

2.24.19 ~ John 18:28-38, Jesus Before Pilate: Part 1

Read John 18:28... Jesus, innocent of any crime, is now led from Caiaphas into the Praetorian (lit. the General's tent, i.e., Pilate's headquarters). John doesn't record Jesus being questioned by Caiaphas, although we know (**John 18:24**) Jesus was sent there by Annas.

The Sanhedrin [Jewish Supreme Court, made up of 71 religious leaders: Pharisees, Sadducees, Chief Priests, High Priest; originated in Exodus 11:16] were gathered at Caiaphas's (**Matthew 26:57-68**), but waited until sunrise (**Matthew 27:1**) to pronounce the death sentence on Jesus and take Him to Pilate.

John mentions that the Jews do not enter Pilate's headquarters, as this would defile them (Gentile contact), and they had not yet eaten Passover.

Note: The Jews of northern Israel (Galileans, Jesus and the eleven) reckoned time from sunrise to sunrise; whereas the Jews of southern Israel (Judea) reckoned time from sunset to sunset.

Jesus and His disciples ate Passover on Thursday, while the religious leaders of Judea would eat Passover on Friday.

Read John 18:29-32... Pilate came out to the Jews and asked what the charge was against Jesus. The Jews knew full well that Pilate wouldn't sentence Jesus to death based on their general accusations that He was "an evildoer" [law breaker].

Pilate is impatient with these Jews concerning their religious rituals and laws, so he tells them (**verse 31**), to go and judge Him according to their own authority to judge religious matters.

It may be that Pilate knows they want Jesus executed, also that they do not have the authority to carry out capital punishment, for they are under the authority of Roman civil and military law.

The Jews reluctantly acknowledge Rome's authority saying, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." Pilate is basically saying, put up or shut up, either convince me that He is guilty of capital punishment, or go deal with this yourselves.

Read John 18:33-37... Pilate removes himself from the Jews, going back into the Praetorian, he summons Jesus for questioning, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

Pilate's question is meant to discern whether or not Jesus is heading up some sort of insurrection against Roman rule, by saying He is a king. See **Luke 23:1-5**.

The reality is, the charges made in Luke's account were false, in fact, Jesus had previously said, concerning paying taxes to Caesar (**Matthew 22:21**), "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Pilate must determine whether or not Jesus poses a threat to Rome's authority over the nation of the Jews. Jesus responds, asking Pilate if it is he who is

concerned whether or not Jesus, as King of the Jews, is a threat to Roman rule, or have others raised this question.

Jesus asks Pilate what others have said, i.e., what have the Jews told you? Pilate's response expresses his own disdain for the Jewish people and their religion (**verse 35**), "I am not a Jew, am I?" Basically, Pilate says, "what is wrong with Your people, after all, it is Your own nation's leaders who have brought You here before me, that I might punish You."

Then Pilate asks, "What have you done?"

Finally, someone asks Jesus what He is guilty of: When Jesus was arrested in the garden, no charges were stated. When He was taken before Annas, no charges were made. Before Caiphas, false witnesses were brought against Jesus. But when Jesus declared Himself to be the Son of God, things erupted (see **Luke 22:66-71; Matthew 26:65-68**).

Back to John 18:35... Pilate gets it, the Jewish leaders want Jesus dead, but he doesn't understand what it is that Jesus has done to cause such hostility from the Jews.

Jesus answers Pilate (**verse 36**), saying that He is a king, but not of any earthly kingdom; because if that were the case, His servants would have fought to keep Him from being turned over to the Jews.

Jesus didn't come to conquer Israel or to challenge the political rule and authority of Rome, for if He had, He would use armies and weapons of this world; but He has instead come to conquer sin in the lives of those who belong to His spiritual and eternal kingdom.

The Jewish religious leaders and all those of Israel who reject Christ as the Messiah-King, are His enemies. Jesus is telling Pilate that he can be assured, Jesus is not an enemy of Rome, and He is not here to lead a rebellion against Roman rule and authority over Israel.

I'm sure Pilate is confused at this point, for if Jesus is not a political or military king, what is this all about. Notice (**verse 37**), Pilate tries to clarify as to whether or not Jesus is really a king at all. To which Jesus responds by saying, "You are correct, in that, I am a king," but not of any kingdom known to you.

Although Jesus was born like all other humans, from a woman, He has come into this world from outside this world; in fact, He has come from His Father, having been named Jesus (Yeshua) meaning "God's Salvation," and called Immanuel meaning, "God with us". Jesus is clearly from another realm, in fact, He is from heaven.

Jesus did not come to conquer people or nations, but "to testify to the truth," i.e., to proclaim the truth about God, men, sin, salvation, eternal life in heaven, eternal punishment in hell, as Peter writes (**2Peter 1:3**), the truth being,

“everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.”

Most of Israel rejected Jesus as Messiah (**John 1:11**), “He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him,” however (**John 1:12-13**), “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Jesus concludes His answer to Pilate in the last part of **verse 37**, “Everyone who is of the truth hears [implies obedience to what Jesus says, see Revelation 1:3] My voice.” Jesus is making a clear distinction here between those who are his, and those who are not!

Look at **John 8:42-47; 10:24-33...** The Jews want Jesus executed because He claims to be God’s Son, the Messiah; and they reject Him vehemently, charging Him with blasphemy, in that, He is claiming equality with God.

The Jews want Him dead, but they don’t have the authority to execute capital punishment; and so, they have lied to and deceived Pilate, saying Jesus was a threat to Roman rule, as if Jesus were an insurgent king planning a revolt against Rome.

Read John 18:38... Pilate has been invited to hear the “truth” from Jesus, but Pilate shows no interest in pondering the depths of “truth” or in hearing more of Jesus’ words.

Pilate responds with a rhetorical question: “What is truth?” Pilate doesn’t care to be enlightened by this Jewish Rabbi, his only concern is, whether or not Jesus poses a threat to Roman rule.

John concludes, “And when [Pilate] had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, ‘I find no guilt in [this Man].’” By this statement, Pilate makes it clear that he doesn’t find Jesus to be guilty of any crime worthy of death.

And as we will study next week, when we pick up where we are ending today, Pilate actually offers to release Jesus, hoping it will appease the crowd, as it was a custom at Passover to release a criminal; but instead of wanting Jesus to be freed, the crowd cries out loudly for Jesus’ death, yelling, “take Him away,” “Crucify Him!”

Pastor Mike

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