

Bible Study 5 – The Passion

1. Background.

The longest extended conversation in the Gospel of John occurs at the beginning of the Passion – the last night Jesus spends with his disciples, the conversation before they head out and Jesus is arrested (John Chapters 13-17). Clearly, we can't study all of these chapters and how these compare to the other Gospels, so we will concentrate on Jesus and Pilate in chapters 18 and 19 (18:25-19:16). Compared with the other Gospels this also falls into the category of an extended conversation.

In the other Gospels Jesus and Pilate have very little interaction. In Matthew while the account of Jesus before Pilate is from 27:11-26, the only exchange between Jesus and Pilate occurs in verses 11-14. The accounts in Mark (15:1-15) and Luke (22:66-27:25) follow a similar pattern (although Luke has Jesus sent to Herod after he had been before Pilate). Read Mark 15:1-15 as a representative of the other Gospels.

In this study we will focus on how John provides us with more detail about what was said between Jesus and Pilate. Read John 18:25-19:16.

Can you identify some themes in this passage that we have been talking about in previous studies? How does John's account compare with Mark's? What things does John emphasise that Mark does not and vice versa? Do you have any questions about this passage and how it differs from the accounts in the other Gospels?

How many changes in scene are there in the interactions between Jesus and Pilate? Can you read anything into this? What does this say about Jesus as a prisoner? Who is controlling the situation?

2. Focus on verses 18:28-40

What insights does this passage give us into how the relationship between the Jews and Romans? Note: Pilate did not live in Jerusalem but he would always be present in Jerusalem for the Passover.

Does verse 36 fit with this relationship?

How does verse 36 impact on the rest of the reading?

Read John 14:6 – does this have any relevance to this passage? If so how, if not why not? How much interest does Pilate have in truth?

What insights into Pilate do we get in verses 38-40? If you were in Pilate's shoes how might you have acted?

3. Focus on verses 19:1-26

What do you think is the rationale behind verses 1-5? What was Pilate hoping to achieve by this?

Do you find the information revealed in verse 7 interesting – why or why not?

Verse 11 – What is Jesus really saying in this verse? How do you think Pilate understood what Jesus was saying?

Consider some of the answers that you have already given about Pilate and his actions – are these contradicted in any way by verse 12?

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