

## Connecting Minds

"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31)

### The Gospel of John

#### Chapter 18:31-36

**"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,' that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die. Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?' Pilate answered him, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nations and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world.'"**

The Jewish leaders have condemned Jesus of blasphemy but Pilate was not interested in judging Jesus based on Jewish Law - "You take Him and judge Him according to your law..." We see this principle of Roman judgment many times in the book of Acts. In Acts 23:26-30 we see a Roman official, Claudias Lysias sending Paul to Felix saying "I found that he was accused concerning questions of their law..." It wasn't a Roman's desire to judge Jews in such fashion according to Jewish law but because a riot and threats to Paul's life had been discovered Lysias was sending him to Felix for his safety and to face such questions later.

These leaders of the Sanhedrin have brought Jesus to Pilate early in the morning and they have insulted his court in saying that their law has an equal weight with his. But now they are forced to acknowledge that it is not "lawful" for them to put anyone to death - they are in fact subservient to the Roman court. John inserts that all this was done to fulfill the words of Christ. John Calvin writes "If we want to read the story of Christ's death with profit, the chief point is to look to God's eternal counsel."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, vol. 5: John 11-21, John Calvin, pg. 164

Pilate now begins to examine Jesus. His first question is "Are You the King of the Jews...?" This was the only accusation that could have any real bearing, for the claim of being a king was an act of treason against the Emperor.

Jesus answers Pilate with a question of His own. Jesus wants to know the reason for the question. He wants to know why Pilate has asked Him about whether He is a king or not. So He says "Are you speaking for yourself..." or for someone else. Why would this matter? Because if Pilate were asking for himself, as a Roman, then no, Jesus is not the *kind of king* that Pilate is thinking about. Jesus is not a king who seeks to overthrow the Roman Empire with force. But, if the question comes from the Jews through the mouth of Pilate, then yes, He is the King that the prophets had predicted.

Pilate answers yet again, with another question, "Am I a Jew? Why are you questioning me? It's your own people who have handed You over to me." Basically, he says "I'm asking as a Roman Prefect, are you the king of the Jews?" Pilate has a simple point he wants to discover. All he wants to know is what it is that Jesus has done against the Roman Empire. Pilate doesn't care about the Jewish squabbles; all he cares about is the protection of the Empire.

Now Jesus does answer the question about being a king. He says that He is a King, but not a King that would be any danger to the Roman Empire or to any earthly king. "My kingdom is not of the world..." These are profound and important words. Words that Pilate ultimately could never understand. Words that today's unbelievers still do not understand. But by the grace and illumination of God those who are called of God know the blessing of being a member of this kingdom and a follower of King Jesus.

## TableTalk

"That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled..." What words of prophecy is Jesus fulfilling? Read Matthew 20:17-19 and John 12:32.