

ROAD TO EASTER
SEARCHING FOR TRUTH

Monday, March 25

Reading: John 18:28-40

John 18:37 "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to Me." **38** "What is truth?" retorted Pilate.

The other gospels record the other two Jewish trials. The second trial is held before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin (Jewish supreme court) where false witnesses are presented and the sentence of death is proclaimed. The third trial occurred as soon as it was daylight since no trial could be legally held at night. This final trial before the Sanhedrin made the nighttime verdict "legal." Since the Romans did not allow the Jews to execute anyone, Jesus is now brought before the Roman governor for sentencing. While the religious leaders are not concerned about their illegal actions in trying Jesus, they are meticulous in not entering a Gentile residence for fear of defiling themselves. So Pilate comes out to them in the courtyard.

By the time of Jesus' trial, Pilate was a man under investigation. He had been governor since A.D. 26 and his consistent provoking of the Jews and his extreme brutality had been reported several times by the Jewish leaders to the Emperor. Pilate was a man who could not afford another bad report. In just a few short years (A.D. 36) he would be removed and sent to Rome to answer for his actions.

John records more detail of the interaction between Jesus and Pilate than the other gospels. In his record, we see a man who is searching for a way out of his predicament. After questioning Jesus, Pilate knows He has done nothing worthy of death, but the mob is screaming for Jesus' crucifixion. He attempts to substitute Barabbas (an infamous criminal) for Jesus but is shocked when the crowd asks for the murderer to be released. Pilate is caught in the eye of a storm!

LESSON ONE: "Are You the King of the Jews?" Of all Jesus' judges, Pilates seems to be the most fair. He is seeking for answers about this strange Man standing before Him. The Jews accused Jesus of claiming to be the King of the Jews (a total fabrication) since the charge of blasphemy would not hold up in a Roman court. Jesus confirms that He is a King but not of a worldly kingdom. One day Jesus will reign as King but He was born as a Man to proclaim the truth of God's love by dying for our sins. Are you a follower of the King who died for you? What are you doing to serve Him and advance His kingdom?

LESSON TWO: "What is Truth?" This was more likely a sarcastic response to Jesus' statement about those on the side of truth listening to Him than an actual quest for truth. Pilate does not believe in Jesus' truth and does not wait around to hear Jesus' answer. If he had really been paying attention, He would see that Truth was standing right before Him inviting him to hear and obey God's voice. Many people today follow Pilate's example. They reject the truth because it will force them to change their lives. How has salvation changed the way you live and think? How can you better share the truth of Christ with others?