

3.03.19 ~ John 18:39-19:12, Jesus before Pilate: Part 2

**Read John 18:39-40...** Clearly, Pilate does not believe Jesus is guilty of any crime against Rome, and he is trying to get Jesus released, while at the same time trying to appease the Jews. Well, that is not going to happen!

Luke gives us more information about what happened (see **Luke 23:4-5**). Pilate tries to make Jesus Herod's problem, since Herod is the ruler over Galilee, where Jesus is from (see **Luke 23:6**). But Herod isn't able to get Jesus to say anything, so after mocking Him and mistreating Him, Herod sends Jesus back to Pilate, with a king's robe around Him (see **Luke 23:8-11**).

Pilate (**verse 39**) tries to release Jesus, as is the custom at Passover, for the governor to release a Jewish prisoner being held by the Romans. The Jews do not want Pilate to release Jesus, instead they want Barabbas released, a known thief and murderer (see **Mark 15:7; Luke 23:19-22; Acts 3:14-15**).

**Read John 19:1-7...** Pilate had Jesus taken and brutally beaten, even though he found Him to be innocent. The scourging [flogging] was done with a whip made up of a short wooden handle, to which several long leather straps were attached, and each strap had pieces of pottery, bone or metal attached to the ends, so as to inflict devastating injuries [Note: this tool of torture was known to tear and lacerate flesh, muscles and even bones].

It would appear, that after they flogged Him (with Pilate's approval), the soldiers mocked and hit Jesus about the head (**verses 2-3**). After the beating, Pilate came out from the Praetorian and addressed the Jews (**verse 4**) saying, "I bring Him out to you, but I find no guilt in Him."

Jesus comes out wearing a crown of thorns, and a royal robe (mocking Him as a king), at which time Pilate expresses his own sarcasm concerning Jesus being a king, let alone being any threat to Rome, saying "Behold the Man!" i.e., "this Man is pathetic, He is not a threat to anyone!" At this point, Jesus looked like the victim of a gang beating, or a failed attempt to torture Him to death.

You would think that the religious leaders would be satisfied with the brutal beating Jesus had just received; but no way (**verse 6**), they demand He be crucified!

Pilate's response here is very revealing, because the Jews do not have the authority to execute anyone; but it seems they are holding some control over Pilate, for although he is fed up with them, and he finds no guilt in Jesus, he seems to be giving in to their hostile demands.

Honestly, the religious leaders are not going to let up, for they have rendered a guilty verdict against Jesus for a capital crime and now they demand His execution.

Pilate is responsible to Caesar, to keep control of the people under his authority, while at the same time he is supposed to uphold their local laws, as long as what they demand does not conflict with what is best for Rome.

The Jews have Pilate right where they want him, and Pilate knows it and he really doesn't like it!

Although the Jews couldn't get Pilate to condemn Jesus as an enemy of Rome, if he did not allow the Jews to have their own laws justly executed upon one of their own people who had, by their judgement, committed a capital crime, Pilate would be remiss in his duties, and could be in trouble with his superior.

The Jews were adamant that Jesus had committed a capital offense under their own laws (**Leviticus 24:16**), "the one who blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him. The alien as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death" (see **Matthew 26:63-66**).

**Read John 19:8-12...** The thought that Jesus might be a god or a son of a god brought great fear to Pilate. Romans believed in many gods, and in fact they believed that when an emperor of Rome died, he became a god, and could use his new god powers to execute vengeance upon his enemies.

Pilate did not want to offend any of the gods. [Before Pilate had Jesus scourged, his wife sent him a message about a dream she had concerning Jesus (**Matthew 27:19**), "While he [Pilate] was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him a message, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that righteous Man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him.'"]

When Paul spoke before the council of Areopagus in Athens (cf Acts 17:22-31), Paul mentioned an altar the Greeks had there, on which was this inscription: "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD." They did not want to anger any god by not showing worship to him, so they had this altar in place for any god they might not be aware of.

Back in **John 19:9**, Pilate goes to Jesus and asks Him, "Where are you from?" Now, Pilate knew Jesus was from Galilee, as he had sent Him to Herod who rules Galilee. Pilate's question is meant to try and find out if Jesus is from the realm or abode of the gods; but Jesus doesn't answer, and that angers Pilate who basically says (**verse 10**), are you not going to answer me, don't you know that I have authority to release you or crucify you?

Jesus' response is controlled and unemotional (**verse 11**), telling Pilate that the only authority he has is that given to him by God (cf 1Peter 2:13-14). And the reality is, it is God's plan for Jesus to die for the sins of the world, and nothing Pilate or the Jews can do will thwart that plan (**Acts 2:23**), "this Man [Jesus],

delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of *godless* men and put Him to death." Okay, this is really cool... the word translated *godless* in that verse, literally means, "men without the Law, i.e., pagans, non-Jews, this saying God use Gentiles, the Romans to execute His Son.

In the last part of **John 19:11** Jesus says, "he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin." The one who delivered Jesus to Pilate was not Judas, but was the high priest of Israel, Caiaphas, the top religious ruler of the Jews rejected his own Messiah, the Son of God.

God used the betrayal by Judas, who was a thief and false disciple; God used the jealous arrogant hatred of the religious leaders, and God used the authority granted to Pilate as Caesar's representative, and although he knew Jesus was innocent, he gave the order to crucify Him; but all this was done according to the plan & purpose of God.

The Jews have control of Pilate at this point (see **verse 12**), and they make a threat that if he doesn't give the execution order, they will report to Caesar (Tiberius was emperor of Rome at this time, and he was ruthless to those who failed him). Basically the Jews threaten to report to Tiberius, that Pilate, knowing full-well Jesus claimed to be a king, let Him live. For a Roman to acknowledge the existence of any other king besides Caesar, was a death sentence, by brutal execution.

**Read John 19:13-16...** Pilate is backed into a corner now, the Jews can make his life miserable if he doesn't sentence Jesus. So, Pilate has Jesus brought to the place where he will render his final judgement.

John tells us (**verse 14**) it is the morning of the day of preparation for Passover (sometime between 6-9 am); Mark 15 tells us that Jesus' was taken to stand before Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, Herod, and back to Pilate, all this took place between 6-9 am; and then Jesus is crucified around 9 am; at high noon darkness covers the earth; and about 3 pm Jesus died.

The northern Jews (from Galilee), mark their days from sunrise to sunrise, they celebrated Passover on Thursday; the southern Jews (from Judea), mark their days from sunset to sunset, they celebrated Passover on Friday.

Pilate (**verse 14**) says to the Jews, "here is your King!" The Jews become enraged (**verse 15**) yelling out, "take Him away, take Him away and crucify Him!" Pilate contemptuously asks, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests perjure themselves saying, "we have no king but Caesar." Wow! These guys rejected their

own Savior-King, and although they hate Caesar and the Roman oppression they live under, they hated Jesus even more.

Jesus (**verse 16**) is turned over to the will of the religious leaders and all of Israel who have rejected God's Son. They finally get what they have wanted from the beginning of Jesus' ministry, His death! And yet, it is His death that will free us all from sin's curse.

**2Corinthians 5:21**, "He [God] made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him [God's Son]."

We are all sinners, and as such, we are unacceptable to God, unable to know or to receive the love of God; but (**John 3:16**), "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

**Romans 10:9-10**, "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." **13**, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."