



John 18:1-11

“Whom Are You Seeking?”

NKJ John 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered.

2 And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples.

3 Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?"

5 They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am He." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them.

6 Now when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.

7 Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

8 Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,"

9 that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."

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 the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"

The Chief Priests and the Pharisees have a problem, they are seeking to arrest Jesus but how are they going to do it? Jesus taught daily in the temple, but they couldn't seize Him there. While they hated Him, the people listened to Him and many thought that He might be the long-awaited King of Israel. So if they attempted to seize Him, there might be a riot, and the Roman garrison which occupied the Atonia fortress overlooking the Temple area might be called out. Things could quickly get out of hand, especially because Jerusalem was filled to bursting with Jews who had up for the Passover. No it was far better to arrest Him at night. The people wouldn't be around, his disciples wouldn't be prepared to resist, they could just swoop in and grab Him.

But where was Jesus? It wasn't like they could look up His address in the Jerusalem phone book. Even if they'd had one at the time, Jesus didn't have a house in the city. All the priests knew was that he showed up in the morning and taught at the Temple and then left in the evening. So they were in a real bind until Judas one of Christ's disciples came to them and said, "I know where Jesus is staying in the evening, and I can take you there." And then Judas asked *"What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. (Matt. 26:13)*

And so on the night of the last supper, Christ's hour, that is the time that God had appointed for his sacrificial death having come, Judas is leading officers from the temple police as well as a detachment of soldiers to Him. The word detachment incidentally is *Speira* or Cohort – which would be up to 600 men probably made up of soldiers from the Roman garrison.

The chief priests weren't going to take any chances this time. The last time they had sent the Temple police alone to arrest Him, they had come back empty handed saying "No man ever spoke like this Man!" So they had probably asked for the soldiers thinking, *no cohort of Roman legionaries is going to be in danger of following this upstart Galilean.* **How ironic that the time would come when not just a few Roman soldiers, but the entire empire from Caesar on down would acknowledge that "Jesus is Lord."**

Judas had known that after the supper, Jesus would leave the city of Jerusalem and go back to their camp at Gethsemane. Gethsemane is a walled garden on the Mount of Olives on the other side of the Kidron Valley from the Temple mount. When we think "garden" we usually think of flowers, but this was more of a grove of Olive trees.

Now we know from the other gospels that Jesus, knowing what was about to happen, had prayed in agony to the Father, and sweat drops of blood. We know the other disciples had fallen asleep, that Judas had betrayed Him with a kiss, but John doesn't give us those details, because his focus throughout has been on the deity of Jesus Christ, so he gives us a detail that the other writers didn't focus on. Namely this brief exchange between Jesus and the troops. When they arrive, which is no surprise to Jesus, Jesus goes straight up to them and asks them whom they are seeking. They say Jesus of Nazareth, and He answers "I Am" – now I know in your text it says "I am *he*" but you'll notice that the word *he* is in italics and whenever you see a word in italics it indicates its not in the original text but is added to help you to understand the meaning. The reason Jesus I AM and not I AM HE is because he was using the name of God to identify Himself. ***"Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*** Said God to Moses at the burning bush.

I will never forget the scene in "Out on a Limb" where Shirley Maclaine and John Heard are sitting on a beach and after blathering on about some blasphemous nonsense for a time Heard asks her to get up and say "I am God" and so you have Shirley Maclaine and John Heard standing before the sea and shouting I am God which sounds ridiculous even to them. Now when Shirley Maclaine says "I am God" nothing happens, because she isn't God. She has no power, she's just a mortal woman saying silly and sinful things.

But when Jesus identifies himself as God by using the divine name "I AM" that cohort of soldiers, the legionaries who inspired fear worldwide, fall to ground before Him. Jesus speaks and the deaf hear, Jesus speaks and storms stop, Jesus speaks and the dead come forth, Jesus speaks and armies fall to the ground. With a word Jesus could have stopped everything that was happening that night. No man could have taken Him if He had not willed it. John wants you to see that, and realize this was no accident, this was Jesus the Son of God doing what He had been sent to earth from Heaven to do.

Jesus then tells them that if they are seeking Him, they should let His disciples go and this command of His is obeyed. But Peter, ever the impetuous one sees them about to take his beloved master and he is determined to stop them. Now is the moment to show his faith and his zeal by striking with the sword! Now this man loves Christ so much that he is willing to take on an entire cohort, even though the

disciples only had two swords between them! So he strikes the man who was probably doing the talking, Malchus the servant of the High Priest. He was probably aiming for his head, and manages to take off an ear.

How the devil would have liked a fight in the garden! How he would have loved to have had the disciples massacred as well. Think about it, if John had died in a futile fight with Roman troops, we would not have the very book we are now reading. Jesus could easily have shown his divine power by wiping out the troops, but as He had already told the disciples *“the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.”* So Jesus immediately puts an end to it. He will not have his disciples fighting and killing for Him and He has come to save. So he must put right what Peter has done wrong, and he picks up the ear that he has struck off and heals him. I wish that was the only the time that Christ has had to heal those who have been wounded by overzealous and misguided followers, but sadly it isn't.

He rebukes Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?" but in so doing, he lets him know that He isn't being taken. He is going. He had prayed "thy will be done" and this is the will of the Father that He has come to do. He must drink the cup. The cup the Father had given Him is mentioned in all of the gospels. Earlier Jesus had prayed crying out to the Father, "saying, **"Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."** (Luke 22:42) This Cup is the cup mentioned again and again in the Old Testament, the Cup of the Lord's Wrath against Wickedness – the cup of His fury as Isaiah 51:17 puts it. Jesus will drink that cup to the dregs, and in so doing the Father's wrath that would have just fallen on believers will fall on Him!

1) Why did Judas betray Jesus? I have seen so much speculation as to why Judas betrayed Christ. We can go back and say well it was ultimately because He was reprobate and the Father had ordained that He would be the betrayer. But how was it that this man who saw all the miracles and heard all the sermons could be brought so low? It's not difficult to understand in the end he loved money more than Christ and step by step he became more and more ready to betray Jesus. 1 Tim. 6:10 "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." How could you betray someone who was trying to help you? The love of money has always operated that way – **SOG example.**

“Above all, let us beware of cherishing within our hearts any secret besetting sin, such as love of money or love of the world. One faulty link in a chain-cable may cause a shipwreck. One little leak may sink a ship. One allowed and unmortified sin may ruin a professing Christian. Let him that is tempted to be a careless man in his religious life, consider these things, and take care. Let him remember Judas Iscariot. His history is meant to be a lesson.” – JC Ryle

2) The difference between Christianity and Islam displayed here, we have no right to kill for Christ "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

Which is more noble, brothers and sisters Martyring or being martyred? While the Muhammad fought and killed to spread Islam, just as the Jihadis are doing today, Christ's great victory was won by DYING! If we would follow him, we need to take up, not the sword, but the cross - "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23) Now this does not mean we have to be pacifists. But it does absolutely FORBID the use of the sword in the

spreading of the gospel. You must be ready to die for your faith, but you must never, ever think that you are serving Christ if you kill for it.

3) **I hope you will see the hardness of men's hearts unless the spirit moves them.** MALCHUS and the COHORT. Ear and falling down. Didn't stop them from taking Jesus back to the High Priest, and the report of what had happened in the garden didn't move the heart of the High priest at all.

4) **Let finally ask Christ's question – whom are you seeking?** Are you seeking after Christ or are you seeking after self. Oh, I'm sure most of you will say, I'm seeking Christ, but WHY? Because men can seek him for ALL the wrong reasons.

The Jews sought Him because they wanted a king

Judas sought him to get rich

The Sanhedrin sought him to get rid of him

Malchus sought him because he was ordered to do so

The ONLY reason to seek Him is because HE ALONE can drink the cup of wrath that otherwise you will have to drink in Hell. The only way to come to Him is loving Him and trusting Him.