

Review: events leading up to this section shows Jesus' tender concern for His disciples. He is to be taken, beaten and hung on the cross – not as a victim but as the Lamb of God. Jesus revealed the heart of the plan of God to His disciples – that all men belonged to Him ([John 17:2](#)) – that Jesus lays claim to the souls of all men, not just a few. We have seen that to be a child of God is more than escaping the fires of hell, nor is it merely possessing eternal life – it is having an intimate face-to-face relationship with God – forever.¹ We learned that the disciples though separated physically from Jesus would not be orphaned² but would be connected with Jesus in a special way – through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit ([14:15-21](#)).

The World View versus the Biblical View of the Passion of Christ.

- The world has Jesus being arrested by the Roman cohort (the temple guards were ineffectual in a previous attempt). However, Jesus had to command the Roman cohort to take Him (and let the disciples go).
- The world has Judas playing a role in identifying Jesus because of the night requiring a search for Jesus. However, Jesus stepped forward and identified Himself.
- The world has Jesus as the victim who was caught, arrested and victimized by cruel men. However, the whole series of events was completely under the control of the Master. Holman has an “arresting” commentary on this narrative: *“I have repeatedly emphasized that Jesus controlled every event throughout this dramatic chapter. His response in the garden is a good example of this. Hughes notes, ‘Jesus’ answer was one of his last uses of the power by which he calmed the seas, stilled the winds, and healed the sick. The cohort didn’t arrest Jesus – he arrested them. His words were a gracious warning that they were in over their heads. Christ was not caught up on the wheel of history. Rather, he is the axis of history” (Hughes, pp. 129 – 30).”* Another mention by one of my sources of Jesus’ power over this arrest was that Jesus’ “challenge” was that He had to filter His power in such a way that the men who were to arrest Him were not destroyed in their attempt to take Him. It was an active decision on Jesus’ part to allow them to arrest Him, cuff Him and take Him away. This whole thought is borne out in Jesus’ statement to Pilate that he (nor anyone else) would have had the power to inflict any harm on Him unless He had permitted it ([John 19:7 - 11](#)).
- The world has Jesus dying on the cross as the victim of a gross injustice. However, this was the cup that Jesus had agreed to partake of from eternity past - it was His active choice to be hung on the Roman cross, dying in horrible pain - bearing the sins of His malefactors along with the world thereby satisfying the Justice of God who desired to forgive them and the world. Even in His dying moments, He reached out in divine Love and asked the Father to forgive them in

¹ See my lesson “[Christ, the Intercessor, Part 1](#)”, pgs 3, 4 with reference to [17:3](#).

² Lit. Left fatherless.

their ignorance.

So we move on to the events leading up to Jesus' dying on cross for the sins of the world.

¹When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive grove, and he and his disciples went into it. ²Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. ³So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. NIV ³

There is some differing thought where Jesus was when He finished praying – perhaps still in the upper room but then perhaps elsewhere – Wescott and others believe these events took place in the courts of the Temple. Be that as it may, Jesus now left this scene, descended into the valley of Kidron through which ran an intermittent brook – literally a winter brook and up on the other side to an olive grove. This was a familiar place for Jesus and His disciples – a deliberately chosen place.

Much is made of the action of Judas' kiss of betrayal. Note that John makes no mention of this act. Interesting. The supposed scenario was that the cohorts were to go into the garden and seek out Jesus with lanterns and torches in order to arrest Him. What actually happened was that Jesus went out to meet the cohort. This action had a two-fold purpose. First, it completely thwarted Judas' plan and actually caught everyone off guard. Second, Jesus in His protective role was shielding His beloved friends from arrest. There was no going in and grabbing each man by the scruff of the neck and determining their identity. No. Jesus stepped forward and took the initiative.

Jesus was in Control of Redemptive History.

⁴Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that are coming upon him, having gone forth, said to them, `Whom do ye seek?' ⁵they answered him, `Jesus the Nazarene;' Jesus saith to them, `I am [he];' -- and Judas who delivered him up was standing with them; -- ⁶when, therefore, he said to them -- `I am [he],' they went away backward, and fell to the ground.⁴ John 18:4-6.

Jesus was not cleverly figuring out what was going to happen to Him. No. This is the Son of God – the divine nature and Jesus' total grasp of Old Testament messianic scripture is certainly in view here as we will note in a remarkable turn of events in this narrative. "All things.." was the redemptive plan of God and all its historical implications. For example, Judas was to be a betrayer. That was prophesied in [Psalms 41:9](#). Even the amount given to Judas – 30 pieces of silver was prophesied in [Zech 11:12 and related passages in Matthew 26 and 27](#). The point is this – the

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⁴ Young's Literal Translation (YLT) Public Domain.

redemptive plan knows no historical bounds. God knows the beginning to the end – none of this was ever out of the hands of Jesus – He knew the redemptive plan, thus John’s comment “...**knowing all**⁵ **things that are coming upon him**...” Even the turning of Jesus over to the Roman governor Pilate was under redemption’s direction. It is important to know that if the Jews had executed Jesus it would have been by stoning (see Stephen’s execution in [Acts 7:54 - 60](#)). Instead, Jesus predicted His own means of death as early as [John 3:14](#) here the life-giving result of Jesus’ crucifixion was implied. But more remarkably in [12:28 - 34](#) Jesus predicts His crucifixion and those around Him *understood the terminology “lifted up”* as such. This prediction was preceded by the Father’s voice from heaven as a sign⁶ that Jesus’ prediction should be deemed true – yet the tragic unbelief was so evident.

“– **and Judas who delivered him up was standing with them;** –“⁷ John gave proper place for Judas’ action (no mention) and place in this scene (with the cohort). Judas had been “marginalized” by events much greater than his own self-importance. Yes, Satan had entered him and directed his actions but more so, Judas and Satan had been rendered irrelevant in this scene for Jesus was the director of things – not Judas nor Satan. Before I leave this portion of the lesson, I’d like to point out one more thing: the tragedy of rejecting Christ as Savior. Judas had been offered one last chance to abandon his path to hell at the Passover supper – but he refused. Judas standing with the cohort was a metaphorical representation of the world rejecting Christ as Savior – unbelievers will take their stand – it’s their decision the blame goes to – no one else. Unbelieving men belong to Jesus Christ but they can refuse that wonderful offer of shelter and go straight to hell with Satan.

The I AM answers Redemption’s Call.

Jesus is taking the active role here. Note that *He* is the one who is going forth – that is seeking out the cohort. Jesus is the one who asks ‘**Whom do ye seek?**’ The answer from the surprised cohort is ‘**Jesus the Nazarene;**’ His answer triggers a response that points out Jesus’ authority in this situation – they retreated and fell to the ground.⁸

I like the way that Young treats the gang’s answer: “... ‘**I am [he];**’ ...” The word “he” is not in the original and actually dilutes the answer, I think. I AM is the Son of God answering the call - not so much as to the cohort – but more to the call of redemption – the men in the cohort were merely pawns in this timeless scene. Hughs quite correctly

⁵ εἰδὼς πάντα τὰ – having completely known *the* all [things].

⁶ Bath qal

⁷ YLT – note the parenthetical nature of this part of Young’s translation – good translation!

⁸ Again YLT does excellent treatment of the original – no delving into the original necessary on my part.

points out; ‘...*The cohort did not arrest Jesus – he arrested them. His words were a gracious warning that they were over their heads. Christ was not caught on the wheel of history. Rather he is the axis of history.*⁹

Holman further quotes Hughs as saying that this was one of Jesus’ last use of His power as the Son of God – the same power that calmed the seas, the same power that quieted the winds, the same power that healed the sick, [I might add] and the same power that brought Lazarus forth from the dead is answering the cohort. I might also add that His power was evident during His interview with Pilate. The fact is that Jesus’ power / authority was very much evident here and that He could easily have left the scene unscathed but His time had come and He literally had to hand Himself over to the gang by asking the question “Whom do you seek” *twice* before the gang took action.

The response of the cohort was quite remarkable - Young accurately points out that they retreated a bit and fell to the ground. Not a very impressive performance from Rome’s finest – but then they were facing THE ALMIGHTY Himself. But although they were over their heads in this matter, Jesus saw to it that the arrest was completed.

Jesus’ Authority in His Arrest.

⁷Again he asked them, “Who is it you want?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁸“I told you that I am he,” Jesus answered. “If you are looking for me, then let these men go.” ⁹This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: “I have not lost one of those you gave me.”

The whole tone of this passage so much reveals Jesus sovereignty in this whole event. He had to help the Roman cohort compose themselves – get off the ground and advance once again – then He orders them to let the disciples go.¹⁰ Lenski says that Jesus ordered the gang to release the disciples – indeed He stood in the way of the cohort – there was no power in Rome that could have countermanded that order – so strong the command (see [John 10:22 - 30](#)). In fact, read the whole context and note the authority implied, especially in [verses 11 - 18](#).

Jesus had complete control of the situation – He presented Himself to the cohort and stood between them and His beloved disciples – an impenetrable barrier of protection that He offered to them and to all believers down through the centuries. Amen.

⁹ Quoted from [HOLMAN NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY - JOHN](#), page 339.

¹⁰ *Imperative, aorist of aphiemi* - release these men, as though they were to be included in the arrest. The gang obeyed the command and released them.