

John 18

Notes

Verse 1-2

John 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

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

Done speaking with them. "hereafter I will not talk much with you, because the prince of this world cometh."

So he has led them to a place that Judas is familiar with.

We saw when he was in Jerusalem before, that he stayed the night there, before the incident of the woman taken in adultery.

Verse 3

John 18:3 Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

And so as Jesus said, the prince of the world has come, with an army, to take him.

And as he said, he has nothing in him. He is not of him. Has no part with him. He's come to betray him.

Verse 4

John 18:4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

And we've seen that Jesus did indeed know what was coming.

He told his disciples of it before it came to pass, that they might know that his Father had sent him.

But knowing whom they are seeking, he goes out and asks them whom they are seeking.

Verse 5-6

John 18:5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

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

And so they cannot stand before the word of God.

Those that came out against him fell backward.
And Judas did with them, because his part was with them, not with him.

Verse 7-9

John 18:7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.
8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:
9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

He said he had lost none but the son of perdition, who was to be judged and cast out at that time.

And so the only of his disciples that would die that night was Judas.
The others would go their way.

So Jesus is commanding the soldiers what to do.
And they must obey the word of God.
The scripture will be fulfilled.

Verse 10-11

John 18:10 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.

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?

But Peter says, "no, I'm not going to go my way, if they are going to take you, their going to have to kill me too."

But Jesus rebukes him. Peter is resisting the word of God, resisting the scriptures. Resisting God's will.

Should not the Son do the will of his Father? Should not he drink the cup of bitterness, the cup of trembling, of judgement, that he has been given?

He has told them that he will be lifted up.
And yet we can see that they still don't fully understand.

Verse 12-14

John 18:12 Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,
13 And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

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

So these are the men who gave counsel that they needed to kill Jesus to save the nation of Israel.

Trying to hang onto the physical kingdom, they need to kill the man preaching the message of a spiritual one.

Verse 15-16

John 18:15 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.

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.

Now, I think it is clear that that other disciple is John, who is writing this.

You'll note that he knew exactly who it was that Peter had cut the ear off of. Malchus. He knew the names of the high priest's servants. Gave his name here in his gospel.

So he knew the high priest, and was known of the high priest.

And he boldly follows Jesus, along with Simon Peter.

And he goes in with Jesus.

But Simon Peter is not being allowed in.

But John knows the doorkeeper, and tells her to let Peter in, so she does.

Verse 17

John 18:17 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.

And so as John brings Peter in, the doorkeeper says, "Oh, you must be one of his disciples also."

But Peter denies it.

Just as Jesus told him he would do.

Verse 18

John 18:18 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.

And this is a fulfillment of Isaiah 50.

It speaks of Christ being brought into judgement, and being smitten.

Isaiah 50:10 Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.

11 Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

And so as we will see, Peter, who warmed himself at their fire, will indeed lie down with sorrow.

Verse 19-21

John 18:19 The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

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.

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

So we've seen Jesus preaching the word. He's preached it openly.
A word of grace and life and truth.

He hasn't been speaking in secret. It is not just for the select few. He's not a cultist.
He's not this subversive, hiding his doctrine. It is light.

And here are his disciples.
They know John, standing here.
And Peter is over there by the fire.
Two of the main guys.
Why don't they ask them what Jesus has said. If he has told them anything in secret.

But they aren't calling them to the witness stand.
Instead they are asking him.
They are asking him accusing questions about what he said. About his disciples.
But if these things are true, Why don't they have any witnesses of them?
Why don't they have any witnesses of him saying that? Or of his disciples doing that?
Why are they asking him if it is true? Don't they have any witnesses of it? No one who will testify?

"In the mouth of two or three witnesses."

They themselves said before that if he bears witness of himself his witness is not true.
But now they are asking him to do just that.
They won't believe his witness of himself when they don't like it, but they will accept it if they do like it.

But apparently they don't have any witnesses. So they are trying to catch him saying something, acknowledging something, that they can condemn him for.

So he calls them out on it, and says, "Why don't you just bring forward some witnesses who heard me?"
They didn't need to capture him and bring him in here to find out what he said.
They heard him themselves.
Many others heard him. Why not ask them?

Verse 22-23

John 18:22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?
23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

I thought this was a trial? Now are we going to torture a confession out of him?
At a trial, you're supposed to bear witness against somebody if they are evil.
They aren't supposed to be beaten until after they are condemned.

But they did the same thing to Paul.
If they didn't like what he said, they just hit him.

Verse 24

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

So he has now been brought to Caiaphas, when this occurred. And that is why the officer said, "Answerest thou the high priest so?"

Because he was standing before the high priest, Caiaphas.

So John reminds us of that, because he was originally brought to Annas.

Verse 25-27

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

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?

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

Verse 28

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

They wouldn't go into a Gentile's house, because then they would be unclean, according to their traditions.

And so they wouldn't be able to eat the Passover, because you had to be clean.

If you were unclean you had to wait until the second month, and then eat it.

But they didn't want to do that, so they won't go into the judgment hall.

Verse 29-31

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

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

Pilate is kind of surprised. He doesn't know what this guy could have done, he hasn't heard of anything that has happened. He doesn't recognize him as some known outlaw.

So he asks them, "who is this? what has he done?"

And their response is, "What, don't you believe us? If he hadn't done something terrible, we wouldn't have brought him to you."

So they are insulted that Pilate won't just rubber stamp this.

They were hoping he might just throw up his hands and dispense with the formalities.

Verse 31-32

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

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

Pilate is dismissive. He isn't interested in getting caught up in what he must suspect is just a political and religious squabble.

But the problem is that the Jews want this guy killed, and they don't have the authority to do that, so they need him to give the death sentence.

So there were many times that they wanted to stone him.

And they could have taken him and done that, when Pilate said, "take ye him and judge him," they could have later said, "well, you gave us permission!"

But in the end Jesus wouldn't be stoned by the Jews. He would be crucified by the Romans. He would be lifted up. As he spake.

Verse 33-34

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

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

He said, "Where'd you get that idea?"

"Did you come up with that on your own, or is that what someone is telling you?"

"Is that the rumor going around, or do I just look the part?"

Verse 35

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

Pilate says, "look, you think I am worried about Jewish kings? That I'd know of myself what sort of king the Jews would want?"

"And even if I did, it is your own people, both the political and religious leaders, that have delivered you to me. They don't want you as their king either."

"Failing to deny that you are the king is dangerous. This isn't a laughing matter. You're own people want you killed, and I don't care, I don't give a darn, because I'm not a Jew."

"So if you want to get out of this, you should have just given an emphatic 'no'."

"You're on thin ice."

"So let's try it again, huh?"

Verse 36

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

But Jesus will not deny that he is a king.
He can't.
He is a king.
He is the king of the Jews. The king of the earth. The King of Creation.
But he's come now, only to establish a spiritual kingdom.
His physical kingdom isn't going to be manifested at this time.
Now his kingdom is not from hence.
If it was, if he was a king, then he wouldn't be standing here.
His servants would be fighting for him. They wouldn't have allowed the Jews to come and take him.

Verse 37

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

So Pilate says, "So you are claiming to be a king? You are speaking treason?"
But Jesus says, "Wait a minute. *Thou* sayest that I am a king. You're the one who brought it up. If there is treason, *you* started it."
"But the reason that I came into this world is not to be a king. That's not what I came to you saying. You said it. That's not what I said to the Jews. I didn't come to be a king, I came to preach the truth."
"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."
Those that are of the truth have heard him, and received his word.
But those that didn't like what he had to say, those that were liars, deceivers, they've hated him, and now they have delivered him unto death.
That's why the Jews are against him.

Verse 38

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

So Pilate says, "what is truth? You have your beliefs, I have mine. None of us really know if anything is true or not."
"But that being so, we might as well get along. No since crucifying someone over a difference of opinion. Over sectarian squabbles."
So Pilate tells the Jews, "there's no fault in this man, that he should be put to death.'

Verse 39

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

So Pilate sees a way to get out of this, and let everybody save face.

He is a little superstitious, and doesn't want to put this innocent holy man to death. But he doesn't want to just let him go, officially declare him innocent, because the rulers of the Jews will be very upset, and they'll feel like they've been made fools of. So he proposes that to kind of paper things over, he won't declare him innocent, he'll just release him at the passover, as he's done in the past with other convicted criminals.

So Pilate comes out to where the Jews are waiting and makes this proposal. And many of the people are also there, so to pander to them, which is what this releasing of a prisoner at the feast was, it was a way to try to gain some popular appeal. So he tries to get the people on his side by calling Jesus the king of the Jews. He knows that Jesus is very popular with many of the people. So he's hoping that even though the leaders aren't going to like this, that he'll be able to get rid of this hot potato, that he doesn't want to deal with.

But it doesn't work.

Verse 40

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

The Pharisees outsmarted Pilate, by convincing the people to ask that Barabbas be released. This thug, this mafia ringleader, this highwayman, a robber, and murderer. Somebody that would have been hated and despised. But everybody ignored Barabbas's past, they didn't mind that he was a crook, because he had lead an insurrection against the establishment. He'd planned to take on the Roman authorities. And everybody hated the Romans, so they liked anybody who stood up to them. They were hoping Jesus would be that kind of guy. They were hoping that he *would be* the king of the Jews. But he came to speak the truth. And they weren't of the truth. So they didn't hear his voice. And instead, they asked for Barabbas.

Chapter 19 Verse 1

John 19:1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

So Pilate doesn't get what he wants. He's being forced to move forward with a judgement and execution.

And the next step was to scourge him. To whip him in the most horrible way. And they didn't just do that because they liked to do violence the people, That was the Roman's means of torture, to try and get a confession from someone. Paul narrowly escaped that when he was imprisoned at Jerusalem, and they wouldn't believe him, wanted to get him to talk and confess to some crime that the Jews were accusing him of. So, Pilate believes Jesus is innocent, but he has him scourged to see if he is going to confess to anything.

Verse 2-3

John 19:2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,
3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

Scourging didn't get anything out of him, and amazingly he lived through it, which wasn't always the case.
So the soldiers dress him up as a king and mock him.

Verse 4

John 19:4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

Now, how is it that through this they would know that he found no fault him?
Well, they could see for themselves that Jesus had been examined by scourging, and yet had maintained his innocence, he hadn't confessed to anything.
And look, here he is attired as a king by Pilate, he's got the crown, and a purple robe.

Pilate is frustrated. The Jews are bugging him, and making him do something that he doesn't want to do.
So he's not so much mocking Jesus here, as mocking them.
Saying, "Here is your king, the king of the Jews."

Verse 5

John 19:5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

So here is their king. Wearing a crown made of thorns.
Who Pilate has just scourged.
So that is Pilate's way of showing what he thinks of Jews and their kings.
Even though their king was innocent, Pilate didn't care, and had him beaten and mocked anyhow.
So this is Pilate's way of taking out his frustration with the Jews, and mocking them.
He's kind of taking it out on Christ.

Verse 6

John 19:6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.

Pilate might have thought that this insult would make them angry, and they'd decide give in to him.
But instead they are just that much more adamant that he be put to death.

So Pilate tells them, "I'm not going to do your dirty work for you. He's your king. You take him and crucify him."

Verse 7

John 19:7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

So Pilate has just insulted them again, saying, "Go and crucify your king, go ahead and put him to death. But I say he's innocent."

And so they say, "No he's not innocent. He's committed blaspheme, under the law, he should be put to death, because he claimed to be the Son of God."

Verse 8

John 19:8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

So Pilate is an average Pagan. He's superstitious. He didn't want to get caught up in what he suspected was a religious squabble.

And now he's had it confirmed again.

But it turns out it isn't just a war between two factions, and the religious leaders wanting to put this popular teacher to death.

This guy didn't claim just to be a teacher. Or even a king.

He claimed to be the Son of God. To have come into the world, as he told Pilate before.

With a message of truth.

To declare the truth, that as Pilate said, man cannot perceive.

Pilate admitted that all the world was in darkness, so this idea of a Son of God coming to declare the truth makes sense to him.

And he's scared that there just might be something to it.

So he is afraid to kill an innocent man that just might be more than just another man.

John 19:8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

Verse 9

John 19:9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

So Pilate is trying to get Jesus to tell him plainly if he is from the gods.

But Jesus knows that if he says that he is the Son of God, it will dissuade Pilate from allowing him to be crucified. And he has come from above to be lifted up. So he doesn't answer.

Verse 10

John 19:10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

So Pilate is even more frustrated.

Everybody is trying to push him around and not honoring him the way he would like. He is supposed to be the one with the power to release a man or put him to death. He is the one that the Romans have put in authority. He is the one who has to give sentence. Why won't Jesus tell him, if he is from God? Why won't he speak to him, and answer his questions. He's trying to have a semblance of a fair trial here. Doesn't this man know that as governor Pilate is going to get the final word? Why won't he defend himself?

Verse 11

John 19:11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

Jesus tells Pilate, you're not in control here. You don't have power to release me. You've been put in a situation where politically it would be very difficult. And you certainly don't have power to crucify me. You'd have no power at all against me, except that it was ordained of my Father. Except that it was given thee from above.

So Jesus again implies that he is from above. Which is exactly what Pilate fears. But Jesus tries to assuage his fear. He wants him to understand that this is ordained of God. And there is no way to escape it. Christ is to be crucified.

And so though it will be sin on Pilate's part, taking part in putting an innocent man to death, that power has been given him by God. God ordained that the Roman governor would have the power to crucify his beloved Son. And Pilate doesn't want to do that, but he is the wrong man in the wrong place at the wrong time. And it is true that he shouldn't do it, that even so it would surely be trespass to kill God's Son, but God also knows that he is not the instigator. That he has resisted. His sin will not be so great as that of him that delivered Jesus to the authorities. It's not the same as if he was following the devil, killing Jesus because he loved darkness rather than life. God knows that Pilate wasn't fully satisfied with the darkness, and feared this man of light. This man of truth.

And so Pilate doesn't want to do this, but Jesus reassures him that if it is any consolation, the greater sin will be imputed to the betrayer. Pilate won't be counted as the man who killed Christ.

Verse 12

John 19:12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

So Pilate heard from Christ again exactly what he feared.

But though he said he had the power to release him, and sought to release him, yet he found that he had no power at all, but that power against him, which was given him from above. The people said that Pilate would be putting his own neck on the line, Pilate would be joining in treason, if he released someone claiming to be a king. He's been forced into a political corner, with only one way out.

Verse 13-15

John 19:13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

Pilate once more mocks the Jews, presenting "their king" before them. And once again they cry out that he be crucified. That they have no king but Caesar.

So Pilate is getting some political mileage out of this. The Jews are suddenly claiming this extreme allegiance to Caesar.

Caesar was the kind of king they wanted. If they had a choice between Jesus and a Caesar, they'd choose a Caesar. Many people still do today. They love the rulers of darkness, rather than the king of light. Because at least with Caesar they didn't feel guilt for sin. They didn't have to hide from the light. They could continue in darkness. And they could be part of a rich kingdom. They could have a pretty good life. And continue in their self-righteous religion. That's all they ever wanted. That's what they hoped Christ would bring them. Even more of that. A fuller and more pleasurable life. But instead he brought righteousness and truth and light and a message of the grace of God, and eternal life. And they hated that. They loved the darkness, because their deeds were evil.