

## 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 19:12-14

**"From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, 'If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.' When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, 'Behold your King!'"**

"Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar..." These words, spoken to Pilate, are sealing Jesus' crucifixion. Earlier Pilate had said to Jesus "I have power to crucify You, and power to release You..." He had said in full confidence and arrogance. But look what has happened to Pilate's power to release Jesus. It is gone. A fear of the Jews and a fear of Caesar has robbed him of it. His power is reduced to reluctant obedience to an unruly mob. From this we should note that the power of man is weak and putting our confidence in the earthly power of any man or woman is foolhardy.

The trial is just about over. Pilate brings Jesus out and sits down in the judgment seat. From this seat of judgment Pilate would render his verdict. It is in a place called "The Pavement" or "Gabbatha" which would be a raised stone platform. The Judgment Seat is the place of official verdict. Paul was brought before Gallio at the Judgment Seat (Acts 18:12).

"Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover..." The Preparation Day was the day that the Passover lamb would be slaughtered. John is indicating that Jesus would be crucified at the same time as the Passover lambs were being killed. Interestingly, this tells us that Jesus ate His Passover on the Day of Preparation, not on the Day of Passover. Since the Jewish day was from sunset to sunset, Jesus actually ate His Passover meal a day earlier.

Mark indicates that Jesus was crucified at the third hour (Mark 15:25), but John says that Pilate only sentenced Him to death at the 6th hour. In order to understand this we need to see how the Jews divided a day by hours. The Jews divided their days into four segments of 3 hours each and named each segment by the first hour of that segment. Therefore, the third hour is any time from 9 am to 12 noon. The interesting thing is that John says that it was "about the sixth hour" which means that it was still within that "third hour" period, but it was close to noon. In the end, there is no contradiction, for both are speaking of a time between 9 and noon.

Now we arrive at the sentencing of Jesus to crucifixion. The leaders had said Jesus "makes Himself a king." Pilate, by saying "Behold your King..." is again showing them the utter insanity of making such a charge. Jesus looked nothing like a king and it was sheer madness to crucify Jesus for this ridiculous charge.

But in these words there is something more. Just as Caiaphas had spoken for God earlier when he said that One should die for the nation, Pilate, a pagan Roman Prefect, is now speaking for God to the Jews. Pilate was declaring the truth of God to the people of God. Jesus was indeed their King, the King promised in the prophets, the great King of the Davidic covenant. In these words God is giving the Jewish people one last chance at this time to acknowledge their Messiah.

To all of Pilate's efforts, he only receives greater cries for death. Alexander MacLaren writes "The passion of hatred was too much in earnest to be turned or even affected... and the only answer was the renewed roar of the mob, which had murder in its tone."<sup>1</sup>

## TableTalk

Read Romans 14:10. Pilate had a seat of judgment before which he would judge those committing crimes against Caesar. But all of us, including Pilate, will one day be brought before Christ as His Judgment Seat. Are you ready?

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<sup>1</sup>Expositions of Holy Scripture: John, vol. 3, Alexander MacLaren, pg. 251