

71. Jesus Explained His Kingdom to Pilate

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn that Jesus fulfilled every prophecy that had been spoken about Him including both the prophecies of the prophets and those that Jesus, Himself, had made. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus explained to Pilate the nature of His kingdom.

We saw in our last topic that the Jews would not enter the Praetorium due to the fact that they did not want to become unclean. They wanted to murder Jesus but they also wanted to remain ceremonially clean so that they could eat the Passover. We saw in the last topic that the Praetorium was the fortress or military headquarters of the Romans in the city of Jerusalem and was located next to the courtyard of the temple. As a result, Pilate had gone out to the Jews to ask them what accusations they had against Jesus. Now we see that Pilate came back into the Praetorium to question Jesus. John 18:33-35 says, “Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?’ Pilate answered, ‘Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?’” Here, we see that Pilate wanted to find out why the Jews had brought Jesus to him.

We see that Pilate asked Jesus if He was the King of the Jews. Instead of answering the question of Pilate, Jesus asked Pilate a question. Jesus asked, “Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?” Jesus knew what Pilate would answer. However, Jesus wanted to cause Pilate to think. This was often the reason why Jesus asked people questions. This question to Pilate forced Pilate to think about the fact that he was actually stating the opinion of the religious leaders and not anything that he had learned from any evidence that the Jews had presented. We will see later that Pilate was forced to come to the conclusion that Jesus was totally innocent.

Pilate responded by saying, “Am I a Jew?” Pilate said that it was the nation of Israel and the chief priests in particular that had delivered Jesus to him. Then, Pilate asked a simple question for his own information. Pilate said, “What have You done?” Jesus then answered Pilate in John 18:36-38, “Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.’ Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are You a king then?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’ Pilate said to Him, ‘What is truth?’ And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, ‘I find no fault in Him at all.’” Jesus had done nothing wrong. As a result, Jesus chose to explain to Pilate the nature of His kingdom.

Jesus explained that His kingdom was not a kingdom like the kingdoms of the world. The kingdoms of the world are based on political power. In fact, the first kingdom was based on rebellion against God. God told Noah in Genesis 9:1 after he came off the ark, “So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.’” In direct

rebellion to this command, the people said in Genesis 11:4, “And they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.’” Human government developed as a direct rebellion to this command of God to, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.” As a result, human governments became part of the evil world system.

Jesus explained that if His kingdom was a part of the evil world system His servants would fight so that He would not be delivered to the Jews. However, Jesus went on to explain that His kingdom was not a part of the evil world system because of the fact that His kingdom was not from the earth. Suddenly, Pilate was forced to realize Jesus was no threat to the Roman government because His kingdom was not a part of the world system. This forced Pilate to ask a new question so he asked Jesus, “Are You a king then?” The answer that Jesus gave to this question would convince Pilate that Jesus was not a threat to the Roman government. It would also cause Pilate to see that he had to examine his own life in order to determine whether he would believe the truth.

Jesus told Pilate that he was right and that Jesus was a king. However, Jesus had just said that His kingdom was not of this world. Then, Jesus began to explain the nature of His kingdom. Matthew 27:11-14 says, “Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus said to him, ‘*It is as you say.*’ And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, ‘Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?’ But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.” From the book of Matthew, we see that Jesus just said that He was the King of the Jews and then He became silent. Jesus did not even try to answer the false accusations that the chief priests and elders were bringing against Him. Pilate was amazed at the silence of Jesus and he was forced to recognize that something very unusual was happening.

Finally, Jesus went on to explain that His kingdom was a spiritual kingdom based on truth. Jesus said that this spiritual kingdom was the very cause for which He had been born. It was the reason why He had come into the world. This spiritual kingdom is for all who receive spiritual life by repenting of their sin of unbelief and placing their faith in Jesus. Jesus said in John 5:24, “‘Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.’” In this verse, Jesus said all those who enter into that spiritual kingdom will have everlasting life.

Then, Jesus made a statement which forced Pilate to have to think about his own life when Jesus said, “Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” Jesus had said in John 10:27-28, “‘My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.’” Those who are of the truth hear the voice of Jesus and come to Jesus in repentance and faith. Suddenly, Pilate had to face the question of whether he was going to believe in the One who is truth or reject that One.

We see that Pilate immediately made his choice. Pilate asked the question, “What is truth?” Jesus had said in John 8:32, “‘And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’” Now, Pilate was face to face with the One who is the Truth. Pilate chose to remain in his bondage to sin.

Hebrews 2:14-15 says, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” We will see in our next topic that the bondage and fear that controlled the life of Pilate drove him to deliver Jesus for crucifixion after saying several times, “I find no fault in Him at all.”

In fact, after Pilate asked the question, “What is truth?”, we see that He immediately went out and spoke to the Jews. His words to the Jews were the first of several times that Pilate would say, “I find no fault in Him at all.” Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent. Mark 15:10 says, “For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.” As a result, we will see that Pilate chose to kill Jesus, even though he knew that Jesus was innocent, because of his fear that the chief priests would complain to the Roman emperor and cause him to lose his power.

As a result, we see that Pilate first tried to appease the chief priests and religious leaders. John 18:39-40 tells us what Pilate then told the Jews and how they responded. Those verses say, “‘But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?’ Then they all cried again, saying, ‘Not this Man, but Barabbas!’ Now Barabbas was a robber.” Here, we see one of the ways that Pilate tried to appease the Jews. The Jews were given the choice to release Jesus or to release Barabbas. Matthew 27:16-17 says, “And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, ‘Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?’” Barabbas was a very dangerous man.

In addition to the fact that he was a robber, Luke 23:18-19 says, “And they all cried out at once, saying, ‘Away with this *Man*, and release to us Barabbas’— who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder.” In these verses, we also see that Barabbas was guilty of rebellion and murder. Pilate probably thought that the Jews would never choose such a dangerous man to be released because of their fear that he might commit additional murders.

The chief priests and elders were very willing to commit murder to maintain their power. Matthew 27:20 says, “But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.” The chief priests and elders made the choice that day to release a robber and murderer and kill the One without sin to maintain their control and power. We want to help our physical and spiritual children to understand the way that sin can control the heart of any person who chooses to reject Christ. Today, many people are making that same choice even though they know that their choice has eternal consequences. However, we are to continue to present that choice. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this choice to others.