

(28) Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor’s headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor’s headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover.

(29) So Pilate went outside to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this man?” They answered him, “If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered Him over to you.” Pilate said to them, “Take Him yourselves and judge Him by your own law.” The Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.” This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death He was going to die.

(33) So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to Him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about Me?” Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You over to me. What have You done?” Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But My kingdom is not from the world.”

(37) Then Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I have come into the world --- to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice.” Pilate said to him, “What is the truth?”

(38b) After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, “I find no guilt in Him. But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” They cried out again, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.

Think on these things:

- 1) Looking into religious defilement in Leviticus, if a “clean” Jew was defiled in any way, s/he could not participate in any religious activities until after darkness of that day. Also, Jews could enter the unroofed (open) courtyard of a gentile, but not enter a ‘roofed’ structure (a tradition from the Talmud). Since they would not enter Pilate’s palace, what did he do?

**He came out of the palace and into the courtyard to talk to them (again, very early in the morning, v.28)**

- 2) Ruling over the Jews was difficult. To try and keep the peace, Rome allowed the Jewish leaders to govern themselves on religious matters, except in one instance. What is that (v.31)?

**Jews could not rule and administer a “death” penalty. Only Rome could put people to death for crime.**

- 3) Jesus’ death by Roman means fulfilled prophecy (Psalm 22:1-21; Isaiah 53; and John 12:32-33). If Jesus died at the hands of the Jews for blasphemy (i.e., for claiming to be God, the Son), how would He have been put to death (see Leviticus 24:16)? Can you guess the “criminal” charge that allowed Rome to kill Him (vs. 33, 37, John 19:12)?

Jewish death? **Jewish death penalties were administered by “stoning.”**

Criminal charge? **The Roman charge would be treason: a king in place of Caesar (John 19:12).**

- 4) Why do you think Pilate interrogated Jesus so closely on being a king? Is it your opinion that Jesus gives him a ‘yes’ or ‘no’? From v.36, where is Jesus’ kingdom (see Matthew 4:17 and 10:7)?

Why interrogated? **Pilate needed to know if Jesus was a true threat to Rome.**

Jesus' answer? **Jesus' answer is basically, "I'm not a threat to Rome. I'm a king, but My kingdom is "not of this world."**

- 5) In v.37 Jesus gives us all a clear statement of why He came into our world. What is the reason? How are you able to hear Jesus' voice?

The reason? **Jesus says He came to bear witness to the truth.**

How I hear? **(A personal answer from class members that may include when reading scripture or in prayer times, perhaps from sermons, teachings or comments from godly friends.)**

- 6) Pilate ends this short dialog with the question, "What is truth?" If you could answer for Jesus at this very moment, how would you have explained Jesus' purpose to witness truth to the world?

**Personal answers from class members. Author's input would be that God is the Creator of all things in our world, seen and unseen, and that Jesus is the Savior (Messiah or Christ) of mankind (Colossians 1:15-23).**

- 7) What was Pilate's conclusion about Jesus' guilt or innocence (v.38)? How did he try to appease the crowd and set Jesus free? Did it work? (In our next lesson we will see that Pilate twice more indicates that he finds Jesus unworthy of being put to death.)

Pilate's conclusion? **Jesus was an innocent man, not guilty of anything deserving His death.**

Pilate's appeasement offer? **Evoking a (Roman) Passover tradition, Pilate offered the Jewish crowd that gathered a choice of prisoner release: Jesus or Barabbas. For fear of Jewish leaders, the crowd clamored for Barabbas' release.**

**(NOTE: Many believe that Pilate clearly understood that Jesus was a problem for the Jewish leaders, but was popular with the people of the land --- and that the leaders had brought Jesus to him out of spite. However, Pilate's attempt to go around the leaders was thwarted when those who had gathered that morning outside his palace demanded Barabbas' release out of fear of Jewish leadership.)**

People and situations I want to pray for this week: