

### The Lord's Trial Continues

#### John 19:1-16

John 19:1-16 - *"So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. <sup>2</sup> And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. <sup>3</sup> Then they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands.*

*<sup>4</sup> Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him."*

*<sup>5</sup> Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, "Behold the Man!" <sup>6</sup> Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him."*

*<sup>7</sup> The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."*

*<sup>8</sup> Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, <sup>9</sup> and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. <sup>10</sup> Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"*

*<sup>11</sup> Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."*

*<sup>12</sup> From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."*

*<sup>13</sup> When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. <sup>14</sup> Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"*

*<sup>15</sup> But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"*

*<sup>16</sup> Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away."*

#### Background Notes

Pilate, the Roman Procurator, ordered that Jesus be scourged. Roman scourging or flogging used a whip of multiple leather thongs, with pieces of metal or bone embedded in the ends of the leather thongs. Scourging was so brutal a practice that men sometimes died after being scourged. Beatings administered by the Jews were limited to 39 strikes, but Roman floggings were not. Pilate hoped to appease the Jews by having Jesus scourged, and then he planned to release Him. But the Jewish leaders wanted no compromise. They wanted Jesus crucified.

The Roman soldiers mocked and made fun of Jesus Christ as the King of the Jews. They were not only mocking Jesus personally, but also showing their contempt for the Jews in general. Little did they realize, when they placed the crown of thorns on our Lord's head, that it symbolized our Lord taking upon Himself the curse for sin. The thorn was symbolic of the curse of sin (Genesis 2). Our Lord "wore a crown of thorns, that we might wear a crown of glory"!

This trial took place at the Pavement, or Gabbatha (v13). The Pavement may have been part of the Antonia Fortress, which was located next to the northwest corner of the Temple complex. A Roman pavement can be seen today on the site of the ancient Fortress. In fact, inscribed on this pavement is a Roman game called the "Game of the King." The soldiers may have been playing this game when they mocked the Lord as King of the Jews - twisting a crown of thorns and putting it on His head, and putting a purple robe on Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

Twice Pilate declared that Jesus Christ was innocent: *"I find no fault in Him..."* (v4) and *"I find no fault in Him"* (v6). When the Jews saw that they couldn't get the Lord crucified for being a threat to Rome, they reverted to the false religious charge. *"The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God'"* (v7).

This statement made Pilate even more afraid (v8). Why? Maybe he was troubled about Jesus' true nature and identity. Remember that Pilate's wife had a dream about Jesus, and she had sent a warning her husband to have nothing to do with this just or righteous man. *"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'"* (Matthew 27:19).

As a result, Pilate wanted to release Jesus, but he capitulated to the pressure of the Jews when they cried out: *"If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar"* (v12). Pilate couldn't handle this political threat. He knew that the Emperor Tiberius would remove him from power he would be removed from power if he couldn't handle the Jews. So Pilate delivered Jesus over to be crucified.

In verse 11, the Lord Jesus said to Pilate, *"You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."* To whom was the Lord referring when He said "the one who delivered Me to you"? Most likely He meant Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest who delivered Jesus over to Pilate.

Caiaphas' sin was greater because, as the Jewish high priest, he knew the Messianic predictions in the Hebrew Scriptures - but he refused to recognize the possibility that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus had claimed to be the Messiah, and He had backed up those claims with His miraculous works, but Caiaphas, the nation's leader, refused to acknowledge and recognize the possibility that Jesus was the Messiah. And the rest of the religious leaders followed him.

## Doctrinal/Teaching Points

### 1. Pilate did not realize the profound truth of his statement, “Behold the Man!”

Verse 5: *“Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, “Behold the Man!”*

In the Old City of Jerusalem today there is an arch called *“Ecce Homo,”* meaning “Behold the Man!” This arch is located near the spot where the Antonia Fortress stood, and supposedly marks the spot where Pilate made this statement. We can’t be sure of the actual site, but we **can** be sure that Pilate didn’t realize the truth of his statement, “Behold the Man!” Pilate probably made this statement with sarcasm and contempt toward Jesus, as well as toward the Jews.

Little did Pilate realize that a profound truth was expressed in his statement, “Behold the Man!” Here was the “Man amongst men.” Here was the **perfect** Man, the only perfect Human who ever lived in history.

The Jews accused Jesus of being a mere man who claimed to be God. The truth is that Jesus is the eternal Son of God who had become Man - the perfect Man. He never ceased to be God, but He became Man in order to die. The penalty of sin was death, so the Redeemer had to be human in order to die. But He had to be the perfect, sinless Human to be able to take upon Himself the penalty for sin. Jesus was the perfect Man.

Pilate didn’t realize the profound truth of his statement, “Behold the Man!” Have you realized the profound truth of that statement? Have you believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He became Man to die for your sins? Have you beheld “The Man”?

### 2. Pilate did not realize the profound truth of his statement, “Behold your King!”

Verse 14: *“Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, “Behold your King!”*

Again, Pilate probably made this statement with sarcasm and contempt toward Jesus, and especially toward the Jews. The Lord was standing there with a crown of thorns on His head and the purple robe on His bleeding body. Pilate certainly could not have seen Jesus as a threat to Rome.

But Pilate didn’t realize the profound truth of His statement, “Behold your King!” Standing before him was not only the true King of the Jews, but the **King of kings**, the **King of the Universe!** One day Pilate will be forced to recognize that Jesus Christ is the Kings of kings, and he will be forced to bow his knee to Christ.

And what about those people who cried out, *“Crucify Him!”* and *“We have no king but Caesar!”*? They, too, will be forced bow the knee and recognize Christ as the King of kings. Philippians 2:10-11 says that *“at the name of Jesus every knee*

*should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

Have you realized the truth of that statement, "Behold your King?" Is Jesus Christ your King? Have you yet bowed your knee to Jesus Christ as King?

## **Practical Application**

### **Don't play politics with the truth.**

Pilate knew the truth. He knew that Jesus was innocent. In fact, he emphatically declared, "I find no fault in Him." But Pilate played politics with the truth. No wonder Jesus refused to answer him (v9). The Lord doesn't answer those who compromise the truth for their own selfish reasons.

Pilate lacked the moral courage to release an innocent man. When the Jews cried out, *"If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar,"* Pilate capitulated to the political pressure, and delivered Jesus up to be crucified. Pilate played politics with the truth.

Recently our president made a terrible decision because he played politics with the truth. He vetoed the bill that Congress had overwhelmingly passed to ban partial birth abortions. The president certainly knows the truth about this horrible procedure, in which all but the head of a viable baby is delivered, and then the baby is brutally killed before it is fully delivered. The president certainly knows that the rationale about the "health of the mother" is not a true factor. He knows that this procedure is infanticide. But the president played politics with the truth. His terrible decision was made to obtain votes. How awful! How horrible! How tragic!

Do we play politics with the truth? All of us would probably say that we would never play politics with the truth - and I certainly hope we wouldn't! But do we sometimes manipulate the truth ("play politics") to push our own agenda in the decisions of our church, or our ministry, or at our workplace?

Is it possible that an innocent person being hurt right now because you're "playing politics" with the truth - to fit your own desires? Don't play politics with the truth!