

MIDWEEK LENT 5: STUDENT

Pilate at His Headquarters: The Kingdom of God

JOHN 18:12–14, 28–38

OPENING

Read Joel 2:13 together.

Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Joel 2:13

Prayer: Jesus, You are King of kings and Lord of lords. With the Father and the Holy Spirit You have dominion and power over all things. Though You humbled Yourself to become one of us, You were no earthly king, as Your kingdom was not of this world. Thank You that Your life, death, and resurrection have set us free from sin by faith in You and Your promises. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Read Psalm 24, paying special attention to verses 7–10. The Israelites in the time of Samuel rejected the Lord as their King and sought an earthly king to rule over them like the other nations had. God obliged and gave them earthly kings, for they had long rejected God, His will for His people, and His ways. But this would not thwart God’s plan for our salvation. As we sing in the season of Advent: “The King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here. Life and salvation He doth bring” (*LSB* 341:1). This King would be like no other king God’s people had ever known or that the world would ever know after Him. Zechariah prophesied about Jesus: “Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9). Before this was fulfilled, John the Baptizer, the forerunner of Christ, would preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2).

QUESTIONS

Q1. Read John 18:28. The Jews brought Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to Pilate’s house. Why did they not enter Pilate’s house with Jesus?

Q2. Read John 18:29–30. Pilate demands to know the accusation the Jews were bringing against Jesus. What is their answer to Pilate? Do they give a specific charge?

Q3. What was the real reason given for bringing Jesus to Pilate? What did this fulfill?

Q4. Pilate faced a big dilemma with this situation. His options were limited. His actions seem only to be stalling the inevitable. He returns to speak some more to Jesus. Read John 18:33. What does Pilate ask Jesus this time? What insight does this give us about Pilate’s grasp of the situation?

Q5. Read John 18:34–35. What is the two-part response that Jesus gives Pilate instead of a straight answer? Why does Jesus give His answer to Pilate in this way? What is Pilate’s response to Jesus’ question?

Q6. Still stuck in worldly-mindedness, Pilate has his “aha” moment and asks Jesus, “So, You are a king?” (John 18:37). Jesus answers by saying that for this purpose He came into the world. What is the purpose for which Jesus came?

CONCLUSION

Jesus states that He has come to “bear witness to the truth,” and that those who are “of the truth” listen to Him. (See also John 10:25–28.) Having grown weary of listening to Jesus talk in such a mysterious way, Pilate dismisses Jesus’ silly notions—as he sees them—with the words “What is truth?” (John 18:38). The world still dismisses Jesus with this very question. Read John 1:9–13.

CLOSING

Prayer: Lord Jesus, as the world continues to reject You and dismiss the truth of Your Word, help us, we pray, in the midst of that rejection, to hear the truth with ears and hearts of faith that cling to You as our King of kings. Bless us with perseverance and strength as we face the days ahead until You come again in glory. In Your name we pray. Amen.