

The Gospel of John

Chapter 18:12-40

December 14, 1997

- **The Gospel of John Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Our Lord is the Word, the Light and the Life
- Chapter 2 The Lord of the Wedding Feast; Zeal for the purity of the temple
- Chapter 3 Spiritual Birth, Belief and Salvation vs. Unbelief and Condemnation
- Chapter 4 The Ministry in Samaria, The Harvest, The Faith of the Nobleman
- Chapter 5 Paralytic man healed on the Sabbath, Unity of The Father and Son
- Chapter 6 The Bread of Life
- Chapter 7 The public debates about Jesus during the Feast of Tabernacles
- Chapter 8 Public debates: Woman caught in adultery; The Son makes you free; Abraham's true children
- Chapter 9 Jesus heals a man born blind.
- Chapter 10 Jesus is the Door and the True Shepherd
- Chapter 11 Our Lord is the Resurrection and the Life
- Chapter 12 Jesus Anointed and Worshipped as King, God softens some and hardens some, Public ministry ends
- Chapter 13 Jesus Loves His Disciples, Judas Betrays The Master
- Chapter 14 The Way, The Truth and The Life
- Chapter 15 Jesus is the True Vine
- Chapter 16 The Spirit will guide into all truth
- Chapter 17 The Glory of God, and the Unity and Perseverance of Believers
- Chapter 18 The Arrest of Jesus and the Denial of Peter

- **Review and Introduction**

Previously in our study of the Gospel of John, we began considering the trial of Jesus which began before Annas the Father in law of Caiaphas the High Priest. We saw that this "trial" was a series of due process procedural violations which made the entire process into a sham. It is a glorious thing to see Jesus not rebelling to ensure that His rights are protected. Christ lays down His rights, always seeks to instruct the loss and goes to the cross willingly but fearfully as a curse of the Father.

In this section, we will continue to review the trial of Christ but this time we will see Caiaphas briefly and most of our consideration this week and next will be the trial before Pilate.

Exposition of John 18:28-40

28 Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.

- Having finished His questioning by Annas, the Jewish leaders moved Jesus from Annas over to Caiaphas where He was to be questioned further. In the other Gospels, there is mention of an appearance before the Sanhedrin of which Caiaphas was a member. The best way to develop a chronology is perhaps to assume that Jesus met privately with Caiaphas first and then the remaining leaders were called to conduct the trial.
- It is quite instructive to see that during the most heinous act of mankind, these men are still attempting to please God by avoiding things that will make them defiled. Clearly the avoidance of defilement is of no value toward true piety unless it includes purity of the heart and mind (Titus 1:15). This behavior of selective purity or obedience is indicative of those who are not under the discipline of God nor are led by the Spirit.

29 Pilate then went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?"³⁰ They answered and said to him, "If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you."³¹ Then Pilate said to them, "You take Him and judge Him according to your law." Therefore the Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,"³² that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die.

- Having concluded that Christ is guilty of blasphemy, (Matthew 26:57) the cohort leads Jesus to Pilate where the trial resumes. Pilate was a Roman procurator who was the liaison for Rome in Jerusalem. Although he did not normally dwell in the Praetorium, it was the week of Passover and his presence would be strategic to squelch any insurrection.
- Not aware that they were intending to put Him to death, Pilate attempts to not get in the middle of the dispute by placing the burden of a trial on the Jews.
- It was lawful according to the scriptures to put a blasphemer to death but under the Roman rule that right was denied and only the Romans could carry out capital punishment. The fact that the Jews came to Romans for His death sentence made certain that He would be crucified because this method was uniquely Roman.

33 Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"³⁴ Jesus answered him,

"Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?"³⁵ Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?"³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

- There many examples where Pilate demonstrates how intimidated and confused he is about what to do with Jesus. Apparently, the charge that the Jews brought against Christ which they shared with Pilate was that He claimed to be a King. Thinking this would incite Pilate, it actually became something Pilate uses to mock Him.
- Jesus states that He truly is a King but not the kind of King with which Pilate was familiar. Jesus states that His kingdom is not an earthly one but rather it is a heavenly one. If it were earthly, He would have amassed a military sufficient to secure His release. But, He did not have an earthly kingdom and His protection rested in Himself and His Father.
- While it is prudent and necessary to protect ourselves and our families from tyrannical government, there is a sense in which we should not at all be surprised by the ability to do evil by a government who flees from God. At the same time when they are killing the innocent or righteous they may say that they are a defender of the family. This hypocrisy should not amaze us. The reason we should not be amazed is because we know that the problem is a spiritual or sin problem not an education problem. The answer to the woes in our land is not a political answer. We will not have righteousness in our land simply because we replace a few political leaders with godly people. The political leaders of scoundrels will themselves be scoundrels. In order to have a righteous administration, the spirit of God must go forth using the faithful proclamation of the Gospel and make spiritually dead men into spiritually alive men.

37 Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

- Christ assumes His pre-existence and states that He came into the world with purpose. The purpose was not discovered later, the purpose was established beforehand in eternity past. Those who are truth haters will not acknowledge Christ but will replace Him with even absurdities to avoid truth. The implications of Jesus' comment is clear, those who love truth will hear His voice, those who don't, won't.

38 Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all."

- John does not include Pilate's attempt to pass this problem on to Herod as the other Gospels do. As soon as Pilate heard that Jesus was from Galilee, he thought he could avoid the issue by deferring to Herod Antipas (one of Herod the Great's three sons: Antipas, Galilee and Perea; Archelaus, Judea and Samaria; and Philip, Batanea, Trachonitis)
- Pilate demonstrates a common technique of the darkened mind. Most likely influenced by his Roman upbringing, Pilate considered all new thought worthy of consideration and none worth rebuking. This is a very common tactic today that unfortunately most Christians do not arm themselves with an adequate defense. When the viability of absolute truth is brought in to question, any answer becomes suspect. The argument "well who is to know if that is true or not" is an assault on knowledge and actually is an assault on the unbeliever's own position.

39 "But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"⁴⁰ Then they all cried again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber. NKJV

- Pilate looks for another way to avoid the situation by appealing to an annual custom of releasing a Jewish prisoner at Passover. This custom was a simple attempt by the Romans to demonstrate some sort of goodwill to the Jews. Apparently the people were sufficiently swayed by the Priests and leaders that they are demanding the release of a convicted criminal in exchange for the corrupt execution of an innocent man.
- A small tidbit of Scriptural irony is that Barabbas name was Aramaic for "son of the father". It is rather interesting to consider that the people demanded the release of the false son in exchange for the spurious conviction of the true Son.