Study 25

The Gospel of John

Jesus on Trial

Introduction

In John 18vs28-19vs16 we see Jesus on trial before Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, a trial which eventually ends with Jesus being handed over for crucifixion (John 19vs16). From the outset it is clear that the charges brought against Jesus are unconvincing – so much so that Pilate declares three times that he finds no basis for any formal charge against Jesus as far as Roman Law is concerned (John 18vs38, 19vs4 &19vs6). Indeed as his conversation with Jesus continues Pilate becomes deeply troubled by Jesus' words, and even tries to set Him free. But in the end his concern for his reputation and popularity wins out, and Jesus is unjustly condemned to death. There is however another side to the unfolding events and John ensures that we are well informed of what it is. Jesus' willingness to go meekly to the cross is because of the nature of His kingdom and in order to complete the saving work that His Father has given Him to do. He will go to the cross, not as a criminal, but as "the king of the Jews" – the true Son of God and the Passover Lamb whose death will truly take away the sins of the world.

Study Questions

These questions help you to see clearly <u>what the text is saying</u>. This is a vital first step towards understanding what the text means. The questions should be answered from the text itself.

Read John 18vs28-19vs16. Answer the following questions:

1. In what way was the behaviour of the Jews ironic and hypocritical? (John 18vs28)

2. What question does Pilate ask? (John 18vs29) Why is this question important as far as John is concerned?

3. What answer does the narrative provide to Pilate's question?

4. In what way do the events of Jesus' trial before Pilate fulfil God's plan for Jesus? (John 18vs32, 19vs11-16)

5. What does this passage teach us about Jesus' kingship and kingdom?

6. In what capacity does Jesus go to the cross? (Note the reference to the Passover and the recurring title given to Jesus)

Think it Through

In what way do the attitudes of the Jews, the soldiers and Pilate reflect the way that people respond to Jesus today?