

## Twenty-three Questions and Answers from John's Gospel, Chapters 18-19

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In this study of John, Chapters 18-19, we will examine those questions and answers that included Jesus, but also, those that did not, but were important to the events of the narrative. These questions and answers provide a wealth of information about the forces at work immediately preceding, and at the very time of the crucifixion of Christ.

*John 18:1-4 (NLT)*

*“After saying these things, Jesus crossed the Kidron Valley with his disciples and entered a grove of olive trees. {2} Judas, the betrayer, knew this place, because Jesus had gone there many times with his disciples. {3} The leading priests and Pharisees had given Judas a battalion of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove. {4} Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him. Stepping forward to meet them, he asked, **“Whom are you looking for?”**”*

A battalion of Roman soldiers and temple guards was a formidable force - all to arrest one Man!

### **Question 1: “Whom are you looking for?”**

When the religious officials and their group came to find Jesus, the Lord asked them, **“Whom are you looking for?”** They responded by telling the Lord what He already knew. They were looking for Him! He was awaiting them and readily made it known that He was whom they sought.

### **They found the great “I AM.”**

*John 18:5a (NLT)*

*“Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. **“I am he,”** Jesus said. Judas was standing there with them when Jesus identified himself.*

Jesus identified Himself, not just as the target of those who came to arrest Him, but also as the God of Moses. He had spoken these same words **“I am”** at the burning bush (Exodus 6:3). Jesus had previously identified Himself to the

Pharisees as the “I AM,” and they tried to kill him (John 8:58-59).

**John 8:58-59 (NLT)**

**“Jesus answered, “The truth is, I existed before Abraham was even born!” Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” {59} At that point they picked up stones to kill him. But Jesus hid himself from them and left the Temple.”**

**John 18:5b-8 (NLT)**

**“And as he said, “I am he,” they all fell backward to the ground! {7} Once more he asked them, “Whom are you searching for?” And again they replied, “Jesus of Nazareth.” {8} “I told you that I am he.” Jesus said. “And since I am the one you want, let these others go.”**

**“And as he said, “I am he,” they all fell backward to the ground!”**

Three times, Jesus answered the crowd with the words, “I am he (or “I am the One”). These words carried the same power and authority that they did when He said them to Moses at the burning bush. The men who were sent to capture Jesus could not stand in the presence of this power-filled statement from Deity. The Bible says, “...they all fell backward to the ground!”

**My Paraphrase**

**They shrunk back and were knocked to the ground by His almighty presence, power and the boldness of His anointed words.**

**(Again) John 18:8b - 9 (NLT)**

**“Jesus said. “And since I am the one you want, let these others go.” He did this to fulfill his own statement: “I have not lost a single one of those you gave me.””**

When Jesus said, “...let these others go,” it was not a request or suggestion. It was a divine command from the great “I AM.” The Scriptures were ordained to be fulfilled at this moment in time and all the coming events were fully subject to the will of God.

**A divine command**

## The Cup from the Father

**Question 2: “Shall I not drink from the cup the Father has given me?”**

*John 18:10-11 (NLT)*

*“Then Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest’s servant. {11} But Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword back into its sheath. **Shall I not drink from the cup the Father has given me?”**”*

Jesus refused to allow Peter’s emotional act of violence to interfere with the plan of God. Jesus was on His journey to the cross. (Luke 22:51 tells us that the Lord touched the servant’s ear and healed him. Even in these enormously difficult circumstances, Jesus was filled with compassion.) Jesus question to Peter could be paraphrased this way.

***Shall I not partake of what my heavenly Father has required of Me? The taste will be bitter, but it is ordained and vital for me to experience. Do not interfere. It is what I must do. It is what I will do.***

The divine purpose

This question, “**Shall I not partake...**” required no answer from Peter. **It was a statement of determined purpose.** The course of history was set. Jesus would walk it faithfully to the end. He knew its earthly end was only a stepping-stone to the beginning of redemption and the door to eternity.

John 18:12-15 recorded Jesus’ arrest. As this happened, Peter disconnected himself from what was happening. He followed Jesus and his captors, distant enough to see them, but hoping not to be seen and connected to the Lord. Verse 14 stands out. It recalls the high priest prophesying that Jesus would die. Though the high priest did not understand the bigger picture, he correctly gave the reason for Jesus’ death.

*John 18:14 (NLT)*

*“Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders, **“Better that one should die for all.”**”*

***New King James Version: “...it was expedient that one man should die for the people.”***

## A Contrast between Flesh and Spirit: Peter lied and said, “I am not!”

*John 18:15-17 (NLT)*

“Simon Peter followed along behind, as did another of the disciples. That other disciple was acquainted with the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the courtyard with Jesus. {16} Peter stood outside the gate. Then the other disciple spoke to the woman watching at the gate, and she let Peter in. {17} The woman asked Peter, “Aren’t you one of Jesus’ disciples?” “No,” he said, “I am not.””

### Question 3: “Aren’t you one of Jesus’ disciples?”

Peter’s lie had no power. It came from a divided, uncommitted heart. The only power a lie carries is the power to steal our freedom, kill our futures and destroy our lives. Peter’s lack of commitment and the lie he spoke resulted in a devastating outcome for him. He surrendered his integrity and honor. He traded them for shame and sorrow. Now, look back for a moment, to John 13:37-38.

*John 13:37-38 (NKJV)*

“Peter said to Him, “Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake.” Jesus answered him, “Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.”

### Question 4: “Will you lay down your life for My sake?”

As Jesus’ question had predicted, following Peter’s third lie, a rooster crowed (John 18:24-27). It was a question that prophetically challenged the integrity of Peter’s commitment. Of course, the Lord’s words were accurate and proven correct.

### Question 5: “Aren’t you one of his disciples?”

### Question 6: “Didn’t I see you out there in the olive grove with Jesus?”

Now that Jesus was arrested, Annas sent the Lord to his son-in-law, Caiaphas, who was the high priest. (See John 18:13.)

(John 18:24-27 NLT)

“Then Annas bound Jesus and sent him to Caiaphas, the high priest. {25} Meanwhile, as Simon Peter was standing by the fire, they asked him again, “Aren’t you one of his disciples?” “I am not,” he said. {26} But one of the household servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Didn’t I see you out there in the olive grove with Jesus?” {27} Again Peter denied it. And immediately a rooster crowed.”

## A Question about Doctrine, which Jesus only answered with a Question

*John 18:19-21 (NLT)*

**“Inside, the high priest began asking Jesus about his followers and what he had been teaching them. {20} Jesus replied, “What I teach is widely known, because I have preached regularly in the synagogues and the Temple. I have been heard by people everywhere, and I teach nothing in private that I have not said in public. {21} Why are you asking me this question? Ask those who heard me. They know what I said.””**

***New King James Version of Verse 19: “The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.”***

### **Question 7: “Why are you asking me this question?”**

The high priest asked Jesus about his disciples and the doctrine He taught them. The original Greek word John used was “*didache*” which translates as “*doctrine*.” It means what has been taught, and what subsequently is believed and followed.

In Verse 21, Jesus answered the high priest’s question with His own question. Notice the pattern of response. Jesus either answered with another question, does not answer, or if He chooses to answer, it is to state the truth, knowing it will provoke His enemies. The pattern of questions and answers continues. **Jesus never loses control of the situation, even as He is bound and beaten.** The lesson for us is that God is always in control and nothing happens unless He allows it.

In Verse 22, one of the temple officers struck Jesus and asked Him, **“Is that the way to answer the high priest?”** Keeping true to form, Jesus did not answer him. Instead, in Verse 24, Jesus responded to this officer, who has just struck Him, **by asking him a question.**

*John 18:22-23 (NLT)*

**“One of the Temple guards standing there struck Jesus on the face. “Is that the way to answer the high priest?” he demanded. {23} Jesus replied, “If I said anything wrong,**

*you must give evidence for it. **Should you hit a man for telling the truth?***

**Question 8: “Is that the way to answer the high priest?”**

**Question 9: “Should you hit a man for telling the truth?”**

This question, *“Should you hit a man for telling the truth?”* challenges the guard’s morality and belief system. Jesus asked him if doing wrong was a proper response to someone else who had done the right thing. Nevertheless, the guard’s actions were a relatively minor part of the cruelty Jesus had to face to fulfill the will of God. In John’s Gospel, every question and answer led to the will and plan of God. This plan was that Jesus’ death would be the propitiating act for our sins. It would bring redemption and eternal life. The story of the plan continues in Verses 24-28, as Annas sent Jesus, captive and bound, to the high priest, who then sent the Lord to Pontius Pilate.

To propitiate means to take action as a substitute for someone else to “make it right.”

*John 18:28 (NLT)*

*“Jesus’ trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the morning. Then he was taken to the headquarters of the Roman governor. His accusers didn’t go in themselves because it would defile them, and they wouldn’t be allowed to celebrate the Passover feast.”*

## **Pilate’s First Question (to the Mob)**

*John 18:29-32 (NLT)*

*“So Pilate, the governor, went out to them and asked, **“What is your charge against this man?”** {30} “We wouldn’t have handed him over to you if he weren’t a criminal!” they retorted. {31} “Then take him away and judge him by your own laws,” Pilate told them. “Only the Romans are permitted to execute someone,” the Jewish leaders replied. {32} **This fulfilled Jesus’ prediction about the way he would die.**”*

**Question 10: “What is your charge against this man?”**

In Verse 29, Pilate asked the religious officials why they were accusing Jesus. They had no answer, except to reply with an

emotional response. Religious spirits and out of control emotions never have valid answers. As the narrative continues, we see the plan of God unfolding. Jesus had predicted how He would die. There was no turning back. Jesus would not permit it.

## Pilate's Second Question (to Jesus) Jesus answered with a Question.

*John 18:33-34 (NLT)*

*“Then Pilate went back inside and called for Jesus to be brought to him. **“Are you the King of the Jews?”** he asked him. {34} Jesus replied, **“Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?”**”*

**Question 11: “Are you the King of the Jews?”**

**Question 12: “Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?”**

In Verse 33, Pilate asked Jesus if He (Jesus) was the King of the Jews? In Verse 34, Jesus does not yet answer Pilate. Again, Jesus turned the question back to Pilate with His own question. He said, **“Is this your question, or did others tell you this about me.”** (This was Pilate's opportunity to believe in Jesus, but he let it pass him by.)

## Four More Questions from Pilate to Jesus

*(John 18:35-38 NLT)*

*“**“Am I a Jew?”** Pilate asked. **“Your own people and their leading priests brought you here. Why? What have you done?”** {36} Then Jesus answered, **“I am not an earthly king. If I were, my followers would have fought when I was arrested by the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world.”** {37} Pilate replied, **“You are a king then?”** **“You say that I am a king, and you are right,”** Jesus said. **“I was born for that purpose. And I came to bring truth to the world. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.”** {38} **“What is truth?”** Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, **“He is not guilty of any crime.”**”*

The conversation was not between captor and a victim of some lower station. It was an exchange in which Pilate never had the

advantage. He was curious and wanted to know the truth. You can discern the calmness of Jesus' Spirit and the frustration in Pilate's, as he sought the truth. Ultimately, Pilate's final question to Jesus showed his frustration, and perhaps his confusion. It certainly revealed his lack of understanding. Jesus did not answer it, and Pilate had no answer to his own question of *"What is truth."*

### Here are the four questions. (Verses 13-16)

#### **Question 13: "Am I a Jew?"** (Verse 35)

This was a question that Pilate did not intend to be answered. It was a statement he spoke to separate himself from the events at hand.

#### **Question 14: "Why? What have you done?"** (Verse 35)

Pilate legitimately was seeking to know why there was such an uproar over Jesus. He was unhappy to be put in the middle of it and wanted an explanation.

#### **Question 15: "You are a king, then?"** (Verse 37)

Jesus chose to answer this question. He told Pilate He was a king, but not an earthly one. This did not help Pilate with his confusion and frustration. His question to Jesus was intended to evoke a further explanation. Jesus explained further, with a statement of His purpose on earth. He said, ***"I came to bring truth to the world"*** Pilate was looking at the Truth, but did not know it. This led to Pilate's final question for Jesus.

#### **16. "What is truth?"** (Verse 38)

Can you answer this question with complete confidence?

## Pilate's Second Question to the Mob

*John 18:39b-40 (NLT)*

***"...So if you want me to, I'll release the King of the Jews."***  
***{40} But they shouted back, "No! Not this man, but Barabbas!" (Barabbas was a criminal.)***

***(NKJV) "Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"***

**Question 17: “Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”**

This question illustrated Pilate’s fear of the religious officials, the mob and their combined power to disrupt his position. Though he was a fierce and violent Roman ruler, and though he knew Jesus was innocent, he feared what might happen if he released the Lord. The religious officials and their mob would disrupt the order he kept in his domain. Therefore, he surrendered to their wishes. They asked for Barabbas to be freed and demanded that Jesus be crucified. This was their answer to Pilate’s question. It was a declaration of unrighteous, evil injustice. It set the will of God into motion for victory over death, hell, the grave. Most importantly, the power of sin was about to be defeated. The cross was awaiting Jesus. Pilate gave the mob what they asked for - the suffering and crucifixion of Christ.

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## Chapter 19

### Pilate’s Final Questions to Jesus

#### *John 19:1-5 (NLT)*

*“Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip. {2} The soldiers made a crown of long, sharp thorns and put it on his head, and they put a royal purple robe on him. {3} “Hail! King of the Jews!” they mocked, and they hit him with their fists. {4} Pilate went outside again and said to the people, “I am going to bring him out to you now, but understand clearly that I find him not guilty.” {5} Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said, “Here is the man!””*

Chapter 19 begins with Pilate having his soldiers mock, scourge and beat Jesus. They put a crown of thorns on His head and a purple robe on His back, even as they continue beating Him.

#### *John 19:6-9 (NLT)*

*“When they saw him, the leading priests and Temple guards began shouting, “Crucify! Crucify!” “You crucify him,” Pilate said. “I find him not guilty.” {7} The Jewish leaders replied, “By our laws he ought to die because he called himself the Son of God.” {8} When Pilate heard this, he was more frightened than ever. {9} He took Jesus back into the headquarters again and asked him, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave no answer.”*

### **Question 18: *Where are you from?***

In the midst of the enraged mob and the terrible beating Jesus was enduring, Pilate became *“more frightened than ever.”* He surrendered control to the mob and brought Jesus out. Pilate declared that he found no fault in the Lord. Nevertheless, he will have his part in the murder of the Lamb of God. At this point, Jesus remained silent. He had no reason to answer Pilate’s question about where He came from. The Lord had determined to make the journey to His cross. Answering this question would profit nothing.

*John 19:10-11 (NLT)*

*““You won’t talk to me?” Pilate demanded. “Don’t you realize that I have the power to release you or to crucify you?” {11} Then Jesus said, “You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who brought me to you has the greater sin.””*

### **Question 19-20: *You won’t talk to me?” Pilate demanded. “Don’t you realize that I have the power to release you or to crucify you?”***

Jesus told Pilate that he was wrong, thinking he had power to release or crucify Him. Everything was in the hands of God. The will of God could not, and would not be stopped. The cross awaited Christ. From the moment of Christ’s death, salvation would await whoever will call on the name of the Lord. Redemption had drawn near and was about to declare itself when Jesus would cry, *“It is finished.”*

## Pilate's Final Question for the Mob

*John 19:14-16 (NLT)*

*"It was now about noon of the day of preparation for the Passover. And Pilate said to the people, "Here is your king!" {15} "Away with him," they yelled. "Away with him--crucify him!" "What? Crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the leading priests shouted back. {16} Then Pilate gave Jesus to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led him away."*

*John 19:15b (NKJV)*

*"Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?"*

**Question 21: "Shall I crucify your King?"**

## Christ's Final Question to the Father

All hell was about to rejoice. Jesus would take the final walk to His cross. It was party time in hell, but the party would not last. In three days, Satan and his demons would know utter defeat. Christ rose from the grave and took His place as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Revelation 19:15 tells us that the day is coming when *"He will tread the winepress of the fierceness and the wrath of Almighty God."* However, before this can become reality, Jesus had to complete His task. He faced the worst pain imaginable - crucifixion. This pain would far exceed the physical torture He already had endured. This was the pain of separation from His heavenly Father. It was such unimaginable agony that Jesus' flesh asked the ultimate, propitiating question, even though He knew the answer.

*Mark 15:34 (NLT)*

*"Then, at that time Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*

**Question 22: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"**

Jesus' final question was the evidence of how complete the abandonment of the Son of man had to be. He had to die alone,

suffering the death of an abandoned criminal, for the sins of mankind. Jesus' words showed the completeness of His humanity. The final barrier was broken. **The Man on the cross was ripped violently from His eternal oneness with the Father.** It was ordained that He would die completely alone, uncovered in the flesh and completely covered in shame. This had never happened before. It will never happen again. It had to be done once, according to the Scriptures, "for it was expedient that one man should die..." (John 11:49-52 and 18:50)

## **It was finished. Then, the Power and Fury of God made itself known.**

*John 19:28-30 (NLT)*

*"Jesus knew that everything was now finished, and to fulfill the Scriptures he said, "I am thirsty." {29} A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. {30} When Jesus had tasted it, he said, **"It is finished!"** Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."*

*(Matthew 27:51-54 NLT)*

*"At that moment the curtain in the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split apart, {52} and tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead {53} after Jesus' resurrection. They left the cemetery, went into the holy city of Jerusalem, and appeared to many people. {54} The Roman officer and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, **"Truly, this was the Son of God!"**"*

## **A Final Question to Pilate**

*John 19:38-42 (NLT)*

*"Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take Jesus' body down. When Pilate gave him permission, he came and took the body away. {39} Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night, also came, bringing about seventy-five pounds of embalming ointment made from myrrh and aloes. {40} Together they wrapped Jesus' body in a long linen cloth with the spices, as*

*is the Jewish custom of burial. {41} The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before. {42} And so, because it was the day of preparation before the Passover and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.”*

**Question 23: (Paraphrased) “Can I claim Jesus’ body and bury it?”**

Even though Joseph of Arimathea could not see the bigger picture, he and Nicodemus were vital links to the completion of the Gospel story. Jesus’ body had to be secured in a tomb that would be well guarded. Joseph and Nicodemus did this. Now, it would be a matter of time until the glory of God would rise from the grave.

**What evil finished was only the beginning.**