

Judas, How Could You?

1. Have you ever been betrayed or falsely accused by someone you considered to be your friend? If so, how did you react?

Drawing Near: Quiet your heart and write your requests to God as you begin to study.

The unforgettable evening of teaching and encouragement with Jesus and His disciples ended with Jesus' beautiful intercessory prayer in John chapter 17. Even as Jesus spent these final hours with His disciples Judas was preparing to carry out his treachery to the end. As you study this chapter, try to imagine how the disciples felt as these events unfolded. We know the outcome, but the disciples didn't have a clue about what was going to happen next.

Study Skill: Observation - Five W's and an H

To get the whole story journalists are taught to ask the "5 W's and an H" (*who, what, when, where, why, and how*). When we ask these same questions of the biblical text we'll be amazed at what we learn and discover.

2. **Read and explore John 18:1-14** with these questions in mind. List the basic facts that you gather. Refer to the map of "Jerusalem in New Testament Times" and trace the steps of Jesus and His disciples.

Note: The Kidron Valley formed the eastern boundary of Jerusalem. The Kidron was also a *wadi* or dry streambed that flowed only in the rainy winter season and so would not have been hard to cross at Passover in April.

3. Why would Jesus deliberately go to a place where He might be found by Judas and his allies?
4. What does the mention of "lanterns" and "weapons" (verse 3) indicate about Judas' expectations about the encounter?

“Detachment” (18:3) (NIV) is a technical term for “cohort” (NASB). In this context it could refer to as many as six hundred Roman soldiers stationed at the Tower of Antonia during the Jewish feasts. It appears that the Jewish leaders asked the Romans for their help in arresting Jesus. In addition to the Roman soldiers the Jewish Temple police were also present. So both *Jews* and *Gentiles* played a part in Jesus’ arrest.

5. Comment on what these same Jewish officers attempted to do earlier (See John 7:32, 44-45).

6. In the end why were all the detailed preparations of the Jews and Romans needless (18:4)?

Re-read John 18:4-11.

7. How did Jesus identify Himself to the soldiers in 18:5, 6, and 8 and why did Jesus’ words have such a profound effect on His arrestors (18:6b)? (Recall John 4:26; 8:58 and 13:19.)

8. What was the point of Jesus’ making His captors state *twice* that their order was only to arrest *Him*? (See 18:4, 7 and 8 especially.)

9. Explain how John 18:8 relates to 18:9 and John 6:39 and 17:12?

10. What do you learn about the character of Jesus and what He values from John 18:1-11?

Personal Reflection: What tense situations are you facing? As you think about your present needs pause and ask God to help you remember the priority of obedience regardless of the cost.

11. What insights do Peter’s actions (verse 10) give you about your attempts to act out of your own strength and wisdom?

For the pathetic end of Judas' story read Matthew 27:1-10.

12. What facts are recorded about Jesus in John 18:12-14? Compare with John 11:49-50.

Note: Annas had been deposed as the Jewish high priest by the Romans in A.D. 15, but he still exerted great influence over the ruling high priest, his son-in law Caiaphas. And he still retained the title of "high priest."

Read John 18:12-27 now as one section. These verses take us through the flow of two dramas occurring at the same time. Both have tremendous significance of their own yet they are mingled together by John and the Holy Spirit in this passage.

13. a. Trace Peter's actions in verses 15-18 and 25-27. What do you think motivated his repeated denials?
- b. What is significant about Peter's attitude when considering John 13:37-38?

*This was a major crisis in Peter's life—one that completely devastated him (Matthew 26:75).
Only an appearance from the risen Lord would help him recover (John chapter 20).*

14. Consider the ways, both obvious and subtle, that you deny Christ. What steps can you take now to plan to avoid it or form a different reaction?
15. At this same moment Jesus was standing alone before His captors. **Reread verses 19-24.** Do you think the Jewish authorities were honestly seeking to determine Jesus' guilt or innocence? Support your answer.
16. As you think about the stunning contrast between the actions of Jesus and the actions of Peter in the interweaving of these two accounts, what truths stand out to you most clearly?

Since Annas was unable to find anything to blame Jesus for He was sent to Caiaphas (John 18:23-24). During the night the Sanhedrin (the Jewish Supreme Court) met at Caiaphas' house and decided that Jesus should die. (**Read Matthew 26:57-68 and 27:1-2 for the details.**) John picked up the story again when Jesus was sent to Pilate, the Roman procurator of Judea. Pilate was probably occupying his official residence in Herod's palace at the time of the Passover (John 18:28-29).

17. **Read John 18:28-40** to get a sense of the overall scene. Notice the reference to time in verse 28. Take time to study each segment in more depth. Then list below the key points and insights you uncover from this unusual encounter between Jesus, Pilate and the Jews. Verses 28-32 -

Verses 33-38a -

Verses 38b-40 -

John doesn't record an answer to Pilate's question in John 18:38, at least not in words. But the whole sequence of events that followed is John's answer in action. Truth is seen in the quality of Jesus' action in going to the cross for the salvation of sinners. Truth is seen in the action of the loving Father in giving up His Son. And when we see the sinless Son of God hanging on the Cross we come to understand what truth in action, real truth, means.

18. In closing, consider how God's truth could be practically demonstrated in your life this week. Provide an example or two of how you want truth to be expressed through you.

JERUSALEM IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

