SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

John 18

The Cup, the Fire and the King — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-10 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

On the night He was betrayed, Jesus was never more in control than when He let Himself be bound. He traded Himself for His men, drank the Father's cup, and told the truth to Pilate — while I see myself in Peter by the fire and in Barabbas set free.

00 The Text

JOHN 18 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples.

2 Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples.

3 Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

4 So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and said to them, "Whom do you seek?"

5 They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He said to them, "I am He." And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them.

6 So when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.

7 Therefore He again asked them, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus the Nazarene."

8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am He; so if you seek Me, let these go their way,"

9 to fulfill the word which He spoke, "Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one."

10 Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus.

11 So Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"

12 So the Roman cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him,

13 and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.

14 Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people.

15 Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest,

16 but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in.

17 Then the slave-girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not."

18 Now the slaves and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself.

19 The high priest then questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching.

20 Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret.

21 "Why do you question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; they know what I said."

22 When He had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying, "Is that the way You answer the high priest?"

23 Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?"

24 So Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You are not also one of His disciples, are you?" He denied it, and said, "I am not."

26 One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?"

27 Peter then denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed.

28 Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.

29 Therefore Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?"

30 They answered and said to him, "If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you."

31 So Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law." The Jews said to him, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death,"

32 to fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.

33 Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

34 Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?"

35 Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?"

36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

38 Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, "I find no guilt in Him.

39 "But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover; do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?"

40 So they cried out again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "over the ravine of the Kidron" — Time / place / contrast
- **v2** "who was betraying Him" — Sin / warning
- **v3** "with lanterns and torches and weapons" — Time / place / contrast
- **v4** "knowing all the things that were coming upon Him" — God — His character & actions
- **v6** "they drew back and fell to the ground" — God — His character & actions
- **v8** "let these go their way" — Promise / blessing
- **v9** "Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one" — Promise / blessing
- **v10** "cut off his right ear" — Sin / warning

- **v11** “Put the sword into the sheath” — Command / instruction
- **v11** “the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?” — God — His character & actions
- **v14** “it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people” — Time / place / contrast
- **v18** “a charcoal fire” — Time / place / contrast
- **v20** “I have spoken openly to the world” — God — His character & actions
- **v22** “struck Jesus” — Sin / warning
- **v27** “immediately a rooster crowed” — Time / place / contrast
- **v28** “so that they would not be defiled” — Sin / warning
- **v28** “it was early” — Time / place / contrast
- **v32** “signifying by what kind of death He was about to die” — God — His character & actions
- **v36** “My kingdom is not of this world” — God — His character & actions
- **v37** “to testify to the truth” — Command / instruction
- **v37** “Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice” — Promise / blessing
- **v38** “What is truth?” — Sin / warning
- **v38** “I find no guilt in Him” — Time / place / contrast
- **v40** “Not this Man, but Barabbas” — Sin / warning
- **v40** “Barabbas was a robber” — Sin / warning
- **v5** “I am He” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v17** “I am not” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v33** “king” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

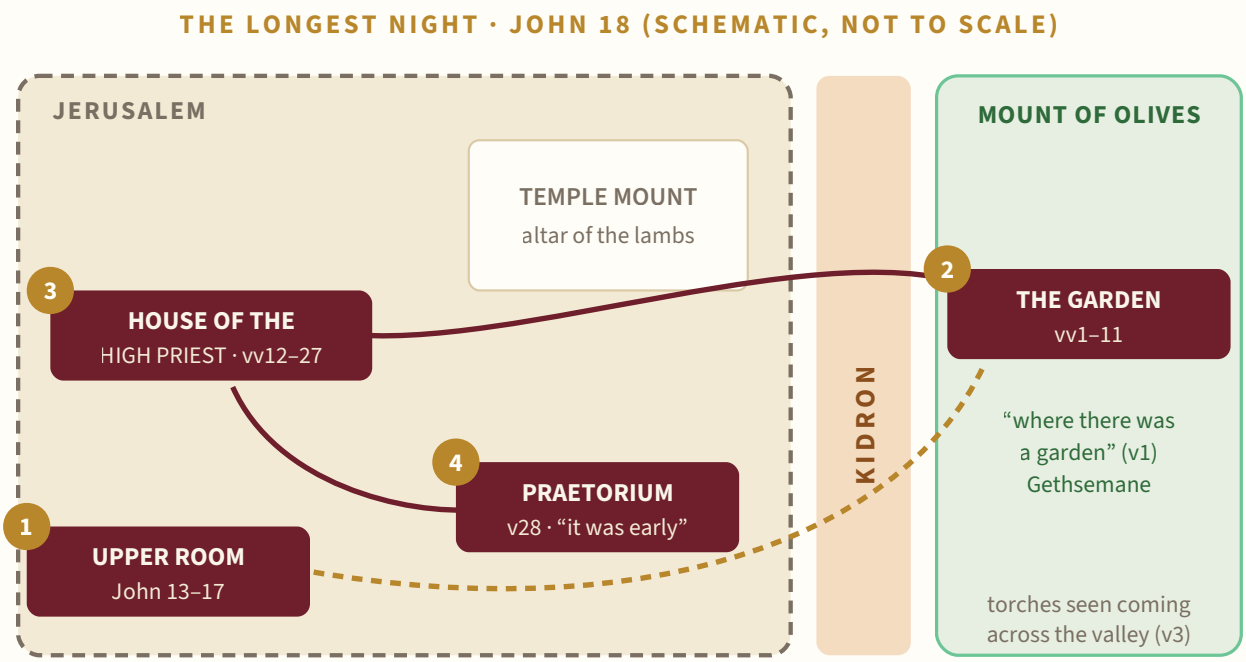
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · JOHN 18:5

"They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He said to them, "⚠ I am He." And Judas also, ⚠ who was betraying Him, was standing with them."

FIGURE · THE ROUTE OF THE NIGHT



Follow the numbers: from the Upper Room across the Kidron to the garden, back into the city to the high priest's house, and at dawn to the Praetorium.

Setting. Thursday night into Friday dawn of Passover week. Jesus leaves the city with the Eleven, crosses the ravine of the Kidron east of the temple, and enters a garden on the Mount of Olives where He often met with them (vv1–2). From there: back into the city to the house of the high priest (Annas, then Caiaphas, vv13, 24), and at daybreak to Pilate's Praetorium (v28).

Structure:

- vv1–11 — **the garden:** Judas comes with the Roman cohort and temple officers, "with lanterns and torches and weapons" (v3). Jesus, knowing everything, goes out: "Whom do you seek?" … "I am He" — and they drew back and fell to the ground (vv4–6). "If you seek Me, let these go their way," fulfilling "I lost not one" (vv8–9). Peter cuts off Malchus' right ear; "Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?" (vv10–11).

- vv12–27 — **two scenes, cut together:** Jesus bound and led to Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas (vv12–14). Peter gets in through another disciple; to the slave-girl at the door, "I am not" (vv15–17); he stands warming himself at the charcoal fire (v18). Inside, Jesus questioned about His disciples and teaching: "I have spoken openly to the world" (vv19–21); an officer strikes Him; "if rightly, why do you strike Me?" (vv22–23). Sent bound to Caiaphas (v24). Outside, "I am not" again (v25); Malchus' relative: "Did I not see you in the garden?"; denied again, and immediately a rooster crowed (vv26–27).
- vv28–40 — **the Praetorium:** they will not enter, so as not to be defiled before the Passover (v28). Pilate goes out: "What accusation?" — "If this Man were not an evildoer…" — "Take Him yourselves" — "We are not permitted to put anyone to death," fulfilling the word of the kind of death He would die (vv29–32). Inside: "Are You the King of the Jews?" … "My kingdom is not of this world" … "For this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth" … "What is truth?" (vv33–38a). Out again: "I find no guilt in Him"; the Passover custom; "Not this Man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber (vv38b–40).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "Jesus" ×20; "Peter" ×10 — vv10, 11, 15, 16 (×2), 17, 18, 25, 26, 27.
- "disciple(s)" ×9 — vv1 (×2), 2, 15 (×2), 16, 17, 19, 25.
- "high priest" ×9 — vv10, 13, 15 (×2), 16, 19, 22, 24, 26; "Annas / Caiaphas" ×6 — vv13 (×2), 14, 24 (×2), 28.
- "Jews / Jew" ×9 — vv12, 14, 20, 31, 33, 35, 36, 38, 39.
- "Pilate" ×6 — vv29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 38.
- "standing / stood" ×6 — vv5, 16, 18 (×2), 22, 25.
- "slave(s) / slave-girl" ×5 — vv10 (×2), 17, 18, 26; "officer(s)" ×4 — vv3, 12, 18, 22.
- "went forth / went out" ×5 — vv1, 4, 16, 29, 38.
- "king / King" ×4 — vv33, 37 (×2), 39; "kingdom" ×3 — v36 (×3); "world" ×4 — vv20, 36 (×2), 37.
- "I am He" ×3 — vv5, 6, 8; "I am not" ×3 — vv17, 25 (Peter), 35 (Pilate: "I am not a Jew, am I?").
- "truth" ×3 — vv37 (×2), 38; "Praetorium" ×3 — vv28 (×2), 33; "warming" ×3 — vv18 (×2), 25.
- "Whom do you seek?" ×2 — vv4, 7; "Jesus the Nazarene" ×2 — vv5, 7; "bound" ×2 — vv12, 24; "denied" ×2 — vv25, 27.

Contrasts: "I am He" (vv5, 6, 8) ⟷ "I am not" (vv17, 25). Armed men fall down (v6) ⟷ one unarmed Man stands. Peter's sword (v10) ⟷ the Father's cup (v11). Jesus spoke "openly" (v20) ⟷ a trial held at night. Careful about defilement (v28) ⟷ careless about an innocent man's blood. A kingdom not of this world (v36) ⟷ the King of the Jews they reject (v39). "I find no guilt in Him" (v38) ⟷ "Not this Man, but Barabbas" (v40).

Shape of the chapter: three places — garden, courtyard, Praetorium — and in each the bound Man is the free one and everyone around Him is trapped: soldiers on the ground, Peter by the fire, Pilate shuttling in and out, the crowd choosing a robber.

Chapter theme (my words): Jesus goes to His death on purpose. He gives Himself up so His men go free, drinks the cup His Father gives, and bears witness to the truth before men who refuse it — and the guilty go free while the Innocent is condemned.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · JOHN 18:36

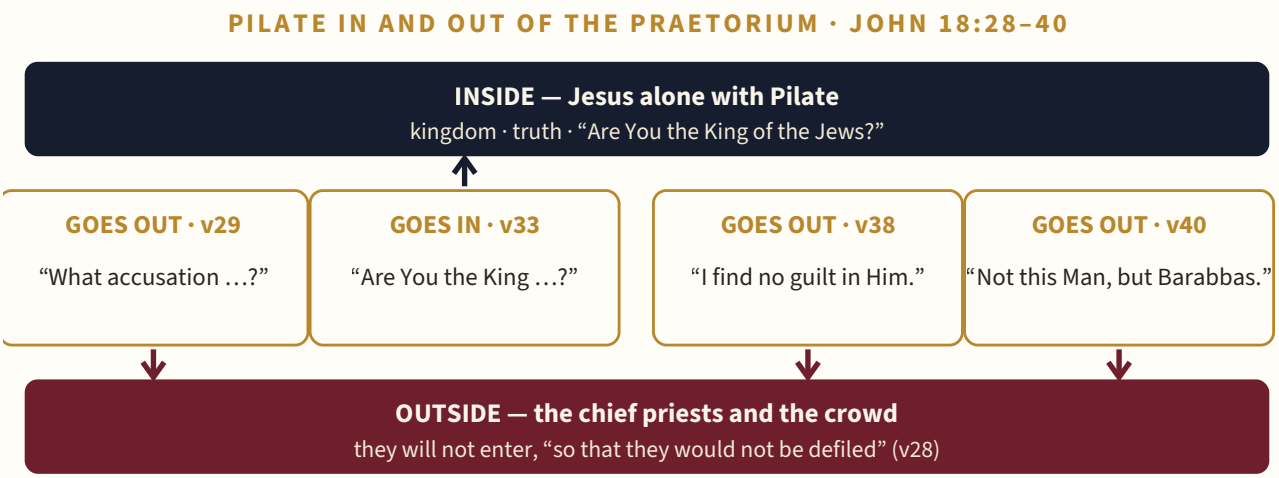
"Jesus answered, "△My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, ◷My kingdom is not of this realm.""

FIGURE · "I AM HE" AND "I AM NOT"

JESUS: "I AM HE" — in the garden, before armed men		PETER: "I AM NOT" — in the courtyard, before slaves	
v5	"Whom do you seek?" … "I am He."	v17	To the slave-girl at the door: "I am not."
v6	They drew back and fell to the ground.	v25	By the charcoal fire: "I am not."
v8	"I told you that I am He; … let these go."	v27	To Malchus' relative: denied again.
He gives Himself up so that "I lost not one" (v9) and drinks the Father's cup (v11)		**"immediately a rooster crowed" (v27)** just as foretold (13:38) — but restored at another charcoal fire (21:9, 15–17)	

Read across each row: the same night, two men, three answers each — the Shepherd gives Himself for His sheep while His sheep denies Him.

FIGURE · PILATE BETWEEN TWO WORLDS



The accusers stay outside to stay clean; Pilate shuttles between them and the prisoner inside — and the scene keeps moving into chapter 19.

"I am He" — and why they fell (vv4–8). In Greek Jesus says only *egō eimi*, "I am" — the words of 8:24, 8:58, 13:19 and Isaiah 43:10. At one level it simply identifies Him; but John tells us twice more that He said it and that armed men "drew back and fell to the ground." Guzik: "There was such a display of divine presence, majesty, and power in those two words." Henry: "Christ was declared to be more than a man." Psalm 27:2 had sung, "When evildoers came upon me … they stumbled and fell." The point is not a magic trick but a surrender: "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative" (10:18). Spurgeon: "There was no power on earth that could have bound Him had He been unwilling."

"Let these go their way" (vv8–9). John says this fulfilled Jesus' word, "Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one" (17:12; 6:39). The garden is the gospel in small: the Shepherd is seized and the sheep go free. Spurgeon puts it in Christ's mouth: "Here I am; but let these, for whom I stood, go their way."

Peter's sword and the Father's cup (vv10–11). Peter was brave and wrong. Guzik suspects he picked an unarmed slave; Henry: "Thus, while he seemed to fight for Christ, he fought against him." Luke adds that Jesus healed the ear (Luke 22:51). The cup in the prophets is God's wrath against sin (Isa 51:17; Jer 25:15). Jesus does not see Judas or Caiaphas handing it to Him; He sees His Father — "the cup which the Father has given Me."

Annas or Caiaphas (vv13–24)? Annas was the power behind the office (Guzik: "he was the one who put Caiaphas in office"). Guzik and Sproul take the questioner in v19 to be Annas; Spurgeon, preaching the whole trial from Psalm 2:2, has Caiaphas asking about the disciples and the doctrine. John calls both men "high priest," and verse 24 sends Jesus on to Caiaphas. The hearing broke the law's own rules — Sproul: "It was inappropriate, improper, and illegal for a capital trial to be carried out at night." Jesus asks only for witnesses; Spurgeon: "Truth is never shamefaced."

Peter by the fire (vv15–18, 25–27). John cuts back and forth: Jesus standing firm inside, Peter crumbling outside. The steps down: following at a distance, getting inside, standing with the slaves and officers, warming himself at their fire. Henry: "It is ill warming ourselves with those with whom we are in danger of burning ourselves." Guzik: "it was not the faith of Peter that failed, but his courage." Spurgeon: "Backslide a little and you are on the way to utter apostasy." And John alone uses the rare *anthrakia*, charcoal fire — again only at 21:9, where Jesus restores

Peter with three questions. Sproul's commentary, quoted at Ligonier: Jesus "had no need to die for people who are sinless, for there are no such people."

Clean hands, dirty hearts (v28). They would not enter a Gentile house before eating the Passover, while handing over the true Passover Lamb. Guzik: "They refused to break relatively small commands regarding ceremonial defilement." Henry: "They strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel." Verse 32: Rome executed by crucifixion; Jesus had said He would be "lifted up" (12:32–33). Henry: "No word of Christ shall fall to the ground."

"My kingdom is not of this world" (v36). "Of" (*ek*) speaks of source, not location. Sproul's commentary, as quoted: Jesus "did not say that His dominion and authority did not include this world," nor that it was "a transcendent spiritual Neverland." Henry: "Its nature is not worldly; it is a kingdom within men," and "its weapons are spiritual." Spurgeon: "His kingdom was not of this world, nor to be sustained by force." I read this with Daniel 7:14 and Revelation 11:15: today His kingdom advances by truth, not swords; one day the King returns and His kingdom fills the earth. It does not come from here — but it is coming here.

"What is truth?" (v38). Guzik: "Probably, Pilate did not mean that there was no truth" — it is the shrug of a politician — and "Many in our day ask Pilate's question, but from a different perspective." Henry: "Truth is that pearl of great price which the human understanding has a desire for," yet Pilate walked out on the answer standing in front of him (14:6).

Barabbas (vv39–40). A *lēstēs*, a violent bandit (Mark 15:7: an insurrectionist and murderer). Guzik: "The cross Jesus hung upon was probably originally intended for Barabbas." Spurgeon: "Barabbas must die or Christ must die," and "He dies that we may be delivered." Henry: "Thus those do who prefer their sins before Christ." I am both — the crowd that preferred my sin, and the robber who walked out free.

Word study (Greek):

- **Kidron — *Kedrōn* (G2748):** the valley east of the temple; only here in the NT (cf. 2 Sam 15:23).
- **cohort — *speira* (G4686):** a Roman cohort, up to ~600 men, or a detachment (vv3, 12).
- **I am — *egō eimi* (G1473, G1510):** "I am He" — the words of 8:58 and Isa 43:10.
- **cup — *potērion* (G4221):** in the prophets, the cup of God's wrath (Isa 51:17).
- **charcoal fire — *anthrakia* (G439):** only John 18:18 and 21:9.
- **deny — *arneomai* (G720):** to disown; Peter's *ouk eimi*, "I am not."
- **blow — *rhapisma* (G4475):** a slap or blow; only Mark 14:65; John 18:22; 19:3.
- **Praetorium — *praitōrion* (G4232):** the Roman governor's headquarters (vv28, 33).
- **kingdom — *basileia* (G932):** reign; "not of (*ek*) this world" — source, not location.
- **truth — *alētheia* (G225):** reality unhidden; Jesus is the truth (14:6).
- **robber — *lēstēs* (G3027):** a violent bandit, not a sneak thief (cf. 10:1, 8).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The prisoner is in charge** (vv4, 8, 11).
2. **"I am" knocks armed men down** (v6).
3. **He is taken so they can go** (vv8–9).
4. **The cup came from the Father** (v11).
5. **"I am He" against "I am not"** (vv5–8, 17, 25).

6. **Watch where you warm yourself** (v18; Henry).
7. **The fire returns** — *anthrakia*, 18:18 and 21:9.
8. **A night trial in the dark** (vv19–24; Sproul).
9. **Religious scruples, murderous hearts** (v28).
10. **The robber went free** (v40).

Cross-references: 2 Sam 15:23; Ps 1:1; 2:2; 27:2; Isa 43:10; 51:17; 53:5–7; Jer 25:15; Dan 7:14; Mic 5:1; Matt 26:52; Mark 14:65; 15:7; Luke 22:51, 61–62; John 6:39; 8:24, 58; 10:1, 8, 18; 11:50; 12:32–33; 13:19, 38; 14:6; 17:12; 21:9, 15–17; Acts 23:3; 1 Tim 6:13; Heb 12:2; 1 Pet 2:23; Rev 11:15.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · JOHN 18:11

"So Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?""

Promise to trust — "let these go their way" (v8). Jesus stood between the soldiers and His men and said, take Me, let them go. That is what He did for me at the cross. Some of the men I sit with have been arrested, booked, sentenced. They know what it is to be the one taken. In the garden Jesus chose to be the one taken so that we could walk out free. I am one of "these."

Command to obey — "Put the sword into the sheath" (v11). Peter's sword was loyalty without trust — swinging at the problem in front of him instead of trusting the Father's plan. My swords are my temper, my tongue, my fists, my plans to get even. This week I will put one of them away: when I want to strike back, I will stop, say "the cup the Father has given me," and trust Him with the outcome.

Sin to confess — warming myself at the wrong fire (vv18, 25). Peter didn't plan to deny Jesus. He just got cold and stood where the crowd was. I confess the places I go to get warm that aren't safe — the old crew, the bar stool, the screen at midnight, the group chat that pulls me away from Christ. I name one this week and walk away from it.

Hope to hold — the second charcoal fire (21:9). If you have denied Him — with your mouth or your life — this chapter is not the end of Peter's story. Jesus built another fire on a beach and asked him three times, "Do you love Me?" He doesn't throw away men who fail. He restores them and gives them work to do.

Example to follow — the good confession before Pilate (1 Tim 6:13). Jesus told the truth when it cost Him everything, without cursing or threatening (1 Pet 2:23). I want to be a man who tells the truth when it costs me — with my parole officer, my wife, my boss, my group.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Jesus walked toward the torches knowing everything that was coming (v4). What am I avoiding this week that I need to walk toward, trusting the Father? (18:4; Heb 12:2) *Knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, He went forth.*
2. Peter grabbed a sword when Jesus wanted him to trust. Where am I fighting in my own strength — with my temper, my mouth, my hands — instead of trusting God's plan? (18:10–11; Matt 26:52) *"Put the sword into the sheath." Zeal without warrant fights against Christ.*
3. Jesus was arrested so His men could go free (vv8–9). How does it change me to see myself as one of "these" who walked away free? (18:8–9; Isa 53:5–6) *The Shepherd is seized; the sheep walk free.*
4. Peter's denial started with standing by the wrong fire with the wrong crowd. What "fire" am I warming myself by that puts me in danger? (18:18, 25; Ps 1:1) *Henry: ill warming ourselves where we may burn.*
5. Peter failed three times and was restored at another charcoal fire. What failure do I need to bring back to Jesus instead of hiding? (18:27; 21:9, 15–17) *The same rare word, anthrakia: where he fell, he was restored.*

6. Pilate asked “What is truth?” and walked away. When truth gets close and personal, how do I walk away — and what would listening to His voice look like? (18:37–38; John 14:6) *“Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”*

Worship. The I AM let Himself be tied up with rope. The One who could have dropped a whole cohort with a word took a slap without striking back. The King whose kingdom will never pass away stood before a Roman governor and told him the truth. And a robber named Barabbas walked out free — the first man to go free because Jesus took his place.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, You walked out to meet the torches for me. Thank You that You were taken so I could go free. Take the sword out of my hand and teach me to trust the Father’s cup. Keep me from warming myself at the wrong fire, and when I fail You, call me back to Your fire again. Make me a man of the truth who hears Your voice. You are my King, and Your kingdom is coming. Amen.

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