

# The Gospel of John

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*John 18:1-21:25*

## The Passion and Resurrection of Jesus

The final three sections we will cover in the Gospel of John are the climactic events surrounding his Passion and Resurrection.

Remember, the overall structure of the Gospel of John is as follows<sup>35</sup>:

- **Prologue: The Word made Flesh (1:1-18)**
- **The Book of Signs: The Signs of the Messiah (1:19-11:54)**
- **The Book of Glory: Jesus Preparation of the Messianic Community and his Passion (11:55-20:31)**
- **Epilogue: Witnesses to Glory: Resurrection and Witness (21:1-25)**

This lesson will cover three main sections:

<b>The Passion and Resurrection</b>	<b><i>John 18-21</i></b>
<b>The Passion Narrative</b>	18:1-19:42
<b>The Resurrection</b>	20:1-29
<b>Epilogue: Peter and the Disciple whom Jesus Loved</b>	John 21:1-25

## The Passion Narrative 18-19

The Passion narrative in John emphasizes the sovereign control of Jesus and his Father over the affairs of men. Many people and groups will be involved in the crucifixion of Jesus, all asserting power and control. However, God remains firmly in control.

### ***The Betrayal and Arrest***

Jesus had predicted his betrayal at the last Passover (13:21). In the High priestly prayer, he prayed that not one would be lost (of his disciples) except the “son of destruction, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled” (17:12). Now the time has come for the betrayal and again we see the divine foreknowledge in Jesus “knowing all that would happen to him”(18:4). John sees the fulfillment of Jesus high priestly prayer in Jesus plea for immunity for his disciples. (18:9)

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<sup>35</sup> Adapted from the outline by Andreas Kostenberger, John: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, (Baker Academic: Grand Rapids, 2004) pgs. 10-11.

Peter stands ready to use force to prevent Jesus' arrest. He strikes the high priest's servant. However, Jesus rebukes Peter for seeking to prevent the Father's plan.

*So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?" –John 18:11*

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John reminds his reader of the earlier prophecy of the High priest that "it would be expedient that one man should die for the people." John 18:14

### ***The Denials of Peter (18:15-18; 25-27)***

Like the betrayal, Jesus had predicted that Peter would deny him three times. (13:36-38) Peter would have the opportunity to lay down his life for Jesus, but not before his own character would be refined in failure. Jesus would later in the Gospel restore Peter by giving him the opportunity to confess love for Jesus three times. For now, Peter is asked directly, "You are not one of this man's disciples." He said, "I am not." Peter's denials while "standing and warming himself" (18:18, 25) is to be contrasted with Jesus standing alone before his interrogators—not backing down from the call. Jesus faithful witness is to be compared with Peter's denials.

### ***The Trials***

Jesus underwent two trials: one Jewish and one Roman. The trial before the Jewish leadership had a formal and informal hearing. Jesus is first brought to the father-in-law, Annas, of the current high priest. Annas was the high priest (AD 6 – AD 15). Because he was deposed from office by the Romans, he was still considered by many to be a considerable power and his office as high priest was for life. His son-in-law, Caiaphas, was the current high priest, yet Annas is clearly calling the shots.

The main emphasis in the Gospel is on the second trial before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate and John's account of the Roman trial is clearly the most detailed of the four gospels. First Jesus is interrogated (18:28-40), then he is sentenced to be crucified. (19:1-16a) The Trial is narrated in seven sections following an oscillating pattern of Pilate's movement inside and outside the Roman governor's headquarters, the Praetorium.

### ***The Interrogation before Pilate (18:28-40)***

The story reveals a delicate dance of evil and corruption, politically neither the Jewish leaders nor Pilate want to take responsibility for putting Jesus to death. Both powers would rather see the other bear the blame. Yet, both make certain by their own motivations that the crucifixion of Jesus be inevitable.

The primary charge before Pilate that would carry any weight would be an assertion of rival kingly authority to Caesar's throne. The crux of Pilate's questioning centers on the royal claim. Pilate asks, "Are you the king of the Jews?" (18:33).

Jesus' denies that he is mounting an insurrection against Caesar, but at the same time makes an absolute truth claim to his authority as the transcendent king of a kingdom "not of this world". Pilate simply doesn't know what to that assertion.

*Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." <sup>37</sup> Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." <sup>38</sup> Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" –John 18:36-38*

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What is truth? This question is left hanging unanswered in this scene, but not in the Gospel. Has not the reader has already been given the definition of Truth when Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (14:6)? John has addressed the issue of truth again and again though the Gospel. "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (8:32)

*How do you answer Pilate's question? What is truth?*

### **The Sentence (19:1-16a)**

Jesus has full control over the situation, for Pilate is losing control. Pilate talks big, "I have authority to release you." Yet, he really was powerless because of his own fear (19:8). The Jews are the ones to make the case that Jesus set himself up to be a king. Using Jesus, Pilate ruthlessly mocked their charges even clothing Jesus in kingly garments and showing him to be a pretty weak king. Nevertheless when they confessed, "We have no king but Caesar." Who was more loyal to Rome, Pilate or the Jewish chief priests? What a strange twist of fate! Pilate acquiesced, and the Jewish leadership revealed their apostasy from the Lordship of YHWH and his anointed one by claiming to be more a friend to Caesar than the Roman governor himself!

### **The Crucifixion (19:16b-37)**

Again, the issue of Jesus royal status and authority of Jesus continues to be at the forefront of the narrative when Pilate posted a sign over Jesus crucified body which read, "Jesus of Nazareth, The King of the Jews". The chief priests petitioned,

*"Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." –John 19:21-22*

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The irony for both the Jews and the Romans is that Jesus is the legitimate sovereign over them both. His death reveals the fulfillment of the divine plan revealed in the scriptures. (19:24, 28, 36, 37). The other emphasis in John's gospel is on the completion of the Father's will. Jesus says, "It is finished". (19:30) Jesus faithfully completed the work that his father had given him to do. In doing so, he brought glory to the Father.

*I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.*  
–John 17:4

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## The Resurrection (20)

The preceding chapter closed with Jesus hasty burial in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathia. (19:38-42) Chapter 20 begins with Mary Madeline coming early to the tomb and seeing the stone has been rolled away she runs to report to the disciples. Her report contains a false theory: someone has stolen the body.

*“They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” –John 20:2*

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Mary’s false theory would be corrected by the Lord himself. (20:16-17)

Peter and “the other disciple” also inspected the empty tomb and yet did not fully grasp the implications of resurrection from the Scriptures (9), though the text says the other disciple “saw and believed”. What exactly did he believe about the empty tomb?

Not only was the tomb empty, Jesus began to appear to the disciples. First to Mary and then to the twelve. His appearances also contain apostolic commissioning.

*Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.” –John 20:21-23*

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The work that Jesus instructed the disciples to complete in the farewell discourse recorded in John 15-16 is now to be completed. The promised Spirit of Truth is given. The disciples must now become apostles and be his witnesses to the truth. Their first opportunity to bear witness is to one another. Mary witnesses to the ten, and the ten witness to Thomas. Thomas becomes the archetypal doubter converted to believer. Here we see the fruit of liberation by the truth. Doubt transforms to worship.

*Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”<sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”<sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”—John 20:27-29*

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## Epilogue: The Commission of Peter and the “other disciple” (21)

Jesus last appearance on the shore of the sea of Galilee becomes an occasion of restoration and commission. Peter is given three opportunities to reverse his three denials. “Do you love me?” Jesus asks him. “You know that I love you” is the reply. With each restorative question comes a charge: Feed my sheep.”

Peter was to play a preeminent role in the early church as one who would lead the flock following Jesus' ascent to the Father. Ultimately, Peter would be martyred for his strong faith and confession (21:18-19). Indeed Peter would obey Jesus' final command to "follow me".

The "other disciple" reveals that he too has a special role to play as one commissioned to bear witness through the testimony of the Gospel.

*<sup>24</sup> This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.*

*<sup>25</sup> Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.*

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Earlier the Gospel writer had revealed his intention for those who would read his book of testimony. John's aim is to foster belief in his readers—belief unto eternal life:

*Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*  
—John 20:30-31

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Do you believe the testimony about Jesus? This is the fundamental question with which every reader of this Gospel must personally wrestle. John has shown you that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. How will you respond? Do you see and believe?