



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



# The Holy Gospel According to St. John

## Chapter 18

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# Introduction

- Chapters 18 and 19 of St. John's Gospel tell the deeply moving story of the Passion and self-sacrificial death of the Savior
- As is his custom, St. John does not often repeat the events covered in the other Gospels except to add new details
- He locates the events of Jesus' Passion and death in five settings
- Three of them are in this chapter
- The garden where Jesus is arrested 18:1-12
- The house of Annas the high priest and father-in-law of Caiaphas 18:13-27
- The Roman Praetorium, court of Pontius Pilate the Roman governor 18:28-19:16



# Introduction

## Chapter Outline

- Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 18:1-11
- Before the High Priest 18:12-14
- Peter Denies Jesus 18:15-18
- Jesus Questioned by the High Priest 18:19-24
- Peter Denies Twice More 18:25-27
- In Pilate's Court 18:28-38
- Taking the Place of Barabbas 18:39-40

# Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 18:1-11



- Jesus had finished His final guidance to His apostles and His prayer for them
- The time of His arrest, trials, and death, was at hand
- Jesus and His disciples crossed the Kidron Valley to reach the Mount of Olives
- We know from the Gospel according to St. Matthew and St. Luke that the Mount of Olives, where the town of Bethany was located, was where Jesus and the disciples were staying each night during their last week in Jerusalem
- John is the only Gospel writer to mention "a garden"

# Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 18:1-11



- What theological reason might John have had to use the word garden?
- St. Cyril of Jerusalem believed that John is drawing our attention to the parallel that exists in the struggle between Satan and the Adam in the Garden of Eden, and now the struggle between the traitor Judas, the tool of Satan, and Jesus the new Adam, in the garden of the olive press
- The fall of man began in a garden with Adam's disobedience and now Jesus the new Adam will begin His defeat of Satan in the garden where, in obedience, He yields Himself to the will of God the Father and accepts *the cup that the Father has given Him*, John 18:11

# Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 18:1-11



- *who betrayed Him*, In all the Gospel accounts whenever Judas is mentioned, he is always identified as the betrayer or traitor, Matthew 10:4, 26:14-16, 25, 47-48, 27:3; Mark 3:19, 14:10-11, 43-44; Luke 6:16, 22:3, 47-48; John 6:71, 12:4, 13:2, 21-30, 18:2-5
- This was a place where Jesus and His disciples had often met, and Judas knew this
- Having agreed to betray Jesus, Judas would no doubt expect to find Him in His usual places
- So, this was one place where He would search

# Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 18:1-11



- John does not tell us of the anguish of Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane
- He had, however, added very useful information regarding Jesus' final instructions to the apostles and His prayer to God for them
- This was the moment Satan has been waiting for since Jesus defeated him in Satan's attempt to tempt the new Adam, Luke 4:19
- Satan's right moment had come
- It is what St. Luke called "the hour of darkness" Luke 22:53

# Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 18:1-11



- Only John mentions that Roman soldiers were involved in Jesus' arrest
- They sent a large group, though we are not told how many
- Mark calls it a great multitude, 14:43
- They were armed with weapons (swords and clubs, according to other accounts), evidently expecting a fight
- They also came with torches to help see in the darkness
- Like the disciples, Jesus' enemies expected Him to try to be an earthly king by military might
- They expected that He and/or His disciples would put up a stiff resistance



# Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 18:1-11



- Jesus' foreknowledge is an indication of His divinity, a reoccurring theme in the Gospel according to St. John
- That Jesus *went forward* also shows that He is in full control of the unfolding events
- He knew all that was about to come upon Him, and consequently was far removed from any intention of withdrawing Himself from His destiny, of which He was fully and clearly conscious
- He did not hide Himself in the garden, as the first Adam did
- He did not stay till those that sought His life came up to Him

# Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 18:1-11



- He went forth, not to make His escape from them, but to meet them, and make Himself known unto them
- *“Whom are you seeking?”* This question was put, not out of ignorance; for He knew well who they were seeking after: nor with a design to deceive them and make His escape
- But to show that He was not afraid of them, and that they could not have known Him, nor have taken Him, had He not made Himself known; and offered Himself to them; and which makes it appear, that He was willingly apprehended by them, and voluntarily suffered

# Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 18:1-11



- His conduct, knowing their intent, shows that He gave Himself up willingly
- Despite their intent, no one forced Him to give His life
- *And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them, No more is recorded here of his part of the scene*
- St. Luke, 22:47 tells us that *Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him*
- Apparently, after having done this, he fell back and rejoined Christ's enemies, standing in the foreground

# Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 18:1-11



- *“I am He”, they drew back and fell to the ground,* There is nothing in the narrative to suggest that our Lord put forth miraculous power to cause this terror
- Some Biblical scholars think that the Jews, upon hearing the Divine Name, prostrated themselves
- But what about the Romans, they certainly would not have fallen to the ground in reverence to the Divine Name?
- Other scholars suggest that, in another demonstration of His divinity, when Jesus pronounced the Divine Name that a flash of His divine power was revealed that pushed those present back and knocked them to the ground

# Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 18:1-11



- There are several Old Testament passages that may be prophetically linked to this incident, Isaiah 28:13 *“That they might go and fall backward and be broken and snared and caught”*
- Also Psalms 27:2 *“When the wicked came against me to eat up my flesh, My enemies and foes, they stumbled and fell.”* and 35:4
- If this was a demonstration of Jesus' divine power, this incident reveals once again that Jesus is fully in charge of the events and that, although He had the power to resist His adversaries, He freely allowed them to take Him prisoner

# Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 18:1-11



- “He saith again, Whom seek ye?” What madness! His word threw them backward, yet not even so did they turn, when they had learnt that His power was so great, but again set themselves to the same attempt. When therefore He had fulfilled all that was His, then He gave Himself up.” **St. John Chrysostom**
- He Himself therefore gives them another opening
- They repeat the terms of their warrant; they have been sent to arrest Jesus the Nazarene
- *Jesus of Nazareth.*” Declaring His identity a second time, Jesus explicitly reminds the officials that by their own acknowledgment they are instructed to arrest none but Himself

# Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 18:1-11



- *I have told you that I am He*, This He said signifying He was ready to deliver Himself up into their hands; and which He did with no fear and calmness
- He was only concerned for His disciples
- It may be that some of the Roman cohort, not knowing Jesus, were already laying hands on the disciples
- In any case, they are exposed to this danger, and the Good Shepherd, who Himself goes forth to meet the danger, will shield the flock from it

# Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 18:1-11



- Christ was about to suffer for them, and therefore it was not just that they should suffer too
- This shows the love of Christ to His disciples, and His care of them
- So, Jesus sought the freedom of the disciples, thereby fulfilling His prophecy of John 17:12 that none of them would perish
- This is a strong confirmation of the historical truth of chapter 17



# Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 18:1-11



- The disciples by this time had gathered before Jesus' enemies and apparently thought that the time had come to fight to protect Jesus Luke 22:49
- One of them drew his sword and cut off the ear of a servant of the high priest
- John adds details that no other account includes: the disciple who did this was Peter, the servant was named Malchus, and the ear was his right ear
- Peter had bravely affirmed His willingness to give his life for Jesus

# Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 18:1-11



- He was here acting quite boldly by human standards, keeping His commitment
- Peter's action, however, was not commended
- Jesus rebuked Peter telling him to put up his sword
- St. Peter's act is one of opposition to what Jesus Himself knew to be the will of the Father
- There is in the words a tender trustfulness which takes from the cup of all its bitterness *the cup which My Father has given Me?*
- They are, as it were, an echo of the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, which is not recorded by St. John



# Before the High Priest 18:12-14

- This passage describes the first steps taken by the enemies of our Lord to conduct the examination which was to issue in a judicial murder, and therefore to provide the basis on which the charge might be laid before Pilate and that Roman court
- *bound Him* Their concern was confirmed by St. Peter's act that Jesus the Nazarene is a dangerous character who stirs up His followers to rebellion
- He must be properly secured and bound
- Perhaps also their falling to the ground on meeting Him impressed them with the necessity of using the utmost caution
- The whole force is required to secure Him



# Before the High Priest 18:12-14

- They first took Him to Annas who, we are told was father-in-law to Caiaphas, the high priest
- John is the only one of the Gospel writers to include the information that Jesus was first taken to Annas, the father-in-law of the High Priest Caiaphas
- Verse 19 calls Annas the high priest
- He had held the position of High Priest from 6-15 AD before he was then removed by the Roman governor Valerius Gratus
- According to the Law of the Torah, a High Priest was supposed to hold his office for life



# Before the High Priest 18:12-14

- But Gratus, like other foreign commanders, feared that a High Priest who ruled too long had too much influence with the people
- However, deposing Annas didn't do much to limit his influence
- Many Jews still considered him as the rightful leader of the Covenant people, John 18:19 and Acts 4:6, and he remained in control through five of his sons and his son-in-law Caiaphas who all held the office of High Priest in subsequent years
- Many Biblical historians think that Annas was the real leader of the priestly Sadducee party and the prime motivator in the plot to kill Jesus

# Before the High Priest 18:12-14



- In including the information that Jesus was first taken to Annas, John seems to be making the same suggestion
- Taking Jesus to Annas first also allowed enough time for Caiaphas to assemble the members of the Sanhedrin and the false witnesses who would testify against Jesus
- It is significant that the reigning High Priest also served as the President of the Sanhedrin
- Caiaphas will also take on the role of the chief prosecutor in Jesus' trial

# Peter Denies Jesus 18:15-18



- Having been rebuked for his attempt to defend Jesus, and having fled with the other disciples when Jesus' enemies arrested Him, Peter nevertheless followed at a distance to see what would happen
- *so did another disciple*, This is thought to be the Apostle John, because he frequently speaks of himself, without mentioning his name; and these two, Peter and John, were generally together
- John gained access to the area where the trial was occurring because he knew the high priest
- He then arranged for Peter to be let into the courtyard
- This set the stage for Peter's denials, which are recorded in subsequent verses

# Peter Denies Jesus 18:15-18



- John records the first of Peter's denials at this time
- Other accounts wait and tell the whole story of the denials later, but no doubt they occurred from time to time during the trials as John describes them
- John says this occurred toward the beginning of the trial, and adds that the maid was the doorkeeper
- John includes the detail that it was cold
- Jerusalem is more than 2,400 feet above sea level and can be very chilly in early springtime



# Jesus Questioned by the High Priest 18:19-24



- An informal examination of Jesus begins
- Annas is clearly the real political power
- John identifies Annas as the high priest in 18:19 and the guard calls Annas the high priest when he slaps Jesus in 18:22
- Annas has probably had Jesus brought to his house in order to give Caiaphas the time to assemble the Sanhedrin court at this late (or very early) hour
- Asking Him about His disciples was the general subject of a series of questions
- Perhaps he was still concerned about a rebellion caused by the disciples

# Jesus Questioned by the High Priest 18:19-24



- He also asked Jesus about His doctrine
- It is obvious from the context that he hoped Jesus would incriminate Himself
- Jesus responded that His teaching had been done publicly in public places
- Perhaps He said this because Annas' question implied some secret plot with the disciples
- In any case, Jesus had nothing new to tell them
- They already knew His teaching and had no valid reason for asking Him about it

# Jesus Questioned by the High Priest 18:19-24



- Their only possible motive would be to hear something they could use against Him
- Jesus here insisted on His rights, and reproves the high priest for his unjust and illegal manner of extorting a confession from Him
- If He had done wrong, or taught untrue doctrines, it was easy to prove it, and the course which He had a right to demand was that they should establish the charge by fair and indisputable evidence
- Jesus insisted that justice should be done Him
- He had been so open in His conduct that He could appeal to the vast multitudes which had heard Him as witnesses in His favor

# Jesus Questioned by the High Priest 18:19-24



- For His statement, Jesus was struck by one of the officers who stood by Him
- He implied Jesus had no right to so answer the high priest
- However, Jesus had said nothing disrespectful to the high priest's office
- He had made a calm statement of truth and legal fact, which was completely appropriate and within His rights
- If He had taught error, proper legal procedure required them to produce the proof

# Jesus Questioned by the High Priest 18:19-24



- If they could not produce it, they had no right to strike Him for expressing His legal rights
- The statement Jesus had made would bother no one unless they knew that He was right and they were being frustrated in their efforts to convict Him
- Jesus' interview before Annas was evidently ended, so He was sent to Caiaphas
- Here the council of elders and scribes gathered
- This is the Sanhedrin council, the highest Jewish political body

# Jesus Questioned by the High Priest 18:19-24



- It was made up of 70 men from chief priests, which were past and present high priests and their families; scribes, who were Pharisee lawyers and copyists; and elders, who were heads of the various Jewish tribes
- The high priest was president of the council
- John gives virtually no details regarding this trial, but other accounts go into great detail

# Peter Denies Twice More

## 18:25-27



- *Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself,* This is repeated from John 18:18 to connect the history, and carry on the thread of the account of Peter's denial of Christ, which is interrupted by inserting the examination of Christ before the high priest, which was made at the same time
- Peter stood among them and continued with the servants and officers of the high priest, warming himself by a fire they had made
- This time Peter took an oath (according to other accounts) saying he did not know Jesus

# Peter Denies Twice More

## 18:25-27



- This denial of his being a disciple of Christ, as before, did not arise from a sense of his unworthiness to be one; nor from diffidence and distrust of a right to such a character; but from the fear of men; and being ashamed of Christ
- Between the residence of Annas and the trial before the Sanhedrin (the Jewish Law Court), Peter has denied Jesus three times
- John, along with the Synoptic Gospels also records the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Peter's denials three times  
Matthew 26:74; Mark 14:72; Luke 22:60-61; John 18:27





# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- St. John assumes that his readers know the result of Jesus being taken to Caiaphas, John 18:24 that He had been condemned to death; and now His enemies take Him to the Roman governor to get the sentence executed
- Synoptic gospels' accounts show that the Sanhedrin met early in the morning to declare an official determination of Jesus' guilt
- Then they took Jesus to Pilate
- Pilate was the Roman governor at that time
- The Jews would doubtless have killed Jesus themselves had they thought they could do so



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- However, since they were subject to Roman law, they had to have approval from the Romans to execute anyone
- *the Praetorium*, Common hall
- It was the place where the Roman governor heard and decided cases brought before him
- *lest they should be defiled*, They considered the touch of a Gentile to be a defilement, they regarded entering the house of a Gentile as a pollution
- It is ironic that these men, so concerned with ritual purification, have lost their moral scope in that they are willing to pollute their souls by lying in order to achieve their goal of sending an innocent man to a horrible death



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- It is ironic that even though they do not wish to contaminate themselves by entering a Gentile residence, they do not hesitate to use the Gentiles to destroy their adversary, our innocent Lord
- *they might eat the Passover*, Not the Passover lamb, for that they had eaten the night before; but the feast on the fifteenth day of the month
- Because they would not enter, Pilate went out to them
- Unlike the Synoptic Gospel accounts, John does not bother to explain Pilate's rank and title



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- The Evangelist assumes that his readers know who Pilate is, just as he assumes that they know the Twelve, John 6:67 and Mary Magdalene, John 19:25; all are introduced without explanation
- They expected that he would have at once ordered His execution; but he asks for the formal charge which they bring against Him
- He knew from rumors what this was, but demands the legal accusation without which the trial could not proceed
- As the Roman official, he demands what crime Jesus has committed against the Roman law



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- The Jews seemed to think that the very fact they brought Jesus ought to be enough to bring a condemnation!
- Don't question us
- If we say He's guilty, He is!
- Apparently, they hoped Pilate would take their word for the matter and accept their verdict without examining the evidence
- They use the vague word *evildoer* though in the trial before Caiaphas they had not sought to prove any evil deed, and they expect that upon this assertion Pilate will pronounce on Him, as on other malefactors, the sentence of death



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- *You take Him and judge Him according to your law*, Pilate takes them at their word
- They claim the judicial right; let them exercise it
- Their law gave them power to punish, but not the right of capital punishment
- If they claim that the matter is wholly within their own power of judgment, then the sentence must also be limited to their own power
- He can only execute a sentence which is pronounced by himself after formal trial



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- Their words admit that they did not possess the power of life and death, while they imply that they had sentenced Jesus to death
- They verbally give up the power, but in reality claim it, and regard the Roman official as their executioner
- John is the only Gospel writer who offers this very reasonable explanation
- However, for the Romans to execute Jesus the Jews must offer a charge other than blasphemy, the charge rendered by the Sanhedrin



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- To blaspheme Jewish ritual practices would not be considered a capital offense to the Romans but would instead be an offense that is punishable by lashing
- This is probably why, when asked by Pilate what crime Jesus has committed, the Jewish authorities hesitated to answer
- *that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, The passage John probably has in mind is John 12:32 where Jesus says: And, I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself*





# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- And also, John 3:14; Matthew 20:19; Psalm 10:21; Luke 9:23, 14:27
- By insisting that Pilate deal with the case, the Jews were once again without knowing fulfilling prophecy and thereby proving Jesus to be the very One whom they denied Him to be: the Christ, the Son of God
- Crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment, and it was in the fact that He was executed, not by Jewish authority and on the charge of blasphemy, but by Roman authority and on a charge of high treason, that His own prophecy of the manner of His death was fulfilled



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- Pilate removed Jesus from the presence of His Jewish accusers and privately asked Him *Are You the King of the Jews?*
- All the Gospel accounts record these as the first words Pilate speaks to Jesus
- The Jews eventually accused Jesus of claiming to be a king, Luke 23:2,3; Matthew 27:11
- This would, if true, be of concern to the Romans, since it would appear to make Jesus in competition with or in rebellion against Caesar
- In truth, Jesus had done nothing to ever imply rebellion against Rome



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- He had even told the people to pay the tribute money Rome demanded, Matthew 22:21
- Pilate questioned Jesus about this accusation and Jesus in turn asked the source of the accusation
- An important question for our Lord's case, to bring out whether the word "King" were meant in a political sense, with which Pilate had a right to deal
- Or whether he were merely put up to it by His accusers, who had no claims to charge Him but such as were of a purely religious nature, with which Pilate had nothing to do



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- It might also mean, whether Pilate asserted this from the sentiments of his own mind; or moved the question from anything he himself had observed
- Jesus was desirous of convincing Pilate of his weakness
- Did he judge of himself, and of his imprudence and hastiness
- Or, did he took up this from others
- And also to expose the wickedness of the Jews, to charge Him with this, when they themselves would have made Him a temporal king, and He refused; and when He had not only paid tribute himself to Caesar, but had exhorted them to do the like



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- Probably with the proud and haughty tone of a Roman military judge or procurator, Pilate says *Am I a Jew?*
- He was not a Jew, neither by birth, nor by religion, and so had never learned anything about their King Messiah, nor read anything about Him
- And knew nothing of His distinguishing characters and properties, by which He was described
- He had no real knowledge of Jesus other than what he had been told by the Jewish authorities, and he was willing to listen to Jesus' defense



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- In the Synoptic gospels Jesus' response was: *You say so*, which is understood as an affirmative "Yes" answer to Pilate's question
- But Jesus accepts the allegation of the Jews and proceeds to explain in what sense He is king
- The dominion that He will have will be one over hearts and lives; the authority of the Lord Jesus cannot be arrested or overpowered by physical force
- This answer was important, not just for Pilate to understand, but also for Jews, for Christians, and for everyone
- Jesus had never come to be an earthly king



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- His Kingdom was not in competition with Caesar and the Romans had no reason to fear since His kingdom and interests did not in the least break in upon, or injure any others: and that this was the nature of His kingdom
- *My servants would fight*, The proof He offered is that He had refused to allow His servants to fight
- His own disciples would not have endure seeing Him to have been betrayed into the hands of the Jews by Judas
- Nor would He have hindered them from attempting His rescue, as He did Peter



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- They wanted to do so, but He had rebuked them for it
- What earthly monarch, intending to take a government by force, would insist that his servants stand idly by while his enemies captured him?
- Would Jesus have acted so if He intended to use force to establish an earthly kingdom?
- The Jews expected Him to use such force, and some of us still expect it
- But it did not happen and will not happen, because that is not the nature of His kingdom





# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- *Are You a king then?* Pilate seems to have spoken this rather in mockery, than out of any desire to catch Him in His words
- Christ neither claims to be a king, nor yet denies it, but tells Pilate that *You say rightly that I am a king*
- The birth and the entrance into the world both refer to the Incarnation, but make clear the thought that the birth in time of Him who existed with the Father before all time, was the manifestation in the world of Him who came forth from the Father



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- This thought of “coming into the world” is frequent in St. John, 10:36; John 16:28
- He has indeed a kingdom, and He came into the world to be a king; but His rule is that of the majesty of Truth, and His kingdom is to be established by His witness of the eternal truth which He had known with His Father, and which He alone could declare to man John 1:18, 16:13
- He came to be a witness—a martyr—to the truth, and to send forth others to be witnesses and martyrs to the same truth, through the Holy Spirit, who should guide them into all truth
- Such was His kingdom; such the power by which it was to rule



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- *Everyone who is of the truth*, That is of God, belongs to the sheep of Christ, knows the truth as it is in Jesus, and is on the side of truth, and stands by it
- The voice of His Gospel
- And that not only externally, but internally; so as to approve of it, rejoice at it, and distinguish it; and the voice of His commands, so as cheerfully to obey them from a principle of love to Him
- Every mind open to the influence of truth will hear His voice



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- Our Lord here not only affirms that His word had in it a self-evidencing, self-recommending power, but gently implied the true secret of the growth and grandeur of His kingdom—as A Kingdom of truth, in its highest sense



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- Pilate, now fully convinced that he has before him an innocent and harmless enthusiast, asks *“What is truth?”*
- There is no evidence that Pilate asked because he wanted an answer
- Instead, He appeared to be making a point
- He apparently did not believe anyone could know what the truth is
- This seems to him to be another issue and it is irrelevant to the question at issue



# In Pilate's Court 18:28-38

- He has neither time nor will to deal with it, and at once goes from the palace again to the Jews
- *he went out again*, Thus missing a noble opportunity for himself to hear what Christ would say to it
- *I find no fault in Him at all*, This confession is both to the shame of Pilate and the Jews
- To the reproach of Pilate, that after this he should condemn Him
- And of the Jews, that after such a fair and full declaration from the judge, they should insist upon His crucifixion
- It shows, however, that He died not for any sin of His own, but for the sins of others

# Taking the Place of Barabbas

## 18:39-40



- *you have a custom*, There was a custom at the feast for the governor to release some prisoner whoever the people wanted released
- This custom was known both to the people and the governor
- The purpose of the custom, one would suppose, was a means whereby the governor could attempt to please the people and gain their favor
- Pilate proposes Christ as the prisoner whom he had most mind to release, perceiving that his prosecution was of malice, rather than for any just cause

# Taking the Place of Barabbas

## 18:39-40



- However, this passage seems to mean that instead of steadfastly protecting the innocence of Jesus, Pilate seeks, unwisely enough, in order not to be unpopular, an indirect way, by which he practically surrenders the innocent one
- *King of the Jews?*, These words are of course said in mockery, but not at Jesus who was still in the palace
- In the Gospels, Barabbas is describes as a robber, a revolutionary and a murderer, Mark 15:7; Luke 23:19
- What does the name Barabbas mean? What is the irony here?



# Taking the Place of Barabbas

## 18:39-40



- It is a surname meaning "son [bar] of the father [abba]"
- The irony is that these people are so blind in their sins that they cannot tell the murdering false "son of the father" from the innocent, true Son of God the Father, Jesus the Messiah
- Pilate appears to have been fully convinced of the innocence of Christ; and that the Jews, through envy and malice, desired His destruction
- On this ground he should have released Him; but he was afraid to offend the Jews
- He knew they were an uneasy people; and he was afraid to irritate them

# Discussion



- Some scholars think that Judas was motivated to betray Jesus because he believed that the Messiah would be a political, military conqueror who would destroy the enemies of Israel, namely, the Roman oppressors. Bringing the Roman soldiers to Jesus might “force Jesus’ hand” to display his power. But it did not work that way. What does this tell us about how people view Jesus? What does this tell us about the mission of Jesus? What does this tell us about how power is viewed in God’s Kingdom?
- Why does Jesus move to the Cross with such confidence?

# Discussion



- Who were Annas and Caiaphas?
- What accusation was made against Peter and how did he respond?
- Why would Peter deny Jesus like this? According to other accounts, how did he feel afterward?

# Discussion



- What did Pilate tell the Jews to do and what objection did they raise? What did this have to do with the manner of Jesus' death?
- What offer did Pilate make to the Jews, and what choice did they make? Who was Barabbas, and what does this show about the Jews?