

John 18:1-12
Jesus Betrayed and Arrested

18 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. **2** Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. **3** So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. **4** Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" **5** They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he."^[a] Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. **6** When Jesus^[a] said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. **7** So he asked them again, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." **8** Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go." **9** This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one." **10** Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant^[a] and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) **11** So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

12 So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews^[a] arrested Jesus and bound him. **13** First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. **14** It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.

Sermon Outline:

1-3 –The Forces of evil set their plan in motion.

v. 4 – Jesus was not surprised by what was happening.

v. 5,8 – Jesus plainly declares his deity.

v. 9 - Jesus fulfills his own word of promise.

v. 10 – Weapons of the world will not accomplish God's will.

v. 11 – Jesus' commitment to drinking the cup the Father has handed him is unwavering.

Let us pray:

Gracious God our Father, we thank you so much for the Gospel of John, for the depth of its riches of the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray you would open up this passage to us that we may learn more of the greatness of our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Intro: What we see in our passage today is that events set before foundation of world were now fast-pacing to their conclusion.

We read in 1 Peter 1:20, *He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you.* In the Gospel of John that we have been studying the past few Sundays Jesus Christ is being manifest, that is , being made known to us. We cannot read the Gospel of John, if our minds are alert, and our hearts are open, without seeing and knowing more of the greatness and holiness of our Lord.

What God had planned to happen, even before the creation of the world, in the events surrounding the death of his Son, were now happening in history. We see it unfolding here in John's gospel.

At the beginning of John's Gospel we read in chapter 1, v. 5, "***5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.***

What we see in our passage today is that the darkness was trying to extinguish the light of Jesus Christ.

We also read in John 1:11 that "***11 He came to his own,^[b] and his own people^[c] did not receive him.***"

We see this happening in our passage today. Judas, one of his disciples, did not receive him, in fact, he betrayed him. Jesus was the light of the world; he gives life to every person. Yet people reject him; Judas rejected him, the chief priests of the Jewish nation and the Pharisees, the strict religious party – all these people were supposed to know the sacred scriptures of the Hebrew OT. They should have known the prophecies about the coming Messiah, they should have recognized that the signs that Jesus from Nazareth had been doing were signs that the Messiah himself would do – he healed the sick and opened the eyes of the blind and bound up the brokenhearted and set people free from the oppression of the devil.

These people should have known better but they rejected the plain evidence before their eyes because they had another greater interest in life: that was to protect their own positions in society and before the Roman political authorities. They were interested in the things of this world, but not in mercy, truth, and righteousness of God.

Jesus stood in their way, and they intended to rid the earth of him. Before them, in the flickering light of torches in the garden, is the one who created all things, he had appeared

in the flesh among his own people, and they rejected their very Creator, Sustainer, and Savior.

Yet in all this, God's plan to save his people was being carried out. We read back in John 13 about the beginning of these last hours which culminated in Jesus' death:

Jesus was conducting the Passover meal with his disciples. ***During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist.***

What we see here are two things happening: the devil was working in Judas to get him to betray Jesus, but Jesus was living in the knowledge of a greater and more powerful reality – the Father was directing these affairs and giving Jesus supreme authority and the Father had sent Jesus into the world and Jesus was going back to the Father.

The devil was trying to destroy Jesus and his saving work, but God the Father's purpose was overruling and would triumph in bringing his Son back to heaven.

But here now in John 18:1 Jesus has led his disciples out to a garden where they had often gathered where he would teach them and spend time with them.

Judas had correctly figured that Jesus could be found in this garden outside the city with his disciples. Shortly before, he had met with the chief priests and for 30 pieces of silver offered to take them to where they could find Jesus and do whatever they wanted with him. They jumped on the opportunity - they wanted to get rid themselves of this thorn in their side as quickly as possible so their comfortable lives could continue interrupted. They were keeping in line with the murderous tradition that their ancestors had followed. Jesus said in Luke 13:34,

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it.

Notice in verse 3 that his was not just a policeman or two – it included “a band of soldiers” along with “some officers from the chief priests and Pharisees.” How many men were there? It looks like there could have been 30 or 40. And they did not just come with a piece of paper with an arrest warrant, but they came fully armed. One of the other gospels describes these weapons as swords.

Who were they coming after? An insurrectionist like Barabbas, or some hardened guerilla fighter who had the blood of Roman soldiers on his hands? No, they had come to overpower with weapons of war a gentle man who had taught the people,

Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Matt. 5:39

Jesus said this, *Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.* Matt. 5:44.

Jesus was a man of love, but he was being pursued by men of a totally different mindset – men of hatred, of jealousy, of murder.

In John 8:44 he was speaking to the scribes and Pharisees and described them like this, ⁴⁴*You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.*

So what are we seeing here in the first three verses of John 18 is that...

1-3 –The Forces of evil had set their plan in motion to destroy Jesus.

Why had Judas turned his back on Jesus and betrayed him to the authorities? Likely because he saw that Jesus wasn't going to be a political/military ruler but instead he was a humble king and servant. So he decided to desert, to jump ship, and get all he could out of the situation.

But even though the Forces of evil had set their plan in motion we see in ...

v. 4 – Jesus was not surprised by what was happening.

⁴ Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?"

Here it is in the darkness of night and he is being approached by a large group of men looking for him to arrest him. We catch no sense of panic or fear in Jesus. He appears to be calm and in complete control of himself, even more than himself, of the very situation.

Jesus did not, in fact, try to slip through the crowd and escape as he had once done in his hometown of Nazareth, but here he calmly steps forward, knowing whom they were seeking, and said to them, "Whom do you seek? "

Look at v. 5: ⁵ ***They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he."*** Look at the reaction of the crowd of soldiers and officers. They didn't say, "Aha! We have found him." They didn't run up and seize him, But look at what verse 6 says,

⁶ ***When Jesus^(b) said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.***

What he said utterly shocked them. Instead of advancing on him, they retreated. Instead of seizing him, they fell down on the ground. It reminds us of the Roman soldiers guarding Jesus' tomb when an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled the stone away from Jesus' tomb the text says in Matt. 28:4, "⁴ *And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.*'

*But here it wasn't Jesus' appearance that shocked them but his words. He said only three words, **I am he**. In the original Greek language of the NT there are only two words, "ego eimi." These two words are some of the most important two words in the Bible.*

v. 5,8 – Jesus plainly declares his deity.

We see them uttered by God himself in Exo. 3:6 when he revealed himself to Moses at the burning bush:

And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

When Moses was confronted with the very presence of the eternal God he rightly fell down and hid his face. Though they didn't realize it, these soldiers and officers had a similar experience. All of a sudden they were confronted with and overwhelmed by the presence on earth of the eternal God in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Something about his presence, his holiness, his power and glory – they were not expecting this – but it hit them and they drew back and fell down on the ground. What do we see happening here?

In v. 5,8 – Jesus is plainly declaring his deity, he is declaring to them that he is Yahweh in the flesh standing before them.

Confronted with such a presence, any and all humans would fall back and fall down. They could do nothing else. Interestingly, in the four gospel accounts of the arrest of Jesus, only John includes this incident.

Jesus said to them, "I am he." In the Greek NT there are just two words written, "ego eimi," translated into English, it is "I am he," or "I myself am he."

These two words in the Greek, "I am he" in English, are two of the most important words not only in the NT but in the whole Bible. They are the translation of the Hebrew word in the OT "Yahweh," or in older English translation, "Jehovah." This is the personal name of God. It was the personal name of God that he told to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3:6. Moses was to go back to Egypt and tell his people that this was the name of the God of their Fathers, and he had sent Moses to rescue them from Egyptian bondage. This name of God, Yahweh, is used close to 7,000 times in the OT.

And this is the name Jesus used to describe himself to these men. Jesus is using the great covenant name of God to describe himself to this nighttime mob. The power of this name coming from the lips of Jesus overwhelmed these men. They were fell back and fell down.

This was not the first time Jesus had used these words in John's Gospel, , I am, ego eimi, in this gospel. Jesus used this term to describe himself with key words and concepts with which Yahweh described himself in the OT.

Psalm 23 says, "***The LORD, Yahweh is my Shepherd.***" Jesus said in John 10:11 - ***I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.***"

King David said in Psalm 27, "The LORD, Yahweh, is my light and my salvation." Jesus said in John 8:12 - ***I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.***

In Deut. 18:18 Yahweh told Moses, - ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. ¹⁹ And I will put my words in his mouth, and ²⁰ he shall speak to them all that I command him."

When Jesus met the woman at the well in John 4 and he told her her life story, she realized she had met a prophet of God.

In John 4:25-26 - ²⁵ The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." ²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he." Jesus was saying to her, I am the One whom Moses spoke about. I am the prophet to come. I am he. Ego eimi. And she ran back to the village and told the people, Come meet a man who told me everything I ever did.

This Samaritan woman, in the clear light of day, at a water well, had met the same man the soldiers and officers confronted in the flickering light of the torches in the garden at night. She ran off to tell her townspeople about this man. They drew back and fell down.

Yahweh told Moses in Deut. 8:3, ***...man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word^(a) that comes from the mouth of the LORD.***

In John 6:35 - Jesus said to the 5,000 men and their families whom he had just fed, **"I am, ego eimi, I am he, the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.**

And then there is that great incident in John 8: 57-59 - ⁵⁷ *So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"^(a)* ⁵⁸ *Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am (I am he, ego eimi)."* ⁵⁹ *So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.*

Jesus was telling them that before Abraham existed, he existed, he fact, more than just existed, he was the great I am. He described himself with the same words that Yahweh described himself to Moses at the burning bush. They understood exactly what Jesus was saying, Jesus was saying that he was Yahweh standing before them. They considered that blasphemy, a mere man claiming to be God. But he was not mere man; yes he was fully man, but he was also fully God.

There in the flickering torches of the night Garden, the power of Jesus's words, "I am he, " ego eimi, hit them with spiritual force. They did not know or understood all that was happening, but the presence and revelation of the incarnate God overwhelmed them, and they fell to the ground.

John records this incident to show us another one of these signs of who Jesus is. What these soldiers and officers experience in the garden that night was a foretaste of what the apostle John later records in Revelation 1 after he was confronted with the vision of the glorified Christ, ¹⁷ *When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore...*

What should these soldiers and officers, and indeed Judas himself have done? They like the apostle John should have fallen on their faces and declared, "Jesus, you are Lord, you are the Son of God, you are the Savior of the world. We bow before you and give you glory and honor and thanksgiving."

But what did they do instead? They got up from the ground, they gathered their composure, they put out of their minds what they had just heard and experienced and they proceeded to execute their plan to arrest Jesus and haul him off to be tried and executed.

Not long after that Judas somehow realized what he had done, the magnitude of his sin, he returned to the chief priests and threw the 30 pieces of silver down and went out and killed himself. How great is the sin of betraying and denying the Son of God.

v. 8-9 - Jesus fulfills his own word of promise.

⁸ Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go."⁹ This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.

John 17:12 - ¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

v. 10 -11- Weapons of the world will not accomplish God's will.

¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) ¹¹ So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

¹² So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. ¹³ First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. ¹⁴ It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.

v. 11 – Jesus' commitment to drinking the cup the Father has handed him is unwavering.

¹¹ So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

My meat and drink...
Not my will, but thine.

Heb. 12:2 - looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God

Sum'y

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APPs

1. Evil is allowed to ascend so that God’s greater purposes can be fulfilled.

We should not be surprised at the ascendancy/triumph of evil in the world.

2. Jesus is not caught off guard by the betrayal and arrest – he is recognizing God’s plan is being fulfilled.

So should we not be shook up by evil and sin in the world.

Keep in mind Romans 8:28 – “all things work together for good ...”

3. Jesus is not reticent to declare his full deity.

-nor should we be reticent either.

4. Jesus keeps his Word; whatever he said will come to pass, will surely come to pass.

5. Weapons of this world will not accomplish God’s will. We must use spiritual weapons of the Word and prayer.

6. Jesus determined purpose to go all the way to the cross, paying the full price of suffering, merits our deepest gratitude and devotion. May we worship him continually, draw near to him, commit to fulfilling the high calling of God to each of our lives.

Closing Prayer

-by Jeff Gregory, pastor

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