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JOHN 18:28-40

INNOCENT YET ACCUSED



THIS WEEK'S focus

Doesn't it sound painful to be unfairly accused? To be willfully misunderstood? To be brought to court without fair charges being brought against you? That just scratches the surface of everything Jesus endured at the end of His life. Jesus never sinned, yet His accusers were determined for Him to receive the death penalty. In their minds, His claims to be God were unforgivable and deserving of death. Perhaps it hadn't occurred to them that these claims could be true! To get what they wanted, Jesus's accusers acted as if He were trying to overthrow the government and requested that instead of releasing Jesus, the governor should release an actual criminal. This was a glimmer of God's rescue plan: the guilty could be released because Jesus went to the cross.



CENTRAL truth

Jesus was innocent yet accused so that the guilty could be free.



EXPLORE.

scripture

JOHN 18:28-40

JOHN 18:28-32

28 Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They did not enter the headquarters themselves; otherwise they would be defiled and unable to eat the Passover. **29** So Pilate came out to them and said, "What charge do you bring against this man?" **30** They answered

him, "If this man weren't a criminal, we wouldn't have handed him over to you."

31 Pilate told them, "You take him and judge him according to your law." "It's not legal for us to put anyone to death," the Jews declared. **32** They said this so that Jesus's words might be fulfilled indicating what kind of death he was going to die.

JOHN 18:33-38a

33 Then Pilate went back into the headquarters, summoned Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" **34** Jesus answered, "Are you asking this on your own, or have others told you about me?" **35** "I'm not a Jew, am I?" Pilate replied. "Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?" **36** "My kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus. "If my kingdom were

of this world, my servants would fight, so that I wouldn't be handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here."

37 "You are a king then?" Pilate asked. "You say that I'm a king," Jesus replied. "I was born for this, and I have come into the world for this: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." **38a** "What is truth?" said Pilate.

JOHN 18:38b-40

38b After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no grounds for charging him. **39** You have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at the Passover. So, do you want me

to release to you the king of the Jews?"

40 They shouted back, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a revolutionary.

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE JOHN 18:36

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about humans?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

JOHN 1:12-18

DWELL

In the midst of this series of trials, Peter and John followed closely behind, with Peter standing outside the courtyard where Jesus was being informally tried. It was here that Peter denied Jesus for the first time. Think of the shift: the bold, sword-wielding Peter, who had hours before mistakenly believed that the Lord needed His protection (see v. 10), now lacked the courage to even be associated with Jesus.

→ Have you ever had lapses of faith like Peter? How does that prompt you to pray?

↪ Despite denying Jesus here, Peter later became an integral part of the early church. How can you encourage someone else with Peter's failures?

MEMORIZE

Using colored pencils or pens, creatively write out John 18:36 on a piece of paper. Read the verse out loud five times. Finally, try to say it out loud five times without looking, trying to picture it in your mind instead.

PRAY

Confess ways your faith has been lacking, and ask God to increase your faith as you study His word.

day 2

JOHN 18:19-27

DWELL

This section highlights the true injustice of Jesus’s situation: He was unfairly accused and abused by the religious leaders, and He was denied by one of His closest friends. Recounting the emotional and relational strife Jesus endured helps us realize that when we experience those things, God not only cares about it—He connects with it.



What does this passage reveal about Jesus’s determination to follow God the Father’s plan?



How can you cling to this passage when you endure emotional and relational strife?

MEMORIZE

Invent motions that match the words John 18:36, and practice them while saying the words out loud a few times. It probably feels a little weird, but hey, sometimes movement can help engage our brains!

PRAY

Thank Jesus for all He endured to get to the cross. Praise Him for understanding when you are in emotional and relational pain.

day 3

JOHN 18:28-40

DWELL

Here it becomes clear that Jesus was headed for a Roman style of execution: crucifixion. The word “crucifixion” and the word “excruciating” share the same root word for a reason—this style of death was known for bringing intense pain. It was dehumanizing and even viewed as a curse from God (see Deut. 21:23). Here we are able to understand another layer of the gospel: Jesus endured our curse so that we might be free from its grasp.



What does Jesus’s conversation with Pilate reveal about His kingdom?



Why is it ironic that the Jewish people weren’t willing to defile themselves by entering Pilate’s headquarters (see v. 28), yet were willing to put the Son of God to death?

MEMORIZE

Write out John 18:36 on a piece of paper or note card, and place it next to your bed. Make it a goal to say it five times before you go to bed and five times when you wake up.

PRAY

Praise God for enduring the curse of the cross so that you might have eternal life!

day 4

JOHN 19:1-8

DWELL

↓ What examples of humiliation do you see in this passage?

← Why do you think Pilate was afraid when he realized the Jews' true accusation against Jesus?

As the story unfolds, we begin to understand more of what Jesus endured. Before being led to the cross, He endured flogging at the hands of a Roman battalion (see Mark 15:16-19, “the whole company”—probably about 600 men³) and intense mockery as they exploited His claims to a kingdom “not of this world.” Pilate seemed to realize that he was dealing with a matter much bigger than he understood—perhaps the Son of God.

MEMORIZE

Write down the first letter of each word of John 18:36 on a note card. At least five times today, see if you can say the verse just by looking at the letters.

PRAY

Ask God to increase your view of Him! Praise Him for yielding to 600 soldiers when He could have called down 72,000 fighting angels.⁴

³ Köstenberger and Taylor, *The Final Days of Jesus*, 146.

⁴ See Matthew 26:51-53 and *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary Online*, s.v. “Legion,” accessed August 24, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/legion>.

day 5

JOHN 19:9-16

DWELL

Pilate believed he had authority to release or crucify Jesus—but he still misunderstood Jesus’s true identity. Jesus was the Son of God, who willingly submitted to crucifixion. Just before Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified, the Jews—who had always hated Roman rule and claimed God as their true king—chanted ominously, “We have no king but Caesar!” With this, they rejected God Himself.

↔ How do you see “fear of people” winning out over “fear of God” in today’s text? How can you respond when it feels like people are more in control in your life than God is?

→ How does this chilling account motivate you to recognize Jesus alone as the true King of your life?

MEMORIZE

Share John 18:36 with a friend or family member, and explain what it means. Then, invite them to randomly quiz you at some point today to see if you can remember the verse.

PRAY

Ask God to help you see any lesser kings you are looking to in your life. Praise Him for being the true and only King!