

Whom Seek Ye?

John 18:1-11



Rock Hill Baptist Church

605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Brother David Buffaloe
731-845-6104

online at bibleteacher.org

FOCAL Read Responsively John 18:1-11^{KJV} When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. {2} **And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.** {3} **Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.** {4} Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? {5} They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. **Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.** {6} **As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground.** {7} **Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.** {8} Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: {9} That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none. {10} Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. {11} **Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?**

It has been said that when God begins to work, Satan also becomes much more active. I can agree with that, because I believe Scripture bears this out. Immediately following our Lord's **baptism by John (Matthew 3:14-17)**, Jesus was afterward **tested by Satan (Matthew 4:3-**

11). Immediately following Peter's great revelation, that Jesus is THE Christ, the Son of the Living God (Matthew 16:17-19), Satan rose up in Peter and told the Lord of all creation that He was *not* going to go to that Cross. In His parable of the sower (Mark 4:15) Jesus talked about Satan coming along and, like the birds of the field, *stealing the seed of the Gospel* from the hearts of men, lest people be saved. When Jesus cast a demonic spirit of infirmity out of a certain woman (Luke 13:12), almost immediately evil men bound by Satan condemned the Master for healing on the Sabbath. And even in our text today we see that, almost immediately following the institution of the Lord's Table, we see the Master in the Garden, betrayed because Satan entered Judas (Luke 22:3).

When God moves, it seems surely that Satan immediately moves. And yet, dear friends, I want you to focus your mind on these important truths we will see in our text today.

1. We Must Always Remember Christ Is CREATOR, But Satan Is CREATED

FOCAL John 18:3-6 Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. {4} Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? {5} They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am

he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. {6} As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

Humans, even Christians, have a tendency to *overrate* Satan and to *underrate* Jesus Christ. Satan does move when God moves. But you need to understand something - God is the CREATOR of all things, even of Satan. When Satan moves, he can move no farther than God Almighty will allow him to move. We must not begin to fear this old dog - and we are never exhorted in Scripture to fear the devil. Satan is no more than a puppy at the heels of our Master and Lord Jesus Christ!

Listen Beloved: you will *never find* the words "fear" and "Satan" or "devil" together in any Bible verse but this one:

Revelation 2:10 **Fear** none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Even in this verse we are told to **fear not** - the devil can do no more than God allows. Certainly Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. Did this surprise the Creator of all things? Did the Master, of Whom the Scripture says:

Colossians 1:15-17^{NIV} [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. {16} For **by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. {17} He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.**

Did His heart *quicken* when Satan's forces came into the peace of that Garden? Did our Lord *fear for His life* when this motley crew burst into that quiet place with lanterns, torches, and weapons, like an old "B" rated Frankenstein movie? Was Jesus *surprised* when Judas Iscariot, a man He chose and befriended, **sold Him for thirty pieces of silver?** Absolutely not! In fact, we read in the Scripture that Jesus saw into Judas' heart *prior to the Lord's Table*:

John 13:26-27^{HCSB} Jesus replied, "He's the one I give the piece of bread to after I have dipped it." When He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas, Simon Iscariot's son. {27} After Judas ate the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Therefore **Jesus told him, "What you're doing, do quickly."**

and not only saw what Satan was doing in Judas, Jesus *allowed it*. He told Judas **"Go and do what's in your**

heart - betray Me!"

In our earlier introduction we talked about Satan working when God works, and gave valid examples of this. But Beloved, you need to know this: **Satan cannot move without the permission of God.** Look at these examples:

a. Jesus was tried by Satan immediately following His baptism and affirmation by God - yet God was in control! Right after God tells all present at the baptism "This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-17), we read these words:

Matthew 4:1 **Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.**

God the Spirit literally *led Jesus to the place of testing, for the purpose of testing*. Why? Because God the Father *wanted us to see how Jesus handled Satan*. Did Jesus quake? Did He fear? Did He allow Satan to lead Him around the ear like a little boy? Absolutely not! In each instance of temptation our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ *used the Divine Word of God* to rebuke Satan. His words, **It is written**, should be a clarion call that every believer in Christ should heed when Satan tempts. Not my strength, but God's strength always defeats the evil one!

b. When Satan moved on Peter following that Apostle's wonderful revelation (*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God*) and attempted to talk Jesus out of going to

the Cross, our Lord immediately turned *and resisted Satan*. We read:

Matthew 16:23 [Jesus] said unto Peter, **Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.**

That yapping dog has no control over God the Son! Satan may move, yet Jesus is in control. Do not fear Satan, **fear God!** Satan is created, perhaps of different substance than we are, yet created nonetheless. Jesus Christ is the Creator, but Satan is the Created.

It is the devil's game to get people worried about the devil, and not about our true concern, the *preaching of the Gospel*. Look at our text:

FOCAL John 18:3-6 Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, **cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. {4} Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? {5} They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he.** And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. {6} **As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.**

Satan and those Satan purchased came after Jesus with weapons, torches, and with much force. They came into the Garden and found Jesus there with *eleven disciples*. The disciples, by the way, were *sleepy and drowsy and, like many of us would have been, a little confused*. That's what the Gospel of Luke tells us:

Luke 22:45-48 And **when [Jesus] rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, {46} And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. {47} And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. {48} But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?**

Oh my Beloved, the disciples were *asleep* when the enemy came for the Master. Eleven sleepy men staggered to their feet, one named Peter so foolish that he drew a sword and, in futility, cut a man's ear off. How foolish Peter! The forces that came for Jesus were *much greater in number* than that little force of eleven in the Garden.

2. Jesus Christ, Eternal God, Is The Great I AM

And yet, a force of ten thousand could have come, and Jesus with a word would have caused them all to fall

down. Our Lord asked, **Whom do you seek?**, and these devil driven men cry out **Jesus of Nazareth**. You see, they are looking for a *mere man, a rabbi, a teacher guilty of ruffling the feathers of the politicians of His day*. How did Jesus answer?

FOCAL John 18:5-6 ... **Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*...** **As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground.**

I want you to notice, dear ones, that the word "he" is *italicized* in the King James text. An *italicized word* in the text signifies that it is added by the translators to improve the reading of the verse. In other words, that little word "he" is *not* in the original Greek manuscript of the Bible. What Jesus said when these men told Him they were looking for Jesus of Nazareth, our Lord replied:

I Am¹

Not **I Am He** but **I Am**. When you understand this, then you understand why **they went backward and fell to the ground**. The great pastor **Arthur W. Pink** writes:²

-
- 1 G1473, ἐγὼ, egō, eg-o', A primary pronoun of the first person, "I" (only expressed when emphatic): - I, me. For the other cases and the plural see G1691, G1698, G1700, G2248, G2249, G2254, G2257, etc., + Present Indicative of G1510, εἰμι, eimi, i-mee', First person singular present indicative; a prolonged form of a primary and defective verb; I exist (used only when emphatic): - am, have been, X it is I, was. See also G1488, G1498, G1511, G1527, G2258, G2071, G2070, G2075, G2076, G2771, G2468, G5600. (Strong's Greek Dictionary), **I AM**
- 2 in *The Exposition Of The Gospel of John, chapter 61, Christ in the Garden*, found online at http://www.pbministries.org/books/pink/John/john_61.htm

"As soon then as He had said unto them, I am, they went backward, and fell to the ground" (John 18:6). ... Observe the words "they went backward." They were there to arrest Him, but instead of advancing to lay hands on Him, they retreated! **Among them were five hundred Roman soldiers, yet they retired before His single "I am." They fell back in consternation, not forward in worship! All He said was "I am"; but it was fully sufficient to overawe and overpower them.** It was the enunciation of the ineffable Name of God, by which He was revealed to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). It was a display of His Divine majesty. It was a quiet exhibition of His Divine power. **It was a signal demonstration that He was "the Word" (John 1:1)! He did not strike them with His hand—there was no need to; He simply spoke two monosyllables and they were completely overcome."**

This is not just a *few* men come to get Jesus. Though the commentaries do not all agree on the number, every commentary I read put the number of men who came to arrest Jesus at 200-500! On one side you have *eleven sleepy men*, and on the other side *hundreds of well armed, alert and seasoned soldiers*. Surely Satan will

win this day. Surely all is lost, we are defeated, we have no hope.

And then JESUS speaks. The Great **I AM** says but His name, and *hundreds* fall backward to the ground. Jesus did not run *away from* these Satanic forces, but *moved toward them*. They did not ask, "Are You Jesus?", but Jesus spoke first, "**Whom do you seek?**". Eternal God took the offensive, not the defensive. This is the Great I AM, the same Very God of Very God Who spoke to Moses through the Burning Bush.

a. They could not see God in Jesus - they sought only **Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter's son**. Though two simple words, I AM, caused all to fall to the ground, **their eyes were not opened**. Look at the text:

FOCAL John 18:5-8 ... **Jesus saith unto them, I am he.** ... {6} As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground. {7} **Then asked [Jesus] them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.** {8} **Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*:** if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

These henchmen of Satan, hundreds strong, rushed into the Garden looking for a created being, but instead found the Great I AM. His two simple words, **ego eimi**, knocked the men to the ground - who can withstand God. And yet, blind and stupid in their unbelief, Jesus -

Eternal God - asked them once more, "**Whom do you seek?**".

They don't fall to the ground this time when Jesus answers them, for they are already there! Blinded by Satan, just as the Scripture says:

2 Corinthians 4:3-5 But **if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: {4} In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.** {5} For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

These men were blind to the reality of Who Christ is. Even when Jesus spoke I AM, that Name which identifies Him as Eternal God, and even as that Name knocked them backward to the ground, they were yet blind to the Gospel. Satan blinds the lost to the Gospel of Christ. And yet, dear Friends, know this: God is still in control. They could not see Jesus *because*

b. **God is still in control!** Look at the text yet once more:

FOCAL John 18:8-9 **Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: {9} That the saying**

might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

Now let me ask you this question: IF several hundred soldiers burst into a Garden where they were told a Traitor *and His followers* were meeting, don't you think that the soldiers would have taken not only the Traitor *but also the other conspirators*? Doesn't that make sense? How is it that One Man, the Man they called **Jesus of Nazareth**, could *dictate terms* to a vastly superior force? That's exactly what Jesus was doing - He was *dictating terms of His surrender*. The Scripture gives this reason:

That the saying might be fulfilled, which He spake, Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none.

The Word of Christ is the Word of God. It was necessary that His every Word be fulfilled. Jesus said in:

John 6:39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

The Triune God has decreed that **all of those who belong to Christ shall *not* be lost**. It would have been normal for this vastly superior force to take - even to kill - the eleven sleepy Apostles. They were under orders to

bring Jesus to trial, but what orders protected the disciples? The **Word of God spoken by Christ** protected them! While Jesus Christ intercedes for you, dear Believer, Satan can do nothing at all. Let that old fool send his forces - God is in control. Do not fear the devil nor his confused minions! Hasn't God promised us:

Romans 8:31-34 ... if God be for us, who can be against us? {32} He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? {33} Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. {34} Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Just as Jesus interceded for the lives of the sleepy eleven, Jesus intercedes for us today - if you know Him as Lord and Savior. You need not fear that which Satan may bring. Jesus prayed just before this incident in the Garden:

John 17:12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the

Scripture might be fulfilled.

None were lost, but he that refused to believe. The son of perdition³, the son of the lost, son of destruction was lost. He was not lost because Jesus lost him. He was lost because *he refused to believe*. God is in control, and can keep what He saves. It was prophesied in Scripture that Judas Iscariot would betray Jesus (compare Psalm 41:9 with John 13:18), and all that was lost in the Garden that day was Judas Iscariot **that the Scripture might be fulfilled**. Pastor Charles Stanley writes:⁴

"[Judas Iscariot] lives on the stage of Scripture as an awful warning to the uncommitted follower of Jesus who is in his company but does not share his spirit," writes R. P. Martin. **The highest title Judas ascribed Jesus was "Rabbi," never "Lord," or "Master." Judas never belonged to Jesus. It was possible then, as it is now, to claim allegiance to God while never handing over the soul's title deed....**

Even if his early association with Christ was in earnest, he allowed Satan a foothold by prostituting his station as treasurer of the disciples in his pilfering of the money box. Satan transformed that foothold into a chasm.... "The fact remains that while he may

3 G684, ἀπώλεια, apōleia, ap-o'-li-a, From a presumed derivative of G622; ruin or loss (physical, spiritual or eternal): - damnable (-nation), destruction, die, perdition, X perish, pernicious ways, waste.

4 *The Ultimate Treachery*, found at

have been sincere, he was not whole-hearted in his decision," Henry Lockyer writes of Judas. The most sobering aspect of the betrayal, Lockyer notes, is that **without regeneration one can be in Christ's service and still not know Him as Savior and Lord."**

Jesus will protect His own. As the Great Shepherd, He has promised that those who belong to Him *will never perish, but have everlasting life*. That is a promise given to those who surrender - not only their lips, but their *lives* to Jesus.

3. A Last Word, And An Application

If you belong to Jesus, don't worry about what Satan will or will not do. Satan has no more power over you than Jesus allows him to have. Remember, Satan is but a created being, whereas Jesus Christ is THE Creator, the Great I AM, Eternal God who took on humanity to die for our sins. Everything that happened in the Garden of Gethsemane on that day long ago was ordained of God. Everything that occurred was as it should be.

In the end Satan was no more than a puppet, allowed to do God's bidding. That great fool became the catalyst that God used to secure our salvation on Calvary.

If you belong to Jesus, surrender *fully* to Jesus. Do not fear Satan nor his demons - respect and honor God. Remember the words of Scripture:

Psalms 27:1-2 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? {2} When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

Remember that Jesus said,

Luke 10:18 ... I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

If Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior, He has promised to be forever with you. You do not need to fight the forces of this world sword to sword, as Peter tried to do. The Sword He has given you is the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Focus on this Word, believe on Him. Be comforted in this - the Word which Jesus has said, He will surely keep.

Two men walked on a road called Emmaus long ago talking about their broken hearts (**Luke 24:13**). They had seen a gentle Man, a kind and sweet Man beaten, mocked, spat on, and fixed to a tree. They had seen this Man, a Person Who had never done wrong, willingly go forward, lay down, stretch out His hands, and had seen with horror those brutal nails rip through His flesh. There He hung. As He prayed the soldiers mocked Him, laughing at His prayers. When He cried out in thirst they thrust a sponge full of vinegar and spit in His face. This Man Who had only done great things died a death that, it

seemed, only Satan could engineer.

As these two walked to Emmaus a Third Person joined them and listened as they tearfully told of Calvary. The Third Man rebuked them, and showed them in the Scriptures why it had to be so. Why the Son of God had to become Perfect man, so that imperfect men could become sons of God. The Third Man preached the Blood of Christ, the Payment of Calvary, the richness of forgiveness by faith in Jesus Christ. So compelling were His Words that the disciples begged Him to stay and eat with them that night. When that Third Man broke bread with them that night, suddenly all that Jesus taught came rushing back.

Matthew 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

and again,

Matthew 28:20 ... lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

My prayer is that God will reveal to you this great truth. If you belong to Him by faith, He is never far away. If you do not know Jesus Christ as Savior then, like Judas, you are toying with your eternity. May God lead you to surrender fully to Christ Jesus today!