

Questions for study and reflection:

1. What was the interaction between Pilate and the Jewish leadership? The fulfillments Jesus spoke of in John 18: 32 are found in John 3: 14 and John 12: 32. How do Pilates actions have any affect on those fulfillments?
2. What is Jesus' reaction to Pilate's first question to Him, "Are you the King of the Jews"? Why does Jesus react that way and how does that lead into His talking of His Kingdom?
3. What does Christ's Kingdom have to do with us?
4. What is Jesus' discussion of the Truth and how did Pilate react to it? Do you think a lot of people today would share Pilate's reaction? Why or why not, and what does that have to do with Jesus?
5. What is Pilate afraid of and how does that lead to a discussion on power? What do Jesus' remarks mean for our lives today? What does Pilate end up doing with Jesus?
6. Bonus Question - read John 19: 17 - 22.
How does Pilate put his own emphasis on Jesus' crucifixion and why does he do it that way?



Session Number Three

China Baptist Church

March 31, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.

Written and led by Pastor David Gorton

Pastor Ron Morrell, Facilitator

John 18: 28 - 19: 16

In this third Lenten study we will be focusing on John's account of Jesus' trial before Pontius Pilate. I have always been intrigued with the interaction between Jesus and Pilate that is reflected here. While Pilate seems to be a consummate politician, there is a certain amount of humanity that comes through in this interaction. It is worth reminding that in the person of Pontius Pilate (and his wife, whom we meet in Matthew 27:19) is one place where the Scriptures touch base with real people that non Biblical sources have a record of. We know who Pilate was, approximate dates of his rule, and some idea of what actually happened to him. Even though the person is real a lot of the information we have about him is speculation. Keep in mind that we are 2000 years removed from the primary information about Pilate. The human heart has a tendency to take facts and turn them into legends. Legends, by definition, are a combination of fact and fiction. Therefore we need to be careful what we believe about the things said of Pilate. None the less, once again, the Scriptures are demonstrated to be a real book dealing with real events that happened to real people in real time.

The interaction is split between two distinct sections. The sections are separated by Jesus' flogging and mockery (including the crown of thorns and a purple robe) by the Roman guard of Pilate. The second section concludes with Jesus being handed over for His crucifixion.

The first section begins with Jesus being brought from Caiaphas the high priest to the Roman governor's palace. In this first interaction Pilate spends his time trying to get to the bottom of the actual charges that are being leveled against Jesus. The primary accusation for the Jewish leadership is a perception on their part that Jesus is claiming to

be a King of the Jews, since He keeps talking so much about the Kingdom of God. The primary interplay between Jesus and Pilate is about the reality of Jesus' Kingdom and the recognition of His Kingship. Technically, Pilate comes out on the proper side of this discussion as seen in John 18:37. The true brilliance of Jesus is demonstrated by how quickly He moves the discussion from His Kingdom into a question of what is the truth. This is the bottom line about what is really happening at Jesus' trials and crucifixion. Jesus has spent three years in ministry trying to reveal the truth. The chief priest and Pharisees are using the trial to try and submerge the truth and let their own point of view prevail. The poverty of Pilate's own values and agenda are borne out by his continuous protest to the crowds and the leadership that he can "find no basis for a charge against Him". Indeed not, since the closest thing Pilate has to an agenda is his self preservation and some attempt to preserve the rule of the Roman empire.

The second section of this exchange with Pilate reinforces the reality of the poverty of Pilate's thinking. When Pilate tries to play the card of his authority over Jesus, Jesus reminds him of where true authority comes from and what happens to those who play around with it. After all people who live in glass houses should not be surprised at what happens to their house when they start throwing stones at all the things they dislike around them.

The Pilate who emerges from this trial seems to be a man who recognizes the reality of who Jesus is and the travesty of what is being done to Him. Unfortunately Pilate doesn't have the courage or the conviction to stand in the way of that which is being carried out. For your further understanding please consider and answer the following questions. (Questions on the back.)