

Join us for

Wednesday Night Bible Study



Berea Christian Church

Our Teacher

Pastor Rob Stovall

Wednesday – April 1, 2020

“Every Knee Shall Bow...”

“Every Knee Shall Bow...”

John 18:1-6

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.



Up until this point in the Gospel, John has shown comparatively little interest in the historical details surrounding our Lord’s earthly ministry, except as a narrative device by which to frame His teaching sections, which have been the unique focus of his writing. Now, as his Gospel moves into a discussion of the circumstances surrounding His Passion, John is committed to the details related to His sufferings, especially those sayings which the other Gospel writers had omitted.

The hour has now come that the captain of our salvation, who was to be made perfect by His sufferings, should directly engage the enemy. Our Lord Jesus, like a bold champion, takes the field first (vv. 1-2). After offering up His “High Priestly Prayer” in the previous chapter, Jesus wastes no time, but went forth immediately, out of the house, out of the city, by moon-light – for the Passover was observed at the full moon – with His disciples (minus Judas). Note here:

- Jesus took His work before Him. The work of the priest was to teach, pray, and offer sacrifice. Christ, after teaching and praying, applies Himself with earnest to make His soul an offering for sin.
- Having prepared His disciples for this hour of trial, and, by His prayer, prepared Himself for it, He then went courageously out to meet it. Christ will never send His own into conflict without first preparing them for that conflict by His word and His continued intercession.
- Jesus “went out with His disciples.” Judas knew of the location at which He had, just that evening, celebrated the Supper. Christ could have simply waited there for the arrival of His enemies. Why relocate to the seclusion of the garden? Our Lord’s withdrawal was a strategic and symbolic one: whereas humanity’s first test against the Tempter was lost in a garden (cf. Genesis 3), the beginnings of the Passion by which the Second Adam’s victory over the principalities and powers would be won transpired in a similar setting – the Garden of Gethsemane.

- The mention of the Brook of Kidron is quite noteworthy. David, as a type of Christ, in his flight from Absalom, passed over Kidron in his ascent of Mount Olivet, and did so weeping, along with those who attended him (cf. 2 Sam. 15:23; 2 Sam. 15:30). The Son of David, being driven out by rebellious Jews (with Judas, like Ahithophel, plotting against Him), passed over the Brook in condescension and humiliation, attended by a company of true compatriots. The godly kings of Judah had destroyed idols at Kidron (Asa: 2 Chron. 15:16; Hezekiah: 2 Chron. 30:14; Josiah: 2 Kings 23:4, 6), and into that brook abominable things were cast. Christ, being made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21), began His Passion by this same Kidron as the Sin-Bearer.
- Mention of made of Judas' acquaintance with the place. To compound the sin of Judas, he would make use of his familiarity with our Lord's routine of seeking a place of solitude for communion with the Father, as giving him an opportunity of betraying Him.

The Captain of our Salvation having taken to the field of combat, the enemy soon appears and attacks Him (v. 3). Concerning those accompanying Judas, please note:

- The persons employed in the arrest of Jesus were a multitude in number. Christ's friends were few, and His enemies were many. Following our Lord's example, let us not fear even a multitude, if God be for us (cf. Psalm 3:6; Rom. 8:31).
- This was a mixed multitude, a combination of Roman soldiers, Gentiles, and the officers of the chief priests, Jews. Ordinarily, these were at odds with one another, but, here, they are united against Christ, who came to reconcile both to God in one Body (cf. Eph. 2:15).
- It is a commissioned multitude, not a popular uprising. They act upon orders from the chief priests and Pharisees, who suggested to Pilate that Jesus was a danger to societal order. As has been the case in every epoch of the church, the enemies of Christ and His Gospel are both religious and political.

Observe the manner with which Christ received these who were bent upon His destruction. Knowing all things that should come upon Him, and, therefore, not surprised at all with the unfolding events, possessed of tremendous courage and imaginable calm, Jesus employed a very soft and mild question (v. 4): "Whom are you seeking?" Note here:

- Christ did not shrink back from sufferings, but went forth to meet them. When the multitudes attempted to make Him king, Jesus withdrew (cf. 6:15); when it came to the cross, however, He offered Himself boldly, because it was His mission to suffer.

- Particular notice is taken here that Judas stood with them (v. 5). The Betrayer, who used to stand with those that followed Christ, now stood with those who fought against Him. This is the very essence of an apostate: one that changes sides. He joins with those who represent his true disposition of heart, those alongside whom he will one day also be judged.

Our Lord's response and its effect are remarkable indeed:

- Jesus responds to their mundane description of Him, "Jesus of Nazareth" (v. 5), with the use of the Divine Name (cf. Ex. 3:14) – "I am *He*" (Greek: *ego eimi*, "I am"). This is not surprising in a Gospel that repeatedly highlights our Lord's deity (e.g., 8:58).
- In the face of His declaration of divinity, the arresting party "drew back and fell to the ground" (v. 6). As Christ declares Himself to be more than just another man, His enemies assume a posture of humiliation before Him, a foreshadowing of the Apostle's assertion in Philippians 2:9-11, "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

