

GOSPEL OF YOHANAN

Chapter 18

The Trial of Our Messiah – Trial 1

Do you know what a drumhead court-martial is?

It is a court-martial held in the field to hear urgent charges of offences. The term is said to originate from the use of a drumhead, as an improvised writing table. Today, this term has connotations of summary justice. It denotes a mock trial, where there is no concern for valid witnesses or for proper proceedings. The only concern is to condemn the accused and do it as fast as possible.

This is the case for the trial of the Messiah. It was done fast, with no valid witnesses and the accusations changed as the circumstances changed. This trial is the case of the Son of God falling into the hands of man.

Man, in his pride, wanted so much to do away with Him that Yeshua is shoved around from one leader to another in order to get someone to condemn Him, as we see in our text today. But there could be nothing legal that could be found, to condemn Him. In their frenzy, they proceeded with six trials, in just a few hours. At the end, they had to resort to illegalities to be able to condemn Him; the condemnations, as well as all the proceedings of the trials, were illegal.

You have heard of the saying: A fox should not be the jury at a goose's trial –but the foxes are the jury the witness and the judge.

It could not have been otherwise, because there was absolutely nothing they could find wrong with the Messiah. As you proceed through the trials, you see that these men become more and more frustrated and irrational because there was nothing they could find. But in the midst of this agitation, you also realize that Yeshua Himself, while accused and mistreated, is in complete control of the circumstances.

Furthermore, we see a certain sense of humor from the Writer while He reveals to us the increasing foolishness of the people, as the time of the crucifixion approaches.

These people–Jews and Gentiles–did not know, nor suspect, that Jesus had to die no matter what. They thought they finally had the matter in their own hands, but God was using them for His glory.

When reading the trial, the passage of **Psalm 2** comes to mind. While this passage speaks of the Second coming of the Messiah, it could very well be applied here.

Psalm 2:2

The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed.....

This is what these people were doing, but in **verse 4** we read:

He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.

In derision, they were. If it was not for Jesus who arranged to be crucified, these people would have turned one against the other. God was in complete control of the situation. After all, it was about His Son and He was there at every step of the way.

There is another point that I want to bring up, before we look at the text. The trial of Jesus has been the motivation and pretext for widespread anti-Semitism, this has led to violent pogroms and inquisitions against the Jewish people throughout the last 2000 years of history, holding all Jews—past and present—accountable for the trial of Jesus.

For one thing, the Scriptures go out of their way in saying that it was not one particular people that led Jesus to be crucified.

The passage of **Acts 4: 2, 28** says:

For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

This passage sums up for us the trials of Yeshua. In the six trials, Herod, Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the Jews, were gathered together. To accuse the Jews of killing Jesus is to carry on the same spirit of dishonesty as those Jews and Gentile who condemned Yeshua with the mock trials.

Before going into the text, let's take a bird's eye view of these trials.

1. **The first** trial was before Annas, one who was considered High Priest. This trial is covered in **John 18:12–24**. Nothing came out of this trial.
2. **The second** trial was before Caiaphas, another High Priest voted in by the Romans. This is seen in **Matthew 26:57–66** and **Mark 14:53–65**. Nothing came out of this trial.
3. **The third** trial was held by the whole Sanhedrin, the supreme court of Israel at the time. This is seen in **Matthew 27:1–2; Mark 15:1** and **Luke 22:66–71**. Here the Messiah is convicted on the grounds of blasphemy and was referred to the Roman rulers for the death sentence.
4. **The fourth** trial was held before Pilate. This is seen in **John 18:28–38, Matthew 27:11–14, Mark 15:1–5** and **Luke 23:1–7**. Blasphemy was not considered a crime that

deserved death, so the accusation is changed; here, Yeshua is accused of claiming to be King of the Jews, in opposition to Caesar.

5. **Fifth**, because no one could produce proof and because Yeshua was from Nazareth, Pilate sent Him to Herod, who had jurisdiction in this area. Nothing came out of this trial as well. At this trial Christ was silent to all questions and, after being mocked by the soldiers, is returned to Pilate.

6. **The final** trial before Pilate and the Roman authorities resulted in the crucifixion. This happened without any valid charge.

Jews and Gentiles—that is everyone—have participated in the crucifixion. In fact, every single one of us has participated, as well, because if one of us has never sinned, then we could have taken the place of Jesus, and He wouldn't have needed to die for us. But because we are all sinners and because He came to die for us, we are all responsible for His death. Thank God for the resurrection and for the salvation by grace.

Let's begin by reading the first two verses of **John 18**, where we notice information that is not given in the other Gospels.

John 18:1-2

When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered.

And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples.

After the Last Supper, or the last Passover meal that Yeshua had with His disciples, they all headed over to the Brook Kidron. This is a valley on the eastern slope of Jerusalem through which a seasonal brook runs. It was often a torrent in the winter rains, and it contained little water in the summer months. The word Kidron is derived from a root word meaning *dark* or *gloomy*. Across the Kidron was the Mount of Olives, where we find the garden of Gethsemane. This is where Jesus and His disciples were going. Gethsemane means olive press. This is so fitting with the spiritual battle that was about to take place there.

As they approached the Garden, eight of the disciples were left near the entrance. They were instructed to be in prayer, not for Messiah but for themselves, in view of the battle to come. Yeshua took the other three disciples with Him—Peter, James, and John; these were the ones to be in leadership later on. Peter and James were leaders of the new found church in Jerusalem, according to the book of **Acts**. John, while not so much a leader of people, was given the great commission to write the **book of Revelation** and the three **Epistles**. These were the same three disciples that were brought to the Mount of Transfiguration. The three were also instructed to pray, as Jesus departed a bit further, "*about a stone's throw*" away as **Luke 22:41** tells us. This is where Jesus began His prayer and His agony.

It was in the Garden of Gethsemane that we see Satan's final attempt to stop Yeshua from going to the cross. Many times throughout the history, he attempted to destroy those who

carried the Seed, that is, the direct ancestors of the Messiah. During the life of the Messiah, he tried many times to kill Him to prevent Him from going to the cross. Now that the event was a few hours away, Satan now tries his utmost to prevent Yeshua from making it to the cross. I believe, what ensues was the greatest spiritual battle ever. The Scriptures use strong words to give us a vivid description of His agony.

Mark 14:33 tell us that Jesus ... *began to be troubled and deeply distressed.*

Jesus Himself says in the following verse, **Mark 14:34**
My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death...

Luke 22:44 also says that Jesus was *in agony*, and it is there that we read that ... *His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

The sweating of real blood implies that the pressure was so strong that small blood vessels burst under the surface of the skin. When the sweat came out, along with it came ... *great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

There, Satan wedged his battle against the Son of God, who previously refused to bow down to him. Angels, who are always present in these battles, were also involved. We read in **Luke 22:43** that at this time,
.....an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

This is how violent this battle was. All of these things happened between the first and second verse of **John 18**. The question we ask is: why didn't John mention the agony, like Matthew, Mark and Luke did? Why were these events skipped in this Gospel?

Actually John did not omit anything. He just selected events that happened in the Garden to show us that, despite the intensity of this encounter, He presents Yeshua in all His deity as being fully aware and in full control of the events.

If you recall, **Matthew** was written to show the Messiah as the king, the One who will occupy the throne of David. **Mark** presents Him as the great Servant, doing the will of the Father. **Luke** presents Him as a just Man in all the perfection of His humanity. But **John** presents us Yeshua as the Son of God—as the Word incarnate—in all His deity.

John does not give us any genealogies. He does not speak of the birth of Jesus, because God has no beginning or end. He does not speak of His Baptism or His temptation; John presents us the Word incarnate.

It is in **John**, where three times it is reported, that Yeshua says that He is the one who lays down His life; no one takes it from Him. It was a voluntary and a controlled action (**John 10:15, 17, 18**).

John 10:18

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.

At this point in **John 18**, we are brought to a great series of tremendous miracles that Yeshua performs in the Garden, to show us that He had the matter fully into his own hands.

Let's read the first **twelve verses**. These are written in such a way that they cannot be comprehended unless you realize that Yeshua was in full control as the Son of God. He used His deity to keep the circumstances focused toward the cross; otherwise, He could have never reached it. These verses are as strong as all those that spoke of the agony of the Messiah, because here, Satan realized that through his spiritual oppressions he could not stop Yeshua. So now, he uses all other possible means to stop Jesus from the cross, but the Messiah is more powerful. It is here where Yeshua uses His divine attributes to secure His death on the cross, for our benefit.

John 18: 1-12

When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered.

And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples.

Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?"

They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am He." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them.

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

Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,"

that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."

Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"

Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him.

Let's get a better sense of what is happening there. First we read that Judas came with troops and officers. Do you know how many people that is?

From the Greek word for *troops* we get the Latin word *cohort* and a cohort could be composed of around 600 Roman soldiers. In addition to that you have the *officer*. That term designates the Jewish temple police, also well armed soldiers. We don't know how many they were. Also with them, came many *chief priests*, these being the Sadducees and Pharisees. The whole world was there, at the arrest of Jesus.

All this was done at night, as they had lanterns and torches so that they could arrest Jesus away from the attention of the masses. They wanted to sentence Him to death and kill Him before the people became aware of what had happened.

The irony is that they came with lanterns and torches to arrest the Light of the World. If it was not given to them by God to do that, they would have not had a chance.

All came about because Judas Iscariot had agreed to sell the Messiah for 30 pieces of silver, 30 *keseph*.

Matthew 26:14-16 tells us what happened just prior to these events:

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.

So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.

Next, we find them all at the Garden of Gethsemane. The whole thing began with a transgression of the Law of God; it began with a bribe. God said in **Exodus 23:8**

"And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous.

This is one of the first multiple transgressions of the Law that we find in this trial. It is here that we find the beginning of the many fulfilled prophecies concerning the death and resurrection of the Messiah. It was the Spirit of God, through the prophet Zechariah, that said in **Zechariah 11:12**

... "If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver.

Here Zechariah symbolically pictured God asking the shepherds what they felt He was worth to them. In a mocking response, the leaders offered 30 silver pieces, which was the amount of compensation paid for a slave gored by an ox (**Exodus 21:32**). This is precisely what the religious leaders gave Judas Iscariot for the price of the Son of God. This is how low their esteem of God had become. Thus, the leaders of Israel held the ministry of the Messiah to be the value of a slave. Yet at the same time, unknown to them, they were fulfilling the prophecy of **Zechariah 11:12**. God was in full control of the events.

Another question we ask is: Why do we see so many people coming to arrest the Messiah? Why so many people against twelve men?

The authorities must have seen that there was no serious threat of an uprising as Jesus was always in the open and He was never hiding. Even Pilate, who was responsible for keeping the peace in Israel, did not seem to know who Jesus was when He was first presented to him. There was no threat!

But one possible reason for them coming in such great number could be that all of these men were aware of one thing—that Jesus could perform great miracles. Roman soldiers, everywhere in Israel, and Jewish soldiers in the Temple along with the Pharisees and the Sadducees, all witnessed many of Yeshua's miracles. Nothing was done in secret, and the one among them who knew the most was Judas Iscariot. He saw Jesus walk on water. He saw Him feed thousands of people. He saw Him raise people from the dead, especially Lazarus. So, did all these men perhaps conceive that Yeshua's miracles had a limit, and figured that a great number of them will deter Yeshua from thinking of defending Himself?

Well, what happens next proves them wrong, because Yeshua kept in store some of His more powerful miracles, which show that no matter how many they are, they cannot fight God. As they entered the Garden, Yeshua is the one who goes to meet them and asks them a question:

John 18:4, 5

... *"Whom are you seeking?"*

They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." ...

It is here that something unusual happens –

Jesus said to them, "I am He."

What happens? **Verse 6** tells us that

..... *they drew back and fell to the ground.*

I get so amazed every time I read this. Just by saying who He is, they fall back—what power!

What is very touching is that the ONE who has so much strength was about to allow them to arrest Him, willingly, because He loves us. Do you see the contrast here between the Lamb and the Lion?

This is reminiscent of the prophecy in **Isaiah 45:23**, which is also repeated in **Romans 14**, and **Ephesians 2**, that says that *every knee shall bow* to Him.

What follows is very astonishing again. **Verse 7** begins as if nothing had happened.

Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Well, didn't they realize that they just fell on the floor? Didn't they realize that the Person, that they came to arrest, has the power to make of them whatever He wills? It is as if they completely forgot what just happened.

That is very similar to the events of the Exodus. God performed great miracles there. It is astonishing is that the people forgot about them a few hours later. They even forgot about them while the Pillar of Fire was present with them. In the same way here, they seemed to have forgotten about what just happened to them a few seconds ago.

We can, in many ways, also see this phenomenon in the believer today. You know, if we remember all the miracles that God has performed in our life time, we would be very different. But the moment something bad happens, we ask, where is God? As if nothing happened before.

We always tend to forget things. But, concerning these people that were in the Garden, when we say forget, I don't believe that the fact just slipped out of the mind. I believe that they willingly forgot it; they were not willing to accept the fact.

What Jesus says next seems to indicate to us that they were not completely ignorant of what just happened. We can see that in **verse 8**, as He gives the reason as to why He performed that miracle. When they asked Him, for the second time, Who He Is:

John 18: 8-9

Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,"

that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."

When they asked who he was the second time, he said to them *I told you*. So they must have known.

The first reason why Yeshua performed these miracles was for the protection of the disciples. *Let these go their way* Jesus ordered the hundreds of soldiers in front of him. Had they not realized His power, they would have not let them go; but they did. Isn't it beautiful how we are protected by such a mighty person.

That was not the only miracle there. Unfortunately, He was compelled to perform yet other miracles. Guess who got so excited in seeing all these things and took out his sword and believed that he could put down this whole army in front of him? Peter.

He takes out his sword and perhaps began to wave it left and right and cut off the ear of a man called Malchus. But Peter's actions brought the situation to be, what I believe, one of the most critical moments for the ministry of the Yeshua. This whole show could have jeopardized Yeshua's whole mission, but thank God that He is powerful and prevented it.

Have you ever wondered, why the soldiers did not respond to Peter's action?

This is equivalent to branding a gun at a few hundred police officers. How do you think they would respond?

But the text does not tell us what happened next. In fact nothing happened except that, as we are told in **Luke 22:51**, Jesus put back the ear of Malchus, healed it and reprimanded Peter. After that, all the eleven disciples went to safety and Jesus was arrested.

Matthew 26:52-54 tells us what Jesus told Peter at this moment:

But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

"Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?"

"How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

What Peter was doing, was to hinder the whole counsel of God. He was, in fact, about to hinder the fulfillment of all the prophecies concerning the death and resurrection of the Messiah. We further learn that the sword cannot be used for the defense of the faith. Nevertheless, the Creator of the universe made sure that our place in heaven is secure, and manipulated the circumstances so that the Son of God could die on the cross. All we can say for now is that some of the greatest miracles were performed here. John really brings us to consider the deity of the Messiah.

As Jesus reprimands Peter He says to him in John **18:11**:

..... *"Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"*

What did He mean by drinking the cup?

The other three Gospels speak of the drinking of the cup as something that greatly disturbed the Messiah.

Matthew 26:39

... "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; ...

Mark 14:36

...all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will ."

Luke 22:42

... take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

This cup is the cup of wrath that Yeshua saw before Him as He prayed. The drinking of this cup represents all the sins that Yeshua took on Himself when He became sin for us. The cup sums up God's judgment on sin.

In the Old Testament, God speaks of the cup of His wrath against sin. In **Jeremiah 25:15** we read:

For thus says the LORD God of Israel to me: "Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it.

God, through the prophet Habakkuk, speaks of that cup in those terms:

Habakkuk 2:16

You are filled with shame instead of glory. You also--drink! And be exposed as uncircumcised! The cup of the LORD'S right hand will be turned against you, And utter shame will be on your glory.

The cup represents God's wrath and divine judgment against sin and this is what Jesus drank for us. This is why we have security in Him. The same cup is mentioned in the book of **Revelation** and points to two events. Should one reject the marvelous work of the Messiah, these two events are lurking in the horizon.

Revelation 14:9, 10

If any man worship the Beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb"

What we learn here is that if one rejects what Jesus has done for us, in taking all the judgment, then two events follow: the time of Tribulation, then the Lake of Fire.

I can hear people complaining and say: what...the Lake of Fire?

Yes, the Lake of Fire. This is what the Scriptures say; it is not something that is imagined or probable. It is a real place like the place where you are now. The Scriptures say that this is the final abode of everyone who rejects God and His Son. But the good news is that, as very hard as it was, Jesus drank that cup for us. We can draw the great benefit of what He did, if we recognize Him as the Savior.

In the event at the Garden of Gethsemane, two men are put in contrast to each other, Peter and Judas—a backslider and an apostate. A backslider is very different from an apostate. A backslider is a believer who strays from the word. An apostate is one who is thought to be a believer, but never was. Here, both were shown the same miracle and the apostate completely disregarded it. I also believe that this miracle was performed as a last attempt for Judas to truly repent before he gave the kiss of death.

As for Peter, his ordeals were not yet finished because, after branding his sword, he further denies the Messiah three times. Some commentators noticed that when he opens his mouth he says the wrong thing and that his life in the Gospels is riddled with overexcitement and failures. Furthermore, the manner he denied His Savior is quite revealing for us: see what the Scriptures tell us, as he was about to deny Jesus three times.

John 18:15-16.

*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.*

John 18:25

*Now Simon Peter **stood** and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, "You are not also one of His disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not!"*

What we see here is that there were two disciples, one that is not named. This was probably John himself, the disciple whom Jesus loved; John never names himself in his Gospel. **Verse 15** tells us that they both began to follow Jesus inside the courtyard, but at one point Peter stayed outside the building. **Verses 16 and 25** tell us that he *stood* outside. It probably appeared to him that it would be safer to stay outside than to follow the other disciple inside, where Jesus was. But it is outside, apart from Jesus, that he lost his faith and denied Him. Even if the situation is more stressful inside than outside, we can find our security only in Jesus. Peter thought that he was safe outside, but not so!

Twice, we are told that *he stood* (**Verses 16 & 25**). That reminds us of what David said in **Psalm 1:1**

*Blessed is the man Who **walks** not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor **stands** in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the **seat** of the scornful;*

It seems that Peter began to walk and then he stood, but thank God he did not sit with them as Judas Iscariot did.

We are told in **Matthew 26:75**

And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

That was a godly repentance. This marks the return of a backsliding brother. Peter was restored and he was the one who opened up the door to the Jews and was instrumental in bringing 3000 souls to a saving knowledge of the Messiah. He is the one who opened up the doors to the Gentiles with Cornelius and many others who were the first Gentiles to come to a saving knowledge of the Messiah. He later wrote two beautiful and faith strengthening letters, **1 and 2 Peter**, where we see a man of great spiritual maturity and filled with the grace of God. Jesus was arrested, but not before Judas gave Him, what we call the kiss of death.

Mark 14:44-45

Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead Him away safely."

As soon as He had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

The original Greek word for the translated word *kissed* indicates that Judas kissed *Yeshua* many times. Yet Jesus was all alone at this time; they could not have missed Him. But Judas was in a hurry, just like we read in **Proverbs 1:16**, that the feet of the wicked
..... run to evil, And they make haste to shed blood.

At that time, kissing was a sign of discipleship. When a student became a disciple of a rabbi, he would signify it by kissing the rabbi. But, the action of Judas is a mockery on the Son of God. Even after spending so much time with Yeshua and hearing all His teaching, he now renounces it by this action. This is more grieving, especially when you consider what is written in **Psalm 2:12**

Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

While the believers *kiss the Son* and *put their trust in Him*, the wicked mock Him, but they will eventually *perish in the way*.

There, begins His arrest leading to the trial.

John 18:12

Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him.

There, begins the mistreatment of the Son of God. As we go along and look at the different steps leading to the cross, the believer is faced with an array of different feelings, where he is brought at times to sadness and other times to shake his head in amazement. But this part of the Scriptures will not fail to bring the believer to great joy and victory at the end.

Let's begin to briefly look at the first arrest. Jesus is brought to a man called Annas, who seems to be the High Priest at that time. According to the Law of God, you can have only one High Priest who is to hold that function until his death, but in the following verses, there seems to be two High Priests. Let's read **Verses 12-14** and **19-24** and try to figure out who was the High Priest and see how this first trial was conducted.

Then the detachment of troops 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 advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

Let's go now to **verse 19**, as it follows after **verse 14**

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

Jesus answered him, "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."

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?"
Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?"
Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

First, who was the High Priest? We can understand from **verse 13** that it could either be Annas or Caiaphas, until you reach **verse 19** where we read that *The high priest then asked Jesus...*

We understand that it was Annas since he was the one who was doing the questioning. This is fine until you read **verse 24** when we read that Caiaphas was the High Priest. Who then is the High Priest?

Apparently, they were both called high priests. In those times, it was the Romans who appointed the high priests and they liked to change them often so that power would not reside in one person. Annas, who was High priest (6-15 AD), was succeeded by his five sons, then by Caiaphas, his son in law, in 18-36 AD. Therefore, having been a high priest, Annas only kept the title, but Caiaphas was the acting high priest at the time of Yeshua's trial. Regardless, Annas undoubtedly had great influence through his sons and son in law. These acting high priests were not appointed according to the Law of God, and this reflects how far removed and disordered the Jewish religion of the time had become.

In the preceding chapter, **John 17**, we have seen that Yeshua was acting as the High Priest, even before His resurrection and Ascension. Yeshua was and still is the real High Priest.

Now, who was this man Annas? Let's hear what Josephus Flavius, the first century historian, says of him in his book *Antiquities*:

“But as for the high priest, Ananias he increased in glory every day, and this to a great degree, and had obtained the favor and esteem of the citizens in a signal manner; for he was a great collector up of money:
He...took away the tithes that belonged to the priests by violence, and did not refrain from beating such as would not give these tithes to them.”

This man was a despot. Some believed that he even had part in the business that was done in the Temple. Remember that Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers and brought out of the temple those who sold sheep and oxen. This man had more than one reason to hate the Son of God.