



October 15, 2023

“What is Truth?”

SS 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

News:

★ **Wednesday Evenings at Alêtheia 6:30-8:00** ★

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JOHN 18:33-38a ~

Pilate began his interrogation by making an emphatic _____ that is formed as a question. It wasn’t a question – it was just rhetorically formed that way to add to the sense of _____.

Jesus answered with a question of His Own – a real question. Essentially, “is this _____ statement or have you simply _____ the High Priests?” Who was interrogating whom now?

Pilate’s retort denied _____ possibilities presented by Jesus.

Pilate then laid out the _____ to Jesus. “Your own nation and the chief priests handed You over to me; what have You done?”

Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” If Pilate had distanced himself from what was _____, here Jesus distanced Himself from what was _____.

The Kingdom of God exists wherever God’s Will is not just entirely unopposed, but enthusiastically obeyed. The Kingdom that Jesus spoke about is now the _____ because the _____ is Christ’s physical presence on earth and Christ always loves, honors, and obeys God.

The True Kingdom on earth that Jesus rules has never posed a physical _____ to the religious or political powers of the world. On the other hand, the true Kingdom poses the greatest possible threat to _____, when the _____ behaves like Jesus and loves.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

The _____ in verse 36...

To this Pilate basically said, "So, in a manner of speaking, you are a _____."

Jesus _____ that Pilate said those words. (When a translation adds a word that is not in the underlying text, they usually italicize it and it's normally _____).

Jesus was the King of Pilate's statement, but He was so much _____ than that, so Jesus couldn't fully _____ with it, nor fully _____ either.

His purpose was to explain Salvation and then, to _____ it. The result is that _____ who listens to Jesus – who hears what He said – who believes His testimony – will believe in Him as the _____.

To this Pilate derisively snorted, "Τί ἐστιν ἀλήθεια." "What is Truth?" The correct question is _____ is Truth!

JOHN 18:38b-40 ~

Pilate knew that the only reason that the Jews had handed Jesus over to him was their _____ fear of Jesus' popularity with the people.

Pilate really wanted nothing to do with Jesus' _____.

JOHN 19:1-5 ~

One can't help but think of _____ in Genesis 3:22–24, "Then the Lord God said, "Behold the man."

The name _____ is the Hebrew word, אָדָם (ä-däm), literally meaning "man."

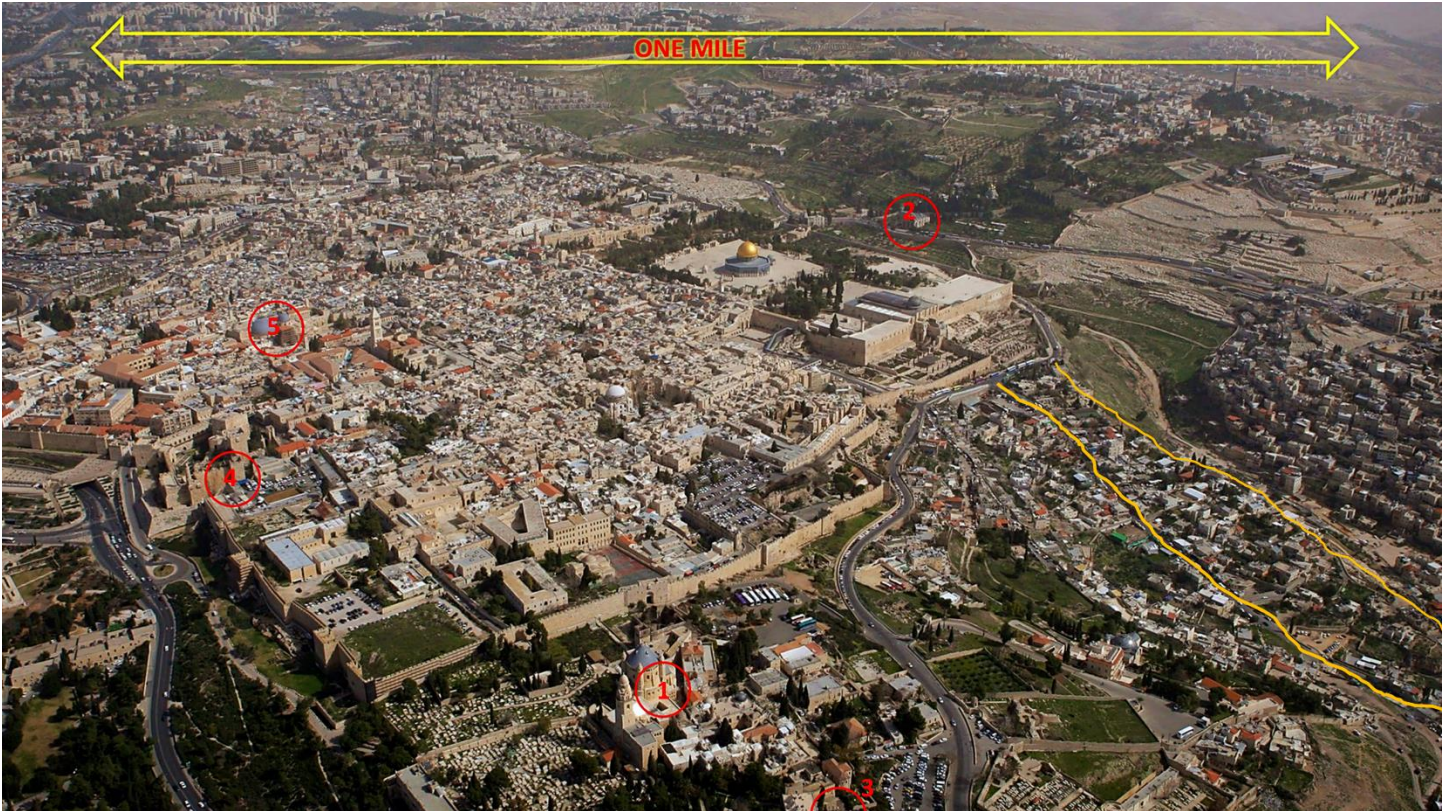
Death reigned because of the first man, the first _____. Life was restored by the Last Man, the Last _____... Jesus.

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____



Model of the Praetorium, Agora (market) right center, Temple top right with the Fortress Antonia attached ↑



Modern Jerusalem 1) Upper Room 2) Gethsemane 3) Annas & Caiaphas' House 4) Praetorium 5) Calvary ↑



Upper Room ↑



Gethsemane ↑



Annas & Caiapas's House Steps ↑



Praetorium ↑



Church of the Holy Sepulchre ↑



Coptic Chapel Altar (and a heathen) ↑



Ladder in 1895 and now. In place since at least 1728 ↑



Pavement where Jesus walked ↑

Last week we left off with the Jewish leaders handing Jesus over to the Roman governor Pontius Pilate at the Praetorium.



The Pilate Stone carved limestone mentioning Pontius Pilate, prefect of Judea from AD 26 to 36. It was discovered at the archaeological site of Caesarea Maritima in 1961.

[DIS AUGUSTI]S TIBERIEUM (For the August Tiberius)
 [...PONTI]US PILATUS (Pontius Pilate)
 [...PRAEF]ECTUS IUDA[EA]E (Governor of Judea)
 [...FECIT D]E[DICAVIT] (Has dedicated this...)

Pilate asked the High Priests why they delivered Jesus to him, and he never got a straight answer, so...

John 18:33–38a, 33Therefore Pilate entered the Praetorium again, and summoned Jesus and said to

Him, "You are the King of the Jews?" 34 Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own, or did others tell you about Me?" 35 Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed You over to me; what have You done?" 36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." 37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this purpose I have been born, and for this I have come into the world: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice." 38 Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?"



Pilate got nowhere with the Jewish leaders and so he went back into the Praetorium and questioned Jesus directly. He began his interrogation by making an emphatic statement that is formed as a question in Greek and so here in English. “You are the King of the Jews?” The word “You” is placed in the emphatic position stressing that Jesus was the subject. It would be like Pilate abruptly pointing at Jesus’ chest while speaking. It wasn’t a question – it was just rhetorically formed that way to add to the sense of unbelief. Essentially, “You, unimpressive common man from Galilee – You are the One that they fear is their King?”

Jesus took Pilate's words as the emphatic statement that it was intended to be and answered Pilate with a question of His Own – a real question. Essentially, “tell me governor, is this your statement or have you simply parroted the High Priests?” Jesus has instantly turned the tables once again and put His judge on defense. Who was interrogating whom now?

Jesus was implying with His question that the governor was either a pawn of the High Priests being manipulated by them for their purposes – nothing more than a puppet on their strings, or that Pilate had his own spiritual insight and had recognized the Truth that Jesus was indeed the King of the Jews.

Naturally, Pilate wasn't thrilled by Jesus questioning him and was annoyed at either of Jesus' implications. So, Pilate retorted indignantly, “I am not a Jew, am I?” He was, in that extremely terse statement that was formed as another rhetorical question, denying both possibilities. He was not a Jew and could not be used by the Jews to do their bidding, nor was he a Jew who had spiritual insight into Jewish religious mumbo jumbo. Pilate distanced himself from the Jews and Judaism.

In the opening salvo we can see the gist of the Jewish charge against Jesus. It was still nebulous and ill-defined at this point and there certainly wasn't any proof, but the general idea was that Jesus was a threat to the Roman occupation of the Jewish homeland. The logic went that if Jesus was the Messiah, He was also the King of the Jews sent by God to restore the Jewish nation. That meant destroying the Romans for a start. Ironically, that was the very thing the Jews desperately wanted Jesus to do, and it was the very thing that He consistently refused to do.

Luke 23:2, tells us that the Jewish assembly "began to bring charges against Jesus, saying, 'We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.'" The charges of criminal behavior were untrue. They were based on pure conjecture, misunderstandings, and outright lies. Jesus was innocent. We will see the fullness of the High Priest's charge in John 19:12, "Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, 'If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.'" Again, never mind the fact that the ultimate reason that Judas and so many others betrayed Jesus was because He refused to lead a

physical revolution – yet, this was the line of false reasoning that finally prevailed to get Jesus crucified.

Again, He was innocent and no charge from the Jews, no charge from the Romans, and no charge from Satan, was legitimate and still...

Back to the interrogation. After distancing himself from the Jewish leadership and from Jewish spiritual insight, Pilate laid out the problem to Jesus. “Your own nation and the chief priests handed You over to me; what have You done?”



Jesus then answered Pilate’s original statement. He said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” If Pilate had

distanced himself from what was Jewish, here Jesus distanced Himself from what was worldly.

Without a show of hands, how many of you think that Jesus was saying that His kingdom was purely spiritual, not physical? How many of you think that it was physical, but wouldn't arrive until the end of time? The first one, a Kingdom that is supernatural, internal, spiritual, moral, is a Kingdom that is spatial. The second one, a Kingdom that is tangible, physical, real in this reality, but is yet to come is a Kingdom that is temporal. Which do you think Jesus was describing to Pilate a spatial or a temporal Kingdom?

I hinted at it with the distancing remark. It's actually neither with a bit of both sprinkled in. The primary point that Jesus was trying to impress upon Pilate was that Jesus was a King and not just the King of the Jews, but the King of Kings, the One True King. As such His title and position had to do with and were inextricably tied to His Kingdom. To His Reign.

Remember that the Kingdom of God exists wherever God's Will is not just entirely unopposed, but enthusiastically obeyed. The Kingdom that Jesus spoke about is the congregation of humble grateful God loving, God honoring, God obeying creatures.

Today, it is the church, because the church is Christ's physical presence on earth and Christ always loves, honors, and obeys God.



The True Kingdom on earth that Jesus rules as the One and Only King has never posed a physical threat to the religious or political leaders, movements, or institutions of the world. It posed no physical threat to Rome then and it poses no physical threat to anyone now. It is a Kingdom that is so much higher and infinitely more important than all of that.

On the other hand, the true Kingdom poses the greatest possible existential threat of all to evil. Whether the evil of religion seen here as the Jewish

leaders, whether the evil of politics seen here as Pilate, whether the evil of the masses seen here as the mob that will soon shout “Crucify Him,” whether the evil of the demonic seen here as the betrayal by Judas, whether the evil of Christ followers who allow fear to rule them seen here as the denial of both Peter and John.



How is the Kingdom a threat to evil in all its forms? Never through religious intolerance, never through political wrangling, never through counter-protesting the protesters, never through pulling a sword and hacking off ears, but always by allowing the Agapê love of God pour from Him through you out onto those around you.

Jesus said that if His Kingdom was earthly His disciples would fight... But it isn't earthly. If American Christians in the 1950's, and ever since, would have worried less about being uptight legalists and political activists and instead would have actively allowed God to love others through them, I think America would be a very different place today.



Satan gets his demonic agenda easily implemented in the world simply through influencing people making them fearful and then telling them what they want to hear to temper their fears. People will join a mob and abandon relationships, commitments, and responsibility without remorse, all while justifying it as

necessary to combat the things they fear. Where did the fear come from in the first place? Influence born on demon's wings. A friend told me about a local school that sent out an email telling parents that the school was aware of Hamas' call to worldwide Islamic Jihad on last Friday the 13th. My friend told me that one mother was so distraught that she was going to keep her kids home on Friday. It is fear born out of thin air and given the right circumstances such fear can easily blossom into hatred, violence, and atrocities. The people in this valley had a better chance of being attacked by a Sasquatch on Friday than by some Muslim lunatic and yet, I know many were fearful. Fearful, not because of anything real, but because of influence.

I bring it up to say, imagine what the world would look like if the Holy Spirit was able to influence the church and the world beyond the church through Christians who actually cared more about the Kingdom than they do about their country, their work, their comfort, even more than their life. Imagine their reward in Heaven.

³⁶Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not OF this world. If My kingdom were OF this world,

My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not OF this realm."

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this realm." The NASB uses the preposition "of" three times in verse 36. The NET uses the preposition "from" three times and the ESV uses a combination. The Greek preposition implies movement and is most often thought of as "out of," or "away from," hence simplified to "of," or "from." I think the simplified translation is slightly misleading here. Jesus wasn't saying that His Kingdom and the physical world are two different things as the NLT mistakenly translates, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom."

Jesus was saying that His Kingdom did not originate in the world – it didn't derive from the physical – it did not

come out of, or away from, the material realm. He was implying that His Kingdom had an entirely different source than any other Kingdom. He was the King of Heaven and Heaven had now come down to earth for those who would believe.



To this Pilate made another statement couched as a question, this time with the stress on the type of Kingdom. “So You are a king?” It was Pilate saying “So, in a manner of speaking, you are a king.” The governor got it – sort of. Jesus was claiming to be a King, sure enough, but of a Kingdom that was otherworldly in scope and therefore one that posed no physical threat to Rome that Pilate could see.

Jesus took Pilate's statement and confirmed that Pilate said those words – that's all. Jesus said, "you say" and then simply repeated what Pilate said. This is a rare spot where the NASB translators have let us down. They have Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king." The word "correctly" is an interpretive addition and it's the wrong interpretation.

When a translation adds a word that is not in the underlying text, they usually italicize it as the NASB does here with the word "correctly." Most of the time these italicized words simply help the flow of English and are harmless. This is an exception – this is interpretation, not translation.

Jesus' initial response was simply to confirm that He heard Pilate's statement and in so doing Jesus didn't confirm, nor deny the content of that statement. Pilate got the gist of what Jesus was saying about His Kingdom not having an earthly source, but he did not fathom that the Source was the One and Only True and Almighty God, Creator of the supernatural Heavens and the natural universe.

Jesus was the King of Pilate's statement, but He was so much more than that, so Jesus couldn't fully agree with it, nor fully disagree either, so He simply confirmed

that Pilate said it. Then Jesus went on to give Pilate a better way to understand His Kingship. Jesus described it in terms of His mission, His mission purpose, and His mission result, both of which were tied up in His role as the Truth.



Jesus said the purpose of His physical birth and His entrance onto this plain of existence was to reveal or testify to, or bear witness of Himself – ultimately.

Jesus exists as the Truth and He was manifested on earth as a human being to point to Himself – again, ultimately speaking. That was His purpose in coming to share with humankind a revelation of God. The heart of

the Father, the sacrificial love and obedience of the Son. And the coming personal indwelling of the Spirit.

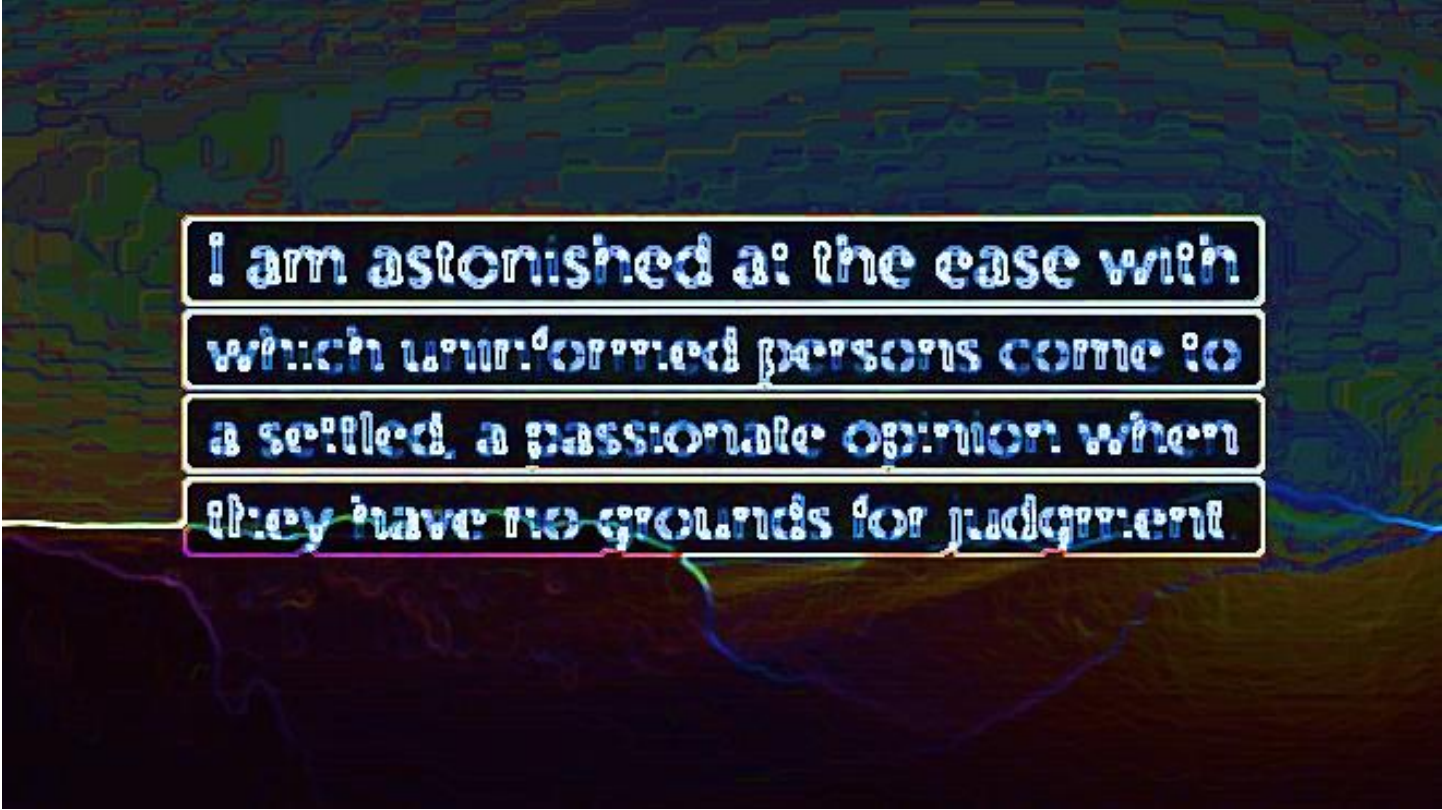
His purpose was to explain Salvation and then, to provide it. That's the purpose and the result is that everyone who listens to Jesus – who hears what He said – who believes His testimony – will believe in Him as the Savior. That's where Christianity is so unique, where it shifts from a belief in information to a belief in Whom the information points to.



To this the Roman governor Pontius Pilate derisively snorted, “Τί ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια” (tē ěs-tĕn ä-lā-thā-ä). “What is Truth?” It’s one of my favorite verses in the Bible because it gets to the heart of the matter. It wasn’t a

statement of faith in something else, it was a statement of cynical unbelief in everything. It is the skeptic's cry. It stems from thinking so highly of yourself that you refuse to believe what is unbelievable to you.

It is the statement of arrogant ignorance that thinks itself too wise to have faith in anything, but in reality, it is just another form of fear-driven closed-mindedness. I love it because in three words Pilate summed up the fundamental problem preventing people from salvific belief in Jesus. What is Truth? No, WHO is Truth! That's the correct question and God made man just gave Pilate and the world the only correct answer.

A quote by C.S. Lewis is displayed in four stacked rectangular boxes with a glowing blue border. The background is dark with faint, colorful, abstract patterns. The text in the boxes reads: "I am astonished at the ease with which unformed persons come to a settled, a passionate opinion when they have no grounds for judgment."

I am astonished at the ease with
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John 18:38b–40, And after saying this, he (Pilate) came out again to the Jews and said to them, “I find no grounds at all for charges in His case. 39However, you have a custom that I release one prisoner for you at the Passover; therefore do you wish that I release for you the King of the Jews?” 40So they shouted again, saying, “Not this Man, but Barabbas.” Now Barabbas was a rebel.

As made crystal clear in Matthew’s account (Matthew 27:18), Pilate knew that the only reason that the Jews had handed Jesus over to him was their envious fear of Jesus’ popularity with the people. The Jewish leaders were simply afraid that Jesus’ increasing stature and influence would make them less relevant – perhaps even make them irrelevant.

Pilate really wanted nothing to do with Jesus’ death, but not because he had any concern for a Jewish man’s life. As a Roman of Equestrian Rank, Pilate started his career as the equivalent of a medieval knight. Pilate was, without doubt, a combat veteran and was no stranger to extreme violence and brutality, especially when it came to non-Romans who interfered with his Friday morning routine.

Pilate was reluctant to kill Jesus because he probably had some sense of justice as the highest judge in the land. Pilate was also a bit hesitant after being warned by his wife, “See that you have nothing to do with that righteous Man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him” (as recorded in Matthew 27:19). It’s also likely that Pilate was less than enthusiastic about the project after meeting Jesus and talking with Him. But the biggest reason of all was because Pilate absolutely did not want to be manipulated by the Jewish leaders. Playing the role of pawn or lap dog for the Jews to get their way was no doubt frustrating.

Pilate had used the custom of releasing a prisoner during Passover as a means to rid himself of the whole affair. We know that by this time in the proceedings a large crowd of Jews had gathered outside of the Praetorium. Pilate’s plan was to present to them only one of two options. He would release Barabbas, the vilest prisoner that he had in custody, or Jesus the completely innocent Teacher. I’m sure that Pilate thought that it was a no brainer.



What he failed to realize was that the crowd that had assembled was already cowed by the intimidation of the Jewish leaders. We'll see in the next chapter that the crowd is referred to as those serving the interests of the Jewish leaders. What Pilate further failed to grasp was that he sealed his own fate and the fate of Jesus by allowing his contempt for the Jews to show in his taunting of them by saying "do you wish that I release for you the King of the Jews?"

Now the highest authority in the land had publicly pronounced Jesus as the King of the Jews. The High Priest's original charge against Jesus had come right

back on them and there was no way that they could live with Jesus living after that.

The leaders incited the crowd to shout for the release of Barabbas instead of Jesus and I imagine that Pilate was stunned, and then angered. He had been outmaneuvered again.



While we're here let me give you a little note about Barabbas. He was an insurrectionist, terrorist, and assassin. He was almost certainly an extremist Zealot and Sicarii. The average Jew back then felt about the Sicarii, like the average Palestinian feels about Hamas fighters today. They do fight their enemy, but at what cost to their own people. While the Jews in the crowd

standing outside the Praetorium that day probably supported what Barabbas did they certainly wouldn't want him released to do it again because innocent civilians like them always get hurt in such actions.

What's even more important is that the Jewish leaders themselves would never want a man like Barabbas released. The Sicarii mainly assassinated Jewish leaders whom they thought were in league with Rome. Barabbas was likely facing crucifixion for killing a Jewish official. Pilate wouldn't dream of releasing a man who had harmed a Roman. He had every reason to believe his plan would work, but he underestimated the fear-driven hatred of the Jews.

The name Barabbas literally means the Son of Abba. The son of a father was being exchanged for The Son of The Father. The Son of The Father had to be sacrificed as the final Lamb at precisely the correct moment in history and nothing would stop that Sovereign decision to provide Salvation to humankind. That's what Jesus already fully knew. Pilate was starting to sense it as well.



John 19:1–5, 1 So Pilate then took Jesus and had Him flogged. 2 And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and placed it on His head, and put a purple cloak on Him; 3 and they repeatedly came up to Him and said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and slapped Him in the face again and again. 4 And then Pilate came out again and said to them, “See, I am bringing Him out to you so that you will know that I find no grounds at all for charges in His case.” 5 Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, “Behold, the Man!”

The Greek text actually starts chapter 19 by saying “So then Pilate took Jesus and flogged Him.” I only bring it

up to demonstrate the principle of taking the Bible seriously and accurately as opposed to purely literal. No one ever had any notion at all that Pilate personally flogged Jesus. This is a way of saying that Pilate had Jesus flogged by his professional torturers.

Flogging, in this case, was an incredibly brutal and potentially deadly practice to ensure that order was maintained. Roman punishment was not merely physical, it was psychological as well. One of the primary features of the psychological aspect was to completely denigrate, degrade, embarrass, shame, and humiliate the person in public. Making the spectacle as public as possible added to the person's shame but was also designed to shock and disgust the public so much that they would not repeat the person's mistake.

The show started with stripping the person completely naked and then tying them to a post, or wall, or some other stationary object. Usually, two experts would alternate striking the person with their flagellum. Yes, we get our word flagellate from this Latin word. A flagellum was a short whip with multiple tails each with metal pieces, bone fragments, or other sharp materials tied into the tails.

The goal was to whip a fresh area of bare skin with enough force to imbed the bits of metal and bone and then rip the tails back to create severe lacerations. Unlike the Jews and others, the Romans didn't set a maximum number of blows. They would whip and rip until they felt the job was done, typically when they knew that the person could take no more. Through experience they could tell when a person was near death and only then stopped. It was such a brutal torture that Roman law forbade its use on Roman citizens.



Then the soldiers mocked Jesus by clothing Him in a purple robe and smashing a victorious king's crown down upon His head. A crown made of thorns rather

than of gold-covered olive leaves. They genuflected before Him saying essentially what they would say to Caesar himself, but instead of kissing his ring they slapped his face.

Pilate had all of this done to Jesus as a last-ditch effort to get Jesus released out of his responsibility. He hoped that if the leaders saw Jesus so abjectly degraded and graphically brutalized, they would be satisfied. Pilate proclaimed Jesus completely innocent of the charges for the second time and then He dramatically presented the horribly beaten and humiliated Jesus to them and said, “Behold the man.”

One can't help but think of Adam in the Garden of Eden right after the Fall, and the curse. God looking at Adam now clothed in dead animal skins. Genesis 3:22–24a, “Then the Lord God said, “Behold the man.” “22Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out with his hand, and take fruit also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”—23therefore the Lord God sent him out of the Garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. 24aSo He drove the man out.”



The name Adam is the Hebrew word, אָדָם (ä-däm), literally meaning “man.” “Behold the man has become like one of Us.” Death reigned because of the first man, the first Adam. Here now, “Behold the man.” Life was restored by the Last Man, the Last Adam...



October 15, 2023

“What is Truth?”

SS 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

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JOHN 18:33-38a ~

Pilate began his interrogation by making an emphatic STATEMENT that is formed as a question. It wasn’t a question – it was just rhetorically formed that way to add to the sense of UNBELIEF.

Jesus answered with a question of His Own – a real question. Essentially, “is this YOUR statement or have you simply PARROTED the High Priests?” Who was interrogating whom now?

Pilate’s retort denied BOTH possibilities presented by Jesus.

Pilate then laid out the PROBLEM to Jesus. “Your own nation and the chief priests handed You over to me; what have You done?”

Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” If Pilate had distanced himself from what was JEWISH, here Jesus distanced Himself from what was WORLDLY.

The Kingdom of God exists wherever God’s Will is not just entirely unopposed, but enthusiastically obeyed. The Kingdom that Jesus spoke about is now the CHURCH because the CHURCH is Christ’s physical presence on earth and Christ always loves, honors, and obeys God.

The True Kingdom on earth that Jesus rules has never posed a physical THREAT to the religious or political powers of the world. On the other hand, the true Kingdom poses the greatest possible threat to EVIL, when the CHURCH behaves like Jesus and loves.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

The PREPOSITIONS in verse 36...

To this Pilate basically said, "So, in a manner of speaking, you are a KING."

Jesus CONFIRMED that Pilate said those words. (When a translation adds a word that is not in the underlying text, they usually italicize it and it's normally HARMLESS).

Jesus was the King of Pilate's statement, but He was so much MORE than that, so Jesus couldn't fully AGREE with it, nor fully DISAGREE either.

His purpose was to explain Salvation and then, to PROVIDE it. The result is that EVERYONE who listens to Jesus – who hears what He said – who believes His testimony – will believe in Him as the SAVIOR.

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Pilate knew that the only reason that the Jews had handed Jesus over to him was their ENVIOUS fear of Jesus' popularity with the people.

Pilate really wanted nothing to do with Jesus' DEATH.

JOHN 19:1-5 ~

One can't help but think of ADAM in Genesis 3:22–24, "Then the Lord God said, "Behold the man."

The name ADAM is the Hebrew word, אָדָם (ä-däm), literally meaning "man."

Death reigned because of the first man, the first ADAM. Life was restored by the Last Man, the Last ADAM... Jesus.

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____