Introduction
It's been over a month now since we last looked at John's gospel. Back at the end of July we began chapter 18. You may have forgotten where we are so let's briefly review what we read last time to help prepare us for today's passage.

At the beginning of chapter 18 Jesus took the remaining disciples and they left the upper room. They went across the city of Jerusalem crossed the Kidron brook and valley to the garden of Gethsemane. It was a familiar place, a place Jesus had visited before with His disciples. It was as we said last time not a good place to go if you were trying to run or hide. Jesus then was in control, it was His decision to go to the garden. Whilst they were in the garden they must have heard across the valley the betrayer Judas leading a large detachment of Roman soldiers and Jewish temple guards. It was night we are told. From the dark garden they must have seen the torches and heard the sound of the men approaching. But again Jesus took control. He didn't try to run away and hide in the dark. When the soldiers approach it is Jesus who steps forward and asks them, “Who are you seeking?” “Jesus of Nazareth,” they tell Him.

Jesus tells them that they have found the man they seek. That will be where we pick up the story today.

In today's passage we get the set up for Jesus' first trial. Jesus as we shall see faced six trials before his execution. Below is a table detailing the six trials our saviour faced.

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<th>#</th>
<th>In front of whom</th>
<th>Scripture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Annas</td>
<td>John 18:13-23</td>
<td>Religious</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Caiaphas</td>
<td>John 18:24</td>
<td>Religious</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>The Sanhedrin</td>
<td>Luke 22:66-71</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Pilate (1)</td>
<td>John 18:28-38</td>
<td>Roman / civil</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Herod Antipas</td>
<td>Luke 23:8-12</td>
<td>Roman / civil</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Pilate (2)</td>
<td>John 18:29 – 19:16</td>
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John 18:12-14 (NKJV)
12 Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him.

Our Lord now having been identified as the one they are looking for is arrested and bound. Perhaps we might skip over the term “captain” here without much thought. In Greek the word is chiliarchos a technical term for a commander of 1000 men. As we said before this does not mean that this number of men was present but it does show us that an important and powerful man of high rank was there to arrest Jesus.

As I pointed out last time it was a joint operation. The Romans representing the gentile world worked in tandem with the Jewish temple guards. This fact is significant. Throughout the centuries there have been those who point at the Jews and say that they are the ones responsible for killing Jesus. This has led to much of the hatred and persecution they have faced. But what John writes here convicts us all. None of us can deny our involvement in the arrest and execution of Jesus. Both Jew and Gentile are guilty.
It is also worth noting that Jesus was bound or physically restrained. Jesus remember had willingly stepped forward and was handing Himself over in a peaceful manner. Why then do they feel it necessary to bind Jesus? This binding is part of Jesus' unmerited sufferings. Given how many soldiers were present and the submissive nature of Jesus they might just have said, “Come along with us.” However as we shall see during His trials Jesus is publicly humiliated and abused. This abuse goes way beyond what was usual, what might be expected or was warranted.

Sometimes we rush over the facts of Jesus arrest, trial and execution. I suppose it's natural that we just simplify things and say, “Jesus died for me.” This is of course a wonderful and beautiful truth but I want you to take a moment as you read and hear of all our Saviour went through over the next few weeks to consider all that He suffered for us. Every physical blow, every verbal insult He endured for us.

Also I think John here in verse 12 has the words of the prophet Isaiah in mind (Isaiah 53:7). Isaiah gives his prophecy regarding how the Messiah will be led meekly like a lamb to the slaughter.

13 And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year.

Jesus then is led away to the residence of Annas. John is the only gospel writer that includes the trial before Annas. We might ask then who was Annas? John tells us he was the father in law of Caiaphas the current “official” high priest.

Annas had 5 sons and 1 grandson who would all be high priests after him. Why then was Jesus not taken directly to the high priest Caiaphas? Annas had been high priest from 6-15 AD. In 15 AD the Roman authorities removed him from this important religious position. This was greatly resented by the Jews. The position of high priest was one that was a lifetime appointment. Not one that could be given or taken as the political winds blew. So in the minds of the Jews, Annas remained the “true” or “real” if not the official high priest. He would continue to exert considerable influence during his lifetime and that is why he is the one who gets the first chance to interrogate Jesus.

14 Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

Caiaphas ruled as high priest from 16-36 AD. John reminds us here of what Caiaphas said back in John chapter 11 (John 11:49-52). The Apostle John tells us something very interesting here in verse 51. “Now this he did not say on his own authority.”

John here interprets what Caiaphas says as a prophecy. He doesn't realise at the time what he is saying or implying but God is giving him a prophetic insight into the future. When Caiaphas made this statement he was looking at Jesus as a Jewish trouble maker. A trouble maker who was stirring up the people. The Jewish leaders fear was that he would lead an armed rebellion against their Roman occupiers. Caiaphas was no fool, he knew that a peasants revolt would lead to a crushing suppression by the Romans and an end to the Jewish nation. Therefore Caiaphas argued if this one man, this trouble maker Jesus died the whole nation might be saved. Jesus in his thinking then would die as a substitute or in the place of the Jewish nation.

Of course Jesus far from being the ultimate trouble-maker is in fact the ultimate peace-maker. The trouble we face as human beings is our sin. Sin is not just our being bad or breaking God's rules. Sin is properly defined as rebellion against God. Sin under God's law is a death sentence on those who are guilty. The reality is that we are all guilty. Our sin means we cannot have a relationship with a Holy God and our sin also means our spiritual death. But this is where Jesus comes in. Jesus is the one who brings peace. He brings peace by being the one who will die for the many. He being perfectly sinless is the only one who can die in the place of all of us who are guilty sinners. His sacrifice brings reconciliation between God and us. God's wrath against sin is appeased. The trouble is all smoothed over. For those who put their faith and trust in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ peace reigns.