

2 - Prince of Paradox

Meditations on Christ from the Gospel of John (John 18:1-11)

03/21/2010 - Jim Johnson

Jesus is a paradox and His life is a series of paradoxical situations. Never is this more apparent than in His journey to cross.



A. John 18:1-2

Jesus left the upper room to spend time in the garden of Gethsemane with His disciples. This garden was a common place of retreat. It was a quiet retreat from the pressures of the ministry for all the disciples - including Judas. It was a special place and yet Judas used it to betray his friend.

Judas betrayed Jesus in the same garden where Jesus had _____ Him.

B. John 18:3

Judas slipped into the garden with his posse made up of a Roman Cohort and certain officers from the chief priests and Pharisees. It was night and the olive trees of the garden would have made it even darker which is why they carried torches and lanterns to help them find their way. The apostle John was fond of calling Christ the light of the world. (John 8:12) How senseless.

They used torches in order to find the _____ of the world.

C. Also in John 18:3

We find that the posse carried weapons. A weapon is ultimately designed to wound those who would resist. They were ready to use the force of those weapons to wound and subdue Christ. If Christ was known for anything, it was His ministry of healing the wounds of others. 30 times in the Gospels does it refer to His healing ministry.

And yet - they came with the intention of wounding the _____.

D. John 18:4

According to John's Gospel, Jesus initiated the conversation. He did this knowing what was just about to happen to Him. Most would prepare to fight or perhaps run but He came forth, out of the shadows of the olive trees and initiated the encounter by asking them "Whom do you seek?"

Jesus knew their _____ yet He went out to meet them.

E. John 18:5-6

The question had been raised, "Whom do you seek?" They answered "Jesus the Nazarene." To which He replied "I am He." When they heard his answer they began to back pedal out of fear and awe, until they found themselves sprawled on the ground.

When Christ answered by saying "I am He" He literally was saying "I am" (according to the Greek). Such words were meant to bring to mind Ex. 3:13-14 where God told Moses that He was to be known as "I am." (Yahweh) As God in the flesh,

Christ was indeed Yahweh and to make the point, the Father in Heaven provided some kind of force that knocked them all to the ground.

If it had been a clumsy accident - a couple of men might have fallen, and if they fell into others maybe a few more – but the whole group fell down like bowling pins. A group of several dozen or more people – all laid flat. This was a force from God.

The Jewish historian, Artapanus, (about 300-200 BC) wrote that when Moses pronounced the name of his God, “Yahweh,” “Pharaoh fell backwards.” This is not Bible but it was tradition.

They sought a man, but they encountered _____.

F. John 18:7-10

Jesus asked again – whom do you seek. The fools replied in the same way, and they proceeded to arrest Him. Peter intervened. He took a wild swing with a sword and cut off the right ear of the Servant of the High Priest of Israel.

Peter tried to liberate Christ by cutting off an ear of a _____.

He didn't go after a soldier – he struck out at a servant – and yet there is a hidden significance to this. Many of the chief priests were also there in the garden according to Lk. 22:52, but not Caiaphas, the High Priest.

He more than any other person represented the leadership structure of the nation of Israel. He sent in His stead his trusted servant to represent his authority and to serve as his eyes and ears so that he might report back. Of Caiaphas and people like him Jesus said, “*For the heart of this people has become dull, and with their ears they scarcely hear.*” (Matt 13:15). Peter just happened to slice off the ear of the one who was the eyes and ears of the High Priest the Priest who did not have ears to hear.

SENSELESS

The more we read today, the more apparent it becomes that this whole saga is riddled through with senselessness UNTIL we read John 18:11

G. John 18:11

The soldiers moved in to subdue Peter. Jesus intervened. He told Peter to cease and then asked, “...*the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?*” He spoke of the cup of God's wrath that would fall upon Christ as He alone would take to himself the sins of the world. He was willing to take that cup and drink of it because it as the Father's will.

It is only the will of the Father that makes _____ of the senseless.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

1. Look at verses 1-11 again. Do you find other paradoxes written there?
2. What kind of senseless issues are you facing today? Where does the will of God enter in?
3. Christ drank the cup of Christ's wrath for you? Have you received his gift? Should you thank Him for it?