

“Jesus Before The High Priest - Annas”

John 18:12-27

Introduction: (Read John 18:12-27) – This past week in my personal devotions I read through the book of Revelation. I’ve decided to do a personal study on the book and in preparation for that study I began to read Tom Schreiner’s theology on Revelation “The Joy of Hearing” - also Brian Tabb’s book, “All Things New: Revelation as Canonical Capstone.”

Schreiner says a couple of things that help to make our study this morning more applicable – Page 18, para 1 (for application to today’s church). However, what Schreiner says about Revelation helps us to understand what is really taking place in the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus. He writes, “The book contains a revelation communicated in a narrative that rehearses the Lord’s triumph over the forces of evil, as we are informed about the end of history and the coming new heavens and new earth... We have a transcendent reality, a heavenly perspective of what is taking place on earth, and yet the story is linear in that it forecasts the final outcome of events taking place on earth. John clearly interprets in his visions the events occurring on earth, informing us about evil and good from a heavenly perspective...”¹ (also page 31, para 2).

The reason this is applicable to this passage is that John – as we noted in our study of 18:1-11 – is intentionally presenting the details of these events in such a way as to present Jesus as the sovereign over the events surrounding His arrest and crucifixion. *In similar fashion* John structures this portion of the narrative to set Jesus’ response to Annas’ questioning in contrast to Peter’s 3 denials. *I believe upon closer examination we will see that the difference between Peter and Jesus is the outworking of the perspective afforded us by Revelation.*

Jesus’ Arrest and Peter’s 1st Denial – 18:12-18

- 18:12-14 - Jesus was arrested, bound and taken to Annas. Imagine for a moment the impact – emotional and otherwise – on the disciples as Jesus is bound and taken away.

Annas, though not the high priest, held significant influence (served A.D. 6-15 appointed by Quirinius Roman prefect and governor of Syria – and replaced by Valerius Gratus A.D. 15-26). He had as many as 5 of his sons who served as High Priest and he was the Father-in-law to Caiaphas serving as High Priest at the time of Jesus’ arrest.² John alone records Annas questioning Jesus (cf. vs. 19-24).

Note that the purpose of John’s mention of Caiaphas was twofold: First – he was the serving High Priest and each of the synoptic gospels records Jesus’ trial before Caiaphas; Second – to associate Jesus’ arrest with Caiaphas statement/unwitting prediction of Jesus’ death in John 11:49-53, 54-57. This was to show that, in looking back, John was connecting these moments

¹ Schreiner, pages 25-26

² Kostenberger, 512

and clarifying that Jesus was not a victim but a sovereign and submissive Son in the plan of redemption. These events were not random and the authorities themselves – Caiaphas, Annas, Pilate - were unaware of their part in God’s redemptive plan (cf. **18:31-32; 19:10-11**).

- 18:15-16 – These verses are key in establishing the record to be the report of an eye witness – namely John. John is the one who was known by the High Priest and he was the one that arranged for Peter to be allowed into the courtyard. It is possible, if not likely, that this was the courtyard to the home of Annas and perhaps gave Annas – in his mind – permission to circumvent Jewish law.

- 18:17-18 – These verses record the context the 1st of Peter’s 3 denials of Jesus. In addition, John sets up the overall narrative in such a way as to set Peter’s response in contrast to Jesus. He accomplishes this by bracketing Annas’ interrogation of Jesus with Peter’s 1st and final 2 denials. ***This purpose is made more clear by the repetition of the fact that Peter was “warming himself” first in 18:18 and then again in 18:25.***

The girl’s observation/expectation based in the wording of the question (*μη̄ καῑ σὺ ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν εἶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τούτου;*) shows that she associated Peter with John, whom she knew to be Jesus’ disciples (“You too”) and that she probably asked tentatively. ***The nature and wording of Peter’s denial was framed to contrast with Jesus’ affirmation in 18:5, 7 (ἐγὼ εἰμι vs οὐκ εἰμι).***

In order to understand the nature of Peter’s denial of Jesus let’s remember the progression of events leading to this moment – Peter’s bold declaration that he was willing to fight with and die for Jesus (cf. **13:36-38; also Luke 22:31-34**); Peter drawing the sword and struck Malchus while facing a force 10 to 20 times the number of the disciples (cf. John 18:10-11) and now Jesus’ surrendering and being taken away bound and put on trial for His life. Confused and frightened – he denied being His disciple.

Jesus Before Annas – 18:19-24

- 18:19 - The High Priest/Annas is said to have asked Jesus about two things – His disciples and His teaching. Perhaps he asked Jesus about His disciples to gage the potential for repercussions but certainly the primary concern the Jewish leadership had was theological – they were concerned because of who Jesus claimed to be (cf. **19:7**) despite what they later said to Pilate (cf. 19:12). ***Indeed – not only had Jesus taught that He is the Son of God – but John wrote this gospel in the way he wrote it to prove that point and to call us to faith (cf. 20:30-31). Make no mistake – from the perspective of heaven and behind the veil – this battle is always about who He claims to be - who He in fact is!!***

- 18:20-21 – Annas may have been outside the scope of their law by not producing witnesses to make their case. Jesus continued to protect His disciples saying nothing about them. Instead He turns the questioning back on Annas by reminding him that He had hidden nothing from him –

rather He regularly taught openly before the people and the leaders. He was shining light into the dark recesses of their hearts.

- 18:22-24 – Jesus’ response anger one of the officials near Jesus so he struck Jesus in the face and rebuked Him for answering the High Priest in such a manner. However, Jesus did not back down. He continued to press the High Priest for a fair and legal trial in the full knowledge that He would not receive a fair trial – He would die at the hands of sinners acting in sin in order to pay for/bear the weight of their sin. He knew He had done nothing wrong. He was forcing their hand of hatred and deceit. This section closes with John saying that Annas sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas – Annas had no leverage.

Note: Let’s remember who this is sitting before these men – the divine Son of God – their creator and sovereign. They dared to put God – the Holy One of Israel – the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords – on trial!! Jesus was not a victim!! When Annas questioned Him and the servant struck Him and Peter watched and denied Him – none of them knew that this moment within time, here on this globe, was at the center of an eternal plan in a great and cosmic battle between God and the forces of evil. Jesus was about to strike the final blow that would conquer every power set against God and to bring the final victory. Jesus at any moment could’ve destroyed His accusers but His was to submit to them in submission to His Father.

Peter’s Final Denials of Jesus – 18:25-27

- Jesus has been taken to Caiaphas in order to be legally accused by the sitting High Priest so that He could be taken to Pilate to face legal charges that would lead to His execution.

- 18:25a – The continuity between Peter’s 1st denial and the final 2 denials is established by the repetition of the fire scene, which also served to emphasize the contrast between Peter and Jesus.

- 18:25b-26 – The 2nd question and denial has little detail. The 3rd contains the detail of the identity of the one questioning Peter – a relative of Malchus who most likely was present at the arrest and saw Peter swing the sword.

Note: Let’s think with Peter for a moment. Here he sits having come from over 3 years of walking with Jesus – hearing Him teach such profound truths spoken with such a unique and captivating clarity, confidence, even authority. He heard Jesus make claims that were Messianic and more – to be somehow God – God was His Father and He was in the Father and His Father was in Him. The power of His words was matched and confirmed by the power of His works. People were healed and raised and cleansed and transformed – demons and the forces of creation submitted to His spoken word. This final evening together was both confusing and thrilling – and now he watched Jesus arrested, bound, falsely accused, mocked, beaten and doing nothing even approximating establishing His kingdom. ***Peter sat in the courtyard seeing only what was taking place on this earth in this moment – with earth’s perspective. He did not have eyes to***

see the events behind the events – heaven’s perspective!! So – he denied Jesus because he was frightened and confused!!

We Sit in Peter’s Place in Our World – cf. John 16:31-33; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 3:13-15, 16-18; 4:12-14, 15-19)

- We do know that Peter was appointed for this moment and that this moment was covered in Jesus’ prayer for him (Luke 22:31-34). The grace of God in Jesus had already been poured into this moment. Consequently, Peter’s failure has not only played a part in his growth in ministry but also in the encouragement he was able to provide the church through the centuries.

- In every age and in every place the church and individual members of the church sit in that courtyard being asked the same kind of question, “You are one of His disciples, aren’t you?”

1. It may be asked us in subtle ways – in fact it has been asked us in subtle ways during times of peace and prosperity – with respect to issues of scriptural truth (science, marriage – how we view marriage overall and how we conduct our own marriages, life – abortion and euthanasia or assisted suicide, wealth, poverty and generosity, issues of racism etc.) – perhaps simply in respect to sharing the gospel with someone we know and love.

Schreiner in the chapter – “The Deafness of Those Living on Earth,” “Life on earth may look ordinary and even plebian, but John reminds readers that there is a war on, a cosmic conflict between good and evil, between God and Satan...” (Just as the Roman empire and its religion were not neutral entities – so too our government and its “religion” are not neutral) “Thus, what is happening on earth is not trivial or insignificant. Believers must hear the message so that they truly grasp what is going on in the world and so that they persevere until the end and refuse to compromise with Rome.”³

2. It may be asked in more explicit ways in times of social upheaval – like in this nation in this time – “Aren’t you one of His disciples?” – *implied by the question is a significant threat by both the church and the culture.*

3. It may be asked us subtly by so many who share the same concerns as we do and have a like faith to ours - “Aren’t you one of His disciples?” They would never ask that question but they would offer or encourage you – like Peter – to resort to earthly means to establish a heavenly kingdom, to place our hope in an earthly “king” and make primary commitments to and direct our energy in establishing that “king” or movement (cf. 18:36-37; contrast 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-18). **Read Schreiner page 45, para 1.**

³ Schreiner, page 44