



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

John 18:25-32 Commentary **New Revised Standard Version**

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further follow the verse-by-verse [*International Bible Study Commentary*](#). **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [*International Bible Study Forum*](#).

(John 18:25) Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, “You are not also one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.”

Officially, Caiaphas was the Roman appointed high priest at the time of Jesus' mock trial. The trial was conducted in the courtyard of Annas, who was also called “the high priest,” because former high priests retained the honorary title “high priest” after the Roman governor replaced them. For the second time, Peter denied that he followed Jesus. The questioner did not ask Peter directly, “Are you also a disciple of Jesus?” He asked with the words, “You are not also,” which made it easier for Peter to quickly answer, “No,” almost without thinking.

(John 18:26) One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?”

Peter may have felt that those questioning him were closing in and he was about to be found out as a disciple of Jesus. He may have recognized this slave of the high priest, who was a relative of Malchus. They may have been

standing close enough together for the slave to recognize Peter and ask, “Did I not see you,” in a way that once again would make it easier for Peter to quickly answer, “I am not,” without remembering the words of Jesus. If Jesus had not healed the ear of Malchus, his relative might have loudly accused Peter saying, “I saw you in the garden with Jesus and you cut off the ear of Malchus!” Instead, this slave knew the power of Jesus to heal, and perhaps asked Peter if he were a disciple of Jesus to learn more about Jesus. If he had asked with a loud accusation, Peter might have courageously drawn his sword as he had in the garden and tried to fight his way out of the courtyard. But in John 17:11, Jesus prayed to the Father, “And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.” The Father answered Jesus’ prayer on behalf of Peter even though Peter denied His only Son—such is the deep love of the Father and Jesus for those who follow Jesus.

(John 18:27) Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

In John 13:37, “Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.’” And in John 13:38, “Jesus answered, ‘Will you lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times.’” Though we might find it interesting, whether the “cock’s crow” was a rooster or a trumpet blast announcing the time in the night as some think, it really does not matter. For what Jesus told Peter came true. The Bible reveals that whatever Jesus prophesied or promised came to pass, so we know that whatever He has promised us will come to pass, for He has risen and ascended to the right hand of God.

(John 18:28) Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate’s headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover.

The religious leaders of the Jews ordered the temple guards to arrest Jesus by night, preferring darkness because their deeds were evil, and they feared the crowds. After a trial before Caiaphas (not repeated by John but

described in Matthew 26:57-68), they took Jesus to Pilate early in the morning so Pilate could sentence Jesus to death by crucifixion. They had plotted the murder of Jesus, an innocent man, for several months before finally succeeding in arresting Jesus. From their place of responsibility as priests and Pharisees, Jesus' death was premeditated murder by the most prominent religious leaders in Jerusalem. Since Satan influenced and finally indwelt Judas, who betrayed Jesus, we have good reason to believe that these leaders were also indwelt by or committed to following Satan instead of God, whom they did not know. As Jesus had told them, these leaders consistently showed more concern for keeping their ceremonial laws of ritual purification than for honesty, love, truth, mercy, and justice. Perhaps they thought that God would forgive them for anything they did if they performed the religious rituals that they believed He required of them to be accepted by Him. Their Passover commemorated God freeing the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt immediately after the firstborn son of Pharaoh and those who did not believe in God died as the angel of death passed over them (see Exodus 12). With Jesus' death, the death of the Son of God, believers in Jesus are forgiven, freed from slavery to sin, and empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit to serve God in love and truth.

(John 18:29) So Pilate went out to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this man?”

Pilate appeared to act the part of a competent and just Roman ruler, who respected the religious rituals of the Jewish leaders when it was politically convenient. To accommodate their religious sensitivities, he went outside of his headquarters to speak to them and hear their accusations against Jesus. He certainly did not want any riots while he was the governor, for the emperor might remove him from office. The Jews thought they could stay right with God through ritualistic practices and worship, even if they murdered an innocent man using Roman legal procedures before their Passover. For these leaders to come to Pilate early in the morning before preparing for and celebrating the Passover shows how urgent it was for them to kill Jesus as soon as possible. In God's plan, Jesus became the true substitute for the Passover lamb as the Lamb of God. In John 1:29, when John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to him, he declared, “Behold, the Lamb

of God who takes away the sin of the world!” In Revelation 7:17, John (the gospel writer) described what he saw, saying, “For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” The Bible repeatedly states that Jesus was an innocent man who came to save us from our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness as the Lamb of God.

Remember what John wrote about Jesus in 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

(John 18:30) They answered, “If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.”

These Jewish leaders had already tried and convicted Jesus by using false witnesses who contradicted themselves and gave false evidence. So, without bringing official charges against Jesus that could be investigated by Pilate and found to be false, they simply told Pilate they were bringing a criminal to him. They did not tell Pilate that they had accused Jesus of blasphemy (the violation of a religious law), because Jesus had made himself equal to God by claiming to be the Son of God. Because Jesus is the Son of God, He did not commit blasphemy or any other crime or sin when He revealed Himself as the Son of God. These priests and Pharisees rejected Jesus as a threat to their power and wealth as religious leaders. A few religious leaders, such as Nicodemus who came to Jesus at night, did investigate Jesus’ claims, came to see that He was the Son of God, and believed in Him. Rather than bring formal charges against Jesus that they knew Pilate would not accept (Jesus never broke a Roman law), they called Jesus a criminal, malefactor, or evildoer that they wanted Pilate to condemn to death.

(John 18:31) Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law.” The Jews replied, “We are not permitted to put anyone to death.”

Jesus demonstrated that He was a man of love, peace, justice, and mercy (He could have called down thousands of angels to rescue Him by force). He told His disciples the night of His arrest, “Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions

of angels?” (Matthew 26:53). However, because Jesus spoke the Word of God and told the truth about himself as God’s Son and Messiah, and because He challenged the false religious traditions and behavior of a corrupt religious establishment, they wanted Him killed and they showed no mercy. Jesus threatened their control over the people, their collaboration with their Roman occupiers to maintain their control, and their ill-gotten wealth from having turned the temple into a den of thieves, which Jesus had cleansed. They rejected Jesus’ efforts to restore true faith and true worship of God the Father, to save His people from their sins, and to grant eternal life to all who would believe in Him.

(John 18:32) (This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

In John 12:31-33 we read how Jesus told His disciples, “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.” The Jewish leaders would murder whomever they chose when they felt they could do so without reprisals. They stoned Stephen to death of their own accord without Roman permission or legalities, because that was the prescribed Old Testament method of applying capital punishment (Acts 7:59). They wanted the Romans to crucify Jesus because death by crucifixion was degrading, painful, and sometimes a long process involving much suffering. On several occasions, Jesus had foretold that crucifixion would be the way He would die. He would not die in the traditional way the Jews used to put someone to death, by stoning them as they did Stephen. When Jesus was lifted up on a cross, God glorified Jesus when He died by crucifixion. When Jesus rose from the dead, God glorified Him again when He appeared to His disciples. When Jesus ascended into heaven, God glorified Him once more, and ever since Jesus has been drawing people to himself as He said He would (see also Luke 24:50-53).

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Who was the last person to ask Peter if he were a disciple of Jesus? Why did he think Peter might be a disciple of Jesus?

2. After Annas questioned Jesus, where did he send Jesus? Where did Jesus go after that, and what was this person's name?
3. Why did those seeking Jesus' murder refuse to enter the headquarters of the Roman governor?
4. What did the Roman governor do when the Jewish leaders refused to enter his headquarters? When the governor asked what accusation they were bringing against Jesus, what was their reply?
5. What reason did the Jewish leaders give the governor for not judging Jesus themselves according to their law? Why did they say this?

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Contact: lgp@theiblf.com.