

BSP #9 GROUP TIME SHARING QUESTIONS

- (1) The occurrence St. John mentions in John 18:6 is not recorded in the other Gospel accounts. What do you think John's purpose is in recording it here and why did the men fall? (See Exodus 3:14, Phil 2:10)
- (2) Why did Pilate have Jesus scourged? What motivated him to make this decision? What was he trying to achieve? (Read Mt. 27:19) When Pilate said he found no case against Jesus, what did the Jews say in John 19:7? What did their answer tell you about the Jews' real reason for prosecuting Jesus? In John 19:12, Pilate tried to release Jesus. Why didn't he?
- (3) Americans have great faith in "the wisdom of the people". The behavior of the mob in John 19 gives another side to the actions of large groups of people. When have you seen "the people" do the right thing? When have you seen "the people" pool their fallenness and commit sin on a large scale? Have you ever participated in either sort of action?

BSP #9 ANSWERS FOR GROUP TIME SHARING QUESTIONS

- (1) The men fell when Jesus said to them “I am”. “I am” in Greek is “ego eimi”, which is, in short, a claim of the divine name (Exodus 3:14). From a human perspective, this demonstrates the fear that Jesus’ enemies had of him. This open claim of the Divine Name positively frightened them.

At the same time, John wishes us to see in this a more than human dimension: these human agents of evil image the principalities and powers of hell which are never truly in command of the world but whose very rebellion is ultimately going to be made part of the divine plan of God who orders all things for his glory. Paul makes the same point when he says that “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth” (Phil 2:10)

- (2) Pilate had Jesus scourged in the hope that the injuries and suffering inflicted on Jesus would be sufficient to make the Jews anger and animosity toward Jesus disappear. This would allow him to release Jesus. Before the trial Pilate had been forewarned by his wife that Jesus was a holy man and therefore should be released (Mt. 27:19).

When Pilate found no case against Jesus, the Jews said, “We have our law, and according to that law he must die because he made himself God’s Son.” The Jews’ original accusation against Jesus was a political one – that he made himself a king. This political accusation, if true, would have made Jesus guilty under Roman law. The Jews statement above revealed the real reason the Jews were against Jesus was his claim of divinity – he made himself God’s Son. This was a religious accusation, which was not a crime under the Roman law.

At this point, Pilate was afraid and wondered if the criminal standing in front of him was really divine. Therefore, he asked, “Where do you come from?” (John 19:9) In the end, Pilate was unable to release Jesus because the Jews referred to Jesus claim of kingship and reminded Pilate that freeing Jesus would mean freeing a rival of Caesar.