

The Revelation of the Truth

John 18: 28-38

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

John 18: 28 Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. **29** So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?" **30** "If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you." **31** Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." "But we have no right to execute anyone," the Jews objected. **32** This happened so that the words Jesus had spoken indicating the kind of death he was going to die would be fulfilled.

Luke 23:2 And they began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king."



John 18: 33 Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" **34** "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?" **35** "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?" **36** Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place." **37** "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." **38** "What is truth?" Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him."

There's one profession that has really come into the limelight within the past few years - **the profession of being a judge**. It all started gaining popularity with a TV show called the "**People's Court**." There's another one out now called something like "**Texas Justice**," and another one called "**Judge Joe Brown**" or something like that. I used to really enjoy sitting down and watching **Judge Judy** over the lunch hour. There is also a network called "**Court TV**" that televises cases for the nation to see.

What interested me was to examine specific cases and try to determine the truth - who is guilty and who is not. Sometime ago I watched a show on 20/20 about a lady who was accused of conspiring to murder her husband. It was tough to determine whether she did it or not. After watching these professionals at work, I realize now the pressure that a judge and jury would have to try and make the right decision. **It seems to be especially difficult given the fact that**

usually both sides will have completely opposite stories - somebody has to be lying. So you have to try and wade your way through what is truth and what is lie to ascertain what the truth really is.

That's exactly what the role of Pilate was when Jesus was brought before him to be executed. He had to get both sides of the story - that of the Jews and that of Jesus. As we see this story of our salvation unfold, and hear both sides of the story, we will also see the Revelation of the Truth

The Revelation of the Truth

I. The false accusations

First, let's look at what the prosecuting attorneys - the Jews- had to say. These men were used to their followers taking them at their word. And so when Pilate asked them, "What charges are you bringing against this man?" it seems almost as if they were taken back a step. And so they replied, **"If he were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you."** **What does this reveal about the Jews?** They were full of self righteous pride - as if they were saying, "How dare you even question us! We would NEVER hand someone over to be put to death who didn't deserve it!" **They were trying to condemn Jesus without any proof.**

First accusation:

When Pilate didn't accept this explanation, they finally had to come forward with a few charges. **"We have found this man subverting our nation. . . and claims to be Christ, a king."** True or false? **Both, right?** If you remember according to the Bible, it wasn't as if Jesus was going around and telling everyone He was the Christ. The Jews were looking for a political Messiah, and Jesus didn't want to give the impression that He had come to set up an EARTHLY kingdom.

John 6:1-15 mentions that after the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, (feeding 5,000) they began to say, **V. 14-15 "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world."** **Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.**

In spite of Jesus' reluctance to become an earthly king, He did still claim to be a king, and He still was somewhat "guilty" of **"subverting"** the Jews. The verb literally means **"to twist"** or **"to confuse."**

He had definitely done that - but only in a spiritual sense. Jesus had challenged the whole religious system of the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law. He had openly ridiculed and embarrassed their legalistic way of life, making the people question their authority and getting them to think on their own.

So this first accusation was a half truth of sorts. They said He had subverted their nation and claimed to be a King - which was true - but not in the political sense that they were insinuating.

Second accusation:

The second accusation was just a flat out lie. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar. Jesus very clearly told the Pharisees and Herodians in [Mark 12:13-17, V.17](#) **“Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”** And they were amazed at him.

They knew full well that Jesus actually promoted paying taxes to Caesar.

Why did they use these accusations? They had to come up with something that would be worthy of death. So they appealed to Pilate’s patriotism - claiming that it was Pilate’s duty to eliminate anyone who claimed to be a king other than Caesar. **So they insinuated that Jesus was trying to set Himself up in place of Caesar.**

As we have looked at the case of the prosecuting attorneys, it has revealed to us not the truth about the Christ - but the truth about the Jews. They were nothing but self righteous liars who were only trying to get rid of Jesus because of jealousy. They sounded like they knew the truth. But instead of knowing the truth, they were completely misled as to what the truth was all about.

Like Pilate, we also are judges and juries of the truth. God says that, **the spiritual man makes judgments about all things. God calls on us to examine the evidence.** And within the religious realm, there are many leaders like the Jews who will say half truths and make innuendos about Jesus that just aren’t true.

With a confident swagger religious gurus will try to convince you that THEY are right. When the Mormon religion says that Jesus is “god,” when they really mean he is “a god of many gods,” **they are telling a lie.**

When the religion of Islam says that Jesus was a prophet but fail to confess him as Savior, **this is only half a truth - and therefore it is a lie.**

Professors at universities - professors of “religion” will claim that Jesus was actually the son of Joseph or some traveling salesman. **Those are flat out lies.** They want your audience. **They want you to believe them. And they confidently assert their lies based on their “PhD’s” or “degrees.”** When they make these false claims about Jesus, they are in turn taking the Christ of the Bible and crucifying him to their logic. You need to be able to tell the truth from lies - to be a judge.

II. The truth

Since Jesus wasn’t present during these accusations, Pilate had to summon Jesus and ask him about them. Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked Him, [John 18:33](#) **“Are you the king of the Jews?”** And how did Jesus respond? [John 18:34](#) **“Is that your own idea,”** Jesus asked, **“or did others talk to you about me?”** You almost have to snicker a bit at Jesus’ response. With an optimistic response, Jesus seems to be asking Pilate, **“are you really interested or are you just doing this because others told you this?”**

Jesus showed a concern for the soul of the man who was allowing Him to be falsely accused and condemned. But Pilate would have none of it. **V. 35** “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. **“It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”** Pilate thought this was simply a Jewish matter and really had nothing to do with him. He wasn’t asking because HE was interested in who Jesus was.

But Jesus didn’t give up on Pilate. He revealed to him the real truth of the matter. Jesus said, **v. 36** “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.” **V. 37** “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

Do you see how Jesus was trying to expand Pilate’s mind beyond his tunnel vision that this was just a “Jewish” matter or whether Jesus was claiming to be a king of the Jews. **Jesus wanted Pilate to see that his kingdom went far beyond that of the Jews.** In an indirect manner Jesus was in fact telling Pilate, **“I came from another world - heaven. I came to this earth to share with the WORLD the truth. I have an absolute truth - a spiritual truth that I can share with you!”**

We know what Jesus was talking about. That He is the Savior - the spiritual Christ. For the truth of the Gospel says in **1 John 2:2**, **He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. Jesus came to die for all people, and he wants ALL people to be saved through the truth of salvation in Christ.**

III. The response

And how did Pilate respond to this revelation of the truth? “What is truth?” As a pessimistic Gentile he looked at truth as a relative matter - as nothing absolute. So he threw up his hands and decided that nothing must be absolutely true. How was he to know?

“What is truth?” Is there such a thing as a Revelation of the Truth? It’s very difficult for our college students, when they take a course on world religions, to really be convicted of a truth. **They are taught that religion develops through culture.** A common theme even among religions is that all paths lead to the same place. **The Universalist religion states that we all go to heaven through whatever belief we have.**

Whether I worship Allah, Jehovah, or God - it’s all the same God. With so many denominations, many tend to think that truth is relevant only to each individual person and there is no absolute truth. **And that’s what the devil wants us to think.** If he can’t get us to fall for an out an out lie, he will get us to fall for the idea that there really is not truth. For if there is no absolute truth, then my ground is not solid. Instead of saying, “I BELIEVE this,” we will only be able to say, “I think we can agree on this.”

But what does God’s Word say? What did Jesus say? **“I came to this world to testify to the**

truth.” And what is the truth? Jesus said, **“I am the way, the TRUTH, and the life. NO ONE comes to the Father except through ME.”** Jesus made a claim on absolute truth, and He proclaimed an absolute truth.

And we do the same - based on God's Word. When God's Word says that homosexuality and premarital sex is a sin, we preach it. When God's Word says that faith comes by hearing the message, we encourage Bible class and worship attendance, because we believe this is absolutely true.

When the Gospel states that salvation is by faith ALONE in Christ - that's what we stick to. We don't say that the Bible might be true or going to heaven through Christ is ONE way. **It's the only way.** That is what we say is THE truth.

Let me ask you some direct questions: Do you shy away from this? Do you take the attitude of Pilate that rather says, “What is truth? Who knows what is really true and what isn't?” Or do you shy away from telling someone, “This is what God's Word says. Period!” How often don't we shy away from “arguments,” and rather give people the impression that they can believe what they want to believe, even if it isn't Scriptural. **In these unassuming ways, we commit the same sin as Pilate, we in fact say, “what is truth?”**, by not stating the truth as God has revealed it. And our faith ends up much weaker or even shipwrecked as a result.

Jesus, on the other hand, revealed the truth. He was the King of another world, who had come to bring people into His kingdom by the revelation of the truth. And even though Jesus did not defend Himself like so many other defendants did before Pilate, Pilate knew the truth. Even though the disciples did not stick by His side, did not shout from the crowd, “RELEASE HIM,” the truth was plain. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, **“I find no basis for a charge against him.”** Inside, Pilate knew what the truth was, even though he acted like he didn't. And this wasn't only Pilate's opinion. Herod found nothing wrong with Jesus. Even Pilate's wife dream told her that “Jesus was innocent.” **Even without a defense attorney, the truth was plain. Jesus was not guilty of an insurrection.** He didn't want to set up an earthly kingdom. He was a spiritual king - the spiritual king of the Jews and the world.

Isn't it interesting, then, to see how God works - and how powerful HIS testimony really is? While Satan's henchmen were yelling out, “guilty, guilty, guilty,” Jesus remained silent. **The devil tried to convict and convince through pressure and power.** But Jesus used His gentle Word. And through His gentle answer to Pilate's question - the truth came out. He was a King alright, a spiritual King. Even Pilate the heathen was convinced of His innocence. **It goes to show that God's kingdom does not come through force, but only through the gentle power of the Word.**

Jesus once told the Jews, **“the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32)** And where did the revelation of the truth lead Jesus? **Did it set him free? He still ended up being crucified.** So some might say, “it doesn't pay to tell the truth. When Jesus told the truth it led Him to the cross. It failed.” But the exact opposite is true. Since Jesus revealed the truth - it set us free. Because Jesus told the truth, when we have denied the truth, He fulfilled the Second Commandment in our place - to use God's name to tell the truth - not to lie.

And because Jesus told the truth, it led Him to the cross, where He died on the cross. Because Jesus was crucified, it set us free from our condemnation for not proclaiming the truth. It filled us with the truth of forgiveness - loosing our tongues to speak the truth of forgiveness in Christ. **“This is the truth, Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”** ([Acts 4:12](#).) It has been revealed to us by Christ. The Holy Spirit has given us the proper judgment to believe that Jesus is the only way to heaven. And this is the truth we will reveal to the world. Amen.