

John 18:28-40 My Kingdom: another place

What do you think of the present day portrayal of Christianity in the media? What about when Christians have something to say about political affairs such as marriage or abortion? How are Christian/biblical opinions often received?

Read *John 18:28-40*.

1. Compare the Jewish Leaders, Pilate and Jesus in the following areas: (a few examples are included).

	Jewish Leaders	Pilate/Romans	Jesus/His Followers
Authority/Power	<i>Not much</i>		
Integrity			
Location of Kingdom		<i>Roman Empire</i>	
Enemies			
Motivation		<i>Stability</i>	<i>Truth</i>
Response to Jesus			

Roman officials began meeting the public at daybreak; “early” is no exaggeration. The priestly aristocracy, who controlled Judea for the Romans, would be able to secure an audience with him on short notice. Clamoring before Pilate in large numbers was usually effective, because a riot was the last thing he wanted. Herod the Great’s old “palace”, used by the Roman prefect when he came to Jerusalem from Caesarea during the feasts. He came precisely to ensure that order was maintained during the feasts, when Jerusalem was overcrowded and riots were most apt to break out.ⁱ

2. There are all sorts of political and religious motivations driving the events of this passage. However, John sees something bigger behind these events. Look at verse 32 and compare it with John 12:32-33 and Acts 2:23. What does John see going on?

3. Why is it important that Jesus suffers crucifixion and not be stoned as a blasphemer (see Deuteronomy 21:22-23 and Galatians 3:13-14)?

Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the promised King in the line of David that the Jews had long been waiting for. The Jewish authorities used this as an opportunity to get Pilate to see the seriousness of the threat posed by Jesus. If Jesus claimed to be a king, that was treason, serious enough to receive the death penalty.

4. If Jesus seems reluctant to admit to Pilate that He is a King, it is not reluctance about the fact but rather the nature of His Kingship. What does Jesus say about the nature of His kingship in verses 36-37?

5. What are the implications of Jesus words in verse 36-37 for his followers today?

6. Considering Jesus’ truthful claims to be the Messiah and the King of the Jews, how should have the Jews and Pilate responded to him?

The Jews were concerned in John 11:7-48 that Jesus would cause some big problems for them. The concern of the Jews is a legitimate one validated by history: those perceived as political messiahs threatened their own power and Judea’s stability, inviting Roman intervention; the Romans accepted only one king, Caesar. Josephus testified to this concern of the priestly aristocracy, and one reason Caiaphas maintained his office longer than any other high priest of the first century (a.d. 18–36) was that he kept the peace for the Romans. But this is another touch of John’s irony (a common ancient literary device): this was their view, not that of the Romans (See John 18:38 & 19:12); and although they killed Jesus, the Romans ultimately did take away their temple and nation, in a.d. 70, anyway.ⁱⁱ

7. So the Jews rejected Jesus and wanted to get rid of him and Pilate considered him of little consequence and ignored him. How do we see these types of reactions to Jesus in people today?

8. How do we see these types of reactions (rejecting or ignoring Jesus) in ourselves? Why do you think we do this sometimes?

9. Jesus says “Everyone on the side of truth listens to me”. What do you think it means in practice to be on the side of truth?

Some optional questions if time available...

In verses 39-40, what choice does Pilate give the crowd and how do they respond?

In what way do all people make a similar choice to this when it comes to Jesus?

How are we like Barabbas? In what way are we guilty and so deserving of punishment, and how have we been released?

Pray and give thanks for Jesus and the truth that we are able to know about him. Pray that we would be concerned for his kingdom and his truth and not caught up trying to look after our own kingdoms. Also please pray for Easter Services & Parish Toolbox Dinner 15 April.

ⁱⁱ *ibid.*

ⁱ Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Jn 18:28). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.