

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to the Gospel of John 18

We are continuing our verse by verse study through the Gospel of John –

And we currently find our selves in the portion of John's gospel where Jesus is being interrogated

He is hours away from being nailed to a Roman cross.

Now, for the past two weeks, we have been looking at Annas – as an example of an individual who wanted to suppress the truth

All he cared about was self preservation

He wanted to maintain the status quo – he wasn't ready to relinquish that to Jesus.

In our study this morning, we are going to be looking at another individual that John focuses on and that is Pontius Pilate

Pilate, unlike Annas, isn't an example of an individual who wanted the suppress the truth – the truth is he isn't an example of an individual who wanted publicize truth either.

You see, Pilate is an example of an individual who wanted to walk down the middle of the road.

He was the ultimate politician.

He was a people pleaser

And because he was a people pleaser – he missed out on knowing who Jesus is

Let's pray...

One of the things that I pointed out in our study last week – is that John, inspired by the Holy Spirit – doesn't include the details of the interrogation that Jesus went through at the hands of current high priest at the time – which was Caiaphas.

John provides details of Jesus' interrogation under Annas – who was Caiaphas' father-in-law and the guy that was really in charge during this time.

So, in order to keep everything in context – we have to look at Matthew's gospel which tells us that when Jesus goes before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin –

Caiaphas confronts Jesus and asks Him if He is the Son of God –

Jesus says – “It is as you said”

And at that moment Caiaphas, in a show of hypocrisy, he tears his clothes – “We don't need witnesses after all – because Jesus just self-incriminated Himself”

And the Sanhedrin pronounced Jesus – guilty of blasphemy – worthy of death

And they spat in His face and beat Him, struck Him and mocked Him

So when we get to the beginning of our text here in verse 18 –

Jesus shows up before Pilate –

Beaten - with bruises on His face and His beard and His face covered in spit

[Jhn 18:28-40 NKJV] 28 Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.

So the religious trial is now done – verdict: guilty

Now the criminal trial begins.

The bring him to Pilate's residence

It is about 6 AM –

Keep in mind that Jesus has been up all night

And notice the hypocrisy here in verse 28 –

They did not go into the Praetorium because they did not want to be defiled.

Who is the they?

The same religious rulers that broke law after law in trying Jesus

The same religious rulers that attempted to bring false witnesses to testify against Jesus

The same religious rulers that struck and spat on Jesus

They refuse to go under a Gentile's roof because they don't want to be ceremoniously unclean – they don't want to be defiled.

In order to keep up their external appearance of righteousness – they refuse to go into the courts of the Gentiles because they would be so defiled by doing so and therefore not be able to continue and partake of the Passover Celebrations.

Turn with me to Luke 11

Because Jesus had already pointed out the hypocrisy that the religious rulers were doing here.

[Luk 11:37-41 NKJV] 37 And as He spoke, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He went in and sat down to eat. 38 When the Pharisee saw [it], he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner. 39 Then the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness. 40 “Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also? 41 “But rather give alms of such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you.

The religious rulers took great concern to make sure that they appeared to be shiny on the outside – just like the cup.

But when one looks into the cup – one sees nothing but filth.

Jesus exposed their hypocrisy and the Pharisees hated Him for it

And the irony of verse 28 is this –

That the One that they abused, the One that they spat on and the One that they mocked -

He is the very One, who is the Lamb of God, who in His impending death, is about to remove the necessity of all the ceremonial uncleanness.

He is the very One that the Passover pointed to.

29 Pilate then went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?" 30 They answered and said to him, "If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you."

As soon as Pilate heard that the religious rulers had arrived to issue charges against someone, he knew that the penalty was death.

If it was some lesser punishment, the religious rulers would have handled it themselves.

So Pilate is asking here – “What is the charge?” – “What did this Man do that is deserving of death?”

But notice the response from the religious rulers – instead of specifying what the charge is – they simply said – “Trust us Pilate; He deserves to die”

They were trying to pull rank

They didn't want Pilate to investigate the legalities

They simply wanted Pilate to rubberstamp their decision that Jesus Christ should be executed.

The problem was that they didn't have a charge that was going to hold up in a Roman court –

Their charge was that Jesus was blasphemous – that He claimed to be God

Pilate couldn't care less about that – Rome had many gods

That was a Jewish concern –

But as far as the religious rulers were concerned – the Sanhedrin had already decided that Jesus should die

They didn't come to Pilate looking for more questions – they simply wanted Pilate to act.

Now, a little background on Pilate –

Pilate was the governor of the region – appointed by Rome.

And his job as governor was to maintain peace within the region.

As we search the gospels – we get a little more insight on his character

In our study next week, we will find out that Pilate was a very proud man.

When Jesus doesn't reply to his question -

[Jhn 19:10 NKJV] 10 Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"

From the other gospels we know that Pilate was also a very cruel man

[Luk 13:1 NKJV] 1 There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

He was a tyrant - At some point during his reign as governor - Pilate had ordered the slaughter of Galilean Jews on their way to sacrifice to the Lord in Jerusalem. So the Jews hated Pilate.

Pilate was also a shrewd individual – meaning he knew exactly what the religious rulers were up to – he could see through them.

[Mat 27:18 NKJV] 18 For he (Pilate) knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.

Pilate was also self-seeking – his main concern was Pilate.

[Mar 15:15 NKJV] 15 So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged [Him], to be crucified.

And probably the obvious characteristic that we find over and over again was that Pilate was neutral regarding everything.

He didn't want to take a side

He didn't want to do the right thing because he would upset the other side

He was the ultimate politician

31 Then Pilate said to them, "You take Him and judge Him according to your law." Therefore, the Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,"

Pilate wants nothing to do with this – he knows their motives – the religious rulers haven't made their case –

He is saying "Go way - You guys take care of your own mess"

To which the religious rulers object –

Notice that they didn't say,

We have no right to examine anyone or try anyone

They say, we have no right to execute anyone – clearly revealing their motives.

We don't want a trial or an investigation – we want an execution.

Under Jewish law, there was provision for certain crimes to be punishable by death

But Rome took away the Jews ability to pronounce and carry out death sentences.

Did the religious rulers still carry out death sentences? Of course – they just couldn't do it officially.

Think of Stephen

Think of the adulterous woman – they were ready to stone her.

32 that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die.

Jewish execution was carried out by stoning -

But the prophecies concerning Messiah's death didn't fit a death by stoning.

The prophecies indicated that the Messiah's death would involve out of joint bones, thirst, and pierced hands and feet.

Turn with me to Psalm 22

When Jesus was on the cross – He cried out, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?

the first line of the Psalm, a way of telling people to look at that Psalm.

[Psa 22:14-16 NKJV] 14 I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. 16 For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet;

Psalm 34 also says that not one of His bones would be broken

And also Jesus Himself prophesied –

[Jhn 3:14-15 NKJV] 14 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

When we look at this, we realize that Jesus couldn't have been put to death by stoning, He had to be crucified.

If the Jews were the to be put to death by the Jews – it would have been by stoning – but if He were to be put to death by Rome – it would be via crucifixion.

[Deu 21:22-23 NKJV] 22 "If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, 23 "his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you [as] an inheritance; for he who is hanged [is] accursed of God.

The religious Jews were very familiar with Deut 21

And it was important for these ruling, envious, hypocrites to try and make such a graphic and public statement to the rest of their people.

Remember, it was only 4 or 5 days earlier where the multitudes were throwing down palm branches and crying out –

“Hosanna!

‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’[fn]

The King of Israel!”

If Rome did their dirty work – they could go back to the people and say, “Remember what the law says about the man hanging on a tree - it is a curse”

Therefore, this Jesus is not our Messianic hope

33 Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" 34 Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?"

Now that Pilate has heard the priest' charges against Jesus, he returns to HQ's & begins his interrogation of Jesus

His main concern lies in the accusation of the priests that Jesus is claiming to be the King of Israel.

"are you the king of the Jews?"

Before Jesus gives Pilate the answer to his question

Jesus wants to make sure that Pilate will understand the answer

So He asks a question of Pilate meant to clarify what he means by "King.

Pilate – are you referring to what you understand to be a king? Someone who is going to challenge the Roman rule of Israel or are you referring to Jewish concept of the Messiah?

You see, Jesus is in fact a King;

but His rule is very different from what Pilate understands & Jesus wants to help him grasp this so his decision can be a just one.

The problem that we will see in a minute is that Pilate didn't want to get involved at all – so once again he sidesteps the conversation

35 Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?"

Pilate was suspicious of what the religious rulers were doing –

Remember, they didn't get along with each other.

So when the religious rulers came that morning dragging one of their own & accusing Him of something worthy of death, he got suspicious

It's not like these guys to turn over one of their own to the Romans

So Pilate wants to find out what did Jesus do that has the religious rulers wanting Him to be put to death.

36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

Jesus gets to the heart of the problem & tells Pilate what he needs to know so he can render a just decision.

Yes, Jesus is a King, but His kingdom is no rival to Rome because His rule is neither political nor military in nature

37 Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say [rightly] that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

Jesus made it clear to Pilate that His kingdom was not an earthly rival to Rome.

It was a realm defined by spiritual rather than geographic borders

Jesus, in His first coming, He came to do a spiritual work - establishing His kingdom in the hearts and the lives of people -

And the main issue of this spiritual kingdom was Truth.

Think about it –

The citizens of Christ's Kingdom aren't defined by what ethnic group they're a part of.

The citizens of Christ's Kingdom aren't defined by where they are born or what language they speak

They are those who recognize Jesus IS Truth & that faith in Him brings them into a right relationship with God.

Where the King is submitted to – that is where the His kingdom is established

It is that relationship that makes them true,

That rightness then flows out from them, influencing those around them.

38 Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all.

Pilate, like many today, was at a place where this question was being answered with all sorts of philosophical ideas.

It seemed like everyone has their own idea of what is truth

The Greeks believed that truth was only found in the many gods that they worshipped

The epicureans believed that truth was found in life's pleasures – they had a saying, Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. So that was their truth.

And today we have movie stars and politicians trying to define truth for us

Church – the definition of truth is not a what but a Who

[Jhn 14:6 NKJV] 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

If we were to paraphrase Jesus' announcement – this is what He is saying

Eternal life is only found in Me and it comes through My Father

And other quest for truth, any other quest for life any other quest for meaning will be fruitless and false because I am the only way and the only truth.

Pilate asks the question "what is truth?"

Some have suggested he was kind of joking around with Jesus, "yeah right, truth, tell me all about it ..."

Some have suggested that Pilate really wanted to know the truth, except he never waits to hear the answer.

And so Pilate goes back to the religious rulers and says - **I find no fault in Him at all**

Technically – Pilate should have released Jesus then and there

But he didn't

You see, between verse 38 and 39 – Pilate sends Jesus to Herod

Again – he is trying to remain neutral – Let Herod make the decision.

And then we find out in Luke's gospel that Herod doesn't want anything to do with this – so Jesus is sent back to Pilate

It is at this time – that Luke records for us that he has a meeting with the religious rulers and says – Hey guys, you bring me Jesus – you guys haven't made a case, I find no fault in Him – there is something really fishy going on here.

And Pilate tries to end the charade –

How?

**39 "But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the
Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" 40
Then they all cried again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas
was a robber.**

The last words that John records for before Pilate sends Jesus to Herod were, I find no
fault in Him

Pilate's first word that John records for us when Jesus is brought back is – but
I find no fault in Him – but I am a coward

I don't want to do the right just thing in letting this innocent man free.

So I will let you decide – because I don't want to make that choice.

BTW – Pilate had a custom –

To release a prisoner

He didn't have to pit Jesus against Barabbas

He could have pitted any of the other prisoners against Barabbas

But he includes Jesus because he doesn't want to deal with it.

And just like the Jews want to wash their hands in all this and blame it on the Roman government / the Roman government wants to wash their hands in it and blame it on the Jews.

The name Barabbas means son of the Father – bar = son of, Abbas = father

He was a terrorist –

And the multitude chose the guilty Barabbas instead of Jesus

Here was a man worthy of death, suddenly being released, and another man, an innocent man, take his place on a Roman cross.

In a way, Barabbas is a picture of all of us.

The Bible says we've all sinned.

[Rom 3:23 NKJV] 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

[Rom 6:23 NKJV] 23 For the wages of sin [is] death, but the gift of God [is] eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is what the gospel is all about.

This is what Jesus came for.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Jesus, the Truth, stood before Pilate.

Today, He sets us, indwelt by the Spirit of Truth, to stand before the world.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

