

John 18:1-11

The narrative now transitions to the events in the Garden of Gethsemane. The other gospel writers record more detail about Christ's prayers and interactions with His disciples before His arrest. John just gets right into the details of the arrest.

One of the main principles that appears in this passage is the sovereign command of Christ all throughout His betrayal, arrest, and condemnation. This is displayed in several ways.

1. See how Christ navigates this scene with perfect knowledge.

Verse 4 explicitly describes Jesus as ***"knowing all things that would come upon Him..."*** The betrayal of Judas and the events of the crucifixion would be shocking to the disciples - but not to Jesus. This was the plan from the start. He came to ***"lay down [His] life for the sheep."*** (John 10:15). Before Judas' treacherous kiss or the mock trial that would lead to His condemnation, John tells his readers that Jesus was in complete command of what transpired. He WENT to the cross - it wasn't forced upon Him by sinful men.

Remember what He said earlier in John's gospel, ***"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."*** (John 10:17-18). See Christ's POWER to give His life. Also see how no man had any power to take it from Him.

He directed the mob away from His disciples in order to protect them from harm. John says Jesus did this so that ***"the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."*** (v. 9). John doesn't say this fulfilled Scripture - he says it fulfilled words that Jesus had spoken earlier. The wonderful reality is - THEY'RE THE SAME! The words that Jesus spoke were the very words of God - whether they were written down or not.

Discussion: This would be a good time to go back and read John 6:37-40. See how Christ's actions here in John 18 are consistent with His words recorded in John 6. You can also do the same with His statements in John 17:9-12.

2. Jesus identifies Himself as the great I AM.

When the soldiers came to arrest Him, Jesus WENT FORWARD to meet them (v. 4). He wasn't hiding or running from them. (This is very much like David running forward to meet Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:48). In fact, He takes a moment to make it crystal clear to everyone who is in charge. Jesus asks the first question, ***"Whom are you seeking?"***

After they tell Him they're looking for Jesus of Nazareth, He simply responds, **"I AM"**. (Many English translations supply the word "He". But the Greek simply says, "I AM.") This is Jesus taking the name Yahweh and applying it to Himself. This is the same God who appeared to Moses at the burning bush - standing here in the flesh!

Discussion: John says the soldiers **"drew back and fell to the ground."** after Jesus said **"I AM"**. What's happening here?

Thoughts: *This is a profound display of power - right before Jesus is going to be handed over to wicked weaklings. It's a demonstration of His deity - when He speaks his name power goes out that knocks down all His foes. They are essentially stripped of their power and forced to submit. This is a loud and clear testimony to all creation that what's about to happen is according to Christ's sovereign purpose - not the power of Hell or scheme of any man.*

3. Jesus restrains Peter from fighting.

In verses 10-11, Jesus forbids Peter from fighting or killing any of His arrestors. This is yet further evidence of Christ's willingness to lay down His life. He just showed that He could crush all these enemies with a word from His mouth. He doesn't need Peter, or anyone else's, protection in this moment. That would defeat the whole purpose His heart was set on.

Peter said He would die with Christ (Matthew 26:35), and here he's making good on that promise. He's ready to fight for Jesus and die with Him right here in the garden. He deserves credit for this! Yet, in a few short hours, he's also about to deny Jesus three times. How fickle are the best of us! Peter is a combination of courage, loyalty, weakness, and selfishness. Can you relate?! Thankfully, the true hero in this story is unwavering and faithful to the very end. Praise God for Christ's obedience - even to the point of death on the cross. (Philippians 2:8)