

John 18 - Betrayal and Arrest; The Garden; Trials before Annas, Caiaphas, Herod

V. Passion Narratives (John 18:1—21:25)

(1) Death (18:1—19:42)

(A) Arrest (18:1-11)

- (a) The Garden (18:1-2)
- (b) The Guard (18:3-6)
- (c) The Request (18:7-9)
- (d) The Rebuke (18:10-11)

(B) Trials (18:12—19:16)

(a) Annas (18:12-23)

- (i) Jesus led to Annas (18:12-14)
- (ii) Outside: Peter's 1st denial (18:15-18)
- (iii) Inside: Jesus before Annas (18:19-23)

(b) Caiaphas (18:24-27)

- (i) Inside: Jesus before Caiaphas (18:24)
- (ii) Outside: Peter's 2nd & 3rd denials (18:25-27)

(c) Pilate (18:28—19:16)

(i) 1st trial before Pilate (18:28-38a)

- (a) What accusation do you have against this Man? (18:28-32)
- (b) Are you the King of the Jews? (18:33-38a)

(ii) 2nd trial before Pilate (18:38b—19:16)

- (a) Do you want me to release the King of the Jews? (18:38b-40)

John 18

V. Passion Narratives (18:1—21:25)

(1) Death (18:1—19:42)

(A) Arrest (18:1-11; Cf. Matt 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53)

(a) The Garden (18:1-2)

1 When Jesus had **spoken these words**, He went away with His disciples across the **ravine of the Kidron**, where there was **a garden** which He entered with His disciples.

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples.

1 After Jesus had said all of this, he went with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.

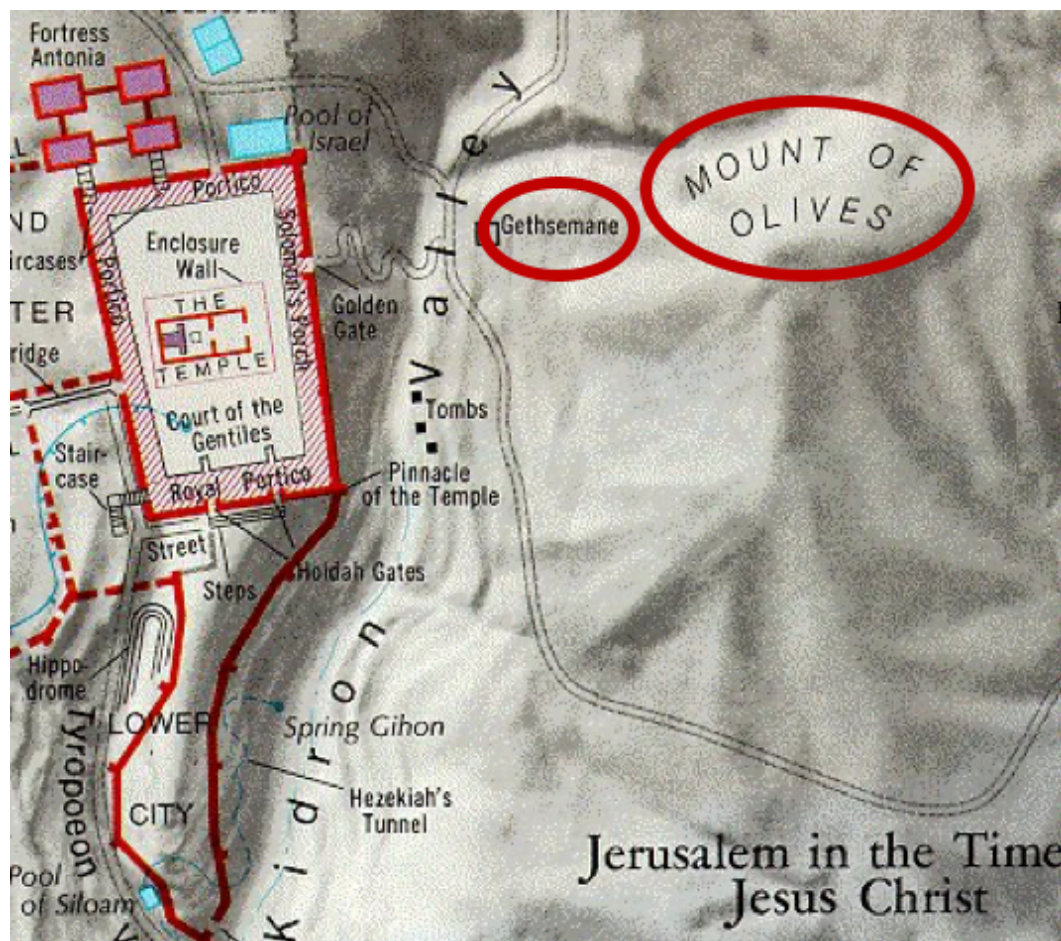
1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

- "...spoken these words" - the Upper Room Discourse, John 13-17

- "...ravine of the Kidron" - the Kidron Valley, the eastern border of Jerusalem

- "...a garden" - the Garden of Gethsemane, located on the western slope of the Mount of Olives

— This garden was well-known by both Jesus and His disciples; it was a place Jesus visited frequently to pray and petition the Father (Cf. Luke 21:37; 22:39)



2 Now Judas, who was betraying Him, also knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with His disciples.

2 Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples.

2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples.

2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft times resorted thither with his disciples.

- We already know that Judas has been identified as the one who will betray Jesus, and we also know that Satan had indwelt him (Cf. 13:27)

— Judas knew where Jesus would go, and Jesus deliberately went to the place where Judas knew He would be. Jesus made absolutely no attempt to avoid this arrest (Cf. 10:17-18).

(b) The Guard (18:3-6)

3 So Judas, having obtained the **Roman cohort** and **officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees**, *came there with **lanterns, torches, and weapons**.

3 Judas then, having received the *Roman* cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, *came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

3 So Judas took a detachment of soldiers and some officers from the high priests and the Pharisees and went there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

3 Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

- "...*Roman* cohort" - 300-600 men (representing Gentiles)

- "...officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees" - representing Jews

— John is revealing here that both the Gentiles through Rome, and the Jews through these officers of the chief priests and Pharisees, were present and involved in the arrest of Jesus.

- There are a number of influential pastors and others who trumpet the notion that the Jews were responsible for Christ's death. Nothing could be further from the truth.

— Both the Jews and the Romans were involved in the arrest, trials, and conviction of Jesus, as well as His death. To blame "the Jews" generally is unfair and flat wrong. To be more accurate, blame goes to 1st century Jews, and more specifically, to the religious leadership in Israel in the 1st century.

— It is incorrect to state that the entire nation is culpable for the crucifixion of Christ because there were multiple Jews who wept at the prospect of Christ's imminent death (Luke 23:27-28).

— The leadership involved in this event was the Herodian dynasty, who were of mixed blood...Jewish and Edomite (Idumean). They were not pure-blooded Jews, but a hybrid race.

— Rome also played a significant role in Jesus' crucifixion. When Rome came to power, they had removed from the Jews the power of capital punishment. The Jews were not allowed to enforce capital punishment...that task was left solely to the Romans (Cf. 18:30-31).

— Jesus Himself explained that the Gentiles bore some of the blame for His death (Matt 20:18-19)

- "...lanterns, torches" - they were prepared in case Jesus would run or hide

- "...weapons" - they were prepared in case Jesus (or His disciples) would resist

4 Jesus therefore, **knowing all the things that were coming upon Him**, came out *into the open* and *said to them, "**Whom are you seeking?**"

4 So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and *said to them, "**Whom do you seek?**"

4 Then Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen, went forward and asked them, "**Who are you looking for?**"

4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, **Whom seek ye?**

- "...knowing all the things that were coming upon Him" - nothing in these next string of events took Jesus by surprise. Jesus did not relinquish any of His attributes (in this case, omniscience) during His Incarnation.

5 They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He *said to them, "**I am He.**" And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them.

5 They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He *said to them, "**I am He.**" And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them.

5 They answered him, "Jesus from Nazareth."

Jesus told them, "**I AM.**" Judas, the man who betrayed him, was standing with them.

5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, **I am he.** And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

- "...I am" - *ego eimi*, Jesus is taking God's title and applying it to Himself (8:58; Cf. Ex 3:14). Jesus is claiming to be deity, equal with God the Father.

— For someone today to claim that Jesus is not God nor ever claimed to be God is to simply not read or understand what the Bible clearly says

6 Now then, when He said to them, "**I am He,**" they drew back and fell to the ground.

6 So when He said to them, "**I am He,**" they drew back and fell to the ground.

6 When Jesus told them, "**I AM,**" they backed away and fell to the ground.

6 As soon then as he had said unto them, **I am [he]**, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

- A reaction to Jesus' claim of deity (Cf. Ps 27:2)

— Some believe this was a voluntary reaction, indicating their shock that Jesus is effectively turning Himself in peacefully, all the while still claiming to be deity

— Others believe this was an involuntary reaction to Jesus' claim to deity, illustrating the weakness and frailty of man in the face of a holy God

(c) The Request (18:7-9)

7 He then asked them again, **"Whom are you seeking?"** And they said, "Jesus the Nazarene."

7 Therefore He again asked them, **"Whom do you seek?"** And they said, "Jesus the Nazarene."

7 So he asked them again, **"Who are you looking for?"**

They said, "Jesus from Nazareth."

7 Then asked he them again, **Whom seek ye?** And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

- If you can capture v7-9, you have a microcosm of Christ's entire ministry. His entire ministry is summed up in these verses in four ideas:

1. Voluntary - these circumstances did not overwhelm or surprise Jesus; He deliberately put Himself in harms way because it was Passover and His time had come
2. Substitution - Jesus tells those who came to arrest Him to take Him and let the disciples go (18:8); the fancy description of this is the substitutionary (in my place, Is 53:4-5), vicarious (in place of), penal (punishment) atonement.
3. Security of the believer (18:9) - of those the Father had given Him, He lost none (Cf. 6:37-39; 10:27-29)
4. Sovereignty (18:9) - Jesus was simply following a script, written in advance; He was in full control of the events of the crucifixion and its timing

8 Jesus answered, **"I told you that I am He; so if you are seeking Me, let these men go on their way."**

8 Jesus answered, **"I told you that I am He; so if you seek Me, let these go their way,"**

8 Jesus replied, **"I told you that I am the one, so if you are looking for me, let these men go."**

8 Jesus answered, **I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:**

- Illustrates the voluntary nature of Jesus' submission to the Father's will

9 *This took place so that **the word which He spoke** would be fulfilled: "Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one."*

9 to fulfill the word which He spoke, *"Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one."*

9 This was to fulfill what he had said, *"I did not lose a single one of those you gave me."*

9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spoke, *Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.*

- "...the word which He spoke" - Cf. 17:12

(d) The Rebuke (18:10-11)

10 Then Simon Peter, since he had a **sword**, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus.

10 Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus.

10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

- John is the only Gospel writer who gives us the names of the person (Peter) who struck the slave, and the slave himself (Malchus), because he was an eyewitness

- "...sword" - probably not what we think of as a sword since weapons were not allowed to be carried at Passover; it was probably more like a dagger

- This is an example of Peter doing ministry in the flesh. There are many examples of well-known Bible characters who have done ministry in the flesh: Abram, Joseph, Moses, Peter, Paul, among others.

— Abram was given a promise by God that an heir would come from his body, but he looked at himself, his age, and his wife, and doubted God could do it.

— He and Sarai decided to help God out, so Sarai gave Abram her handmaid Hagar, and Hagar brought forth a son, Ishmael. But God made it clear that Ishmael was not the heir that God promised.

— Any time we try to "help God out" the results are disastrous. From Ishmael came a race of people who have been perpetual enemies of Israel even up to today.

- We have a tendency in ministry to want to "help God out." We don't pray, we don't wait for God, we just go ahead and do what He has not called us to do to try to "move things along" or "make things happen."

— When we look at things carefully, we can see that we are actually not doing God's work, we're doing the work of our flesh; we're trying to accomplish the work of God through human power.

— This is what Peter is doing here...he's doing what was right in his own eyes, and in the process he's making a fool of himself. And not only that, he's actually hindering God's will from coming to pass.

- There are two problems to doing ministry in the flesh:

1. We are blind to spiritual truth

- Peter, while he is doing this, is completely blind to the reality and purpose of the cross. He's been told and explained what is going to happen (Cf. 16:19-22, et al), yet Peter forgot all about what Jesus had told him.

2. We can only accomplish so much for God

- Why? Because we as human beings are limited in what we can do. We can only go so far or do so much in ministry until we run out of ourselves. The results are unimpressive.
- What gives us effectiveness and fruitfulness in ministry is not us doing it in the power of the flesh, but our becoming a flexible, pliable vessel in the hands of an omnipotent God. When we are usable by Him, the results will be outstanding.

- Fortunately for Peter, God did something in his life between the time of Jesus' ministry on the earth and the time of Acts 1-10 because during that time there is not a person who was used more by God than Peter. The Lord did something in his life to move him away from being a minister in the flesh, under his own power, into a pliable, flexible vessel in the hands of a powerful God.

— What did God do in Peter's life to change him from a fleshly, blind minister to the powerful ministry he had in Acts 1-10? How did God generate this monumental change in Peter's life in such a short time?

— What the Lord did was to put Peter in multiple situations where he became painfully aware of his limitations. This is often how God breaks us down and rids us of our dependence upon ourselves so that He can use us how He sees fit. God did this for Peter, but He also does it for us as well.

— Our sin nature completely blinds us to own attitude of pride and self-sufficiency. There is a tremendous human tendency, borne from our sin nature, toward pride and this tendency doesn't stop once you become a Christian because our sin nature is still present in us.

— As we go through the Christian life, until we go under the disciplinary hand of God, we still have a lot of this pride in our life. Our mind, which has been programmed to think a certain way since birth, doesn't just stop thinking that way because you're a believer now. If my mind was immediately changed into a godly line of thinking, why would Paul tell me in Rom 12:2 to renew my mind. If my mind was immediately renewed, I immediately became a new creation, I would have no need to renew my mind.

— Because God wants to use us after we become believers, He needs to reprogram the way we think. He has to neutralize the power of the sin nature within us. The means by

which God does this is through His "breaking process."

— This is the process by which God makes us aware of our attitude of pride and self-sufficiency by taking us through multiple failures as we attempt to do the work of God through human power. He orchestrates these circumstances and situations where we inevitably fall on our face. But it is through these failures that we even become aware of our propensity to do ministry through human power.

— The Lord is literally taking Peter to the point of brokenness. The turning point in Peter's life is Matt 26:75 when Peter goes out after denying Christ three times and weeps bitterly. As he was weeping bitterly it was at that point that he despaired of human power. It was at that point that Peter matured to the point that he understood that he could no longer perform the work of ministry under his own power.

— When we look back at the gospel narratives on how Jesus dealt with Peter, specifically on four separate occasions, we can see how God worked in Peter's life and eventually brought him to understanding and maturity on how to do ministry God's way.

— This should be a learning process for us, and thus an encouragement. When we understand God's "breaking process" in us, to rid us of ourselves and our pride, we can better understand how and why God is working in our lives.

— God's goal is to bring every believer to the point of Zech 4:6: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord." We don't say this naturally unless we have first been "broken." God wants to take us to the point where Paul was in Phil 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." But God can't do that until He first "breaks" us.

- The Lord orchestrated four events in Peter's life that eventually taught him this lesson, and prepared him for what was going to come in Acts 1-10:

1. Sea of Galilee (Matt 14:28-33)

- The disciples were out in the boat at night, and Jesus came up to them walking on the water. Peter asked the Lord if it was really Him, and Jesus commanded him to walk out onto the water. Peter did, and walked on water.
- But (18:30) when Peter, "seeing the wind" became frightened, he began to sink. The lesson for Peter was that as soon as he took his eyes off of God and began to look at his circumstances (the wind), he sank.

2. Caesarea Philippi (Matt 16:21-23)

- Jesus began to pronounce many blessings upon Peter based on Peter's correct response about who Jesus was
- Jesus then began to explain to the disciples how He must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, be killed, and be raised up on the third day (18:21)
- After hearing this, Peter pulled Jesus aside and rebuked Him, saying that these things will never happen

- Jesus gave Peter one of the sharpest retorts in the Bible: "Get behind me, Satan!" This probably stunned Peter. The same Lord who just pronounced so many blessings on him just a few minutes earlier now tells him that Satan is controlling his thoughts and words.
3. Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:10-11)
- This passage, where Peter is doing what was right in his own eyes, what his flesh wanted him to do
 - He is trying to accomplish the will of God through his own power. Jesus rebukes Peter once again (18:11) for stepping outside of the will of God, being ignorant of God's program, and attempting to take things into his own hands.
4. Jerusalem (John 13:36-38; 18:17,25-27)
- Jesus predicted in the Upper Room that Peter would deny Him 3x before the rooster crowed (13:36-38)
 - Peter denied Jesus the first time (18:17); then the 2nd & 3rd times (18:25-27)
 - Then Peter remembered what the Lord said that he would deny Him three times. Then Peter went out and wept bitterly (Matt 26:75). It was at this point in Peter's life that he had finally come to the end of himself, which is exactly where God wanted him.

- After God's "breaking process" Peter was now qualified to be that pliable, flexible vessel that God can use. This is how God took the Garden of Gethsemane Peter and turned him into an Acts 1-10 apostle. God has done this same work in the lives of other biblical characters, 2 OT and 1 NT:

1. Joseph (Gen 37-41)
- Gen 37:2 - Joseph was 17 years old pasturing a flock with his brothers. The reason why the Bible gives us the ages is so that we understand how long the breaking process sometimes lasts.
 - Gen 37:9-10 - Joseph had a dream about the sun, moon and stars bowing down to him; v10 his family questioned the meaning the dream. Joseph related it to his parents and his brothers, and is very proud of this dream.
 - Later, Joseph is thrown in a pit to die, sold into slavery by his brothers, falsely accused of sexual misconduct, thrown into prison without cause, forgotten about in prison, and eventually elevated to second in command in Egypt (Gen 40:40-41).
 - All of these things took place over a 13 year period where God was breaking down Joseph (Gen 41:46), forcing him to unlearn his flesh, his pride and his self-sufficiency that rule his sin nature. From age 17 to age 30, Joseph experienced nothing but perpetual failures and brokenness. And once that process was complete, Joseph was now ready to be used mightily by God.

2. Moses (Ex 3:1-11; Acts 7:22-29)

- During the first phase of Moses' life, he was well-educated, going to the best Egyptian schools. This evidently elevated Moses' pride and self-sufficiency. At age 40, Moses was intellectually qualified to do God's work, but he was not spiritually qualified. He was not spiritually qualified because Acts 7:23-24.
- At that time, Moses knew he would be deliverer of Israel, but what he didn't understand is that he would deliver Israel through God's power, not his power. After receiving his top education, he was so focused on his own abilities and talents that when he saw an Egyptian harassing an Israelite, he killed the Egyptian.
- So between the age of 40-80, God implemented His "breaking process" to teach prepare Moses spiritually. God sent him to Midian, the middle of nowhere, to do nothing for 40 years but tend a bunch of sheep. No one lived there, and there was nothing to do. Nobody knew your name, and nobody cared. God left Him there for 40 years doing nothing, doing a job that was beneath him.
- It's obvious that during that 40-year period, Moses despaired of himself...so now he was ready to be used by God (Ex 3:10-11). He was a different person at 80 than he was at 40. At 40 he was prideful and trying to murder Egyptians in the power of his flesh, to fulfill the role God had for him. At 80, Moses tells God, Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?"
- It's interesting that Moses' "breaking" occurred in the same venue as his ministry: in the wilderness. Moses' calling was to be a shepherd for God's people, so God says I'll audition you for that role for 40 years in Midian, then I'll call you to lead the exodus from Egypt and you'll spend another 40 years in ministry in the wilderness.

3. Paul (Acts 9:15)

- Just like Peter, Joseph and Moses, Paul was a man of destiny. God chose him for a specific purpose. But just like these other men, Paul was not ready to jump into ministry for God right after his conversion. He thought he was ready (Cf. Acts 9:20), but God didn't think he was ready. He probably could've had a pretty good ministry if he launched it right after his conversion, but God had grander plans. The vision and destiny that God had for Paul was so great that Paul could never understand.
- God moved Paul to the desert of Arabia for three years (Gal 1:17-18). We have no record of what the Lord did with Paul there, it was a time period where God was working on him. Why did God need to work on Paul? Because of Phil 3:4-6...if there was ever a man who had confidence in his flesh, it was Paul because of his resume. Paul, like Moses, had received the best education possible (Acts 22:3).

- There was so much flesh and pride in Paul that a Damascus Road encounter with the risen Christ could not put it down. It took a process, initiated by God, for Paul's benefit, to do that before Paul could be qualified to fulfill the purpose that God had for him. Paul, like everyone, needed to be "recalibrated" after he came to Christ. We need to recalibrate after we come to God because during our entire life before coming to God we depended upon ourselves.
 - We come to God through the grace of God, and God says Great, I'm glad you're saved, now I want to use you. But the self-sufficiency we had while we were unsaved continues on into our Christian life and I have to be reprogrammed to learn to do things that are counter-intuitive to me. And there isn't an easy way for this to happen other than God's "breaking process" of multiple humiliations and failures.
 - God works differently depending on the person (Joseph, 17 years; Moses, 40 years; Peter and Paul, 3 years), but the need to break and recalibrate us always the same.
- Coach Bobby Knight once said that everyone wants to win, but not everyone wants to prepare to win. If you ask any competitive athlete, they all want to win...not one of them likes to lose. But not all of them want to do what it takes to win.
- In the same vein, every Christian wants to be used by God, but only a very few Christians want to walk with God through the tangible, real, breaking process in order to go through the preparation period in order to serve God fully.
- If a Christian is willing to walk with God through the breaking process, you have graduated from simply being a believer to becoming a disciple.
- As believers, we need to walk with God during the breaking process. We need to reinterpret what is happening in our lives from God's perspective, not as God's disfavor toward me, but actually His love and favor toward me because He wants so badly to use me for His purposes.

Three Phases of Moses' 120 Year Life

| <u>Life Phase</u> | <u>Scripture</u> | <u>Years</u> | <u>Age</u> | <u>Activity</u> |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|------------|---|
| Natural Training | Acts 7:22 | 1526–1486 BC | 1-40 | Egyptian Education |
| Spiritual Training | Ex 7:7 | 1486–1446 BC | 40-80 | Midian Shepherding |
| Ministry | <u>Deut 31:2; 34:7;</u> Acts 7:36 | 1446–1406 BC | 80-120 | Exodus, Law, Wilderness Preservation, Pentateuch Authorship |

11 So Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; **the cup** which the Father has given Me, am I not to drink it?"

11 So Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"

11 Jesus told Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Shouldn't I drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

- "...the cup" - metaphorical speech to denote the ordeal of the cross. Jesus uses a "cup" to describe the suffering that He will endure in the events leading up to and including the cross (Cf. Matt 20:22-23).

(B) Trials (18:12—19:16)

Jesus endured a total of six trials, three Jewish trials and three Roman trials. John will only document for us two Jewish trials and one Roman trial. No single Gospel writer spells out all six trials; we only understand that there are six trials when we put all four Gospel accounts together.

What John is doing with the trials he has selected to write about is highlighting a parallel between Peter and Jesus. Peter's failures are juxtaposed against Christ's successes. He is teaching us that when we go through trials in life, who do we rely upon for strength...ourselves (like Peter) or Jesus?

| JESUS' RELIGIOUS TRIAL | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| | Matthew | Mark | Luke | John |
| Before Annas | | | | 18:12-14, 19-24 |
| Before Caiaphas | 26:57-68 | 14:53-65 | 22:54, 63-65 | |
| Before the Sanhedrin | 27:1 | 15:1 | 22:66-71 | |
| JESUS' CIVIL TRIAL | | | | |
| Before Pilate | 27:2, 11-14 | 15:1-5 | 23:1-5 | 18:28-38 |
| Before Herod Antipas | | | 23:6-12 | |
| Before Pilate | 27:15-26 | 15:6-15 | 23:13-25 | 18:39—19:16 |

(a) Annas (18:12-23)

(i) Jesus led to Annas (18:12-14)

12 So the *Roman* cohort, **the commander, and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him,**

12 So the *Roman* cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him,

12 Then the soldiers, along with their commander and the Jewish officers, arrested Jesus and tied him up.

12 Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

- "...the commander" - the commander of the Roman cohort

- "...and" - an important word here...it shows us that both the Romans and the Jews were present and involved in Jesus' arrest

- "...the officers of the Jews" - the officers of the chief priests (Cf. v3), who were Jewish

- "...arrested Jesus and bound Him" - just like a Lamb being led to the slaughter (Cf. Is 53:7)

13 and brought Him to **Annas** first; for he was the father-in-law of **Caiaphas**, who was high priest that year.

13 and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.

13 First they brought him to Annas, because he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year.

13 And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

- "...Annas" - the former high priest in Israel (6-15 AD); he was no longer in power at the time of Jesus' arrest
- Even though he was not serving as high priest at that time, they brought Him to Annas because according to the Mosaic Law, if you ever served as high priest, you served for life, so the Jews viewed Annas as an authority figure.
- Annas was deposed by Rome, which was pulling the governmental strings in Israel, and replaced him with Annas' five sons and his son-in-law Caiaphas
- Annas performs somewhat of a pre-trial hearing, an informal interview of Jesus to gather information
- Any decision by Annas was not binding; only the decisions of the reigning high priest (Caiaphas) were binding
- "...Caiaphas" - functioned as high priest from 18-36 AD

14 Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was in their best interest for one man to die in behalf of the people.

14 Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people.

14 Caiaphas was the person who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one man die for the people.

14 Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

- John reminds us of a previous statement that Caiaphas made back in 11:47-51

— Caiaphas' prophetic statement perfectly describes the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ

— Jesus is so sovereign, so in control of what is happening and when, that He even uses the mouths of His enemies to accurately describe what is happening

— If we don't understand and acknowledge the substitutionary (18:icarious) nature of Jesus' death, we don't understand Christianity. If we don't understand that we deserve to be nailed to that cross and take the punishment for our sin, and that Jesus did not deserve it, we don't understand atonement.

| The High Priests of Israel (ca. A.D. 6-36) | |
|--|--|
| ANNAS (ca. A.D. 6-15) | Unofficial high priest with Caiaphas during Jesus' trial (Luke 3:2; John 18:13, 24) Unofficial high priest who, with Caiaphas, tried Peter and John (Acts 4:6) |
| ELEAZAR (ca. A.D. 16-17) | Son of Annas whose name does not appear in the New Testament |
| CAIAPHAS (ca. A.D. 18-36) | Son-in-law of Annas Official high priest during Jesus' earthly ministry (Luke 3:2; Matt. 26:3, 57; John 11:49-50) With Annas tried Peter and John (Acts 4:6) |

(ii) Outside: Peter's 1st denial (18:15-18; Cf. Matt 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62)

15 Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so ~~was~~**another disciple**. Now that disciple was **known to the high priest**, and he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest,

15 Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so ~~was~~ another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest,

15 Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Since the other disciple was known to the high priest, he accompanied Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.

15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

- "...another disciple" - the Apostle John; John never identifies himself in his gospel, always referring to himself in the third person, or as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (Cf. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:20)

— A possible reason why John never identified himself in his Gospel is because he was overwhelmed by God's grace. John was not always known as the "love apostle." In fact, in Luke 9:51-55, after a Samaritan village would not provide rest for Jesus and the traveling disciples, John (and his brother James) asked Jesus if they could call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans.

— How did Jesus move John from the hate and racism displayed in Luke 9, to become the "disciple whom Jesus loved"? Jesus loved him (1 John 4:7-8). The means by which Jesus changed John is bound up in the phrase "the disciple whom the Lord loved."

— John didn't know much, but he knew that Jesus Christ loved him unconditionally. We're the same way...once we understand our position in Christ and His grace to us, it changes our relationships. There is less of a tendency to treat people with grudges, hatred and anger.

— If we're in Christ, we have no basis for judgment against those who may have hurt or offended us in the past. If I am a beneficiary of the grace of God for all that I have done, how in the world do I have the right to demand justice from those who may have offended me.

- "...known to the high priest" - some have questioned how John, a Galilean fisherman, could've known the high priest. John was the son of Zebedee, a successful fisherman (Cf. Mark 1:19-20), so it's completely plausible that John, through his father, may have known Caiaphas.

16 but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in.

16 but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in.

16 Peter, however, stood outside the gate. So this other disciple who was known to the high priest went out and spoke to the gatekeeper and brought Peter inside.

16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

17 Then the **slave woman** who was the doorkeeper *said to Peter, "You are not also *one* of this Man's disciples, are you?" He *said, "**I am not.**"

17 Then the slave-girl who kept the door *said to Peter, "You are not also *one* of this man's disciples, are you?" He *said, "I am not."

17 The young woman at the gate asked Peter, "You aren't one of this man's disciples, too, are you?"

"I am not," he replied.

17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

- "...slave woman" - Peter was beat up by a girl; this detail is given to us here to show how weak Peter was when he was operating under human power

- "...I am not" - here we see Peter succumbing to pressure; he denies his association with Jesus and also denies that he was ever one of Jesus' disciples

— While Jesus is inside before Caiaphas with His life on the line, Peter is outside folding like a cheap tent

— When Jesus predicted that Peter would deny Him three times in the Upper Room, Peter told Jesus that he would lay his life down for Him (Cf. 13:37). That is a man who is pontificating his abilities out of human power.

— Peter knew his divine destiny; he was aware and he sensed the mission that Jesus called him to. But how could Peter fulfill this mission that Jesus had for him if he folded at the

questioning of a slave girl? How did Jesus transform this weak vessel we see here into the giant we see in Acts 1-10? It is God's "breaking process" (Cf. v10), where God puts us into situations where we will fail in order to break our dependence on ourselves and learn to depend/rely on Him.

— The Lord needs to "de-program" us from always depending upon ourselves to always depending/relying on Him

Jer 17:5: This is what the LORD says: "Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, And whose heart turns away from the LORD.

18 Now the slaves and the officers were standing *there*, having made **a charcoal fire**, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself.

18 Now the slaves and the officers were standing *there*, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself.

18 Meanwhile, the servants and officers were standing around a charcoal fire they had built and were warming themselves because it was cold. Peter was also standing with them, keeping himself warm.

18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

- "...a charcoal fire" - the very same type of fire is found in 21:9 when Jesus reinstates Peter

— John mentions these two charcoal fires (18:18; 21:9) so that we can connect the dots between Peter's "breaking process" and failure with the grace of God in his restoration. It shows us today that experiencing the breaking of God gives us the opportunity to experience the grace of God.

(iii) Inside: Jesus before Annas (18:19-23)

19 The high priest then **questioned Jesus about His disciples**, and about His teaching.

19 The high priest then questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching.

19 Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his own teaching.

19 The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

- "...questioned Jesus about His disciples" - why did Annas question Jesus about His disciples? Annas is questioning Jesus about His level of popularity; if Annas felt like Jesus was too popular, or leading an insurrection, Rome would invade and take their nation away.

— All of the Jewish leaders who tried Jesus are only interested in one thing...and it's not the substitutionary atonement that Jesus was about to provide to pay the sin debt of the

world. It was self-preservation. They didn't want Jesus to do anything to upset their authority structure. This is how the world system works...always having their eyes looking out for themselves.

20 Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple area, where all the Jews congregate; and I said nothing in secret.

20 Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret.

20 Jesus answered him, "I have spoken publicly to the world. I have always taught in the synagogue or in the Temple, where all Jews meet together, and I have said nothing in secret.

20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

- Jesus was an open book...He had no double-talk or secret agenda; everything He did and taught was in public for all to see and hear

- "...I said nothing in secret" - a fulfillment of Is 53:9

— Jesus' answer held Annas responsible. Jesus had spoken publicly, so Annas knew the answers to the questions he was asking. Annas chose not to believe.

— Today Jesus holds people responsible to know His words and to know what they believe about His words. We are responsible to know His teaching.

21 Why are you asking Me? Ask those who have heard what I spoke to them. Look: these people know what I said."

21 Why do you question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; they know what I said."

21 Why do you question me? Question those who heard what I said. These are the people who know what I said."

21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

- The rules of evidence in the Mosaic Law required at least 2-3 witnesses to confirm a matter; this was a basic legal rule and right of the accused throughout the OT

— Jesus is testifying here...go around and find 2-3 witnesses. You won't do that because you can't find them. There were not 2-3 people who could corroborate a story of Jesus breaking the Law (Cf. Mark 14:56-59)

22 But when He said this, one of the officers, who was standing nearby, **struck** Jesus, saying, "Is that the way You answer the high priest?"

22 When He had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying, "Is that the way You answer the high priest?"

22 When he said this, one of the officers standing nearby slapped Jesus on the face and demanded, "Is that any way to answer the high priest?"

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?

- One of the officers of the chief priests interprets Jesus' response as disrespectful, and strikes Him

- "...struck" - *didōmi*, a sharp blow with the palm of one hand

- For nothing other than being completely truthful, Jesus took a sharp blow from one of the officers

23 Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?"

23 Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?"

23 Jesus answered him, "If I have said anything wrong, tell me what it was. But if I have told the truth, why do you hit me?"

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

- How does Jesus, untainted by the sin nature that would instead fight back, get revenge, or make a biting comment at such as indiscretion, instead responds with further truth.

- The natural man, in the flesh, would've responded in exactly the opposite way

(iv) Inside: Jesus before Caiaphas (18:24)

24 So Annas **sent Himbound** to **Caiaphas** the high priest.

24 So Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

24 Then Annas sent him, with his hands tied, to Caiaphas the high priest.

24 Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

- John does not give us much information about the other Jewish trials (trial #2 and #3) because he wrote his Gospel late, the last Gospel written, and Matthew, Mark and Luke (the synoptics) thoroughly covered these two trials

- But there's also likely another reason, which comes from 11:47-53: John believed that the religious leaders, including Caiaphas, had already made up their minds to convict Jesus, despite no evidence. If you've already made up your mind, the facts don't matter.

- Why did Annas transfer the case to Caiaphas? Because Annas' questioning did not reveal any evidence that Jesus should be put to death, so he transfers the case to Caiaphas, the

actual high priest at the time and the higher authority, to see if he could find any evidence with which to convict Christ.

— After they cannot find any evidence to use, they are going to begin manufacturing evidence. They have a crime already in mind (blasphemy), and all they are looking for now is the evidence to prove it.

- "...sent Him bound" - why would they bind a Man who is not guilty? Because they have already convicted Him, now they just need evidence or they need the time to manufacture the evidence, to fit their guilty verdict.

- "...Caiaphas" - any trial had to go through the high priest; the Sanhedrin would not hear charges unless they came from the actual functioning high priest

The Power of Unbelief

The power of unbelief resides in the human mind, which first makes a decision to not believe, then works backward from that decision to find any evidence to support their conclusion (Cf. Rom 1:18). Unbelief decides it is not going to believe in a vacuum, then invents facts out of thin air to substantiate their preordained conclusion.

For example, the unbelieving mind looks at creation, which should point them to the fact that God exists, but they make a decision to not believe what is right in front of them and obvious. Instead their carnal mind works overtime to explain away creation. How do you explain creation without a Creator? You don't, but that's what the unbelieving, carnal mind is constantly trying to do. Consequently they have to come up with all kinds of crazy speculations like naturalism or evolution.

But when someone arrives at a conclusion such as naturalism or evolution, they are not arriving at that position because they started out neutral and are looking at facts and data. Their neutrality is a myth. The reason they are arriving at those conclusions is because that position justifies whatever it is they already wanted to do. In this case, they didn't want to believe in a Creator, so they gravitate toward a theory that will justify their unbelief in their own eyes and mind.

This is exactly what the Jewish religious leaders did with Jesus Christ. They violated 15 of their own legal rules because they had already made up their mind that they did not want this Man, Jesus Christ, to reign over them. The decision/verdict was already made before the trials even began. Once they came to their verdict, their minds worked overtime to come up with whatever flimsy evidence they could muster to justify a preordained verdict.

Jesus' Jewish (Religious) Trials

There were a total of 15 legal rules that the religious leaders violated during the trials of Jesus. We cannot understand those rules until we understand a little about the OT, and the

Mishnah. The *Mishnah* is a written document, in codified form, that documented all of the oral traditions and laws that functioned in the life of the nation of Israel during Jesus' day. The nation of Israel committed vast amounts of information to memory, and their legal system was no different. They had a complex legal system, all committed to memory. And ultimately what was codified in their minds came to be documented in *Mishnah*.

In the *Mishnah*, there is a tract called Sanhedrin, and within this tract they documented all of the legal rules that the Jews were to follow when they tried people. There were rules for civil cases (which didn't involve a crime), and there were rules for capital cases (which involved a crime where the punishment may be execution).

The religious leaders had all of these rules in place when Jesus began His ministry, and what they did during His trials is run roughshod over all of them (Cf. 1:11). The three Jewish/Religious trials that Jesus endured were a mockery of justice, even the justice of the religious leaders themselves, as well as the Mosaic Law. They were a complete sham, and illustrate for us the power of unbelief.

Illegalities of Christ's Jewish/Religious Trials

1. No night trials or verdicts (Mishnah: *Sanhedrin* 4.1)
 - There were to be no trials or verdicts rendered before the morning sacrifice.
 - *Sanhedrin* 4.1 says: Capital cases are to be tried during the day, and completed during the day. In addition, the verdict in a trial must be announced during the day, not at night.
 - Matt 26:66,69; John 18:18,27 indicates that the trials before Annas and Caiaphas happened at night
2. Trials were to be held in public (Mishnah: *Sanhedrin* 1.6)
 - The trial for a capital crime was not to take place in secret, but in public
 - This was violated in the trials before Annas and Caiaphas, as both took place within their private homes (likely the same building)
3. Capital cases required at least 23 judges (Mishnah: *Sanhedrin* 4.1)
 - *Sanhedrin* 4.1 says: Monetary lawsuits are to be before 3 judges; capital cases are to be before 23 judges
 - The Gospels do not mention any assembly of 23 judges to hear the case; based on the chronology reported in the Gospels, there was no opportunity for 23 judges to be assembled to hear the case
4. No condemnation on the basis of the accused's sole testimony (with no witnesses)

- According to the Mosaic Law, a person could not be the only witness to testify about a crime; they could not incriminate themselves. There had to be 2-3 independent, corroborating witnesses to convict someone of a capital crime (Num 35:30; Deut 17:6-7; 19:15-20).
 - This law was violated in Mark 14:63; Matt 26:65
5. Accused could not testify against Himself (Mishnah: *Sanhedrin* 3.3-4)
- There are extensive regulations regarding the testimony and the questioning of witnesses, but there is no provision for the accused to testify against themselves
 - When Annas questioned Jesus about His disciples and His teaching (Cf. v19), Jesus refused to testify against Himself. Jesus asserted His rights by suggesting that Annas should direct his questions to any witnesses, not to Him (18:20-21).
6. At least 2-3 witnesses must testify, and be in perfect agreement with each other (Mishnah: *Sanhedrin* 5.2)
- If you convicted someone of a capital crime, you must have 2-3 witnesses, and their testimony must line up perfectly (Num 35:30-32)
 - *Sanhedrin* 5.2 says: When the witnesses contradict one another, their testimony is null.
 - The Jewish leaders violated this rule in Matt 26:59-61; Mark 14:55-60
7. The accused is not to be mocked, beaten or mistreated
- The punishment should not be doled out until the accused is actually convicted of a crime. Prior to their conviction, you are to treat the accused as an innocent man.
 - This was violated during the trial before Annas, when one of the officers struck Jesus (John 18:22)
8. Arguments for innocence presented first, followed by arguments for guilt (Mishnah: *Sanhedrin* 4.1)
- The accused was to present their case for innocence/acquittal first, followed by the accuser's presentation of their case for guilt/conviction
 - This rule was violated in Luke 22:66-71, where the arguments for guilt were presented first, and no arguments for innocence were presented at all
9. All Sanhedrin judges could argue for acquittal, but not all could argue for guilt (Mishnah: *Sanhedrin* 4.1)
- It was lawful to have unanimity for acquittal amongst the judges, but unlawful to have unanimity for guilt

- This was a wise law, which protected from the danger of "group think"
 - The religious leaders (judges) violated this law in Luke 22:70—23:1; Mark 14:64 when the "whole body" (all the judges) got up and brought Him before Pilate
10. A person could be convicted of blasphemy only if God's name is uttered (Mishnah: *Sanhedrin* 7.5)
- If you wanted to charge someone with blasphemy, you had to establish that the accused had uttered God's very name
 - *Sanhedrin* 7.5 says: He who blasphemes is liable only when he fully pronounces the divine name.
 - In the trials of Jesus, we find that He never uttered God's divine name. What Jesus did (Mark 14:61-64) is apply Ps 110:1 and Dan 7:13 to Himself
 - Everyone knew that He was claiming to be God, but He never uttered God's formal name
11. Each witness was to be questioned individually, in isolation, not in the presence of other witnesses (Mishnah: *Sanhedrin* 3.6)
- The Jewish leaders disregarded this rule in Mark 14:57-60 as it's obvious from v60 that all of the witnesses testified at the same time, in front of one another
12. Each witness in a capital case was to be advised that the blood of the accused was to be held against them if they gave false testimony (Mishnah: *Sanhedrin* 14.5; *Makkot* 1.5)
- The witnesses must be advised that if they provided false testimony, their testimony would be held against them until the end of time
 - In capital cases, the blood of the victim and his offspring would hang over the head of a false witness until the end of time
 - If these trials were conducted correctly, every witness would've been advised and educated on this point
 - *Makkot* 1.5 stated that if false witnesses testified falsely, they were to be put to death
 - This rule was violated in Matt 26:59-62; Mark 14:55-60 since the intent of the judges was to never admonish witnesses to speak the truth, but rather to secure two witnesses who could agree. If these witnesses were lying in the process, so be it.
13. In a capital case, the trial and the verdict announcement could not occur on the same day (Mishnah: *Sanhedrin* 4.1)

- The verdict in a trial had to wait at least until the following day before being announced
- This was designed to be a time of reflection and deliberation for the 23 judges, rather than rushing the verdict; it was to prevent a "rush to judgment" mentality
- This rule was violated in Mark 14:62-64 when the trial and the verdict were made back to back

14. A trial could not be held on a feast day (Mishnah: *Sanhedrin* 4.1)

- Jesus was tried on a feast day: Passover (John 18:28). The Jewish leaders did not enter the Praetorium where Pilate was because they did not want to ceremonially defile themselves so that they could participate in the Passover.
- A great example of legalism: they ran roughshod over law after law, yet they were very careful to keep the command to be ceremonially pure in order to partake in the Passover

15. Voting for execution must be conducted individually, beginning with the youngest judge (Mishnah: *Sanhedrin* 4.2)

- The idea behind beginning the vote by the youngest is so that they would not be influenced by the older judges
- This rule was violated in Mark 14:64 when "they all" condemned Him to be deserving of death

(ii) Outside: Peter's 2nd & 3rd denials (18:25-27; Cf. Matt 26:71-75; Mark 14:69-72; Luke 22:58-62)

As John is documenting Jesus' religious trials, he paints a clear contrast between what is going on inside (Jesus' trials) and what is going on outside (Peter's denials). He moves back and forth, inside to outside and back to inside to illustrate clearly what is happening with Christ, who is standing firm under unjust treatment, and Peter, who is collapsing morally, collapsing ethically, because he's trying to do the work of God under human power.

25 Now Simon Peter was *still* standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You are not *one* of His disciples as well, are you?" He denied *it*, and said, "**I am not.**"

25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You are not also *one* of His disciples, are you?" He denied *it*, and said, "I am not."

25 Meanwhile, Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. Some people⁷ asked him, "You aren't one of his disciples, too, are you?"

He denied it by saying, "I am not!"

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.

- "...I am not" - Peter's 2nd denial of Christ

— What is interesting about this verse is not how John describes it, but how Mark describes it in the parallel passage (Mark 14:69): The slave woman saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, "This man is *one* of them!"

— Peter again, under pressure from a little girl, collapses

— God is working in and through this situation to demonstrate to Peter that after his human-powered declaration in the Upper Room that he would never deny Christ, just hours later is folding under questioning from a little slave girl.

— It is not until we experience failure when trying to do things under our own power that we understand the impotence of the flesh to accomplish anything worthwhile for God

- As you look at the future, over the next year, and you think about all of the things you'd like to accomplish, all of the ministry you want to do, the people you want to reach, all of the responsibilities you have to family, spouse, business/employment, or church, the question is: who are you trusting in? How are you going to get all of those things done?

— If you think about these things and have anxiety or worry about them, that is a telltale sign that you are trusting in your flesh to accomplish these things instead of the Lord.

— How you feel when you look at the future is a good barometer to learn if you're trusting in yourself and your power, or you're trusting in Him. God does not call us to live out the Christian faith through human power, He calls us to rest in Him.

John constructed a dramatic contrast where Jesus stands up to His questioners and denies nothing, while Peter cowers before his questioners and denies everything.

| Religious / Civil | Trial | Scripture | Judge | Ruling |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|-----------|--|
| Religious-Jewish | 1 | John 18:12-14 | Annas | Approval given to execute Jesus |
| Religious-Jewish | 2 | Matt 26:57-68 | Caiaphas | Blasphemy |
| Religious-Jewish | 3 | Matt 27:1-2 | Sanhedrin | Death sentence |
| Civil-Roman | 4 | John 18:28-38a | Pilate | Not guilty |
| Civil-Roman | 5 | Luke 23:6-12 | Herod | Not guilty |
| Civil-Roman | 6 | John 18:38b–19:16 | Pilate | Not guilty but Jesus turned over to Jews |

26 One of the slaves of the high priest, who was related to the one whose ear Peter cut off, *said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?"

26 One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, *said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?"

26 Then one of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said, "I saw you in the garden with Jesus, didn't I?"

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?

- This slave recalled the incident in the Garden of Gethsemane that precipitated all of these things? It was Peter's attempt to do the work of God through human power.

— During the arrest of Jesus, which Peter didn't like, he picked up a sword and swing away. He attempted to do the work of God under his own power. In the process, he cut off the ear of Malchus (Cf. v10).

— Now, one of Malchus' relatives sees Peter warming himself and recognizes him as the one who wielded the sword

27 Peter then denied *it* again, and **immediately a rooster crowed**.

27 Peter then denied *it* again, and immediately a rooster crowed.

27 Peter again denied it, and immediately a rooster crowed.

27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

- Peter's third denial...

— Mark 14:71 adds an interesting detail to Peter's third denial: But he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this man you are talking about!"

— Mark tells us that in his third denial, he didn't just shrug off a question with a cursory denial, he actually got quite angry and began to curse and swear

— We know when God is doing His greatest work in us when we get angry. The reason we get angry is because God is removing from us the very thing we have been trusting in. As we go down in flames of failure over and over again, it's a frustrating process and there's a tendency for us to get emotional and angry about it.

— If you find yourself angry at God at what is taking place in your life, be thankful for that because God is doing the spiritual surgery in your life that is required before you can successfully serve Him

- If you study anger in the Bible, you find that people get angry just before they receive one of the biggest transformations they could ever receive:

— David's anger burned greatly (2 Sam 12:5) after Nathan told him a parable that God designed to bring about a confession and a repentance in him. David was angry at Nathan, he was angry at the neighbor in the parable, and no doubt he was also angry at God.

- Paul was "breathing threats and murder" against the disciples of the Lord (Acts 9:1) just before Jesus met him on the Damascus Road.
- We become the most angry when the Lord begins to take away things that we've been trusting in the most
- All three synoptic gospels tell us that after the rooster crowed, Peter remembered what Jesus said to him in the Upper Room, and he went out and wept bitterly (Matt 26:75; Mark 14:72; Luke 22:62)
- The reason why Peter is weeping is because everything he had trusted in to get him to the finish line had failed. The weeping is his emotional response to loss. He realizes the futility of pleasing God under human power; his weeping is an indication that he has finally reached the end of himself, and God has him just where He wants him.
- "...immediately a rooster crowed" - fulfilling the prophecy Jesus gave to Peter in the Upper Room (Cf. 13:38)
- In 13:19, Jesus told the disciples that He was making a number of short term prophecies so that when they saw them fulfilled just like He predicted, they would believe (their faith in Him would be strengthened)
- Besides the seven signs that John details in this Gospel, which was designed for us to read and lead us to belief in who Jesus is, Jesus also gave Peter (and us) another sign: the fulfillment of prophecy.
- One of the primary ways that Jesus evidences that He is who He claimed to be is to predict the future. Thus, Jesus made a number of short-term prophecies to the disciples in the Upper Room, regarding Judas and Peter, and John is careful to document for us how these short term predictions came to pass. This is further evidence for us, beyond the seven signs that Jesus performed, that Jesus was God.
- One of the things we need to understand about the Bible is that it is a book of prophecy. A full 27% of the biblical text was prophetic at the time it was written. Now some of that 27% has already been fulfilled, for example the 300+ predictions related to Christ's first coming. However there is a huge amount of prophecy that is future to us today, which God can and will fulfill.
- The fulfillment of prophecy is one of the greatest evidences we have that the Bible is the very Word of God. There are no such prophecies given in the Book of Mormon, there are no similar signs found in the Quran, and there are no other similar prophecies or predictions found in any other alleged holy book. Prophecy is something that is unique to the Scripture itself.

(c) Pilate (18:28—19:16)

(i) 1st trial before Pilate (18:28-38a)

(a) What accusation do you have against this Man? (18:28-32)

28 Then they *brought Jesus from Caiaphas into the **Praetorium, and it was early;** and **they themselves did not enter the Praetorium, so that they would not be defiled,** but might eat the Passover.

28 Then they *led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.

28 Then Jesus was led from Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters early in the morning. The Jews did not go into the headquarters, to avoid becoming unclean and unable to eat the Passover meal.

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.

- After being found guilty by the Sanhedrin and sentenced to execution, the religious leaders brought Jesus from Caiaphas' house into the Praetorium for His trial before Caesar, away from Jewish authority over to Roman authority

- "...Praetorium" - the Roman military governor's (prefect) headquarters; Pontius Pilate was a Roman governor over Judea

- Pilate's headquarters were typically up north in the town of Caesarea (by the sea). However, during the Jewish feast days, Pilate would relocate his headquarters to Jerusalem to prevent any uprisings from taking place. Pilate probably chose as his Jerusalem headquarters Herod's former palace on the western wall of the city.

- During the Jewish feast days, hundreds of thousands, possibly millions, of Jews would travel to Jerusalem to take part; Pilate and the Roman guards/troops who would accompany him would be in the city to keep the peace.

- "...it was early" - most likely between 6-7am

- "...they themselves did not enter the Praetorium, so that they would not be defiled" - the Jews believed that interacting with Gentiles made them unclean (Cf. Acts 10:28)

- They believed this because they could not be sure that Pilate would keep everything in his home in a kosher state, and as a Gentile, he may have even had yeast in his home (Cf. Ex 12:19; 13:7).

- Jesus and His disciples celebrated the Passover meal the night before, so why were these religious leaders so concerned that entering Pilate's Praetorium might preclude them from eating the Passover? Had they too not already eaten it the night before? The Passover was the name that the Jews used to describe both the Passover proper and the entire week-long festival that followed it, which included the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Cf. Luke 22:1). Evidently it was their continuing participation in this eight-day festival that these Jewish leaders did not want to forfeit by entering a Gentile residence.

— John is explaining to us the power that religion has to blind us to the big picture. Religion will get you focused on "do's" and "don'ts"; religion will get you focused on rules; religion will get you focused on external behavior. And these religious concepts can be so blinding to us that we miss the big picture in the process.

— The Jewish religious leaders are so uptight about possibly coming into adjacent contact with leaven and their subsequent ceremonial defilement that they are missing the fact that they are working to crucifying the One to Whom the Passover ultimately points to. They are crucifying the One who, after His death, burial and resurrection, will get rid of all of these ancient ceremonies because He fulfilled them.

— How many Christians are so focused on the external, so focused on the rituals, so focused on the routine, that they are blind to Jesus Christ?

— John does not only point of the Jewish leader's blindness here, he also points it out in 19:31

29 Therefore Pilate came out to them and *said, "What accusation are you bringing against this Man?"

29 Therefore Pilate went out to them and *said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?"

29 So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What accusation are you bringing against this man?"

29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?
- After Jesus goes in to see Pilate and the Jewish religious leaders remain outside, Pilate has to go outside to question them...

— Pilate was unsure/unaware of why they brought Jesus to him, so he goes outside to find out from the Jewish leaders

— Roman law required three things:

1. Specific indictment
2. Bringing accusers before the accused (Acts 23:28)
3. Liberty granted to the accused to answer for himself (Acts 25:16)

30 They answered and said to him, "If this Man were not a criminal, we would not have handed Him over to you."

30 They answered and said to him, "If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you."

30 They answered him, "If he weren't a criminal, we wouldn't have handed him over to you."

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

- Notice how these Jewish religious leaders are hesitant to bring up specific charges against Christ
- Based upon their sham religious trials, the charge against Him was blasphemy, but that charge will not get the Romans to crucify Him because that is a religious charge and this was a political trial (Cf. Acts 18:14-15).
- Pilate wanted to know what Roman law Jesus violated...their response: He's just a bad guy, take our word for it. They are looking for a rubber stamp to their preordained guilty verdict.
- Pilate couldn't care less about some Jewish religious controversy. Blasphemy may have been sufficient to get Jesus executed by the Jews (Cf. Lev 24:16), but it was insufficient grounds for execution by the Romans.
- What we learn from the other Gospels is that the Jews changed the charges in the middle of the trial (Cf. Luke 23:2). Anyone even remotely familiar with the law knows that a prosecutor cannot change an indictment in the middle of a trial. They are changing the indictment to say that Jesus is now promoting insurrection.
- These charges were not raised or tried in the first two religious trials, no witnesses were brought forward to corroborate any of these accusations. What the Jews thought was, He is convicted on religious grounds and deserves execution, now all we need to do is get the Romans to agree to our verdict, by trumping up some other charges, in order to move forward.

31 So Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law." The Jews said to him, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death."

31 So Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law." The Jews said to him, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death,"

31 Pilate told them, "You take him and try him according to your Law." The Jewish leaders told him, "It is not legal for us to put anyone to death."

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:

- After hearing the Jew's non-answer for the charges against Jesus, Pilate attempted to wash his hands of this distraction

— This was not the response the Jewish religious leaders were looking for, because politically the Jews did not have the authority to mete out capital punishment.

— When Rome came to power over the land of Israel in 63 BC, they removed the authority to perform capital punishment from the Jews. What about Stephen, who was the first Christian martyr (Acts 7)? The only "crime" where the Jews were allowed to execute a person was for speaking against the temple.

— Earlier in the religious trials, the Jews tried to charge Jesus with speaking against the temple, but the witness accounts did not corroborate with each other.

Pilate's Six Attempts to Release Jesus

1. "You judge Him" (18:31)
2. "He is innocent" (18:38)
3. Jews substitute Barabbas (18:39)
4. Partial punishment (19:1)
5. Play on pity (19:5)
6. "Behold your King" (19:14)

32 *This happened* so that the word of Jesus which He said, indicating what kind of death He was going to die, would be fulfilled.

32 to fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.

32 This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.

32 That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

- This is another demonstration of the sovereignty of God...God is not going to allow Israel to put Jesus to death because their means would've been stoning. However, the Roman means of execution was crucifixion, which lined up perfectly with OT prophecy.

— Jesus Himself gave prophecies about His manner of death (Cf. 12:32; Matt 20:19); if Christ was stoned instead of crucified, these prophecies would not have been fulfilled.

— There are also a number of OT prophecies about Christ's manner of death (Ps 22:16; Is 53:5; Zech 12:10)

(b) Are you the King of the Jews? (18:33-38a)

33 Therefore Pilate entered the Praetorium again, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, **"You are the King of the Jews?"**

33 Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

33 So Pilate went back into the governor's headquarters, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

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

- "...You are the King of the Jews?" - Pilate picks up on a narrative that isn't covered by John; in Luke 23:2, the Jewish religious leaders change their indictments from blasphemy,

which they convicted Jesus on in the religious trials, to three new indictments:

1. Misleading our nation (leading the Jews away from their duty to Rome)
2. Forbidding us to pay taxes to Caesar (Jesus actually said the opposite, Cf. Luke 20:25)
3. Saying that He Himself is Christ, a King (this charge was true, Cf. Luke 22:69-70)

— The third charge was the only one that Pilate was interested in, so he goes back into the Praetorium and asks Jesus this question himself

34 Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own, or did others tell you about Me?"

34 Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?"

34 Jesus replied, "Are you asking this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about me?"

34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

- Jesus is attempting to ascertain if Pilate is an honest seeker of truth: does Pilate want an answer to this question for the benefit of his own salvation, or is he just being manipulated by other individuals

— Jesus is asking Pilate: What side are you on? Is your motivation personal or political?

— As the narrative of this trial moves forward, we see how Jesus is concerned about the personal salvation of Pilate. As He is being mistreated, wrongly accused, maliciously prosecuted, even struck in the face, Jesus shows true love and concern for Pilate and his eternal destiny.

— Jesus is not concerned for Himself, He's not concerned about vindicating justice for Himself, He's concerned about the personal salvation of Pilate

35 Pilate answered, "**I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed You over to me;** what have You done?"

35 Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?"

35 Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? It is your own nation and high priests who have handed you over to me. What have you done?"

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

- Pilate gives Jesus a flippant, sarcastic answer

— He has God in human flesh standing before him, yet he doesn't give Jesus the time of day

— Pilate probably assumed that the opportunity he had before him would always exist; many people today as this way, they hear spiritual truth after spiritual truth, but they are

flippant and unconcerned as if the opportunity for salvation will always be there. However, today's opportunities will not always be available tomorrow.

- "...I am not a Jew, am I?" - Pilate is not interested in Jesus Christ or his own personal salvation, he simply wants clarification of the Sanhedrin's charge against Him

— Pilate tells Jesus that he is not a Jew, thus he doesn't understand all of the complex legalities in the OT or the *Mishnah*, and to be honest, he didn't really care

— He wants Jesus to clarify the charges against Him, since he was agnostic to the Jewish religious intricacies

- "...Your own nation and the chief priests handed You over to me" - Pilate acknowledges that it was the nation of Israel and chief priests, in their rebellion against God, who turned Jesus Christ over to the Romans for execution. This is a fulfillment of what John wrote in 1:11.

36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were **of** this world, My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but **as it is**, My kingdom is not **of** this realm."

36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom belonged to this world, my servants would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But for now my kingdom is not from here."

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.

- Pilate is questioning Jesus about the 3rd new indictment by the Jewish religious leaders, that of Jesus claiming to be the King of Israel (Cf. notes on v33)

— He's questioning Jesus on this charge because it's the only one of the three charges that he cared about, since his job was to quell any insurrection of the Jews against Rome

— Jesus is answering Pilate to say that His kingdom is no immediate threat to Rome; the kingdom that Jesus is the King over is not a threat to Rome at this time

- Sadly, ever since Augustine in the 4th century AD, this verse has been used to espouse the heretical teaching that there is no earthly reign of Christ in the future: amillennialism.

— Amillennialists love this verse because they think it says, three times over, that there is no future kingdom on the earth. Period, end of discussion.

— Every major heresy that has come into the church is ultimately rooted in the amillennial idea that the church is the kingdom of God

— For example, take the Prosperity Gospel, the idea that if you are a Christian, you are entitled to health, wealth, prosperity and leisure. Where does this idea come from? It comes from the belief that we are currently experiencing kingdom conditions, a time when there will be complete healing.

— So they take this one verse, and from it, construct an entire doctrine around it that negates the dozens of passages in the OT (and NT) that speak to a coming, future earthly kingdom ruled by Jesus Christ from David's Throne in Jerusalem.

- "...as it is" - *nyn*, better translated as "now" as in the KJV; the last clause should read: "but now [*nyn*], My kingdom is not of this world"

— Jesus is not making a statement that there will never be an earthly kingdom as the amillennialist reads it; He's making a statement that that kingdom is not "now." Thus, His kingdom, which would be a reality in the future, was not a threat to Pilate or Rome at that time.

— The any moment appearance of the kingdom, which you could've seen and experienced had Israel accepted the offer of the kingdom, is now postponed. He's telling Pilate that his man-made kingdom is safe.

— He's telling Pilate, I will not establish My kingdom in your lifetime, so you have nothing to worry about. The Stone cut without human hands will not demolish the statue and the kingdom will not be instantaneously established while you are in power, or even alive.

— This is clear not only from the wording of the verse, but also from the context. Of the three charges brought against Jesus, the only one Pilate was concerned about, and thus questioned Jesus about, was the charge around insurrection. Jesus' response directly addresses Pilate's concern and question, not denying a future kingdom, but that the kingdom that He will rule was not at that time a direct threat to Rome.

- "...of" [2x] - *ek*, indicating origin or source; Jesus is making a statement on where this kingdom that Pilate is asking about, His kingdom, would come from. Jesus answered that this kingdom will not come from "this realm" (the earth).

— You could easily render both instances of "of" in this verse as "from," speaking of origin

— Amillennialists misinterpret this as meaning that the kingdom will never come to earth; Jesus is saying that the kingdom will not *originate* from the earth. This is why the Offer of the Kingdom was: Repent, for the *kingdom of heaven* is near" (Cf. Dan 2:44).

— But Jesus is making a statement that when the kingdom originates, it will come *to* the earth, but it doesn't originate *from* the earth. It comes from heaven to the earth. The kingdom will not come *from* the earth *to* the earth. The kingdom is not "from" (*ek*) this world. When it comes, it will come *from* heaven, *to* the earth.

To believe the amillennial interpretation of 18:36, you have to believe that Jesus, at the end of His ministry and on *the very day* of His crucifixion, secretly informed a pagan

Roman governor that His kingdom "was not of this world." This, after teaching over and over again throughout His ministry, as well as throughout the entire OT, that the kingdom would be an earthly reality. And without the presence of His disciples or any other Jew.

If this was the case, Jesus would've deceived His disciples over and over again, and concealed from them this great truth concerning the kingdom just hours after He instituted the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:29-30). He would've also had to conceal this great truth from them for the 40 days after His resurrection, during which time He taught the disciples "things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3) and "opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45).

Basically, the amilennial view is that Jesus taught literally about the kingdom throughout His entire ministry, then again to the disciples after the resurrection, but when He was alone with Pilate just hours before His death, Jesus gave him the true interpretation. How plausible is that?

The premillennial interpretation simply supposes that Jesus spoke to Pilate in complete consistency and in accordance with all of His previous and subsequent teachings about the kingdom. Amillennialism believes that Jesus only gave the true interpretation to a pagan Roman emperor.

37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, **"So You are a king?"** Jesus answered, **"You say correctly that I am a king. For this purpose I have been born, and for this I have come into the world: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice."**

37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, **"You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."**

37 Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?"

Jesus answered, **"You say that I am a king. I was born for this, and I came into the world for this: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is committed to the truth listens to my voice."**

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.**

- From Pilate's follow-up with Jesus, it is evident that he did not understand the nature of Christ's kingdom, that when it comes one day, it will be sourced/originated in heaven and come to the earth. Pilate likely didn't understand any of this.

— But this fact he did understand: Jesus is the ruler of this kingdom. The kingdom isn't here yet, but when it does come, Jesus will be the ruler of it.

- "...So You are a king?" - this question from Pilate gives Jesus the opportunity to explain more about this future kingdom...
- Jesus had some negative prohibitions about the kingdom in v36...the kingdom is not now, and the kingdom does not originate on this earth.
- After telling Pilate what the kingdom is not, Jesus tells Pilate here what the kingdom actually is: (1) Jesus is a King, and (2) His purpose for coming to earth is to create citizens of this future kingdom.
- "...truth" - *alētheia*, Jesus was born into the world to testify to the truth (Cf. 1:18)
- Jesus came into the world, putting flesh on eternally existent deity, to reveal the truth of the Father
- There is no better means available to reveal who the Father is, what the Father feels, and what the Father is, than for the second member of the Trinity to take His eternally existent deity and add to it humanity, and live on the earth as a normal man.
- Jesus is revealing truth to the fallen mind so that the fallen human being can believe in Jesus Christ and consequently be born spiritually. And as this process begins to happen around the world, Jesus is winning citizens to the future kingdom.
- But this new birth and subsequent citizenship in the kingdom cannot happen without truth. That is the significance of truth. An exposure to truth leads one to faith in Christ (Luke 16:27-31; Rom 10:17; 2 Tim 3:15; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23).
- "...Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice" - everyone who wants this truth will hear Him, they will gravitate toward Christ, but there are some people who want no part of truth (Cf. 3:19-21)

38a Pilate *said to Him, "**What is truth?**"

38a Pilate *said to Him, "What is truth?"

38a Pilate asked him, "What is 'truth'?"

38a Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?

- "...What is truth?" - truth is when the Word and deed become one
- Obviously, Pilate was not one who truly sought the truth. He offered a cynical comment that implied that the "truth" was relative and unknowable. He was not a seeker of truth.
- His cynical question showed no reverence for or personal interest in truth. Pilate responded to the greatest opportunity of his life with indifference.
- To Pilate, the idea of truth, the pursuit of truth, seemed silly to even think about
- Why was Pilate so cynical when it came to knowing the truth or even understanding what truth is? Maybe because of his high position, he had observed all the lying and had probably been lied to all the time. He'd seen all the manipulation and scheming.
- Pilate was a post-modernist before post-modernism was the thing to be. Post-modernism, prevalent today, is the idea that truth is unattainable. It's the idea that Truth

(uppercase 'T') is not knowable, but truth (lowercase 't') is anything that you are passionate or sincere about. If you sincerely believe something, that is considered 'your truth.'

— Post-modernism today masquerades as humility but in reality it is unbelief masquerading as uncertainty. To hide their unbelief, Post-modernists have simply exchanged one set of truths for another: If I say truth can be found in God's Word and they say that truth is unknowable, we are both making truth claims. The post-modernist is simply exchanging one set of dogma for another.

— The Bible is all about truth (Cf. 1:14; 14:6; 16:13)

(ii) 2nd trial before Pilate (18:38b-19:16)

Note that between v38a and v38b is the trial of Jesus before Herod (see trial #5 below, Luke 23:6-12). After Pilate asks Jesus "What is truth?" (and says some other things, detailed in Luke 23:4), he learns that Jesus was from Galilee and sends Him to Herod.

(a) Do you want me to release the King of the Jews? (18:38b-40) (Cf. Matt 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15; Luke 23:13-25)

38b And after saying this, he came out again to the Jews and *said to them, **"I find no grounds at all for charges in His case."**

38b And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and *said to them, "I find no guilt in Him.

38b and then he went out to the Jewish leaders again and told them, "I find no basis for a charge against him.

38b 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.

- Pilate doesn't even stick around to allow Jesus, Truth Incarnate, to answer the question. He issues his sarcastic, cynical statement, then walked out.

— As noted above, after asking Jesus "What is truth?" and his proclamation of Jesus' innocence of the charges leveled against Him (even the trumped up charges on top of blasphemy, Luke 23:2), Pilate sent Jesus to Herod (Cf. Luke 23:6-12).

— Matt 27:19 talks about a dream that Pilate's wife had, and while Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife warned him about a terrible dream she had the night before, and told Pilate "Have nothing to do with that righteous Man."

- "...I find no grounds at all for charges in His case" - Pilate pronounced Him innocent: If Jesus was innocent of all charges then Pilate should have set Him free! After displaying a lack of interest in truth, he now revealed a lack of commitment to justice. He lacked the courage of his convictions. Instead, Pilate began a series of compromising moves to avoid

dealing with an inconvenient truth in a difficult circumstance. [Ed Bloom, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*]

— According to Roman Law, everything that followed Pilate's declaration of innocence is illegal.

- Pilate ruled that Jesus had done nothing worthy of punishment by Rome (Luke 23:14). He was innocent of any activity that constituted a threat to Rome.

— Apparently, Pilate concluded that Jesus was not a king, at least not in the normal sense, but simply an idealist

- John excludes that the Jews accused Jesus further; Jesus replied nothing; Pilate marveled at Jesus' silence (Matt 27:12-14; Mark 15:3-5; Luke 23:4-6).

— John also omitted the account of Jesus' appearance before Herod Antipas that followed Pilate's verdict and preceded Pilate's offer to release Barabbas in Jesus' place (Luke 23:6-12)

Barabbas is Released (Cf. Matt 27:15-25; Mark 15:6-14; Luke 23:17-23)

39 However, you have a custom that I release one *prisoner* for you at the Passover; therefore do you wish that I release for you the **King of the Jews**?"

39 But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover; do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?"

39 But you have a custom that I release one person for you at Passover. Do you want me to release for you the king of the Jews?"

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?

- Pilate tried to appeal to the crowd, hoping to bypass the desire of the chief priests and the elders

— At the end of the day, Pilate did not act on his own convictions, but instead has a desire to please men

— Instead of doing the right thing and releasing Jesus completely, he tries to draw attention to his own generosity. He wanted the Jews to realize that he was being good to them by honoring their custom. And in the process, Pilate opened the door to a tragic mistake. Something was about to happen here that Pilate probably never dreamed could happen: that the Jews themselves would turn down the offer.

- "...King of the Jews" - by referring to Jesus with this title, he insulted the Jewish leaders and set his compromising plans up for rejection

- It was about this time that Pilate's wife warned him to have nothing more to do with Jesus because He was a righteous Man (Matt 27:19)

40 So they shouted again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a **rebel**.

40 So they cried out again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber.

40 At this, they shouted out again, "Not this fellow, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a revolutionary.

40 Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

- This statement no doubt stunned Pilate...

- "...rebel" - *lēstēs*, one who seizes plunder

- But Barabbas was worse than just a "rebel" or a robber...Mark 15:7 tells us that he was in prison with actual insurrectionists, who committed murder during one of their insurrections; he was a domestic terrorist

- He was obviously well known because Pilate does not give the crowd a choice between Jesus and Barabbas, but between Jesus and any other criminal, and these people shout out that they want Barabbas released

- This was someone who actually attempted to overthrow the Roman occupation, and had been convicted of it. But these men wanted innocent Jesus killed instead of a convicted domestic terrorist, who was involved in a bloody insurrection in which people were killed, despite the fact that Jesus never sought to overthrow Rome.

- The Jews looked at Jesus as a threat to their power structure, and wanted Him dead at any cost

- This verse is a portrait of the atonement...the innocent suffers in place of the guilty.

Barabbas was released, despite the fact that he was guilty and deserved execution as his punishment. Jesus was innocent, according to Pilate (2x) and Herod of any (trumped up) charge that the Jews brought before them.