

The Inner Court

Texts: John 18:28-38; Luke 23:1-12; John 18:39-19:22

Last week we talked about Jesus standing illegally three times before the Jewish Sanhedrin, which I have likened to the outer court. As we move into the inner court, we see our Lord facing three illegal Gentile trials. He will stand twice before Pilate and once before Herod (the Adumean).

I. THE FALSE ACCUSATIONS

John 18:28-30, Mark 15:3-5; Luke 23:1, 2

The wicked Pharisees tell Pilate they would never have brought Jesus to him unless He was criminal. When the chief priests presented these false accusations again, our Lord does not honor those accusations with an answer (Mark 15:3-5; Isaiah 53:7). Then, according to Luke, they speak an outright lie: "And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King" (Luke 23:2).

Mark tells us what Christ truly had said: "And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at Him" (Mark 12:17).

II. THE SOVEREIGN LORD STAYS IN CONTROL

John 18:31, 32; John 12:12-33

Let us go back to the Triumphant entry in what has commonly been called Palm Sunday. Many scholars believe this was actually Monday, the day the Passover lamb was chosen. The Pharisees' concern is expressed by saying that the world is gone after him (John 12:19). The Gentiles are now longing to experience Jesus, as they request from Phillip, "Sir, we would see Jesus," (John 12:21b). Within the week of His death, Christ says in John 12:27, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour."

Earlier that week, Jesus told those that stood by that His death will not be the traditional stoning for blasphemy (Leviticus 24:16), but rather by being lifted up from the earth which describes the Roman crucifixion: John 12:32, 33: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."

III. THE CLASH OF THE KINGDOMS

John 18:33-38

When Pilate inquired if Jesus was the King of the Jews, Jesus answered with a question: was he really concerned or was he parroting information that others brought to him. Pilate further inquired what Christ had done. Christ had done nothing wrong. He was standing before Pilate because of who He was. And then our Lord declared that His kingdom is not of this world, for if it was, His servants would fight and they would win! The Truth of who Jesus is and why He

came is revealed in John 18:37, 38. Twenty years later, the kingdom of Christ was taking root and turning the world not upside down, but rather right-side up (Acts 17:6, 7).

IV. THE VISIT WITH THE COUNTERFEIT KING

Luke 23:4-12

This Idumean was not even close to being kin to the kings of Israel or Judah; he was the puppet king, permitted by the Roman government. He had desired to see Jesus perform one of His miracles. The Lord Jesus never performed miracles for anyone's entertainment. The nervous Herod had many questions for Jesus, but our Lord spoke not a word (Isaiah 53:7). The chief priests and scribes showed up showing their true colors. Luke 23:10: "And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him."

Wicked Herod, in mockery, clothed Jesus in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate. That day the two of them became friends. To use the proverbial term, water rises to its own level.

V. THE FINAL TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

John 18:39-John 19:22

Pilate thought he saw a way out by following the custom of releasing a prisoner at this special time of the year. He thought surely the Jews would vote for the freedom of this One who already was seen by Pilate to be an innocent man, but they cried out for Jesus to be crucified and for Barabbas to be released instead. It appears that somewhere in the proposition of crucifying Barabbas or Jesus, Pilate seemed to think if he tortures Jesus enough, they would have mercy (Luke 23:13-16). However, the chief priests had been working behind the scenes. Mark 15:11: "But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them."

A. The Manly Bravery of Jesus on Display after the Torture

John 19:1-4. "...And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man!" (John 19:5b).

B. Pilate Is Struck with Fear

John 19:6-8

After seeing Jesus standing before them bruised and bleeding, the chief priests and officers, showing no mercy, cry out for Pilate to finish Him off. When Pilate is informed by the priests that Jesus made Himself to be the Son of God, Pilate became, "...more afraid" (John 19:8b).

C. Pilate's Final Interrogation

John 19:9-13

Pilate inquires of Jesus where He comes from, then tells our Lord that he had power to release Jesus. The reply of our Lord was quick: "Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from

above: therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin" (John 19:11).

The Bible says in Proverbs 29:25: "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe." When Pilate heard the threatening tones of the chief priests declaring their allegiance only to Caesar, and that if he released Jesus, he would not be Caesars' friend, Pilate chose the fear of man over the fear of God (John 19:12, 13).

D. The Warning of Pilate's Wife

Pilate is given one more last warning from his wife: Matthew 27:19: "When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him."

VI. THE PRESENTATION OF THE KING

John 19:14-22

A. Pilate Declares Jesus King of The Jews

John 19:14: "And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!" John 19:19: "And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS."

B. We All Must Choose Our King

John 19:15: "But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar."

Who will be our king? This is the question that we all must answer. Matthew 27:22: "Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified."

-Pastor Pope-