

## 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 19:7-9

**"The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.' Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again in the Praetorium and said to Jesus, 'Where are You from?' But Jesus gave him no answer."**

Pilate has now heard the real charge that the Jewish leaders are bring against Christ. The charges they had brought initially were that Jesus was causing rebellion, forbidding taxes, claiming to be a king. Now though the real charge is presented - "He made Himself the Son of God..." James Boice writes "Imagine [Pilate's] surprise then when, after having acquitted Jesus of the charge of insurrection, he suddenly hears the real charge mentioned."<sup>1</sup>

"We have a law..." Yes, but how they have misused this law throughout their trial of Christ. They have broken it into a thousand tiny pieces. The trial was too fast, the witnesses lied, the high priest was the prosecutor not the impartial judge, Christ was made to be His own accuser. These leaders were attempting to use their "law" (the one they have mangled) to prove the justness of their case against Christ. Their law called for death and since they had no power to execute death, they needed Rome to carry it forward.

"He made Himself the Son of God..." Let's look at the law that the Jews are appealing to. Leviticus 24:16 says "Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death..." In their opinion, Jesus has blasphemed the name of God - "He made Himself the Son of God..." This is the charge brought against Jesus, but according to the New Testament, this charge is not correct. What in fact did Jesus do? The amazing and mind-blowing truth of Philippians 2:6,7 is that Jesus is not a man who made himself God but God who made Himself a Man - "Who being in the form of God... made Himself of no reputation... coming in the likeness of men..."

<sup>1</sup> An Expository Commentary: The Gospel of John, vol. 5, James Montgomery Boice, pg. 1472

When Pilate hears the real charge, he becomes "more afraid." The Greek word for "afraid" here means to be terrified, to be afraid of something. Note that we are now told that he is "more" afraid, indicating that his hesitancy in releasing Jesus has been based on fear. His fear is likely political. An acquittal may bring a riot from the Jews. Israel is very strong in its emphasis on monotheism and if Pilate were to acquit a man for claiming to be God it could be disastrous. But also, for his own standing in Rome, it would not be good to acquit a rival to Caesar.

Alexander MacLaren asks where Jesus is in all this. He says that Jesus is the "least conspicuous figure in the history of His own trial. In silent communion with the Father, in silent submission to His murderers, in silent pity for us, in silent contemplation of the 'joy that was set before Him.' He waits on their will."<sup>2</sup> I make that quote to ask, What effect do you think Jesus has had on Pilate throughout this trial? Pilate has been a witness to Jesus' actions and demeanor. And now, with the claim that Jesus has assumed to be God, coupled with His actions, this must be troubling to Pilate. He might be asking himself who this man is and so Pilate asks "Where are You from?" With this question Pilate is asking "Are You a God from heaven or where did you come from?"

To this question Jesus does not answer. Silence. He doesn't need to answer. One, He has already been acquitted. Two, He had already given the answer in His previous testimony - "My kingdom is not of this world..." Again, we see the complete control Jesus has over the entire trial.

## TableTalk

Read Philippians 2:5-11. Paul opens "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus..." When you think of the trial of Jesus and how many injustices were carried out and how many inaccuracies were Jesus' actions give us an example for our lives.

Have you been slandered? Have injustices been brought against you? Meditate on having this mind of Christ in these times and the times to come.

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<sup>2</sup>Expositions of Holy Scripture: John, vol. 3 Alexander MacLaren, pg. 248