



G R A C E

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SOLI ◇ DEO ◇ GLORIA

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Sermon Notes

The Arrest, Trials, and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ

Jesus before Pilate

John 18:33-38a

September 3, 2006

The Gospel Accounts of the Trials, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Christ:

Matthew 26:30-27:66

Mark 14:26-15:47

Luke 22:39-23:56

John 18:1-19:42

I. THE ARREST OF JESUS

- a. In the Garden of Gethsemane

II. THE SIX PHASES OF THE TRIAL(S) OF JESUS

a. The Jewish (Religious) Trial(s)

- Peter's denials begin
 1. Matt. 26:69-71a; Mk. 14:66-68; Luke 22:56-57; John 18:16-18
- ii. Before **Annas** – the former High Priest in Jerusalem
 1. John 18:13-23
- iii. Before Joseph **Caiaphas** – the current High Priest in Jerusalem
 1. Matthew 26:57-68; Mark 14:53-65; [Luke 22:67-71]; John 18:24
- Peter's final denial at cockcrow
 2. Matt. 26:71b-75; Mk. 14:69-72; Luke 22:58-62; John 18:25-27
- iv. Before **the Sanhedrin** at dawn – the Jewish governing body
 1. Matt. 27:1; Mark 15:1a; Luke 22:66-71; John 18:28b
 2. Sentenced to Death
- Remorse and suicide of Judas Iscariot
 1. Matthew 27:3-10; Acts 1:18-19

b. The Roman (Civil) Trials

- i. Before **Pontius Pilate** – the Roman procurator
- ii. Before **Herod Antipas** – the tetrarch of Galilee
- iii. Before **Pontius Pilate**
 1. Sentenced to be Crucified

III. THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST

- a. Nailed to the cross at 9:00 a.m. Friday morning
- b. Jesus gives up His spirit and dies at 3:00 p.m.

- ❖ Here, in John 18:33-38a, the Evangelist continues describing the trial of Jesus before Pilate [the ‘fourth’ trial – the ‘first’ before the Romans]. The irony in this account is most certainly profound; yet, in these six verses, Jesus will begin to reveal Himself to Pilate in a way that neither he, the Jewish authorities, or even His disciples at this point, can understand.
- ❖ It is fascinating that Jesus, the One True High Priest stood before Caiaphas, the Jewish High Priest that year, and Caiaphas condemned Jesus; now, Jesus stands before the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, a representative of Caesar, the Roman King / Emperor, while ONLY Jesus is the true King, indeed, the King of Kings.
- ❖ Also, what remains clear in these Verses is what John so clearly demonstrates throughout His Gospel: Jesus Christ is fully God and fully in control. The Jewish and Roman authorities are only doing what God has ordained for them to do, even though they have no clue of it...for no one is out of the sovereign control of Almighty God.

Verse 33

- ❑ John now tells the reader that Pilate left the Jewish leaders and went back inside the Praetorium, where he began to interrogate Jesus.
- ❑ Notice, the Jews refused to enter into the Praetorium, for fear of becoming ceremonially unclean; yet, Jesus, who perfectly fulfills the Law, and is fully God Himself (and, consequently, is in complete, sovereign control), allows Himself to be led into the Praetorium.
- ❑ Pilate, then, asks Jesus, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’
 - This question is recorded in all three of the Synoptic Gospels.
 - The Sanhedrin condemned Jesus for claiming to be the Son of God [recorded in the Synoptic]; this was blasphemy in their eyes and warranted the death penalty.
 - However, claiming to be the Son of God would not necessarily ‘earn’ Christ death before the Roman Governor; however, treason would. Therefore, the question of Pilate assumes that the Jews have leveled this charge against Jesus before Pilate – that Jesus, by claiming to be King, was committing a treasonous act against Rome.
 - *Treason* – the offense of attempting by overt acts to overthrow the government of the state to which the offender owes allegiance or to kill or personally injure the sovereign or the sovereign's family.
 - What Pilate was most concerned about in his questioning of Jesus was if He was a threat to the Roman political system and government, as well as the stability of the region.

- The reason for this was because, according to ancient literature, Judea was ‘infested with brigands’ (*Ant.* 20.95 215) and ‘anyone might make himself king as the head of a band of rebels’ (*Ant.* 17.10.8 285).
- Certainly, this accusation is consistent with the claims of Jesus. For, according to the expectation of first century Palestinian Jews, the Davidic Messiah was most definitely the long-awaited great King of Israel.
 - Recall the response of Nathaniel in John 1:49: “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; ***You are the King of Israel!***” [emphasis added]

Verses 34 – 35

- In direct response to Pilate’s question [‘Are You the King of the Jews?’], Jesus responds, rather curiously, “Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?”
 - It would not be appropriate for Jesus to simply answer with a ‘Yes’ or a ‘No.’ The reason for this is that, the answer to this question depends upon what Pilate means.
 - The point Jesus is making is this:
 - If Pilate is asking this question because the Sanhedrin informed him of the false charges against Jesus, then it would be quite difficult to answer ‘truthfully.’ In other words, if Pilate is asking because of the Jewish leaders, then an answer of ‘yes’ would be an answer that simply confirms what the Sanhedrin is falsely accusing Jesus of: that Jesus is claiming to be a the King of the Jews in a region where only Caesar is king.
 - However, if Pilate is asking the question because of his own curiosity, independent of the false accusations of the Sanhedrin, then it is quite possible that Jesus can explain to Pilate the true *nature* of His Kingship.
 - Either way, Jesus has demonstrated two truths with His question:
 - His is in no way oblivious to what is going on. He knows what the Sanhedrin has done, and He is demonstrating this truth [and of course He knows the answer to the question He has asked of Pilate].
 - Secondly, in a twist of irony, Jesus is now the interrogator and the judge, although He is bound as a prisoner.
- Pilate quickly responds as though he is offended by Jesus’ question: ‘I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?’

- It is as though Pilate is thinking, “I have the authority to crucify you and you have the audacity to answer my question with a question of me?!”
- As C.K. Barrett paraphrased what Pilate was saying, “You, a prisoner, deserted even by your friends, are a king, are you?”
 - The point Pilate is making is clear.
 - First of all, he is pointing out that he really doesn’t care what Jesus claims, after all, he knows [so he thinks] that Jesus is only a peasant Jew whose own people rejected Him and want Him dead.
 - Secondly, by Pilate asking Jesus, ‘Are You the King of the Jews’ and then ‘I am not a Jew, am I?’ it is as though Pilate is saying, ‘**Are you my king?**’

Verse 36

- Rather than recording Jesus saying, as the Synoptics do, ‘Yes’ in response to Pilate’s question, ‘Are You the King of the Jews,’ John records Jesus **explaining the nature of His Kingdom**.
- What Jesus is saying is this – “I am a King, but not the kind that you are thinking of.”
 - In the Old Testament, the name *Adonai*, typically translated ‘Lord’ also can mean “**Sovereign, Ruler, or King**.”
 - In fact, a monarch of a nation could be referred to as the Hebrew word *Adonai*.
 - This should not surprise us, as in most monarchies, the ruler is often referred to as the Sovereign.
 - By this, it is often meant that he is absolutely FREE...this is the true meaning of sovereign. He has the authority and ability to do whatever he desires.
 - And this is truly how God is, the only truly free Being in existence.
- But, also, Jesus, by acknowledging His Kingship, and the nature of it, is saying that His Kingdom is wholly different than those of the world – for it is **eternal** [as opposed to temporal], **infinite** [as opposed to finite], and **spiritual** [as opposed to physical].
- This was a concept that was fundamentally different from what the Jews expected.

- ❑ Not only is Christ's Kingdom not of this world, but it is greater than this world. For, it could not be of this world and still be greater than all the kingdoms of the earth – it had to **transcend the world** – which it does.
- ❑ Notice, Christ's throne is not in Jerusalem, but in heaven!
- ❑ Consider these questions:
 - Where does Pilate derive his authority?
 - Certainly, to a degree, one could rightfully say, from Caesar in Rome. Yet, even Caesar must derive his authority from a source outside Himself.
 - Furthermore, Paul states in Romans 13:1: "...there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God."
 - So, in the truest sense, Pilate derives his authority from God?
 - Yet, from whom does Jesus derive His authority to rule in His Kingdom?
 - From **HIMSELF!** For He is fully God.
 - In other words, the very authority that Pilate exercises when interrogating Jesus is given to him by Jesus Christ Himself!
- ❑ Then, Jesus says, 'If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews;'"
 - It is fascinating that Peter appeared willing to fight when they came to arrest Jesus, as he caught off Malchus' ear. Yet, this only demonstrated that the kingdom that Peter expected was one that was 'of this world' to be defended by 'worldly' means.
 - Yet, the Kingdom of Christ is a Kingdom that cannot be accessed [or threatened] by just anyone...it can only be accessed through the work of the King!

Verse 37

- ❑ Then, Pilate responds, 'So you *are* a King?'
- ❑ To this, Jesus says, in essence, 'Yes.'
- ❑ Then, Christ explains His **mission**: 'For this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth.'

- Why would Jesus use these words?
 - He does simply because in His Kingdom, He rules and reins in and with Truth.
 - As D.A. Carson states, ‘Disclosing the truth of God, of salvation and of judgment, was the principle way of making subjects, of exercising saving kingship.’

- Then, Jesus states, ‘Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’
 - This echoes the words of Jesus in John 15, when He speaks as the Good Shepherd, whose sheep hear His voice.

- Raymond Brown correctly states, “For in truth, it is not Jesus who is on trial but rather Pilate, who is confronted with the ‘light of the world’ and must decide whether he prefers darkness or light.”

Verse 38

- Then, Pilate asks the question of the ages: “What is truth?”
 - Powerfully, John demonstrates that, given His question, Pilate is not of the truth – of those given by the Father to the Son.
 - For, the very One who stands before Pilate not only speaks the truth, but IS the TRUTH (John 14:6)!
 - Further, the truth is that Pilate and Jesus shall one day meet again – on the great and terrible day when Christ shall be Judge and King

May we never forget that Pontius Pilate may have had the authority over the physical body of Jesus; yet, it is Jesus who has the authority over the soul!

RECALL Matthew 10:28: “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

For, as Jesus states in John 14:6: “I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”