Lesson 50 – John 18:28-40 Pilate Questions Jesus
English Standard Version (ESV) Bethel Bible Resources

(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?

   _____

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)?

   _____

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? _____

   Criminal charge? _____

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? _____

Jesus' answer? _____

_____

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? _____

   How I hear? _____

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?

   _____

   _____

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? _____

   Pilate's appeasement offer? _____

   _____

People and situations I want to pray for this week: