

Today we are going to look at Jesus' arrest and trials.

John's Gospel adds detail and depth to some of the information contained in the other Gospels.

Three major events are the focus of John 18:

### 1. The arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane

John 18:1-11 <sup>1</sup> After saying these things, Jesus crossed the Kidron Valley with his disciples and entered a grove of olive trees. <sup>2</sup> Judas, the betrayer, knew this place, because Jesus had often gone there with his disciples. <sup>3</sup> The leading priests and Pharisees had given Judas a contingent of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove.

<sup>4</sup> Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him, so he stepped forward to meet them. "Who are you looking for?" he asked.

<sup>5</sup> "Jesus the Nazarene," they replied.

"I am he," Jesus said. (Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.) <sup>6</sup> As Jesus said "I am he," they all drew back and fell to the ground! <sup>7</sup> Once more he asked them, "Who are you looking for?"

And again they replied, "Jesus the Nazarene."

<sup>8</sup> "I told you that I am he," Jesus said. "And since I am the one you want, let these others go." <sup>9</sup> He did this to fulfill his own statement: "I did not lose a single one of those you have given me."

<sup>10</sup> Then Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest's slave. <sup>11</sup> But Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the cup of suffering the Father has given me?"

John says Jesus met the mob coming to arrest Him and immediately identified Himself.

Peter learned a great lesson from this incident:

<sup>1</sup> Peter 2:23 He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly.

### 2. The trial before the Jewish priests

John 18:12-18 <sup>12</sup> So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. <sup>13</sup> First they took him to Annas, since he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time. <sup>14</sup> Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders, "It's better that one man should die for the people."

<sup>15</sup> Simon Peter followed Jesus, as did another of the disciples. That other disciple was acquainted with the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the high priest's courtyard with Jesus. <sup>16</sup> Peter had to stay outside the gate. Then the disciple who knew the high priest spoke to the woman watching at the gate, and she let Peter in. <sup>17</sup> The woman asked Peter, "You're not one of that man's disciples, are you?"

"No," he said, "I am not."

<sup>18</sup> Because it was cold, the household servants and the guards had made a charcoal fire. They stood around it, warming themselves, and Peter stood with them, warming himself.

What mainly occupied John's attention were the actions of Peter, who decided that the best course of action was to lie.

John describes Jesus' response, a great contrast to Peter's.

John 18:19-24 <sup>19</sup> Inside, the high priest began asking Jesus about his followers and what he had been teaching them. <sup>20</sup> Jesus replied, "Everyone knows what I teach. I have preached regularly in the synagogues and the Temple, where the people gather. I have not spoken in secret." <sup>21</sup> Why are you asking me this question? Ask those who heard me. They know what I said."

<sup>22</sup> Then one of the Temple guards standing nearby slapped Jesus across the face. "Is that the way to answer the high priest?" he demanded.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus replied, "If I said anything wrong, you must prove it. But if I'm speaking the truth, why are you beating me?"

<sup>24</sup> Then Annas bound Jesus and sent him to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Jesus was next taken before Caiaphas, but John ignores this trial to again focus on the actions of Peter.

John 18:25-27 <sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, as Simon Peter was standing by the fire warming himself, they asked him again, "You're not one of his disciples, are you?"

He denied it, saying, "No, I am not."

<sup>26</sup> But one of the household slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Didn't I see you out there in the olive grove with Jesus?" <sup>27</sup> Again Peter denied it. And immediately a rooster crowed.

The trials were illegal, but John indicates that the most difficult part of the night for Jesus was the desertion by those closest to Him.

### 3. Jesus' trial before Pilate

John 18:28-32 <sup>28</sup> Jesus' trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the morning. Then he was taken to the headquarters of the Roman governor. His accusers didn't go inside because it would defile them, and they wouldn't be allowed to celebrate the Passover. <sup>29</sup> So Pilate, the governor, went out to them and asked, "What is your charge against this man?"

<sup>30</sup> "We wouldn't have handed him over to you if he weren't a criminal!" they retorted.

<sup>31</sup> "Then take him away and judge him by your own law," Pilate told them.

"Only the Romans are permitted to execute someone," the Jewish leaders replied. <sup>32</sup> (This fulfilled Jesus' prediction about the way he would die.)

This encounter began with the Jewish leaders and Pilate trading insults.

What followed was a conversation between Jesus and Pilate in which Jesus revealed why He came to Earth.

John 18:33-38 <sup>33</sup> Then Pilate went back into his headquarters and called for Jesus to be brought to him. "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked him.

<sup>34</sup> Jesus replied, "Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?"

<sup>35</sup> "Am I a Jew?" Pilate retorted. "Your own people and their leading priests brought you to me for trial. Why? What have you done?"

<sup>36</sup> Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world."

<sup>37</sup> Pilate said, "So you are a king?"

Jesus responded, "You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true."

<sup>38</sup> "What is truth?" Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, "He is not guilty of any crime."

Two important implications found in this passage:

A. There is truth.

B. Jesus came to testify to that truth.

Jesus declared that there is absolute truth, which is in contrast with our culture's desire for relativism.

A truth that is absolute and unchanging is a truth everyone should seek, submit to, and believe.

John 14:6 Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

Jesus clearly declared that He came into the world to testify to the truth.

God has made us dependent on the Bible for the testimony of Jesus, because the Bible has the power to convince people that Jesus' testimony is true.

#### Conclusion

Jesus was born and came into the world to bear witness to the truth. That witness is preserved in the Gospels.

My closing exhortation is that we not react like Pilate when we hear the truth. Pilate lacked the courage to take action to respond to the truth.