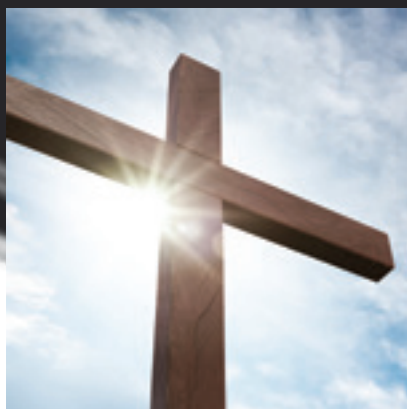


JOHN 18-21

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# GLORIFYING JESUS



6 INTERACTIVE BIBLE STUDIES FOR  
SMALL GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS



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MATT OLLIFFE

*Glorifying Jesus*

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## » HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THESE STUDIES

### 1. What is an Interactive Bible Study?

Interactive Bible Studies are a bit like a guided tour of a famous city. They take you through a particular part of the Bible, helping you to know where to start, pointing out things along the way, suggesting avenues for further exploration, and making sure that you know how to get home. Like any good tour, the real purpose is to allow you to go exploring for yourself—to dive in, have a good look around, and discover for yourself the riches that God's word has in store.

In other words, these studies aim to provide stimulation and input and point you in the right direction, while leaving you to do plenty of the exploration and discovery yourself.

We hope that these studies will stimulate lots of 'interaction'—interaction with the Bible, with the things we've written, with your own current thoughts and attitudes, with other people as you discuss them, and with God as you talk to him about it all.

## 2. The format

The studies contain five main components:

- sections of text that introduce, inform, summarize and challenge
- numbered questions that help you examine the passage and think through its meaning
- sidebars that provide extra bits of background or optional extra study ideas, especially regarding other relevant parts of the Bible
- ‘Implications’ sections that help you think about what the passage means for you and your life today
- suggestions for thanksgiving and prayer as you close.

## 3. How to use these studies on your own

- Before you begin, pray that God would open your eyes to what he is saying in the Bible, and give you the spiritual strength to do something about it.
- Work through the study, reading the text, answering the questions about the Bible passage, and exploring the sidebars as you have time.
- Resist the temptation to skip over the ‘Implications’ and ‘Give thanks and pray’ sections at the end. It is important that we not only hear and understand God’s word, but also respond to it. These closing sections help us do that.
- Take what opportunities you can to talk to others about what you’ve learned.

## 4. How to use these studies in a small group

- Much of the above applies to group study as well. The studies are suitable for structured Bible study or cell groups, as well as for more informal pairs and triplets. Get together with a friend or friends and work through them at your own pace; use them as the basis for regular Bible study with your spouse. You don’t need the formal structure of a ‘group’ to gain maximum benefit.

- For small groups, it is *very useful* if group members can work through the study themselves *before* the group meets. The group discussion can take place comfortably in an hour (depending on how sidetracked you get!) if all the members have done some work in advance.
- The role of the group leader is to direct the course of the discussion and to try to draw the threads together at the end. This will mean a little extra preparation—underlining the sections of text to emphasize and read out loud, working out which questions are worth concentrating on, and being sure of the main thrust of the study. Leaders will also probably want to work out approximately how long they'd like to spend on each part.
- If your group members usually don't work through the study in advance, it's extra important that the leader prepares which parts to concentrate on, and which parts to glide past more quickly. In particular, the leader will need to select which of the 'Implications' to focus on.
- We haven't included an 'answer guide' to the questions in the studies. This is a deliberate move. We want to give you a guided tour of the Bible, not a lecture. There is more than enough in the text we have written and the questions we have asked to point you in what we think is the right direction. The rest is up to you.

## 5. Bible translation

We quote from and refer to the English Standard Version, which we recommend. There should not generally be any problems, however, if you are using a different translation. (Nevertheless, it might be useful to have an ESV on hand in case of any confusion.)





## » STUDY 1

# BEFORE THE HIGH PRIESTS

[JOHN 18:1-27]

### The road to glory

THE ‘ROAD TO GLORY’ IS THE PLOT line of many a bestselling biography or inspirational movie. An athlete seeks to excel and overcomes opposition, obstacles, injuries and self-doubt on the way to their ultimate triumph; a great leader emerges from humble origins and early setbacks to bring victory to a nation in its darkest hour; a soldier endures hardship, hunger and fear, and by daring feats of arms turns the battle and subdues a powerful enemy.

Throughout John’s Gospel, Jesus has been walking his own ‘path to glory’. He is introduced to us as God made man, who came into the world to give eternal life to all who believe.<sup>1</sup> But from chapter 5 onwards, we see Jesus facing increasing challenges from the Jewish leadership of the day.<sup>2</sup> By chapter 11,

these opponents and their plans are crystallized and articulated by Caiaphas, the reigning high priest: “It is better for you that one man should die for the people” (v. 50). This is a self-fulfilling prophecy: humanly speaking, the high priests are key players who ensure that Jesus dies (v. 51).

Thus, the moment of ‘triumph’ and ‘glorification’ is not what we might otherwise expect. Jesus’ glorification will occur by and in his crucifixion—his torture and execution, stripped bare and nailed to a cross from which he will hang, exposed to mockery, until he is dead.

Jesus will be glorified as the suffering servant (Isa 52:13-14). Certainly, the disciples are confused about this—so much so that Jesus spends the night

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before he dies explaining it to them so that it will make sense afterwards.<sup>3</sup> The Son of Man is about to be lifted up (John 3:14-17), and so will draw all people to himself (12:32-33). This glorification will later be expressed in his resurrected life, demonstrating him as the Lord of his creation. But before any of that, Jesus' glorification comes through the

cross. As such, John's account of Jesus' road to glory is now reaching its climax. Jesus is the grain of wheat that falls into the earth and dies, and thus bears much fruit (12:23-24).

But even in the humiliating path of suffering laid out before Jesus, there are still glimpses of his glory and indications of his true identity.

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**Read John 18:1-12.**

1. How did Jesus protect his disciples? What does John show us about why this was so important to Jesus (vv. 4, 8-9, 11; cf. 10:11-15, 28-29)?
2. How did the arresting officers respond to Jesus when he said, **"I am he"** (vv. 5-6)? Why do you think they responded this way?
3. What did Peter do, and why (vv. 10-11; cf. Matt 26:51-55)? Why was he wrong to do this (cf. 18:36)?

**"I am he"**

This important phrase could alternatively be translated "I am", and the ESV translates it that way in 8:58, a theologically significant verse. This phrase can simply be one of self-identification (e.g. 9:9). But on Jesus' lips, it is the self-identification of the great "I am" (Exod 3:14; John 6:20; 8:24, 28; 13:19), the one who 'is who he is' —the independent, self-describing God from whom Moses hid his face (cf. 1:1-3, 18).

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## Jesus arrested

THROUGHOUT JOHN'S GOSPEL, Jesus is in charge. As he pursues his Father's mission—even in his arrest—Jesus is king in everything that transpires. Jesus has just finished praying in the garden that he and his disciples had so often frequented (named in the other Gospels as 'Gethsemane'). Judas the betrayer knows of the place, which perhaps was why Jesus chose it—for he is determined to drink the cup the Father has set before him. Then Judas arrives, emboldened by a cohort of soldiers and temple police. They have come prepared for a fight and are not going to risk defeat for lack of weaponry or numbers (v. 3).

Jesus goes out of the walled garden to meet the armed detachment. He is certainly not the hired hand who runs away, putting his disciples at risk (vv. 8-9; cf. 10:10ff). On the contrary, he stands with kingly dignity, requiring the arresting party to name the one whom they seek. And when he identifies himself, the fully armed military unit, together with Judas, draws back and falls to the ground (18:4-6).

At the name of Jesus, every knee should bow (Phil 2:10)—no less his unwilling enemies than his grateful people. In his account, Luke adds that Jesus heals the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant whom Peter has wounded (Luke 22:51). But what the temple officers at a previous time could not do (7:32-36, 45-46), they now can, since Jesus' time has come. They successfully arrest Jesus, because he will **drink the cup** the Father has prepared for him (18:11). Thus, he must be finally rejected by his own—and for this, he must come before the high priests. John focuses on **Annas'** interrogation of Jesus rather than the proceedings before **Caiaphas** and the Sanhedrin (vv. 13-14, 19-24, 28; cf. Matt 26:57-68; Mark 14:53-65; Luke 22:66-71).

### 'Drinking the cup'

God's punishment is frequently described as "the cup of his wrath" by which he makes his enemies 'drunk' with suffering (e.g. Jer 25:15-18; Rev 14:10, 16:19). Poisoning was an infamous method of assassination and execution in the ancient world. Jesus will drink the repellent draught of death, judgement and wrath down to the dregs. Elsewhere, John describes Jesus' death as a 'propitiation'—a sacrifice that turns aside God's wrath against us and our sin (1 John 2:2, 4:10; cf. John 3:36). As Jesus drinks the cup of God's wrath, he is incurring God's wrath in our place.

### Annas and Caiaphas

History tells us that Annas was appointed high priest in AD 6 and was deposed in AD 15 and replaced by one of his sons.<sup>4</sup> In all, five of Annas' sons were appointed as high priests after him. Caiaphas, who held the office from AD 18-36, was Annas' son-in-law (v. 13). Annas' family members organized ►

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themselves to gain the position of high priest from the Roman occupiers and rotate it among the family heads. There is sarcasm in John's note that Caiaphas was "high priest that year", as it was difficult to keep up with which family member held the office at any given time, whereas the law of Moses expected the appointment of the high priest to be for life (Num 35:25, 28). As the patriarch of the family, it is not surprising that Annas continued to exercise substantial influence in Jewish political and religious life (cf. Luke 3:2; Acts 4:6).

**Read John 18:13-27.**

4. Why do you think John reminds us of Caiaphas' prophecy here (v. 14; 11:49-53)?
  
5. What is Jesus' response to being struck, and why (vv. 22-23)? Does he 'turn the other cheek' (cf. Matt 5:39, 26:53)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What is the significance of Peter's denial of Jesus?

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7. Why do you think John interweaves the account of Peter's denial (vv. 15-18, 25-27) with the account of Jesus' interrogation before Annas (vv. 13-14, 19-24)?
8. How do Jesus' words and actions contrast with Peter's words and actions?
9. How does John's presentation of the events of this passage continue to show that Jesus is ultimately in control?

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## At the high priest's house

MATTHEW RECORDS THE RESPONSE of corrupt King Herod to the birth of the true “king of the Jews” (Matt 2:2-3). Similarly, John here recounts the response of the corrupt high priestly family to God's true High Priest (cf. Heb 4:14-5:10). Under Jewish law, trials had to be conducted in daylight, because the testimony of witnesses under artificial light was considered unreliable, and all court procedures had to be public and observable. But darkness is the appropriate

moment for this evil (cf. John 3:19-20; Luke 22:53).

Jesus' initial interrogation by Annas—recorded only by John among our Gospel writers—is an informal questioning (hence the lack of witnesses) by the patriarch of the high priestly family about Jesus' disciples and his teaching. In response, Jesus continues to protect his disciples and conducts his own interrogation of Annas (vv. 20-21). Jesus' point is that Annas' questioning is

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unnecessary because his teaching was public. Unlike the religious leaders, Jesus did not have one message for the masses and a different mode of operation revealed behind closed doors.

As he speaks, Jesus is struck across the face with a heavy blow by one of the officials. He then shows us how to apply his own saying, ‘Turn the other cheek’ (Matt 5:39). He does not invite another sinful blow, but withholds revenge and holds the man accountable by asking a reasonable question: “Why do you strike me?”

Jesus is then bundled off to Caiaphas—the member of the high priestly family currently installed by the Romans into the office of high priest—for further interrogation. Unlike the other Gospel writers, John doesn’t record the detail of the proceedings before Caiaphas or the Sanhedrin hearing; it is hardly

necessary for him to do so, for we already know the outcome. In the questioning of the man born blind, the Jewish leadership had already reached a consensus: “We know that this man is a sinner” (John 9:24). Any apparent due process is merely for show. As Caiaphas prophesied previously, Jesus must die to “gather into one the children of God” (11:52).

During the various proceedings, Peter is also being tested, just as Jesus promised (cf. 13:37-38). John (in all probability the “other disciple” of 18:16) had used his personal contacts to gain entry into the high priest’s courtyard for himself and Peter (v. 15). Perhaps Peter had thoughts of defending Jesus, but there in the semi-darkness, challenged by the servants and servant girls, Peter could only do exactly what Jesus said he would do: deny him three times.

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## » Implications

(Choose one or more of the following to think about further or to discuss in your group.)

- How is Jesus’ glory seen in his arrest and interrogation? How does this shape your notions of true ‘glory’?





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## » Give thanks and pray

- Thank Jesus for enduring such humiliation to take away the sin of the world.
- Ask God for forgiveness for your own failures.
- Pray for wisdom and strength for those situations where you find yourself being abused, particularly situations of discrimination or persecution because of your Christian faith.

## Endnotes

1. See my studies on John 1-4, *Introducing Jesus*, Matthias Media, 2019.
2. Likewise, refer to my studies on John 5-12, *Challenging Jesus*, Matthias Media, 2020.
3. You can study John 13-17 using my *Revealing Jesus*, also from Matthias Media, 2021.
4. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 18:33-35.