

The Plot Against the King: Introduction (John 18:1-27)

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Introduction

1. Jesus' intention from the beginning of His earthly existence was to press toward the cross. All four Gospels are united in this fact. John wants his readers to see Jesus in all His glory (Philippians 2:9–11).
2. The psalmist declared: "*The LORD says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool'*" (Psalm 110:1). This is the most cited Psalms text in the New Testament (Matthew 26:64; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:12). It is no doubt the foundation of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15:25–27.
3. We are in a spiritual battle that is playing out in this gospel age. The struggle is not to determine the winner because that was decided at Calvary when Jesus cried, "*It is finished*" (John 19:30). The struggle today is *overcoming* the enemy. Yet, all this remaining evil is in the will of God as the pattern of Scripture demonstrates (Romans 8:28; 1 Corinthians 15:55; Colossians 2:15).

I. The Heritage of the King

1. In Psalm 2 the Lord said, "*Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession*" (v. 8).
 - a. In the temptation, Satan sought the worship of Jesus in exchange for dominion over the works of God's hands (Luke 4:6). Jesus responded, "*You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve [latreya, 'serve in worship']*" (v. 8). Are you in obedience to this command (Romans 12:1)?
 - b. So, Jesus resisted Satan's offer to give Him this dominion over nations, but did He ask the Father for it? It may not seem so from our perspective. Where are the nations in His possession today? Is He truly ruling them now? The *principle* set forth in Scripture again and again is that there will always be a period of darkness before the dawn.
3. But again, what is the progress of this victory? The answer is twofold.
 - a. First, as Paul stated, Jesus is currently reigning and subjecting His enemies under His feet. This is taking place in the invisible kingdom Jesus spoke about to Pilate (v. 36). The initial establishment of this victorious rule is spiritual, but it also has clear political consequences.
 - b. Second, the kingdom of God will ultimately triumph in the political realm (19:10, 11). Jesus has absolute authority over every nation now.

II. The Rejection of the King

1. John's Gospel is unique in his attention to the universal aspect of the good news.
 - a. John shows the Romans' playing a larger role in the final hours of Christ's life because Jesus was the Savior of the *world* (1:29; note also 3:17; 4:42; 12:19ff). When the unbelieving Jews reacted to His focus on these Gentile, He responded, "*If anyone hears my words ...*" (12:47, 48; Deuteronomy 18:18, 19). The Jews needed the Romans to cooperate in their effort to kill Jesus in order to be rid of Him. This, too, was in God's (Acts 2:23).
 - b. The sin of the Jews in plotting against and betraying their King was returned on their own heads when, in answer to a real insurrection of the Jews, the Romans destroyed their nation in AD 70 (Matthew 23:37–39; 24:2).

III. Setting Things in Motion

1. The significance of verse 1 is that Jesus consecrated Himself for the sake of His own so that they would be sanctified in the truth (17:19). Although He knew what would take place (v. 4).
2. John 18:1 records the journey to Gethsemane (“oil press”), an olive garden located on the Mount of Olives just east of Jerusalem.
 - a. Jesus and the disciples descended into the Kidron Valley (*Wadi en Nar*), 200 feet below the Temple battlement, then began the climb onto the Mount of Olives where they entered the walled enclosure of the garden.
 - b. There were three reasons for His going there. (1) The Feast of the Passover required all attendees to remain within certain bounds of the city. (2) John records that Jesus often resorted there (v. 2). (3) Although John does not record Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane, His resolve is evident, having fully understood what was to take place (vv. 4, 11; Isaiah 53:10–12). This text reveals both the dark place and the glorious day that follows.

Application

1. We need to learn how to live like Jesus. Hebrews addresses this (Hebrews 12:1–3). We must walk by faith and not by sight, making it our aim to please Him (2 Corinthians 5:7, 9).
2. Even though all the world appears to be collapsing into chaos, we must take heart and trust that Jesus is reigning now. His enemies are being subdued. The Scriptures teach this truth (Colossians 2:15; I Corinthians 15:24; Romans 8:18–25).
3. We must be “*strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. [because] He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son. ... If indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel*” (Colossians 1:11–13, 23).