

2.17.18 ~ John 18:12-27,

Priests Persecute, Peter Denies, The Lord

**Read John 18:12-14...** Last week we left the Lord in the garden, where He was being betrayed, by Judas, into the hands of the chief priests and the Roman soldiers. At that point (cf **Mark 14:50**), the eleven "left Him and fled."

Jesus was abandoned by His disciples, leaving Him alone with His enemies, both Jew and Gentile. The arresting mob (**verse 12**) was made up of Roman soldiers, Jewish religious leaders, and temple guards; this would have amounted to several hundred armed men .

This mob of men were armed because of the fear that followers of Jesus would riot when an attempt was made to capture Him. These enemies of God came to this secluded spot at night, based on the information provided by Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, turned betrayer.

Perhaps there was a large number because of the power displayed by Jesus in healing the multitudes, even raising the dead; in fact, Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave, at Bethany (just two miles from Gethsemane), His last miracle before entering Jerusalem.

Last week (cf **John 18:6**), when Jesus spoke to this mob saying, "I AM the one you are looking for," this large group of armed men fell backwards to the ground.

The narrative we are studying today, takes place early Friday morning, just five days since Jesus entered Jerusalem on Sunday, riding on a donkey's colt (John 12). I began teaching John 12, in June of 2018, and it has taken 21 sermons to get to where we are today (not counting the topical sermons I did during the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year holidays.

Think about that, it has taken about seven months to cover what happened in the first five days of Passion Week: Jesus rode into town on a donkey's colt, hailed as Messiah, now He has been arrested, bound, and is being led to the slaughter like a lamb, for He is God's Lamb.

Notice (**verse 13**), after His arrest Jesus is taken to Annas, who had been the high priest from A.D. 6 to A.D. 15, and although he was not now the high priest, many influential Jews still held him in high esteem.

Truth be told, Caiaphas, his son-in-law is high priest at this time, but Annas was a wealthy and influential power in Israel; and so, Jesus is brought to Annas first.

See **Luke 3:1-6; Acts 4:1-6; 1:15; 2:41**

Notice (**verse 14**) John tells us Caiaphas was the one who told the Jews it was better for one man to die, rather than the whole nation perish (cf **John 11:47-53**).

Caiaphas was appointed high priest in A.D. 18, and he served until A.D. 36; this was one of the longest tenures of a high priest in the 1st century.

**Read John 18:15-18...** All the disciples ran to hide after Jesus was arrested, but it would seem that Peter and "another disciple" followed the arresting party,

probably at a very safe distance, wanting to see what was going to happen to Jesus. It was not yet, at this time, a crime to be a follower of Jesus, but His followers were, no doubt, fearful for their own safety.

Notice that John tells us there is someone else with Peter, although his name is not given. It is most likely that this disciple is John, for John never names himself in his gospel; but instead, he describes himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved.

The phrase "other disciple," is also used in **John 20:2**. and is clarified with "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

Who is the disciple that Jesus loved? See **John 13:23-25; 21:20, 24**. Peter and John are following Jesus as He is taken to the compound where Annas lives.

John is known to the high priest and is allowed to enter the courtyard, where as, Peter remains outside, until John speaks to the door keeper, in order to allow Peter to enter the courtyard.

In **verses 17-18** we are told that a servant girl at the door questions Peter about being a follower of Jesus, but he denies it! As Peter enters the courtyard and goes over to where some of the temple guards and servants are warming themselves by a charcoal fire.

John's focus shifts to Jesus being questioned by Annas (here called the high priest). Note: Just as a US President, after leaving office, will continue to be addressed as Mr. President, it was the same with the high priests in Israel.

**Read John 18:19-24...** No charges have been brought against Jesus, yet the questions being directed to Jesus have to do with His disciples and His teaching.

Although we are not told the specifics, it would seem that Annas is trying to get Jesus to incriminate Himself (**verse 19**). Jesus responds (**verses 20-21**), basically saying to Annas that He doesn't have any secret agenda, and He has taught openly in the synagogues, at the Temple, in the marketplace, and along the roads.

Jesus suggests that Annas question those who have heard Him speak, for they will tell him about Jesus' teachings.

Note: The religious leaders fear Jesus' teaching, for He spoke as one with authority of God, unlike themselves (see **Matthew 7:28-29; John 7:15-16, 32, 44-46**).

**Back to John 18:22...** Jesus responds to Annas, one of the guards strikes Jesus, probably in the face; and yet, Jesus calmly responds (**verse 23**). Remember, no charges have been stated as of yet, but He is being questioned as if He is a criminal who has broken Jewish religious laws. Jesus response, basically says, "If I am guilty of something, tell Me!"

Annas isn't getting anywhere with his questioning, so he sends Jesus to Caiaphas, the current high priest, the only one who can bring charges against Jesus before Pilate, and only Pilate can render the death penalty.

The focus of John's narrative now switches back to the courtyard where Peter is warming himself, waiting to see what will be done with Jesus.

**Read John 18:25-27...** John doesn't tell us why Peter is questioned again about being a follower of Jesus, but the other writers give us information that clears it up (see **Mark 14:66-67; Luke 22:54-56**). It would seem that by firelight, Peter is recognized as a disciple of Jesus, but he denies it.

**Back to John 18:26...** One of Annas's servants, was at the garden when Jesus was arrested, and is also related to Malchus (whose ear Peter cut off) now accuses Peter of being one of the disciples who was there with Jesus.

Peter, for the third time, denies either knowing or being a follower of Jesus, immediately a rooster crows.

John doesn't mention that at this moment, Peter goes out and weeps bitterly; probably because John's focus is on Jesus, not Peter. However, Luke gives us more insight concerning Peter's brokenness over his denial of believing in and belonging to Jesus Christ, God's Son, Lord and Savior (see **Luke 22:57-62**).

Peter relentlessly denied any relationship with Christ, but when confronted by the eyes of the Lord, Peter broke down. The word translated *wept* here, means to loudly express unconsolable grief; but Peter didn't just weep, he wept *bitterly*, meaning with deep painful regret.

Peter had denied any association with Jesus, but when Jesus looked at him (**Luke 22:61**), "Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times."

During the Passover meal in the upper room, Jesus had told the eleven He was going to leave them, to which Simon Peter replied (**John 13:36-38**), "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later." Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times."

How much like Peter we are, one moment we are willing to take on an army of God's enemies for the honor of our Lord, and the next moment, we are fearfully lying about, even denying, any knowledge or relationship with our Lord.

May it never be so!

**Isaiah 41:10**, "Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

**Romans 8:38-39**, "For... neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

**1Corinthians 15:58**, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord."