Earth" gives a good resume of what probably happened. "Going immediately to Caiaphas, or to some other leading member of the Sanhedrin, he informs him where Jesus is, and announces that he is ready to fulfill his compact and at once to make the arrest. It was not, as we have seen, the intention to arrest Him during the feast lest there should be a popular tumult (Matt. 26:5); but now that an opportunity offered of seizing Him secretly at dead of night when all were asleep or engaged at the paschal meal, and therefore without danger of interference or uproar, His enemies could not hesitate. Once in their hands, the rest was easy. A hasty trial, a prejudged condemnation, an immediate execution, and the hated Prophet of Galilee was forever removed out of their way. All, perhaps, might be done by the hour of morning prayer and sacrifice. With great despatch all the necessary arrangements are made. Some soldiers the Sanhedrin had under its own direction, the guards of the temple commanded by 'the captains of the temple,' or, as translated by Campbell, 'officers of the temple guard;' and to these they added some of their own servants armed with staves. But they must be attended by Roman soldiers in case a disturbance should arise; and to this end Pilate was persuaded to place at their command the cohort, or a part of it, under its captain, that during the feast was stationed at Fort Antonia for the preservation of order. Some of the chief priests and elders were also themselves to be present, to direct the proceedings, and if necessary to control the people. The soldiers, or some portion of them were to be provided with lanterns and torches, probably to search the garden if any attempt was made to escape. That at this time the moon was full presents no objection. They would need lanterns and torches, even in a clear night and under a brilliant moon, because the western side of Olivet abounds in deserted tombs and caves. It is possible that they thought to surprise Him asleep. It was agreed that Judas should precede the others, and, approaching Him in a friendly way, kiss Him, and thus make Him known. This indicates that no resistance was anticipated."

Judas knew exactly where Jesus would be. It may be that Judas had taken the soldiers first to the upper room and finding Jesus and the disciples gone led the authorities directly to the garden because he

knew this is where Jesus would go. Judas had often been to this garden with Jesus and the other disciples.

But they did not surprise Jesus! Jesus knew at all times exactly what was happening. He knew the unspoken thoughts of Judas' heart. Seeing the many flickering torches and lanterns borne by the multitude of soldiers as they came across the Kedron toward the garden, Jesus knew exactly their purpose. As they approached, Jesus strode forward to meet them, coming out of the darkened shelter of the olive trees.

He takes command of the situation immediately by asking, "Whom are you seeking?" Their answer was, "Jesus of Nazareth." Judas had not yet given his sign and was still standing in front of the crowd. Jesus must have taken another step or two forward leaving the disciples behind Him when He said, "I am he!" The complete calm, determined resolution, sublime majesty and commanding manner in both voice and demeanor surprised and startled those in the front of the crowd so that they stumbled backward over each other and some fell to the ground. There is no indication that Jesus did anything miraculous here to cause these soldiers to fall to the ground. There are many indications scattered through the Gospels that there was something extraordinarily subduing in the aspect and voice of Christ (when He cleansed the temple; when He had steadfastly set His face toward Jerusalem; when He walked through their midst unharmed; when they returned empty handed saying never a man so spake, etc.). Lenski thinks it was altogether miraculous and that the entire multitude fell backwards to the ground. Hendriksen says both the demeanor of Jesus and a miraculous sign both must account for the falling back of the soldiers. What Jesus did was completely unexpected! They expected Him to flee or at least hide. Barnes says, ". . . to suppose that there was (miraculous power—physical force) greatly detracts from the moral sublimity of the scene." The truth is, they were caught, instead of catching Him. Theirs was a mean, treacherous errand. They were employing a traitor as their guide. They were to surprise Him but He surprised them! He brought all their nefarious scheming into the open and put them to shame. The Lord rebuked them and uncovered for them their cowardice when He said to them, as the synoptics record, "Are you come out, as against a robber, with swords and staves to seize me? When I was among you daily in the temple, you made no move to arrest me—but *this* is *your* hour and the power of darkness."

After they had recovered somewhat from their surprise Jesus asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" and they replied a second time, "Jesus of Nazareth." "As I told you before," He replies, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, and if you are seeking me, let these other men behind me

go their way unharmed. Verse 9 seems to be John's own parenthetical insertion into the narrative here as John is writing the account years later to show that what Jesus had prophesied 6:39; 10:28 and 17:12 was in part fulfilled in this very incident.

Now Judas had already made a pact with the leaders. Judas had arranged to embrace His Master and this would be the signal for them to take Jesus by physical force and take Him away "safely" (said Judas). Judas probably feared some miraculous judgment or escape by Jesus. So Judas stepped forth and embraced Jesus with fervency, saying, "Hail, Teacher!" Jesus replied with deep pathos, no doubt, "Friend, do what you have purposed in your heart to do—but must you betray the Son of man with a hypocritical embrace?" At the signal the soldiers stepped forward and grasped Jesus' arms roughly and as they were about to take Him away Simon Peter and another disciple rushed forward, their short dagger-type swords drawn, shouting, "Lord shall we smite them with the sword?" Impulsive Peter did not hesitate or wait for a reply but swung his sword at one of the servants of the high priest, Malchus by name. It is worthy of note in passing that this record, which not only gives the name of the servant but tells that it was his *right* ear which was severed by Peter, certainly is *the record of one who was an eyewitness* and not the record of someone in the second century church making up silly little subjective myths about a mythical Jesus!

Jesus turned to Peter with a firm rebuke and a stern command to put the sword into its sheath. The reasons for this command and Jesus' refusal of the courageous act of Peter and the others are summarized by Hendriksen: (a) The cup which the Father had given Him, He must drink and Peter's deed is at variance with this determination of His to do so; (b) Jesus must be able to say to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world . . ." and if He allows them to fight with carnal weapons He cannot so answer; (c) If Jesus had wished to defend Himself He could have called legions of supernatural beings to His aid—Peter's act was unnecessary and uncalled for; (d) Finally, all they that take the sword will perish with the sword. This last one needs a bit of amplification. Certain rulers, magistrates and law enforcers are to wield the sword at the command of God (cf. Rom. 13:1-7; I Pet. 2:13-17; Titus 3:1, etc.). Those who wield the sword without just reason, and without receiving the orders of competent authority, are themselves liable to give life for life. National laws and governments are ordained by God and citizens of those national boundaries are to be subject to those governments as long as they do not demand that the individual violate the expressed will of God.

We have discussed before the boldness and courage of the disciples. Especially do we see it here! These men are not cowards. We do not believe that the record of them leaving Jesus and fleeing should be interpreted to mean they were cringing cowards (Matt. 26:56). We believe that Peter and John's boldness later as they entered into the very courtyard of the high priest as they followed Jesus indicates they may have felt the best thing they could do in the garden was to make good their escape in order to fight for their Master at a later, more opportune, time. Then when it finally came home to them that Jesus was not going to resist at all—that He was going to willingly submit to death—they were disillusioned and despondent but not cringing in fear. Their hopes for a powerful, reigning, temporal Messiah had vanished. They were more ashamed than afraid.

This type of attitude toward the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom did not die with the disciples. Many people today still insist that the King and the Kingdom must maintain a worldly prestige. They will boldly and courageously battle for such prestige. But when it comes to being treated in the humiliating, despicable way the Saviour was treated, they all leave Him and flee.

A couple of incidents recorded by the Synoptics and omitted by John are worthy of notice here. First, Jesus said (Matt. 26:56) that the events then happening were fulfillments of prophecies made by the Old Testament prophets. His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver is prophesied by Zechariah and His sufferings are prophesied by Isaiah. There are over 300 prophecies concerning the birth, life and passion of Christ in the O.T. prophets.

Second, the Synoptics record that a young man (Mk. 14:51-52) followed clad only in a linen cloth. He undoubtedly awoke in the middle of the night, having heard the noise of the multitude of soldiers, and being a follower of Jesus wrapped himself hurriedly and followed the throng out of the city into the garden. There he was discovered as a follower of Jesus and the soldiers grappled with him to arrest him also, but he fled leaving them holding the linen cloth (bed clothing?) with which he had wrapped himself. Some say this lad was John Mark but we cannot be sure.

### Quiz

1. What does the word "Gethsemane" mean and where was it located?
2. Where is the brook Kedron? Describe it.
3. Describe what you believe transpired between Judas' leaving the upper room and his leading the arresting party.
4. Why did they "fall to the ground" when Jesus spoke to them?
5. Why did Jesus say, "... let these go their way."?



6. Why did Jesus command Peter to put away his sword?
7. Did the disciples leave Him and flee because they were cowards? Explain your answer.

## TRIAL BY THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES

*Text: 18:12-27*

12 So the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound him,

13 and led him to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.

14 Now Caiaphas was he that gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known unto the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest;

16 but Peter was standing at the door without. So the other disciple, who was known unto the high priest, went out and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

17 The maid therefore that kept the door saith unto Peter, Art thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

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

19 The high priest therefore asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his teaching.

20 Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world; I ever taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and in secret spake I nothing.

21 Why askest thou me? ask them that have heard me, what I spake unto them: behold, these know the things which I said.

22 And when he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

23 Jesus answered him, if I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

24 Annas therefore sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore unto him, Art thou also one of his disciples? He denied, and said, I am not.

26 One of the servants of the high priest, being a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

27 Peter therefore denied again: and straightway the cock crew.

*Queries*

- a. Why did they take Jesus to Annas first?
- b. Why did Peter gain entrance into the court of the high priest's palace and then deny that he knew Jesus?
- c. Why did Annas ask Jesus concerning His disciples and His teaching?

*Paraphrase (Harmony)*

So the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound him, and led him to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. Now Caiaphas was he that gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known unto the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest; but Peter was standing at the door without. So the other disciple, who was known unto the high priest, went out and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. The maid therefore that kept the door saith unto Peter, Art thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. Now the servants and the officers were standing there, having made a fire of coals; for it was cold; and they were warming themselves: and Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

The high priest therefore asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his teaching. Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world; I even taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and in secret spake I nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them that have heard me, what I spake unto them: behold, these know the things which I said. And when he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? Annas therefore sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

And they that had taken Jesus led him away to the house of Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. And Peter had followed him afar off, even within, into the court of the high priest; and sat with the officers to see the end. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the court, and had sat down together, Peter sat in the midst of them, warming himself in the light of the fire.

Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death; and they found it not, though many false witnesses came. For many bare false witness against

him, and their witness agreed not together. But afterward came two, and said, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands, And not even so did their witness agree together. And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But he held his peace, and answered nothing.

And the high priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God. And Jesus said, I am; and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. And the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, He hath spoken blasphemy: What further need have we of witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be worthy of death. And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and beat him. Then did they spit in his face and buffet him, cover his face. And some smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, prophesy unto us, thou Christ: who is he that struck thee? And the officers received him with blows of their hands. And many other things spake they against him, reviling him.

And as Peter was beneath in the court, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest; and seeing Peter warming himself, as he sat in the light of the fire, and looking steadfastly upon him, said, Thou also wast with the Nazarene, even Jesus. But he denied, before them all saying, woman I know him not I neither know, nor understand what thou sayest: and he went out into the porch, and the cock crew. One of the servants of the high priest, being a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? And the maid saw him, and began again to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. But he again denied it. And after a little while again they that stood by said to Peter, Of a truth thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilean, for thy speech maketh thee known. But he began to curse, and to swear, I know not this man of whom ye speak. and straightway the second time the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said unto him, Before the cock crow twice this day thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Now when morning was come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: and they led him away into their council, saying, If thou art the Christ, tell us. But he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I ask you, ye will not answer. But from henceforth shall the Son of man be

seated at the right hand of the power of God. And they all said, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What further need have we of witness? for we ourselves have heard from his own mouth.

Then Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood. But they said, What is that to us? See thou to it. And he cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary, and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the pieces of silver, and said, It is not lawful to put them in the treasury, since it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was priced, whom certain of the children of Israel did price; and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

### *Summary*

By cruel and evil men Jesus is tried illegally, coerced, mocked, brutalized and condemned without proof or cause. The Jewish authorities had already condemned Him before trial. At the same trials, His most steadfast disciple denies Him.

### *Comment*

Jesus is led first to the palace of the high priest which was probably in, or at least very near, the temple courts. Here He was subjected to a sort of preliminary questioning by Annas, father-in-law of the present high priest Caiaphas. Ever since the Romans had occupied Palestine the high priests no longer held office for life as the O.T. Law legislated. Jewish high priests were now appointed by the Romans as they saw fit. According to history Annas had been high priest and had ruled from 7-14 A.D. when he was deposed by the Roman procurator, Gratus, and Caiaphas, his son-in-law, was appointed and ruled from 18-36 A.D. Five sons of Annas ruled as high priest during this final period of Jewish national life. Just why Jesus was taken to Annas first we do not know. Conjecturally speaking we would guess that it had something to do with the pride and vain glory of Annas himself that would cause him to demand Jesus be brought to him first. Perhaps Annas really "pulled all the strings" in the office and his son-in-law Caiaphas was merely the puppet high priest (cf. Lk. 3:2; Acts 4:6).

It seems highly probable that Annas and Caiaphas would both reside in the palace of the high priest. Therefore just as soon as Annas was

through with his questioning they took Jesus immediately into the quarters of Caiaphas. From there He was taken into the council chambers of the Sanhedrin. The harmonized account of all the Jewish trials indicates that they all transpired in one place for Peter did not leave the same courtyard. The palace would be built on the same order as most expensive homes in Jerusalem, around an open court. The rooms were in the rectangle opening into the inside court. The hall leading from the front door to this court was called the "porch." The gallery connecting these rooms surrounded the court and was a little higher than the court, although not like a second story.

John does not give us any information on the trial before Caiaphas and the one before the Sanhedrin. He supplies what the Synoptics do not—the questioning before Annas. John seems to be that "other disciple" of v. 16 and he was an eyewitness to the questioning by Annas. Some think this "other" disciple was not John but one who dwelt at Jerusalem and who, not being a Galilean, could enter the palace without suspicion. But John states that "the other disciple" was known to the high priest and his servants and was therefore allowed certain liberties others were not allowed. We might guess that John, being the son of a well-to-do fisherman, would have been patronized by the high priest. The authorities would want the influence of the well-to-do businessmen.

Hendriksen says of Annas that "He was very proud, exceedingly ambitious, and fabulously wealthy. His family was notorious for its greed. The main source of his wealth seems to have been a goodly share of the proceeds from the price of sacrificial animals, which were sold in the Court of the Gentiles. By him the house of prayer had been turned into a den of robbers. Even the Talmud declares: 'Woe to the family of Annas! Woe to the serpent-like hisses! (probably the whisperings of Annas and the members of his family, seeking to bribe and influence the judges).'"

The reason that John makes the parenthetical notice concerning Caiaphas in verse 14 is because of the significance of his statement that it was expedient for one man to die for the whole nation (cf. our comments on Jn. 11:49-52). He had been planning the death of Christ for a long time and he and his father-in-law were two of a kind.

The discerning reader will notice right away the differences in reporting the denials of Peter in the Synoptics and in John's gospel. There can be no doubt that all four writers expect three denials. Hendriksen offers the following solution to the differences in the four accounts: ". . . he (John) also reports on three denials, but counts differently, splitting up into two denials that which by the others is

considered the third denial. In the latter case, what by the others is presented as the third denial is by John counted as the second and the third." That would harmonize as follows:

1st denial—Matt. 26:69-70 Mk. 14:66-68 Lk. 22:56-57 Jn. 18:15-18

2nd denial—Matt. 26:71-72 Mk. 14:69-70a Lk. 22:58 Jn. 18:25

3rd denial—Matt. 26:73-74 Mk. 14:70b-72 Lk. 22:59-60 Jn. 18:26-27

R. C. Foster, in his syllabus on the Life of Christ, explains the challenges and denials in this way: "The accounts are agreed as to the first challenge. Mark says the same maid gave the second; Matthew says another woman; Luke, a man; John, a group. Evidently when the portress saw Peter out in the hall leading to the front door, she left her post and challenged him again. Another maid joined her in it; then a man servant. Peter retreated before this attack to the campfire and there a whole group added their accusation to those of the three trailing him. The second and third denials represent a succession of attacks. Peter, assailed on all sides, repeatedly denied. Mark indicates this by the very graphic and exact imperfect tense, 'He kept on denying.' In the third denial, Matthew and Mark say a group; Luke, another man; John, a kinsman of Malchus—here again a succession of accusations and denials occurred."

Why was Peter in there? Why, after having entered, did He deny Jesus? We cannot be sure. It does not seem reasonable, however, to think of Peter's denials as expressions of cowardice when he bravely entered, so to speak, the "lion's den." If Peter was a coward, why did he walk right into the midst of the arresting officers? And why, if he was a coward, did he not bolt and run when challenged the first time—why did he stay on? We believe the exact opposite of cowardice may have moved Peter to get into the palace of the high priest to courageously spy out the possibilities of counter-attack. He may even have had ideas of fighting to free Jesus there in the palace. We must remember that Peter was a rough and rugged fisherman. He was used to danger of life and limb. His denials were probably to conceal his association with Jesus until he could spy out the information needed to carry out a rescue later or until an opportune time afforded itself when he could effect a rescue there in the courtyard. Whatever his reason for denying that he knew Jesus the denial was wrong. If he denied to gain information to use in a struggle of force later it was wrong for as Jesus told Pilate later, and had told Peter earlier, His kingdom was not one of carnal warfare. The sword was not to be used. Christ must suffer. He must drink the cup the Father had given Him. Remember that once before when Jesus told the impetuous Peter He must suffer and be killed, Peter boldly said he would fight to the death for

his Master. It was then that Jesus called Peter, Satan, because Peter did not realize the nature of the Messiah or the Messianic kingdom. We believe the gospel records indicates these men would have fought to the death for the worldly type of Messiah and Messianic kingdom they had envisioned, but when they saw that their Master was submitting to humiliation and death like a "sheep led to the slaughter," they had no other recourse but to go away in despondency. The transformation that came in the lives of the disciples after the resurrection of Christ is another story.

Now the trials of Jesus have been divided into two sections: (a) the ecclesiastical trials—before Annas; before Caiaphas and the elders; and before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin; and (b) the civil trials—before Pilate; before Herod; and back to Pilate.

John omits all but a brief notice of the two trials before Caiaphas and concerns himself with the preliminary questioning before Annas and the trials before Pilate. We shall comment only on the trials recorded by John.

There are many illegal aspects of the arrest and trial of Jesus Christ. We recommend for a more detailed study of the subject a book entitled "The Trial of Jesus Christ," by Frank J. Powell, an English Magistrate, published by Eerdmans. For a devotional study of the arrest, trials and crucifixion we recommend a book entitled, "The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ," by James Stalker, pub. Zondervan.

Jesus was tried illegally at night; His arrest came by bribery; He was forced to testify against Himself; He was sentenced the very same night which was illegal; He was coerced and beaten during the trial but the most atrocious part of the trial was the prejudice, bigotry and malice aforethought of the judges. As Hendriksen says, it was not a trial, but a plot to murder Jesus.

Annas (v. 19) asks Jesus concerning his disciples, and of his teaching. Exactly what Annas asked is not certain, but it appears that he wanted some preliminary confession that Jesus by his teaching and his disciples was inciting the public to treason. Annas could use such a confession when he takes the Nazarene before Pilate. After all, had not the Nazarene taught that He was King of the Jews and that He was about to establish a kingdom. His disciples taught the same thing.

There were times when Jesus taught His disciples privately but what He taught them then He had already taught publicly. He taught in the temple courts and in the synagogues. He taught in the streets and in the fields. He taught on the mountain sides and on the sea shores. There were always plenty of Pharisees or other authorities present when Jesus taught His doctrines of the kingdom and the Messiah.

They could not trap Him this way. They were really wanting Him to incriminate Himself with some confession of wrong.

But Jesus turns the tables. He demands that they produce witnesses to testify. He has no secrets to conceal. These judges knew that they had no evidence to present against Him. The demand of Jesus that they bring witnesses to testify brings their lack of evidence into the open.

The Lord had no more than finished the words when one of the officers of the temple guard struck Him across the mouth with his open hand. Either this officer took it upon himself to strike the prisoner or he was encouraged by the high priest to do so. The *real* High Priest was scornfully rebuked with, "Answerest thou the high priest so?"

Jesus shows the utter disregard of His judges for fairness, legality, mercy or truth when He answers, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?" He demands again that valid testimony be brought into the trial and that He shall not be judged and coerced with violence before some evidence is heard. The authorities had no evidence. They were not interested in evidence anyway. They had already made up their minds to kill Him regardless of the evidence. They would later bribe witnesses to testify, but even the bribed witnesses could not agree in their testimony!

While Peter was in the midst of denying Jesus with oaths and curses he suddenly saw the eyes of his tormentors turned away from him toward the gallery of the palace. They were looking at Jesus, who was now being led, amidst blows and curses, across the courtyard to either Caiaphas' quarters or a guard-room where He was to be kept for a few hours until a later questioning by the Sanhedrin. As Jesus stepped out of Annas' quarters onto the gallery His ear had caught the oaths and curses of Peter and hurt deep in His heart He turned around in the direction of Peter—at the same moment the cock crowed and Peter turned—and they looked one another full in the face. Soul looked into soul. What was in that look of the Master to the one who had denied Him? There may be a world in a look. A look may be more eloquent than a whole volume of words. It may reveal more than the lips can ever utter. One writer has commented that the following may have been in the look of the Master:

- (a) His look was a talisman dissolving the spell in which Peter was then held. Peter was so engrossed in his scheming to rescue Jesus that he needed to be brought to himself again.
- (b) The look of Christ was a mirror in which Peter saw himself. He saw what Christ thought of him. His past confessions and professions of courage and "I will fight to the death with you" came



rushing back upon his mind.

- (c) It was a rescuing look. Had it been an angry look he saw on Christ's face when their eyes met, Peter's fate might have been the same as Judas'. In that look of an instant Peter saw forgiveness and unutterable love.

We are not sure that Peter saw all this in that one look. But what he did see was enough to cause him to go out and weep bitterly. It may be that Peter's compassion for Christ in His torture and humiliation had something to do with his bitter weeping. No doubt Peter read disappointment in the eyes of Jesus as He looked. No doubt Peter was ashamed of himself when Jesus looked at him. The same Word of God pierces our very souls today in the same manner if we will allow it to do so.

Between this section of the eighteenth chapter (v. 12-27) and the next section (v. 28-40) the trials before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin occur. John does not record these trials and when we take up our comments again at verse 28 it will be where Jesus is led before Pilate for the first time.

### Quiz

1. Who was Annas and what sort of a person was he?
2. Who was Caiaphas and what sort of a person was he?
3. Where would these two have had their residence and what type of a residence would it be?
4. How was John able to get into the palace?
5. Why was Peter in the courtyard?
6. Name some ways in which the trials of Jesus are illegal?
7. Of what significance was the look Jesus gave to Peter?

### TRIED BY PILATE, THE ROMAN AUTHORITY

#### *Text: 18:28-40*

- 28 They lead Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium: and it was early; and they themselves entered not into the Praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover.
- 29 Pilate therefore went out unto them, and saith, What accusation bring ye against this man?
- 30 They answered and said unto him, if this man were not an evildoer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee.
- 31 Pilate therefore said unto them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. The Jews said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:
- 32 that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should die.

33 Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of Jews?

34 Jesus answered, Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me?

35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me: what has thou done?

36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find no crime in him.

39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

40 They cried out therefore again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

### *Queries*

- a. Why could the Jews not put Jesus to death?
- b. By what manner of death should Jesus die?
- c. What did Pilate mean when he said, "What is truth?"

### *Paraphrase (Harmony)*

And straightway in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him up to Pilate.

They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium: and it was early; and they themselves entered not into the Praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover. Pilate therefore went out unto them, and saith, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If this man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up to thee. And they began to accuse him, saying, We would this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king. Pilate therefore said unto them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. The Jews said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death; that the word of Jesus

might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should die.

Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered, Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?

And when he had said this, he went out again unto the chief priests and the multitudes, and saith unto them, I find no crime in him. And Pilate again asked him, saying, Answerest thou nothing? Behold how many things they accuse thee of. But Jesus no more answered anything; insomuch that Pilate marvelled greatly.

But they were the more urgent, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, and beginning from Galilee even unto this place. But when Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man were a Galilean.

And when he knew that he was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him unto Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem in these days.

Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was of a long time desirous to see him, because he had heard concerning him; and he hoped to see some miracle done by him. And he questioned him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the scribes stood vehemently accusing him. And Herod with his soldiers set him at nought, and mocked him, and arraying him in gorgeous apparel sent him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

And Pilate called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said unto them, Ye brought unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: no, nor yet Herod: for he sent him back unto us; and behold, nothing worthy of death hath been done by him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

Now at the feast he used to release unto them one prisoner, whom

they asked of him. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas, lying bound with them, that had made insurrection, men who in the insurrection had committed murder.

When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him up. And while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

They cried out therefore again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas.

### Summary

Jesus, having been tortured and subjected to questioning all night, is condemned to death early in the morning by the Sanhedrin, but they cannot execute their sentence. They must have permission from the Roman governor. So Jesus is taken before Pilate. Pilate finds nothing in Jesus worthy of death and wants to release Him.

### Comment

Just where the "Praetorium" was located is not certain. Andrews thinks the procurator's "pavement" or judgment stones were carried with him to different places. Andrews further believes that Pilate judged Jesus in the open paved space before the palace of Herod the Great which was situated on the north side of Mount Zion. Others think the judgment hall of Pilate was in the Tower of Antonia which may have been connected to Herod's palace.

Verse 28 has been abused by destructive critics to prove that the Fourth Gospel contradicts the Synoptics. The Synoptics all say that Jesus ate the passover on Thursday and was crucified on Friday. Verse 28, at first glance, would make one think that the Passover had not yet been celebrated. But there are two possible answers. First, however, it must be seen that John and the Synoptics do not disagree in the light of so much evidence to their perfect harmony. On the one hand these Jews who feared to enter the Praetorium may have feared defilement for the *remainder* of the passover feast. The actual festivities of the passover lasted a full week. There were other feasts besides the passover lamb on the 14th of Nisan such as the *Chagigah* which followed the day after the Passover Supper. On the other hand these Jews may have been so busy with arresting and trying Jesus that they postponed their Passover Supper and planned to eat it after the matter of Jesus' death was taken care of. These men were not above violating the law of Moses to serve their own ends.

If they should enter any place where the Roman eagle was on its standard they would have been, according to their tradition, ceremonially unclean.

They would not come in so Pilate went out to meet them. We believe Pilate must have known some of the rumblings that were going on there in the city during that passover. After all, that is what he was there for—to keep down rioting and insurrection. He had no doubt heard of the great triumphal entry of Jesus into the city on the first day of the week. He no doubt had informers keeping him informed of the arrest and trial of this Jesus by His own Sanhedrin. He was probably not too worried about this Jesus since he had no doubt heard of His meekness and His "philosophical teachings." We believe Pilate was persuaded that Jesus was just another Jewish philosopher or rabbi. Jesus' followers were not organized and were unarmed. But it seems it was also plain to Pilate that these Jewish rulers were trying to embroil him in their religious wranglings. It is plain by his question in v. 29 that he was not intending to become a mere tool in the hands of the priests and elders to execute their revengeful plans.

Pilate was a politician, first last and always. He seems to have been superstitious as most Romans were. His sense of justice went only to the point where it might cost him his official position. He later was accused of mismanagement of his procuratorship and called to Rome to answer the charges. Before he could defend himself the emperor died and tradition has it that he committed the honorable Roman suicide.

Pilate and the Jews had no love for one another. Once he caused soldiers who were under his command to bring with them ensigns with their images of the emperor. To the Jew this was sacrilege. When he threatened with death those who had come to petition him for the removal of these idolatrous standards, they called his bluff, and he yielded. At another time he used the temple-treasure to pay for an aqueduct. When a crowd complained and rioted, he ordered his soldiers to club them into submission. He felt the Jews were always causing him trouble and every opportunity he had to trouble them he enjoyed.

Here they had come to cause him some more trouble. If he became involved in a local religious dispute things might get out of hand and he would lose his position. Furthermore, he might use this opportunity to vex his enemies.

That they were vexed by his refusal to go along with their murderous scheme is evident from their impudent, sarcastic answer, "If this man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up unto

thee." There may even have been the hint of a threat in their answer. In fact, later they do threaten Pilate (Jn. 19:12).

Pilate is at a loss to know why these Jewish rulers would bring one of their rabbis who had fallen into disrepute because of something the rulers felt was heresy. Let these Jews take care of their own religious squabbings. But then, the Jews (Luke 23:2) came up with the accusation that Jesus was "perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king." Such treasonable acts were worthy of death and the Jews were forbidden by their Roman conquerors to execute the sentence of death upon any one.

Now the lawful method of execution for the Jew was death by stoning. Any other death was accursed by the law (Deut. 21:23). At this time, however, the Jews were not allowed to put anyone to death. Jesus had predicted that he would be crucified (Jn. 3:14; Matt. 20:19). His death to atone for man's sin and remove the curse of the law was predicted as one which would come by hanging Him "on a tree," (cf. Gal. 3:13). And so when the Romans were forced to crucify Him on "a tree," it fulfilled prophecy.

Upon hearing the accusation of the Jews Pilate thought it wise to make a thorough examination in case this religious teacher might be planning an insurrection. So, leaving the Jews outside, Pilate entered into the Praetorium and called for Jesus to be brought before him for questioning. The accusations of the Jews were utterly false. Jesus was not perverting the nation but trying to raise its moral standards; He actually taught that tribute was to be paid to Caesar; He refused to be crowned the temporal king of Israel. But Pilate had no knowledge of this.

Hendriksen thinks the emphasis in Pilate's question (v. 33) should be upon "thou." In other words, "Are *you* the King of the Jews?" It was inconceivable to Pilate that such an unassuming individual as this could be a king! The Roman concept of king and ruler was one of power, dignity and pride.

Jesus answers Pilate's question with a question of His own, "Are you saying this of your own accord, or have others said it to you about me?" In other words, "Why are you asking concerning my kingship—is it because you also have the concept of it which these Jews have given you or is it because you really want to know for yourself?"

With a note of contempt in his voice for the Jews Pilate answers, "No, I do not see in you any such king as the Jews see or any such danger of insurrection as they see—No, I am not a Jew, am I? But your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me for some reason which they evidently believe is a crime. What have you

done?" We think Pilate knew that the envy of the Jewish rulers over the following this Jesus had gained was part of the reason for His arrest, but he was not sure this was all the prisoner was guilty of.

In His answer, Jesus not only answers all the charges but He witnesses to this Gentile ruler. First He allays Pilate's concern over the political situation when He says, "My kingship is not of this world. If my kingship were of this world my attendants would have been fighting in order to keep me from being handed over to the Jews, but now my kingship does not spring from that source." Jesus makes it plain that He does not seek a kingdom or kingship of the world at all. He seeks no overthrow of the political structure, either Roman or Jewish. In fact, He infers that the Jewish rulers are His enemies as much as any other political group so He is not the king of the Jews as they would think of it. Furthermore, His followers were not allowed to use force to rescue Him. He had no temporal throne, no temporal army and no temporal province. The implication is evident to Pilate that Jesus claims to be some kind of a king. So Pilate's question, "So you are a king?"

Now Jesus has opportunity to witness to Pilate. "Yes," Jesus replies, "you are saying correctly that I am a king, for this royal purpose was I born." But His kingship is His rule in the hearts of men by truth. He, Himself, is the embodiment of the truth which He came to witness. He brought divine truth—supernatural truth—from realms beyond this world. He had brought to this world that which every man needs and most men long for—supernatural truth and supernatural wisdom. And men may live in this truth by listening to His doctrine . . . His doctrine as He taught it and as the apostles taught it later (cf. I Jn. 4:1-6).

Pilate had nothing but contempt and skepticism for such high idealism. "What is truth?" he scoffs. To a Roman politician of his day truth was relative. Their view of what was good and truthful was cynical pragmatism. In other words, whatever worked for their personal benefit or promotion was perfectly justifiable. One has but to study the case histories of some of the Roman Caesars to see this (Nero, Caligula, etc.).

Pilate could plainly see that this Jewish rabbi was just another religious fanatic and He was simply stirring up His own religious leaders to jealousy, but as far as committing any crime worthy of death, He was not guilty. So Pilate went out on the porch to where the Jews were waiting and pronounced Jesus innocent. But the Jews would not hear of it! They began a clamor for His death. The rulers incited the crowd to clamoring also. Meanwhile, Pilate's wife came to him with

her superstitions connected to a dream she had had concerning this Jesus (cf. Matt. 27:19-21). Pilate must be careful! Every move must be weighed! He does not want to become involved in the nasty trial and condemnation of an innocent man. But neither does he want to incur the political disfavor of the Jewish rulers. So he offers to release the prisoner Jesus according to the Roman custom of releasing a prisoner at passover time. Now there was another Jewish prisoner held by the Romans, one Barabbas, a robber and one who had in fact incited a seditious riot. But the Jews would not hear of it! They cried out, "Not this man but Barabbas . . . this man stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, and beginning from Galilee even unto this place."

Aha! Pilate ponders the thought! This Jesus was a Galilean. Herod was ruler of that province. Pilate and Herod had been at odds with one another over some political squabble for quite a while. Here was an opportunity to "kill two birds with one stone." He would be rid of the responsibility of condemning an innocent man while placating Herod at the same time. Herod was placated but the innocent Jesus was returned to Pilate for final responsibility. John leaves all this out of his account. It may be studied in the Synoptics.

### *Quiz*

1. Where was Pilate's judgment hall and the Praetorium?
2. What is meant when it is said that the Jews were afraid of defilement should they enter Pilate's judgment hall?
3. What type of a man was Pilate and what did he probably know about Jesus?
4. Why must the Romans put Jesus to death?
5. How did Jesus answer the charges against Him and witness to Pilate at the same time?
6. What did Pilate mean when he said, "What is truth?"
7. How did Pilate think he had solved his dilemma of not wanting to sentence an innocent man and yet not wanting to displease the Jews?

### SERMON NO. SEVENTEEN MANKIND ON TRIAL

Mark 14:53-65; John 18:33-38

#### *Introduction*

WHY WAS JESUS ON TRIAL? Because of the claims He made to be the Son of God, Messiah, Forgiver of sins. Because of what He did: He broke the traditions of the Pharisees and loved sinners. Because of what He was: He was righteous, sinless and condemned the evil of the rulers.



BUT WAS THE SON OF GOD REALLY ON TRIAL? Actually, those before whom He stood were on trial. These murderous judges and officials were at this moment being weighed in the balances of God. They were under the heart-searching gaze of the One who is the Judge of all the earth.

IT WAS REALLY THE MOMENT OF TRUTH FOR THOSE JUDGES. He is not a prisoner—because He is powerless, but because He wills it to be so. He made His claims, performed His deeds and lived His life, and substantiated it all by great miracles which were done openly and before His enemies.

THIS SEEMS TO BE THE ATTITUDE OF MEN FACED WITH JESUS CHRIST TODAY . . . THEY DEMAND THAT HE STAND TRIAL BEFORE THEIR PERSONAL COURT. If He conforms to their desires or ideals He can go free . . . IF HE DOESN'T BOTHER THEM TOO MUCH. But men and women must awake to the fact Jesus has made such tremendous claims to deity, with such undeniable testimony and evidence to back them up, that THEY ARE ON TRIAL.

"For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Heb. 4:12. HIS WORD WILL JUDGE MEN AND DOES JUDGE MEN NOW. Jn. 12:48.

#### *Discussion*

I. RULERS OF THE JEWS. It is near midnight, and Annas is questioning Jesus about disciples and teachings. After this Jesus is taken to the Sanhedrin gathered at night and is condemned to death on charge of blasphemy (the whole trial was illegal). Dignified religious leaders then act like hoodlums as they spit upon Him, strike Him, mock Him. To make the trial appear legal, they call the Sanhedrin together again after daybreak and try Him again. THE TRIAL WAS ILLEGAL IN MANY RESPECTS. IT WAS AFTER DARK, CONDUCTED WITH BRIBED WITNESSES, FORCE WAS USED, THE ACCUSED WAS MADE TO TESTIFY AGAINST SELF, THE WITNESSES COULD NOT AGREE, THE JUDGES HAD DETERMINED HIS GUILT AND SENTENCE BEFORE COURT WAS HELD.

Truth mattered little to these evil men. These rulers did not want a Messiah. Jesus stood before them condemned because He was upsetting their "apple carts". He cleansed the temple and publicly ex-

posed and condemned their graft which ran in the millions annually. He openly taught the multitudes of people and exposed the unbelief and greed of the rulers: **IT WAS FOR ENVY AND JEALOUSY AND GREED THAT THEY DECIDED TO KILL JESUS—EVEN PILATE KNEW THIS.** It was because He was hurting their pocket-books that they were trying Him. **IF HE HAD NOT BOTHERED THEM OR THEIR BUSINESS, HE COULD HAVE PREACHED ALL HE WANTED TO.**

Jesus was the prisoner bound in chains, but the judges were on trial! There are those today who think they have Jesus where they want Him. He has been tried in the courts of their hearts and found guilty of being too righteous. **THEY WILL NOT HAVE JESUS CHRIST TO RULE OVER THEM BECAUSE HIS RIGHTEOUS TEACHING AND SINLESS LIFE EXPOSES AND CONDEMNS THEIR EVIL.** "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil: For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light lest his works should be reprov'd." Jn. 3:19-20. "But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God." Jn. 3:21. Men may try to hide and dress up their evil deeds all they want but the light of God's truth exposes them for what they really are. **THEY MAY CRY BIGOT AND FANATIC ALL THEY WANT AND HOLD COURT IN THEIR HEART UPON GOD'S WORD AND HIS PEOPLE, BUT THEY ARE REALLY THE ONES ON TRIAL!**

And so it is with people who will not give up their sinful lives and evil habits today. They *demand* the *right* to *do as they please*. If God's Word says different, they hold court, try God as a narrow-minded bigot and condemn Him.

Jesus stood before men, some of whom had seen with their own eyes evidence that He was the Son of God. One of their number, Nicodemus, admitted it. They simply brushed aside any facts or any truth. They tried to make it appear that Jesus was guilty instead of admitting the truth and repenting and bringing their lives into conformity to His teaching.

**IT WAS NOT THE SON OF GOD ON TRIAL THAT NIGHT, BUT MEN BLIND IN UNBELIEF AND GREED AND ENVY. THEIR CHARGES WERE TOO RIDICULOUS TO ANSWER . . . THEIR PURPOSE WAS EVIDENT TO ALL, MURDER. BEFORE THEM STOOD ONE WHO HAD MADE CLAIM TO BE GOD AND HAD SUBSTANTIATED IT WITH GREAT MIRACLES WHICH SOME OF THEM HAD SEEN. THEY COULD NOT**

DISPROVE HIS CLAIMS, SO THEY KILLED HIM! I ASK YOU, WHO WAS BEING TRIED THAT NIGHT? PERHAPS YOU ARE IN THE SAME POSITION THIS EVENING. YOU KNOW HIS CLAIM TO BE RULER OF THE HEARTS OF MEN—YOU KNOW THAT THE EVIDENCE TO BACK HIM UP IS OVERWHELMING! YOU CAN'T DISPROVE HIM! WHY WILL YOU STAND THERE WITH THE EVIL SANHEDRIN AND CONDEMN HIM, MOCK HIM?

II. HEROD. Actually Jesus was sent to Pilate first who then sent Him to Herod. Herod had been anxious to see the Galilean. He had heard about His miracles and wanted to see Him work one (like a magic show).

Herod was a man who had let his sensual appetites take possession of him. Everything was a lark to him. He loved only to eat, drink, be merry and luxuriate in pleasure and revelry. Even that which was from God he thought to make into a show for his amusement and diversion.

There are people judging Jesus and Christianity like this today. They are interested only in eating, drinking and merry-making. If religion will thrill them or indulge in their revelry and pleasure then they will play church and join the "Sunday club." They mock and laugh at any pretension of righteousness. JESUS IN ALL HIS PURE, SINLESS DIGNITY, SPOKE NOT A WORD IN ANSWER TO THE ANIMAL HEROD . . . IT WOULD BE LIKE CASTING YOUR PEARLS BEFORE THE SWINE. Jesus was not on trial before Herod—Herod simply showed his debased nature and judged himself. So the Son of God is not on trial by the debauched and those who delight in sin today! THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE TODAY WHO SEEM TO DELIGHT IN MAKING MOCKERY OF ANYTHING THAT IS PURE AND HOLY AND SACRED WITH THEIR FILTHY MINDS AND FILTHY MOUTHS. THESE PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY BEEN GIVEN UP BY GOD! READ ROMANS 1st chapter! and II Thess. 2:8-12. Those who take pleasure in unrighteousness and will not love the truth, God sends them a strong delusion, so that they will believe a lie! They are like Belshazzar who was weighed and found wanting in the balances of God!

III. PILATE. He was intelligent enough to see that there was no valid reason for Jesus to be on trial. HE EVEN PRONOUNCED JESUS INNOCENT AND WOULD HAVE LET HIM GO. But Pilate was a coward for He knew what was right but he would not stand for it. He allowed worldly pressures to rule him. He allowed the fear of what men would think and do cause him to do something he knew to be wrong. HE BETRAYED HIMSELF WHEN HE SAID

"WHAT IS TRUTH?" HE WAS A MAN LIKE SO MANY MEN TODAY WHO SAY THE SAME! THEY MAKE TRUTH A RELATIVE THING! SOMETHING IS TRUE ONLY AS LONG AS IT WORKS! IF IT DOESN'T WORK FOR ME OR FOR SOCIETY, IT ISN'T TRUE. TRUTH IS TRUTH WHEREVER IT IS FOUND AND WHETHER IT WORKS FOR MAN'S PHYSICAL DESIRES OR NOT! SO MANY PUT THE SON OF GOD ON TRIAL TODAY BY THIS VERY SAME TOKEN! HE CLAIMED TO BE THE PRINCE OF PEACE AND THERE IS NO PEACE SO CHRISTIANITY IS UNTRUE. Jesus never claimed to give the world peace from war as men think of peace. God's word is true, whether you believe it or not, whether you like it or not, and whether it works for your desires or not. IT IS NOT HIS WORD THAT IS IN COURT, BUT HIS WORD IS THE COURT AND YOU ARE ON TRIAL!

Pilate then tried to rid himself of guilt by washing his hands and crying . . . "I'm neutral . . . Take him yourself and crucify him . . ." AND ARE THERE NOT MEN AND WOMEN TODAY WHO STAND ALONG SIDE PILATE, SAYING . . . "NO, I WILL NOT PUT THE SON OF GOD ON TRIAL, I WILL NOT BE FOR HIM OR AGAINST HIM . . .?" "I MAY BE A LOT OF THINGS, BUT I'M NOT AGAINST RELIGION!" My friend, you may not put the Son of God on trial, BUT YOU ARE ON TRIAL, JUST THE SAME! It is impossible to be neutral with the Lord Jesus Christ! "He that is not with me is against me . . . and he that gathereth not scattereth . . ."

NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS. BUT EVERY MAN SERVES ONE MASTER OR THE OTHER. IF YOU ARE NOT FOR JESUS BY SERVING HIM WITH YOUR LIFE, YOUR TIME AND YOUR MONEY . . . THEN YOU ARE AGAINST HIM AND SERVING THE DEVIL WITH YOUR LIFE, TIME AND MONEY! BY SERVING SELF WE SERVE THE DEVIL . . . FOR IF HE CAN GET US TO SERVE OURSELVES AND DENY CHRIST, WE HAVE BECOME HIS SLAVE AND WE HAVE SOLD OUR SOULS TO HIM! ELIJAH SAID, "HOW LONG GO YE LIMPING BETWEEN THE TWO,—IF BAAL BE GOD SERVE HIM . . . IF JEHOVAH BE GOD SERVE HIM".

#### *Conclusion*

And so, the Jesus revealed to you in the Gospels stands before the court of your heart this evening. He stands before you this evening as the God-man of Nazareth—the One who was as truly a man as if He had been altogether man—the One who is as surely God as if he had been altogether God—like a man, like God!

Like a man, the 12 year old tarried behind in the temple—like a God he confused the teachers with his understanding. Like a man He came to Jordan to be baptized of John—like a God He was acclaimed by the Father. Like a man He was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil—like a God He said "NO!" Like a man He fell asleep in the little boat after a hard day's work—like a God He stood forth, and with His voice "peace be still" calmed the tempest. Like a man He wept before the tomb of His dead friend—like a God he called, "Lazarus, come forth!" and was obeyed. Like a man He permitted that perfect body to be spiked to the Roman cross—like a God He died forgiving. Like a man He was placed in the tomb—like a God He came forth triumphant, the living reigning King. Here He stands before the court of your heart. **BUT HE IS NOT ON TRIAL, YOU ARE ON TRIAL!** I know you want to acknowledge His Lordship over your heart and life this evening if you have not done so. You believe in Him with all your heart . . . I know you do! Then step out this evening and come down front and say, "Lord, be my King, rule over me . . . I want to obey you in all that you have commanded . . . I want to be immersed and baptized in water for the forgiveness of my sin . . ."

When Paul stood before Felix, it was Felix on trial not Paul. When Paul stood before Agrippa, it was Agrippa on trial not Paul. **WHERE DO YOU STAND . . . DON'T BE A PILATE!**

**EVER SINCE GOD SENT HIS WORD MEN HAVE BEEN ON TRIAL, YOU CANNOT ESCAPE THIS FACT! YOU MUST DECIDE—YOU WILL DECIDE—YOU ARE DECIDING—OH, I PRAY, I HAVE PRAYED THAT YOUR DECISION WILL BE FOR JESUS!**

In 1829 George Wilson, in Pennsylvania, was sentenced by the U.S. Court to be hanged for robbing the mails, and murder. President Andrew Jackson pardoned him, but the pardon was refused. Wilson insisted that he was not pardoned unless he accepted it. That was a point of law never raised before and the President called on the Supreme Court to decide. Chief Justice John Marshall gave the following decision: "A pardon" is a paper, the value of which depends upon its acceptance by the person implicated. If it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must be hanged." And he was hanged although potentially he had been pardoned . . . he refused it by rejecting its provisions.

Potentially the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to the whole world. All men and women mature enough to make a choice, have been potentially pardoned by the New Covenant in Jesus'

blood. But, there are provisions of accepting this pardon and if we do not meet these provisions we must suffer the sentence and penalty which God has pronounced upon us for our sins . . . the sentence: DEATH . . . ETERNAL DEATH, the pardon: LIFE . . . ETERNAL LIFE.

FACE TO FACE WITH CHRIST YOUR SAVIOR, WHAT WILL IT BE? WHEN THE ROLL IS CALLED UP YONDER WILL YOU BE THERE? TO HIM THAT KNOWETH TO DO GOOD AND DOETH IT NOT, IT IS SIN . . . YOU KNOW BROTHER YOU CANNOT GO AWAY TONIGHT AND NOT KNOW.

EXAMINATION, CHAPTERS 16, 17 and 18

*Interpret These Enigmatic Sayings*

1. "It is expedient for you that I go away;"
2. "A little while and ye behold me not; and again a little while, and ye shall see me;"
3. ". . . ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice;"
4. "not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."
5. ". . . expedient that one man should die for the people."
6. ". . . My kingdom is not of this world:"

*Identify the Following and  
Tell of Their Character*

- |             |                  |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1. Annas    | 4. Pilate        |
| 2. Malchus  | 5. Barabbas      |
| 3. Caiaphas | 6. The Comforter |

*Who said This and Why?*

1. "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no dark saying."
2. "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth."
3. "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me."
4. "Art thou also one of this man's disciples?"
5. "Answerest thou the high priest so?"
6. "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."
7. "What is truth?"

*Fill in the Blanks*

1. "And he, when he is come, will \_\_\_\_\_ the world in respect of \_\_\_\_\_, and of \_\_\_\_\_, and of \_\_\_\_\_:"
2. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of \_\_\_\_\_, is come, he shall \_\_\_\_\_ you into all the \_\_\_\_\_:"

3. "And this is life \_\_\_\_\_, that they should \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ thee, the only \_\_\_\_\_ God, and \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ whom thou didst \_\_\_\_\_, even Jesus  
Christ."
4. "And for their sakes I \_\_\_\_\_ myself, that they them-  
selves also may be \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_."
5. "I have spoken \_\_\_\_\_ to the world; I ever taught in  
\_\_\_\_\_ and in the temple, where all the Jews come  
together; and in \_\_\_\_\_ spake I nothing."
6. "If I have spoken evil, \_\_\_\_\_  
of the evil: but if well, why \_\_\_\_\_ thou me?"
7. "Thou sayest that I am a \_\_\_\_\_. To this end have I  
been \_\_\_\_\_, and to this end am I \_\_\_\_\_  
into the world, that I should bear \_\_\_\_\_ unto the  
\_\_\_\_\_. Every one that is of the \_\_\_\_\_  
heareth my voice."

*Questions for Thought*

1. Why did Jesus tell the disciples of such dark and foreboding future persecutions? (chapter 16)
2. Why did Jesus emphasize the "word" and "truth" so much in His prayer? (chapter 17)
3. Why did Peter and John make a point to follow Jesus into the courtyard of the home of the High Priest?

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

This is John's account of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Here again the Fourth Gospel shows its supplementary nature. John omits even some of the incidents of the crucifixion which are recorded by the Synoptics (especially the words of the two thieves and the taunts of the hecklers around the cross). But John supplies some of the more tender and personal scenes and words which occurred at the foot of the cross that day.

The account of John is very evidently the account of an eyewitness, for it records even the words Jesus spoke to His mother. John alone records that it was Pilate who wrote the inscription "King of the Jews" and placed it upon His cross. Only John records that His legs were not broken but that the soldiers pierced His side with a spear and water and blood came gushing forth.

The nineteenth chapter really begins with the final examination by Pilate and tells of Pilate's final attempt to release Him. But the Jewish rulers are determined to put this enemy to their popularity to death and they bring great political pressure to bear on Pilate.