

John Chapter 18 (DDC) – August 17, 2008

- In our trek through John... two weeks ago we covered Ch.17
- And so 2 weeks ago we finished up a very special section of scripture... “the upper room discourse”.
 - Which covers Ch. 13-17 of John
 - And that brings us to Chapter 18 tonight
 - I want to just take a couple of seconds and run through the sections of John that we’ve covered

(pause)

Story about me being impatient at times – want to know the bottom line.

- The Reason I like John’s Gospel is because it is **Very** to the point
 - It is so distinctly purposeful.

 - John begins his Gospel... which we’ve talked about was written specifically (with the direct purpose) that we might believe in Jesus... and have life through him.
 - Life literally derived through Jesus’ substitutionary atonement for sin
 - Big concept

 - And understanding this purpose (that we might believe)... John begins his Gospel with Jesus being one with God
 - God the Father and the begotten son – together as one
 - The triune God head – one God multiple facets
 - And this existence was
 - Before man
 - Before creation
 - Before time
 - The begotten Son
 - Literally God almighty embodied in the begotten Son
 - That’s who we are talking about when we say Jesus... and John tells us that
- (pause)

- And then John goes on to tell us that it is through Jesus that all things were made and all things came into existence
- And in Colossians it says all things were made through Him... and for Him....
 - He is the purpose
 - The thesis
 - The point
 - The climax
 - Everything

(pause)

- In John’s purposeful sort of way... that is the first thing that he makes crystal clear.

- Jesus is God

(pause)

- And then... (pause)
- John says...He became flesh and dwelt among us.
- Almighty God became man, and dwelt among us.

(pause)

- I know I'm not telling you guys anything new
- But I've been praying... for you and for me... that we could grasp just a little more of what that means.
- Because I think there is power in really understanding this.
- That God literally presented himself to us as a man.
 - The creator of everything... (through Him all things were made)
 - The creator of...
 - Almighty God became man
- And he explained himself and his heart towards us that we might understand who God is.
 - That we might have a picture of him.
 - A perfect unblemished... picture

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- When I actually honestly think about this I come to the question: How can I not spend my life pouring into who Jesus is?
 - God became man
 - How else could God have explained himself in such razor accurate terms that we could understand so completely?
 - He became a man that we might understand him... and what he was to do for us

(pause)

- And thus... the incarnation... God becoming man... is the central most important point in all of history.
- Every other historical event pails in comparison.

Santa clause vs. birth of Jesus

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- So John begins his Gospel explaining the magnitude of Jesus... who He is...
 - God... existent before time
 - And then He explains that God became man (literally became flesh) and dwelt among us.

(pause)

- And Next in Chapters 2-12 John highlights Jesus' 3 year public ministry
- Picking out specific teachings of Jesus in order that we might believe in Jesus... and have life through him.
- And through Jesus' miracles and teachings and discourses we learn that... through sin we have separated ourselves from a holy righteous sovereign God.
- Jesus demonstrates the totality of our existence apart from God...
 - We are without birth. – (as it talks about in Chapter 3) - there is no life in us – only biological life
 - We are hungry – (as it talks about in Chapter 6) - we lack fulfillment – we can never be satisfied – we go from one thing to another thing and can never be satisfied
 - We are blind. – (as it talks about in Chapter 9) - Jesus is the light and apart from that light we are blind
 - And... we are dead. – as it talks about in the chapter 11... literally dead... He is the resurrection... and apart from Him we are dead.
- All of these are descriptors (models) of our existence apart from God.

Story about Ben Crosby - we are all like that apart from God

- We read about in Chapter 3 that we must be born again?
 - It only makes sense
 - We have to be renewed... if we are to come to God
 - Without a righteousness far greater than our own we cannot come to God
- When I think about my wife's friend... or I think about the way I act.. I understand why it says in Romans that we were children of wrath.
 - In other words...
- But Jesus came... and He died.
- Not just an ordinary death. (that would have been enough)
- In Philippians 2 it talks about the fact that God choose the most brutal death imaginable to restore our relationship with God... so that we can understand the true nature of His love for us.
- He choose to endure the cross for us.
- And in believing... that Jesus... God almighty in the flesh... was the propitiation for our sin...
 - In other words... He as a willing unblemished substitute... bore the punishment for our sin
- If we choose to accept that gift... God makes us a new creature
- God breaths life into our spirit
- And suddenly we are aware of the things of God

- And suddenly we are concerned with pleasing God...
- because we are a new creature
(pause)
- Well as a new creature... as long as we live on this earth our new nature will battle with our old nature. Right?
- I think that's why Chapters 13-17 are so important. Jesus teaches us to abide in Him.
(pause)
- Ch.2-12 take place over 3 years
- Ch.13-17 (the upper room discourse) takes place during one night
- 5 Chapters... take place over one night.
- And that one night is the night before Jesus is crucified
 - The upper room discourse is permeated by Jesus' desire that we would love him by serving each other.
 - And that we would abide in him. That He would be our strength... and our comforter...

When I've had free time I've been trying to pick up the Bible and read this section knowing that hours before his death Jesus is pouring his heart out to the ones he loves

- Incredibly important teaching as highlighted by the amount of text John devotes to it.
(pause)
- Well... when we get to Chapter 18 there is a bit of a shift (a section change)
- We move from this last discourse given by Jesus...
- To an accounting of his arrest, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection
- So now we are more in a story telling mode
- Beginning in Verse 1, it says:

Joh 18:1 When he had finished praying, ...

- If you recall Jesus is in Jerusalem at the temple praying.
- That is where Chapter 17 takes place.
- So it says:

Joh 18:1 When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive grove, and he and his disciples went into it.

- So Jesus is in Jerusalem in the Temple praying.
- When he has finished praying He takes his disciples, leaves Jerusalem.
- On his way to the garden of Gethsemane located on the Mount of Olives... they cross the Kidron Valley .

- So what is the Kidron Valley?

(pause)

- Jerusalem is located in the Judean Mountains about 40 miles west of the Mediterranean Sea (so inland about 40 miles)
- And is constructed basically on two hills within the Judean Mountains
- Directly east of Jerusalem is the Mount of Olives
- And between the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem is a low very small valley that runs North South along the City
- You could almost call it a ravine because of how quickly it drops off along the east side of the City.
- So if you are in Jerusalem and you want to go to the Mount of Olives you had cross this valley before you begin to climb Mount Olives
- Now I'm a civil Engineer so I'm going to describe this a little more. Bear with me.
- Well the Kidron Valley is a drainage way for the Mount of Olives and for Jerusalem
- Thus seasonally there was a stream that ran south to north through the Kidron Valley
- Which we refer to as the brook Kidron
- At the north end of Jerusalem close to the Temple Mount there was a large bridge that crossed over this stream.
- With Jesus leaving the temple it's assumed He crossed over the brook Kidron on this bridge.

(pause)

- So you can picture Jesus... finishing praying,
- It's late at night.
- His disciples are no doubt tired... and they begin crossing over the Brook Kidron

(pause)

- Well as we picture this it is interesting that this takes place during Passover,
- So he's crossing over this bridge looking down at the Brook Kidron during the spring time so the brook would have been flowing with spring runoff
- But it also would have been mixed and darkened with blood

(pause)

- There on the temple mount (which is directly adjacent to the brook Kidron) there were thousands and thousands of lambs which are sacrificed within this one week period.

(pause)

- In fact, about thirty years later Josephus (a Jewish historian) tells us the Roman government decided they wanted to take a census.
- But the Romans could not count the Jews, because they were opposed to a census.
- So why would the Jews be apposed to a Census?
 - If you recall in 2 Samuel, David was told not to take a census... but he took the census anyway and the nation was judged for David's sin.
 - So because of this... Jews were apposed to a census.
 - In fact even orthodox Jews today follow this.
 - Believe it or not if you're at a party and you have to count off for a game or something...
 - So as to not count people, they will literally say, "Not one, not two, not three, not four, not five. Etc"

(pause)

- Well as part of the Census the Romans wanted to know how many Jews gathered in Jerusalem during the Passover season.
- Because the Jews refused to allow themselves to be counted the Roman government found a different way to determine the number of people.
- They counted then number of sheep that were slain during the Passover week.
- And so, at the particular census recorded by Josephus, there were 256,000 sheep killed for that one Passover.
- 256,000 sheep slain in the temple
- One sheep was to feed no less than 10 people.
- So at Passover there would have been over 2.5 million Jews gathered in Jersualem.

(pause)

- But what I think is noteworthy is that 256,000 sheep were sacrificed... within the temple... within one week.
- And the blood was collected in a little channel which flowed in a stream down to the Brook Kidron.

(pause)

- So Jesus is crossing over this bridge looking down at the Brook Kidron flowing dark red with blood from all those Passover lambs
- The Brook Kidron flowing with Blood and water

(pause)

- That had to be a bit moving for Jesus.
- Knowing that all this was done to point to Him as the sacrificial Lamb that in just a few hours was to die for the sins of the world.

(pause)

- And it's interesting that after he died on the cross... the soldier comes up to him to make sure he is dead.

- And he sticks a spear in his side... and what flows out?
 - Blood and water
- (pause)

- I bet the disciples looked back as they put this together and thought... wow

(long pause)

- Well it says they were on their way to an olive grove.
- The other Gospels give us a little more detail and tell us he was on his way to the Garden Gethsemane.
- So it says in verse 2:

Joh 18:2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples.

Joh 18:3 So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

- The text says a detachment of roman soldiers is accompanying Judas as well as some of the chief priests and Pharisees.
- If you look at the Greek word for detachment it's actually a military term representing as little as 200 soldiers and as many as 650 soldiers depending on the situation.

(pause)

- Well this is interesting to me.
- Jesus is in the garden praying. And when they come to arrest him, they don't just send a few soldiers... like we would expect.
- Instead they send hundreds of trained soldiers.
- So they must have assumed that Jesus and his followers may put up a fight.

(pause)

- And on top of that they were carrying torches and lanterns
- We are told else where that there is a full moon this particular night... so they wouldn't have needed the torches and lanterns for traveling.
- So they must have also assumed Jesus might try to escape or possibly hide.
- So they had lots of men, with lanterns and torches so they could track him and find him in the dark.

(pause)

- But it's interesting what Jesus does.
- He's not surprised but them being there.
- In fact notice who is in control of this situation.
- Notice who calls the shots.

It says:

Joh 18:4 Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?"

Joh 18:5 "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied.

Joh 18:6 "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.

- So Jesus says "Who do you want"
- They say "Jesus of Nazareth."
- And he replies literally with Ego i-mee – I am – the "he" was added by translators
- This obviously identifying himself as Jesus to the soldiers... but to the Jews he was also again identifying himself as God.

(pause)

- If you recall when God was speaking to Moses through the burring bush... the name God used for himself is... I am
- And Jesus keeps using it to refer to himself... which is one of the indictments that the Jewish leaders had against him.
- Well Jesus says that here.
- And what happens?

(pause)

- I wish I could watch this.
- It says that they drew back and fell to the ground.
- So... in him revealing himself, using the name of God... there is a blast of divine power and it says they fell to the ground.
- 200 plus men fall to the ground.
- That must have been a sight.

(pause)

- Now, at that point, Jesus could have just walked off and left them lying there.
- But again... notice how Jesus is in control of the whole situation.
- They've come to arrest him... but He is the one that is giving the orders.

(pause)

So...

Joh 18:7 Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?"
And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

- I'm guessing their tone might have been a little different at this point.

Joh 18:8 "I told you that I am he," Jesus answered. "If you are looking for me, then let these men go."

- Remember... it's not happenstance that these events are occurring.
- Jesus is God.

- Through him (as we talked about in the beginning) all things were made.
 - He is in complete and total control of this situation.
 - And that becomes so important as we understand that he freely gave his life.
 - It was His choice.
 - As God here in the flesh... he is orchestrating this
- (pause)

Well referring to the fact that Jesus orders that his disciples are to be let go... John tells us that....Starting in verse 9:

Joh 18:9 This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me."^[1]

Joh 18:10 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.)

- So my first question is... who gave Peter a sword?
 - There are some people you don't give swords to.
- (pause)
- Jon Courson suggested that when Jesus in Luke 22 tells his disciples that they must be prepared and ready to be persecuted.
 - And He uses an idiom of buying a sword to be prepared for battle.
 - Well John Courson suggests that perhaps Peter took it literally and went and actually bought a sword.
- (pause)
- Regardless of how he got it... Peter has a sword.
- (pause)
- If you recall from Chapter 13, earlier that evening Jesus relayed to them the startling events that were about to transpire.
 - That one of them was going to betray him
 - And that He was going to leave them and where He was going they could not come.
 - And as Peter steps up and says I'll follow you lord... Ill die for you...
 - Jesus says no... you will deny me 3 times before the morning
 - We talked about before how in a lot of ways their world was crashing in on them.
 - Their expectations were being challenged
- (pause)
- And then next after these startling words from Jesus, they traveled until late in the night to get to this Garden.
 - And when they get to this peaceful garden... they are exhausted... and that understandable.

(pause)

- Well Jesus begins praying about the agonizing events that about to happen... and in the other gospels we learn that Peter (and the other disciples) kept falling asleep.
- And Jesus is agonizing so much that he begins sweating blood.
- And Jesus kept coming back to them and pleading with them... guys please pray for me...
- But each time Jesus comes back to them and they were asleep.

(pasue)

- Then suddenly that peaceful garden is filled with soldiers which intend to arrest Jesus.
- And Jesus... declares **I am**
- And the solders all fall down.
- But despite Jesus' obvious power.... he allows himself to be arrested.

- And so Peter, no doubt looking to prove that he wouldn't deny Jesus... pulls out his sword and starts swinging.

- Now it is likely that he swung for Malchus' head.
- And perhaps because of a combination of him being a bit groggy from sleeping... and the fact that surely Malchus attempted to parry the attack...
- Peter misses his head and only takes off his ear.

(pause)

- Now I just want to quickly note, it is easy to kind of laugh at Peter and think... man what was he thinking.
- But I just want to note, Peter claimed earlier that night that he would die for Jesus.
- Remember that?
- He said I will die for you Jesus.
- Then Jesus tells him that Peter will deny him 3 times before morning.

(pause)

- Jesus doesn't deny that Peter would die for him.
- And I think Peter proved it here.
- He would die for him.
- Think about the courage it would take to pull your sword out when there are 200+ armed soldiers ready to fight you.
- That took tremendous courage.

(pause)

- I have to believe Peter was courageous... he was a man's man
- He was ready to stand off 200+ armed soldiers

But in verse 11:

Joh 18:11 Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

(pause)

- The other Gospels tell us that after Jesus said this... he knelt down... picked up Malchus' ear and restored him.

(pause)

- This is the last healing miracles that Jesus preformed.
- Think about that.
- Jesus' last healing miracle was done to cover the over zealous act of one of His disciples.

(long pause)

- In Mathew Jesus tells Peter, "Don't you realize that at this moment I could call 12 legions of angels to deliver Me?"
- In other words... Peter I don't need your help.
- This is my will.

Joh 18:12 Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him

- It's interesting... I wonder what these men thought as they bound him with rope.
- As if these ropes could actually bind him.

(pause)

- Really... what bound him was his love for us. That's what bound him.
- That's why he allowed himself to be subjected to this.
- Because he loves us.
- Ropes could not have bound him.
- But because of His love for us... he allowed this.

Joh 18:13 and they brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year.

Joh 18:14 Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it would be good if one man died for the people.

- So the obvious question is... if Caiaphas was the High Priest... why did they bring Jesus to Annas?

(pause)

- Well Annas was the high priest from the year 5 to year 16... 11 years.
- And was probably one of the most influential, powerful, wealthy men in the city of Jerusalem.

(pause)

- At this particular time, the high priesthood was determined by a political appointment by the Roman government.
- And it was secured by a sort of bidding process believe it or not.
- They paid... or really rather bribed for the privilege of being the high priest.
- The priesthood was very corrupted at this point.

(pause)

- Annas at this time was recognized as the power behind the office of the high priest.
- Five of his sons, at various times held the position of high priest.
- And currently his son-in-law Caiaphas held the official Roman sanction as high priest.

(pause)

- But to the people... Annas was considered to be the high priest
- And that is why they brought Jesus to Annas first.

(pause)

It Goes on in Verse 15:

Joh 18:15 Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus.

- So after Jesus is arrested Peter and another disciple (which we know to be John... the writer of this gospel) are following Jesus.
- The rest of the disciples fled... which honestly... is understandable... they were scared
- But Peter and John to their credit follow after Jesus.

Starting in verse 15 again:

Joh 18:15 Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard,

- So one of them (John) was able to follow Jesus into the high priests court yard.
- Peter was not able to.
- It says:

Joh 18:16 but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

- So John gets in... but Peter is stuck out side.
- Then John comes back... because he knows the High Priest he talks to the girl on duty and gets Peter into the High Priests courtyard.

(pause)

- So why do you suppose John was known to the high priest?

(pause)

- According to stories, John's father, Zebedee, was a very wealthy fish merchant.
- So Zebedee had basically a fleet of fishing boats on the sea of Galilee.
- Well it was impossible to get fresh fish 80 miles south to the market in Jerusalem.
- So they would heavily salt the fish as a preservative
- This salted fish ended up becoming a delicacy in Jerusalem.

(pause)

- Well a fair amount of this salted fish would have been sold to the High priest for him and his servants.
- So John growing up, (probably as a delivery boy) had been there in the high priest's home many times delivering the salted fish.
- And thus this is how it is believed and taught that John knew the high priest.

(longer pause)

- Well regardless of how John knew the High Priest... the important thing for this story is that he knew him.
- And so he was able to get Peter from outside... to inside.

(pause)

- Now Peter being more the blue collar type... I'm sure was immediately on edge

Story about me feeling on edge when I am around people who are of a different class than me.

- Well likewise, I think Peter's self awareness probably began to be heightened.

(pause)

- Peter had already proven that he would give his life for Jesus
- But... as he goes into the court yard of the social elite of that time
 - Literally the ruling class
- And as he goes into this social atmosphere that is predisposed against Jesus
- Suddenly Peter is challenged in a less direct sort of way.

(pause)

- And as it turns out (and as I know to be true)... sometimes the little battles are harder to fight than the big battles.
- In fact I think Satan is much more likely to use lots of little attacks rather than one large assault.
- And that's simply because it's more effective in turning us from Jesus.

Well Peter is challenged in verse 17. It says:

Joh 18:17 "You are not one of his disciples, are you?" the girl at the door asked Peter. He replied, "I am not."

- Peters first denial of Christ comes to a girl at the door to the High Priests Courts.
- He can face 200+ men with the sword.
- But can he face one girl?

Then it says:

Joh 18:18 It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.

- Chuck Smith noted the following (regarding Verse 18): be on guard whenever you seek warmth at the enemy's fires, you're in dangerous territory.

Joh 18:19 Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

- Now I want to note, this was a violation of the Jewish law.
- You were not required to testify against yourself.
- And much like our fifth amendment, it was illegal to force a man to witness against himself.
- So, when the high priest was asking Him this... it was not legal.
- But notice how Jesus answers.

Joh 18:20 "I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret.

Joh 18:21 Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said."

- In other words... what you are asking me is illegal.
- And really is less legitimate than those who heard me.
- Let them bear whiteness of me. Ask them!!
- So, it is easy to miss but it was really a technical, legal point that Jesus was calling the high priest on here.

Joh 18:22 When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby struck him in the face. "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" he demanded.

Joh 18:23 "If I said something wrong," Jesus replied, "testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?"

- Now it is interesting... on the Sermon-on-the-Mount Jesus says if someone strikes you turn the other cheek so they can strike the other cheek.
- But that is not what Jesus did here is it?
- So the question is why not?

(pause)

- Well I think we need to take the sermon on the Mount in context... and that context is completely different here.
- Someone did something that was illegal and was simply unjust.

- It wasn't just an act of hate... it was illegal and unjust.
- This man broke the law and unjustly hit Jesus.

(pause)

- And what does Jesus do?
- He challenges him on it.
- He says: If I said something wrong... tell me what I said that is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?

(pasue)

Well that must have made an impression because it says in verse 24:

Joh 18:24 Then Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest.^[2]

- So after Jesus' challenge... Annas sends him to Caiaphas.

(pause)

- And John does not tell us about Jesus' trial before Caiaphas.
- However, the trial is well documented in the other gospels.

John goes on in Verse 25

Joh 18:25 As Simon Peter stood warming himself, he was asked, "You are not one of his disciples, are you?"

He denied it, saying, "I am not."

Joh 18:26 One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the olive grove?"

Joh 18:27 Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

- One of the other gospels tells us that at this point Jesus turned over and looked at Peter.

(pause)

- You can just kind of picture Peter... trying to be loyal... trying to be courageous following and watching what is happening to Jesus
- But as he try's to stay anonymous among people who are against Jesus... he is forced to deny Jesus 3 times... otherwise he could not stay anonymous
 - And likewise we cannot seek to be anonymous in this world.
 - If we do... to stay anonymous we will be forced to denying Jesus
 - Just like Peter

(pause)

- So Peter no doubt remembering the words of Jesus' (you will betray me 3 times before tomorrow morning)
- And remembering his lofty claim that he would die for Jesus....
- Sees the eyes of Jesus...

- And it says in Matthew... Peter left and he wept bitterly.

Joh 18:28 Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover.

- So it says to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews would not enter the palace
- Before Passover the Jews would complete certain cleansing rituals.
- They didn't want to go into the palace (which was the place of the gentiles) because according to their traditions... it would defile them and make them unclean and they wouldn't be able to participate in the Passover.

(pause)

- This blows my mind.
- They didn't want to come in because they didn't want to defile themselves.
- And yet, they were engineering the crucifixion of God's begotten son. Jesus.

(pause)

- Honestly, it is amazing to me how meticulous a person can be within the rituals of a religious system, and at the same time be so totally inwardly corrupt.

(pause)

- They were worrying about becoming unclean... but not worrying about the fact that they were working to crucify God!!
- Backwards thinking – and I think we all fall into that trap at times.

It says in verse 29:

Joh 18:29 So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?"

- When Herod the Great died (about 4 BC), he divided his kingdom among his three sons.
- Herod Archelaus became ruler over the area of Judea.
- And he began to extort such heavy taxes from the people that they eventually complained to the Roman government.
- And in 6 AD because of the complaints... the Roman government decided to take Judea under their direct control.

(pause)

- To do that... they made Judea a province of Rome and appointed a procurator.
- Well eventually Pontus Pilate became the procurator (or governor) of Judea

(pause)

- Well the Roman headquarters in that area was located in Caesarea, not Jerusalem.
- But the procurator had to visit every major city at least once a year.

- Rome required that.
 - So he would try to come during the times of the major feasts because He knew that is when all of the people would be gathered.
 - And if there was to be any civil movement against Rome, it would occur during the time when all the people were gathered.
- (pause)
- Well because of the potential for an uprising, Pilate would come each year with a legion of Roman soldiers.
- (pause)
- Shortly after Pilate was appointed as procurator over Jerusalem he ended up in a conflict with the Jews.
- (pause)
- The Romans basically viewed Caesar in the same position that they viewed god...
 - And so on the tops of the flags of the Roman legions they had these little figures of the Caesar, which represented that he was on par with God
 - Well the Jews objected to the Roman's coming into Jerusalem with this representation on their flags.
 - And procurators prior to Pilate had acquiesced to the Jews and would not put this figure on top of their flags.
 - But when Pilate was appointed he was not ready to give in to what he viewed as Jewish superstition.
- (pause)
- And so, shortly after Pilate was appointed the Roman soldiers marched right into Jerusalem with these figures on the top of their flags.
 - And it so enraged the Jews that they began insisting this never happen again..
 - And they actually followed him back to Caesarea and continued to attempt to persuade him.
- (pause)
- Eventually his patients was tried... and he commanded that they all gather into the arena there in Caesarea.
 - Next he had his soldiers lock the arena gates.
 - And then he said essentially, "Either quit bugging me about this... or I'm going to kill every one of you.
 - I'll literally have the soldiers kill you... if you don't quite bugging me.
- (pause)
- Well it's reported that the Jews leaned over and they pulled their collars off of their necks.
 - And said, "Go ahead and kill us."
- (pause)

- Well, obviously he couldn't slay that many innocent men.
- Word of that would have probably cost him his position.
- And so, he capitulated and he gave in on this issue.

(pause)

- Well not to much longer after this Pilate violated several other Jewish traditions to the extent that many of the Jews appealed directly to the emperor.
- They went directly to Caesar.
- According to the Roman senate, their main priority was to keep the provinces as peaceful as possible.
- And thus they sided on the side of the Jews.

(pause)

- Well giving into the people in order to keep the peace... was not something that came naturally to Pilate.
- But because of the previous problems he had with the Jews... and the fact that the senate sided with the Jews... more problems would not be good for his record.

(pause)

- So if you are like me and are wondering why Pilate had the patience to come out to meet the Jews... that is why.
- He was very concerned at this point with keeping the peace.
- If he didn't it would mean his Job.

(pause)

- So... in order to keep the peace... Pilate goes out to them and says, "What charges do you bring against this man?"
- And they respond in verse 30:

Joh 18:30 "If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you."

- Now notice they don't answer the question.
- They say... obviously he is a criminal or we wouldn't have brought him before you.

(pause)

So...

Joh 18:31 Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."

- In other words... if he is a problem... Judge him by your own laws.
- Pilate clearly did not want to be bothered with this.

(pause)

- Do you recall the accusation against Jesus?.

- Blasphemy.
 - Jesus claimed to be God.
- (pause)

- But that's not an official criminal charge they can bring to a Roman official.
 - So they just claim generally that he is rebelling against Rome.
 - In other words... they just shout "he is a criminal."
- (pause)

- Well Pilate had been burned by the Jews before and so he really was forced to listen to them.
 - He couldn't just write them off...because he couldn't afford another problem.
 - But instead of just giving into them ... he says simply Judge him by your own laws.
- (pause)

Well the Jews reply:

Joh 18:32 "But we have no right to execute anyone," the Jews objected.

- So clearly the punishment they were seeking for Jesus is death.
- (pause)
- But the right of capital punishment had been taken from the Jews just a couple of years previous to this.
 - According to the Talmud: the Roman government took the right of capital punishment 40 years before the destruction of Jerusalem, which was destroyed in 70 A.D.
 - Thus the right of capital punishment was taken away in 30 A.D. (just two years prior to this)

- It's interesting that when the right of capital punishment was taken away from the Jews, many of the leaders put on sackcloth and ashes on their head and they went mourning through the streets of Jerusalem.
- (pause)

- They believed God had not fulfilled the promise he had made through Jacob.
 - If you recall, it was prophesied that the scepter shall not depart from Judah until the Messiah comes.
- (pause)

- Well in 30 A.D., the Roman government took away the right of capital punishment
- And to the Jews that was equivalent to removing the scepter from the people.
- They had lost their sovereign right as a nation.
- And thus they mourned and they said, "God failed His promise." .. where is the messiah??

(pause)

- What they didn't realize is that God had kept His promise.
- The Messiah had been living among them for 30 years.
- The Messiah had come; they just didn't recognize Him.

(pause)

- But the right of capital punishment was taken away in 30 A.D. by the Roman government.
- And so they said, "We have no right to execute."

Joh 18:33 Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Joh 18:34 "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

- So Pilate asks the question that we are all presented with.

(pause)

- Is Jesus who He says He is?
- And Jesus replies... is that your idea... or did someone tell you about me?
- And I think what Jesus is getting at here is...
- Are you concerned with who I am personally
- Or are you concerned with who I am because other people have been talking about me

Story regarding people who are open... and people who are only there to argue – not really concerned with the truth.

- Well Pilate replies to Jesus:

Joh 18:35 "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

Joh 18:36a Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. ...

- So Jesus says essentially: You ask me if I'm a King? Yes.
- But my kingdom is not of this world.

Joh 18:36b ... If it were... my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

- Notice he says now my kingdom is from another place.
- That won't always be the case.

Well Pilate replies:

Joh 18:37 "You are a king, then!" ...

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

Joh 18:38 "What is truth?" Pilate asked. ...

- I love that question.
- What is truth...
- Anyone who spends time thinking will come to that question.
- And anyone who spends time thinking will be frustrated by that question.
- And the syntax of the text implies that his now Pilate replies here.
- Frustrated... "I've thought about that"... what is truth....

(pause)

- Without Jesus... there is no adequate answer for that question.

(pause)

- And like Pilate... anyone who ponders that question... apart from Jesus... becomes frustrated.
- Simply because there is no truth apart from Jesus.

Story regarding talking to Zach about truth

Joh 18:38 ... With this he went out again to the Jews and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him.

Joh 18:39 But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?"

Joh 18:40 They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in a rebellion.

- So, here is Pilate's first attempt to release Jesus.
- Clearly Pilate can tell there is something special about Jesus.
- And here is his first attempt to release Jesus.

(pause)

- The custom at Passover was for the Roman government to show favor unto the people by releasing a prisoner.
- And so Pilate tries to release Jesus as the Passover prisoner.

(pause)

- But instead they cried for Barabbas instead.

(pause)

- Barabbas was a rather savage criminal.
- But they choose Barabbas instead.

(pause)

How could they do that?? – It's the choice we are left with.

- And that brings us to the end of Chapter 18.
- Josh will pick up next week with Chapter 19.
 - Jesus is sentences
 - Crucifixion
 - Burial

Closing Prayer