



GETHSEMANE ACCORDING TO JOHN

¹When he had said this, Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered. ² Judas his betrayer also knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. ³ So Judas got a band of soldiers and guards from the chief priests and the Pharisees and went there with lanterns, torches, and

weapons.

⁴Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, went out and said to them, “Whom are you looking for?” ⁵ They answered him, “Jesus the Nazorean.” He said to them, “I AM.” Judas his betrayer was also with them. ⁶ When he said to them, “I AM,” they turned away and fell to the ground. ⁷ So he again asked them, “Whom are you looking for?” They said, “Jesus the Nazorean.” ⁸ Jesus answered, “I told you that I AM. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.” ⁹ This was to fulfill what he had said, “I have not lost any of those you gave me.”

¹⁰Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave’s name was Malchus. ¹¹ Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?”

¹² So the band of soldiers, the tribune, and the Jewish guards seized Jesus, bound him, ¹³ and brought him to Annas first.

(John 18, 1-13)

Brief Commentary:

John does not present Jesus as the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. John’s Jesus through his passion fulfils the mission he was destined to, and his death on the cross is its glorification (John 12, 20-33). In this Gospel the story of Jesus’ agony in the garden of Olives is totally absent, while it shows us Jesus not just betrayed by Judas, but he freely offering himself to drink “the cup” prepared for him by the Father. In contrast with the Synoptic Gospels, it does mention neither the Mount of Olives nor the Gethsemane, but the Kidron brook that divided the high ground of the Temple from the Mount of Olives.

While all the other evangelists vaguely point to the culprit of the high priest servant’s ear cut, John not only specifies his name, Malchus, but also finds in Peter the responsible of that gesture. This is to be read as Peter’s willingness to leave on the servant a sign of shame. Moreover, John states precisely that Jesus’ arrest was carried over by a group of officers of the Jews sent by the high priests rather than the Luke’s less realistic version in which the high priest personally had been there to arrest Jesus.