

3 - Prince of Paradox

Meditations on Christ from the Gospel of John - John 18:28-33

03/28/2010 - Jim Johnson



John 18:28a

The Jewish leaders had just tried Jesus and found Him guilty. They needed to authority of Rome, however, to see Him executed. They therefore sought out Pilate who was residing in the Praetorium (also known as the fortress of Antonia). They arrived early in the morning and then refused to enter the judgment hall, demanding that Pilate come out to them instead. They did not want to defile themselves.

A. The Jewish leaders were careful about being _____

They believed that by entering the house of this Gentile, they would be made ceremonially dirty and therefore, made unacceptable to God. To be unclean meant that you would be excluded from contact with people and excluded from the places of worship. To be clean meant that you could be included in the community of faith.

There is no indication from the Law of Moses that a Jew would be made unclean by entering the house of a Gentile. This idea was propounded by hyper legalists in that day, but that is what they believed so they refused to enter.

John 18:28a & b

B. They wanted to be able to partake of the Passover _____.

Each year, the Jews would be required to reenact the first Passover. Each family would take a lamb to be slain at the temple. The blood would be symbolically spilled upon the altar, and they were reminded that it was the blood of a lamb that caused God to turn His wrath away from His people. They would take the flesh of the lamb home and make a meal of it.

The Passover Festival had begun. Jesus and his disciples had already partaken of the Passover lamb the night before. Yet John tells us that the Jewish leaders were still waiting to celebrate the Passover Feast. It appears that the Passover was celebrated in those days from Thursday afternoon through Friday evening. Those in the leadership circle of Israel had not yet partaken, and it was important to them that they do. They needed to stay clean – so they simply refused to risk it by entering the home of a Gentile.

C. Christ was the _____ Passover Lamb.

Christ was the true Passover Lamb according to the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 5:7). The Passover Feast was given to Israel, to help them understand and prepare for the advent and work of Christ. Exodus 12 gives us the qualifications for the Passover Lamb.

1. The Passover Lamb must be without _____ . (Ex. 12:5)

Christ was sinless. (1 Peter 1:18-19.)

2. The Passover Lamb must be a _____ . - Ex. 12:5

3. The Lamb must be sacrificed at _____ - Ex. 12:6

Mark 15:33-37 reminds us that darkness fell at the time of Christ's death.

4. The Lamb should have no broken _____ - Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12

Though it was customary to break the legs of the crucified, Christ had died before the soldiers had a chance to do it. (Jn. 19:36)

Christ was the true Passover Lamb. The lambs of the past were just types to point to Christ. The blood they shed were just pictures of the cleansing that only he could provide.

John 18:29-33

Pilate asked about their allegations. They insisted that they had sufficient reason to deliver him up. Perceiving it to be a religious matter, Pilate told them to take care of it themselves. They made it clear that they wanted Him executed and only the Roman government could do that. Pilate was pressured to interrogate Him. He, therefore, escorted Christ from the porch into the Praetorium to do so. (18:33)

A Paradox: The Jewish leaders refused to enter the house for fear of being defiled and unable to eat of the Passover Lamb. But then Pilate summoned the true unblemished Passover Lamb and took him into His residence.

D. The one who could make clean went into the _____ of the unclean. While those who thought they were clean stayed outside and remained dirty.

They refused to enter the house for fear of getting dirty – whereas the morally cleanest person in the whole world – Jesus - went in. They stayed out so that they could eat of the Passover Lamb and be protected from God's wrath and live - but they sent the true Lamb of God into the house to be condemned to death. Those leaders were oh so careful to keep themselves clean so that they could partake of the Passover Lamb – but the true Lamb was in their hands.

The things that we mistakenly _____ for in this life, are truly provided by Christ.

They wanted to partake of the Passover Lamb. Christ was the Passover Lamb. They wanted to be clean. Christ was the Lamb that could wash away all sin.

The same is true for us today - The things that we mistakenly long for in this life are truly provided by Christ. Our longings are many - to be loved, to be someone, to have financial security, to enjoy companionship, to have some sense of security, to experience adventure or to have a friend. Ultimately, Christ Jesus meets these needs and in a far more significant way than any person could do.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

1. What kinds of things have you longed for in the past – that you have now found to be amply and better supplied through your relationship with Christ?
2. What longings do you still have and to whom are you looking to fulfill them?