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What do you want to with Jesus?

Matthew 27:11-18

Matthew 27:11-18, *Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?"*

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 marvelled greatly.*

Taking the Place of Barabbas

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.*

In this passage the most important, fateful, and serious question that could ever be posed by anyone is posed.

What shall I do then with Jesus who is called Christ?

The key question.

Pilate found himself in an almost unbearable dilemma as to what to do with Jesus Christ.

But Pilate is not alone.

Every human being on the face of the earth faces that very same question. **What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?**

Especially as we are approaching **yet another Christmas season** this query that faces every man and woman alive.

The answer to that question you give will determine your eternal destiny.

Pilate articulates a question that is a question facing every person.

Sadly, tragically, **Pilate made a wrong choice** in response to that question.

He asked the right question, what shall I do with Jesus Christ? Instead of going to the right source, **he went to the wrong source, got the wrong answer, and ended up as an eternal tragedy.**

It is my prayer that you will answer that question better than Pilate did.

Matthew 27:1-2, transition from the Jewish trial of Christ to the Roman trial.

Christ is being tried because the Jewish leaders want Him dead. The **3 phased Jewish trial** is now over.

Jesus stood before Annas, Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin.

To accomplish their goal putting Jesus to death they must get the Romans to get involved. Because under Roman occupation, the Jews have not had the right of execution.

They want Jesus executed but they need the Romans to do it.

Why didn't they do to Jesus what they did later to Stephen, just take Him out of the city, throw Him down and stone Him?

Didn't they have the right to do that?

No.

In their action against Stephen, they were acting illegally. It was a mob action.

They were not going to act as a mob, because they were trying to maintain a form of legality. They weren't about to act in a mob fashion.

They wanted it to be done right and so they went to Pilate with Jesus. To get Pilate to comply with them and execute Him.

The fourth watch of the night, about 5:00 a.m., when they arrived at **Pilate's judgment hall**, most likely located in **Fort Antonius** which was to the north of the temple ground. They hand Him over to Pontius Pilate.

That brings us to the Roman trial.

V 11, *Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."*

We are going to witness a **3 phased Roman trial**.

- Before Pilate,
- Before Herod,
- Back to Pilate.

That will be six different elements to the trial of Jesus Christ.

One thing comes ringing through all of it is that Jesus Christ is without fault.

With all the things that had gone on all night long with the Jewish leaders, they came up with no legitimate accusation against Him.

The Spirit of God is proving without a shadow of a doubt that Jesus is indeed the spotless Lamb of God who has no blemish, who is fit to die for the sins of the world.

Matthew always wants to present the perfection of Christ, the majesty of Christ, His purity, even in this scene.

All the courts of men and demons combined together cannot come up with one single legitimate accusation against Christ. The record stands that He was killed because they hated Him and rejected Him.

It was the evil of their own hearts, not anything Christ had done.

Matthew in taking us to the Roman trial will accomplish the same thing he did through the Jewish trial and that is the exaltation of Jesus Christ.

The Bible stands as a timeless record: **Jesus Christ was crucified due to the hatred of men.** He was the perfect, righteous, sinless, majestic Son of God, yet all human authorities—

- Caiaphas,
- Annas,
- the Sanhedrin,
- false witnesses,
- Judas,
- Herod, and
- Pilate,

Failed to bring a single legitimate accusation against Him.

The collective courts of men could find no fault in the perfect Son of God.

1. The accusation of the Jews.

The lack of a legitimate accusation speaks volumes about the perfection of Christ.

Jesus stood before the governor.

V 11, Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

The governor was asking Him relative to the accusation the Jews had made. Matthew doesn't give that accusation.

To get it, we must go to the gospel of John.

John 18:28, *Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.*

From the judgment hall presided over by Caiaphas they took Jesus very early morning by 5- 6 am.

They wouldn't go into Pilate's judgment hall because they didn't want to be defiled. They had this tradition that contact with a Gentile is defiling. Entering into a Gentile home is defiling.

The Talmud records that when a Gentile woman aborts a baby, she throws the baby down the drain and thus the whole house is contaminated by a dead body. If you go into a Gentile house, you will receive a condemnation and defilement. They believed that Gentiles were unclean.

To maintain the place of cleanliness as they approached the Passover, they wanted to be sure they avoided such contact. It is indeed hypocrisy of all hypocrisies to be preoccupied with some silly tradition like that while busily going about executing the very Son of the living God.

They maintain the fastidious commitment to their religion while they were in a hurry to kill the very One who was the source of it.

That meant Pilate had to come out.

John 18:29, *Pilate then went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?"*

Pilate asks them to give him the indictment.

What is the accusation?

What are we trying Him for?

This is the first legal thing that has happened in the trial of Christ.

Pilate is a Roman governor. He has been placed in Judea in Palestine to give Roman presence.

There were other rulers there. There were the Herod's.

There was **Herod Antipas** who ruled in **Galilee and Peraea** to the north.

There was **Herod Philip** who was northeast of that in a very unpopulated area.

There was **Herod Archelaus** who ruled in **Judea and Samaria** and Idumea.

They were **three sons of Herod the Great** who was once the **Idumean king** of all of Palestine. He had killed off some of his sons, the remaining ones had inherited pieces of his kingdom.

They did have some power.

They did have some rule.

They did amass some fortunes.

The judicial processes and the military might was in the hands of the Roman governor who was placed there to maintain the Roman peace.

Pilate is the judicial person.

Since the Romans had the right of execution only, they had to approach Pilate.

From the standpoint of the Scripture, Jesus had to be executed by Romans, because He would die a Roman death as we will note in a moment.

Now Pilate had been governor from **26 – 36 A.D.** for about ten years. They bring Jesus to Pilate and in a proper fashion as a judge, he steps out and holds court outside the judgment hall because they won't come in.

Jesus is inside.

They stay out.

Pilate asks, "**What is the accusation?**"

Which is a fair enough way to begin the trial.

Notice their response.

John 18:30, *They answered and said to him, "If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.*

An amazing answer. They impugned Pilate for even asking the question.

What right have you to question our motives?

We wouldn't have brought Him to you if He weren't a criminal.

Pilate asked a proper judicial question: What is the accusation? They don't give an answer.

They just indict Pilate for even asking the question.

They weren't looking for a judge but an executioner.

They didn't want another trial but wanted Pilate to just agree to take His life.

The absence of any accusation here is another affirmation of the perfection of Jesus Christ.

Pilate had no information about Jesus Christ that would let him know what their accusation might be.

Pilate saw Jesus Christ as no threat.

Pilate knew of no crime He had committed.

When asked about an accusation, the Jews had none to give. They have no charge.

John 18:31, *Then Pilate said to them, “You take Him and judge Him according to your law.” Therefore the Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,”*

He may have even been giving them the right to execute Him. If you feel He ought to be executed, execute Him. I don't want to get involved in this.

Pilate knew who Jesus was. The night before when the Roman soldiers came along with the Jews to the garden to take Jesus' captive, the Roman soldiers were there because Pilate had granted permission for them to be there.

Pilate even had an opinion about why they wanted to take Jesus Christ. So he was up to speed, at least in part.

John 18:31, *Therefore the Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,”*

We don't want you to be a judge but an executioner.

Do you think we would bring somebody to you who is not a criminal?

They sure did it when they wanted to. They put Stephen to death. Later on, they tried to put Paul to death, and the Romans had to rescue Paul and take him to Caesarea and put him in a cell for his own protection for two years.

If they really wanted to badly enough, they could have. But they were trying to maintain a legal appearance, so that when the people started asking questions, they could say it was all very legal and the Romans did it.

The plan of God which demanded it as well.

John 18:32, *that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die.*

They were fulfilling prophecy but thinking in their own minds that they were doing this to maintain legality. They were fulfilling the plan of God.

John 18:33, *Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"*

Then Pilate went back into the judgment hall.

Matthew 27:11 comes in.

V 11, *Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."*

Luke 23:2, *And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."*

This is **NOT** the reason why they convicted Him in the Jewish trial. **They convicted Him in the Jewish trial of blasphemy**, because He said He was the Son of God.

But they know that a blasphemy charge in a Roman court isn't going to hold. The Romans aren't interested in executing people for their religious persuasion.

They must come up with an accusation against Jesus that appears to be high treason against Rome. The only way they can get Pilate involved is to accuse Jesus of something that is a threat to Roman security.

The Romans had very small toleration for rebels and revolutionaries as they had proven by crucifying many Jews who had tried to revolt against their government, even in Palestine.

First, they come up with this idea that Jesus is a threat to Roman security, that He perverts our nation, that is He is a rebel, stirring up the nation against Rome.

Secondly, that Jesus forbids to pay taxes, that is that He is not rendering to Caesar what is due Caesar. He is telling people not to as well.

Thirdly, that He is claiming to be a king. He is setting Himself up as a rival to the Caesar himself.

This is brand new. They just prepared this on the spot. Of course, the accusations are totally false.

- ✓ Jesus didn't pervert the nation into rebellion against Rome.
- ✓ He never led a social revolution.
- ✓ He never rebelled against Roman oppression.
- ✓ He never called the people to do that.
- ✓ He never incited anybody to do that.
- ✓ He was very submissive.
- ✓ He even taught that if a Roman soldier's going along and asks you to carry his burden a mile, carry it two miles.
- ✓ He taught the people to respond to those in authority over them properly.
- ✓ He also taught to pay taxes.

When He was approached and asked if He paid taxes, through Peter the Apostle, He said, "we pay taxes, so we don't offend anyone."

He even said, "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." That is pay your taxes to the government but save your worship for the Lord.

Yes, He was a king, but not a king who was a threat to Caesar. Because when they tried to make Him a king, He disappeared from their midst, lest there be a riot and a revolution.

All their accusations were lies. Again, marvellous testimony is born to the perfection of Jesus Christ.

The only thing they can come up with are lies of such obvious nature that anybody reading the Bible knows they are lies.

More testimony to His sinless, spotless, blameless purity and making Him fit to be the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world.

V 11, *And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."*

John 18:33-37, *Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"*

³⁴*Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?"* ³⁵*Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?"* 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."* ³⁷*Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the*

world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

Jesus is saying to Pilate is My Kingdom is a spiritual Kingdom and an internal Kingdom.

John 18:38, *Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all.*

Verdict by Pilate:

I find no fault in Him.

This is a courtroom term.

The judge finds, the finding of the court is, he was found innocent. That is a term that’s carried down even today to show that the proceedings having been followed, the verdict is rendered.

When Pilate came out and said, “I find no fault,” he rendered the verdict ‘not guilty’ on Jesus.

He was not guilty of being an insurrectionist rebel who called people not to pay their taxes and to defy the government of Rome, no proof was brought none.

Pilate did not see any.

Jesus said to him Is this your accusation.

Is Rome making this accusation against Me?

He says, "This is your own people and Pilate in saying that knew he had no case.

How could Rome convict Him of a crime Rome wasn't even accusing Him of?

No fault.

V 11, *And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."*

Jesus explained what He meant as we saw in John.

What happens?

V 12, *And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.*

The whole crowd started to verbalize their accusations against Jesus.

Pilate out on the porch again, and the whole crowd is stirred up.

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."*

They started to cry against Him. They started to put the heat on Pilate.

Pilate is no match for the furious hatred of Jesus that is in the hearts of these leaders who are Satan-possessed. The accusation is empty talk. Pilate knows it.

Let the whole world know. The record stands.

When you read the Bible, you discover that **Jesus Christ was utterly without fault**. All the courts of the world—from the religious tribunals led by Caiaphas and Annas to the pagan proceedings conducted by the coward Pilate—ultimately arrived at the same verdict: **He was innocent.**

They had to manufacture lies to kill Jesus Christ.

Pilate could see it all, he wasn't dumb. It was obvious.

Anybody who was a real threat to Rome, they would hide and join in his revolution. They wouldn't expose him. Pilate knew the whole thing was a farce.

Pilate knew they did it for envy.

They hated Him because He could do what they couldn't.

- ✓ He could heal people,
- ✓ He could teach wisdom,
- ✓ He could remove disease,
- ✓ He could raise the dead.

They couldn't do that.

He was popular and they were not, and they hated Him because of it. It was that simple.

Even a pagan unbeliever could see the real issue was envy. Jesus had never posed a threat to Rome. If He was a real threat to Rome, the Jews wouldn't have brought Him there to be exposed by Rome and executed for doing that.

Pilate knew it was all a matter of envy. He must have even suspected that when they came to ask for Roman soldiers the night before to take Him captive. He must have known then what the real issues were.

Pilate knew it and pronounced Him not guilty.

But when he brought Him back out, he should have dismissed the crowd, he should have moved his soldiers in, broken them up and given Jesus the protection He needed from them.

He should have done what was justice.

But instead, he puts Jesus on the dock and lets everybody start screaming accusations at Him.

2. The attitude of the Lord

V 12, *Jesus answered nothing.*

His attitude is a demonstration of His absolute perfection. They just started screaming their accusations against Him, constantly, fiercely. Jesus answered nothing.

He answered him not a word. He had said what He needed to say when He was on trial. The judge had given the verdict. There was nothing more to say. It was over.

What else to say?

Not guilty was already the verdict.

Jesus is not going to answer the crowd.

He is not going to answer Pilate.

Because there is nothing left to say.

There is nothing to defend for Himself because He must die, that is the Father's will, and He is committed to it.

V 13-14, *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 marvelled greatly.*

Can't You hear the tremendous accusations they are making against You?

Not even one word, the Greek says.

Not even one word did He say.

Pilate was absolutely amazed.

Pilate had a lot of prisoners, condemned and here was somebody who was being accused of heinous kinds of things, serious kind of crimes who said nothing in His own defence absolutely nothing.

Pilate had seen a steady parade of criminals who would plead their case and cry out for mercy and protest loudly to those who were wanting to convict and charge them with crimes.

He had seen all the people demanding their exoneration, pleading their innocence.

Here is Jesus quiet, never says a single word.

Where is the troublesome revolutionary who is a threat to Rome?

Where is the tax protester who is leading the nation in an insurrection?

Where is the king who is a rival to Caesar?

Here is a calm serene peaceful man who is literally offering Himself without reason.

Pilate knows He is innocent.

Jesus confirms it by saying absolutely nothing.

He is resolute, like a sheep before her shearers, Isaiah said.

He did not open His mouth.
He would willingly go to the cross.

What would Pilate do now?

He knows He doesn't deserve to die and yet he doesn't want to irritate the crowd and create another incident.

Pilate life is on the line.
His career is on the line.
Pilate was in a very dangerous position.

Pilates past mistakes.

The first thing he did to make a **show of power when he was appointed governor** was to ride into Jerusalem with a whole entourage of soldiers to show his power. He came with the soldiers with banners and flags. On top of the flags in brass was an eagle and on top of the eagle was a moulded image of Caesar. Prior governors had the sense to remove those kinds of things because the Jews believed them to be idols.

The Jews had left idolatry since the Babylonian captivity. They didn't tolerate it. The other governors had been careful about that, but Pilate, wanting to show his power, came in with his whole group of soldiers, all with the image of Caesar, which of course the Romans believed to be a god. He brought an idol in the city of Jerusalem, the holy city. The Jews rioted and

protested and demanded that he take those off his banners. In a power play, he refused to do it.

After accomplishing what he wanted to in his splendid appearance in Jerusalem, he turned to return the **60 miles to the seacoast in Caesarea** where his basic operation was headquartered, and they followed him for five days, screaming and rioting and demanding. Sometimes patiently, sometimes impatiently that he removes those graven images.

Pilate refused to do it.

He called a meeting of all these rioting Jews.

He put them in the ***amphitheatre***, surrounded them with his soldiers and said if they didn't stop the demands, he would cut off their heads.

At which point they bared their necks, and heads to one side and told his soldiers to go ahead and cut off all their heads.

They called his bluff. There was no way he could do it. There was no way he could report back to Rome that he had massacred a whole bunch of defenceless Jews in an amphitheatre with their necks bared.

Furthermore, it could have led to national revolution. He couldn't have survived that situation because he was sent to keep the peace, not start a war.

Pilate was forced to remove all those images. They were one up on him. They had him where they wanted him.

A little later, he realized the need for a better water supply in Jerusalem.

Pilate decided to build an **aqueduct to bring water into the city of Jerusalem.** He took the money out of the temple treasury, money which was devoted to God. This so greatly irritated the Jews that it fomented another riot which he had to deal with by sending his soldiers into a huge crowd of people with clubs, spears, swords, and at a given signal they clubbed and stabbed people to death to break up the riot.

The third and most devastating thing that happened to Pilate was when he established a **residence in the city of Jerusalem.** Made some shields for his soldiers, and on the shields, he had engraved **“Tiberius, The Emperor.”**

Which to the Jewish people again was an emblem of a false god and they demanded that the shields be changed. He refused to do that. They sent word to Tiberius. They reported him to Caesar that he was doing this. Caesar sent word down to get those shields changed immediately.

They have him right where they want him.

- He cannot afford another message sent to Tiberius.
- He cannot afford another riot.

- He cannot afford any kind of revolution.
- He is in a difficult place.

Pilate has enough of a sense of justice as a Roman and as a judge, a governor, to do what's right. But he was a coward because if he does what's right and releases Christ, he is going to have a riot on his hands.

Something is going to happen, and he knows that it could end up in his losing his job. It would be like Tiberius to remove a governor and then execute him for his unfaithfulness.

Pilate hears the crowd say that Jesus started in Galilee and has come to this place, all the while stirring up the people. (**Luke 23:5**)

Something snaps in his mind as Galilee.

A solution for him.

Pilate when he hears the word Galilee an idea comes to his mind.

Luke 23:7, *And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.*

The time is still around 6:00 in the morning. Herod's right in Jerusalem. But Herod was the ruler, the tetrarch of Galilee.

These kings were basically under the yoke of Rome.
They functioned as Romans wished they would function.

Pilate decided to pass it off to Herod and that way I can get rid of the issue all together.

Pilate decides to send Him to Herod.

Herod Antipas, one of the three sons of Herod the Great who was given a third of the kingdom when Herod the Great died in 4 B.C. Herod Antipas was given the region of Galilee and Perea which is east of the Jordan River.

Herod Antipas knew about Jesus. Because Jesus had a great ministry in Galilee. Jesus removed disease from Galilee, so Herod Antipas knew of Him.

Judiciously, Christ in all His Galilean ministry had never gone to the city of Tiberius, named after Caesar, where Herod had his headquarters.

He had avoided that because Herod Antipas was the one who had beheaded John the Baptist.

- He was an incestuous man.
- He was a murderer.
- He was immoral.
- He was a very evil man.

Jesus avoided him but Herod had been curious to meet Jesus.

Luke 23:8, *Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him.*

Herod Antipas was excited to see Jesus. He had wanted to for a long time because he wanted to see Him do a miracle. He was fascinated by Him and what he had heard about Him.

Then Jesus is rushed off early in the morning again to Herod who sets up a court in his own presence there.

Luke 23:9, *Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing.*

Jesus answered nothing.

Herod is not the one who has the right to judge a man in the land of Palestine. That is a Roman right. Pilate is the judge. The verdict is already in. He needs to say nothing to Herod.

Why didn't He tell him about His Kingdom?

Because Herod Antipas already knew. He had heard the preaching of John the Baptist. There was nothing to say to this man.

Luke 23:10, *And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him.*

The chief priests of course were there, too, and they were vehemently accusing Him again. They would just follow Him all around and scream their accusations.

But Herod thought the whole thing was a joke.

- This is no king.
- This is no rival to me.
- This is no rival to Caesar.
- This is no insurrectionist.

Look at this poor man with the puffy face, black and blue because of the fists that have blasted against His flesh that very night when He was punched by the Sanhedrin members and the temple guard in the place of Caiaphas.

Jesus is no threat to Roman security or to the throne of Herod.

Luke 23:11, *Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate.*

The gorgeous robe means a bright white resplendent glistening robe that was commonly wore by Jewish kings and sometimes they wove silver thread in it to make it glisten in the sun.

So, they put a robe on Him like He was a king and they just mocked the whole thing. But he came up with no accusation.

Luke 23:14-15, *said to them, "You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; ¹⁵no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him.*

Pilate affirms that Herod's verdict was the same.
This man hasn't done anything.

This man is no revolutionary, no insurrectionist, no threat to security. The verdict of the second phase before Herod is the same as the first phase, not guilty!

Herod sends Him back. Still early in the morning. He comes through the town with this robe on, the mock king.

Now Jesus is back in Pilate's hands.

Pilate must deal again with Jesus. The accusation of the Jews only demonstrates the perfection of Christ.

The attitude of Christ before Pilate,

The attitude of Christ before Herod of absolute silence only demonstrates again the perfection of Christ.

He has nothing to answer to, because there is no crime.

The only thing that Pilate could say is, “Are You a king?” He said, “Yes, but not like you think I am a king. I am a King of a spiritual kingdom.” There is no legitimate accusation.

They can come up with nothing!

3. The animosity of the crowd.

The first phase of the Roman trial ended with acquittal.

Pilate says I find no fault in Him.

The second phase ended with acquittal.

Herod found no fault with Him.

Now for a third phase:

Pilate could have ended it after the first.

Herod could have ended it after the second.

What is he bringing it back to them again for?

The reason is because he was trapped.

He can't just defy them without a riot, and a riot could be fatal to his career and even to his own life.

What does Pilate going to do?

He is on the road to disaster.
He can't defy the Jews again.

V 15, *Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished.*

The feast of Passover.

As a concession to a conquered people, as an act of kindness and goodness, the governor annually at the Passover would release a criminal as a way of showing mercy to this conquered people.

This custom was potentiated at this season, as it had been in the past. If we read the other gospel record in **Luke and Mark**, we will find that the people even asked for it.

They demand that he release someone to them. He realizes that they have in hand a notable prisoner.

Literally a prisoner of mark, or a prisoner of note. Not just another common criminal but somebody who was well-known.

V 16, *And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas.*

His name is Barabbas.

We don't know anything about his background.

We really don't even know what his name means.

John 18:40, *Then they all cried again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.*

Mark 15 and Luke 23 that he was an insurrectionist who was also a murderer. He must have been a threat to the Jews as well as the Romans.

Perhaps even more so the Jews, or the Romans wouldn't have been willing to release him here. He is an arch-criminal. He is a famous criminal who is a threat to the safety of the population.

Obviously, a severe threat. He is due to be crucified, and I believe that he was the one on whose cross Jesus died between two of his own thieving buddies. Jesus literally did take Barabbas's place in that regard.

Pilate sees the idea of giving them an option between Barabbas and Jesus.

V 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?"*

They are in the front row and screaming accusations against Jesus.

Pilate offers to them whom will you that I release to you?
Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?

Pilate adds that after the name Jesus twice, once here and again in **V 22**. To emphasize the difference between Jesus and Barabbas.

Barabbas and Jesus who is called the anointed.

Who are you going to choose?

Your anointed, your Messiah or Barabbas, a criminal?

What does Pilate have in mind?

Pilate knows who the leaders will choose.

But what he has in mind is pitting the leaders against the people.

Because he understands the population of Jesus.

Surely, he knows about the triumphal entry that happened.

Surely, he knows how the population were turned toward Him.

Surely, he knows this miracle worker had made Himself one whom the people cheered.

Pilate object is to pit the people against the leaders.

Morning now arrived and the people are starting to gather. It is approaching 6:00.

John 19:14, *Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"*

The Roman clock which would put it at 6:00 in the morning. Pilate sees the crowd coming and he realizes now that he can play off the people against the leaders.

The leaders will want Jesus crucified,
The people will want Jesus released when given this choice.

Even pagan Pilate knows the difference between Christ and a criminal!

Another wonderful testimony to the beauty of Jesus Christ.

V 18, *For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.*

But the people wouldn't have that motive, because the people were the recipients of Jesus' ministry, not in competition with Him like the leaders.

Pilate figured he had a good way out.

Then something very interesting happened that I believe was divinely appointed by God.

There was an interruption, we will look in detail next week.

An interruption occurred with his wife.

Pilate had to turn to pay attention to what was going on. By the time he turned around something happened.

V 20, But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.

God allowed a divine intervention, a pause to give time for the leaders to stir up the crowd against, Jesus because it was the plan that He die.

Pilate's plan might have worked, pitting them against the people who still were somewhat fascinated against Jesus, but they could be convinced.

Because their fascination was very fickle.

It had been four days, since Jesus came into town and He had done no miracle and not overthrown the Romans. Now Jesus was standing there next to Pilate.

Pilate was saying He was innocent, and he found no fault in Him. **Herod** found no fault in Him.

They could have well concluded when they were stirred up that anybody who Pilate said was no threat was certainly no Messiah. Because they thought the Messiah would come and

overthrow Rome and here was Rome saying this man has no fault, we don't see this man as any threat.

Could anyone that Pilate approved of truly be their Messiah?

Jesus had attacked the temple, not Rome.

The leaders used whatever leverage they could gain, moved through the crowd.

Mark says, "Stirred up," or incited the crowd to bring about the destruction of Jesus. They wanted to destroy Him.

By the time Pilate comes back from this little interlude, he has got a real problem in his hands. Because the crowd and the leaders have become one.

Pilate play off against one another didn't work.

All the evil of hell, all the worse that men can bring cannot diminish Christ beauty. All the tribunals of evil men, lying murderous hearts, cowards, and egomaniacs come together to try Christ. They try themselves and are found guilty and He stands innocent.

The spotless Lamb of God without blemish.

What will you do with Jesus?

- Pilate condemned Him.

- The crowd accused Him.
- Herod mocked Him.
- Judas betrayed Him.
- Peter denied Him.

What are you going to do?

The right thing is to receive Him as Saviour and Lord.

Invite Jesus as Lord of your life into your heart. The one who came to die for you, take away your sin, give you eternal life.

Pilate was removed from Palestine a few years after the death of Christ.

A tragic man, exiled, and ended up a suicide.

Judas couldn't live with his guilt.

Pilate couldn't Pilate.

Look into your own heart and ask yourself a very serious question:

What are you going to do with Jesus Christ?

For what you do with Christ will impact your time and eternity.

What is your answer?