

John Chapter Eighteen

Read **John 18:1-9** – Jesus Betrayal

v.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.”

As we know from prior studies, Jesus and his disciples were going to the garden called Gethsemane. Cedron, translated Kidron in the Old Testament, was the brook and valley between the Mount of Olives and the city of Jerusalem. The brook, Kidron, ran along the eastern wall of the old city of Jerusalem and is named several times beginning in II Samuel and then in both books of Kings and Chronicles. It was frequently used as a place to dispose of the refuse of the city, the location where idol gods were destroyed. It also contained a large number of tombs, and still does.

v.2 “AND JUDAS ALSO, WHICH BETRAYED HIM, KNEW THE PLACE: FOR JESUS OFTTIMES RESORTED THITHER WITH HIS DISCIPLES.”

Jesus and his disciples went there frequently; Luke writes:

Luke 21:37 “AND IN THE DAY TIME HE WAS TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE; AND AT NIGHT HE WENT OUT, AND ABODE IN THE MOUNT THAT IS CALLED *the mount* OF OLIVES.”

So their purpose for going there was to spend the night away from the crowd and press of the city when they were in Jerusalem. As we read in other accounts it also provided Jesus a place to pray privately.

v.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.”

We have read this account so many times that we can repeat it without missing any element of it. What I want to emphasize from it is that it is a fulfillment of prophecy. As Peter stands before the 120 he declares:

“MEN *and* BRETHREN, THIS SCRIPTURE MUST NEEDS HAVE BEEN FULFILLED, WHICH THE HOLY GHOST BY THE MOUTH OF DAVID SPAKE BEFORE CONCERNING JUDAS, WHICH WAS GUIDE TO THEM THAT TOOK JESUS.” **Acts 1:16**

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Peter is referring to:

Psalms 41:9 “YEA, MINE OWN FAMILIAR FRIEND, IN WHOM I TRUSTED, WHICH DID EAT OF MY BREAD, HATH LIFTED UP *his* HEEL AGAINST ME.”

v.4 “JESUS THEREFORE, KNOWING ALL THINGS THAT SHOULD COME UPON HIM, WENT FORTH, AND SAID UNTO THEM, WHOM SEEK YE?”

Jesus has just gone through the agony of the anticipation of his death. Luke records that when Judas arrives he has just finished praying and has returned once again to his disciples who were supposed to be waiting for him.

Luke 22:47 “AND WHILE HE YET SPAKE, BEHOLD A MULTITUDE, AND HE THAT WAS CALLED JUDAS, ONE OF THE TWELVE, WENT BEFORE THEM, AND DREW NEAR UNTO JESUS TO KISS HIM.”

v.5 “THEY ANSWERED HIM, JESUS OF NAZARETH. JESUS SAITH UNTO THEM, I AM *he*. AND JUDAS ALSO, WHICH BETRAYED HIM, STOOD WITH THEM.”

The other writers record that Judas identified Jesus with a kiss but John doesn't mention this. It probably occurred at this time. Jesus made no effort to hide himself but stepped forward and told them that he was the man they were seeking.

v.6 “AS SOON THEN AS HE HAD SAID UNTO THEM, I AM *he*, THEY WENT BACKWARD, AND FELL TO THE GROUND.”

As soon as Jesus identified himself this group of fearless, well-armed men “WENT BACKWARD, AND FELL TO THE GROUND”. John is the only writer that records this event. Some folks like to speculate about why it occurred. It doesn't appear from the context or from John's description that Jesus did anything out of the ordinary to cause it. But what comes to my mind is a scene reminiscent of an old comedy clip. Jesus is standing in the midst of them, he has a commanding present, he is calm, probably soft spoken and as they realize who he is they stumble and fall all over each other while trying to move away from him. That is pure conjecture on my part but completely within the realm of reason and human nature.

v.7-8 “THEN ASKED HE THEM AGAIN, WHOM SEEK YE? AND THEY SAID, JESUS OF NAZARETH. JESUS ANSWERED, I HAVE TOLD YOU THAT I AM *he*: IF THEREFORE YE SEEK ME, LET THESE GO THEIR WAY:”

So Jesus asks them again who they are looking for, they tell him. He again tells them that he is the one and asks them to allow his disciples to depart. John tells us why in the next verse.

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v.9 “THAT THE SAYING MIGHT BE FULFILLED, WHICH HE SPAKE, OF THEM WHICH THOU GAVEST ME HAVE I LOST NONE.”

Jesus requested that his disciples allowed to go on their way because he is the one that they really want and he wants no harm to come to them. He had prayed to the Father:

John 17:12 “WHILE I WAS WITH THEM IN THE WORLD, I KEPT THEM IN THY NAME: THOSE THAT THOU GAVEST ME I HAVE KEPT, AND NONE OF THEM IS LOST, BUT THE SON OF PERDITION; THAT THE SCRIPTURE MIGHT BE FULFILLED.”

The original prophecy concerning the loss of the “SON OF PERDITION” is found in **Psalms 109**

Read **John 18:10-14** – Jesus’ Arrest

v.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.”

At the time that Jesus had told Peter that he would deny him, Luke records a discussion concerning weapons that Jesus’ disciples thought they needed.

Luke 22:38 “AND THEY SAID, LORD, BEHOLD, HERE *are* TWO SWORDS. AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, IT IS ENOUGH.”

Peter was carrying one of them and now uses it in hopes of defending his Master and preventing his arrest. As we will see in verse 15 one of the disciples knew the high priest, his family and apparently his household servants. Here we have confirmation that that disciple was the Apostle John. He is the only one that names the man whom Peter struck and Jesus healed.

v.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?”

Jesus tells Peter to put up his sword. God has given him his purpose, without his sacrifice there can be no redemption of men’s souls from sin. The Hebrew writer confirms this:

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Hebrews 9:21-22 “MOREOVER HE SPRINKLED WITH BLOOD BOTH THE TABERNACLE, AND ALL THE VESSELS OF THE MINISTRY. AND ALMOST ALL THINGS ARE BY THE LAW PURGED WITH BLOOD; AND WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD IS NO REMISSION.”

Now Peter is trying to interfere with God’s plan. He doesn’t understand the nature of Christ’s kingdom; he is still looking for a worldly kingdom and that is not what Jesus is creating.

v.12 “THEN THE BAND AND THE CAPTAIN AND OFFICERS OF THE JEWS TOOK JESUS, AND BOUND HIM,”

So Jesus is taken and bound as a common criminal. Secular history tells us that the custom of the day was to place a chain on one arm and then around the waist of a soldier so that the prisoner was tied to the soldier. One thing to note that caught my attention is that the captain here is a higher ranking individual than a “captain” or centurion like Cornelius. Like the Navy equivalent in our armed forces, the captain or chiliarch was commander of a band of men numbering about 1,000; equal to a colonel in the other services.

v.13 “AND LED HIM AWAY TO ANNAS FIRST; FOR HE WAS FATHER IN LAW TO CAIAPHAS, WHICH WAS THE HIGH PRIEST THAT SAME YEAR.”

At the beginning of the nation of Israel the ascension to High Priest was restricted to the sons or descendants of Aaron. During the time of Christ the High Priest was primarily a political office and Annas and Caiaphas were both appointed by Rome. Whether they were direct descendants of Aaron we’re not told. According to sources outside the scripture; Annas, obviously the oldest was appointed in 6 A.D. and Caiaphas, his son-in-law, in 18 A.D. Luke writes that they were both serving when John the Baptizer began his ministry:

Luke 3:2 “ANNAS AND CAIAPHAS BEING THE HIGH PRIESTS, THE WORD OF GOD CAME UNTO JOHN THE SON OF ZECHARIAH IN THE WILDERNESS.”

v.14 “NOW CAIAPHAS WAS HE, WHICH GAVE COUNSEL TO THE JEWS, THAT IT WAS EXPEDIENT THAT ONE MAN SHOULD DIE FOR THE PEOPLE.”

Now John is referring back to what he wrote in:

John 11:50 “NOR CONSIDER THAT IT IS EXPEDIENT FOR US, THAT ONE MAN SHOULD DIE FOR THE PEOPLE, AND THAT THE WHOLE NATION PERISH NOT.”

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As they planned to rid themselves of this pesky man who claimed to be the King of the Jews, who would ascend to the throne of David; Caiaphas had argued that it was more expedient for this one man to die rather than risk an uprising against Rome. They feared an uprising that would bring swift and sure devastation of what remained of Israel by Roman armies. His fears were justified as only about forty years later that is exactly what happened.

Read **John 18:15-27** – Peter’s Denial

v.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.”

Peter followed after the mob as they took Jesus back across the Brook Kidron and into the city. Matthew records this:

Matthew 26:58 “BUT PETER FOLLOWED HIM AFAR OFF UNTO THE HIGH PRIEST’S PALACE, AND WENT IN, AND SAT WITH THE SERVANTS, TO SEE THE END.”

Mark adds in **14:54** that he “SAT WITH THE SERVANTS AND WARMED HIMSELF AT THE FIRE” and Luke provides a similar record.

v.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.”

Peter hasn’t come into the palace as yet so John goes to the doorkeeper and tells her to invite him in.

v.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.”

Since John was known to the household of Annas, and known to be a disciple of Christ; the doorkeeper comes to the logical conclusion that since Peter and John know each other, he must be a disciple as well. This is the first denial by Peter, there will be two more.

v.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.”

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It was now about midnight and in the Judean hills in mid-late spring it can get rather cold. The desert, even the high desert can get cold at night any time. If you have never experienced this it can be shocking. When I went into the Army Reserve Center in the high desert above Yakima, Washington in August, 1967 they issued us an extra blanket. Being from Missouri we didn't understand why; after all it was August and the daytime temperature was around 90 degrees. But before morning we understood completely and were grateful to have them.

v.19 "THE HIGH PRIEST THEN ASKED JESUS OF HIS DISCIPLES, AND OF HIS DOCTRINE."

Annas starts his interrogation by asking Jesus about his followers and his teaching. Notice that, as John records, his primary concern, that which he asks about first are his followers. We could assume that he is weighing the risk of generating the very thing that they are trying to avoid by arresting Jesus; a disturbance among the hundreds of thousands of Jews in the city for the Passover.

v.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 didn't do any teaching in secret but spoke openly. He taught in the synagogues as Luke records:

Luke 4:15 "AND HE TAUGHT I THEIR SYNAGOGUES, BEING GLOIFIED OF ALL."

And John had recorded his earlier in his record of the gospel as well:

John 7:14 "NOW ABOUT THE MIDST OF THE FEAST JESUS WENT UP INTO THE TEMPLE AND TAUGHT."

And he continued to do so every time that he was present there.

v.21 "WHY ASKEST THOU ME? ASK THEM WHICH HEARD ME, WHAT I HAVE SAID UNTO THEM: BEHOLD, THEY KNOW WHAT I SAID."

Jesus had been preaching and teaching within a very small geographic area for three years. His enemies as well as his disciples had listened to his doctrine, had argued and in some cases challenged it. Now they want him to build their case against him with his own words. He tells them to call their witnesses, ask them what he taught. Since we know the "rest of the story" we know that they couldn't find two that could agree and finally had to hire two to lie to meet the letter of the Mosaic Covenant.

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v.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 didn't like what Jesus said to the high priest so he simply smacks him. This is a violation of the law that the high priest is supposed to be upholding. Paul tell us that when he is under arrest in Jerusalem:

Acts 23:2-3 “AND THE HIGH PRIEST ANANIAS COMMANDED THEM THAT STOOD BY HIM TO SMITE HIM ON THE MOUTH. THEN SAID PAUL UNTO HIM, GOD SHALL SMITE THEE, *thou* WHITED WALL: FOR SITTEST THOU TO JUDGE ME AFTER THE LAW, AND COMMANDEST ME TO BE SMITTEN CONTRARY TO THE LAW?”

v.23 “JESUS ANSWERED HIM, IF I HAVE SPOKEN EVIL, BEAR WITNESS OF THE EVIL; BUT IF WELL, WHY SMITEST THOU ME?”

Jesus answers the high priest like any man should. If I have done something wrong, then produce the witnesses to prove that. If not why have you allowed me to be struck?

v.24 “NOW ANNAS HAD SENT HIM BOUND UNTO CAIAPHAS THE HIGH PRIEST.”

Annas now send Jesus on to Caiaphas. Matthew tells us why:

Matthew 26:57 “AND THEY THAT HAD LAID HOLD ON JESUS LED *him* AWAY TO CAIAPHAS THE HIGH PRIEST, WERE THE SCRIBES AND ELDERS WERE ASSEMBLED.”

Jesus' appearance before Annas was a private affair because the elders and scribes were assembled at their usual place in the temple compound.

v.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.”

Peter had been invited into the palace of the high priest and is with the servants. They ask him again if he is not one of Jesus' disciples and for the second time he denies it.

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v.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?”

As is common with mankind; when someone tells one lie they usually have to tell several more to cover up the first. When someone starts doing that sooner or later it will catch up with him. That’s what happens to Peter here. A kinsman, a relative of Malchus whose ear Peter removed and Jesus healed now says he saw Peter with Jesus.

v.27 “PETER THEN DENIED AGAIN: AND IMMEDIATELY THE COCK CREW.”

Sometimes it’s amazing what a man will do when he is fearful and Peter is afraid. He is afraid that he will be taken along with Jesus and this is what is behind his reaction. Matthew’s record is more detailed:

Matthew 26:74 “THEN BEGAN HE TO CURSE AND TO SWEAR, *saying*, I KNOW NOT THE MAN. AND IMMEDIATELY THE COCK CREW.

Here is the material for an entire sermon concerning our daily language. Peter cursed and swore in an attempt to prove that he was not a follower of Christ. Indeed our language is one measure of whether or not we are living for Christ or not.

Read **John 18:28-40** – Jesus Before Pilate

v.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.”

The judgment hall is what we would call a courtroom today, and in the ASV is called the Praetorium. That’s not a word that we see every day, what does it mean? Originally it meant the tent or headquarters of a military commander or praetor, then was applied to a military headquarters. In the New Testament it is used to designate the palace of the Roman governor of Judea, Pontus Pilate.

The high priest, scribes and elders wouldn’t go there because by doing so they would become defiled and not be allowed to participate in the feast of the Passover. How would they become defiled? We find the answer in the words of Peter in:

Acts 10:28 “AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, YE KNOW HOW IT IS AN UNLAWFUL THING FOR A MAN THAT IS A JEW TO JOIN HIMSELF OR COME UNTO ONE OF ANOTHER NATION; BUT GOD HATH SHOWED ME THAT I SHOULD NOT CALL ANY MAN COMMON OR UNCLEAR:”

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Pilate was a gentile, a Roman. For them to have come into his company, especially at the time of the Passover, would render them unclean and they would need to be purified again before they could participate in the feast.

v.29 "PILATE THEREFORE WENT OUT UNTO THEM, AND SAITH, WHAT ACCUSATION BRING YE AGAINST THIS MAN?"

Pilate now is required to stand in judgment of Jesus, so the first thing he needs to know is what he's being charged with. In their council the Jews had determined that Jesus had to die, but Judea did not have the power to execute anyone, only Rome could, so they need to assistance of the Roman governor.

v.30 "THEY ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HIM, IF THIS MAN WERE NOT AN MALEFACTOR, WE WOULD NOT HAVE DELIVERED HIM UP UNTO THEE."

They had no intention for Pilate to conduct a real trial of Jesus. They apparently hadn't even thought about it. They expected Pilate to go along with the decision of the council to execute him. So their answer was that if he wasn't a doer of evil they wouldn't have bothered Pilate with him. This simply displays the arrogance that is frequently found among those in power when they are challenged.

v.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:"

Pilate's response is normal for their situation. If this man was actually an evildoer then they should judge him according to their law. They had already conducted their kangaroo court and determined to kill him but could not under Roman rule, otherwise he would probably already be dead and they would have stoned him.

v.32 "THAT THE SAYING OF JESUS MIGHT BE FULFILLED, WHICH HE SPAKE, SIGNIFYING WHAT DEATH HE SHOULD DIE,"

Jesus had foretold that he would be crucified:

Matthew 20:19 "AND SHALL DELIVER HIM TO THE GENTILES TO MOCK, AND TO SCOURGE, AND TO CRUCIFY *him*: AND THE THIRD DAY HE SHALL RISE AGAIN."

In addition there were several reasons that he should die by crucifixion; one is given by Paul in:

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Galatians 3:13 “CHRIST HATH REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW, BEING MADE A CURSE FOR US: FOR IT IS WRITTEN, CURSED *is* EVERY ONE THAT HANGETH ON A TREE:”

Paul’s “IT IS WRITTEN” refers to **Deuteronomy 21:22-23**.

v.33 “THEN PILATE ENTERED INTO THE JUDGMENT HALL AGAIN, AND CALLED JESUS, AND SAID UNTO HIM, ART THOU THE KING OF THE JEWS?”

In Luke’s record we find the charges that the Jews decided to bring against Jesus:

Luke 23:2 “AND THEY BEGAN TO ACCUSE HIM, SAYING, WE FOUND THIS *fellow* PERVERTING THE NATION, AND FORBIDDING TO GIVE TRIBUTE TO CAESAR, SAYING THAT HE HIMSELF IS CHRIST A KING.”

They had to bring a charge against him that the Roman governor would recognize, so they chose these two. What about the first; that he forbid giving tribute to Caesar; was that true? No, in fact we find just the opposite in all three of the other gospel accounts. When asked that question before; He said and Matthew recorded:

Matthew 22:20-22 “AND HE SAITH UNTO THEM, WHOSE IS THIS IMAGE AND SUPERScription? THEY SAY UNTO HIM, CAESAR’S. THEN SAITH HE UNTO THEM, RENDER THEREFORE UNTO CAESAR THE THINGS WHICH ARE CAESAR’S; AND UNTO GOD THE THINGS THAT ARE GOD’S. WHEN THEY HAD HEARD *these words*, THEY MARVELLED, AND LEFT HIM, AND WENT THEIR WAY.”

The second is true but not in the sense that they project to Pilate. We see that in Jesus’ answer but first Jesus has a question for Pilate:

v.34 “JESUS ANSWERED HIM, SAYEST THOU THIS THING OF THYSELF, OR DID OTHERS TELL IT THEE OF ME?”

Jesus is challenging the charge. He had not broken Roman law; Pilate knew that and knew the nature of the people that he ruled. The Jews were a rebellious people and if someone had arisen from among them that would indeed allow them to throw off Roman bondage they wouldn’t be bringing him to their Roman governor for execution. They would be plotting and planning their rebellion.

v.35 “PILATE ANSWERED, AM I A JEW? THINE OWN NATION AND THE CHIEF PRIESTS HAVE DELIVERED THEE UNTO ME: WHAT HAST THOU DONE?”

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Pilate says he's not a Jew, he doesn't know anything about Jewish law. Jesus' own people had brought the charges and brought him to Pilate for judgment so he wants to know: what have you done?

v.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."

Christ's kingdom is not a physical kingdom such as we find on earth and never will be. Earthly kingdoms come and go, earthly kings live and die; the prophet Daniel described the Kingdom of God in the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream this way:

"...IN THE DAYS OF THESE KINGS SHALL THE GOD OF HEAVEN SET UP A KINGDOM, WHICH SHALL NEVER BE DESTROYED: AND THE KINGDOM SHALL NOT BE LEFT TO OTHER PEOPLE, *but* IT SHALL BREAK IN PIECES AND CONSUME ALL THESE KINGDOMS, AND IT SHALL STAND FOR EVER." **Daniel 2:44**

The servants of earthly kings fight to protect their king and to preserve his kingdom. Though Jesus is a king, in fact The King, if his kingdom had been earthly his servants would have fought to bring about that kingdom and to preserve it. But Christ's kingdom is spiritual, his servants fight but a different kind of warfare, a warfare against evil and against Satan; a spiritual warfare for the hearts and minds of men.

v.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, confused perhaps, asks "ART THOU A KING THEN?" He doesn't understand spiritual concepts, he doesn't understand a kingdom that would not be anchored somewhere on earth. He is unable to "HEAR" in the sense of hearing and understanding, why? Jesus taught:

John 8:47 "HE THAT IS OF GOD HEARETH GOD'S WORDS: YE THEREFORE HEAR *them* NOT, BECAUSE YE ARE NOT OF GOD."

Pilate was not "OF GOD", therefore Pilate is handicapped in understanding what Jesus was talking about. This is also common today and for the same reason. If he tried to listen to an explanation he would only become confused and frustrated. So he renders his judgment.

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v.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.*”

What is truth? Pilate is a politician and as one who has survived serving Rome was probably like most politicians today; truth is a stranger. This condition today has become more and more obvious as time goes by. I don't know if it because I'm getting older and comprehending better, whether the world is getting worse or if it is such that the multitude of ways we can communicate today bringing more of their words to us than before. I would submit that it's probably a combination of all three.

Jesus defined truth for us:

John 17:17 “SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH: THY WORD IS TRUTH”

Then he goes and tells the Jews what to them is bad news. He can find no reason to punish this man that they have bound and brought to him, he's innocent of any crime; the charges laid against him cannot be proven. Then he makes a suggestion to try to placate them.

v.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?”

They had a custom, apparently a custom that had grown out of Roman occupation as we find no previous record of it. Luke calls it a necessity that Pilate release some Jew that has been jailed to them at the time of this feast, apparently a provision in an agreement between Rome and Jerusalem or as David Lipscomb contends in his commentary on John something that Romans started to win favor with the Jews. He offers to release Jesus to fulfill that obligation.

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v.40 “THEN CRIED THEY ALL AGAIN, SAYING, NOT THIS MAN, BUT BARABAS. NOW BARABAS WAS A ROBBER.”

John writes that Barabas was a robber, but Barabas was more than just a robber. Luke writes:

Luke 23:19 “(WHO FOR A CERTAIN SEDITION MADE IN THE CITY AND FOR MURDER, WAS CAST INTO PRISON.)”

Barabas was guilty of “SEDITION”, rebellion against those who ruled over them and also guilty of murder. Peter later reminds us of this situation:

Acts 3:14 “BUT YE DENIED THE HOLY ONE AND THE JUST, AND DESIRED A MURDERER TO BE GRANTED UNTO YOU.”