

EXALTING CHRIST . . . THE LAMB OF GOD

Rush to Judgment

John 18:28–19:16

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

When we're reading the Scriptures, the emotions depicted in the scenes can often be overwhelming. In this penetrating exposé of Jesus' multiple appearances before Pilate prior to His crucifixion, one can't help but feel anger, frustration, and sorrow that anyone, let alone gracious Jesus, would be forced to endure such injustice. But that's what hate and envy do—they corrupt the attitudes and motivations of the human heart. The gates of hell opened wide and released the sins of the world upon the loving back of Jesus, the exalted Son of God.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Guard your mind from the perils of overfamiliarity with the text; take a moment to bow in prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to offer you fresh insight into the significance and meaning of the events you're about to study. As you do, make certain to express a word of gratitude to the Lord for all He has done to bring about your salvation.



Observation: A Fresh Reading of the Passage

After praying, read John 18:28–19:16. The movement John relayed in this passage is swift and concise. Make some notes about what you observe about the timing, the individuals involved, and the overall posture and demeanor of Jesus throughout the entire ordeal.

Quotable

I urge you simply to plumb the depths as much as you can of what Jesus Christ endured. When you do, you will come away with a renewed appreciation for what the Savior suffered on your behalf.

— Charles R. Swindoll



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After leaving the court of Caiaphas, the high priest, the Jews led Jesus to the Roman governor's headquarters. This is where Pilate resided and sat as overseer of Judea (John 18:28).

About what time of day do you believe Jesus was brought before Pilate? How would you know? Why is the time significant?

What was Pilate's initial question, and to whom does he direct it (18:33)?

This would be a good time to consult a Bible dictionary to learn important information about some of the key players in Jesus' trials. For instance, you can look up entries for *Caiaphas* the high priest and *Pilate* the governor of Judea. By exploring pertinent information about the characters crucial to the story, you can begin to build your interpretation of the passage.

How would you compare the questions the high priest asked Jesus (18:19–24) with the questions Pilate asked Jesus (18:28–38)?

Why did the Jews feel compelled to bring Jesus to Pilate? What was their ultimate objective (18:30–32)?



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In the opening verses of John 19, the tension escalates to fever pitch. What actions by Pilate and the soldiers caused the situation to intensify (John 19:1–5)? Write them down in sequence below.

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All of this eventually led to Pilate handing over Jesus to be crucified. What was the turning point for Pilate according to John's account (19:6–8)?



Interpretation: Coming to Terms with the Importance of Pilate

Often one person's actions or decisions can affect circumstances for good or for ill. This seems to be the case when Jesus was brought before Pilate. As governor of Judea, he had an obligation not only to administer justice but to keep the peace in his region. This was no small task given the heightened tensions between the Jews and the Romans, especially during the time of Jesus.

As a result, Jesus was certainly rushed to an unjust judgment. Pilate simply caved to the political pressure of the Jews.

In the sovereign plan of God, the Jews' determination to eliminate Jesus as a threat to their religious power and prestige, coupled with Pilate's inability to withstand the political pressure, brought about a sequence of events that led Jesus to the cross.



The apostle John powerfully wove a compelling narrative with twists and intrigue. He illustrated the irony of how human folly and the most base and deprived of human motives brought about Christ's finished work of redemption for all sinners everywhere (1 Peter 2:24).

Pause a moment to offer praise to God for ushering in your salvation through the wondrous, enduring love of Christ! Write a sentence or two of thanksgiving!



Correlation: How Does It Relate?

Correlating the Scripture verses you're studying with other biblical passages helps you fine-tune your interpretation. Matthew's concluding statement of this very scene with Jesus before Pilate, for instance, offers a compelling interpretive clue to the significance of Pilate's final decision to hand over Jesus to be crucified.

Take a moment to read Matthew 27:24–26. According to Matthew, what ultimately led Pilate to make this fateful decision?

What did Pilate do after handing over Jesus to death?



Discuss in your own words the irony of Pilate's words, "I am innocent of this man's blood" (Matthew 27:24).

Application: Where Do You Stand?

The trials of Jesus are long over. The jury rendered its verdict. Innocent blood was shed. Pilate chose to wash his hands in a final desperate act of weakness and fear. The crowd cheered. The disciples fled.

That leaves you . . . and all who stand reflecting on the death of Jesus. Where are you when Christ's message and reputation stand in the balance? Do you duck and run, mumbling to yourself about not wanting to force your religion on others? Do you join in the folly and follow the crowd? Or do you wash your hands of the whole thing, refusing to take a stand?

Is it hard to stand by Christ when the world rails against Him? Is it even harder when those closest to you so easily desert Him for lesser purposes and more comfortable surroundings?

Yet He will never leave you . . . nor forsake you. And He will never allow anything or anyone to come between your relationship with Him (Romans 8:38–39).

Contrasting groups form around the cross of Jesus—those standing *for* Jesus and those standing *against* Him. The real question becomes: Where do *you* stand with Jesus? In the space below, express to the Lord your desire to stand with Him regardless of the pressures you may face.





A FINAL PRAYER

Father, forgive me for going weak in the knees when the pressure to fall away from Christ intensifies. Strengthen my resolve to stand firm in my trust in Him and in my bold witness of His grace in my life. Thank You, Father, for loving me so much that You were willing to watch Him suffer and die so that I could live eternally. I give You my whole life. In Jesus' name, amen.



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For the 2018 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Mark Tobey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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