

Matthew 27:11-26 – The Trial of Jesus

Calvin, TSK, Henry, GreekLexicon, Geneva, JFB, Poole, Robertson, Trapp, Barnes, Rienecker, FourFoldG, Clarke, Gill, Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: There have been people who were declared guilty in court who were innocent of the crimes with which they were charged. Maybe evidence was made up by the police. Maybe the witnesses lied against the accused. Maybe the accused was guilty of other things in the past so there was a presumption of guilt 内疚. Whatever the reason, the innocent have suffered. But you would be hard-pressed to find a case where the accused was declared innocent and still punished with death.

When Jesus appeared before Pilate the judge, Pilate clearly asserted his innocence and tried to release him, but being pressured by Jesus' accusers, Pilate walked away from his attempts to release Jesus and killed him instead. This is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

Pilate Asserted Jesus' Innocence

Pilate Attempted to release Jesus

Pilate Abdicated 放弃 his Civil Duty

Our goals are: That you will see the true innocence of the Lamb of God who was slain for your sins, and that you will then, with tears in your eyes, embrace and love him more.

Pilate Asserted Jesus' Innocence

11 Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "**Are You the King of the Jews?**" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say." 12 And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, **He answered nothing.** 13 Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" 14 But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.

1. Pilate then began the process of examining the accused, Jesus Christ, in a legal criminal proceeding after the chief priests brought the charges. This is important because it was the job of the priests to bring the sacrifice to the altar and examine them to make sure they were perfect – without any injury, spot, or wrinkle. The Jewish priests were unknowingly fulfilling the law of the sacrifices.

2. Pilate then began the trial and one of the questions he asked Jesus was whether he was King of the Jews. This was an important question because Rome had power over Palestine and Caesar was king. So if there were a legitimate charge against Jesus, then Pilate would have summarily executed Jesus for attempting to usurp Rome's power.

3. Jesus answered Pilate and confirmed that he was the King of the Jews. But what kind of king was he?

John 18:36 Jesus answered, "**My kingdom is not of this world.** If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." Jesus had no weapons...no army...no belligerent 宣战 speech...no powerful friends...nothing to show him as a threat. So Pilate realized that Jesus was not guilty of anything wrong. In Luke's account he said: "I find no fault in this man."

4. Seeing the obvious, the Jews accused him of many things – they threw everything, hoping something would stick. One of the greatest ironies here is that the Jews knew that Jesus' claim to be Christ meant that he was king. But they wanted him to be king of earthly deliverance from Rome. (Remember how they cried "hosanna" the week before?) So instead of supporting him as king, they turned him over to the Romans – whom they hated – falsely accusing him subversion of Rome.

Luke 23:5 But they were the more fierce, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place."

5. But with all their charges, Jesus remained silent. Wasn't he wrong to refuse to answer the judge? No, he wasn't. There are 2 reasons for his silence.

a. It was up to the court to prove guilt. No one was allowed to force a man to testify against himself. God required this in order to stop the state from torturing 折磨 people for confession.

b. Jesus did not speak because he was guilty of great sins - your sins. This was the main reason.

6. Pilate stood in amazement because he wondered how Jesus could be silent when he knew that Jesus was innocent!

7. Lessons:

a. You could not stand before God on account of your sins. This is why Jesus had to become sin for you. This was why he had to remain silent. He was the Lamb going to the slaughter 屠杀 and he kept quiet. **He couldn't cry for justice so you could cry "Abba, Father."** Because he was declared guilty on earth, you will be declared **not guilty** in heaven.

b. Know that there will be many who will reject the Lord, even to the end of the world. They are the guilty ones but they will believe they are innocent. **Only the Spirit working through the Word will set them free. You have work!**

Pilate Attempted to release Jesus

15 Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. 16 And at that time they had a **notorious prisoner called Barabbas**. 17 Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "**Whom do you want me to release** to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" 18 **For he knew** that they had handed Him over **because of envy**.

1. Rome would release 1 criminal – show clemency 赦免 – every year around the Jewish Passover. They usually released someone who was innocently arrested or a political prisoner. **But this time Pilate offered to release Barabbas, a convicted thief, murderer, and insurrectionist 造反, or the innocent Jesus.** Why would he offer such a terrorist? Pilate knew that the Jews had only a feigned 假装 interest in the welfare of Rome when they accused Jesus of trying to be king. So Pilate's offered this hardened criminal or the blameless Christ with the hope that the Jews would rethink and choose the innocent Christ. He hoped they had consciences! And in fact, he scourged 鞭打 Jesus before this, hoping to appease the Jews.

19 While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have **nothing to do with that just Man**, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."

2. Pilate's wife (probably named Abrokla) even warned him through a messenger to be careful with Jesus based on a dream from God. Abrokla was probably a Jew so she had some background in Jesus. She did not want her husband to be guilty of killing Jesus – an innocent man.

20 But the **chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes** that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. 21 The governor answered and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They said, "Barabbas!"

3. Given the choice, the Jewish leaders worked hard to convince the people to choose Barabbas. They would have told the people that Jesus was examined by the Sanhedrin the day before and declared guilty. Surely they did not think that Barabbas was a good man, but their hatred for Jesus was so great that they would let an awful man like Barabbas go free – a man who would go back to this old ways and bring judgment on the Jews from the angry Romans.

22 Pilate said to them, "**What then shall I do with Jesus** who is called Christ?" They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

4. And to give them another chance – like a loophole 漏洞 Pilate challenged them to rethink their actions. And they made their choice. They wanted Rome, whom they hated, to kill the Lord, whom they hated even more. They numbered Jesus with the wicked at his death...as worse than a thief, an insurrectionist, and a murderer...fully guilty of death. And the Jews wanted the worst death possible that the Romans inflicted. Crucifixion was reserved for the worst of the worst. It was **extremely painful** – causing the person to ultimately suffocate 窒息 to death. And it was the most **shameful way to die**.

5. Lessons:

a. **Don't rely on dreams for direction.** You have the "perfect" thing to know what to do. You have the Word of God. As those who have grown up, you must put away childish things.

b. The Jews were **bringing Jesus to be that perfect sacrifice for your sins** and the sins of the world. He came willingly.

Pilate's Abdicated his Civil Duty

23 Then the governor said, "**Why, what evil has He done?**" But **they cried out all the more**, saying, "**Let Him be crucified!**"

1. The governor then tried again to question the Jews about the reason for crucifying Jesus because he had found none. (Indeed this was a fulfillment of the prophecy that Jesus would be without sin.) Pilate was pleading for Jesus' life, knowing he was innocent. This was at least his 3rd attempt.

2. The response of the Jews was not to provide evidence of Jesus guilt but to scream louder for this death. And they even got personal, accusing Pilate of not being a friend of Caesar if he did not crucify Jesus. (They knew that Pilate did not want to antagonize 对抗 Caesar as he wanted to get out of Palestine desperately and get a better post.)

24 When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and **washed his hands** before the multitude, saying, "**I am innocent** of the blood of this just Person. You see to it."

3. Because Pilate wanted to make peace with the Jewish leaders (and hopefully get out of Palestine) he took water and washed his hands (literally, washed-off), symbolizing that he was not responsible for the death of Jesus. He acted as if water could wash away sins. In doing this, he abdicated his duty. He thought that by saying, "It is your business now," that somehow it was no longer his business. In this, **Pilate condemned the one who was acquitted.**

25 And all the people answered and said, "**His blood be on us and on our children.**"

4. The Jews then called the guilt of Jesus' murder on their children. Jesus was going to shed his blood as a gift for sinners so their sins would be forgiven, but these people wanted God to punish their children. God was willing to oblige. When Titus laid siege 围城 on Jerusalem he crucified 500 of them every day... till he ran out of place to crucify them and ran out of wood for crosses. Their blood flowed everywhere when Jerusalem was destroyed. Thousands were killed and their bodies dumped in the Sea of Galilee until the lake looked like blood. Thousands chose to kill themselves! Thousands starved to death. Over 1,000,000 were killed. (Josephus) Do you see why Israel has never been able to become strong again...and why it is foolish to try to make them strong again? For 2000 years they have had to continuously run from their enemies. This is what God threatened in Deuteronomy.

26 Then **he released Barabbas** to them; and when he had **scourged Jesus**, he **delivered Him to be crucified.**

5. Pilate then showed his complicity 同谋 when he tortured Jesus before executing him on the cross. The Roman Beast and the Jewish Scarlet Harlot did not simply kill him; they wanted to torture him first. Pilate could have simply beheaded him, which was relatively painless. But he ordered the Lord to be tortured before execution. Pilate wanted the people to love him so he killed Jesus. The Jews wanted to kill Jesus because they were losing their influence. None of them could hide from the blame. But it was sad to see Pilate had no interest in Jesus when he found Jesus had no supporters in the crowd. So he had no evidence from the Jews, his wife told him that Jesus was innocent, he believed Jesus was innocent, so he condemned him. Pilate knew the Jews turned Jesus over from envy...and this made his sin worse.

6. Before he was crucified, Jesus was stripped naked, chained to a pillar, and severely whipped across his bare back. The whips had hooks that tore into the flesh...and so his back became furrows. The people hit him...the God of glory. With blood running down his face and his back soaked in blood, they led him to the cross to kill him. (Mark 14). Then the Roman soldiers, called for more soldiers to join them to mock Jesus. They fake saluted Jesus, insulting and not honoring him. They even spat on him.

7. Lessons:

- a. God may oblige when people ask him to damn their children**...or if you spiritually starve them to death from lack of instruction and discipline.
- b. The bound Lord pictured the perfect bound sacrifice prepared for the altar.** This pictured you, bound in sin and slavery! And you were in him. It was as if you were tied. He took full responsibility for you; this is what you deserved. Jesus went to be the sacrifice and the criminal went free!
- c. He then took that crown of thorns on his head.** Adam was cursed with thorns...and Jesus took them all. And the scourging was a matter of Divine justice.

Conclusion:

Pilate **asserted the innocence** of Jesus in 3 ways: through his examination, the lack of evidence against Jesus, and the testimony of his wife. Then on 3 occasions he **tried to release Jesus**. But because he loved his power, he handed over the innocent **to be tortured and crucified**. Yet these Jewish and Roman rulers were doing exactly what God decreed 谕旨! They were preparing the Lamb of God to die for the sins of the world.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Jesus loved you – a wretched sinner heading for hell - so much that he took your guilt, suffering as the just for the unjust. None else could or would do that.

2. Doesn't this bring you to tears? But more! Doesn't this make you serve him with more zeal? Doesn't this make you want to know him more? Doesn't this want to make you tell others of this great love?

Finally, I urge you to call on God to accept the sacrifice of Jesus – that true and perfect Lamb of God – that you, though guilty, might receive eternal life, starting now!