

John Chapter 18 Continued

John 18:22 "And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?"

In the previous lesson, Jesus had told them that He had not spoken in secret, but openly where anyone could hear Him. We pick up in the verse above.

This officer had no idea who he slapped. This slap was the way they did someone thought to be insolent. Perhaps, he thought Jesus cut the high priest short with His answer.

John 18:23 "Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?"

Jesus was asking for a fair trial, while His opponents, who had already decided on the sentence (see 11:47-57), had no intention of providing one.

In Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught if someone smites you on the one cheek, turn unto him the other also. Jesus appeals to this officers' good conscience here.

John 18:24 "Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest."

Annas recognized that he was not getting anywhere with Jesus and sent Him to Caiaphas because, if Jesus was to be brought before Pilate for execution, the legal accusation must be brought by the current reigning High Priest I.e., Caiaphas in his capacity as chairman of the Sanhedrin.

Annas sends Jesus to the high priest, Caiaphas.

In (verses 25-27), we see the final fulfillment of Jesus' prediction that Peter would deny Jesus three times (Matt. 26:34).

John 18:25 "And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not."

We see here, a progression of Peter's denial. Perhaps the woman went back and spoke to others about believing who Peter was. At any rate, Peter is asked again, are you one of the disciples of this Jesus who is being questioned? Peter is very emphatic when he says, I am not.

John 18:26 "One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?"

It seems a large group of the high priest's servants had gone to bring Jesus back. Malchus, whose ear was cut off by Peter, had some of his relatives among those who came to capture Jesus. He would have looked more closely at Peter, since Peter had cut Malchus' ear off.

I do not understand after Jesus put his ear back, that they did not realize who Jesus was. This kinsman of Malchus' says, didn't I see you?

John 18:27 “Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.”

In Mark 14:71, we read that Peter actually cursed and began to swear at this last denial. Just as Jesus had told Peter: after the third denial, the cock crew.

(From verses 18:28 to 19:16), this section deals with Jesus' trial before Pilate. Although Pilate appears in every scene here, Jesus Himself and the nature of His kingdom occupy center stage.

“Should be defiled”: They will not enter the house of a Gentile and thus cause ceremonial defilement, but they are willing to commit murder. When Pilate asks for the accusation, they admit there is none deserving of death by Roman law (verses 30-31). Pilate realizes that Jesus has been delivered to him because of their jealousy.

John 18:28, Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.”

The judgment hall was the headquarters of the commanding officer of the Roman military camp or the headquarters of the Roman military governor. I.e., Pilate, whose normal headquarters was in Caesarea, in the palace that Herod the Great had built for himself. However, Pilate and his predecessors made it a point to be in Jerusalem during the feasts in order to quell any riots. Jerusalem became his Praetorium or headquarters.

The word “early” is ambiguous. Most likely, it refers to around 6 a.m. since many Roman officials began their day very early and finished by 10 or 11 a.m.

Jewish oral law gives evidence that a Jew who entered the dwelling places of Gentiles became ceremonially unclean. Their remaining outside in the colonnade avoided that pollution. John loads this statement with great irony by noting the chief priests' scrupulousness in the matter of ceremonial cleansing, when all the time they were incurring incomparably greater moral defilement by their proceedings against Jesus.

This hall of judgment was a worldly court. This is where the Romans judged when they were in Jerusalem. This was very early morning, possibly even before 6 a.m. as the other trials had taken place during the night.

These high priests would not go into this building, because it was a Gentile court. Passover was at hand. They were so caught up in the law that they could not recognize the Savior of the world.

John 18:29 “Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?”

The question formally opened the Roman civil phase of proceedings against Jesus, in contrast to the religious phase before the Jews (in verse 24). The fact that Roman troops were used at the arrest, proves that the Jewish authorities communicated something about this case to Pilate in advance. Although they most likely had expected Pilate to confirm their judgment against Jesus and order His death sentence, Pilate ordered instead a fresh hearing in his presence.

Pilate is the Roman governor in authority. He realizes these Jews have peculiar customs about Passover, and he comes out to judge this matter. His question is, what do you accuse Him of?

John 18:30 “They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.”

The definition of a malefactor is a criminal: someone who has committed a crime or has been legally convicted of a crime.

This is an evasive answer. Really, they do not have a legitimate complaint to make. They know they are limited in the severity of punishment they can do, and they want Pilate to do their dirty work for them.

John 18:31 “Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:”

When Rome took over Judea and began direct rule through a prefect in A.D. 6, capital judgment, i.e. the right to execute, was taken away from the Jews and given to the Roman governor. Capital punishment was the most jealously guarded of all the attributes in Roman provincial administration.

Now, we see their evil plan. Their law prohibits them from killing Him, and they have brought Him to Pilate to do their dirty work for them, as is stated in the verse above. They want to kill Him, but they do not want to take the blame for the killing.

As we have said before, they are jealous and afraid that Jesus will dethrone them. They do not want to lose their status or their followers.

John 18:32 “That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.”

Jesus said that He would die by being “lifted up” (3:14, 8:28, 12:32-33). If the Jews had executed Him, it would have been by throwing Him down and stoning Him. But God providentially

controlled all the political procedures to assure that when sentence was finally passed, He would be crucified by the Romans and not stoned by the Jews, as was Stephen (Acts 7:59).

The Jews may have preferred this form of execution based on (Deut. 21:23).

We see here, that Pilate represents the Gentile world and these high priests and other Hebrew leaders represent the Jews. With God, there are only two types of people in the world: Jew and Gentile.

We see here that they are both guilty of the death of Jesus. Jesus, in every little detail, fulfills the Scriptures.

John 18:33 “Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?”

Pilate went away from the accusers, back to the hall. His question to Jesus is not have you committed a crime, but are you king of the Jews? John skips it here, but Pilate's wife had warned him of a dream she had about Jesus. She told Pilate to have nothing to do with this.

John 18:34 “Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?”

Again, Jesus demanded witnesses.

Jesus speaks to the conscience of Pilate. We see here, that Pilate is on the defensive, not Jesus. He says to Pilate in a sense, are you going to condemn me on hearsay?

In (verses 35-38), Pilate's only concern is whether Jesus has incited rebellion against Rome. Jesus' answers show this is not the case. For this reason, Pilate finds no fault with Him.

John 18:35 “Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?”

Pilate has no evidence of wrong done by Jesus. He is sincere in wanting to know what crime Jesus has committed. He feels Jesus must have done something, or His own people would have not brought Him, accusing Him.

John 18:36 “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”

By this phrase “My kingdom is not of this world”, Jesus meant that His kingdom is not connected to earthly political and national entities, nor does it have its origin in the evil world

system that is in rebellion against God. If His kingdom was of this world, He would have fought. The kingships of this world preserve themselves by fighting with force.

Messiah's kingdom does not originate in the efforts of man, but with the Son of Man forcefully and decisively conquering sin in the lives of His people and someday conquering the evil world system at His second coming when He establishes the earthly form of His kingdom. His kingdom was no threat to the national identity of Israel or the political and military identity of Rome. It exists in the spiritual dimension until the end of the age (Rev. 11:15).

Jesus here, is speaking to Pilate in a way that Pilate understands. Pilate knows that earthly kings have armies that fight for them. Jesus is telling Pilate this is a spiritual kingdom and not a physical kingdom.

John 18:37 “Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”

Jesus here, is telling Pilate that the things, which are happening to Him now, are things He must do. Jesus says, all I have done is tell the truth. Those who recognize the truth hear me.

John 18:38 “Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.”

In response to Jesus' mention of “truth” (in verse 37), Pilate responded rhetorically with cynicism, convinced that no answer existed to the question. The retort proved that he was not among those who the Father had given to the Son. “Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice” (verse 37).

John made it clear that Jesus was not guilty of any sin or crime, thus exhibiting the severe injustice and guilt of both the Jews and Romans who executed Him.

Pilate was truly interested. This was not a play on words. He was an intelligent man. Pilate knew that Jesus was not guilty of any crime.

John 18:39 “But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the Passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?”

Here, Pilate (knowing of Jesus' innocence), tries to get the people to request the release of Jesus at the Passover. Pilate knows for sure that Jesus is innocent.

John 18:40 “Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.”

The word “robber” means “one who seizes plunder” and may depict not only a robber but a terrorist or guerrilla fighter who participated in bloody insurrection (see Mark 15:7).

Barabbas was a robber. He was guilty of what he was charged. Jesus was not guilty of any crime. Pilate knew that jealousy and envy had caused them to try to do away with Jesus. Pilate thought that by offering to free one for Passover that they would surely choose Jesus to free.

He had underestimated their hatred for the Son of God. The chief priests and elders (leaders of the church), had power over the people, and they persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas, instead of Jesus to be freed.

John Chapter 18 Continued Questions

1. Who struck Jesus with the palm of his hand?
2. In verse 23, why did Jesus ask why he hit Him?
3. Who had Annas sent Jesus to?
4. What office did Caiaphas hold?
5. What was Peter doing when they asked him if he was Jesus' disciple?
6. What was Peter's reply?
7. Who was the third person who recognized Peter and asked him if he was Jesus' disciple?
8. When Peter denied the third time, what happened?
9. Where was Jesus taken after Caiaphas?
10. Who was the Roman in charge?
11. Why did the high priest not go into the judgment hall?
12. When Pilate came out to them, what did he ask them?
13. What evasive answer did they give Pilate?
14. When Pilate told them to judge Him themselves, what did they reply?
15. Why do they want Jesus killed?
16. In verse 32, it speaks of fulfilling Scripture. In what way, does it fulfill?
17. What question did Pilate ask Jesus in verse 33?
18. Who had warned Pilate not to have anything to do with killing Jesus?

19. Who is on the defensive, Pilate or Jesus?
20. In verse 35, what question did Pilate ask Jesus?
21. Jesus said, My kingdom is _____.
22. Jesus is telling Pilate that His kingdom is _____ not _____.
23. When Pilate asked Jesus if He was a king, how did Jesus answer?
24. What did Jesus bear witness of?
25. After Pilate talked with Jesus, what did he say to the people?
26. Pilate was offering what to fulfill the Jewish custom at Passover?
27. Who did the people choose over Jesus?