

Remember that the Gospel according to John was written much later than the other three Gospels, at least 30 years after the Gospel according to Mark, which was the first one written around 60 AD. During that 30 years, the Church, the community of faith centered in Jesus and worshipping Jesus had time to reflect on the meaning of His life, death and resurrection.

For this reason, the story in John's Gospel of Jesus' sentencing and crucifixion have much more to do with the meaning of it all than just reporting the facts of what happened. In the very first chapter of John, we hear of the Word that was with God in the beginning and that the Word which was with God in the beginning was God. And finally, that this Word which was God became flesh and dwelled among us, full of grace and truth. By this time, the Church had come to understand that the One God became manifest in a human being. Unfortunately this God which became human in the person of Jesus of Nazareth was rejected by His own people. But, the text says, and this is the great news of the Gospel, "But to all who received him, who believed in His Name, He gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God." That is us, Beloved. God has adopted us as His children. We are blessed.

In that same first chapter of John, John the Baptist sees Jesus coming and says to His disciples, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

**In John 3.14, Jesus says,**

And just as Moses **lifted up** the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be **lifted up**, and remember the serpent was lifted up on a pole and all who looked upon the serpent were healed.

John 3.9-19	show passage	yes	yes	no	
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### Later on, In John 8.28, Jesus says,

'When you have **lifted up** the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he,\* and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me.

John 8.23-33	show passage	yes	yes	no	
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### And finally, in John 12.32, Jesus says,

And I, when I am **lifted up** from the earth, will draw all people\* to myself.'

Are we getting the picture? In the Gospel of John, this Word that became flesh has come to be lifted up so that He might draw the whole world, all humanity to Himself. Since this is so, since Jesus came to be crucified and and He came not to be defeated by the Cross but to reign from the Cross as God and as King. Therefore, the story of the crucifixion in John depicts Jesus not as someone who is being framed and jerked around by the Jewish religious leaders or the Romans, but rather He is depicted for who He is, a King, in total control of the situation.

Let's think about what we heard in the Passion Narrative in this context. In this Gospel, Jesus speaks freely with Pilate. When Pilate asks Jesus if He is the King of the Jews, Jesus admits that He is a king but that His kingdom is not of this world. In fact, Jesus told Pilate, "it was for this that I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone, He says, who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.'

Pilate, totally oblivious to what Jesus is saying says, probably mockingly, "What is truth?" It becomes apparent however that Pilate is getting nervous about having Jesus crucified as Pilate recognizes that Jesus is an innocent man. However, the paid off crowd cries out for Jesus' blood.

Pilate hears from the Jewish religious leaders that Jesus has claimed to be the Son of God and because of this Jesus deserves to die. The text says that, hearing this, and perhaps thinking that Jesus might in fact be the Son of God, Pilate is more afraid than ever. He goes back to Jesus and says, "Where are you from?" Again, Jesus totally controlling the situation refuses to answer Pilate.

Then Pilate said, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have the power to release you and the power to crucify you?" Again, in total control of the situation, Jesus said to Pilate, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of the greater sin."

From then on, Pilate tried to release Jesus, but eventually gave into the crowd and had Jesus led out to be crucified.

In the interest of time, I will just mention two more things about this Passion Narrative from John.

First, the Jews were incensed after Pilate wrote, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" on a placard to be placed over Jesus' head on the Cross. It turns out that Pilate, in writing the charge against Jesus had written the truth.

And finally, in this Gospel, Jesus carries his on Cross out to Golgotha. There is no mocking from the bystanders, no account of the two men crucified with him; Jesus does not cry out in abandonment in this Gospel because in this Gospel, the emphasis is on King Jesus being lifted high on the Cross to fulfill His mission, which was to draw the whole world to Himself.

As we remain seated or kneeling if you wish, as a meditation on the death of our Lord, let's sing together quietly, O Sacred Head Sore Wounded, Hymn 168