

**JOHN**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to John chapter 18 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Now keep in mind that chapter's 13-14 dealt with the Passover meal and the teachings, the discussions that went on during and after this meal.

Then in chapter's 15-17 they have now gotten up and they are heading to the Temple area and out the east gate toward the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane.

And once again Jesus is teaching His men and even praying for them.

Now as we move into chapter 18 they have exited the east gate of the Temple and they are heading to the Mount of Olives where Jesus will be arrested shortly, after a time of prayer before the cross.

Now, before we get to our text this evening there is something I need to say regarding what happened to Jesus. You see, many feel that Jesus just let things get out of control and He ended up dead. He tried too hard to achieve this title of Messiah and in the end, He lost everything, even His life.

One writer gives us this insight of what goes on in the minds of many regarding the events leading up to and including the death of Jesus. He wrote,

Christ's life, and especially his death and resurrection, have been interpreted in very different ways by different people. In 1906 Albert Schweitzer published his landmark book *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*. In it Schweitzer concluded that Jesus was a mere man who was dominated by the expectation of the coming of God's kingdom and who finally in desperation tried to force its coming by seeking his own death. Schweitzer describes this in a famous quotation:

*There is silence all around. The Baptist appears, and cries: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Soon after that comes Jesus, and in the knowledge that he is the coming Son of Man lays hold of the wheel of the world to set it moving on that last revolution which is to bring all ordinary history to a close. It refuses to turn, and he throws himself upon it. Then it does turn; and crushes him. Instead of bringing in the eschatological conditions, he has destroyed them. The wheel rolls onward, and the mangled body of the one immeasurably great man, who was strong enough to think of himself as the spiritual rule of mankind and to bend history to his purpose, is hanging upon it still. That is his victory and his reign.*

To Albert Schweitzer and, tragically, to the thousands who followed him, Jesus was a mistaken idealist, caught and crushed like a rag doll in the wheels of history, who died in confusion, despair, and rejection. To Schweitzer, Jesus' great contribution was to free mankind of the hope of a future kingdom. A great deal of modern theology has been written to escape the implication of this concept.

Far from seeing Jesus as a helpless figure mangled on the cruel wheel of history, the Apostle John portrayed him as one who dramatically exhibited his lordship and control in the terrible events surrounding his death. Christ's actions have encouraging implications for us as we wage lives fraught with trying events. The record of his last days on earth brings encouragement and optimism to those who live in a world that at times appears to have no caring Sovereign.

- R. Kent Hughes, John – That You May Believe, pp. 413-414

As we will see tonight, Jesus was not someone who lost control of the situation, but He completed the work the Father sent Him to do, to free man from his sin by being the sacrifice for sinful man.

We need to keep that in mind as we look at our own lives that many times seem out of control. God is in charge of all things, nothing happens without His knowledge, and in knowing that we find great comfort and hope.

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in John chapter 18, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

## **JOHN 18**

### **VERSE 1**

Jesus just finished His last teaching for His men, in a sense. And that was His prayers for Himself, for them, and lastly, for all those who would come to saving faith in the Messiah, in Jesus and I love that. Jesus is praying for me, He is praying for you! That is how much He loves us!

Keep in mind that it is Passover and thus, Jerusalem was filled with people. Josephus tells us that during this specific Passover there were 250,000 sheep that were sacrificed. Thus, Jerusalem could have been filled with some 2.5 million people who have come to this Feast of Passover!

Thus, with all these sheep being sacrificed, as the blood flowed down from the Temple it would flow into the Brook Kidron, where Jesus and His men were now crossing.

Thus, as our Passover Lamb, Jesus, crosses the Brook Kidron He has a vivid reminder of what will shortly take place in His own life, the sacrifice He would make, the shedding of His blood!

Barclay put it like this, “From the altar there was a channel down to the brook Kedron, and through that channel the blood of the Passover lambs drained away. When Jesus crossed the brook Kedron it would still be red with the blood of the lambs which had been sacrificed.”

And Spurgeon wrote, “The very brook would remind him of his approaching sacrifice, for through it flowed the blood and refuse from the temple.”

We are also told that as they crossed the brook Kidron that “**there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered.**”

Keep in mind that the wealthy people owned gardens on the Mount of Olives and whoever owned this one, allowed Jesus to use it anytime He wanted.

How do I know that? Because the Scriptures tell us He spent much time there in this garden. In fact, it was such a routine for Him that Judas knew exactly where to find Him to have Him arrested as we are going to see! (See Matthew 26:36, Mark 14:32)

Now, as we will see, John is not going to deal with the prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. We don't know why, but the Holy Spirit did not include that prayer in this Gospel.

One more point before we move on and that is this garden called Gethsemane. This is not a garden like we might think. This was an olive orchard and thus, the name, “Gethsemane” means “olive press”. Here they would gather the olives and crush them to release the oil.

I find that interesting because this is the place where the wrath of God the Father would be poured out upon the sins of all humanity. The sins that Jesus bore for us and thus, this wrath, this crushing was going to be upon Him. May we not lose sight of what the Lord has done for us, what He endured for us, the crushing that He faced for us!

### VERSES 2-3

Think about the number of people that came to arrest Jesus, and not just people, but soldiers! We are told that they sent a “**detachment**” or “**cohort**” of troops, SPEIRAN in the Greek, and it speaks of a 10<sup>th</sup> part of a legion, which were 6,000 men.

Judas came with 600 armed men with swords, clubs, and lanterns to arrest Jesus. That means that there could have been upwards of 1,000 people coming to arrest one man if you include the religious leaders and others that may have gathered with them.

Don’t you think that just a few men would have been enough? Yes and no! Yes, because Jesus was laying down His life and no, not even a million men would have been enough if He was not willing to go, He is the creator!

Now they must have thought He was going to hide so, even though it was a full moon, they brought lanterns and torches with them. The sky must have lit up as they came up the Mount of Olives.

Also, as Jesus finished praying, He must have watched them as they approached to arrest Him.

As we will see, Jesus wasn't hiding from them but will reveal Himself to these soldiers and those who accompanied them.

Of this Clarke wrote, "With these they had intended to search the corners and caverns, provided Christ had hidden himself; for they could not have needed them for any other purpose, it being now the fourteenth day of the moon's age, in the month Nisan, and consequently she appeared *full and bright*."

One more point here and here in this garden a sinless man was about to do battle with Satan's representative, Judas (Luke 22:3). And Jesus would not fail!

Some 6,000 years ago this also happened in a garden as a sinless man did battle with Satan and lost. Adam failed and Jesus, the last Adam would not fail!

Paul points this out for us in I Corinthians chapter 15 as he wrote, "**For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. . . . And so it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.**" I Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49.

Now, as they are coming up the Mount of Olives, looking for Jesus to arrest this man who thinks He is the King, guess who meets them? We don't have to guess, let's read on and see!

VERSES 4-6

First of all, why did Jesus ask them, “**Whom are you seeking?**”? And not only once, but twice, (vv. 5, 7).

Because Jesus wanted them to acknowledge who they were looking for to protect His men. In fact, that is what we see in verse 8 here in John chapter 18 as Jesus tells these soldiers, “**I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way.**”

So as Jesus asks them this question, they answer Him by telling Him they are looking for “**Jesus of Nazareth.**” And Jesus tells them, “**I AM**” and once again we see this EGO EIMI statement. In other words, Jesus is telling them that He is God! You see, in the Greek the “**He**” is not there. It was added later again for clarification, but by doing that it loses the point being made, that Jesus is God!

And if there is any doubt to the fact that Jesus claimed to be God, when you see what happens to these men who came to arrest Jesus, I think that clears things up for us. You see, they were pushed back and fell to the ground!

I find that interesting because Paul tells us in Philippians 2:9-11, “**Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**”

As Jesus announced His deity they fell to their knees because, every knee will bow before the Lord one day and here is a glimpse of that!

Of this Clarke wrote, “Our Lord chose to give them this proof of *his* infinite power, that they might know that *their* power could not prevail against him if he chose to exert his might, seeing that the very breath of his mouth confounded, drove back, and struck them down to the earth.”

Now let me say this because there are those out there that like to claim that these soldiers falling backwards to the ground speaks of being slain in the Spirit. That is ridiculous!

You see, these men were not saved, and they were knocked down by the power of God in humility, He could have toasted them, but He didn't!

There is another verse in the New Testament that speaks of being slain in the Spirit and that is in Acts chapter 5 where Ananias and Sapphira are slain by the Spirit – they are dead because they lied to the Holy Spirit! Not a good verse to try and support this false teaching of being slain in the Spirit!

Now, after being knocked to the ground, listen to what these men do next.

#### VERSES 7-9

Who is in charge here? It doesn't seem like the soldiers or the religious leaders, but Jesus. In fact, as you read this you can clearly see that Jesus is telling them who they should arrest and who they should let go. How crazy is that when there are some 600 soldiers and maybe another 400 men who came to arrest Jesus, and yet they are unable to take control of the situation. One Man, Jesus, has them bound!

And we see Jesus once again draw their attention back to Himself and away from His disciples, as He was protecting them.



Again, they should have also been arrested as they were accomplices with Jesus, but they would be let go just as Jesus said.

You see, He displayed His divinity when He told them He was Almighty God and now, He once again tells them who He is, but they don't need to see that display again and they are not driven back on their knees before Him!

But think about how they must have felt when Jesus asked them once again, “**Whom are you seeking?**” I'm sure their voices quivered just a little and they braced themselves waiting to be knocked down again as they said “JJJEESSSUUSS of NNAAAZZZZAAARRATTH!!!” And once again He tells them “**I AM.**”

And the concern for Jesus, as I have said, was for His men, their safety.

Remember in John 17:12 Jesus said, “**While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.**”

Here we see Jesus freely give His life and asks them to let His men go, protecting them from any harm.

Jesus has done that for us all. He went to the cross and paid in full the penalty for our sins so that the judgment of God will not come upon us. We are set free!

Clarke once again sums this up for us by saying, “These words are rather words of *authority*, than words of *entreaty*. I *voluntarily* give myself up to you, but you must not molest one of these my disciples. At your peril injure them. Let them go about their business. I have already given you a sufficient proof of my power: I will not exert it in my own behalf, for I will lay down my life for the sheep; but I will not permit you to injure the least of *these*.”

And another writer put it like this, “In a sense, he sacrificed himself for their safety. He had promised the Father that he would protect them (John 17:12) and he fulfilled the guarantee of the voluntary surrender of his life.” (Tenney)

What a Savior we have. Laying down His life for us!

#### VERSES 10-11

Now as you read of Peter’s actions to protect Jesus you might think this was very brave. But think about what Peter just saw, the display of the deity of Jesus. And he also saw Jesus in His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. He saw the miracles that Jesus did. And he thinks he needs to help God out on this one!

Now, before we are too tough on Peter here, don’t we also do that, try to help God out! And in the end, we too cut off ears or make a mess of things and have to wait for Jesus to clean things up or put things back together again! A good lesson to learn. He is God and He does not need our help. All He wants us to do is follow Him!

Bruce put it like this, “Peter’s impulsive action was more likely to get himself and his companions into serious trouble than to do his Master any good, but even if it had a better chance of success, Jesus would allow nothing to stand in the way of his bringing to completion the work which his Father had given him to do.”

And that should make sense to us. Jesus came to fulfill the will of the Father and pay the debt of sin for mankind! In Matthew 26:52-56 we see this same event where we are told, **“But Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?’ In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, ‘Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.’ Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.”**

Here’s the thing. If man could be saved by good works, then why did Almighty God become flesh and dwell amongst us to go to the cross of Calvary? Now some would say that it is His sacrifice and good works that save us. Hogwash!

Paul tells us in Galatians 2:21, **“I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”** The Law can’t save anyone, it can only show you how far short you come to a relationship with God. It exposes your sin. Only Jesus can save us because He was the Sacrificial Lamb that paid the price for our sin, all of our sin. Never forget that!

There was no other way, as Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, that if there was, then to let this cup pass from Him. But there was no other way, only one, and that was the cross and He was going to complete the work the Father sent Him to do!

Now we do need to deal with this issue of what Peter did because we might think this was a very brave act that Peter did, as I have said. I don’t think so.

Let's think about this for a minute. If Peter was right handed, to cut off the right ear of Malchus, the servant of the High Priest, meant that this man was running away, had his back to Peter!

And really, think about it, one man with one sword and did he really believe he could win? I guess Peter thought he was going to go down swinging and must have picked on the weakest guy, the one running away!

But, as Calvin said, "It is exceedingly thoughtless in Peter to try to prove his faith by the sword, while he could not do so by his tongue." Something for us to think about, not just dying for the Lord, but living for Him!

Now I can't imagine what this servant of the High Priest was thinking as he was walking away or running away, and Peter cuts off his ear. Now, in another Gospel we are told that Jesus picked up this ear and placed it back on Malchus, healing him.

Why did Jesus do that? Because if He didn't there might have been another cross and Peter would have been the one hanging on it! He was protecting Peter here.

As I have said, we must be careful in our zeal for the Lord that we are not mauling, injuring people. How many ears has the Lord had to replace that we cut off? Again, something for us to think about!

VERSES 12-14

Now think about this for a minute. Did they really need to bind the hands of Jesus? Of course not, but again, they truly didn't understand who they had bound and were leading away to the house of Annas. Jesus is the creator of heaven and earth and no ropes were going to hold Him! But His love for us, fulfilling the work that was before Him would keep those ropes upon His wrists.

Keep in mind that it is still very early in the morning, before sunrise and we are told that Jesus was first brought to the house of Annas, who was the High Priest from 6 to 15 A. D. and then he was removed by Rome.

He was replaced by one of his five sons and each of them was removed by Rome because they fell in disfavor with Rome. And finally, the position of High Priest was given to his son-in-law, Caiaphas.

Even though Caiaphas was the High Priest, the power behind the position was still Annas; the people looked to him more than Caiaphas. The main reason is that Rome appointed Caiaphas as the High Priest and the people did not acknowledge what Rome established!

And Annas was not a good man. He was a Sadducee, a materialist and he made his wealth by setting up booths in the court of the Gentiles by the Temple to sell the certified animals for sacrifice at outrageous prices and they exchanged the Temple money for high rates.

Thus, as Jesus began and ended His ministry we see Him in this area throwing out those who were ripping the people off who came to worship God, the men of Annas who were overseeing this, and turning over the tables. He told them that the house of God is to be a place of prayer, a place where people can be touched by God and they have made it into a den of thieves! So, you can see why Annas didn't like Jesus as well as Caiaphas!

Jesus is going to face two trials, one of them is religious in nature, as we see here. The other will be civil and that will be with the Roman authority in Jerusalem!

Also, in John 11:49-53 we read of this man named Caiaphas and the prophecy that he spoke forth. We are told, **“And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, ‘You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.’ Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.”**

An amazing statement he made, and how true it was! Regarding this James Stewart said, “This was the man who was the accredited guardian of the nation’s soul. He had been set apart to be the supreme interpreter and representative of the Most High. To him was committed the glorious privilege of entering once every year into the holy of holies. Yet this was the man who condemned the Son of God. History provides no more startling illustration of the truth that the best religious opportunities in the world and the most promising environment will not guarantee a man’s salvation or of themselves ennoble his soul. ‘Then I saw, ‘says John Bunyan, closing his book, ‘that there was a way to hell, even from the gates of heaven.’”

VERSE 15

Who was this other disciple and how did he know the high priest?

I believe this was the apostle John. You see, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were in business with their father, a fishing business that they operated from the Sea of Galilee. As they gathered in the fish, some they would salt to preserve and send to Jerusalem where they had a shop in the market to sell them.

Also, the High Priest, being wealthy from ripping people off, would purchase these fish from the Zebedee's and maybe John was one of the businessmen that helped to make these deals.

VERSES 16-18

Peter is out in the courtyard while John is inside at this point. In another Gospel we are told that Peter was following Jesus at a distance, which is always a mistake and I believe it is the starting point for trouble.

When he is questioned if he too was a disciple of Jesus he denied, which tells me they must have known that John was one of His disciples by the way they phrased the question.

Now to try and fit in, warm up, Peter goes to the camp of the enemy and warms himself by their fire!

Let me ask you this. Where do you go when you feel cold, where do you go to get warm? Many go to the fires of this world when they are confused, hurting, lonely and that is never a good thing. You see, anytime you try to warm yourself by the world's fire, you will get burned! May we learn that lesson.

And think about it, Peter was willing to die for the Lord, cutting off the ear of the servant of the High Priest, and now he can't even admit he knows the Lord before this servant girl. How his life was a contradiction – what about yours?

Now, keep in mind while this is going on outside, inside Jesus is on trial, is being beaten, so these two stories go hand-in-hand as we are going to see.

### VERSES 19-21

Jesus faced three religious trials, one before Annas, one before Caiaphas and then before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. Here He is before Annas and He tells Annas that He has spoken freely, openly in the Temple, in the synagogues and if he didn't hear Him in any of these places, then ask others who have heard Him speak.

Keep in mind that it was the High Priest's duty to call forth the witnesses first, beginning with those for the defense. These basic legal protections for the accused under Jewish law were not observed in the trial of Jesus. "Jesus therefore claimed that, if his teaching was in question, evidence should be heard in the normal way." (Bruce)

They broke so many of the Jewish laws with these trials and yet, they said Jesus was the one who broke the law. Not at all, not even one little law did Jesus break, He was sinless!

### VERSES 22-24

Now please understand that Jesus was not sarcastic here. He was not putting down Annas, He just laid it out and they did not like it so one of the officials struck Jesus. And that is what happens when you have nothing to stand upon, you resort to violence and that violence is just beginning.



And the response of Jesus in John 18:23 puts the ball back in their court. If He did evil, tell Him the evil that He did. But, if He did no evil, then **“why did you strike Me?”**

As Annas is done with Jesus, He sends Him on to Caiaphas and the second religious trial. Caiaphas was the High Priest and thus, had more power than Annas, at least with Rome.

And at this trial they brought false witnesses to speak against Jesus and none of their stories agreed with each other and thus, without two witnesses who were in agreement, they should have let Him go, but they didn't!

And more abuse upon Jesus, as Matthew tells us.

#### VERSES 25-27

Remember what Jesus told Peter in Luke 22:31-32, **“... ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.’”**

Now it is coming to pass, and Peter is shocked by his failure, the Lord wasn't! Not only was Peter questioned if He knew Jesus, but now there is an eyewitness that was able to pick Peter out, and he still continued to deny the Lord.

Now as Jesus was beaten and blooded in these illegal religious trial, as He is sitting down in the house or one of the rooms of the High Priest and Peter denied the Lord for the third time and the rooster crowed, we read in Luke 22:61-62, **“And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ So Peter went out and wept bitterly.”** Do you see how these things were going on at the same time and culminated with this!

Now, why did Peter weep and run? Because of God's love, the look of love that Jesus gave to Peter just broke him as he saw his Lord beaten and bloodied and all he could do is deny Him, the one he said he was willing to die for!

But don't lose hope. Jesus said He was praying for Peter and "**WHEN**" he returned, not "***IF***" he returned, he was to strengthen the brethren, strengthen others through what happened to him.

What a great lesson for us, what a great encouragement for us, for when we think we know ourselves better than God, after we have fallen, after we are broken, God restores us and will use us again!

#### VERSE 28

Keep in mind that Jesus had three religious trials. One with Annas, one with Caiaphas and then the last one with Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin where they found Him guilty and sent Him to Pilate to put Him to death!

And keep in mind that the first trial with Caiaphas was a hastily gathered assembly of the council recorded in Matthew 26:57-68 and the second was the official, daylight meeting of the Sanhedrin recorded in Luke 22:66.

So, Jesus is taken to the Praetorium or headquarters for Pilate there in Jerusalem. His normal headquarters was in Caesarea, in the palace that Herod the Great had built for himself.

Now the Jews did not want to go in because they would defile themselves and they wanted to eat the Passover meal.

How can that be if Jesus just finished the Passover meal with His men the evening before? What is this all about or did they celebrate the Passover meal the night before, was that just a meal?

I believe they did celebrate that Passover meal that night because in Mark 14:12, 17-18a we are told, **“Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover lamb, His disciples said to Him, ‘Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?’ . . . ‘In the evening He came with the twelve. Now as they sat and ate . . .”**

So, this seems to indicate that they did celebrate the Passover the evening before His crucifixion.

The problem here is John seems to indicate the Passover was on the following night, how can that be?

First of all, the Mishnah, which is a compilation of the writings of well-known Jewish scholars and was completed in the third century A. D., tells us that the Pharisees and Sadducees disagreed about the day of the week on which the Passover was celebrated.

The Pharisees believed it was celebrated the night that Jesus and His men celebrated it while the Sadducees celebrated it a day later. Thus, here in John they were preparing for the Passover meal while the Pharisees already celebrated it.

Now, because the religious leaders wanted to partake of the feast, they did not want to defile themselves, so they refused to go into this Gentile area, the Praetorium.

That is amazing to me, for they are willing to put to death an innocent man on this feast but not go into the place of the Gentiles because that would defile them. Do you think they were straining out the gnat and swallowing a camel? I do!

VERSES 29-32

Jesus now faces three civil trials, the first with Pilate, then with Herod and then again with Pilate before He is sentenced to death.

Here Pilate doesn't want to deal with this and he throws it back to the Jews to do something about it. They in turn throw it right back to Pilate saying that Rome took away their right of capital punishment, they couldn't put anyone to death anymore, at least legally.

And at times we see them ignore what Rome took away, their right of capital punishment. We see this with Stephen when he was stoned to death for his faith in Christ in Acts.

Two points I would like to bring up here and the first one is that the Jews did not want anyone following Jesus after His death, like He was some martyr that died for a cause. Thus, stoning would not work.

I think the real reason is given to us in the Scriptures. You see, I think they wanted a curse upon Jesus to detract anyone from following Him after His death, at least any Jew.

In Deuteronomy 21:22-23 we are told, "**If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God.**"

And Jesus was crucified; He did bear the curse of God upon Him as He bore the sins of the world. Paul said in Galatians 3:13, **“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’).”**

That is what the Jews were thinking but I believe the real reason was Jesus said He would be crucified. In John 3:14-15 Jesus tells us, **“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”** Jesus fulfilled the prophecies made of Him, not only in His life, but also in His death!

#### VERSES 33-34

As you read this you might think that this is one continuous period, but it is not. You see, John combined two appearances of Jesus before Pilate, separated by an appearance of Jesus before Herod Antipas (Luke 23:8-12).

Pilate hoped to give this problem to Herod because he ruled over Galilee, where Jesus was from. But that did not happen as we then see Herod send Jesus back to Pilate, and this is the likely start of the second appearance before Pilate.

Now, keep in mind that Pilate was the judge, he was to be in charge, and yet he is running back and forth from the religious leaders to Jesus trying to deal with this issue.

And he asks Jesus if He is a king, an insurrectionist, a person causing trouble for Rome and Jesus turns the question back on him. He wants to know if these are things that Pilate just heard or is it something that he saw, something that he truly knows.

One writer summed it up like this, “If Pilate asked it of himself, the question would have meant, ‘Art thou a political King, conspiring against Caesar’! If he had asked it of Caiaphas’ prompting, it would have meant, ‘Art Thou the Messianic King of Israel?’ The answer to the first question would have been ‘No’. The answer to the second question, ‘Yes.’” (Pilcher, cited in Morris)

And listen to how Pilate responds to the question Jesus asked him.

### VERSES 35-37

This is interesting to me. Pilate wants to know why His own people are so upset with Him. He wants to know why they want Him dead. In fact, if He is the King of the Jews they should be rejoicing!

He couldn’t understand their anger, their hatred over this one man, and it is hard for us to see it unless we look at them this way. It was all about them and when Jesus said it wasn’t, they wanted Him dead! He upset their beliefs, their way of life and they wanted Him out of the picture before they lost their nation and their statues with Rome, their position!

And the answer that Jesus gave probably surprised Pilate. He said that He was not some zealot, some political insurrectionist who was looking to overthrow Rome and establish His own Kingdom.

But make no mistake about it, Jesus is a King, but not a King whose power comes or originates from this world, but from heaven, from God the Father.

Earthly kingdoms are based upon power, pride, money, praise, self-interests, and they try to restrain wickedness to maintain order.

But Jesus tells us His kingdom is far different, it is based upon love, sacrificial love. Yes, one-day Jesus will rule and reign on this earth for 1,000 years but until that day He can rule and reign in our hearts if we let Him in.

You see, to be part of His kingdom you are not forced to come in, but you are invited to come in. It is the new birth that takes you out of the kingdom of darkness and places you into God's kingdom!

Paul put it like this in Colossians 1:13-14, **“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”**

Also, Jesus tells us in John 3:3, **“... ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”**

You see, unless you repent of your sins and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life, you are dead in your trespasses and sins. It is only as you come to Christ that your sins are cast away and you enter into the kingdom of God!

One writer summed it up like this,

This is the crucial point. While human politics is based on the premise that society must be changed in order to change people, in the politics of the Kingdom it is people who must be changed in order to change.

- Charles Colson – Kingdoms in Conflict

How that is true today as many Christians look for the salvation of this nation in a particular political party when our salvation comes from Jesus. And the reality is, you can make all the laws you want, but if hearts are unchanged, it won't matter.

We have laws against murder, drugs, speeding, stealing, and people still do it. Why? Because of their hearts, laws don't stop people from doing things, for the most part.

You see, society is changed one heart at a time not by rules and regulations, but by Jesus Christ.

Think about it. Abortion is legal, so how many of you women, if you were pregnant, would have an abortion? None I hope!

Why wouldn't you have an abortion, it is legal in this country? Because your heart has been changed by God and it doesn't matter if something is legal or not, if it goes against what God has said, against the standards that God has set, you won't go down that path, at least you shouldn't!

And I love how Jesus concludes this conversation with Pilate. He says in John 18:37, “**. . . 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.**”

And this is going to lead Pilate to make some interesting statements about truth. Before we look at what Pilate said, Tenney tells us, “The obvious inference from his words would be that he came in to the world from another realm, that whoever did not listen to him would not be characterized by truth, and that if Pilate really wanted to know what truth was, he would give Jesus his earnest attention.”

Why do people listen to what others have to say instead of what Jesus has said in His Word? And when I say, “what Jesus has said” I mean from Genesis to Revelation for Jesus is known as the Word and the Holy Spirit inspired all these writers to put down these words for us.

Listen to the response of Pilate to the words of Jesus.



VERSE 38

What an interesting question, “*What is truth?*” How do you think Pilate said that?

Was he interested in the truth or did he say it sarcastically?

I don’t believe he was interested in the truth because when Jesus said it; he just walked away, ignoring the question, not wanting a response by Jesus.

You see, Pilate couldn’t see this because he was not of the truth, wanted nothing to do with the truth, he only believed what he wanted, his truth. That is all that mattered to him and in the end, he found out that his truth was meaningless, worthless while the truths of God were life, abundant life!

Today there are many Americans who don’t believe there is such a thing as absolute truth and they are absolutely sure about that? Which is funny when you think about it. But today many feel that whatever you feel is right is okay and no one can say anything against it. Listen to this report from 2016. We are told,

However, when it comes to the agreeing on what determines right and wrong, Americans are far from standing in unison.

“According to a majority of American adults (57 percent), knowing what is right or wrong is a matter of personal experience,” Barna researchers assert. “This view is much more prevalent among younger generations than among older adults, [as] three-quarters of Millennials (74 percent) agree strongly or somewhat with the statement, ‘Whatever is right for your life or works best for you is the only truth you can know,’ compared to only 38 percent of Elders. And Millennials (31 percent) are three times more likely than Elders (10 percent) and twice as likely as Boomers (16 percent) and Gen-Xers (16 percent) to *strongly* agree with the statement.” . . .

“Two-thirds of American adults either believe moral truth is relative to circumstances (44 percent) or have not given it much thought (21 percent),” the survey divulged. “About one-third, on the other hand, believes moral truth is absolute (35 percent). Millennials are more likely than other age cohorts to say moral truth is relative - in fact, half of them say so (51 percent), compared to 44 percent of Gen-Xers, 41 percent of Boomers and 39 percent of Elders. Among the generations, Boomers are most likely to say moral truth is absolute (42 percent), while Elders are more likely than other age groups to admit they have never thought about it (28 percent).” . . .

Barna President David Kinnaman contends that research indicates a new brand of morality has evolved in America. He insists that Christianity has for the most part been removed as the cultures’ moral norm and replaced with a new moral code, which he says consists of six tenets:

1. The best way of finding yourself is by looking within yourself
2. People should not criticize someone else’s life choices
3. To be fulfilled in life, you should pursue the things you desire most
4. The highest goal of life is to enjoy it as much as possible
5. People can believe whatever they want, as long as those beliefs don’t affect society
6. Any kind of sexual expression between two consenting adults is acceptable

“The highest good, according to our society, is ‘finding yourself’ and then living by ‘what’s right for you,’” the polling expert declares. “There is a tremendous amount of individualism in today’s society, and that’s reflected in the Church, too.”

He credits the religion of godless secular humanism as a major influence that has diverted Americans from using the Bible as their spiritual and moral guide.

“Millions of Christians have grafted New Age dogma onto their spiritual person,” Kinnaman continued. “When we peel back the layers, we find that many Christians are using the way of Jesus to pursue the way of self . . . While we wring our hands about secularism spreading through culture, a majority of churchgoing Christians have embraced corrupt, me-centered theology.”

Even though the Bible is black and white in regard to laying out the moral path for man to take, it is argued that those who proclaim themselves to be Christians in the U.S. are as lost—when it comes to morality - as those outside the Church.

- <https://www.onenewsnow.com/culture/2016/05/29/us-barna-survey-goodbye-absolutes-hello-new-morality>

Let me tell you what truth is so there will be no misunderstanding. And you can agree with it or not, that is your choice. But it won't change the fact that you are accountable before God for your actions!

In John 14:6 we are told, **“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”**

In John 1:1 and 1:14 we are told, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”**

In John 8:31-32 we are told, **“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”**

In John 17:17 Jesus said, **“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”**

I like this one in Psalm 119:160, **“The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.”**

Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:13-14, **“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”**

And lastly, and there are many more, in Psalm 25:5 we are told, **“Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day.”**

So, if you want to know the truth, look to Jesus and His Word and you will find it. Does the world have truth? Sure, but there are a lot of lies out there and thus, how do you know what is truth and what is a lie? The Word of God because the entirety of the Word of God is **TRUTH!**

Also, notice that Pilate found nothing to convict Jesus of so that should have been the end of the story, but it is not.

Remember Pilate was the judge, but the reality was, the people were in control and they will force him to do that which he does not want to do, put Jesus to death! But, as we will see, Pilate thinks he found a loophole to get out of this, but in the end, the crowds were just too much for him and he will give into their ways!

For Pilate, he did not want to hear from Jesus anymore. Morris put it like this, “It was a way of dismissing the subject. Pilate has learned what he wants to know. Jesus is no revolutionary. He represents no danger to the state. He may be safely released, and indeed He ought in common justice to be released.”

VERSES 39-40

Pilate thought he had a way out, by letting a prisoner go, a free will jester that he did during the Feast of Passover. And he thought they would let Jesus go and send Barabbas to the cross, to death because he was a murderer and an insurrectionist and Jesus was not, He was innocent!

But they didn't do that, they wanted Jesus to be put to death!

Do you see how ugly hate can be? Do you see where hate can lead? To the death of an innocent person and the release of a guilty person, ourselves!

So, Pilate is going to put to death an innocent man because the people are forcing him. May we never be forced to do anything contrary to what God has said because of peer pressure, crowd influence or whatever! Fear God and not man!

Jesus took the place of a guilty man, a sinner, Barabbas. And when you think about it, He did the same for us. We are all guilty before Him and He took our place, He paid for our sins on that cross. We deserved death and God has given us life through Jesus Christ.

Praise God for His tremendous love for us. Never lose sight of that and thank Him for that love that has given to each of us abundant life, eternal life!