

Gospel of John 18 A (1-9)

Intro:

“Not only is the Passion the climax of the work (John’s gospel), but it has determined the Gospel from the beginning in a very particular way. It is the ‘hour’ towards which Jesus has been looking from the beginning, and it is also he who is in control of the movement to this hour and what happens at this hour: it might appear that he is executed, but by his voluntary self-offering he turns the destruction of the temple of his body into the act of raising it up...In John’s gospel Jesus says...‘What shall I say?’ ‘Father save me from this hour? No for this purpose I have come to this hour.’ (John 12:27).” (Fr. John Behr, *John the Theologian The Paschal Gospel*, pg. 176-7).”

“Having said these things, Jesus went forth with His disciples beyond the winter torrent of Kedron, where there was a garden, into which He entered, and His disciples.

Cyril of Alexandria: “The place was a garden, typifying the paradise of old. For in this place, as it were, all places were recapitulated and our return to humanity’s ancient condition was consummated.”

John Chrysostom: “He also comforts the disciples that he came to this action willingly when he placed himself in the garden as in a prison.”

²And Judas also, the *one* delivering Him up, knew the place; for Jesus many times gathered together there with His disciples.

The solitude of the garden was used by Jesus as a space for teaching free from distractions (Chrys.)

³Judas then, having received the cohort and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, comes there with torches and lamps and weapons.

“This rather unlikely group of characters clearly has a representative character; as Schnakenburg, *Gospel*, 3, 223, puts it: John has ‘Jesus confront the whole unbelieving cosmos. His “report” becomes a theological representation.’ It is also noteworthy that only Judas and his companions bear lights and torches; having departed from the Light of the world’ (8:12) they are in the darkness of the night (Fr. Behr, *Paschal Gospel of John*, pg. 177.).”

⁴Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and said to them, “Who do you seek?”

“At the time of his arrest, Jesus with his disciples ‘go out to a garden’...it is Jesus who again ‘goes out’ to meet them and it is he that interrogates them, ‘who do you seek?’ and then as Barrett puts it ‘fells them to the ground with a word,’ identifying himself three times with the affirmation ‘I AM’ (18:5,6,8). In all this, John represents Jesus not as being put to death, but rather as the Good

Shepherd, laying down His life of His own accord for His sheep that they might be one flock (10:14-16), for as Jesus says, ‘when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all to myself. (12:32) (Fr. Behr, *The Paschal Gospel of John*, p. 177).”

⁵They answered Him, “Jesus the Nazaræan.” Jesus said to them, “I am.” And Judas also, the one delivering Him up, was standing with them. ⁶Then when He said to them, “I am,” they went backward and fell to *the* ground. ⁷Then He asked them again, “Who do you seek?” And they said, “Jesus the Nazaræan.”

Saint Gregory of Nyssa: “The Lord of glory, Who ... embraced suffering in the flesh, did not abandon His free will, saying, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it [Jn. 2:19]’; and again, ‘No one takes My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again [cf. Jn. 10:18]’; and when those who were armed with swords and clubs drew near to Him on the night before His Passion, He caused them all to go backward by saying, ‘I AM [Jn. 18:6; Ex. 3:14],’ and again, when the dying thief besought Him to remember him, He showed His universal sovereignty by saying, ‘Today you shall be with Me in Paradise [Lk. 23:43].’ Even in the time of His Passion He is not separated from His authority.” [*Against Eunomius*, Bk. II, § 11, in *Nicene*, 2nd Ser., V:122.]

Saint Chrysostom: “Do you see His invincible power, how being in the midst of them He disabled their eyes. ...they also had torches...If they did not know it was Jesus, how could Judas be ignorant, who had been continually with Him? For he also stood with them, and knew Him no more than they, but with them fell backward. And Jesus did this to show that not only could they not seize Him, but could not even see Him when in their midst, unless He Himself permitted.” [Hom. 83, *P.G.* 59:490 (col. 448).]

⁸Jesus answered, “I told you that I am. If therefore you seek Me, let these withdraw,” ⁹that the word might be fulfilled which He spoke, “Of those whom You have given Me, I lost not one of them.”

Chrys. “Even at the last hour He shows His love for His own.”