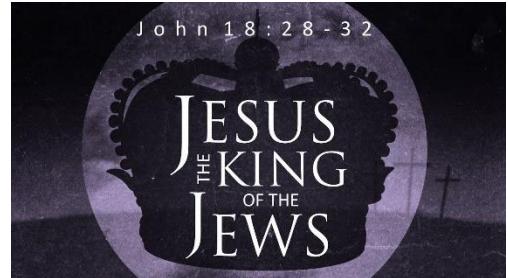


The Gospel of John Pt. 27

John 18:1-40

Big Idea

In spite of betrayal, denial, and illegal trial, Jesus shows us what it is like to be determined in God's calling and thus unmistakably reveal His true identity as the Son of God.



Exposition – John 18:1-40

Chapter 18 is action packed. Included in this passage is: Judas' betrayal and the subsequent arrest of Jesus; Peter's denial of Jesus according to His prophecy; and the details of Jesus' illegal trial before Annas, the High Priest and Pilate, the Roman prefect of Judea. This passage is pure narrative yet it is chocked full of doctrine. We can see Jesus' divinity; His passion; questions about the essence of truth; the essence of God's Kingdom as opposed to the world; man's sinful condition; God's sovereignty, and on the list goes.

1. Judas' Betrayal (V1-11)

- A. (V1-3) – Judas would have been familiar with the place that Jesus was because they had been there numerous times together. It is understood that during the Passover many, many Jews would have made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate the holy day. Many of them would have made camp on the mount of olives. Judas was necessary to the Jews in order for Jesus to be located at night amongst a sea of Jews. But, make no mistake, Judas is not an innocent purveyor of information, but rather a betrayer (Luke 6:16; Ps. 41:9; Acts 1:18; John 6:70-71; 13:27; 17:12). This is the culmination of the migration that Jesus and His disciples made after the Last Supper in John 13. The Kidron Valley is what separates Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. The distance between the two is just over two miles.

There were two different types of soldiers present: the Roman Cohort was a group of Roman soldiers that were normally stationed at Caesarea, but would come to Jerusalem at the times of the holy days to quell any insurrections or rebellions from the Jews. They could number up to 1000 soldiers. The officers from the chief priests and Pharisees were the temple guards. These were Jews that enforced the wishes of the Jewish leaders. They came expecting a fight.

- B. (V4) -- The discourse between Jesus and the Jews begins with Jesus' signature knowing the hearts of those He was dealing with. Consider the number of times this theme is revealed in the Gospels alone (John 2:25; Matt. 12:25; 22:28; Mark 2:8; Luke 6:8; 11:7; 16:15).
- C. (V5-9) – In the confrontation, Jesus asks that His disciples be allowed to leave without further detention. John notes how this fulfills Jesus' words from John 17:12, that He has lost none of those who were given to Him.
- D. (V10-11) – Peter reveals that he has not yet fully left his old ways. He resorts to the flesh, not fully understanding all that Jesus had predicted about His arrest, God's purposes, and His own voluntary sacrifice of His life. The young, male servant is identified here as Malchus. It seems likely that Peter intended a mortal blow to his head. Nonetheless, Jesus healed the ear. It is remarkable that Jesus performs this miraculous event, but it escapes the notice of His captors. Jesus will drink the cup which the Father has given Him (Matt. 20:22; 26:39).

2. Jesus Before Annas (V12-24)

- A. (V12-14) – Annas was once the High Priest, but was removed from that office by Pilate's predecessor. However, the Jews felt like he was still the true high priest, plus five of his sons and a

son in law had held the office at one time. There was clearly a great deal of politics in the priesthood in those days. Caiaphas was the current high priest. It was Caiaphas that first proposed that it would be a wise move to ask the people to select one person to die – this led to the decision between Barabbas and Jesus. While this meeting happens between Annas and Jesus, the Sanhedrin are being assembled for Jesus' pseudo-organized trial.

- B. (V15-18) – Here, in the middle of the discourse about Jesus' trial is a mention of Peter's first denial of Jesus. In his customary fashion, John refers to himself in veiled language, "another disciple". It seems that John was a connected man in these circles. We know that he knew Nicodemus (3:1) and Joseph (19:38), who were both prominent Jews.
- C. (V19-24) – The discourse between Annas and Jesus had obviously taken a turn toward the accusation of Jesus subverting the authority of the Emperor of Rome. This is why Jesus defends His ministry by saying it had not been in secret. This is how the Jews presented Jesus to Pilate, as an insurrectionist against Rome and Caesar. Their plan was quite devilish.

3. Peter's Denial (V25-27)

- A. Peter's second and third denials of Jesus Christ are recorded here, back to back. This was predicted by Jesus in Matthew 26:34. It really is amazing how quickly our affections & intentions can change!

4. Jesus Before Pilate (V28-40)

- A. (V28) – When Jesus left Annas He was taken to Caiaphas, but John is silent about this portion of Jesus' trial as well as when Jesus was taken to Herod as recorded in Luke 23.
The hypocrisy of the Jews is on full display here – They took Jesus, the King of the Jews, into the Praetorium, but would not step inside themselves because they wanted to be ceremonially clean for the celebration of the Passover, entering would have defiled them. The Praetorium was Pilate's palace, which was adjacent to the Fortress Antonia that housed the Roman Cohort. Within the Roman cohort was a special detachment known as the Praetorian Guard. These were the special forces of the Roman Army. Paul won many of these to Christ while he was imprisoned in Rome.
- B. (V29-32) – Since the Jews would not enter into the Praetorium, Pilate came outside to them.
When they were asked about the charges against Jesus, they acted as though they were credible enough to not accuse a man that was not obviously guilty, "if this man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you."
In order to understand the exchange here, you must understand that while Judah was occupied and controlled by Rome, the Romans allowed the Jews to rule their own people on civil/religious matters. So, Pilate tells them they should try Jesus in their own courts. While the Romans allowed the Jews considerable latitude on civil/religious matters, they were not allowed to execute anyone without consent from the Prefect, Pontius Pilate. In fact, in most cases, the Romans would handle the actual execution themselves. The Jews knew they could incite the Romans by making it appear that Jesus committed treason against the Caesar by claiming that He alone was King of the Jews.
- C. (V33-38) – "Are you the King of the Jews?" Pilate's question was direct. Jesus' reply was also. It was essentially, "Who's asking?" Pilate then responds by explaining that he is not familiar with the Jewish/Judaistic system and after all, the leaders of the system are the ones that brought Jesus to him, after all. This statement clearly reveals the disparity between the Kingdom that Jesus came representing and the devolved religious system that the Jews' system had become. Jesus' kingdom is not of this world!
- D. (V39-40) – As an olive branch, the Romans made it a custom to release one Jewish inmate at the Passover each year. Pilate assumes that the Jews would ask for Jesus to be released since Pilate found Him to have broken no laws. However, they spiral deeper into wickedness by requesting Barabbas, a murderer, to be freed.