

Title:     **“TO THIS END WAS I BORN!”**

Text:       John 18:28-40

Subject:    *Christ's Voluntary Sacrifice*

Reading:    *Psalm 2:1-12*

Introduction:

In the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of John's Gospel, we see our Lord Jesus arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, drug as a thief along the dark streets to Annas and then to the palace of Caiaphas the high priest, where He was mocked, slapped, falsely accused, and denied by one of His beloved disciples. Then, he is led from Caiaphas' palace to the hall of judgment to be judged by Pilate, the Roman administrator placed over Jerusalem.

**You will search the pages of history in vain to find another instance of a person charged with a capital offence arraigned before two different tribunals in a matter of hours.** This aspect of our Lord's trial is made even more extraordinary by the fact that He was arraigned before the courts of **two nationalities**: the one was Jewish and the other Roman. And the courts were of **different orders**: one was ecclesiastical and the other civil. He was

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arraigned first before the Jewish Sanhedrin, over which Caiaphas presided, he being “*the high priest the same year*” (John 11:49), and then before the Roman court. **And so it must needs have been in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled which foretold the manner of His death.**

**The closing events of our Lord’s life were clearly foretold by the prophets.** Thus in the second Psalm we read: — “*The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against His Christ, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.*” There is no uncertainty as to the fulfilment of this prophecy; for the disciples, after reciting these verses of the Psalm, said: — “*For a truth, against Thy Holy Child Jesus, Whom Thou has anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done*” (Acts 4: 24-28).

**Thus the great confederacy of Jews and Gentiles, kings of the earth and rulers, having set**

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**themselves in defiance against Jehovah and against His Christ, succeeded only in accomplishing what the Triune Jehovah had in His eternal counsels decreed before to be done.**

From the very beginning of time, by all the types and shadows of the law, through all the writings of the Old Testament prophets, throughout the earthly life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through all the preaching and writings of the Apostles, in all the Book of God, the Lord God revealed to fallen, sinful, hell-bent, hell-deserving sinners **the only possible way of salvation** for fallen man is the way of the cross, the way of Christ’s death and resurrection as the sinners’ Substitute.

I must needs go home by the way of the cross,  
There’s no other way but this;  
I shall ne’er get sight of the gates of light,  
If the way of the cross I miss.

I must walk by faith in the strait, narrow way, —  
Faith in His atoning blood!  
I can never stand in God’s Promised Land,  
But by the merit of His blood!

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**The Christ of God must needs have suffered all those things He suffered, in every detail, before He could enter into His promised glory and be the Savior of His people** (Luke 24: 25-27).

Let’s read about our Savior’s examination before Pilate in John 18, beginning at verse 28.

(John 18:28-40) “Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. 29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? 30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. 31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: 32 That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die. 33 Then Pilate entered

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into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? 34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? 35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? 36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. **To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.** Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. 38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault [at all]. 39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? 40 Then cried

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they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.”

The blood-thirsty Sanhedrim stayed up all night so that they could plot their course and get the Lord Jesus over to Pilate’s judgment hall as early as possible. How they thirsted for His blood! — But His thirst was greater than theirs. He thirsted to drink the cup of the Father’s wrath for us. He thirsted to drink of that cup for us to very dregs of utmost bitterness, that He might, with one tremendous draft of love drink damnation dry!

You will find the title of my message in verse 37, were our Lord Jesus says to Pilate, **“TO THIS END WAS I BORN!”** — *“To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.”*

**Divisions:** Let me show you six things in this passage. May God the Holy Spirit, whose Word you hold in your hand, be our Teacher, taking the things

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of Christ and showing them to us as only He can, in almighty, efficacious, irresistible, saving mercy.

1. *First*, in verses 28-31 we see a stunning display of hypocrisy.
2. *Second*, God’s overruling providence compelled the Jews, as they were scheming to crucify the Lord of Glory, to bear witness to Him whom they crucified (vv. 31-32).
3. *Third*, in verses 33-36 our Lord Jesus shows us clearly that His Kingdom is altogether spiritual.
4. *Fourth*, in the 37<sup>th</sup> verse of John 18, our Savior declares His mission.
5. *Fifth*, Pilate asserts publicly that our blessed Redeemer is without fault (v. 38).
6. *Sixth*, the chapter closes with a clear, instructive picture substitution (vv. 39-40).

**1. STUNNING HYPOCRISY**

*First*, in verses 28-31 we see a stunning display of hypocrisy. Here is a band of religious zealots, the religious leaders of Israel, the Pharisees, the religious leaders of the Pharisees, the Sanhedrim and the high priest of Israel, all plotting together to murder the

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Lord of Glory, a man whom they knew to be completely innocent of any offence. Yet, they were fearful of being ceremonially defiled by going into the judgment hall.

(John 18:28-30) “Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. 29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? 30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.”

These hardened men were engaged in doing the most abominably wicked thing mortal man ever did. They were in the process of murdering the Messiah. Yet, they talked of being “*defiled*,” and were very fastidious about the rules for keeping the passover! Our Lord Jesus rightly identified them as hypocrites and vipers!



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**The conscience of man is as fallen, depraved, and wicked as the rest of our nature.**

- Sometimes it is hardened, seared, dead, and feels nothing.
- At other times it is morbidly scrupulous about the matters of religious ceremony and tradition.
- It is not at all uncommon to find people excessively meticulous about trifling forms and outward ceremonies, while they are detestably immoral.
- Robbers and murderers are sometimes extremely strict about confessions, and absolutions, and prayers to saints.
- Fastings and self-imposed austerities in Lent are often followed by vile ungodliness when Lent is over. There is but a step from Lent to Carnival.
- People who know they are wrong in one direction, often struggle to make things appear right by excess of zeal in another direction. — That very zeal is the show of their hypocrisy and their condemnation.

Any form of religion that makes you focus on outward forms, rites, sacraments, and ceremonies is,

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to say the least, very suspicious. It may be accompanied by immense zeal and a show of earnestness, but it is not sound. The Pharisees paid tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, and compassed sea and land to make proselytes, while they neglected “*judgment, mercy, and faith*” (Matthew 23:23).

**Hypocrisy is always mean-spirited and dishonest, though it always seeks to make a show of gentleness, meekness, and brotherly love.**

- These Jews knew that the Lord Jesus had done nothing amiss, that He was completely innocent of all their trumped up and falsified charges. — Yet, they said to Pilate, “*If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up unto thee*” (v. 30).
- Envy and covetousness and jealousy and greed are always the motives by which hypocrites are moved to action.

These Jews who thirsted for Christ’s blood, feared the defilement of a Roman judgment hall, and made much ado about keeping the passover! They were moved by envy, covetousness, jealousy, and greed.

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Let their conduct be a beacon to Christians, as long as the world stands. **That religion is worth nothing which does not make us say with David,** *“I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way”* (Psalm 119:128). **That Christianity is worthless which supplants heart worship, heart faith, and heart devotion with an outward show.**

God’s saints are not hypocrites, but men and women who worship and serve God and one another in sincerity and truth (Philippians 3:3). True faith is *“faith which worketh by love.”*

- *“Man looketh on the outward appearance.”*
- *“The Lord looketh on the heart!”*

**2. PROPHECY FULFILLED**

*Second,* God’s overruling providence compelled the Jews, as they were scheming to crucify the Lord of Glory, to bear witness to Him whom they crucified (vv. 31-32).

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(John 18:31-32) “Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: 32 That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.”

In verse 31, by acknowledging that they were not allowed by Roman law to execute a criminal, the Jewish Sanhedrim acknowledged that the scepter of civil government had departed from Judah, and that the time of the Redeemer’s revelation had come (Genesis 49:10).

(Genesis 49:10) “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him [shall] the gathering of the people [be].”

“Shiloh” is one of the names by which the Messiah was called in the Old Testament. It means “quiet,” “peaceable,” and “prosperous.” What a great name for our Savior, who came to make peace between

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God and men by the blood of His cross! He and He alone gives peace to men.

- He obtained peace for us.
- He gives peace to us.
- He is our Peace!

In verse 32 we are told that the Jews did everything they did with regard to our Savior’s crucifixion, *“That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, signifying what death He should die.”*

Our Lord Jesus repeatedly told His disciples that He must be delivered by the Jews into the hands of the Gentiles, that He might be lifted up from the earth, as the serpent upon the pole (Matthew 20:19; John 12:32, 33, 3:14-16). The Lord God brought it to pass. Both the Jews and the Romans did exactly what the Lord decreed and said they would do, no more and no less.

(John 12:32-33) “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [men] unto me. 33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.”

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(John 3:14-16) “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

**3. SPIRITUAL KINGDOM**

*Third*, in verses 33-36 our Lord Jesus shows us clearly that His Kingdom is altogether spiritual.

(John 18:33-36) “Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? 34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? 35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? 36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I

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should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”

That is what the Son of God Himself has to say about the kingdom of God. **His Kingdom is not of this world.**

- It is not a carnal, political, civil kingdom.
- It is not established by worldly power or worldly means.
- It is not like any earthly kingdom.
- The Kingdom of God is altogether spiritual.

Almost everything you hear preachers say or read from the writings of men about the kingdom of God is totally false. All the popular books about the coming of the Kingdom of God and the end of the world promote nothing but carnal notions about future things. Almost everything to be found in the notes of reference Bibles and study Bibles about prophetic things is false. Obviously, I have not read them all; but I have read a few, and I have not yet read even one that sets forth the teaching of Holy Scripture about the kingdom of God. I urge you to ignore such religious tomfoolery.

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And if what I have to say here is not verified by the Word of God, count what I say as nothing more than religious tomfoolery. I will go further than that. — If what I have to say to you in this message is not exactly what God says in His Word about His Kingdom, ignore me and count what I say as nothing more than religious tomfoolery.

Turn back to Luke 17 for a moment. Here our Lord answers the Pharisees’ question about His Kingdom.

(Luke 17:20-25 “And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see [it]. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after [them], nor follow [them]. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one [part] under



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heaven, shineth unto the other [part] under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.”

Everything the Pharisees asked our Lord was asked with an evil motive. They never asked anything that they might learn, but only that they might accuse the Lord Jesus of some evil by twisting His words, or deride our Savior’s doctrine.

But here, they went even further; they “*demanded*” Him! What arrogance! What presumption! What hellishness of heart is exposed when sinful men dare to demand anything from the God of Glory! Yet, those who made this demand pretended to be the only true worshippers of God!

The word translated “*demanded*” means “accosted” or “interrogated.” All the Jews, including the Pharisees, were looking for the coming of the Kingdom of God. They were looking for the promised Messiah to come and establish His

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Kingdom on earth, making them the rulers over all the world.

**But this demand has the tone of derision in it.** It is as if they said, “You tell us you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the King. If that is true, where is the kingdom? Do you really expect anyone to believe that such a poor, common man, a man known to keep company with sinners is the Christ of God? How long do you expect us to wait for this kingdom of yours to appear?”

**Our Lord Jesus seized the occasion given Him by their derision to teach His own disciples some blessed Gospel truths.**

First, he says, “**The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation**” (v. 20). I can almost picture the puzzled look of utter ignorance upon the faces of those ignorant Pharisees. Our Lord answered these fools according to their folly, only to make them more ignorant, only to give them greater confusion.

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Yet, He was at the same time teaching His own disciples who were in the crowd that day, and teaching His disciples of all future days. How Peter, James, and John must have perked up their ears. Mary Magdalene, I am sure, came to a dead silence. **“The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation.”**

**What does that mean? It means that the Kingdom of God is not at all like any earthly kingdom.** Its coming cannot be observed by the eye, by observing signs, marking dates, measuring time, or checking off fulfilled prophecy. Its presence cannot be observed by carnal means, because it is not carnal, but spiritual. Those who expect to observe anything of this kind are sure to be disappointed. They wait and watch in vain for a carnal, material kingdom that will never come, just as the Pharisees did. The Lord Jesus says, *“The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation.”* These **THREE THINGS**, at least, are meant by His words.

1<sup>st</sup> — **The kingdom of God does not come with pomp and pageantry.** It does not come with an

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outward show of any kind. In fact, the translation given in the margin of your Bible is, “The Kingdom of God cometh not with outward show.”

2<sup>nd</sup> — **The kingdom of God does not come in such a way that men can observe it.** God’s Kingdom is a kingdom no one can see, except he be born again. It is a kingdom none can enter, but by the new birth (John 3:3, 5). No one can discern anything at all about this Kingdom, except those who are taught of God and have the mind of Christ (John 3:1-8; 1 Corinthians 2:12-16).

3<sup>rd</sup> — Our Lord’s words in Luke 17:20 also mean, perhaps primarily means that **the Kingdom of God does not come by the observation of religious laws, ceremonies, traditions, and ordinances.** The kingdom of God does not come by observing holy days and doing holy things. You do not get into the Kingdom of God by receiving imaginary sacraments and doing imaginary good works. The Kingdom of God is not a matter of religious dos and taboos (Romans 14:17; Colossians 2:20-23). The fact is if you and I see something that so greatly impresses our

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eyes, our natural senses, and/or our feelings that we are by what we see inclined to think, “Surely, the Kingdom of God is here,” we are wrong, dead wrong.

**4. CHRIST’S MISSION**

*Fourth, in the 37<sup>th</sup> verse of John 18, our Savior declares His mission. — “Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”*

- He was born at Bethlehem to die in the place of His people upon Mt. Calvary.
- He came into the world to bear witness of the truth: the whole Gospel, the Word of Truth. — He came to show us the glory of God, to show us God Himself! — He came to show us how God can be just and justify the ungodly.
- He came here to glorify the Triune God in the salvation of His people (Matthew 1:21). — *“To save sinners, of whom I am chief!”*

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- Everyone who is of the truth (of God, born of God and taught of God) hears His voice.

**5. PILATE’S DECLARATION**

*Fifth*, Pilate asserts publicly that our blessed Redeemer is without fault. — *“Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault [at all]”* (v. 38).

First, Pilate asked a sneering, scoffing question. — **“What is truth?”** He seems to say as almost all men do today, “There is no such thing as truth. Truth is one thing to you and another thing to me. No man can tell another man that which is truth!” But that is not the case. **“All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth”** (Psalm 25:10). The Scriptures speak repeatedly of **“Thy truth,”** as if to tell us that all truth is wrapped up in one thing. — **“For Thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and Thy truth unto the clouds”** (Psalm 57:10).

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Look at Psalm 85. Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the Truth that sprang out of the earth...

- In His Incarnation!
- In His Resurrection!
- In His Ascension!

**He is the Truth by whom and in whom and with whom God is known!**

(Psalms 85:10-11) “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed [each other]. 11 Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.”

Then, though he was but a scoffing pagan, Pilate was compelled by God to confess our Savior’s perfect innocence before the law. — “*I find in Him no fault at all!*” — He who is our Passover Sacrifice must be altogether without fault before the law!

**6. SUBSTITUTION PORTRAYED**

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*Sixth*, the chapter closes with a clear, instructive picture substitution (vv. 39-40). — Here is a picture of the Truth.

(John 18:39-40) “But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? 40 Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.”

- Barabbas was a robber. So are we! — You and I have robbed God of His glory and our souls of life and happiness.
- The Son of God died in Barabbas’ place, crucified by wicked hands and slain.
- Barabbas was released at the passover, when the Lord Jesus died in his place. So were we!

What is truth? This is Truth: — God saves sinners by the sacrifice of His own darling Son, justly!

(Galatians 3:13) “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:



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for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree.”

(1 Peter 2:24) “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

(1 Peter 3:18) “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”

(2 Corinthians 5:21) “For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

(Romans 5:20-21) “Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

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“In evil long I took delight,  
Unawed by shame or fear,  
Till a new Object struck my sight,  
And stopped my wild career.

I saw One hanging on a tree,  
In agonies and blood,  
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,  
As near His cross I stood.

Sure never till my latest breath  
Can I forget that look;  
It seemed to charge me with his death,  
Though not a word He spoke.

My conscience felt and owned the guilt,  
And plunged me in despair;  
I saw my sins His blood had spilt,  
And helped to nail Him there.

A second look He gave, which said,  
‘I freely all forgive;  
This blood is for thy ransom paid;  
I die that thou may’st live.’

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Thus while His death my sin displays  
In all its blackest hue,  
Such is the myst’ry of His grace, —  
It seals my pardon too!”

—John Newton

Amen!