

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

John: Believing On The Christ, The Son Of God, For Eternal Life

Part XLI: Trusting In Christ For His Conduct Before Pilate

A. Trusting In Christ For His Offer Of God's True Versus A False, Earthly Kingdom (John 18:24-38)

I. Introduction

- A. John's Gospel presents Jesus as the Son of God (John 1:18) and "full of grace and truth," and His witness before Pontius Pilate on the true versus a worldly kingdom He was offering reveals that grace and truth.
- B. This subject is highly applicable today, for dominion theology asserts that "the Church " must "establish a physical Kingdom of God on earth," bringing "the Church, the government, and corporations into an equal partnership in solving world problems . . ." (Brannon Howse, Religious Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 108, 123)
- C. We view that witness by Jesus in its context for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. Trusting In Christ For His Offer Of God's True Versus A False, Earthly Kingdom, John 18:24-38.

- A. After His trial before Annas, Jesus was sent to Caiaphas (John 18:24), but John does not report on that trial, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to John 18:24. However, John *did* then report one of Peter's denials of Jesus made when he was charged as being a disciple of Jesus by a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off in Gethsemane when Peter had tried to defend Jesus from arrest, an effort Jesus opposed, Jn. 18:10, 25-27!
- B. This report on Peter's denial fits Jesus' witness of His true versus a false kingdom (as follows), John 18:28-38:
 1. When Jesus was led from Caiaphas to the Roman praetorium, the Jewish authorities would not enter it, for they wanted to remain ceremonially clean to celebrate Passover, Jn. 18:28; Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to Jn. 18:28. Pilate thus went out of the barracks to discern from the Jews their accusation against Jesus, and they told him that if Jesus were not a criminal, they would not have turned Him over to Pilate, John 18:29-30 NIV.
 2. Unwilling to rule against Jesus based solely on this answer, Pilate told the Jews to judge Him themselves according to their Mosaic law, but they replied that Jesus was guilty of a capital crime that they were not allowed by Roman law to execute, John 18:31. This event fulfilled Jesus' John 12:32 claim that He would die by being lifted up in crucifixion by the Gentile Romans rather than by stoning at the hands of the Jews.
 3. Pilate then entered the judgment hall to ask Jesus if He was the King of the Jews (John 18:33), reflecting his awareness of the Luke 23:2 report to Him by the Jews that Jesus had claimed to be Messiah, a King.
 4. This title of "king" at that time could be understood in one of two ways: (a) either Jesus claimed to be a spiritual ruler sent from God but submissive to Roman rule, a "rule" the Romans would ignore, (b) or Jesus was a political foe of Rome, bent on usurping Roman rule to establish His own earthly kingdom. Only the latter idea would be a crime, a capital one at that, in the eyes of a Roman official like Pilate.
 5. Jesus answered, asking if Pilate authored this question about Him being a "king" himself in the sense of His being a political foe of Rome, or whether his question reflected the idea of a spiritual king, John 18:34.
 6. Pilate as a secularist did not discern this difference in views, seen in his response, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?" (John 18:35)
 7. Jesus then explained that His kingdom was not of this world, otherwise His servants would fight to keep Him from being delivered to the Jews, John 18:36a. Note how this testimony fits with the John 18:25-27 recollection of Peter's past errant effort to try to fight to keep Jesus from arrest, an effort Jesus Himself by example had countered, telling Peter to put up his sword as He had to suffer in God's will, John 18:10-11.
 8. Christ added that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36b), so Pilate asked if He were a king, and Jesus replied that He was, one bearing witness of the truth (John 18:37a), to which Pilate, thinking He spoke philosophically, mockingly asked, "What is truth?" and went to tell the Jews he did not find fault in Jesus, John 18:38. Pilate was convinced that Jesus was not trying to set up an earthly, political kingdom in place of Roman rule, so any other kind of "king" Jesus tried to be in Pilate's view was meaningless to him.

Lesson: *Jesus clarified (1) by example in correcting Peter's effort to fight for Him in Gethsemane and (2) in His testimony to Pilate that His kingdom was not a false, earthly, political entity of this world intended to usurp Roman rule as in dominion theology today, but a rule to be instituted by God apart from earthly human effort.*

Application: *(1) May we believe on Jesus as the true Son of God for eternal life, John 1:11-12. (2) May we refuse to heed dominion theology that asserts the Church is to be an earthly kingdom wrought by human effort, and work for the spiritual kingdom of God as taught in Scripture, discipling the nations to be followers of Jesus Christ.*