

Twenty-One Days With John

Day 18 – John 18

Prayer:

Jesus Christ, as we prepare to read John 18, enable us to hear the testimony of John and be affirmed that You are the Messiah, the Chosen One of God. We know the Truth. You have come to love us. You have died to save us. May nothing ever cause us to fall from You. Amen.

Meditation:

John 18 marks a shift in John. John 1-17 have been relatively slow moving, focusing on the testimony of witnesses. Whereas previous chapters had one or two events per chapter, John 18 moves in a fast-forward manner through the betrayal-arrest-trial sequence. Even Mark, which is normally considered the “fast pace” Gospel, seems to lag behind John’s quick re-telling of the events leading from Jesus’ arrest to his sentencing by Pilate.

What factors account for the change of pace? There are several possibilities including...

- ?? *First*, and most obvious, the glaring omission of Jesus’ extensive dialog with disciples and would be disciples.
- ?? *Second*, the omission of detailed interaction between the “players” in the various events as in previous chapters.
- ?? *Third*, John—as he had been doing throughout this Gospel—may be acting as a defense attorney. The evidence he presented in John 18 included only what John, guided by inspiration of the Spirit, felt was necessary need to make the case for Jesus and against His enemies.

What evidence did John present to validate Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah? Here’s a short listing.

- 1) Evidence that Jesus was betrayed by a bribed disciple-gone-bad (18:2-3).
- 2) Evidence that the Jewish leaders believed Jesus was a violent person needing to be arrested by armed police (18:3).
- 3) Evidence that Jesus knew all things...and yet persisted to go to the cross (18:4).
- 4) Evidence that Jesus did not try to escape, but made good His confession, “I am He”...repeatedly (18:5, 6, 8).
- 5) Evidence that Jesus could have defended Himself with swords, but denounced Peter’s violent act (18:10). Notice that John does not mention the healing of Malchus’ ear, an event recorded only by Luke (Luke 22:51).
- 6) Evidence that the conspiracy against Jesus was rooted in the *highest* levels of the Jewish leadership (Priest Annas and his son-in-law, the High Priest Caiaphas).
- 7) Evidence that Jesus, as the Messianic expectations specified, *did* know *all* things. Peter’s three denials are recorded to validate Jesus’ fore-boding warning to Peter (18:15ff, 25ff).
- 8) Evidence that everything done against Jesus was done “behind closed doors” under the cover of darkness to conceal the protracted evil abuse the Jewish leaders planned against Him (18:20, 23).
- 9) Evidence that all of Jesus’ actions occurred as the Scriptures prescribed (18:32).
- 10) Evidence that His death sentence was the result of people who either did not know the Truth or refused to accept the Truth. This includes the likes of Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate (“What is Truth?” 18:38) and the crowds who, in their denial of the truth, shouted for Barabbas, the one who had taken part in a rebellion (18:40).

The list of evidence in John 18 may be even deeper than this listing suggests. But suffice it to say that John has fulfilled his purpose. Having explained to the Jews who couldn’t understand why and how God’s chosen Messiah could be crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23), John 18 goes a long way to show Jesus’ fate was that of so many other prophets sent by God.

Jesus’ words recorded in Matthew 23:37 seem to echo throughout John 18.

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“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing” (NIV).

If only the Jews would listen to the Truth, they would recognized Jesus as the truth Lamb of God. Those who will hear the Truth believe. Those who don't reject the Messiah, the Chosen One.

John 18 is not the end of the story. The saga—and the testimony—continues in the last chapters of John's Gospel. What will happen to the Truth? How will those at the cross respond? Stay tuned for chapter 19.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, You are the Christ. You are the Son of God who brought Truth. Open our hearts to the Truth that we might never fall from You. Open the ears of those who have rejected the Truth that they might turn from the “Father of Lies” (John 8:44) to You, the Way, the Truth and the Life. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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