

4/3/22 - John 18:13-27 - "Unbelief on Trial"

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- [0 : 00] Consider how movies and books have a way of telling stories. And those stories can be centered around various plots and dilemmas and hardships to capture our attention.
- And in so telling a story and actually striking often our emotions within the narratives that we watch on a movie or as we read in a book.
- Both movies and books as combined often are structured in a chronological set of events that take place.
- And you sense the rising action of this story of is he going to win the girl? Is he going to finally chase her down and get her? I did. She's sitting right here.
- And so we have the resolution and four kids after we're still chasing each other. And often me chasing her. And those are the stories that just capture our attention and then end in the conclusion and the winding action into a new scene and setting.
- [1 : 15] But movies, however, movies have a uniqueness to them because they can do something that is often challenging for books to do.
- And that's to capture a scene that's happening at the same exact moment in time. You can see this. I've seen movies do this by kind of like a PIP, picture in picture of two things going on at the same time.
- I've seen it in different camera angles where this scene would pause and it would pan over to something else going on. And within written work, when you see a book or within written work, when you see a book doing that, it's known as intercalation.
- And that's a big word today that, thank you for commentary to help me understand this and great studying within that. It's a moment where in writing, you see two things simultaneously unfolding within the pages of which we read.
- And that is exactly what our passage today has for us. We have an intercalating text, two stories that are simultaneously happening at the same time.
- [2 : 39] And one of Jesus's trial and one of what's going on with Peter. And within this complex passage, we enter into several significant contrasts and details and maybe some lack thereof details that we're looking for of what's going on.
- We'll get into that momentarily. But the passage that Daniel just read to us and for us begs a question, a couple questions I'll lay out to you today.
- The first is, why is John intercalating this text? It's a complicated way of writing. How about help us as readers and understand this a little bit more clearly.
- Why is he intercalating this text? Where does John intend our focus to be fixated upon Jesus over here or Peter over here?
- And lastly, what is the message that John wants us to know today regarding his unique arrangement of material?
- [3 : 48] And we will be answering all these questions today by the end of our time and be encouraged and challenged by God's word. Before we do, I just want to take a moment and pray over our time and get into the text.

Let's pray. Father, we look upon your word as something that's sure and steady, something that guides our life, that without a shadow of a doubt, it is you speaking to us today.

And so, Father, as we approach your word, speak to us. Speak through me. Father, be glorified by everything that you put upon my mind and heart, even things that I haven't prepared today to say to your church.

Speak to your church through your scriptures today and help us by the power of the Holy Spirit to hear you clearly and to live our lives according to your will. And we praise in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. I'm going to split this up into three different sections. Firstly, because I'm a Baptist preacher and a good Baptist preacher does three points.

[5 : 06] So I'm submitting to the Baptist tradition, but also the passage suggests three different sections. So we're actually submitting to the shape of the text. So the first section that we're going to be looking through is between verses 12 and 16.

And I spelled out that word for you so you can be entertained by it. It's actually a term in chemistry as well with molecules. And I believe I have been spending so much time figuring out what this word meant.

And it's been quite a rabbit trail of information. Intercalating. Two intercalating trials. And so we got verse 12.

Picking up where Rick left off. We'll do a little bit of overlap in that. I want you to see this. I'm going to point this out to you so you understand where those two scenes are taking place.

So the first story is Jesus being led to Annas. It says in verse 12, So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him.

[6 : 14] First they led him to Annas. For he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man would die for the people.

Story one. Second story begins. Simon Peter followed Jesus. And so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.

But Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door and brought Peter in.

Let's pause there for a moment. So we see two stories. Jesus being led to Annas. And we see Peter sort of, I mean, we're all asking, what are you doing, Peter?

What are you doing? Straggling behind. After Jesus is apprehended in the garden after his high priestly prayer, and as Rick preached last week, he's led to what's known as a trial, specifically a Jewish trial, which will lead to the Gentile or the Roman trial next week.

[7 : 32] And it's quite an interesting setup, according to history. Because if we recall what John has previously brought to our attention from back in the series, John chapter 11.

The Jewish leaders had already made up their minds to put Jesus to death. And John makes sure that we recall what already has transpired, saying that it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it would be expedient for one man to die for the people.

That's when the Sanhedrin were assembled. You got the rock star religious leaders all assembling and figuring out what do you do with this guy who is threatening our citizenship in Rome.

It's the basis of this assembly that was determined that on account of Jesus Christ possibly threatening their citizenship, all of a sudden they could possibly be excommunicated and exiled from Rome as citizens.

You got to remember the unique cultural constructs of this time period. You had a nation that's assembled within another nation.

[8 : 50] And so they were given the ability to do their thing, essentially, without all this oversight and everything. They had to abide by specific rules and things like that and taxation and things of that nature.

But you have to imagine that if Jesus is running wild, if he's raising somebody that has been four days dead, yeah, this is something that history books don't even have written in them.

This is serious. What if Rome begins to think that we as the Jewish people might overthrow the Roman government? Well, I want to be a good little Israelite.

I want to just be quiet, mind our own business, lest we get exiled from this nation once again. That's a trigger warning in Jewish culture of being exiled again.

And so it was at that time where the Sanhedrin made up their mind to get rid of Jesus, to get rid of him. And so we see the solution to the threat of their livelihood as good citizens of Rome.

[10 : 00] That was decided in John 11 was to put Jesus to death because it would be far better for one person to die on account of the whole nation to be able to live in their freedom.

Right. And now Caiaphas' words were actually prophetically rich and deep, right? Because he did say it's better for one man to die for the people rather than they all perish.

And providentially speaking, this is exactly why Jesus came. But it's not just to keep their citizenship in Rome. It's to usher in a citizenship with the Father in heaven.

This is important. And so the high priest is ignorant of his selfishness. He's absorbed in pride and greed at that time.

And the high priest revealed the very leadership issue. You look all throughout these pages, church. You see leadership issue after leadership issue. You could turn on the news. Churches are still trying to figure it out.

[11 : 07] Leadership issue after leadership issue. And this high priest reveals that very leadership issue. And Jesus makes known what he previously stated in John 10 when he was talking about the good shepherd.

That these leaders, this leader that is sentencing Jesus to death on account of the threat of livelihood, is exactly the thief and the robber that has jumped the fence into the sheepfold that God has given to Jesus.

And these leaders have jumped the fence. And they're benefiting through financial gain from the labor of other people. And in so doing, oppressing God's people.

This is the leadership issue that we're seeing unfolding before our very eyes in the sentencing of Jesus. And so we think about the cross.

Easter's coming up. Good Friday is coming up where we will take a special reflection upon that night when Jesus died. And you see, not only the cross is an image of God's justice and mercy, it is also the image of man's pride and Christ's humility.

[12 : 32] Paradoxically speaking, upon the cross, Jesus Christ bore the penalty for our pride. God, by our pride, as we're seeing unfolding here, to release us from our pride.

All upon the cross. And as the magnitude of the cross approaches, the religious leaders begin to show their true colors. But it's not only them who are showing their true colors of being thieves and robbers.

There's some other people showing their true colors as well. A guy straggling outside in the high priest's courtyard. A guy known as Peter.

You can't forget Peter, right? Peter, the emotional, sacrificial follower of Jesus Christ. Back in John 13, verse 37.

He said, Lord, why can I not follow you? I will lay down my life for you. Emotional. I'm all for you.

[13 : 41] It's Ruth to Naomi. Where you go, I'll go. Where you stay, I'll stay. I'll follow you. Let's do this together. Or the adrenaline rush defender who tried to stab a dude in the face and missed and cut his ear off just previously.

Right? Peter. Peter. Peter. Where is he? Straggling. Straggling behind the other disciple. The one disciple being confident of being identified with Jesus.

It's known that this is actually John the Baptist. Or not John the. John the writer of this gospel. And he is the beloved disciple.

So one, no problem with following Jesus. And the other hiding on the outskirts. Struggling with similar pride of life.

And this leads us to a section of intercalated questioning at this Jewish trial. But it seems as if there is another trial occurring.

[14 : 47] You'll see in the heading of your Bible, if you have an ESV Bible, it's the trial of Jesus. But what we see here is actually another trial occurring out in the high priestly courtyard.

It's a trial of devotion. And we see that unfolding as the cross-examination begins in the second section. And we see a section that is all about the high priest and Peter.

As being ambiguous representatives of God. We see that intercalation. Let me show you these breakups. In verse 17, it starts with Peter's trial.

The servant girl at the door said to Peter, You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you? He said, I am not. Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire.

Because it was cold. And they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself. And then the camera pans over to Jesus in the next story.

[16 : 03] The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. And Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world.

I have always taught in the synagogues and in the temple where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them.

They know what I said. So these two trials begin. The devotion trial and the Jewish trial. And there are great similarities and questions and responses that's going on between these two trials.

So Peter is being questioned by the gatekeeper out in this high priestly courtyard. And we also see Jesus being questioned by the high priest. And I'll say high priest.

Because was anybody else confused when Daniel read this passage? Of who is the high priest here?

[17 : 15] Right? We see that in verse 13. First they led him to Annas. For he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was the high priest that year.

And then in this passage we're seeing a questioning going on with the high priest. But then the end of the passage ends with, in verse 24, Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

So what's going on here? Who's the high priest? Right? If you're reading this and wondering who the high priest is, I wonder if John has made this tactfully ambiguous of who the high priest is.

Not affirming any high priest blatantly. Because from our vantage point today, we know that Jesus Christ, according to the book of Hebrews, he is the high priest of high priests.

He is the Lord of lords. He's the judge of judges. Judges. He is the capital J in judges.

[18 : 29] It would be important for us to see John making a literary point in this passage to reveal the phoniness of this entire trial. Because who's documenting the questions that this high priest is asking?

We don't even know what he's asking. And John says, well, I'm not even going to tell you because guess what? This trial is phony. What's going on here? It doesn't even need to be detailed. Maybe we can better understand of who John is trying to insinuate who is in control.

That Jesus is the high priest. Jesus is actually turning this trial upon the high priest in his questioning of them, which gets him assaulted in this passage.

But not only that, who's Christ's disciple? Just as Christ diverts attention off himself to his disciple to attest to his followers and also his teachings, he calls for the disciples to speak for themselves and to attest as witnesses.

Because he has not done anything in secret. But I can tell you what, whoever this high priest is in this passage could very well wish that Jesus was doing everything in secret, not raising people from the dead.

[19 : 53] That was his aim. Consider the profoundness for a moment of what John is making clear and what John is making unclear.

And I believe that this is tactful in his writing. What's unclear? Well, this trial going on. What else is unclear?

Who's Jesus being interrogated by? Who is this high priest? Is it the one he's going to or coming from or who is that? And what questions are they asking? Where is Jesus going after this?

But what John makes vividly clear, it's interesting, he doesn't detail any of that. But what we know is that we know a lot of details about Peter's trial.

We know the proximity of where Peter is located. We know that it's a cold night in this time frame.

[20 : 52] We know more about the weather than who's questioning Jesus. We know not only what kind of fire it was.

It wasn't just a little candle lit that everyone was huddling around. This was not a wood-burning fire, but a charcoal fire. Look at these details that John is including in this text.

We know more about the fire than what's going on with this indictment of Jesus. And don't miss this. Because we have more details about that than what we know about Jesus' indictment.

Which is the very pride of which put him on the cross. This is startling, church. Startling. I believe this to be tactful ambiguity by John.

Which is directing a spotlight not on the Jewish trial. Or whatever's going on over there with Jesus and whoever's asking these questions. But is actually putting the spotlight upon what's going on in the courtyard.

[21 : 55] In the intercalative writing of this text. At the moment of Jesus Christ diverting the witness to the church.

His disciples. The church is often found when that spotlight hits us. Diverting the responsibility to attest to Jesus Christ to somebody else.

Look at what's happening in this passage. In other words, at the very moment that Jesus Christ points to you. And points to you. And you. And you. Is often a moment where we as a church buckle under the pressure to represent him.

And point it to someone else's duty. And this is precisely what is unfolding in real time during this trial. Might we learn a vital lesson from such a moment of contrast and cyclical writing.

Stemming back several chapters. Because it's at those moments where we come to faith in Jesus Christ. And it's like a mountaintop experience.

[23 : 05] You are just. You could scream it that you love Jesus. Wave the banner. Wave the flag. Shake the tambourines.

Pull out the harp and the lyre. Like David. Just celebrate what he's done. But. Something happens. Something real happens.

When those emotions begin to simmer. When that adrenaline. Begins to run out. That our devotion. At that point in time.

Is placed on trial. In the simmering emotions. And simmering adrenaline. Our emotionally gripped words.

And adrenaline filled spirits. Can run circles. Around Youngstown. Shouting out Jesus. And proclaiming Jesus name. And doing this. And where you go. I'll go.

[24 : 04] Where you stay. I'll stay. Anybody who comes against me. I'll stab you in the face. Right? And I'll miss and cut your ear off. Right? It's all this hype.

But what God puts on trial. Is the substance. He goes down to. The point. When you're staring at your cross.

Things tend to get real. It's kind of a parting of a sheepfold. Of the true followers of Jesus Christ. Why is John intercalating this text?

For us to realize. That at the very moment. The world questions Jesus. Jesus is pointing to. Pointing to the church. To attest to the world. Of who he is.

The world promises. Comfort. Acceptance. Friendship. I mean. Some of the things that they say. And do. Sound pretty good.

[25 : 02] But this is simply. Satan's means. To an end. Of pulling you away. From Christ. Away from obedience. To his word. Keeping you in the courtyard. Of the high priests.

And ultimately. Keeping you away. From any. Suffering. Or your cross. And if we get real. Want to get real. For a moment.

Who can blame. Folks. For being more attracted. To following the world. I mean. Churches can be. Some of the most unfriendly. Places. To walk into. You can.

Rest assured. When you walk into that bar. With your friends. From high school. They're going to say. Hey. What's up. And so accepting. At those times. Trying to.

Pull you. Away. And who can blame. Folks. For being more attracted. To that. Of following the world. Rather than following Christ. Or maybe. Even. Christians. Who.

[25 : 57] Want. Jesus Christ. But don't want to deal. With the drama. Of a church. And just watch a live stream. For a pastor. That preaches. 500 miles away. Who doesn't know their name. And doesn't know you.

Doesn't know your. The sins you're struggling with. You have nobody around you. To help you. And grow as a Christian. And living in isolation. Because the church. Is full of problems.

And drama. Right. Right. But both of those two. Dispositions. Share the same. Root. Of pride. Both of those dispositions. Our pride.

Calls out for comfort. Our pride. Calls out for ease. And rejection. Of any suffering. That our faith. In Christ. May demand. Of us.

In this life. We must remember. That. As the world. Questions. Jesus. Jesus Christ. Is pointing to you. To testify.

[26 : 51] To the truth. The world. Will challenge. Our allegiance. With God. They'll threaten. They'll. Whoop. And holler. About. Bigotry. And everything.

That. That you can. Imagine. That can. Identify. And label. Christ followers. But if you aren't. Maybe experiencing. Friction in the world.

And maybe you're like. Actually Brent. The world's not that bad. I have a lot of. Non-Christian friends. Well I might beg to differ. Maybe it's time to put out. Your little cozy fire.

And charcoal. And sit in there. Warming with the world. And maybe speak a little truth. Of who Jesus is. And why he came. And the way. Of salvation. And it has a lot to do.

With dying to yourself. Dying to your pride. Jesus. Christ. Has a message of salvation. Not to offend. But to offer.

[27 : 47] True hope. In this dark. Lost. And evil world. Now don't get me wrong. The truth of this message. Is scandalous. It will offend. But we don't go out. With the ends.

And the reasons. To just offend people. That's arrogance. That's not what Christ. Has called us. To do. We bear the truth. Faith in Jesus Christ.

And Jesus Christ. Is pointing to you. As his ambassador. Or maybe you. As his ambiguous. Disciple. I don't know. If I need to say anything. More on that. Section three.

Is in verse 22. And this intercalation. Is running. In parallel. Even up to the end here. Let's look at the first scenario.

The spotlight pans back. To Jesus for a moment. In verse 22. We see the. The slap of. Denial. Coming. I know with everything.

[28 : 44] That's been going on. With the Oscars. And everything. With. This passage. Couldn't have happened. At a more prime time. With Will Smith. Because here I am. Studying a slap.

And here's Will Smith. Freaking out on Chris Rock. Anyhow. So I labeled this. The slap of denial. Just so I can remember this. In my sermon archives. We.

We see verse 22. Occurring. The first scene. When he had said. These things. One of the offers.

Standing by. Struck Jesus with his hand. Saying. Is that how you answer. The high priest. And Jesus answered him. If what I said is wrong.

Bear witness about the wrong. But if what I said. Is right. Why do you strike me. Annas then sent. Him bound.

[29 : 41] To Caiaphas. The high priest. Pause on that moment. And now back to the courtyard. To that straggling disciple. Out there. Now Simon.

Peter. Was standing and warming himself. So they said to him. You are not. One of his disciples. Are you? He denied it. And said.

I am not. One of the servants. Of the high priest. A relative. Of the man. Whose ear. Peter had cut off. Asked. Did I not see you. In the garden. With him.

Peter. Again. Denied it. And at once. A rooster. Crowed. Trials. Are over. John drives a nail.

Into our consciences. At this point. In his writing. With this. Two-fold. Indictment. And rejection. From the leaders. Of God's people. And supposedly. This beloved.

[30 : 36] Disciple. Of Jesus Christ. Who said. He was. With Jesus. Till the end. The high priest. Rejects any response. From Jesus Christ. Without cause. He.

Jesus. Makes clear. That he. Has no. They have no basis. Of. Of. Of. Of. Putting him. To death. And clearly. This trial.

Was merely. A simple formality. It meant nothing. And as they simply. Responded. By slapping. Jesus. In the face. And similarly. Peter.

Figuratively. Slaps. Jesus. In the face. As well. By denouncing. Christ. Twice. More. And fulfilling.

In the prophetic. Reality. Jesus. Made clear. To emotionally. Hyped. Peter. Who said. He was in it. Till the end. In John. 13. 38. Will you lay down. Your life for me? Truly.

[31 : 31] Truly. I say to you. The rooster. Will not crow. Till you have denied me. Three times. Where are. The leaders.

Of God's people. Where are these high priests. Of God's people. Where are the disciples. Of God.

You can almost feel. The pain. That Chris Rock felt. Upon. The face of death. Just. If you've ever been.

Hit in the face. You could feel that swelling. And that. That blood just. Pumping. Into that. That location.

You could feel the swelling. And that pain. Just increasing. And it's almost as if. We can feel that. In this narrative. Along with a distant. Sound.

[32 : 27] Of a rooster. Crowing. You imagine. The. Intercalation. Of what is going on. In this passage. And how raw. And real. This betrayal looks.

Pride of life. Has overcome. In this passage. So as we. Think about. This and reflect.

Upon this. Complete. And utter rejection. From the high priest. Rejection. From Peter. We can often. Feel a sense of guilt. Even looking in our own lives. And our denial.

Of Christ. Is the swiftest. Way of slapping. Jesus in the face. That we could ever do. Our swift denial. Now. And John wrote. In such a way. To make us.

Evaluate our lives. In. With one question. It's. How do our lives. Deny. Christ. Are we denying.

[33 : 27] Christ. In a plethora. Of different ways. This comes in. In all. Shapes. And sizes. Bags. And boxes. This comes. Into our lives.

And often. We can just. Go through this life. In complete. Betrayal. Of Jesus Christ. And not hear his word. And let it change us. And change the course. So are we denying.

Christ. By our worldly. Attitudes. By maybe our bitterness. Of what's going on. In our lives. Maybe envy. Maybe strife.

Are we denying. Christ. By gossip. Are we denying. Christ. By. Our hatred. Towards. Brothers and sisters. And. Even the world. Hatred.

Sure hatred. The world of which. Jesus. Loved. Are we denying. Christ. Of our insistent. Complaining. Of the situations.

[34 : 20] And scenarios. As difficult. As they may be. That God is working. Out. Providentially. In your life. All according to his. Plan. And you're just. Questioning.

And questioning. Complaining. Complaining. Calling your mom. Calling your sister. Talking. And talking. And talking. Of complaining. About what God is. Is taking. His time. Working out.

In your life. Are you denying. Christ. By your divisiveness. Within the body. Of Christ. Against other brothers and sisters. In the church. Are you denying.

Christ. Of your. Maybe lack of attention. That your kids deserve. Or maybe your. Your wife. Or your husband. Deserve. Or maybe.

Your. Your family members. Maybe. Families are. Are grudge holders. Often. And you just won't reconcile. Are we denying. Christ.

[35 : 13] Christ. Is there hope. Is there. Redemption. Church. Yes. There is the cross.

Of Jesus Christ. Where our pride. Is paid. And at the cross. Our salvation. Was made. All. At the cross.

Just as the failing. Of not only. The high priest. Here. Or the centuries. Of leaders. Of God's people. In the past. We think of the cross.

When we see the failings. Of Israel. We think of the cross. When we see. The priests. And the prophets. And the kings. And the judges. All falling. For the pride.

Of life. All points. To the remedy. Filled at the cross. The failings. Of God's people. Are reminded. That we are remedied. At the cross.

[36 : 07] And if it is. Guilt that you feel. Simply stop. Rejecting. Jesus Christ. And accept. Him. As your Lord.

And Savior. And live your life. According to that purpose. This is a message. For the church. If you've been a Christian. All your life. Or maybe this is the first time. You've heard the gospel. This is for all.

Of us. Who are desiring. To honor. Jesus Christ. Might you too. Beat yourself down. Knocking. Knocking yourself down. Knowing that. All of your failings.

To serve God as a witness. That you've been compromising your faith. You know it deep down inside. You just don't know what to do. We must remember. That the cross of Christ.

Transforms our denial. Of him. And propels our devotion. For him. That at the cross.

[37 : 03] We are transformed. Forms. We are propelled. In devotion. If you're not propelled. In devotion. We might ask. Are you in Christ? Regardless of our failings.

And shortcomings. We are assured. In the power of the cross. To redeem that which is lost. And if that's you today. Come to Jesus Christ. Trust in him. As your Lord and Savior. Accept him.

In your life. And give your life to him. God is in the business. Of redeeming what's lost. Context even attests to it.

Because we're not long away. From seeing the cross. Redeem. This straggling disciple. Out in the high priestly courtyard. Straggling and denying Jesus Christ.

What is the message that John wants us to know today? And we'll land the metaphorical plane on this. We give so many reasons. To Jesus. Why he should not love us.

[38 : 03] And why he should not save us. We have endless reasons. And still there is no failing or shortcoming. That cannot be redeemed. By our faith.

In who Christ is. And what Christ has accomplished for us. So three things. May we stand firm. As representatives. Not ambiguous. But as ambassadors of God.

And witnesses to the gospel. Regardless of the cost. Regardless of the friends that ridicule you. Regardless of your friends that all of a sudden abandon you. Because you're some religious nut now.

And you follow this guy named Jesus Christ. And your life is changed. Why you stand firm. Secondly. May we reject the comforting fire. Offered from the world.

And instead. Bear. The consuming fire. Offered by God. Through our lives. And lastly. May our greatest joy.

[39 : 01] Is that our suffering. Has a purpose. Will youhofca? May our Gill ■■■■ vind the cause.

May our true death. In our heaven. May our ■■■■ah. May our genuin. In our heaven. May our xu. May our cheer. May our hearts. May our beauty. May our soul isn't ready. May our question. May our much befriend. May our happiness. May our joy. May our hum. May our victory. May our verse. May our Lord. May our heads.