

<sup>10</sup>Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) <sup>11</sup>Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" John 18:10, 11, NIV.<sup>1</sup>

A brief comment Jesus' sovereignty as the Lamb of God and Peter's striking the high priest's servant with a sword. The two verses provide a transition between Jesus' sovereignty and His submission as the Lamb of God. Jesus was standing between the cohort and His disciples. However, Peter in an attempt to prove his loyalty to the Master took a step in front of Him and with a large knife a *machaira* struck the high priest's ear. Bible students differ on just what this weapon was but it may have been a large knife that was used to butcher animals or a Roman sword, a short broad double-edged weapon. Whatever it was, it was clear that Jesus was not pleased with Peter's brash and clumsy attempt at killing the servant. Matthew records an interesting comment by Jesus to Peter in [26:52, 53](#) where He said that His Father could have sent an army of 12 legions of angels<sup>2</sup> to rescue Him (as compared to the 12 – Jesus plus the 11 disciples) but then salvation for sinners would not be possible.



Please note the name of the servant. Later on his name will reappear in John's gospel. The important point to note here is that Jesus promptly restored the man's ear to its rightful owner and pointed out to Peter that He was in control and that He *would* drink of the Father's cup. Interesting phrase – the cup is referring to the wrath of God being consumed by Jesus. This phrase was referred to in a few places in the Old Testament – most remarkably in [Jeremiah 25:15-29](#) where Judah was to drink from the cup of God's wrath. The cup that Jesus was to drink was also the wrath of God for He became SIN for us<sup>3</sup> – He took upon Himself the punishment for the sins of the world. To this end He was appointed – He as the Lamb of God was not going to turn aside from the cross.

### Christ the Submissive Lamb.

Jesus chose to submit to the Roman cohort and so to the Jews' plan to have Him killed. Isaiah depicts Jesus in messianic prophesy as the lamb that did not bleat in protest ([Isaiah 53:7](#)). This submission was not a helpless one. No. It was His choice to submit even though He could have felled the Roman cohort with a single word from His mouth (see [Rev 1:9 - 16](#)) but He did not. Instead, He allowed the cohort to cuff Him (bind Him) and take Him away.

I'd like to say a little about the way John treats this account as contrasted to the way the synoptics handle things. I'm seeing a more personal interplay between Jesus and the others in this account. I'm also seeing a very gracious attempt by Jesus toward those around Him. More on that later. I think I want to organize this section in this way:

- The Jews Accuse Christ

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<sup>2</sup> A Legion consisted of 6,000 soldiers so we are talking 72,000 angels.

<sup>3</sup> [2 Cor 5:21](#).

- Peter Denys Christ
- Pilate Decides Against Christ

### The Jews Accuse Christ.

**<sup>12</sup>Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him <sup>13</sup>and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. <sup>14</sup>Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it would be good if one man died for the people.**

**<sup>19</sup>Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.**

Annas had been high priest but his son-in-law Caiaphas was now the high priest. Annas was, however much respected by the Jewish rulers and so Jesus is led bound to illegal preliminary trial to stand before him – so this title was one of high priest, emeritus. This was sort of a preliminary hearing but there was no search for the truth regarding Jesus Christ. Annas considered himself a master of the law and began to attempt to entrap Jesus. What follows has been a bit confusing for some bible students. Let's look at Jesus' answer.

**<sup>20</sup>“I have spoken openly to the world,” Jesus replied. “I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. <sup>21</sup>Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said.”** John 18:20, 21, NIV.

This might seem like an impertinent answer by Jesus but the opposite was the case. The first point was this hearing was being conducted at night - an illegal action by the Jews. Secondly, Annas was not in a quest for getting the facts straight. No. He was trying to entrap Jesus by asking Him “trick” questions. Jesus' response was actually a gracious warning to Annas that what he was doing was against Jewish law. Jesus did not have to answer these questions that were conceived to trap Him. His teachings were known abroad. Even those present at this hearing knew Jesus' teachings – the problem was why Jesus was there in the first place. The answer was that they had rejected Christ and they were in the process of conducting a “kangaroo” court with the view of killing Him.

**<sup>22</sup>When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby struck him in the face. “Is this the way you answer the high priest?” he demanded. <sup>23</sup>“If I said something wrong,” Jesus replied, “testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?” <sup>24</sup>Then Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest.** John 18:22 - 24, NIV.

Jesus' response to this abuse was really a gracious reminder that this hearing had gone out of control. Annas was really asking Jesus to testify against Himself – which was against Jewish law. This really was a reminder that Annas should have gathered together witnesses. Of course, there was no time for this and thus the illegal procedure of trying to get the accused to testify against Himself. Nevertheless, Jesus did recognize Annas' authority and answered properly that he should have brought in witnesses. What we have here is, of course, a man who was trying any means to accuse Jesus of crimes that would allow capital punishment. Jesus responded in the correct way. The hearing ended abortively with the illegal physical assault by the official. Jesus' answer “...why did you strike me?” indicates that Jesus was bruised. This is clearly illegal and resulted in termination of the hearing.

Jesus was sent to Caiaphas the current high priest where the regular trial was to be held. John leaves out this trial mostly because the synoptics had left out this hearing but even this trial was a travesty.

### Just Who Was on Trial?

Good question. Jesus was the Messiah. Caiaphas had somewhat prophetically said that it was good that one person die for the people.<sup>4</sup> Yet in spite of all the signs that He was the promised One they had rejected Jesus. We have already seen that Jesus was being mistreated because He permitted it. Such mistreatment was prophesied in the Old Testament.<sup>5</sup> Jesus was to die for the nation Judah and the world. These evil men were the ones on trial and they were to be found guilty. Guilty of not only the illegality of the trial but of lies and deception.<sup>6</sup> But the greatest guilt they by their own admission was that they had rejected their Christ and were guilty themselves of sin.<sup>7</sup> We will soon see that Pilate, Rome's representative was also on trial. John will give detail of the struggle that Pilate went through in trying to free Jesus because he could see no reason for the crucifixion of Jesus.

The simple fact is that all of mankind was on trial here. Paul says in his condemnation of mankind that all have rejected the revelation of God ([Rom 1:18 - 22](#)). He goes on in his indictment to say that all were sinners ([Rom 3:9 - 18](#)). All these men, the accusing Jews, John, Peter and Pilate were on trial here – as were we all being represented by the men in this narrative. Jesus stood wrongfully accused and wrongfully sentenced to death – not for the trumped up charges but so that He could be the Lamb of God. The tragedy of this story was that most of these men did not take advantage of the death of Christ and receive forgiveness from the hand of the Father *even though Jesus prayed to that end*. The exception, of course, was John and Peter and the rest of those who believed on Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God, including the Roman soldier who witnessed that Jesus was the Son of God<sup>8</sup> and the thief who asked Jesus to remember him.<sup>9</sup> All of mankind put Jesus on the cross in that day but not in the way we might take the details of this narrative. The sins of mankind had to meet the justice of God at the cross and at the same time when men meet the demands of the cross they find forgiveness and the Love of God.

<sup>32</sup>**But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.**” John 12:32, NIV.

Amen.

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<sup>4</sup> [John 11:45 - 50](#).

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 53:10, [NIV](#), [NASB](#), [AMP](#), [KJV](#).

<sup>6</sup> [Luke 23:2](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Matt 27:25](#).

<sup>8</sup> [Matt 27:54](#).

<sup>9</sup> [Luke 23:40 - 43](#).