



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

John Sermon Series
Supports Session 9: I Am He
Sermon Title: “The Sovereign Savior” (John 18:1-11)

Connection to Session 9

Jesus demonstrated His authority when He submitted to the crowd who came to arrest Him. He would submit to the Father’s plan of redemption.

Introduction/Opening

On March 30, 1981, an assassination attempt was made on then President Ronald Reagan by John Hinckley, Jr. In the chaos and aftermath of the event, Alexander Haig, who was Secretary of State, became famous—or perhaps infamous—for stating “I’m in control here.”¹ One can understand his desire to bring comfort to a nation whose President had just been shot. However, his comments were broadcast for millions to see and hear, and it appeared momentarily as if no one was in charge.

When viewing the scene in Gethsemane, it appeared as if the ones in charge were the Roman cohort, the religious leaders, the Temple guards, and Judas Iscariot, the betrayer. Nothing could be further from the truth. Jesus never once relinquished His sovereign control. He was in charge that night in the same way He had sovereign control over the storm on the Sea of Galilee. He affirmed that sovereignty with one phrase, “I am he” (v. 5).

Outline

1. The Sovereign Choice (vv. 1-3)
 - a. In the previous chapter, Jesus said “Father, the hour has come” (John 17:1). Jesus knew the cross loomed before Him. However, He had already prayed “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will” (Matthew 26:39). Jesus’s journey to the garden was a part of God’s sovereign plan.
 - b. Jesus and the disciples traveled to the garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. This place was common to them. It was a place where many times after long days of ministry they had come to rest in the shade of the olive trees. These faithful but imperfect followers were with Jesus in the darkest hour of the darkest night in history.
 - c. The text teaches us two facts about Judas. First, Judas knew the place. He knew it because of the number of times he had been there with Jesus. Second, Judas would be the one to betray Jesus.

1. “Al Haig and the Reagan Assassination Attempt — ‘I’m in Control Here’ – Association for Diplomatic Studies & Training,” [adst.org](https://adst.org/2014/03/al-haig-and-the-reagan-assassination-attempt-im-in-charge-here/), March 21, 2014, <https://adst.org/2014/03/al-haig-and-the-reagan-assassination-attempt-im-in-charge-here/>.

- d. Judas was not alone however. He “took a company of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees” (v. 3). The company of soldiers could refer to a cohort, a group of Roman soldiers. The Temple guards were under the control of the high priests and carried lanterns, torches, and weapons.

2. Sovereign Power (vv. 4-6)

- a. Jesus displayed omniscience, authority, and power. Instead of the crowd asking where He was, He asked them who it was they sought. John noted that He knew everything that was about to happen and why they had come.
- b. The mob replied that they were there for Jesus, to which he replied, “I am he” (v. 5). This phrase in Greek could also be literally translated “I am.” Some view this self-identification as a reference to Jesus’s statement of His equality with God in John 8:58.
- c. John makes a note that Judas Iscariot was present for this conversation. Judas, standing with them, was there to betray Jesus.

3. Sovereign Love (vv. 7-9)

- a. Jesus again asked them whom they sought, and again they told Him Jesus of Nazareth. He affirmed again who He was. Then He said to them, “let these men go” (v. 8). This was a command. He showed His authority to the crowd, and He showed His sovereign love to the Eleven.

4. Sovereign Obedience (vv. 10-11)

- a. Peter, in a rash moment, pulled out his sword and cut off the right ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest. He aimed for the head, but Malchus dodged the sword in the light of the torches, and Peter cut off his right ear. Only Luke records that Jesus healed Malchus.
- b. Jesus quickly told Peter to put away the sword. He then added, “Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?” (v. 11). The cup here refers to God’s wrath against sin. Jesus drank the cup in full obedience to God’s plan.

Conclusion

The crowd of soldiers and guards came to Gethsemane thinking they were the ones in control. What they failed to understand is that Jesus was in complete control. They came to arrest a criminal. What were His crimes? He opened blind eyes. He caused the lame to walk. He healed the lepers. He raised the dead. The religious and political leaders of His day could not tolerate someone with popularity and authority that superseded theirs. They plotted to kill Him. The arrest had been made, and the plan was unfolding. They were moving Jesus toward the cross. What they did not know is that He was in control at every step. He willingly drank the cup. He died loving His own. He died in obedience to the divine plan of redemption.

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