



Whom Do You Seek?

John 18:1-27

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Overview: John reports the arrest and initial examination of Jesus as an act of betrayal under the cover of darkness with false pretenses. Judas leads the soldiers and officers to Jesus and identifies with the enemies of Jesus as he stands alongside them. Jesus identifies Himself early, clearly, and boldly as the One they are seeking to arrest. Jesus's statement "I am He" serves as a powerful demonstration over the forces of darkness and a picture of the good shepherd preserving and caring for His own. Peter acts on impulse to defend Jesus but suddenly discovers that Jesus fully intends to surrender Himself to the authorities. The contrast between Jesus' mission and Peter's intentions become abundantly clear as Jesus stands boldly before the High Priest, whereas Peter cowers before a small crowd and servant girl. In presenting these details of Jesus' arrest, John reveals the importance of recognizing Jesus for Who He is, not for who we expect Him to be.

01. The hardness of heart in those who reject Jesus stands in stark contrast to the depth of Christ's love for all. If you have not received Jesus as Savior, consider Him again.

02. The weakness of heart in those who love Jesus stands in stark contrast to Christ's commitment to those who are His. If you have failed Jesus as your Savior, rejoice in Him again.

That You May Believe

1. John states that Judas knew where to lead authorities to Jesus because "Jesus often met there with His disciples" (verse 2). How is it that someone can sit under the teaching of Jesus for so long and yet not become a follower of Jesus? What was the source of Judas' unbelief? How does his example serve as a warning to us not to assume we are believers because we have religious habits?

2. Why did the soldiers fall to the ground when Jesus announced, "I am He" (verse 6)? On what other occasions in John's Gospel does Jesus use "I am" language? How do these statements point us to the divinity of Christ? What does the power of Jesus' words to His foes suggest about the final judgment? Will anyone who opposes Jesus be able to stand before Him?

3. What reason does John give for Jesus stepping forward and making Himself known to the soldiers (verse 9)? What does this teach us about Jesus' care for His own? How does the willingness of Jesus to step forward in the face of danger anticipate what He intends to accomplish on the cross?

4. Why did the Jewish authorities arrest Jesus? In what way did they think they were serving God by doing so? Looking back, how can we see that their assumptions about Jesus were misguided? Why is it important for Jesus to state that He taught openly? Could they have listened to His teachings directly and reached a different conclusion, namely that He was the Messiah who came to suffer, not to conquer?

5. What do you make of Peter's denial of Jesus? Why was he so brave in one moment and yet so afraid soon after? Where do you feel most bold and open about your faith in Jesus? Where do you feel weak? Are you tempted to keep silent about your faith in Jesus? Pray for courage to be consistent in your faith and praise God for His mercy and forgiveness when you fail.

For Further Reading: Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew* (Zondervan, 2008)

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