

# The Gospel of John

## Jesus Before Pilate (Part 3)

### John 19:8-16

#### INTRODUCTION:

This morning we find ourselves in the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of the gospel of John. We are in the final week of Christ's life before His crucifixion. Jesus has gone through five trials. There were six in total. Three of the trials were with the Jewish leaders and three of them were with the Gentile leaders. He is now in the middle of the final trial with Pilate. Pilate has already determined that he did not find any guilt in Him.

His verdict: NOT GUILTY! But the Jews are not done. They continue to press the issue in order to get Pilate to say "OK! He is Guilty. I will execute Him."

#### Stand and Read Scripture

##### **John 19:8-16 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup> Therefore when Pilate heard this statement, he was *even* more afraid; <sup>9</sup> and he entered into the Praetorium again and \*said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. <sup>10</sup> So Pilate \*said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?" <sup>11</sup> Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has *the* greater sin." <sup>12</sup> As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him, but the Jews cried out saying, "If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out *to be* a king opposes Caesar."

<sup>13</sup> Therefore when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. <sup>14</sup> Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. And he \*said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!" <sup>15</sup> So 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> So he then handed Him over to them to be crucified.

#### Prayer

In their sinful blindness, **the Jews were convinced that they were honoring God by killing His Son.** But they had a problem. They did not have a good reason to present to Pilate to justify Jesus' execution.

#### **What are they to do?**

Pilate has told them that he does not find any guilt in Him and he wants to get him off of his hands. He has made several proposals to them to try to appease them.

**I will lift the restriction that you have on capital punishment in this case and allow you to kill Jesus yourself.** You would have thought they would have run with that, but they said "**NO**". And we spoke of the significance of that decision because Christ had said that He was going to be "lifted up" which was the Roman's crucifixion on the cross. If the Jews had stoned Him, it would have made Jesus a liar and all Christianity would have gone down the drain.

**He passed Jesus on to Herod.** But Herod only laughed at the situation and returned him to Pilate.

**I will allow you to set a Jewish prisoner free.** You can choose between Jesus and Barabbas. But to Pilate's dismay, they chose Barabbas.

**I will punish Him by scourging and mockingly dress Him up as your "King".** But this just brought on more cries to "Crucify Him"!

**So what are they to do?** Their only recourse was blackmail. We will threaten him with a major revolt.

Pilate knew that the Jewish leaders did not want a fair trial. They just wanted an executioner. So his dilemma is clear. Rome wants fair and just rule. The Jews do not want fairness or justice. They are like a lynch mob and want to execute an innocent man. Pilate does not want to do that, but he also does not want another revolt by the Jews.

So he is trapped. If he rules justly, according to the law of Rome and his own conscience, and lets Jesus go, the situation is likely to get even worse. If he rules unjustly, then he will be violating his oath and brought great grief to his conscience. But worse than that, he has sold himself to those hated Jews once again by blackmail. So we come to Pilate's fatal panic in verse 8.

## **BODY:**

### **I. PILATE'S FATAL PANIC.**

#### **John 19:8 (NASB)**

**<sup>8</sup>Therefore when Pilate heard this statement, he was *even* more afraid;**

What statement did Pilate hear that made him even more afraid? The indictment was blasphemy. Jesus was claiming to be the Son of God.

Now why does he panic over this statement about Jesus being the Son of God? Because every Roman believed in a panoply of gods. Roman gods dominated the Mediterranean world. The Romans knew very well about the stories of the gods who came down into the life of men. They all knew that the gods had offspring and that the offspring often came down as men in human form and that is how he would understand the phrase "Son of God". Pilate knew that Jesus was from Galilee. He knew He was **not** a military king. He knew that He was a miracle worker. And now He is claiming to be the Son of God! In his mind he may have been thinking that a child of one of the gods had come down to earth to confront him.

We see evidence of this mythology in the scriptures. One example is found in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts. Paul healed a man who was lame from birth and caused him to walk for the first time in his life. The people thought he was a god.

### **Acts 14:11-12 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have become like men and have come down to us." <sup>12</sup> And they *began* calling Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.

Also, remember in Acts 28 when Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake on island of Malta and He shook off the snake?

### **Acts 28:6 (NASB)**

<sup>6</sup> But they were expecting that he was about to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and *began* to say that he was a god.

So from a pagan perspective Pilate might have been thinking, "This could be worse than the threat from the Jews or even worse than dealing with Caesar. The gods may have come down after me." He is in a panicked state of mind! And to add to that, he had just received a warning from his wife about some kind of a weird dream.

### **Matthew 27:19 (NASB)**

<sup>19</sup> While he 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."

What did it all mean? He was a superstitious man who believed in the Roman gods. In his panic He goes back into the Praetorium with Jesus.

### **John 19:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> and he entered into the Praetorium again and *said* to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

Pilate knew that Jesus was from Galilee. But what he was really wanting to know was if Jesus came down from the gods? And this time Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate had finally reached the point of no return you might say. When Jesus has nothing more to say to someone that is not good. It is a fulfillment of Genesis 6 during the time of Noah.

### **Genesis 6:3a (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh;..."

### **Genesis 6:5-8 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. <sup>6</sup> The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. <sup>7</sup> The Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." <sup>8</sup> But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

And guess what; He drowned the entire world except for Noah and those in the ark. Grace does have its limits.

Jesus knew Pilate's heart. He was like Pharaoh. Pharaoh hardened his heart to the point that God further hardened His heart. Pilate hardened his heart to a point that God hardened His heart and gave him no answer.

Pilate was not completely in the dark concerning Jesus. If you remember, Pilate had asked Jesus if He was the Kings of the Jews? This is what Jesus told him.

### **John 18:33-37 (NASB)**

<sup>33</sup> Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?" <sup>35</sup> Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?" <sup>36</sup> Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." <sup>37</sup> Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say *correctly* that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

But none of this seemed to register with Pilate. Since Jesus was no longer speaking to him listen to his response.

### **John 19:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup> So Pilate \*said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?"

The truth of the matter is he did not have that authority and he knew it. It wasn't because he knew that God alone had that authority, but because he couldn't get past the Jews. They were the ones that were going to decide whether Jesus lived or died, not him. It really wasn't his decision to make, it was taken out of his hands completely so that when we get to the end of the section, he doesn't even render the verdict, the Jews do.

Technically he did have the authority, but that had all been forfeited. He was being blackmailed by the Jews and terrified by this man that might be a god in his presence. That would be a reason why He had the power to do so many miracles.

Then listen to Jesus' response.

### **John 19:11a (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above;..."

This just deepens his fear and panic.

He does not know about the true God. In his pagan mythology something terrifying is going on here. All pagan gods terrified people. In the Roman pantheon there are no gods of grace or mercy, they are all vengeful.

### **John 19:11b (NASB)**

...for this reason he who delivered Me to you has *the* greater sin."

Pilate was not off the hook. If you reject Christ, you have sinned. But in this case someone had the greater sin. Your first thought might be that it was Judas that Jesus was referring to but actually it was Caiaphas the high priest, the Sanhedrin, and the Jewish supreme court that brought Jesus before Pilate. They had the greater sin.

Does Pilate have guilt? **Yes!** Do the Roman executioners have guilt? **Yes!** But the greater sin goes to the leaders of Israel. Mark it down: there is guilt and there is greater guilt. Eternally there is punishment, and greater punishment, and greater punishment, and greater punishment. Not all crimes are the same.

Pilate is guilty, but his guilt does not ascend to the level of those who handed Him over to him. Jesus is speaking in a strange language to him. He is a king. He is from above. His authority is from above. He is the Son of God. He has a kingdom that is not of this world. All of this has Pilate is terrified. So what was Pilate's response?

### **John 19:12a (NASB)**

*<sup>12</sup> As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him,...*

We do not know what those efforts were, but he must have made some intensified efforts. But in reality his efforts are too late. The Jews have him by the throat. All of his efforts are going for naught because the Jews continued to cry out to him.

### **John 19:12b (NASB)**

*...but the Jews cried out saying, "If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar."*

Do you notice the shift? Their original claim was that the crime of Jesus was blasphemy. He is claiming to be the Son of God! But that had no bearing on Pilate. So they had to shift back to, "This is a man who claims to be a king. He is a rival to Caesar. He threatens Caesar." Of course, this was all just manipulation. **"If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar."**

You know what Pilate heard at that time? "If I let this Man go, there is going to be a riot. That riot is going to be so big they are going to send word back to Caesar and I will be finished. So in an act of self-protection, he is going to have to give in. That was the last straw: "You're no friend of Caesar. We are going to tell Caesar that you have aligned yourself with a rival king. **You will lose your life, Pilate!**"

Pilate told them six times "I find no guilt in Him". I will waive the restriction that has been placed upon you. Go and judge Him according to your law. Matthew tells us how the Jews responded and what Pilate's final verdict would be.

### **Matthew 27:21-26**

*<sup>21</sup> But the governor said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." <sup>22</sup> Pilate \*said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all \*said, "Crucify Him!" <sup>23</sup> And he said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they kept shouting all the more, saying, "Crucify Him!"*

*<sup>24</sup> When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves." <sup>25</sup> And all the people said, "His blood shall be on us*

and on our children!" <sup>26</sup> Then he released Barabbas for them; but after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified.

## II. PILATE'S FINAL VERDICT.

Well, Pilate has to make a decision, so we go from his **failing proposals** that we covered last week, to his **fatal panic**, to his **final verdict**.

### **John 19:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> Therefore when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

When Pilate heard the Jews shouting to blackmail him he brought Jesus back out in front of them. He set up the bench and took his seat as a judge.

### **John 19:14a (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. ...

To start the final proceedings we read that it is the day of preparation for the Passover. It is early Friday morning. Passover does not start until Friday night at sundown. The Galilean Jews did their preparation the night before because their Friday began at sundown instead of midnight. The **Judean** Jews started their day at midnight with the Romans. It is the sixth hour which is around 6:00 AM Roman time.

The verdict was about to be made. But Pilate wanted to make one more comment to the Jews..

### **John 19:14b (NASB)**

...And he \*said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!"

First he said, "Behold, the Man!" Now he says, "**Behold, your King!**" I am sure it was said in a tone of mockery, scorn, ridicule, and sarcasm but also with a bit of fear.

## **CONCLUSION:**

He renders no verdict, the people do that; they are the ones in charge. He has set up his judgment seat. But they pronounce the verdict.

### **John 19:15 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup> So 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."

"We have no king but Caesar" This was a blatant lie! Even if they could not accept Jesus as the Messiah, they knew that a king was coming and that king was certainly not Caesar. So...

### **John 19:16 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> So he then handed Him over to them to be crucified.

**He is Lord!**