

Yochanan ~ Part 34

Imagine **Kefa**, always the bravest of the talmidim, standing outside the **Cohan Hagadol's** courtyard, trying to blend in but failing miserably. It's like being at that awkward family gathering where you accidentally wear the same shirt as your Dad. He's caught red-handed, denying he knows **Yeshua** three times, just as **Yeshua** said he would. It's a humorous yet sobering reminder that even the best intentions can lead to unexpected detours.

Kefa Denies Yeshua Twice More

18 ²⁵ Meanwhile, Shim'on Kefa was standing and warming himself. They said to him, "Aren't you also one of His talmidim?" He denied it, saying, "No, I am not."²⁶ One of the slaves of the Cohen Hagadol, a relative of the man whose ear Kefa had cut off, said, "Didn't I see you with Him in the grove of trees?"²⁷ So again Kefa denied it, and instantly a rooster crowed.

Here was the final fulfillment of **Yeshua's** prediction that **Kefa** would deny Him 3 times (cf. Mattityahu 26:34).

Yeshua Before Pilate

This section (18:28–19:16) deals with **Yeshua's** trial before **Pilate**. Although **Pilate** appears in every scene here, **Yeshua** Himself and the nature of His kingdom occupy center stage.

²⁸ They led Yeshua from Kayafa to the Governor's headquarters. By now it was early morning. They did not enter the headquarters building because they didn't want to become ritually defiled and thus unable to eat the Pesach meal.

They didn't want to become **ritually defiled**. This defilement is not the same as that spoken of at Yochanan 11:55 but results from entering the home of a **Gentile**, in this case the **Governor's** Headquarters. The **Torah** does not mention such a defilement; it is a rabbinic addition (see Acts 10:28).

²⁹ So Pilate went outside to them and said, "What charge are you bringing against this man?"

³⁰ They answered, "If he hadn't done something wrong, we wouldn't have brought Him to you."

³¹ Pilate said to them, "You take Him and judge Him according to your own law." The Judeans replied, "We don't have the legal power to put anyone to death."

We don't have the legal power to put anyone to death. Although the **Torah** prescribes the death penalty for a number of offenses, and although the **Romans** permitted the **Judeans** a measure of self-government, they did not allow the execution of a death sentence; capital punishment was reserved for **Rome**.

³² This was so that what Yeshua had said, about how He was going to die, might be fulfilled.

How He was going to die, by being "lifted up" (Yochanan 3:14, 8:28, 12:32) on an execution stake, a cross, which was a **Roman**, not a **Jewish**, method of capital punishment.

³³ So Pilate went back into the headquarters, called Yeshua and said to Him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"³⁴ Yeshua answered, "Are you asking this on your own, or have other people told you about me?"³⁵ Pilate replied, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and head Cohanim have handed you over to me; what have you done?"³⁶ Yeshua answered, "My kingship does not derive its authority from this world's order of things. If it did, my men would have fought to keep me from being arrested by the Judeans. But my kingship does not come from here."

My kingship (or: "kingdom") does not derive its authority from this world's order of things; literally, "is not of this world." This is not to say that the **Messianic** kingdom and **Yeshua's** rulership is only "**spiritual**," not to be expressed really and physically in this world, fulfilling the prophecy that **Isra'el** will become "the head and not the tail" (Deuteronomy 28:13); but that the present aspect of His kingship is in Believers' hearts and lives (see 16:27), not in international politics (which is the framework of **Pilate's** question). Thus **Yeshua**, without denying His office as the **Messiah**, the **King**, claims He has done nothing against **Rome**.

³⁷ "So then," Pilate said to Him, "You are a king, after all." Yeshua answered, "You say I am a king. The reason I have been born, the reason I have come into the world, is to bear witness to the truth. Every one who belongs to the truth listens to Me."

Yeshua Or Barabbas

³⁸ Pilate asked him, "What is truth?"

What is truth? The cynical and worldly **Pilate** shrugs off the one who is the **Truth** (14:6) with a flippant question, and he is uninterested in knowing the answer. Alternatively, it was a philosophical question divorced from practicality, the kind asked by people "**who are always learning but never able to come to full knowledge of the Truth**" (2 Timothy 3:7).

Having said this, Pilate went outside again to the Judeans and told them, "I don't find any case against Him."

Ironically, the man charged with determining truth in the matter glibly dismissed the relevance of truth in the presence of the **One** who is truth incarnate. **Pilate's** comment may reflect disillusionment, if not bitterness, and a pragmatic viewpoint. On he went out to the **Jews** again; see verses 28–29. **Pilate** exonerated **Yeshua** three times (cp. 19:4, 6), but **Jewish** pressures convinced him to press the prosecution (19:12–16).

³⁹ However, you have a custom that at Passover I set one prisoner free. Do you want me to set free for you the 'king of the Jews'?"⁴⁰ But they yelled back, "No, not this man but Bar-Abba!" (Bar-Abba was a revolutionary.)¹

Bar-Abba means "**son of the father**" in Greek. Ironically, people wanted **Bar-Abba** released rather than the true **Son of the Father** - **Yeshua**. **Revolutionary** refers to an insurrectionist or domestic terrorist, perhaps engaged in **Zealot-style** political extremism (Mark 15:7; Luke 23:19).

As you engage with others in public life, reflect on how often societal norms push for quick judgments. Draw from the compassion emphasized in Matthew 18:25-40. If you overhear a discussion where someone is unfairly criticized or blamed, intervene gently. Instead of agreeing or adding fuel to the fire, advocate for a more understanding approach by suggesting positive aspects of that person's character or actions. This can promote a healthier dialogue that encourages forgiveness and a second chance.

¹ Yochanan 18:25-40.