

Jesus Was Examined by Pilate

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children explain why Judas committed suicide and what that action also showed about the chief priests. In our topic today, we will see what happened when Jesus was examined by Pilate.

We saw that, in the morning, the Jews officially condemned Jesus and then took Him to Pilate. In Matthew 27:11-14, we read, “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.*’ And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, ‘Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?’ But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.” Here, we see that the religious leaders had brought Jesus to Pilate because they wanted Pilate to put Jesus to death since the Romans did not allow them to put a prisoner to death.

As Jesus stood before Pilate, we see that Pilate asked Jesus the question, “Are You the King of the Jews?” John 18:34-35 says, “Jesus answered him, ‘Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?’ Pilate answered, ‘Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?’” Here, we see that Jesus chose to make it clear that this was a charge that was being made by the Jews. Jesus gave a very simple answer when He said, “*It is as you say.*” Jesus did not try to deny who He was. However, then John tells us that Jesus went on to explain what it meant for Him to be the King of the Jews.

John 18:36-38 says, “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.’ 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.’ 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.’” Jesus explained that His kingdom was not a worldly kingdom.

Then, we see that Jesus explained why He came into the world. Jesus explained that He came into the world to bear witness to the truth. Then, Jesus explained who the people were that are a part of His kingdom. Jesus said that all those who are followers of truth hear His voice. Suddenly, this raised a question in the mind of Pilate. He did not know how to be a follower of truth, because he did not know what truth was. As a result, Pilate asked the question, “What is truth?” Since Jesus is the One who is truth, we see that He did not even give any answer when the chief priests and other religious leaders made false accusations against Jesus. Pilate pointed out the fact that the religious leaders were making many charges against Jesus. Jesus did not even bother to answer the charges that were being made against Him. This caused Pilate to be filled with amazement. It

caused Pilate to realize that the charges were all false. That is why Pilate said in the last part of John 18:38, “I find no fault in Him at all.” Pilate repeated this same phrase two more times, in John 19:4 and 19:6.

However, Pilate was controlled by fear of the Jews and did not do what he knew was the right thing to do. As a result, he tried to shift the decision from himself to the Jewish religious leaders. Matthew 27:15-18 says, “Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. 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?’ For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.” As a result, we see that Pilate decided to give the religious leaders a choice.

One of the criminals Pilate was planning to crucify that day was a notorious prisoner by the name of Barabbas. Luke 23:18-19 says, “And they all cried out at once, saying, ‘Away with this *Man*, and release to us Barabbas’— who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder.” Pilate may have thought the religious leaders would certainly not want a murderer released and given his freedom so that he would be free to kill others. What he did not understand was that the religious leaders were just as evil as Barabbas. They had already decided to get Pilate to murder Jesus, so they were choosing to free someone with the same evil attitudes.

We see that the religious leaders chose to free a murderer in order to kill Jesus. Pilate knew that choice was due to envy. We see that Pilate understood Jesus was innocent and that the religious leaders wanted to murder Him because of the fact that their hearts were controlled by envy. Romans 1:29 says, “Being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers.” Galatians 5:19-21 says, “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” In both of these passages, on the works of the flesh, we see that envy is followed by murder. The passages make it clear that those who practice such sins will not inherit the kingdom of God. The religious leaders were making it very clear, by their choices, that they were religious but had hearts filled with evil.

Pilate knew that the right thing to do was to release Jesus, because he knew that Jesus was innocent. However, Pilate was controlled by fear of the religious leaders. He knew that they would complain to the Roman emperor and he would lose his position of political power if he chose to release Jesus. Pilate was actually in bondage to Satan. Hebrews 2:14-15 says, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” This verse points out the fact that those who are controlled by Satan, and fear, are living in bondage.

Meanwhile, Pilate also received a message from his wife. Matthew 27:19-21 says, “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.’ But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, ‘Which of the two do you want me to release to you?’ They said, ‘Barabbas!’” Pilate received a message while he was sitting on the judgment seat. This was the throne from which Pilate would make his official decision. We see that the wife of Pilate gave him a warning not to make a judgment against Jesus, because he was a just man.

This was actually a warning not to act out of fear. The word translated “just man” means *one who is righteous*. A just or righteous person is one who has a right relationship with God because he or she is without sin. Once Adam sinned, no one other than Jesus has been righteous in himself. When we come to God in repentance, and place our faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, we have His righteousness placed to our account. In 2 Corinthians 5:21, we read, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Christ became sin for us so that we can now stand in the righteousness of Christ.

The wife of Pilate said she had suffered many things that day, in a dream, because of Jesus. The word translated “suffered” is used most commonly to speak of the sufferings of Jesus or the sufferings of His followers. The first use of this word, in the New Testament, is found in Matthew 16:21, where Jesus told the disciples, “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.” Then, 1 Peter 2:19-21 says, “For this *is* commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.” The wife of Pilate must have experienced a very terrible dream to use this word.

However, Pilate did not listen to this warning, by his wife, because of his fear of the religious leaders. We also see that the tremendous envy and hatred of the chief priests and elders caused them to start demanding the release of Barabbas and the destruction of Jesus. Mark 15:11 says, “But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them.” The chief priests were willing to do anything to maintain their power and control. Pilate did what he did to satisfy the chief priests and the multitude. Mark 15:15 says, “So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged *Him*, to be crucified.” The chief priests and elders got what they wanted that day, but they will experience consequences that will last for an eternity. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain, to others, that sin may give pleasure for a short time; sin will also give consequences that will be eternal for all those who do not come to Christ in repentance and faith. The religious leaders and Pilate made choices that day that had eternal consequences for their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain that sin brings temporary pleasure but eternal consequences.

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