Research: Trials of Jesus: John 18:1, 2, 3, 12-14, 28, 29, 30

1When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

*The brook Cedron (John 18:1)*

The word translated "brook" means more strictly “winter torrent" and was sometimes applied to the ravine through which it ran. "Cedron" is a variant spelling of what is elsewhere called "Kedron" or "Kidron." This "Ravine of the Cedars," as both Goodspeed and Weymouth call it, lay between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. Moffatt translates the verse as follows: "Having said this, Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron ravine to an orchard, which he entered in the company of his disciples."

“Where was a garden - On the west side of the Mount of Olives. This was called Gethsemane. It is probable that this was the property of some wealthy man in Jerusalem - perhaps some friend of the Savior. It was customary for the rich in great cities to have country-seats in the vicinity. This, it seems, was so accessible that Jesus was accustomed to visit it, and yet so retired as to be a suitable place for devotion” (Barnes’ Notes, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

2And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples.

“**For Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples.**—This is one of the instances of St. John’s exact knowledge of the incidents which attended the Jerusalem life of our Lord. All the Evangelists narrate the coming of Judas. John only remembers that the spot was one belonging, it may be, to a friend or disciple, where Jesus was in the habit of going with His disciples, and that Judas therefore knew the place, and knew that he would probably find them there” (Ellicott’s Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

““And Judas also knew the place, because Jesus and His disciples had frequently assembled there” on previous visits to Jerusalem. This is inserted to account for what follows, and to remind the reader of the voluntariness of the surrender. There was no attempt to escape or hide” (Expositor’s Greek testament, www.biblehub.com).

3Judas then, having received a band *of men* and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

“**A band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees.**—Better, *the band, and officers from the chief priests and Pharieess.* The other Gospels tell us of a “great multitude” (Matt.), or a “multitude” (Mark and Luke). St. John uses the technical word for the Roman cohort. It was the garrison band from Fort Antonia, at the north-east corner of the Temple.

“The torches and lamps were part of the regular military equipment for night service. Dionysius describes soldiers rushing out of their tents with torches and lamps in the same words which are used here” (Ellicott’s Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

12Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

“The “band and the captain” were the Roman cohort (comp. The “officers of the Jews” were, as before, the Temple servants, and the apparitors of the Sanhedrin” (Ellicott’s Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

“*Then the band,*&c. — To whom Jesus, without any opposition, surrendered himself; *took and bound him*— Foolishly supposing, that he might attempt to make his escape” (Benson Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

13And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

*Annas ... father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year (John 18:13)*

Annas was immensely influential in Jewish circles during the years when Jesus and his earliest followers were establishing Christianity. He himself was High Priest between 6 and 15 AD, and in his family five sons and a grandson (not to mention his son-in-law Caiaphas) also held that office from 17 to 41 AD. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, Joseph Caiaphas was High Priest between 18 and 36 AD, an exceptional tenure during a period of upheavals—a tenure indicating a rather close and cooperative relationship with the Roman authorities who had the power both to appoint to and depose from that office. The phrase "that same year" has been taken by some to mean the year in which the crucifixion took place—for that (and not the High Priest's incumbency) is the event which takes center stage for the Evangelist. (From Bible Notes in the periodicals)

14Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

*Caiaphas (John 18:28)*

The high priest of the Jews, known to the historian Josephus as having served from about 18-37 AD and appointed by the Roman authorities. (From Bible Notes in the periodicals)

28¶ Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

“*Then led they* John assumes that his readers know the result of Jesus being taken to Caiaphas. He had been condemned to death; and now His enemies (there is no need to name them) take Him to the Roman governor to get the sentence executed.  
  
*“the hall of judgment*. *Pilate’s house*, i.e. *the* **palace**. In the original it is *praitorion*, the Greek form of *praetorium*. . . The meaning of *praetorium* varies according to the context. The word is of military origin; (1) ‘the general’s tent’ or ‘headquarters.’ *the official residence of the Procurator*. Where Pilate resided in Jerusalem is not quite certain. We know that ‘Herod’s Praetorium,’ a magnificent building on the western hill of Jerusalem, was used by Roman governors somewhat later. But it is perhaps more likely that Pilate occupied part of the fortress Antonia, on the supposed site of which a chamber with a column in it has recently been discovered, which it is thought may possibly be the scene of the scourging” (Expositor’s Greek Testament, www.biblehub.com).

29Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

“They expected that he would have at once ordered His execution; but he asks for the formal charge which they bring against Him. He knew by hearsay what this was, but demands the legal accusation without which the trial could not proceed. As the Roman procurator, he demands what crime Jesus has committed against the Roman law” (Ellicott’ Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

30They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

*Malefactor (John 18:30)*

One guilty of an evil deed or crime; a criminal.

“*a malefactor*] Literally, ‘doing evil’ or **an evil-doer**; not the same expression as [Luke 23:32](http://biblehub.com/luke/23-32.htm). The Jews are taken aback at Pilate’s evident intention of trying the case himself. They had expected him merely to carry out their sentence, and had not come provided with any definite accusation. Blasphemy, for which they had condemned Him ([Matthew 26:65-66](http://biblehub.com/context/matthew/26-65.htm)), might be no crime with Pilate (comp. [Acts 18:16](http://biblehub.com/acts/18-16.htm)). Hence the vagueness of their first charge. Later on ([John 19:7](http://biblehub.com/john/19-7.htm)) they throw in the charge of blasphemy; but they rely mainly on three distinct charges, which being political, Pilate must hear; (1) seditious agitation, (2) forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, (3) assuming the title, ‘King of the Jews’ ([Luke 23:3](http://biblehub.com/luke/23-3.htm))” (Cambridge Bible, www.biblehub.com).