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October memory verse: **Romans 8:28 (NKJV)**

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

Shoe boxes are due back by Sunday November 8th

Commentary on John Chapter 18, by Chuck Smith 10.21.2020

Jesus has finished His prayer, which we mentioned last week should properly be entitled the Lord's Prayer. And now, from wherever this prayer was offered, maybe it was on the temple precincts itself, as the temple gates were open all night during the time of Passover so people could come at any time and worship God. But having finished His prayer, He now crosses the Brook Kidron with His disciples that He might go over to a place on the Mount of Olives, where Jesus went often with His disciples into a garden known as Gethsemane. In those days, the wealthy people of Jerusalem had private gardens on the Mount of Olives. It could be that one of these persons who liked Jesus had given Him the key to the gate of his garden, and that Jesus had access to this particular garden there on the Mount of Olives. And He went there often with His disciples. Chapter 18, verse 1:

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden, into which he entered, with his disciples ([Jhn 18:1](#)).

So, the wording and the phraseology here would indicate that it was one of these private gardens within a gated area that Jesus entered. The interesting thing is, He crossed the Brook Kidron at this point. During Passover season, there on the temple mount, for the Passover there would

be slain thousands of lambs. In fact, some thirty years later than this, the Roman government sought to take a census. They could not count the people, because the Jews were opposed to a census of the people ever since the time that David took the census and the nation was judged for David's sin. So, from that time, they would never count people. In fact, the orthodox today, if you're at a party and you have to count off for a game or something, they won't count people. They'll say, "Not one, not two, not three, not four, not five." But, in the taking of the census, what they did was count the number of sheep that were killed for the Passover. Because they were curious to find out how many people were gathering in Jerusalem for these Passovers.

Now, the Passover lamb had to be eaten by no fewer than ten people. And so, at the particular census made mention by Josephus, there were two hundred and fifty-six thousand sheep killed for that one Passover feast, indicating the number of people in Jerusalem at somewhere around two and a half million people gathered for the Passover. So, when they would kill the lambs, the blood would go in a little rivulet that was created on down to the Brook of Kidron. And there it would mingle with the water of the Brook Kidron and it would be bloody-looking water flowing down the stream. And as Jesus crossed it with His disciples, filled with the blood mingled with the water of the stream, which, of course, washed it on down, thinking of all of those lambs that were sacrificed for Passover, Jesus was no doubt thinking of the lamb that was to be sacrificed this Passover. "The Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world." And so, to Him, it was probably a very touching moment as He crossed that stream with His disciples, seeing it flowing red with the blood of the Passover lambs.

Judas also, who betrayed him, was familiar with this garden where Jesus often went. Having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, they came out with their torches and lanterns and weapons ([Jhn 18:2-3](#)).

The band, that word in the Greek indicates a Roman contingent of either what was known as a cohort, six hundred and fifty men, or they also had an enlarged cohort, which was a thousand men comprised of two hundred and seventy cavalry men, plus the footmen, or at the least two hundred men. Now, it is interesting that they would bring such a large number of Roman soldiers along with the officers of the temple to arrest Jesus with His twelve. Why they thought they needed that many is interesting.

Jesus therefore, knowing that all things should come upon him, went forth ([Jhn 18:4](#)),

He came on out of the garden. They came with their torches. Now, it was full moon; they really didn't need torches during the full moon over there. But perhaps they thought that He would be lurking somewhere in the bushes or hiding, and so they came with their torches and weapons. But Jesus came right on out to meet them.

and he said unto them, Who are you looking for? And they answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. And he said unto them, I am *He* ([Jhn 18:4-5](#))

You'll notice that the word *He* is in italics, which means that it was added by the translators. Jesus just said, "I am." That divine name of the eternal God. When Jesus said, "I am," there went forth, no doubt, a blast of power, divine power.

And as he said unto them, I am *He*, they fell backward to the ground ([Jhn 18:6](#)).

Now, at that point, Jesus could have just walked off and left them lying there. It is interesting that Jesus is in control of the whole situation. He is the Master. And though they have come to arrest Him, He is the one that is giving the orders. Notice,

He asked them again, Who are you looking for? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. He said, I told you that I am *He*: if therefore you are seeking me, then let these others go ([Jhn 18:7-8](#)):

He ordered them to let the disciples go, which they did. He was in control; He was calling the orders at this point. Perfect command of the entire situation!

That the scripture might be fulfilled, which said, Of them which you gave me I have lost none. Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and he smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus ([Jhn 18:9-10](#)).

Simon had been in a deep sleep. He had tried to stay awake and pray with the Lord, but he just couldn't do it. He was tired. And so, when Jesus said, "Sleep on now. Take your rest," and then He said, "Arise, the hour is

come." When Peter arose out of the deep sleep, he was probably still pretty groggy, looked around, saw the crowd, pulled out his sword and began to swing. And Malchus can be glad that he was sleepy. He only caught his ear. He was trying for his head, no doubt. It is interesting the last healing miracle that Jesus performed, He performed to cover the bungling act of one of His disciples. For Jesus healed the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest.

Now, Peter is one that we are prone to fault, because in just a moment he will be denying his Lord. In spite of his strong protestations earlier that he would never deny Him, that he would die for Him. Soon he will be denying Him. And we're prone to fault Peter for his cowardess, but wait a minute! Here are at least two hundred Roman soldiers plus the officers of the temple, and I'll tell you, Peter is ready to stand them all off to defend Jesus Christ. That's not cowardess, that takes some kind of a man. And so don't be too harsh on Peter. He was a man's man. He was ready to stand off the whole band.

Then said Jesus to Peter, Put up your sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? ([Jhn 18:11](#))

Now, just a little earlier in the evening, as Jesus was in the garden, praying, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not what I will, Your will be done;" at that point, Jesus was facing the cup reluctantly. It was at that point He was submitting His will to the Father's. It wasn't something He wanted to do, desired to do. This was an act of submission to the Father. But that commitment was made. Once it was made, there was no turning back. Jesus said to His disciples, "Don't you realize that at this moment I could call ten legions of angels to deliver Me? I don't need your help, Peter. If I wanted out of this, I could get out of it very easily. But the cup that the Father has given Me to drink, shall I not drink it?" He had made His commitment, there is no turning back.

Then the band and the captain and the officers took Jesus, and they bound him ([Jhn 18:12](#)),

How ridiculous that they should bind Him! But let me tell you, whatever they used, the ropes or whatever to bind Jesus, did not bind Jesus. Jesus was bound by something else much more powerful than the ropes. He was bound by His love for you and for me. That's what caused Him to submit to

this. Not that they tied Him and were taking Him as a captive. He was not their captive, He was a captive of love. His love for you, His love for me...that's what bound Jesus to go ahead to face the cross.

And they led him away to Annas first; for he was the father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year ([Jhn 18:13](#)).

Annas had been the high priest from the year five to the year sixteen. Annas was probably one of the most influential, powerful, wealthy men in the city of Jerusalem. At this particular time, the high priesthood was a political kind of an appointment by the Roman government. And it was secured by a bidding kind of a process. They paid and bribed for the privilege of being the high priest. It was extremely corrupted at this point. Annas was the high priest, and being the patriarch of that family, was recognized still as the power behind the office of the high priest. Five of his sons, at various times and for various periods, held the position of high priest. At this particular time, his son-in-law Caiaphas had the official Roman sanction as high priest. But Annas was still considered by the people the high priest, and he was the power behind the throne. And that is why they brought Him to Annas first. Annas was the man who had so corrupted the priesthood.

He was the one who owned the booths in the temple courtyard where they sold the animals for sacrifices, where the moneychanger tables were. For he was the one extorting from the people the high prices for the sacrificial animals. You could buy a dove out on the street for about twenty cents to offer as a sacrifice. But the sacrifices had to be without spot or blemish. So, if you bought a dove out on the streets and brought it for a sacrifice, the priests would examine it carefully and they'd find some little blemish. They'd say, "I can't offer this to God. Look, it's got a blemish here. You better go over to the table over there and buy a dove from them." And of course, this was a concession owned by Annas. And they were charging ten or fifteen dollars for a dove. But if you wanted to offer a sacrifice, you had to have one the priests would accept, and these were already accepted. There were no question about these that Annas was selling in his concessionaires there. And that was thing that Jesus saw that upset Him so much, that He made a whip and He drove them out of the temple. And He overturned the moneychangers' tables and He said, "My Father's house is to be called the house of prayer, and you've made it a den of thieves, merchandising the things of God." How God gets angry at that!

Annas had it in for Jesus ever since He had overturned his little business. Naturally, they put things right back together again. But it galled him that Jesus would have the nerve to upset his extortion racket. And so, He was first brought to this man, an extortioner, a wealthy man, a Sadducee. And there He was first tried before Annas, then to Caiaphas, and then to Pilate. So, they brought Him to Annas, the father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was the high priest that same year. So that's why there were two high priests, Annas the patriarch, the old man, recognized by the people; but the Roman government had appointed politically Caiaphas as the high priest.

Now, this Caiaphas was the one who said, "Look, it's necessary that one be killed for the whole nation."

And Simon Peter followed Jesus ([Jhn 18:15](#)),

Now, again, this is admirable. The rest of the disciples, with the exception of John, had fled. Simon got into trouble because he wasn't going to leave Jesus. He continued to follow Him.

the disciple which was known unto the high priest, and went with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door ([Jhn 18:15-16](#)).

Now, this other disciple is no doubt John, referring to himself.

Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, spoke to the her that was keeping the door, and he brought Peter on in. Then the damsel said to Peter, the one keeping the door, Are you not one of this man's disciples? And Peter said, No, I'm not. And the servants and the officer stood there, who had made a fire of coals, for it was cold; and they were warming themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself ([Jhn 18:16-18](#)).

I might at this point just say: be careful whenever you seek warmth at the enemy's fires, you're in dangerous territory.

The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine ([Jhn 18:19](#)).

Now, this was a violation of Jewish law. They had a fifth amendment kind of a thing where no man could testify against himself. You were not required to testify against yourself. There was the fifth amendment, and it was illegal

to ask a man to witness against himself. So, when the high priest was asking Him the question, Annas asked Him about His disciples and His doctrine. Jesus is actually answering, saying, "Look,"

I spoke openly to the world; and I was always teaching in the synagogues, and in the temple, where the Jews always resort; and I have said nothing in secret. So, why do you ask me? ([Jhn 18:20-21](#)) That's illegal. Ask them which heard me ([Jhn 18:21](#)),

Bring forth your witnesses, that's the legal thing to do. Those which heard Me, and let them tell you.

what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I have said ([Jhn 18:21](#)).

So, it was a technical, legal point that Jesus was calling the high priest on.

But when he said that, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, and he said, Do you answer the high priest so? And Jesus said to him, If I have spoken evil, then you bear witness of the evil: but if well, why are you smiting me? ([Jhn 18:22-23](#))

Now, evidently, this guy standing by the high priest like to hit the prisoners. Paul had the same kind of an experience later on. When the high priest asked Paul a question and Paul challenged it and the guy hit Paul, and Paul turned and said, "God will smite you; you whited sepulchre!" He was a little more gentle than Jesus. I think of this, though, in the context of the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus said, "And if a man smites thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." We've got to understand that particular scripture in its context. For Jesus did not really turn the other cheek. He just said, "Look, if I've said, then bear witness of the evil, and if I've brought point forth an honest point of the law, then why did you strike me?" And He challenged the man for striking Him illegally.

Now Annas bound him again and sent him to his son-in-law Caiaphas ([Jhn 18:24](#)).

And John does not tell us about His trial before Caiaphas, but the other gospels, Matthew and Mark tell us about the trial before Caiaphas.

Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Are you not also one of his disciples?' And he denied it, and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, being a relative to Malchus, the guy who's ear was cut off by Peter, said, Did I not see you in the garden with him? And Peter again denied; and immediately the cock crew ([Jhn 18:25-27](#)).

One of the other gospels tells us that at this point Jesus turned over and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the words of the Lord, and he went out and wept bitterly. It was a very hard experience for Peter.

Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the hall of judgment ([Jhn 18:28](#)):

Now He is being brought before Pilate.

and it was early; but they themselves would not go into the judgment hall ([Jhn 18:28](#)),

You see, it was the area of the Gentiles. And if they went into there,

they would be defiled; and they couldn't celebrate the passover. So Pilate went out unto them ([Jhn 18:29](#)),

Interesting, how corrupt and evil they were, and yet, meticulously religious. It's a terrible thing how meticulous a person can be within the rituals of a religious system, and yet, so totally inwardly corrupt. Now, we've got to guard ourselves against traditions and meticulous adherence to traditions, but yet, overlooking some of the more important things that God is interested in. And so, here they were, they didn't want to come in because they didn't want to defile themselves. And yet, they were engineering the crucifixion of God's Son. What a whole paradox here!

So Pilate went out to them, and he said,

What accusation do you bring against this man? ([Jhn 18:29](#))

"So Pilate went out and he said, 'What accusation do you bring against this man?'"

And they said unto him, If he weren't a criminal, we would not have delivered him up to you. Pilate said unto them, Then take him, and judge him by your own laws ([Jhn 18:30-31](#)).

I mean, Pilate didn't want to be bothered with this; if they don't want to make actual charges. Now, their charge against Him was blasphemy. You remember the priest said, "Art thou then the Son of God?" And He said, "Thou sayest it." And he said, "What need we of any further witnesses? We've heard Him say it with His own mouth. Blasphemy! What do you say? He's guilty of death!" But they couldn't bring this charge of blasphemy before Pilate. So, before Pilate they had to bring other charges. He is inciting people to rebel against Rome. But Pilate really didn't have any love for these people; they had burned him already. And he didn't have any patience for their religious feelings. And so, when they said, "If He weren't a malefactor, we wouldn't have brought Him." Pilate then said, "Then you go ahead and try Him according to your own laws." He's not going to be playing games with these guys.

The Jews therefore said unto him, It isn't lawful for us to put any man to death ([Jhn 18:31](#)):

Now, this right of capital punishment had been taken away from the Jews just a couple of years previous. According to the Talmud, the Roman government took away the right of capital punishment forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, which was destroyed in 70 A.D. Which means that in 30 A.D., the right of capital punishment was taken away from the Jews by the Roman government. When...and this is just two years before the crucifixion of Jesus...when the right of capital punishment was taken away from the Jews, many of the leaders put on sackcloth and ashes on their head and they went mourning through the streets of Jerusalem. And they said, "God has failed His promise and His word." And they had mourning over the failure of God to keep His word. For God had promised through the prophet of Jacob that the scepter shall not depart from Judah until the Messiah comes. And when, in 30 A.D., the Roman government took away the right of capital punishment, that was equivalent to removing the scepter from the people. And they mourned and they said, "God failed His promise." What they didn't realize, God had kept His promise. He was living among them at that very moment. The Messiah had come; they just didn't recognize Him. There was no need for their mourning processions; God had kept His word. But the right of capital punishment was taken away in 30 A.D. by the Roman government. And so they said, "We don't have the right. It isn't lawful for us to condemn a man to die."

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and he called Jesus, and he said unto him, Are you the King of the Jews? And Jesus said, Do you want to know this for yourself, or did others tell you about me? ([Jhn 18:33-34](#))

"Is this really something you want to know, or is this just something that you've heard?" "Do you really want to know? Or do you want an argument? Did someone else tell you this of Me, or are you really asking?"

Pilate said, Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you unto me: what have you done? Jesus answered me, My kingdom is not of this world ([Jhn 18:35-36](#)):

You ask me if I'm a King? Yes. But my kingdom is not of this world.

if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from here. Pilate therefore said unto him, Are you then a king? And Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king ([Jhn 18:36-37](#)).

Or more literally, "You said it, I am a king." To this end was I born, and for this cause I came unto the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. And every one that is of the truth hears my voice. Pilate said unto him, What is truth? ([Jhn 18:37-38](#))

And I think that it was a question of cynicism, "What is truth?"

And when he said this, he went out again to the Jews, and he said unto them, I find no fault in him. But you have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will you therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber ([Jhn 18:38-40](#)).

So, here is Pilate's first attempt to release Jesus. Because of the custom of the Passover, for the Roman government to show favor unto the people, he was to release a prisoner. And so, he tried to release Jesus as the Passover prisoner. But they cried for Barabbas. So Pilate sought the second time for releasing Jesus by having Him scourged, hoping that the horrible, brutal punishment of the scourging would suffice the thirst for blood that these people had.