

Summary of September 9

This week we covered chapter 18 of St. John's Gospel. This chapter focused on our Lord's Betrayal and Arrest. We spent the majority of our time prayerfully considering the powerful Scriptural text along with the enlightening notes of our Eastern Christian Study Bible.

St. John 18: 36-37:

Jesus tells us the truth that He is a king, but this is not in the earthly sense. He is the Heavenly King of Kings and He has come to us to bear witness to the truth. Those who want the truth will come to Him and His Church. As members of this Church it is our duty to likewise bear witness to Him and His truth. This is what the word "martyr" means: one who bears witness to the truth. Kim Davis is doing that right now in prison: bearing witness to the truth that marriage, as God created it, is between a man and woman and that homosexual acts are very much against nature as God created it (Mt 19:4-6, Eph 5:31, Lev 20:13, Rom 1:24-27). True Christians will bear witness to the truth.

ICBS: Jesus does not deny His royal mission, but He disassociates it from the political form of government that concerns Pilate. He thus turns the focus toward heaven, where He will be crowned not with gold but with glory and honor (Heb 2:9 and where homage is paid to him not in taxes but in worship and allegiance to the truth. The coronation of Jesus begins with his Passion (see the "Lord of Glory" Icon) and culminates with His Ascension (Eph 1:20-23) (see "Great High Priest" Icon). It is from heaven that Christ's Kingship, and High-Priesthood extends over the earth through the preaching and sacramental ministry of the Church (Mt 28:18-20).

St. John 18:38-39 ICBS:

The cynical response shows Pilate to be politically disinterested in the otherworldly perspective of Jesus. The irony here is that, while Pilate sees 'truth' as a harmless abstraction, the acceptance of the gospel throughout the Roman world will eventually lead to the downfall of the empire and the rise of a Christian civilization in its place.

St. John 18:40:

There is great irony in the person of Barabbas. First his name means "son of the Father" (barabbas). Barabbas is well known to be a robber. Elsewhere Barabbas is described as an insurrectionist and a murderer (Mk 15:7). The irony becomes apparent when we consider our Lord's words in the Garden of Gethsemane, "have you come out as against a robber" and the fact that He was crucified between two thieves. The Jews here have a choice between the robber who is called "son of the Father" and the innocent who is truly "Son of the Father." They will ultimately choose to free the robber and crucify the innocent between two thieves.

**Your brother,
Sub-Deacon Lazarus**