



JOHN 18:28-19:16 | JESUS BEFORE PILATE

- Verse 28 –
  - This Gospel does not cover the time before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, which is covered in the other Gospels (see Matthew 26:58-27:2).
  - The **hall of judgment** is πραιτώριον [praetorium], which is sometimes translated into the Latin *Praetorium* (see Mark 15:16).
    - The *praetor* is the leader or commander, and the *praetorium* is the place of this leader. In this case, the leader was Pilate.
  - We are told that **it was early**, but not told the exact time.
    - Bullinger places this between 11 P.M. and midnight (see Appendix 165, *The Companion Bible*).
    - However, I do not see that the word πρωῖ [proi] allows for this to take place in darkness, at least in Biblical usage.
  - Note that the *Last Supper* had ended, but the Jewish leaders would not go to the judgment hall **that they might eat the passover**.
    - Thus the “common Christian lore” that the Last Supper was the Passover meal must be rejected.
    - For the “standard evangelical answer,” see here: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Last-Supper.html>
- Verses 29-31 –
  - The Jewish leadership, it appears, still did not have a crime to meet the sentence.
    - They “dodged the question,” hoping (it appears) that Pilate would simply feel gracious toward them (as he would later with Barabbas) and accept their word.
    - Their answer, **If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up** is a non-answer.
  - Pilate attempted to send him back to the Jews to **judge him according to your law**.
    - It is hard to tell whether Pilate is unaware of their ultimate goal or simply attempting to deflect the issue back to them.
    - The Jewish leadership pushes their agenda, however, saying **It is not lawful for us to put any man to death**.
  - We should note two things that shed light on the matter, from the book of Acts.
    - The Romans had what is now standard “rights of the accused,” that they be able to face their accusers. See Acts 25:16. However, the Jewish leadership is *not* going to be present at this trial. Both the Jews and the Romans have set aside their jurisprudence for the sake of their agenda.
    - The Romans also needed a crime (and for this reason the Roman leadership hesitated to send Paul to Rome) -see again Acts 25:16.

- Concerning the fact that **it is not lawful** for the Jews to **put any man to death**, we must question the case of Stephen (Acts 7:59), and even the previous times in this fourth gospel in which they attempted to kill Jesus (Jn. 8:59, 10:31). It seems that they were more concerned with what was *politically expedient and the moment* than with obeying the letter of the law.
- Verse 32 –
  - The **saying** in reference is likely John 12:32, which is noted in John 12:33 with the same words used here, as **signifying what death he should die**.
- Verses 33-35 –
  - It is highly unlikely that Pilate’s question, **Art thou the King of the Jews?**, is anything but an accusation coming from the Jews themselves.
  - Jesus answers in this light, is what is either a disrespectful answer or a carefully worded legal answer: **Sayest thou this thing of thyself?**
    - If it is Pilate’s accusation, then Jesus is facing His accuser. If it is of the Jews, then this is an illegal trial.
    - Pilate’s answer (v. 35) and responding question, **what hast thou done?** shows us that, without the accusers, this would be a sham trial.
- Verse 36 –
  - The coming Kingdom of Christ is **not of this world**. The word **of** is ἐκ [ek], “out of.” It speaks of the source, not the location. If the Lord’s kingdom was *sourced* in this world, then it would take worldly measures to bring it into existence.
  - This is a long-standing Jewish doctrine: *the Messiah Himself sets up the his own Kingdom without man’s assistance*.
  - Many in “standard evangelicalism” have taken this verse to mean that there is no physical kingdom. They are at a loss to tell when this spiritual kingdom began, though the words clearly show that the truth of Jesus words was **now**.
- Verse 37 –
  - Pilate is somewhat mystified at the answer and asks bluntly **Art thou a king then?** An equally valid translation would be, *Then thou art a king?*
  - Jesus does not answer the question (neither affirming nor denying). Rather, He says, “I was born to **bear witness unto the truth.**” Of course, *bearing witness to truth* is not a punishable charge.
- Verse 38 –
  - Pilate’s answer shows that Jesus did *not* answer the question of verse 37 in the affirmative, for otherwise he would have not said, **I find in him no fault at all**. Pilate was ready to release Jesus on lack of a charge.