

GOSPEL OF John 18 C (28- 38a)

Intro: The Trial Before Pilate – takes place early on the Day of Preparation for the Passover and concludes at about the 6th hour (noon). John has crafted the Trail (John 18:28-9:16) after seven scenes with seven witnesses based upon Isaiah’s book of consolation chapters 40-55. – Fr. Behr, p. 194

Isaiah – God’s Plan - “My whole plan shall stand, and I shall do all things I have planned (Is.46:10); The Plan is “I have made the human being forever (Isa. 44:7); Calls upon those who believe in Him to be His witnesses, “I too am a witness, says the Lord God, and the servant who I have chosen, so that you may know and believe that ‘I AM.’ (Isa. 43:10). (Fr. Behr, pg. 195)

At stake at this cosmic trial is the very glory of God. If God is moved the act, to redeem Israel, it is for the sake of His name and to vindicate His glory. Yet, it is by being ‘lifted up’ that the servant is ‘glorified exceedingly (Isa. 52:13); then those who follow the Servant as witnesses/martyrs are also glorified by God and God is glorified in them – Fr. Behr.

John says nothing about the trial before Caiaphas which is recorded in the synoptics. Caiaphas won the council (Sanhedrin) on his side condemning Jesus to death as one who is blasphemous. The Sanhedrin had the right to hold trials on faith but could not carry out capital punishment which only the Roman authorities could execute. (Bp. Gerasimos)

First Scene (28-32)

²⁸Then they lead Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium (The Palace or military quarters of Pilate) ; **and it was early. And they themselves entered not into the Praetorium, in order that they should not be defiled** (ritual pollution by contact with Gentiles), **but that they might eat the passover.** **²⁹Pilate then went out to them, and said, “What accusation bring you against this Man?”** **³⁰They answered and said to him, “If this One were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.”**

- John points out the irony of observing with exactitude ritual purification laws while seeking to kill the holy one of God (Bp. Gerasimos)
- They do not present a clear charge against Christ, they wanted Pilate to confirm their own charge of blasphemy (which means nothing to Pilate, he needs a political threat to execute someone) and for him not to be interrogated. (Bp. Gerasimos).

³¹Then Pilate said to them, “Take Him yourselves and judge Him according to your law.” **The Jews therefore said to him, “It is not allowed for us to put anyone to death,”** **³²that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.**

¹⁴“And even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, thus it is needful for the Son of Man to be lifted up; [Jn. 3:14] ; ²⁸Then Jesus said to them, “Whenever ye lift up the Son of Man, then ye shall know that I am, and I do nothing of Myself; but even as the Father taught Me, these things I speak. [Jn. 8:28]; ³²“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all to Myself.” [Jn. 12:32]

The Second Scene (33-38a): Pilate interrogates Jesus for himself

33Then Pilate entered into the Praetorium again, and called Jesus, and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” **34**Jesus answered him, “Did You say this of yourself, or did others tell you about Me?” **35**Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your nation and the chief priests delivered You up to me. What did You do?” **36**Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would be fighting, in order that I should not be delivered up to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from this place.”

Chrysostom: “...not depriving the world of His providence and governance but rather showing, as I said, that His power was not human or perishable.”

37Pilate therefore said to Him, “You are then a king, are You not?” Jesus answered, “You say *it*, for I am King. For this *cause* have I been born, and for this *cause* have I come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

Fr. Hopko (The Names of Jesus) – “...the truth He speaks is the Truth that He is. He *is* the Truth, personally... The God of Abraham is the *true God*.”

By His answer, “Thou sayest” (σὺ λέγεις), Christ affirms He is, as if to say, “Yes, because (ὅτι) I am King.” Saint Chrysostom: “That is to say, ‘I am indeed King, yet not such a one as thou dost suspect, but far more splendid,’ hinting by these words and those which follow that no evil had been done by Him.” [Hom. 84, P.G. 59:498 (col. 455).]

38Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?”

Bp. Gerasimos: “He merely asks as a human being who wants to speak ironically and to doubt the existence of truth, to ridicule every religion that seeks to promote the truth. For this reason, apparently, Pilate did not wait to receive an answer from Jesus; Jesus also avoided giving him an answer.”

Fr. Hopkos: “Jesus remains silent because He is standing right in front of Pilate, and if Pilate cannot see that Jesus is the Truth, there is nothing that Jesus can say that will convince him. Jesus is this Truth, and it is the Truth that the true God *is*. (The Names of Jesus, pg. 207)”

Truth – *emet* (Hebrew) that which is dependable, not shifting

- The “rock” as a metaphor of God
- *Emet* can also mean *Faithfulness* – *someone who is a true friend is a faithful one, who shows fidelity*
- *Veritas* (Latin) – *something being dependable, faithful, loyal, provable, verifiable*
- *Emet* is translated into *Aletheia* (Greek) – *true to fact, uncovered*. You know what something is because you can see it. It is no longer covered.

“If you know the truth of God, you will know the truth about yourself... We can hold the truth, but if we are unrighteous ourselves, we cannot even know what we are talking about, although verbally, our words may be true... we may speak of Christ, the Truth, but if our hearts are far from Him, we do not know Him in truth. (Hopko, Names of Jesus, pg. 209).”