

# John 18:1-11

Jesus has finished his last words to his disciples and his last prayer to the Father. Now he willingly and intentionally goes to where he knows he will be arrested, tried and executed. Not a whole lot more to say in setting the stage. Onto the text!

## 18:1

There are a couple of things to take away from this verse. First, the disciples are with Jesus when he goes out to meet his betrayer. No doubt they believe there is another reason why Jesus goes to where he had gone many times before. (The take-away from this is that we should not be surprised when God leads us into a situation that surprises us or that doesn't turn out like we thought it should.) Second, and more importantly, Jesus takes his disciples into a GARDEN. Hmm... Think back to Genesis 3. What else happened in a garden? Could it be that Jesus goes to a garden here to undo what happened to a garden back then?

## 18:2

Notice how many times Judas is described as the one who would betray Jesus in this text.

## 18:3

The men Judas brings with him are ready for war. But there would be no war. They misunderstood their mission. They thought they were coming out for a conflict against a political or military enemy. Instead, they came out against the one who would soon lay down his life to them. Notice that the group of people coming out against Jesus included Jew and Gentile, official religious leaders and popular (unofficial) leaders.

## 18:4

Jesus knows why these men with lethal weapons have come out to meet him. The natural human response would be to run and hide or put up a fight. Jesus, however, comes right out and asks the men what they want. He isn't running, nor is he putting up a fight. He's also not standing around quietly, waiting for them to make the first move. He makes the first move; one that hastens his arrest without harming either those with him or those against him.

## 18:5

Again, we read Judas identified as the one who betrayed him. Judas behaves in a cowardly fashion. He knew who Jesus was. He could have identified him and had those with him place Jesus under arrest. Instead, he remains silent. Jesus' answer in the affirmative should remove any doubt that those who came out to arrest Jesus got their man. Jesus is not afraid of who he is; and we should not be either!

### **18:6**

We are not told why they did this. It could have been due to some supernatural power commanding their reverence. More likely, it was the power of Jesus' voice, the power of the Word of God. Jesus has just spoken an "I AM." And while we have been careful up to this point to downplay the claim to divinity this phrase implies, I believe that here it does make such a claim. (Thus the response of those who came out to arrest Jesus.) The point? In identifying himself, Jesus also identifies himself as God. A fact to which the arresting party inadvertently acknowledges in their response.

### **18:7**

The awkward (given what they had come out to do) response of the arresting party leads Jesus to ask the question again. And, true to form, the arresting party gives the same reply. They are looking for Jesus of Nazareth. And yes, he's the guy who, in claiming to be God, just caused all of you to draw back and fall to the ground. THIS is the one you are coming to arrest and kill. (Are you beginning to see how silly Judas and his little band of step-brothers look? It's practically a miracle that they are able to find their way back to Caiaphas once they have Jesus in custody!)

### **18:8**

Jesus answers as he did before. He is not afraid to say that he is the one they are looking for. "Yes! The one you just reacted to as if he was God is also the one you have plotted and planned to arrest and kill. Yes! You are going to put the one worthy of your worship to death."

### **18:9**

Notice that Jesus is not fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah; he is fulfilling what he said in the previous chapter. Jesus words (his prayers, even) are treated as prophetic. Jesus never turns his disciples away from following him. If we turn away from him it is our doing, not his.

### **18:10**

Peter decides to take matters literally into his own hands. He is going to fight to prevent Jesus' arrest. We do not know if Peter was the only one who did not

understand that Jesus had to be arrested, tried and executed, or if his actions represented the thoughts of the other disciples who were with Jesus.

## **18:11**

More important than Peter's actions (which really serve as a foil to get Jesus to say what he says) is what Jesus has to say. These are his last words to his disciples before he rises from the dead. (The words from the cross are spoken to the women and John; the other disciples are not there.) The last words that they hear Jesus speak are this: "Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

Two take-aways from this:

- Jesus knows that his arrest and execution is the Father's will for him. He knows the reason why he was sent (to reveal the Father) and what he has to do in order to accomplish it (die on the cross). In doing so, Jesus reveals to us a God who is otherwise unknowable: a God who would see his son die on the altar of the cross if it means the ones who put him there would be forgiven and have life.
- If Jesus willingly (as we saw above: he did not run away or fight to prevent what happened from happening) drank the cup his Father gave him (and this cup leading to a miserable death), then who are we to complain about anything that comes our way, the cup the Father has given US to drink?