

Betrayed & Arrested | Pastor Steve Wells | 09.11.2022
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This week Pastor Steve spoke about John 18: The Betrayal of Jesus. John 18 begins with Jesus passing over the Kidron Valley (some translations say more specifically He crossed over the Brook Kidron). This is a small detail that packs huge historical significance. This week's GoDeeper explores the historical significance of the Kidron Valley (Brook Kidron) and draws an interesting parallel application of John 18 to our lives.

Brook Kidron/Kidron Valley

There is an interesting and important representation that runs through the Old Testament, concerning the process by which idols were removed from God's people. Israel's history was marked with idolatry. From the moment they were redeemed out of Egypt, Israel worshiped other gods. Standing at the foot of Mount Sinai, where they were to wait for God's Law, Israel made a golden calf to worship in the name of Yahweh. When Moses came down the mountain he burned the idol, crushed it to fine dust, and poured it into a nearby river. In Deuteronomy 9:21 Moses recounts this event for Israel's remembrance:

Then I took your sin, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it and ground it very small, until it was as fine as dust; and I threw its dust into the brook that descended from the mountain.

While Moses made the people drink the water into which the idol dust was thrown, he simply notes that the dust of the idol was thrown into the "brook that descended from the mountain." This sets the stage for actions of the righteous Kings throughout Israel's history. Each and every time that the Lord raised up a righteous King to deliver His people from their evil practices and enemies, they would remove the idols from the land in a manner similar to that of Moses. In the days of righteous King Asa we see this pattern:

*Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did his father David. And he banished the perverted persons from the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. Also he removed Maachah his grandmother from being queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of Asherah. And **Asa cut down her obscene image and burned it by the Brook Kidron.** (1 Kings 15:11-13)*

Perhaps the greatest reformer King in Israel's history (our Lord Jesus excepted) was Josiah. His reforms were substantial and are recorded in great detail in 2 Kings 23. Consider the way in which the brook Kidron is at the center of his removal of idols:

*And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the articles that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. Then he removed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places all around Jerusalem, and those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven. **And he brought out the wooden image from the house of the LORD, to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem, burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground it to ashes, and threw its ashes on the graves of the common people...**The altars that were on the roof, the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, **the king broke down and pulverized there, and threw their dust into the Brook Kidron.** (2 Kings 23:4-6, 12)*

When King Hezekiah came to power he made a point of cleansing all the impurity and corruptions that had been carried into the Temple. The priests who ministered there did as Moses and the righteous Kings had done before them:

***Then the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD to cleanse it, and brought out all the debris that they found in the temple of the LORD to the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took it out and carried it to the Brook Kidron...**Now many people, a very great assembly, gathered at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month. They arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and **they took away all the incense altars and cast them into the Brook Kidron.** (2 Chronicles 29:16; 30:13)*

GoDeeper



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The pattern of crushing idols and idolatrous alters, and throwing them into the Brook Kidron, was symbolic. It represented how God would permanently remove idolatry from the lives of His people. When our Lord Jesus was heading to the cross to tear down our idols once and for all, He crossed over the Brook Kidron (John 18:1). Almost a thousand years before, righteous King David had crossed that brook with his men. He was being pursued by his betrayer, just as the Son of David was. (2 Samuel 15:23). It might be thought fanciful to read a spiritual reality into the reference to the Brook Kidron, were it not for the fact that it is constantly said to be the place where the idol dust was poured out. Jesus Christ crushed the idols of His people underfoot when He went to the cross. It was there that the stronghold of idolatry was broken. Our idols may be more sophisticated gods of silver and golds, success and power, than the gods of ancient Israel, but they are no match for the King of Kings. By His death and resurrection He has reformed His church forever. By one offering of Himself He has forever perfected those who are being sanctified. Christ has "given Himself for us that He might purify for Himself His own special people zealous for good works."

Matthew Henry noted this in his comments on John 18:1 wrote: *"The godly kings of Judah had burnt and destroyed the idols they found at the brook Cedron; Asa, 2 Chronicles 15:16; Hezekiah, 2 Chronicles 30:14; Josiah, 2 Kings 23:4,6. Into that brook the abominable things were cast. Christ, being now made sin for us, that he might abolish it and take it away, began his passion by the same brook."*

The Brook Kidron is representative as a redemptive-historical marker of the destruction of idolatry. The destruction of idolatry is completely and utterly dependent upon the Person and work of Christ at Calvary. He is the supreme solution to our idolatrous attachments. Idolatry is, in its essence, "worshiping and serving the creature rather than the Creator." In order to cure us of our evil attachments, the Creator created a body and soul for Himself so that He could die and save us from our sin. The incarnation (Jesus Christ) is the solution to idolatry. We must all flee from idols and follow Christ alone!

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