

The Jews and Jesus (God vs. Man II) JL 114
John 18:12-14, 19-24 Sunday, January 28, 2006

We are in the midst of the *historical narrative* of John 18
where verses 12-27 take us through the flow of two dramas
occurring at the same time.

Both have **tremendous significance** *on their own*,
yet they are **mingled together** by John and *by the Holy Spirit.*

These **two dramas** *bring again* to the **forefront** the *two basic truths* upon
which all Christian doctrine is based:

- 1) The **glory** and **perfection** of **Christ** and
- 2) the **sinfulness** of **man**.

This is the **foundational matter** which *the gospel addresses.*

That **man** is *utterly sinful* and *as a result separated from God*,
whose requirement for fellowship is **perfect holiness**

This is the story of the Bible ...
... from *Genesis to Revelation*

is the story of **man's rebellion** and **fight**
against God,

vs.

God's mercy and **longsuffering grace**,
striving with man,
condescending to make a way that He would
be **reconciled to man.**

From *at first* in the *Garden of Eden*,
the book of Genesis records how

mankind's representative Adam,
though in a **perfect environment**,
nevertheless chose to disobey and **rebel**
against a single command of God –

thus **breaking God's gracious covenant.**

And at the end of the Bible, the book of Revelation,
we are **confronted** *again* with the rebellion of man
in one called *Anti-Christ* –
the one who is **against Christ** –
He is the *portrait* of **man's ultimate rebellion**
He is **man's *magnum opus*** ...

endowed with the number of man - 666.

John 18 – presents us with the **same struggle** – *God vs. man*
in varying contexts:

Each *drama* as it is described in the narrative of John chapter 18
pits **Jesus Christ** *against man*.

Beginning in the Garden of Gethsemane
where we found a *bloody, exhausted, solitary man*,
knock out entire cohort of Roman soldiers,
led by Judas Iscariot.

In that garden, we witnessed **God** in *all of His glory*
taking on **man** in *all his debauchery* –

The Son of God vs. the Son of perdition.

We saw from those events
that Jesus Christ was **not a victim**,
but **always a victor**.

The *sad, pathetic*, and almost *unbelievable* **response**
to the *display* of **His glory, majesty, and divine power**
is recorded in verse 12:

*Then the band [of troops] and the captain and the officers of
the Jews took Jesus and bound Him.*

Within this multitude are *Gentiles and Jews,*
pagans, soldiers and servants, priests and Pharisees.

Though they did **not** have *much in common*,
they did have **one thing in common** ...

they were **Spiritually blind**.

This **massive force** *took Jesus* and *bound Him*
as if He hadn't even done anything miraculous
as if what had just taken place did not happen.

It was *as if* their minds were **suddenly blanked out**
to what they had **just experienced**.

Oh how the **blindness of sin** cannot see the
miraculous character of Jesus Christ.

What other than **Spiritual blindness** can we attribute this to?

They are **totally untouched** by the **tremendous display**
of the **power of Jesus Christ** that *they have just witnessed*.

Demonstrating *once again* that **man** can *personally witness*
great miracles and mighty power,
but unless God has opened his eyes
He *simply* **WILL not believe** ...

Those who do not believe, the Scripture tells us,

have their minds blinded ...

Man may be struck by God's power for a moment,
but he will go right back to the **grip of sin**
if it **be not** for the *efficacious saving grace of God*

When we see things like this,
we realize that it is *not too difficult to understand*
the **unbelief and hardness of heart**
that we see around us **today**.

if they do these things in a green tree,
what shall be done in the dry?

We see in our day ... people under the powerful preaching of the Word – perhaps their souls stirred at times, but remaining unchanged.

So **unmoved** by Christ's majesty, these men **proceed** to *arrest Him*.

Our text also records that the arresting party *took Jesus and bound Him*.

It is **important** that *He is bound* –

just as the **sacrifice** before being *offered* was bound to the altar –

just as **Abraham bound the type Isaac** – so **Christ** the archetype was also bound.

vs. 12-14

Then the cohort and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. Now it was Caiaphas who gave counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

John's account *uniquely* includes a **preliminary post-midnight trial** *with Annas* – the father-in-law of Caiaphas.

While John alone makes mention of this **trial before Annas** – he does **not** mention the next **trial before Caiaphas**.

As a result I will **confine my comments** to **this trial**
We will stay close to the text in John and look *specifically* at the **encounter** between **Jesus and Annas**.

Our text for this morning places - again - another man against Christ.

Though this time it is not the *sinful* son of Perdition

But *now stepping into the ring*
is a “*righteous man*”
a *keeper of the law* –
a *fine upstanding citizen*
Wearing a purple robe - the *garb of religion*

Surely this man will be a **better representative** of *humanity*
than Judas was.

Surely he will **fair better** in his confrontation with Christ.

Who is **Annas**?

His name is **Hananiah** (meaning God is gracious)
He was **extremely proud**, **ambitious**, and **wealthy**.

Annas was the **high priest** for ten years between 6 and 15 A.D.

He may well have been in the **line of Aaron**.

A man was supposed to be high priest for life, but

In the year A.D. 15 he was **pressured** by Rome
to withdraw from the office of high priest
because they wanted the high-priest to be a puppet of Rome,
and **Annas** was **too powerful** to be anyone’s puppet.

History records him as a man of **tremendous influence**
among the **Sanhedrin**.

As proof of his **power** and **influence**,

He was the **father** of a **60 year** dynasty.

Between **Annas**, his **5 sons**, his son-in-law
(**Caiaphas**) and **grandson**,
they reigned from 6 until 66 A.D.

His family was **notorious** for greed.

They derived their wealth from the **sale of sacrificial animals**
in the *temple courts* –

He was the one responsible for turning
the house of God into a den of thieves.

When he left the office in A.D. 15,
he **took control** of the **concessions** in the Temple.

When people came to make their sacrifices,
they passed the outer court of the Temple called
"The Court of the Gentiles."

In this court, **concession booths** had been set up for the
exchange of money *because*
the people had to pay a Temple tax.

Anyone who possessed foreign currency had to have it **exchanged**
by **money changers** who cheated them sometimes giving only
one-fifth the value of their money.

Annas also had a *monopoly* in the **sale of sacrificial animals**

Annas had stationed *inspectors of sacrifices* in the court.

So on Passover for example, even if a man
would **bring his own sacrifice** –

Because the Law required that any **sacrifice**
be *without spot and blemish*.

Naturally, **few sacrifices** ever **passed the priest's inspection**.

*And as a result, they were **forced to purchase the sacrifice** from a vendor in the Court of the Gentiles. Which at times could be sold at **five times** its **actual value**.*

Consider **one-quarter million lambs** were sacrificed on Passover!

In fact, **the entire Temple ground** became known as "*The Bazaar of Annas.*"

But guess who disrupted The Bazaar of Annas?

Jesus on two occasions – *one* - **only a few days earlier**, came into the temple courts and **turned the tables**.

So you could see the reason that **Annas** hated Jesus

Jesus was a **threat** *the thing* they had going.

Jesus *represented* to him **something threatening** to the **security of his office** and to his **riches**

Even the Jews hated Annas:

The Talmud declares,

"Woe to the house of Annas. Woe to their serpent-like hisses"

Up Annas steps into the ring ...

Annas –*richly garbed* in the robes of his own *filthy good works* – **Annas** the *holy-looking* **hypocrite** and oppressor of the people

Annas ... Was about to meet his match tonight!

Keep the scene in your mind for a moment,

I want to *first* make some parenthetical comments

First of all, why a preliminary trial at all?

Well, *realize* that *the Jews* had **no intent**
to conduct these proceedings legally.

From the **betrayal** to the **arrest**
(which was **effected** as the result of a bribe)
to the **secret meetings** to the **false charges**
to the **trial before the Sanhedrin**
which was **illegal** in that it was:

conducted at **night**,
on the **day before the Sabbath**,
on a **feast day**,
within the **space of 24 hours**,
seeking to **secure a condemnation** by the confession of
the defendant himself, and
no defense was offered.

They broke *these* and *many other* laws regarding trials.

They did so because they wanted an indictment
they wanted to be sure that this time,
Jesus was **not going to slip away**.

And they wanted to do it *quickly* – so as not to cause an *uproar*.

They were *thirsting for blood* – so this “*trial*” was **no trial at all**,
but was rather a **plot** – *they devised it* –
and they were going to make sure it was carried out.

Making it *nothing short of murder!*

Now, if the Jews wanted to **indict Jesus**,
they would *naturally* go to Annas
if anyone would have the **influence** and **power** to
indict Jesus, Annas did.

In fact, Annas is even called “**high priest**,”

He is referred to as such by **Luke** in his gospel as well as the **book of Acts**.

John specifically writes that they ***first*** led him to Annas – meaning that he was well aware of a **subsequent trial** which would be held before the entire Sanhedrin under **Caiaphas**.

This is made clear in verse 24,
after this **preliminary investigation** was **complete**.

Jhn 18:24

Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

This ***preliminary trial*** before Annas also served to buy the Sanhedrin time to assemble a **quorum** of their 71 members for their official trial. as it likely took a bit of time to **assemble** that many men at this **early morning hour.**

although we are only looking at the confrontation between **Jesus and Annas** today,

I do not want to completely overlook
the flow of John's text –

there is a reason that the Holy Spirit has *interwoven* the account of **Jesus trial** with that of **Peter's denials**.

Lets read verses 15-18 ...

And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to

the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. Then the servant 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."

Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself.

I will save the **exposition** of these verses and those that follow recording Peter's final denial for **next week** ...

but I don't want you to overlook the fact
that these events are *purposefully interwoven*.

as they **so beautifully contrast**

the **glorious majesty, courage** and **faithfulness** of Christ
in front of the high priest

with the **depth of human depravity**
displayed in **Peter's faithLESSness** and **FEAR**
in his **denial** to a servant girl.

As with John's description of *Gethsemane*,

Jesus' trial and Peter's denial *again*

reveal to us the two *basic, foundational* truths of:

- 1) *Christ's glory* and
- 2) *man's sinfulness*.

The two *intermingled accounts* give us a **very vivid contrast**
which **magnifies Christ above man again!**

The *two dramas* also reveal the **reality** and **pervasiveness of sin**
and **desperate need** that man has for **an atonement**

by showing *not only* the **sinfulness** of the **unregenerate**
(as *represented* by the Annas)

but *even* the **sinful life** of **believers** (as *represented* by **Peter**).

Let us now *return to the scene* in John 18 ... for the **encounter** ...

Last week's feature bout was **Son of God** vs. the **son of Perdition**

This week, its the **high priest** vs. **THE High Priest**.

A high priest who *likely* bought his position by **bribing Rome**

vs.

THE High Priest *after the order of Melchizadek* –

THE High Priest who is the **True High Priest**
by **right of His nature!**

In this corner the *challenger* –the “high priest” **Annas** –
the **biggest cog** in the **ecclesiastical machine of Judaism**
He is **wealthy, influential, the leader of a nation.**

And in this corner – **Jesus** –

the man with *no place to lay his head* -

bound up

still **bloodied**

by the **spiritual battle He faced in the garden.**

Now, standing alone – his **little flock of 12 scattered** –

In the Garden it was an **army** against a one **man** ...

Now here in **Annas**, it is a **nation** against a one **man** ...

God is not **putting Jesus** *before just any*

of the **trivial** or **transient** **priests**

who *came and went* ...

But God places His Son over against the **founder of a dynasty**
of priests –

in whom there is *ancient dignity, pride and human glory.*

So what the **conflict here** *boils down to* is one between
a **human dynasty** of the **utmost human merit**

vs.

the eternal –

The **priesthood** *according to the flesh*
vs.
The **priesthood** *according to the Spirit*.

It is a **battle** *between* the Aaron's **waning** priesthood –
a **temporary** priesthood that was *soon to run out* –
and the **eternal** priesthood *of Christ*.

Annas was **witnessing** the **degradation** and **destruction**
of **his people** under the **dominion of Rome**.
His **grandson** would witness the
destruction of the temple and
effectual end to the **office** of the **high priest**.

But **Annas** *ignores this*,
Rather than **seeing** *before him* a **HOPE** for his people,

Annas **chooses** rather **His** **dying** tradition.
He **chooses** that which is comfortable to him

He lets the **stem of David** (the *natural kingdom*)
lie in its nakedness
rather than

Taking notice of the **new shoot** that has come out of Jesse.

This short scene between **Jesus** and **Annas**
is a **compendium** of a **greater confrontation**
of flesh vs. Spirit – even of man vs. God.

It is a **battle** which over the next few years
would **divide Israel** into a people
living by faith with Abraham,
and a people
dying through trust in tradition

This **confrontation** shows that not all Israel is Israel ...

that it is not the one who is **Jewish after the flesh**
that **pleases God**,
but the **descendents of Abraham by faith**.

Its about the old vs. the new –

the comforts of tradition and the *old wine skin*
vs.
the *new wine skin of new life*.

It's the **city of man**

vs.
The **city of God**

The scene also takes us **back in time** and **resolves** the matter between
Abraham and Melchizedek.

The writer of Hebrews tells us in chapter 7 ...
in the first 3 verses of Hebrews 7,

of a *mysterious man* by the name of **Melchizedek** –
who is called *king of righteousness* and *king of peace* –

he is (vs. 3) *without father and mother – without genealogy -*

*having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made
like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually*.

*4 Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the
patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.*

It goes on to say that the *sons of Levi* who *receive the priestly office*
have a **command in the law** to collect *tithes from the people* ...
this was a **privilege** they had ... under the law

But **Melchizedek**, was so *great* that he *actually* had the **right to receive tithes from Abraham ...**
and *through Abraham – Levi ...*

9 And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, [who] received tithes, paid tithes, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

The writer of Hebrews goes on to use this argument
to **defend the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ**,
while showing that the **Levitical order** was only *temporary* –

they were the **ministers of the Old Covenant**,
but a *New Covenant* **requires a new priesthood** to mediate it ...

and *that* **priesthood** of the **New Covenant**
is the eternal priesthood of *Jesus Christ*.

17 For it is witnessed of Him:

"Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek ."

...

22 so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a BETTER covenant. And the former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from continuing, but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.

There's the city of man vs. the city of God

25 Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

There's the basis of entry into the city of God –
the *efficacious intercession* of the **Great Eternal High Priest**.

26 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

Jesus Christ is both the **priest** and the **sacrifice**

28 For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.

So **Abraham** *in his person* bowed to **Melchizedek** ...
and so *all of his children* who are **children by faith**,
also bow to **archetype** of Melchizedek – Jesus Christ.

... **BUT** ... **Levi and Aaron never bowed.**

Aaron and Levi *bent the knee to Melchizedek,*
only as they were in the loins of Abraham,
but **never did so physically.**

And Paul says in Romans 9:6-7:

*... For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:
Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they
all children ...*

Then he goes on to explain in verse 8:

They which are the children of the flesh, these are NOT the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

So *although* **Levi and Aaron** are of the *natural seed* of Abraham,
their **lineage** *does not guarantee*
that they are **counted** as *Abraham's seed.*

But *now*, in our text in John, *here in the person of Annas*,
is the line of **Aaron and Levi** – in person –

standing on their own feet before the **Real Melchizedek** –
with the *opportunity* to **honor Him** –

But *instead* they reveal whom their real father is
by **binding his hands** and **slapping his face**.

Let's go back to John chapter 18 verse 19,
and look at the **interaction** that occurred.

Recall the *mindset* of **Annas** ... he has in mind

Every **disdainful speech** that **Jesus** ever directed **against Judaism** ...
Every time he **derided** the **Pharisees** and
leaders of the Jewish people
was a **personal insult** to **him** and **his family**.

Fresh in his mind are **two times** this *rebel Nazarene*
came onto temple grounds – **his turf** –
and caused a stir among the people – **his people**.

There is great *bitterness* and *hatred* of this **Jesus of Nazareth**.

But now the Nazarene is **standing before him** –
this is a **private meeting** –
and **he is bound** –

in **Annas'** mind the **situation** could not be any better.

He nurtured the idea of **this event** for a *long time*
And it was **better** than he could have **imagined**.

The bell rings.

Annas comes out of his corner – *circles Jesus* and hurls the first jab.

verse 19:

*The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples
and His doctrine.*

It is sad to consider what Annas might have asked.

He might have asked Jesus about **matters of eternity**
He might have asked Jesus who He was *in His essence*

But instead Annas is interested only with that which is
natural and outward.
(as only the *natural man* would be)

He asks about *his disciples and his teaching* –
both are realms of *mere natural knowledge*.

No man shall ever know Christ by knowing *all about Christ*.

One can know every Messianic prophecy,
One can know all of the facts of His life, death & resurrection,
One can know all of the great doctrines of the faith ...

if God does not become his covenant God –
if God does not become his Father –
if the Almighty voice of Yahweh, does not say, “I am He,”
if that voice does not thunder above all that is
generally revealed to all men –

then, he is **without hope** –

He will only be consumed *at best* with that which is outward.

That is a tragedy,

because **Annas** and **Caiaphas** had *such an opportunity* –
they had the **audience** of the **Creator of the Universe**
before them –

And though Abraham's eyes were **opened**
to *who Melchizedek was* (he needed no introduction)

Here now, **Annas** and later **Caiaphas**
Demonstrate their **blindness** by
using force and binding Him.

Yet we cannot condemn them, because
we would do the same thing *apart*
from the *revelatory grace of God.*

Considering that **Annas** only *saw that which is natural,*
His **line of questioning** was not *unusual.*

his questions show where **Annas' concern** **lied** ...
first with the disciples, and secondly with the doctrine.

He was **most interested** in the "*success*" of *Jesus* –
that is **how big a following** he had – who was following him –
only *secondarily* is he concerned with the
truthfulness or **untruthfulness** of that which Jesus taught.

In his mind, if it was small, it posed no threat –
there is nothing to worry about ...
Get rid of the leader and the small congregation will scatter

That is *ever* the way that the world **thinks.**

As long as we are on earth, people will *always*
confuse **blessing** with **success.**

They will see the people **flocking** to a church and *assume*
that *because of it,* they are **blessed.**

The *natural* human mind will **never understand** or **respect**
the **principle** or **nature** of *the dying seed,*
falling into the ground and

gradually but *surely* growing into a mighty oak –

Mankind will always prefer rather the
principle of the this age which is based on
immediate gratification and *fast and explosive growth*.

Annas was **only concerned** with the **threat** that *Jesus' thing*
would **cause** to *his own thing*.

I am amazed at **church conventions** –
and **fellowships with pastors** *how often*
the first question betrays the **carnality** of this *Annas-like* **philosophy**

... *How many people you have in your church?*

... How about –

how deep is your church?

How many people in your church are reading the word of God?

How many people in you church are growing in grace?

Let us be aware of the *human tendency* that we have to **equate**
human success with **God's blessing** (the two are rarely align)

Next,

Annas' question *also* reveals **mode of thought** at that time –
that *the Messiah* would come with **mystery** and **intrigue**.

It was believed that the **Messiah** would **secretly gather disciples** –
that he would **incubate his movement in secret**
before making a public appearance.

The **Christology of the Rabbis** – that is their **doctrine of Messiah** –
contained a chapter on **messianic secretiveness**.

Listen to Jesus' response ...

listen how he **addresses this** and answers the question -
while at the same time
again **protecting His disciples**.

It is written in Greek with emphatic pronouns (vs. 20)

"I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said."

Jesus' point in saying *this is not to be uncooperative,*
but rather to **let the high priest know,**
without saying it
that **his question is illegal.**

It was the **responsibility** of the **questioning authority**
to question **WITNESSES,**
not the defendant himself.

What Jesus is saying in essence is:

*"I decline to be a witness against myself.
You produce the honest witnesses as the law requires"*

*It should not be difficult for you to get a number of witnesses –
I have always thought openly and boldly in public places.*

Also He is saying ...

*Look, you know the answer – as to my doctrine –
you've heard all I have had to say.*

*And as to my disciples, you've seen them –
they are the ones who follow me.*

*You act as if you are uninformed, but you **know the answers already.***

And if you don't ... get a witness – there are many.

In giving this answer, Christ also reveals to **Annas,**
just how out of touch they are with the average person.

This priesthood, alienated the average Jewish person of the time.

They separated themselves from **the people**.

The **man on the street** was *never* a **stranger to Christ** –
the *blind beggar* was **no outcast to Him**.

Christ was a friend with **all**
for whom he would soon lay down his life.

There is something else here in Jesus' answer that points the finger to us.

Don't miss this ... it is deeply personal –
it speaks to every single one of us here by way of application.

Annas, ie. the priesthood ie. religion ie. the natural world
is **asking a question** of Jesus ...

They are saying:

"Who are you?" "What are you doing?"

"What is your doctrine, Jesus?"

And Christ, points to you and says, *"Ask him – he can tell you."*

Here is where **WE** are **drawn into this trial**.

And *here* is where it **gets very uncomfortable**.

Because if YOU can't give an answer –

you are **pronouncing your own judgment**.

If someone asks *you*, *Who is Christ? What is Christ's doctrine?*

And the best answer you can give is *"ask my pastor."*

There is a problem.

Jesus is **pointing to His church** – he is pointing to *you*

to **provide the answer** to the world's question.

We cannot plead *ignorance!*

Yet so much of the church IS ignorant –
I'd say, most professing church have no clue
as to **Jesus' doctrine** –
they cannot even explain the Gospel.

They teach the *precepts of men* (pray this prayer ... open your heart)

Look at Isaiah 29 - vs. 9

Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.

For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

That is the **judgment** ... *The Lord has closed your eyes.*

God has **blinded the eyes** of *those* who cannot see.

Now look at *how* that **judgment** is manifested
in the **response of ignorance** *on the part of the people*:

*And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, *Read this, I pray thee: and he says, I cannot; for it is sealed:**

*And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, *Read this, I pray thee: and he says, I am not learned.**

There is the two-fold excuse ... of much of the church.
either *it's sealed* – that is **blame the book** –
I cannot understand the Bible, because
it is too hard to understand ...

Or

Blame my education –

I cannot understand the Bible, because I am not educated.

But God does not accept such excuses ...

Look at His indictment of *those making these excuses* (vs. 13)

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

How will you reply to this question of Annas?

Will you tell Annas, and say to Caiaphas, and proclaim to the whole world that **Christ has come – repent or your sin and believe in Him!**

Can you say this?

You can only say this if you have **done so** yourself first.

Jesus said:

“Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said.”

Do you know His voice?

Jesus said, *“My sheep hear my voice and follow me.”*

Do you hear Him? Do you know Christ?

Or are you only honoring Him with your lips, while your heart is far from Him?

If you have heard the voice of *the shepherd of your soul* calling you – then you will KNOW what he has said to you –

and you will bear witness and give an answer when Christ turns and says, “ask them”.

It was *nice and comfortable*, when it was just **Annas** and **Jesus**,
but now that Jesus has drawn you in His trial ...
it gets a little uncomfortable.

It causes us to examine ourselves.

But take heart, yes, Jesus implicates you in His trial,
but He does so only after He has first pleaded your case
in the presence of God the Father!

There is no doubt in Jesus' words:

Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said.

Jesus knows that *all those* who have heard His voice,
will follow Him,
He *knows those given Him by the Father* KNOW Him.

verse 21:

And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying,
"Do You answer the high priest like that?"

While Jesus stands there bound before Annas,
a certain *miserable ... flattering member of the temple-guard,*
Some *goon*
seeks to **exploit the situation** – *perhaps to gain a promotion* –
so in front of **Annas,**
without any command to do so,
he **slaps Jesus in the face.**

*Even had Jesus been an ordinary and even **guilty man,***
this would have been unfair

But *here* is a man **completely innocent** – and *more than that* –
completely holy –

Which makes this *underlings* **act even more despicable!**

Jesus is slapped, by a man whom He created.

... what does Jesus do in response?

He **blesse**s – He **speaks forth words** ...

Every time Jesus **opens His mouth**,

Every time He says **anything** – it is a **bles**sing!

all of His words are **bles**sings.

He is **struck**, and *in return* He **breaths inspired words!**

How this *fulfills* the **sermon on the mount!**

Bless those who persecute you

Remember that every time you slap His face.

Every word you speak in haste

Every angry thought you have

Every sinful thought that you act upon in haste

Every doubt-prompted leap to trust in man

Every flight from personal pain to seek a sedative of human wisdom

Is another blow to **Christ's face** ...

and His answer *remains the same* ...

He answers with **His Word** –

He answers with **His Gospel** ...

He says unto us ... *it is for this, that I have died.*

Jesus' answer to this **maltreatment** is *filled* with **self-control** and **dignity**.

verse 23:

Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?"

Unbelievers through the ages have looked at this and *argued*:

*Jesus failed to carry out his own injunction and **turn the other cheek***

But they miss the fact that **He did just that.**

For a man might even **turn his other cheek in anger**
at the one who struck him.

But there is **no anger here ...** Jesus is **completely at peace**
offering with **dignity** and **tranquility**
a *fair* and *truthful* response
to his **being slapped in the face.**

*At last, this is the **worst** man or Satan can do to Jesus –*
is **slap Him in the face.**

I'm sure Satan was overjoyed to **humiliate Christ**
by prompting a man to **slap His face ...**

Oh how the demons laughed!

*But in the end, the **worst any created power***
could do to Christ was *nothing more* than **bruise His heal**
as the **ancient prophecy said.**

So our narrative ends ...

What did Annas accomplish ... NOTHING!
With *nothing more* than **evidence** that **Jesus** is was *indeed*
wiser and **more holy** than they imagined –

Annas sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas ...

And so another **confrontation** comes to an **end.**

But who won?

Well, the winner of any boxing match,
is the **one who comes back** to *fight again.*

And this marked the **end** of a **battle** which began back in the prologue ...

“He came to His own and His own received Him not”

*“the law came through Moses, but grace and truth
came by Jesus Christ”*

It all **ends** right here in chapter 18 verse 24.

The **Jewish leaders** – the **scribes** – the **Pharisees** –
are **prominent fixtures** in John’s Gospel –

John is *continually* mentioning them ...

But *they* which had so occupied chapter 1-12 so *prominently* –

from their **objecting to John the Baptist’s ministry**
to Jesus’ **final words to them** in the end of chapter 12 ...

they resurface here in chapter 18 -
for **one final confrontation**.

And after Jesus leaves **Annas** to go to **Caiaphas**, here in John 18:24,
we **do not hear either name again**.

In fact “**The Jews**” in general are **not mentioned again**

with the *brief exception* of their **being part** of the crowd
who *called for* **Barabbas**

and

their *trivial objection* to **Pilate’s** having ordered
“*King of the Jews*” to be **posted at the cross** ...

That’s it ...

John does not mention the Jewish leaders *again*.

Just as we will not hear the name of Judas again in John’s Gospel.

So as **Jesus** *knocked out* **Judas** –
he here knocks out **Annas** and with him **all of what was Judaism**
with all of its traditional trappings.

What if this same scene happened today?

In many ways and forms it is ... Truth is *constantly* being put on trial.
And it is usually at the **hands** of the **most religious**.

As these events take place in our day,
they end up no different.

If you are familiar with the story of **William Tyndale**, you know that it was **the church** that had him killed for **distributing Bibles in English**.

We **cannot** ever expect **the world** to do *anything* but **condemn Christ**.

We **cannot** expect the **most religious** to do *anything less*.

If they hated Him, they will hate us.

What better can we expect from an unregenerate world.

Every **religious system**, every **philosophy**, every **theology**,
every **system of morals**
all of **man's isms**

are built upon **human wisdom** –

they are *worldly* in **their origin** and they **remain natural** –
as was the **priesthood** of Annas.

And *as Annas' priesthood*, they are **natural**, **carnal**,
they *cannot receive the things of the Spirit!*

And so every world-view that is **not derived** from **special revelation** –
from the **quickening of the Spirit of God** –
from God's *special revelatory grace* –
is *itself included* on the broad road *which will lead to death*.

But thanks be to God, though
the natural man cannot discern the things of the Spirit –

God has opened our eyes so that we might see!