

The Good Confession John 18:28-19:16

2-3-13

Who is the fifth most mentioned man in the New Testament? The first you know: Jesus. The second and third are no surprise: Paul and Peter. John the Baptist is number four. But many are surprised that it is Pontius Pilate who ranks number 5 on the list. His importance is primarily historical; he provides a reference and a witness to the murder of Jesus of Nazareth. But there may be more significance than merely his position in the trial of Jesus. Consider this statement by Paul in I Timothy 6:13: *"I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate"*

John 18:28-19:16 is the most in depth of the records of the trial of Jesus of Nazareth before Pilate, one of the four "courts" Jesus was tried in during the early morning hours of that fateful Friday. It was here that Jesus made "the good confession": *"Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth."* (John 18:37a)

It is interesting to note that Jesus had not confessed being the Christ directly throughout His time on earth. Consider this passage: *Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."*(John 10:24). It is the next verse that tells us that Jesus "confessed" His identity by works: Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me." (John 10:25)

One consideration is that Jesus expected others to confess Him. We see that with John the Baptist and the Apostle Nathanael in John 1; the Samaritan woman in John 4; Peter in Mathew 16; the blind man in John 9; Martha in John 11, and the Roman Centurion in Mark 15.

So why was this confession such a big deal? First, consider that what Pilate came to understand is the foundational truth of Christianity. Second, God had revealed it to a Gentile. The import is the same as the importance of our own confession. We know that words are important; consider John 1:1 if you doubt it. Also, confession relates understanding, which is the cornerstone of the reception of the Gospel. Jesus told Peter and Pilate that flesh and blood does not tell us of Christ; it is the Father Himself!

If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." Romans 10:9-11