AM John 18:1-27 "The One who Dies for the Many"

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[0:00] I'm going to read verses 1 to 27, but we're not going to look at the whole passage, just one small part of this passage.

But it's good to read it in its context. So let's read from John chapter 18, verses 1 to 27. When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.
Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.
Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, Whom do you seek?
They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said to them, I am he.
[1:21] Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, I am he, they drew back and fell to the ground.

So he asked them again, Whom do you seek? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I told you that I am he.
So if you seek me, let these men go. This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken. Of those whom you gave me, I have lost not one.
Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.
So Jesus said to Peter, put your sword into its sheath. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?
[2:23] So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him.

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 should die for the people.
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.
The servant girl at the door said to Peter, You are not one of this man's disciples, are you? He said, I am not.
[3:36] 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.

The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world.
I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple where all 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. When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand saying, Is that how you answer the high priest?
Jesus answered him, If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong.
[4:45] But if what I said is right, why do you strike me? Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas, the high priest.

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Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, You also 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. Amen. May God bless this reading of his word.
I am with me in your Bibles to John chapter 18, to the portion that we read together. This passage in which we see the Lord's humiliation and also we see something of the Lord's glory shining through the darkness of his humiliation.
[5:56] His humiliation is seen in his being betrayed by a close friend, Judas. There can't be anything much worse, surely, than being betrayed and betrayed by a close friend, one who shared the food on a table with you.

And then he was arrested. Arrested by a really substantial number of soldiers and other officials from the temple, the chief priests and officers and so forth, perhaps numbering somewhere in the region of 500 to 1,000 people, all with their lanterns and torches and clubs.
This isn't something that's happening quietly or secretly. It's a very, very large number who have come out to arrest him.
And I think that adds to his humiliation, being arrested by such a large number of men. And then, having been arrested, he is bound, he's tied up, he's put, as it were, in handcuffs.
He would have gone willingly with them. But no, he has to be bound to add to his humiliation. And yet, in this darkness, we see something of his glory shining forth.
[7:31] In what ways? Well, we see him going forth to the garden in the first place. As I said, the last time I was here, he knew that Judas knew that he would be going to the garden to pray.

And yet, he goes to the place where he knows he is going to be betrayed, arrested, and bound. But he goes forth to meet the enemy, as it were, the captain of our salvation.
Not shying away from the battle, but going into the battle in order to engage the enemy. And in the garden itself, we see him going forth again to meet the enemy.
Perhaps it was at the gate of the garden. He goes forth to meet the enemy and ask, Who do you seek? Whom do you seek? And then, in answer to that question, they say, Jesus of Nazareth, that's who we want to take into custody.
And he says, and John records this three times, I am he, or I am literally. And at the sound of his voice, and at the pronunciation of these words, this great crowd of soldiers and others, draw back from him, and fall to the ground.
[9:08] Something in the voice of Jesus, maybe something of his glory, we don't know for sure, because we're not told. But there was something in this man, and his word, that forced them back, and sent them down to the ground.

So he asks again, Whom do you seek? Jesus of Nazareth, they say. He tells them, It is I. I am he.
And if you seek me, he says, let these men go their way, which was the theme of our sermon the last time I was with you, on Communion Sunday. And he says this, John adds, to fulfill the word, that he had spoken of, those who you give me, I have lost, not one.
There again, in his humiliation, in the darkness of this night, we see something of the glory of the Lord Jesus shining through, taking care of his disciples.
If you seek me, let these men go their way. Take me, let these men go free. And that is something that was true, not only of the physical events that took place that night, but there is a deeper gospel significance in our Lord Jesus Christ's words.
[10:47] He is the one who is taken, that his followers might be saved, from death, and from destruction. If you seek me, let these men go their way.

And then in response to Peter's rash attack, you remember Peter takes the sword, that he is carrying, and he lashes out, and tries to defend, and preserve the Lord Jesus Christ, from danger.
And Jesus says, Peter put your sword away, in its sheath. Shall I not drink the cup that my Father has given me?
The cup that the Father has given to him is the cup that contains the wrath and judgment of God for sin.
This is something that the Old Testament prophets mention from time to time. We think of, for example, Isaiah 51, 22, where he speaks about the cup of staggering the bowl of my wrath, God says.

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[12:03] The cup that makes men stagger the bowl that is full of wrath. Jesus says to Peter, Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?

Jesus, the mighty Savior, takes the cup that we ought to have drunk from, and suffered as a result of, and he takes it, and drinks it, and drains it, so that his people might be saved from it.
So having been betrayed, and arrested, and bound, Jesus is then led away to be tried. He is taken to Annas, and will be also brought later before Caiaphas, and the Jewish council known as the Sanhedrin.
And it was Caiaphas who had made the statement advising the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.
Now here John is quoting words that Caiaphas had spoken earlier, which John had recorded in chapter 11 of his gospel.
[13:30] So turn back to chapter 11, to this chapter that speaks about the death, and the subsequent raising of Lazarus. And the consequences of that miracle is spelled out for us from verse 45 of chapter 11 of John's gospel, where we read, many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and seen what he did, believed in him.

But some of them, some of the Jews that is, went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council, that is the Sanhedrin, and said, what are we to do?
For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.
But one of them Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, you know nothing at all, nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.
And then John adds his own commentary on this. He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.
[15:20] God. It is better for you, says Caiaphas, that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.

Now what did Caiaphas mean by these words? Well, in the context, we see that it was reported to the chief priests and to the Pharisees that Jesus had done many signs, many miracles, perhaps the healing of the man born blind and then the raising of Lazarus were just two of the many miracles that Jesus had recently performed.
And they say, this is their fear, many are believing in him, but if he keeps on doing these things, even more will believe in him. His disciples will grow and they will multiply, and they believed wrongly, that if that happens, the Romans will come and destroy our place, which is probably a reference to the temple, or Jerusalem in general, including the temple, and shall destroy the nation, scatter the nation, just as Nebuchadnezzar had done to both temple and nation in the 6th century BC.
Now, it's possible that they were hiding their own personal loss in these words that reflect a concern for the nation and for the commonwealth of Israel.
What they were really concerned about was the loss of their own position religion, and the shame that that would bring if more and more people deserted from their form of the Jewish religion, which was apostate, to the true form of the Jewish religion as represented by the Lord Jesus and his teachings.
[17:34] nations. It's more expedient for you that one man should die for the nation and not that the nation should perish.

And so he proposes that Jesus be killed and removed from the scene, and by killing Jesus, the threat to them, couched in terms of a perceived threat to the nation, would be removed.
It's better for you, for your interests, that this man be killed, that this man should die. But what did God intend by Caiaphas' statement?
Well, look at John's comments. He tells us that Caiaphas was the high priest that year. He was the high priest for a number of years, but he's referring to that memorable year in which Jesus died and God sent the Holy Spirit.
And as high priest he spoke, but his speech was not of his own accord, or what he means is his speech was his own words.

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[18:51] No one forced him to say these words. And he had his own plan and purpose in uttering these words, but there was a higher, greater hand at work in the delivery of the speech.

He prophesied, though that wasn't his intention. Yet God's intention was that through these spoken words, God intended to declare a very different meaning.
He did not say this of his own accord, says John, but it was God's intention that the truth, wonderful gospel truth, would naturally emerge from this corrupt man's speech.
Jesus would die for the nation. And not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad, God has his people in the Jewish nation and amongst the nations of this world.
He refers to them as the children of God. And Jesus is going to die for these children of God from amongst the Jewish nation, and from amongst the Gentile nations scattered across the face of the earth.
[20:56] One man will die for them all. Reminds us of words that Jesus spoke earlier in John's gospel, in John chapter 10 and verse 16, where he said, said, and I have other sheep that are not of this fold.

I have other people who are not of the Jewish nation. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice, so then there will be one flock and one shepherd.
And remember too, the words of Jesus' prayer in John chapter 17 and verse 20, where he says, I do not ask for these only, I, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.
So the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep does so for the sheep amongst the Jewish people and for the sheep amongst all the nations of the world outside the Jewish nation.
And on the eve of his passion and death, he prays to his father again for these people who will believe in him through the witness and testimony of those that he had prayed for earlier, his immediate disciples.
[22:47] And he prays that they also will believe in me through their word and that they will all be one, just as you father are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

There's a purpose and an intention here in the death of Jesus, revealed through this wonderful use of Caiaphas' words.
God is going to do something through this man's death. He's going to save his children, whether they be amongst the Jewish nation or amongst the nations of this world, and he's going to do more than save them, he's going to bring them together into union with Christ and union with himself.
So then, by Jesus' death, a greater, more glorious, divine purpose is going to be accomplished than what this corrupt, disgusting man Caiaphas had planned.
In and by the death of Jesus, God was going to redeem and save Jews and Gentiles, and bring them together into union with Jesus Christ.
[24:13] This is the church, made up of all the faithful, all believers in Jesus, with Jesus only as the head, the one shepherd, or as Peter calls him, the chief shepherd, and the elders being the under shepherds.

But it is this phrase, one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish, which is so significant for our understanding of the death of Jesus.
The death of Jesus was for the benefit of, for the good of others. One man should die for the people.
die for, for the good of, for the benefit of, on the behalf of. Caiaphas saw falsely in his own understanding that the nation was in some kind of danger.
To save the nation from this danger, one man, he believed, should die. if this one man dies, then the whole nation will not perish.
[25:35] But if he does not die, the whole nation will perish. That's the corrupt thinking of Caiaphas. and so he advises the one man's death will be for the good of the nation.

But though his thinking is perverted and corrupt, yet there is an element of truth. He speaks better than he knows or realizes or understands.
This one man will indeed die on behalf of others. This man's death will bring good and lasting benefit to the people.

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It will save them. Not from the threat of the Romans. There is a great irony in these words, isn't there?
He advocates the death of Jesus, the killing of Jesus, in order to save the nation from destruction by the hand of the Romans.
[27:03] And yet his actions start the ball rolling that led to the destruction of the temple in AD 70 and the scattering of the nation as a result.

But the death of Jesus Christ is going to bring salvation, not from the threat of the Romans, but from the threat, the very real threat of the wrath of God.
Look again at what Jesus said to Peter in chapter 18 and verse 11. Put your sword into its sheath, Peter. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?
This is the cup of the wrath of God. the just punishment that our sins deserve.
And the plan of God was for Jesus to be given and to willingly take this cup and to drink it all right down to the very dregs.
[28:31] As I was preparing the sermon this morning, my mind went back to the church that I was converted in. We used to sing our hymns from an old scripture union hymn book called Golden Bells.

And around the Lord's table quite often we sang, O Christ what burdens bowed thy head. God and there's a verse in that hymn that so well fits this part of the text.
When we think about the cup that the Lord Jesus takes from his father's hand and drinks from, the verse says, death and the curse were in our cup.
O Christ t'was full for thee. But thou hast drained the last dark drop. Tis empty now for me.
That bitter cup love drank it up. Now blessings draft for me. This is what the Lord Jesus Christ was doing here.
[29:50] In his humiliation, in the darkness of these hours, we see another bright beam of the glory of Christ shining through as he takes the cup.

And as Caiaphas in his twisted thinking says, it is expedient, it is good that one man should die for the nation and not that the nation should perish.
Death and the curse were in the cup. O Christ was full for thee, but thou hast drained the last dark drop. Tis empty now for me. That bitter cup, love drank it up.
Now blessings draft for me. My friends, the statement of Caiaphas brings us to the very heart of the gospel. One man dies for the people.
Here is the central truth of the message. God would have us tell and have you all believe. The good shepherd, Jesus Christ, lays down his life for the sheep.
[31:03] He takes the cup and he drinks the cup for us. O the love of God in this. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through him should be saved. and in a sense the world through him will be saved because he didn't die in vain.
He died for the children of God amongst the Jewish people and they will come. And he died for the children of God in every nation and language and people group around the world and they will come.
One last thing to emphasize here. John's explanation or commentary on Caiaphas' words in John chapter 11 speaks about the children of God being gathered into one.
Those who were scattered abroad are going to be gathered into one as we have seen. My friends this is a reference to us. We are the ones who are scattered abroad among all the nations of the world.
[32:37] But God's purpose in the death of Jesus was to redeem us, to save us from our sins and to gather us into the one flock of the good shepherd, the church, the body of Christ.

Christ. But what makes us children of God? To know that is to remember what John has already written in the opening chapter of his gospel.
So turn with me to John chapter 1. And let's read from verse 10 of John chapter 1. John chapter 1. who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Of God. this world, as we see throughout the Bible, and especially through John's gospel, and particularly John chapter 18, is divided into two sorts of people.

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[34:10] Those who do not receive Jesus. The world, on the one hand, and those who do receive him, who believe in his name, the children of God, who are born of God, on the other.

The purpose of Jesus' death is to save the children of God. Those who receive him, and believe in his name, who are born of God, these are the children of God, whom Jesus died to save.
So the question that we need to apply to ourselves as we meditate upon this portion of scripture, and as we admire the glory of the Savior, in taking this cup, and standing in the place of the children of God, those children of God amongst the Jews, those children of God amongst the Gentile nations of this world, and dies for them, for their benefit, for their salvation, for their redemption.
The question we have to ask ourselves is this, am I born of God? Am I a child of God? How can I tell?
Have I received him? what does it mean to receive him? John tells us. Have I believed on his name?
[35:52] Have I accepted the revelation that he has given in his word about himself and about his saving work?

have I seen my danger? The cup, the bowl of God's wrath, is going to be poured out upon this world.
We're going to perish because of our sins, because of our guilt. But the Lord Jesus Christ, we're told, has taken the cup and has suffered and died in the place of sinners.
Do I accept that? Do I receive it for myself? Do I believe in his name? To do so is to make it plain and known that we belong to God, that we are his children.
Because the infallible mark of a child of God is to respond to the gospel, to believe in Christ's name, and to receive him, and to rest our souls upon him as Savior and as Lord.
[37:19] So these words of Caiaphas spoken in ignorance and unbelief, nevertheless, as John picks out, as John emphasizes and highlights show us something wonderful about the death of Jesus.

It wasn't an accident. He wasn't a victim of circumstances. This is the will of God being pled out on the stage of human history. He dies so that his people live and are saved.
May God bless his word to us. He man to He was

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