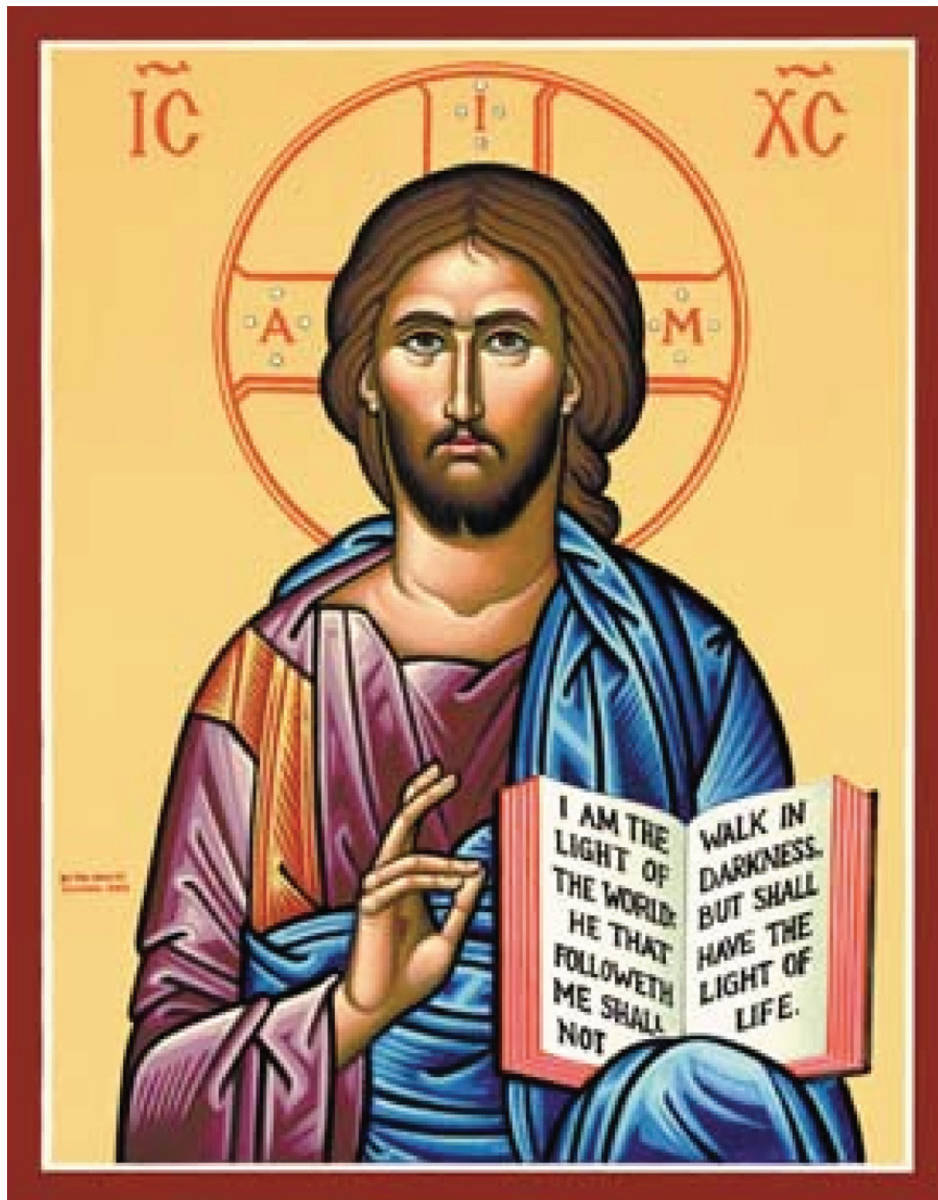


Life of Christ

A Study of the Four Gospels



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By **Pastor Edward F. Markquart**
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Session 48 | Theme: Arrest, Crucifixion, Burial (2)

(Jesus Delivered to Pilate, The Trial Before Pilate, Jesus Before Herod, Pilate Declares Jesus Innocent, Jesus or Barabbas, Behold the Man, Pilate Delivers Jesus to be Crucified, The Road to Golgotha)

(Lesson #48 is a longer lesson. An instructor may need to omit sections to study during the class period. Or perhaps an instructor may extend the class period by about fifteen minutes...with the class' permission.)

- *Prayer*
- *Questions from last week's session*
- *Finish sections of the lesson not completed last week*

#334, #336. Jesus Delivered to Pilate, The Trial before Pilate

Matthew 27:1-2, 11-14, Mark 15:1-5, Luke 23:1-5, John 18:28-38

-**Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas.** (Only John) We remember from earlier lessons that Herod the Great (Herod the Great Builder) had erected several large, grandiose Roman edifices in Jerusalem. We remember that the Romans were fine craftsmen and artisans. These Roman grand buildings in Jerusalem would have been opulent and similar to buildings in Ephesus and other centers of Roman culture.

Unlike Ephesus and Rome, the Roman armies leveled Jerusalem in 70 CE.

But during Jesus' time on earth, there were several grand Roman buildings in Jerusalem.

Jesus visited an impressive city when he visited that city.

In the diagram below, identify both the house of Caiaphas and the palace of Herod. It was most likely that Herod's palace was the official residence of Governor Pontius Pilate when he visited Jerusalem for special occasions such as the Passover feast.

Herod's palace is "the praetorium" in the gospels.



Identify Herod's Palace and the House of Caiaphas on the Map



Model of the Palace of Caiaphas

“The model of this palace is where informal meetings of a small Sanhedrin were held. Peter denied Jesus in one of these courts. This model at the Holy Land Hotel is a scholar’s conception showing how the site may have looked in Jesus’ day.”

-To the headquarters (the praetorium.) The praetorium “denotes the place of residence of the chief official in the subjugated Roman territory.”

“In Palestine, the Roman governor’s *permanent* residence was at Caesarea (Acts 23:33-35 which places the Roman governor in the praetorium of Herod.) Here we are concerned with the governor’s residence in Jerusalem, occupied during festivals or in times of trouble. ... (The gospels) envision a large building with an outside court where the Jewish crowd would assemble. There would have been inside rooms, including bed chambers (e.g. Pilate’s wife) and barracks for soldiers. ... The location of the Jerusalem praetorium is uncertain, but there are two likely candidates, both mentioned by Josephus. 1) The fortress of Antonio and 2) The Herodian Palace on the West hill (today near the Jaffa gate) which dominates the whole city. Herod the Great built this as a more grandiose dwelling and moved here from the Antonio in 23 BC. From the evidence in Josephus and Philo, this served as the usual Jerusalem residence for the Roman procurators.” (Brown, *John*, V. 2, p. 845.)



Model of the Palace of Herod (Praetorium) Where Jesus Was Put on Trial

“Just like the Temple, Herod’s Palace was constructed on a platform, about 1,000 feet (from north-south), and 180 feet (from east-west). The Palace consisted of 2 main buildings, each with its banquet halls, baths, and accommodation for hundreds of guests. It was surrounded with groves of trees, canals, and ponds studded with bronze fountains.” ... “King Herod built a fantastic fortified palace to provide protection for the Upper City. Just like the Temple, Herod’s Palace was constructed on a platform, about 1000 feet (from north-south), and 180 feet (from east-west). The Palace consisted of 2 main buildings, each with its banquet halls, baths, and accommodation for hundreds of guests. It was surrounded with groves of trees, canals, and ponds studded with bronze fountains. The praetorium of the trial of Jesus was located at Herod’s palace that was actually the official residence of the Roman governors when they came to Jerusalem during major Jewish festivals. Unfortunately, nothing remains of its construction. [This model at the Holy Land Hotel is a scholar’s conception showing how the site may have looked in Jesus’ day.](#)”

Remember that we are dealing with grandiose Roman architecture and construction. If a person visits Rome or Ephesus today and sees the ruins from the grand Roman culture of the past, a person is overwhelmed by the engineering, architecture and construction of these Romanesque colossal sites. The Roman architecture in Jerusalem was no different.

The Jerusalem of Jesus’ day was not a backwater “hick town” but the capital city of that area of the world.

Jerusalem could “boast” of many large Roman buildings erected by the builder of all builders, Herod the Great.

On the above model, focus on the platform which was longer than three football fields.

Take note of the grandeur of the building in the model above. It seems to be an accurate representation of the building in which Jesus was tried by the Roman governor and then scourged.

-It was early in the morning. At daybreak. The Roman officials began their work before dawn.

-They themselves did not enter the headquarters (praetorium), so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. “The reference to the coming Passover supper makes it clear that for John, Jesus was tried by Pilate and crucified on the day before Passover.” (Brown, *John*, V. 2, p. 846).

-So Pilate went out to them and said, ‘What accusation do you bring against this man?’ This is the first mention of Pilate in the book of John.

Pontius Pilate’s name would have been known to the early Christians since his name is mentioned in the book of Acts (3:13, 4:27, 13:28) and also in the Apostle’s Creed.

“He was of lower nobility as contrasted with senatorial rank. He ruled Judea from 26-36 AD. Judea was a lesser imperial province. . . . Pilate is usually identified as a procurator. . . . A reasonable amount about Pilate is known from Jewish writing and the picture is not favorable. Philo attributes to Pilate robbery, murder and inhumanity. Josephus writes vividly of his blunders and atrocities (e.g. the slaughter of the Galileans mentioned in Luke 13:1).” (Brown, *John*, V. 2, p. 847).

From a sermon about Pilate: *The Riots of Pilate: No Middle Ground*

“It is with this mood of rioting, polarizations, and a nation and city torn apart, that we approach the governorship of Pontius Pilate.

Pilate was the governor of Jerusalem and Judea.

Pontius Pilate, during his ten years as a governor, from the year 26-36 CE, had thirty-two riots.

There were 32 riots in a mere ten years.

That is three major riots a year for ten consecutive years.

The Jews hated the Romans. They hated the Roman taxes. They hated the Roman insensitivities to their religion. The Jews of that time were constantly on the edge of rioting, especially the Galileans.

I would like to briefly tell you about three riots during the reign of Pontius Pilate. These reports come from Philo, a Jewish theologian, and Josephus, the Roman historian.

The first riot was like this:

The Jews were fanatics about God, and they were absolutely committed to their second commandment, “You shall have no graven images of God.” Idolatry was the worst of sins. It was strictly forbidden to worship a graven image, a carved image of God. Carved or crafted images of God were absolutely and totally forbidden.

In the year 26 CE, shortly after Pilate became governor, Pontius Pilate came riding into the city of Jerusalem with his troops bearing their standards or flag poles. On the top of every flagpole was a carved image of Caesar, the bust of Caesar. No Roman governor had done this before, parading with a carved image of Caesar. It was a total insult to the Jews, and so a riot began.

The Jews first came out by the hundreds and then by the thousands to the home of Pontius Pilate

in Jerusalem, and for five days, they staged a sit-in, much like college students stage a sit-in on the college campus, on the front lawn of the college president.

Pilate was infuriated with the protestors. He rounded up some of them into an auditorium and killed several of them.

The Jews continued their civil disobedience, passively offering their necks to be sliced. The protests were effective; Pilate backed down; and the busts of Caesar were removed from all the flagpoles.

But lives had been killed and this was the first of many more riots to come.

Let me tell you about the second riot that Pilate precipitated.

Pilate wanted to take money from the temple treasury in order to build a pipeline to bring water into the city of Jerusalem. Like Arizona and California today, Jerusalem had water problems. Jerusalem had to get money in order to build an aqueduct so water could be transported to the city. Where was Pilate going to get the money? He didn't have federal funds to draw on. He didn't have any extra tax money sitting around.

So Pilate went to the temple treasury, to the sacred money, to the money of Annas and Caiaphas. Pilate demanded the money from the temple treasury to build his aqueduct.

Immediately, the rioting began. This time Pilate ordered his soldiers to dress up as plain-clothes men, secretly to arm themselves and mingle with the rioting mobs. As the signal was given, these Roman soldiers, dressed as civilians, bludgeoned the Jews with their weapons, clubbing and stabbing the Jews to death.

Thus another riot was stopped during the reign of Pilate.

Pilate, of course, was hated.

The neighboring governors started sending letters to Emperor Tiberius in Rome complaining about Pilate's brutality in handling the riots. (Again, this useful material comes from Josephus, the historian, and Philo, the Jewish theologian, both writing at this time.)

Let me tell you about the last riot, the 32nd riot under Pilate.

It was the year 36 CE just northwest of Jerusalem, in Samaria. A Samaritan told some Jews that he would show them where Moses had hidden sacred relics on a mountain. People were going on a wild goose chase, up to the top of the mountain, looking for a copy of the Ten Commandments, the sacred relics of Moses. The Jews had small arms with them.

Pilate, hearing that the Jews were armed, ordered his horsemen to attack and kill the essentially defenseless Jews. It was a bloodbath, a slaughter of innocent people.

One neighboring Roman ruler was so upset about Pilate's slaughtering of the Jews that he sent another letter to Caesar Tiberius in Rome complaining about Pilate.

Shortly thereafter, Pilate was removed from office because of his brutal handling of the riots. As Pilate traveled to Rome, Emperor Tiberius died, and we don't ever know what happened to Pilate.

Pilate disappeared into the pages of history; only to have his name repeated every Sunday in our creed, “crucified under Pontius Pilate.”

Maybe our creed should have said, “Jesus was crucified *under the riots of* Pontius Pilate.” Our creed would have been more historically accurate.

Pilate was a person who was sick of rioting, sick of the mobs, sick of a nation torn apart by strife.

It is with this awareness of Pilate and his riots that we begin to *more* clearly understand what happened to Jesus on that Friday morning in Jerusalem.

Pilate had already arrived in Jerusalem with his wife, Procula, and 600 troops. Yes, 600 armed soldiers. The soldiers had come prepared. They were well armed and trained to exercise control if another riot erupted. Normally, Pilate lived in Caesarea on the Coast, but Pilate would come to the capital city, Jerusalem, whenever the city was jammed with potentially rebellious pilgrims.

It was Passover time on that particular Thursday and Friday, and there were two-three million people jammed into Jerusalem.

So Pilate came from Caesarea by the Sea, his home residence, to Jerusalem with 600 troops and 600 horses, “just in case.”

Thursday night, nothing happened. It was calm that Thursday night, but *Friday morning*, all hell broke loose.

Annas, the old man and power behind the high priest, and Caiaphas, his son-in-law and current chief High Priest, brought Jesus to Pilate.

Annas and Caiaphas, the two religious leaders and thugs, brought not only Jesus, but a large mob of shouting, yelling, shrieking Jews who were bent on rioting at the least provocation. Annas and Caiaphas brought their charges against Jesus, telling Pilate that Jesus claimed to be king of the Jews. Annas and Caiaphas stirred up the people into a riotous mood, and falsely said that Jesus forbid the citizens to pay the proper taxes to Caesar.

Annas and Caiaphas finally played their trump card when they said: “Pilate, if you are a friend of Caesar, you better execute this revolutionary, this seditionist, this anarchist. Pilate, you better have him killed.”

Pilate then questioned Jesus and found no guilt in him. Jesus was innocent of the charges that the two high priests had brought against him. Pilate saw through the sham; Pilate saw through the scheme of Annas and Caiaphas. Pilate wanted to dismiss the whole affair as a nuisance, but the two powerful high priests incited the crowds to begin rioting.

The Bible says, “In order to avoid a riot,” Pilate condemned Jesus to death.

Pilate was caught in the middle and he didn't like it.

There was no neutrality before the cross.

There was no middle ground.

When I think of Pilate, he was not like Annas and Caiaphas who blatantly wanted to have Jesus

killed.

Pilate was not like Judas, who betrayed Jesus for money, greed and material prosperity.

Pilate was not like Peter, who denied Jesus at the crucial hour, pretending he never knew Jesus.

Pilate was like none of these.

Rather, Pilate was one of those people who wanted to remain neutral, who didn't want to become involved. He wasn't for Jesus nor was he against Jesus. Pilate was the man in the middle and he wanted to remain the middle where he thought he could save his own skin.

There is one basic lesson to be learned from Pilate: Before the cross of Christ, there is no neutrality. The cross of Christ always demands a decision.

Pilate, during the trial, asked, "What shall I do with Jesus?"

There was no middle ground.

Either he was to cast his lot for Christ or against him.

The cross does that.

During the whole passion narrative, the cross forces people into a decision.

People had to make a choice, either to be for Christ or against him.

There was no neutrality.

Let me give you some examples of this.

Consider the eleven disciples. When Jesus was arrested in the garden, the disciples had to make a decision, either to be crucified with Jesus or to run away. The disciples made a decision: they ran. There was no neutrality.

Or, Consider Simon Peter out in the courtyard at the home of Caiaphas. A maid asked Peter the question: "Are you one of the Galileans or not?" Peter had to make a decision. "I am not," he said. Again, there was no neutrality.

Or, consider the two men were on the cross on either side of Jesus at Golgotha. One criminal made a decision to ridicule Jesus; the other criminal made a different decision and said, "Remember me when you come into your kingly power." Again, there was no neutrality.

It is the nature of the cross that compels us to make a choice, whether a person has to make a snap decision or a slow decision.

There is something about the cross that compels us to make a choice, either for him or against him.

You can't find a middle ground when it comes to Christ, even though at times we try to.

This is clearly expressed in a poem:

*I stood alone at the cross of Christ,
In the hush of twilight dim,
And faced the question
That pierced my heart,
What shall I do with him?
Crown or crucify, what shall it be?
No other choice is offered me.”*

End of this part of the sermon.



http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/palm_passion_riots.htm

-They answered, ‘If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.’ The Jewish authorities knew that only the Romans had the power to execute Jesus.

-Pilate said to them, ‘Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law.’ Pilate knew the Roman law and Jewish law. Pilate didn’t want to get involved in this mess. He didn’t want to get involved with an “in house” squabble among the Jews.

- The Jews replied, ‘We are not permitted to put anyone to death.’ (This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.) The phrase, “the Jews” is a summarization of all those Jewish leaders who were hostile to Jesus e.g. the elders, scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and others in positions of governing authority.

Jesus knew by what kind of death he was going to die. He had prophesied that he was to “be lifted up” and to be “lifted up” meant to be “lifted up” onto a cross, which was the Roman means of execution.

The Roman government retained the power to execute. That is one primary way that the Romans retained political power in their provinces.

“A death penalty could not be executed unless Rome issued it (Josephus *Jewish Wars* 2.8.1 117; Jn 18:31). So the leadership takes Jesus to Pilate. The charges must be formulated in a way that causes Pilate, as procurator and protector of Roman regional concerns, to be worried about his future as governor if he does not stop Jesus. (Kinman 1991).” From Biblegate.com., Luke.

- They began to accuse him, saying, ‘We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.’ Then Pilate asked him, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ He answered, ‘You say so.’ (Only Luke) The Jewish leaders wanted to frame Jesus, so that he would be executed. The charges that needed to be brought against Jesus was that he was a revolutionary and not loyal to Caesar. We recall that Pilate had faced thirty-two riots in his term in office and he knew first hand the political pandemonium associated with revolutionaries.

“He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar.” This charge concerning the poll tax is patently false, as 20:25 has already shown. But the charge is clever, because Pilate’s major political responsibility is the collection of taxes for Rome. A second element in the charge is also a source of concern. The taxes go to Caesar, raising the issue of Pilate’s personal loyalty or disloyalty. Failure to act against one who opposes Caesar would mean one is not a friend of Caesar either. Servants of Rome unfaithful to Caesar are not servants for long!”

-Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, ‘Are you the King of

the Jews?’ In the Gospel of John, we find Pilate going in and out of his headquarters. Pilate ordered Jesus into his palace.

All four gospels have Pilate asking that same question: “Are you king of the Jews?”

Perhaps there was a lingering memory within Pilate’s mind of the Maccabean revolt from years before and the Jewish masses hoping for a political liberator. Such was the mood from the Palm Sunday parade a few days earlier when the masses were calling for a new messiah, a new liberator to free them from the oppression and insensitivities of the Roman occupiers of the land.

-Jesus answered, ‘Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?’

-Pilate replied, ‘I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?’

-Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not from this world. Circle this phrase. Underline it. Highlight it. Memorize it. Circle the phrase, “my kingdom.” Focus, for a moment, on those two words, “my kingdom.”

Christ is king. Christ’s desire is to rule over our hearts and habits. Christ’s purpose is to rule our minds and movements of our daily lives.

His was not a political kingdom like that of Caesar, Herod or Pilate.

The “kingdom” was Jesus’ primary teaching in the first three gospels. Jesus shared miracles of the kingdom, parables of the kingdom, teachings of the kingdom.

Christ’s kingdom is wherever God/Christ rules in our hearts, lives or our communities.

From a sermon, *You Can’t Kill the King.*

“I would like to suggest to you that this king and the spirit of his kingdom lives on today and throughout history. It is the strongest force in the centuries of civilization.

This kingdom of Christ will be forever challenged but never defeated.

All kings die. All presidents die. All dictators die. Every one of them has died and few of them are remembered.

In the thousands of years of history, their names are already or will be gone, disappeared, forgotten, but there will be one king...one name that will continue.

The spirit of his kingdom is alive today as much as it was 2000 years ago.

The great nations today will rise and fall: the United States, Russia, China, Germany, France, England, and Japan. In two thousand years from now, their names will be like Pamphilia, Gad, and Silica.

For all the great nations which are so powerful today have their nanosecond in history, and will quickly disappear like ripples in a pond. Their names will be barely remembered.

The spirit of *God's* kingdom will live and shine when all these kingdoms of the earth have faded into oblivion.

What I am suggesting to you is that people attempt to execute Jesus in every generation, but no one has been able to kill the king.

No one has been able to kill the spirit of his kingdom.

Kings have come and gone.

And kingdoms have come and gone.

And intellectuals have come and gone.

All of them have at one time challenged this king with their weapons or intellect, and then, they have all died.

But *the* king? *The* king and the spirit of his kingdom live on into God's eternal future.

You see, the king is the Spirit of the Living Christ and there is no earthly king, no nation, no skeptic who in any way compares to the everlasting king, the ruling Spirit of the Living God."



http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/palm_passion_youcant.htm

-If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.'

-Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Pilate is interested in this line of questioning. Pilate wants to know if Jesus is really a threat to him.

-Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king.'

-For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.' Jesus' life had a fundamental purpose and destiny: to witness to the truth. Jesus has come into the world to testify that he wants to rule the hearts and habits of human beings, the minds and movements of our daily lives. That is the truth: Jesus wants to rule our hearts and lives. Jesus wants to be *the* Lord of our lives. That was and is the destiny of Jesus.

We, the followers of Jesus, know his voice and listen to his voice, as sheep know and listen to the voice of their shepherd. The mark of a loyal disciple is listening, listening to the words of Jesus.

We recall the contrast between Mary and Martha. Martha was distracted and worried about many things.

Meanwhile, Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and listened to him.

The disciples of Jesus listen to his voice.

-Pilate asked him, 'What is truth?' Circle, highlight, memorize. We remember Pilate for many reasons and one reason we remember him is because of this fundamental question: "What is truth?"

Jesus, who was the embodiment of truth, stood in front of Pilate. Jesus spoke the truth:

The truth that there is a personal God;

The truth that God is a loving Father;

The truth that God knows the numbers of hairs on our heads;

The truth that the great commandments of God are to love God and our neighbor as ourselves.

Jesus embodied the truth about God and the way that we human beings are to live and love.

What is truth?

Look at Jesus, listen to his voice, and see who he is and you will discover the Truth about God and your own life.

-After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, 'I find no case against him. Three times in the Gospel of John we hear that Jesus was declared "not guilty." (In John 19: 4, 6)

Jesus was also declared "not guilty" three times in the Gospel of Luke also. (Luke 23: 4, 14, 22.)

#337. Jesus Before Herod

Luke 23:6-12

This section of the Passion Story is only found in Luke's gospel.

-But they were insistent and said, 'He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place.'

-When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. It was as if Pilate learned for the first time that Jesus was a Galilean who had begun his ministry preaching and teaching in the province of Galilee, which was a hotbed for many political revolutionaries.

-And when he learned that he was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. We remember Herod Antipas from our previous studies.

There are thirteen references to Herod Antipas in the Gospel of Luke.

See P. 133 in our text, #143-144.

That is, Herod was the ruler who had John the Baptist beheaded.

Herod had immorally and illegally married his brother's wife, Herodias.

Herod had heard about the fame of Jesus.

See also P. 190, #212, Luke 13:31 when the Pharisees said to Jesus, "Get away from here for Herod wants to kill you."

When Herod the Great died in the year 4 BCE, he divided his kingdom among his sons. Herod the Tetrarch was one of those sons. Tetrarch means four or the ruler of one of the four parts. He was also known as Herod Antipas, and he ruled Galilee and Peraea.

We learn about this Herod Antipas from the Bible but also from Josephus in his book, *The Antiquity of the Jews*.

“Because of the holiday season, Herod himself is also in Jerusalem--a coincidence of divine proportions--staying at a beautiful palace west of the temple (Josephus *Jewish Wars* 2.16.3 344; 5.4.4 176-83). When Jesus is brought before him, Herod hopes for a show, for he has been longing to see Jesus work miracles. But Jesus is not an entertainer given to fulfilling curiosity.” From Biblegate.com., Luke.

This, then, was the fourth trial of Jesus. The four trials of Jesus were:

- 1) Before Caiaphas and the Jewish Sanhedrin late Thursday night;
- 2) Before Pilate early Friday morning;
- 3) Before Herod Friday morning.
- 4) Before Pilate again.

-When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time, because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign. For Herod, Jesus was a circus sideshow, a performer of religious tricks, a happy Houdini from the Holy Land. Herod wanted to see a religious show and demonstration of miraculous signs. Jesus had made his reputation in Herod's province of Galilee by doing such signs and miracles. Herod had only heard the stories about Jesus but had never seen the man in action. Here was his chance for divine entertainment.

In the movie, *The Passion*, Mel Gibson created a wonderful scene about Herod who wanted to see Jesus perform a sign or miracle.

He questioned him at some length, but Jesus gave him no answer. Herod kept on hammering away his questions at Jesus. By speaking no words, Jesus seems to be fulfilling a prophecy from Isaiah 53:7 that became meaningful in the Church: “He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.”

-The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. The chief priests and scribes joined in the fervor of the moment, intensely accusing Jesus of many crimes.

-Even Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him; then he put an elegant robe on him, and sent him back to Pilate. This same mocking of Jesus as king also occurred the night before in the house of Caiaphas, the high priest. This was the second beating of Jesus.

-That same day Herod and Pilate became friends with each other; before this they had been enemies. We do not know the source of conflict between Herod and Pilate. Perhaps Pilate's killing of thirteen Galileans (Herod's subjects) in the temple (Luke 13:31-33) made Herod angry. But Pilate and Herod became united in their disdain for Jesus. (Best, *Luke*, V. 2, p. 902)

#338. Pilate Declares Jesus Innocent

Luke 23:13-16

This scene is only found in Luke.

-Pilate then called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people. For the first time in the story of the crucifixion, the people *clearly* turn against Jesus. Previously, it was always and only the leaders who were against Jesus and tried to find schemes to kill him. But now, the people began turning against Jesus.

“In many ways the passion account’s real turning point occurs here. Until this point, the common people have been strongly supportive of Jesus. On a few occasions the leadership had found it prudent not to carry out its threats against Jesus because of the people (20:19; 22:2). But now the people react against Jesus, stopping Pilate’s attempt to release him.”

-And said to them, ‘You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him.

-Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death. “Pilate regards Jesus as not worthy of death but still does not grant him freedom. Two leaders have acquitted Jesus, but that is not enough. The Jewish teacher has become a political football. In a crazy game, a murderer is released and a deliverer is slain.”

So two Roman leaders, Pilate and Herod, found Jesus innocent of the false accusations of Jesus’ being a king. We remember that the Gospel of Luke was written to Theophilus, a Roman official, and that one of the purposes of Luke’s gospel was to convince people/Gentiles in the Roman world that Jesus can be the Lord/King of their lives. It seems that Luke wanted Theophilus to know that Jesus was declared innocent by two Roman authorities. Jesus was/is not a political insurrectionist. Jesus clearly said, “My kingdom is not of this world.”

-I will therefore have him flogged and release him.’ “Pilate proposes a compromise: he will beat Jesus and then release him. The beating would be either the less severe *fustigata* or the dreaded *verberatio*, which would leave one on the edge of death. In either case, the whip used possessed short teeth that would cut the skin and lead to bleeding. Pilate supposes that punishment would deter the teacher and calm the leadership. But no compromise can be found. When the decision comes for Jesus to be crucified, he receives the heavier beating, the *verberatio*, since it prepares the victim for crucifixion and makes death come more quickly.” From Biblegate.com., Luke.

This will be the third beating of Jesus. The first was by Caiaphas’s soldiers (p. 303); the second by Herod’s troops; the third by Pilate’s militia.

#339. Jesus or Barabbas?

Matthew 27:15-23, Mark 15:6-14, Luke 23:17-23, John 18:39-40

The following is a harmonization of the gospel accounts of this event.

-Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. It seems that it was an annual custom at Passover that the governor would release one prisoner of the crowd’s choosing. There is no historical record of such a procedure in Roman law, so this appears to be a local custom in Jerusalem at the Passover.

-Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. Notice the footnote at the bottom of the page, “k”. The footnote says that in certain manuscripts, Barabbas had a first name and his first name was Jesus.

So Pilate was giving the crowd a choice of *Jesus* Barabbas or *Jesus* the Christ.

This Jesus Barabbas was in prison and had been part of the numerous insurrections in Jerusalem. This Jesus Barabbas had killed a person/persons during riots in the city.

-So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Circle the word, “crowd,” and focus your attention to the masses.

In this scene, we feel the presence of the crowd, the power of the mob.

Five days before, this same crowd was chanting wildly for Jesus as he rode into the city on a young jackass, but now the fickle crowd had turned hostile against Jesus.

Why the sudden change? Why had Jesus become such a disappointment to the masses?

The Scriptures don't tell us. What is your conjecture? Were they disappointed that Jesus was not the political messiah that they were looking for?

-Then he answered them, ‘Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?’ A reader can feel the sarcasm in Pilate's voice. Jesus did not look like a king, act like a king, or use power like a king. If anything, Jesus was a parody of what an earthly king was to be.

-For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. Circle the word, “jealousy.” Pilate knew the real reason that the chief priests wanted to get rid of Jesus.

- While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, ‘Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.’ (Only Matthew) Circle the word, “wife,” and write the name, “Procula.” Also write, “She was the granddaughter of Caesar Augustus.”

Procula is the only Roman woman we find in the gospel stories.

A tradition is that Procula became a Christian and the Greek Orthodox Church assigns her a feast day on October 27th. Procula plays a major role in the film, *The Passion*.

“During a stay in Rome Pilate met and married Claudia Procula, the illegitimate daughter of Claudia, the third wife of the Emperor, Tiberius. She was the granddaughter of Augustus Caesar.

This connection with the ruling house served Pilate's personal interests in an unexpected degree; in AD26, on the recommendation of Sejanus, the Emperor's right-hand man, he was appointed Procurator of Judea. In accepting the post, he applied for and obtained the very unusual privilege of taking his wife with him. Wives did not normally accompany their husbands to the provinces. That she wanted to be with her husband in Judea and in Jerusalem at a time of turbulence indicates that she and Pilate had a relationship that was closer than usual. Her intervention in the trial of Jesus is an action of grace in a day that was clouded by sorrow. We know little about her, but what we do know indicates that she was a remarkable woman:

She is the only *Roman* woman spoken of in the four gospels. She is the only woman of high rank who was in any way affected by Jesus. She seems to have had the confidence of her husband, or she would not have dared to intervene in a trial where he was the representative of Rome and judge in the case. She had been sufficiently impressed by Jesus to dream about Him. She knew Jesus well enough to pass a penetrating judgment upon Him. She had the courage to forget the repercussions that it might have on her and send the one sentence message to her husband.”

Why did Matthew insert this vignette about Herod's wife? We don't know. It is consistent with Matthew's positive appreciation of God revealing himself through dreams that we see often in Matthew's gospel. We remember the story about the wise men being warned in a dream and Joseph also being warned in a dream. The theme of

“being warned in a dream” is important to Matthew.

-But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. The power was in the crowds. The chief priests sensed that they could stir up the crowds against Jesus.

-Pilate spoke to them again, “Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?” Write the phrase, “This is the big question.” This is the most important question for our lives: “What shall I do with Jesus?”

As was said previously in a sermon on this text, Pilate wanted to remain in the middle. He wanted to be the man in the middle and not make a decision for or against Jesus. We often want to play the same role. But often in life, the situation demands that we make a decision, either for Christ or against him. Too often, we want to retreat to the safety of the middle.

-They shouted back, ‘Crucify him!’ Pilate had the power to crucify. The crowds had the power to make Pilate afraid of another riot.

-Pilate asked them, ‘Why, what evil has he done?’ Pilate is keenly aware that Jesus was innocent. So was Herod. The two highest Roman officials at the scene of the crime knew the innocence of Jesus.

- A third time he said to them, ‘Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him.’ But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and their voices prevailed. (Only Luke). Luke is addressing Theophilus, a Roman official, and it seems that Luke wants to make it very clear that the Roman governor, Pilate, found no crime in Jesus. It was the crowd, the mob, and the masses that put pressure on Pilate who succumbed to their fanatical desires.

-But they shouted all the more, ‘Crucify him!’



Discussion Question:

In your opinion, why did the enthusiastic crowds of Palm Sunday become the crucifying crowds of Good Friday?

#340. “Behold The Man!” (also #342)

Matthew 27:28-31, Mark 15:17-20, John 19:1-15

-Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. (Only John) Mark and Matthew parallels say, “Having scourged Jesus.” Mark and Matthew report the scourging in the next scene, but, in the Gospel of John, the scourging occurred here, at this moment, in the story.

The next verse in John’s gospel reports that it was the soldiers who were doing the dirty deeds of scourging Jesus.

“Literally, the Greek says that Pilate scourged Jesus. ... Mark and Matthew use the Latinized verb, “fragelloun,” which means “flogged.” (Brown, *John*, V. 2, p. 874)

“The Romans used three forms of bodily chastisement with sticks or whips: fustigatio (beating), flagellatio (flogging), and verberatio (scourging) –in ascending gradation. Beating was used as a corrective punishment in itself, but severer punishment was part of the capital sentence.” (Brown, *John*, V. 2, p. 874)

“The soldiers. John leaves the number indefinite but Mark 15:16 and Matthew 27:27 speak of the whole cohort (600 soldiers.)” (Brown, *John*, V. 2, p. 874)



Scouring as Pictured in A Website from The Mayo Clinic, 1986

Please read the page of explanation under the above diagram. It is helpful in understanding what actually occurred during a scouring.

In Mel Gibson's fine film, *The Passion*, the scouring of Jesus is particularly harsh.

Knowing from history that scouring was inhumanly awful, a question is asked: “Is there anything in the New Testament record that suggests that Jesus' scouring was unusually harsh and worse than the scouring of the other two criminals on their crosses? That the body of Jesus was whipped more than the normal Roman “verbatio” that prepared a criminal for execution?”

A key line in the *above* article from Mayo clinic is: “A detailed word study of the ancient Greek text for this verse indicates that the scouring of Jesus was particularly harsh.”

As I read this passage (suggested by the Mayo Clinic) in Greek and English, I did not find that I Peter 2:24 emphasized that Jesus' scouring was more harsh than the scouring of the other two criminals.

Read the following words from I Peter 2:24. From those words, you determine if you think Jesus' beating was “particularly harsh.”

I Peter 2:24 says: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”

From this verse, do you think you can draw the conclusion that Jesus' scouring was particularly harsh, more so than the other criminals?

It is to be remembered that the severity of the scouring was not emphasized in the gospels.

In fact, the Gospel of Mark (and therefore Matthew) report Jesus' scouring in the passive tense e.g. “and having scourged Jesus.”

It is to be remembered that the Apostle Paul received flogging /scouring. See Acts 2:22-25, “The tribune ordered Paul to be brought into the barracks and ordered him to be examined by scouring” and II Corinthians 11:25, “Five times I have received at the hands of the Jews forty lashes less one.”

There is verbal restraint in the Biblical accounts of the scouring and crucifixion.

The word, “scouring,” occurs once in Mark and once in John.

The Bible itself does not focus on the lurid and horrid details of Jesus' scouring.

To get the lurid details of scouring, one must go to secular Roman history and *cinematic imagination and recreation*.

A similar restraint is found when the Bible describes the crucifixion.

A description of Jesus being “nailed to the cross” or “nailing his hands and feet to the cross” is not found in

the Good Friday execution scene itself.

Later, when Thomas doubted that Jesus was raised from the dead, he demanded to see to the nail wounds in Jesus' hands and the spear mark in Jesus' side.

What Thomas saw were the wounds, not the nails pounding into human flesh on Good Friday.

John's gospel (which gives us an eyewitness) account does not describe nails being pounded into Jesus' flesh.

The Bible exercises considerable restraint by not graphically describing the grimy details of Jesus' scourging nor his crucifixion.

Having seen Mel Gibson's film, *The Passion*, I found it to be emotionally and spiritually riveting. His film was a powerful, visual work of art. When the film was finished, I again knew that Jesus had died for the sins of the whole world, including mine. I again knew that "by his stripes, we are healed." I again knew that that Jesus had suffered immeasurably, in ways that I could/cannot comprehend. When Jesus suffered beyond human imagination, he still loved and prayed for his enemies. His love was incomprehensible. When I saw his body dripping with blood, I understood more clearly the Eucharistic prayer, "This is my body given for you. This is my blood, shed for you."

Knowing the *Bible's* restraint in picturing the scourging and crucifixion, I still appreciated Gibson's graphic presentation of the horrific suffering of Jesus. Through Gibson's film, I again encountered the Jesus of the cross, his teachings, his love, his death, his suffering,

Through Gibson's film, I was amazed at its historical accuracy *in most* respects. Like all authors, Gibson had his biases e.g. the prominent role that he created for Mary the mother of Jesus. He also had his biases to cinematically emphasize the physical brutality of Jesus' suffering. Previously, Gibson had portrayed physical brutality in his other films. As a director, he knows how to picture physical brutality. In spite of Gibson's biases, I appreciated the film and its telling the story about Jesus in a new way. The movie was confronting, uncomfortable and downright painful.

Like almost everyone else, I felt cheated when the story came to the Resurrection. The heart of the Christian Easter message was swallowed up by the devastating execution of Good Friday.

In the movie, the scourging and crucifixion of Jesus was much more powerful than the victory and resurrection of Christ.

Gibson exaggerated violence in several scenes: the crow pecking out the eyes of the impenitent thief, the soldier stretching out Jesus' arm on the cross and popping the shoulder so Jesus' hand would fit over a hole in the cross. In the film, the cross of Christ was not a vertical post stuck in the ground but a Latin cross on which the body of Jesus was nailed. Then, in the movie, that Latin cross came banging down against the ground with Jesus' body on it...twice, mind you. The scourging scenes were similarly reconstructed to have Jesus suggesting he could handle more punishment and the scourging intensified.

All of these scenes are inaccurate in that they reveal a tendency to exaggerate physical violence.

A question is: Why did Gibson have the need to exaggerate physical violence which was already present in the historical narrative?

I personally believe it was because he has a genius within himself to portray graphic violence e.g. in the movie, *Brave Heart*.

I remember a description of another artist, a French novelist. It was said about him, "He was much better

at describing winter than spring.”

Gibson was far better at describing Good Friday than Easter Sunday.

- **And they clothed him in a purple cloak.** Purple was a sign of royalty. Caesar wore royal, purple robes and so in a spirit of mockery, the soldiers covered Jesus with a purple cloak.

This was the first of four mocking actions towards Jesus.

The four mocking actions were: placing a purple cloak around him, placing a crown of thorns on his head, shouting “Hail to the Emperor,” and kneeling in homage.

-**And after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him.** This was the second part of the mockery. Caesar wore a laurel wreath for a crown.

In human imagination, we often want the crown of thorns to exhibit sharp, prickly spikes that are one – two inches in length. According to most scholars, that kind of thorn bush was hard to find in ancient Jerusalem.

On the other hand, we know that thorn bushes can have shorter prickly spikes and those short prickly spikes can also be very painful. There were several species of prickly, thorny shrubs that could have been used for the crown of thorns.

Source: *Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913)*

Christ’s-thorn \Christ’s-thorn`, n. (Bot.) One of several prickly or thorny shrubs found in Palestine, especially the *Paliurus aculeatus*, *Zizyphus Spina-Christi*, and *Z. vulgaris*. The last bears the fruit called jujube, and may be considered to have been the mostreadily obtainable for the Crown of Thorns.”



An enlarged photograph of Zizphus Spina-Christi

The above is a photograph of the prickly plant that some scholars think was the crown of thorns. It is called *Zizyplus-Spina-Christi*. In our contemporary imagination of the crown of thorns, we visualize thorns two inches long. But the thorns on the prickly shrubs of ancient Palestine were much shorter than our contemporary imagination.

-**And they began saluting him, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’** The third mockery is greeting given to the Emperor, “Ave Caesar” or “Hail, the king of the Jews.”

-**They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him.** The fourth mockery is kneeling before Jesus as if he were a king.

-**After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him.** The verses do not say that the soldiers stripped him of his crown. In popular art, we see Jesus’ crown of thorns still being worn during the crucifixion.

-**Pilate went out again and said to them, ‘Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.’ So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe.** The text is clear: Jesus was wearing the crown of thorns and purple robe.

Painting of Jesus Wearing a Crown of Thorns



The Crown of Thorns, Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld

-**Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!'** The mood of the sentence is, "Look, here is your king."

Through the centuries, artists have attempted to capture this scene. Hundreds of paintings are titled, "Ecco Homo," "Behold the man."

Paintings of "Behold, the Man!"



Behold the Man, Munkacsy



Behold the Man, Rembrandt



Behold the Man, Dore



Behold the Man, Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld



The Crown of Thorns, Reni

Which of these paintings speaks most deeply to you and why?

-**When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!'** In the story of the crucifixion, there were two groups of law enforcement officers: the Jewish temple police and the Roman soldiers. Both groups were intensely and fanatically taunting Jesus. In this particular verse, we hear about the Jewish temple police who shouted, "Crucify him."

- **Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.'** Pilate was going to try to come off as innocent.

-**The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.'** This is the issue. Underline it. Highlight it. Emphasize it. "He has claimed to be the Son of God." This is the real issue, but the Romans couldn't execute Jesus for that, so the Jews (the chief priests) needed to frame Jesus by saying that he was a king in competition with Caesar.

-**Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever.** We hear for the first time that Pilate was afraid. We hear that Pilate was afraid earlier but that he was more afraid when he heard the accusation that Jesus may be the Son of God. What was Pilate afraid of? Jesus? That Jesus might be divine? That Jesus might be the Son of God?

-**He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, 'Where are you from?'** Pilate knew that Jesus was from Galilee. This question is deeper than geography.

Where do you come from Jesus? From above? From heaven? From God?

-**But Jesus gave him no answer.**

-**Pilate therefore said to him, 'Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?'**

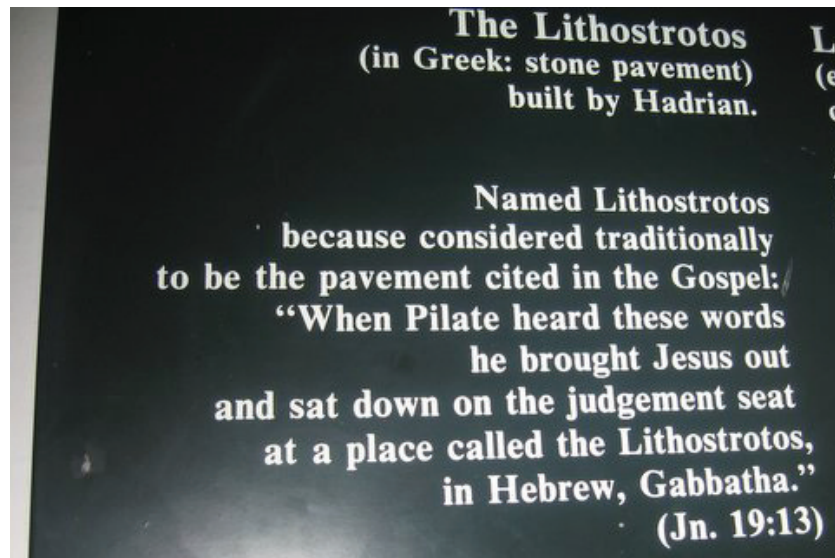
-Jesus answered him, 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.' Jesus answered Pilate's earlier question. That is, Jesus was suggesting that he, Jesus, had come "from above" and that Pilate would have no power over Jesus unless the God "above" had given him such power.

-From then on Pilate tried to release him, It is almost as if Pilate sensed that Jesus was "from above" and Pilate did not want to mess around with the Divine Presence of God that was within Jesus.

-But the Jews cried out, 'If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor.' The Jewish leadership changed their charges from blasphemy to insurrection, and they knew what they were doing. They falsely accused Jesus of setting himself up as a competitor with Caesar even though Jesus had expressly denied it. Jesus knew that his kingdom was not of this world.

-When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. "Gabbatha, from the Aramaic or Hebrew meaning *ridge*, or *height*, with a practical meaning of *the ridge of the house*, or *the temple-mound*, was located in Jerusalem near the Fortress of Antonia, a palace / Roman military barracks, named after Mark Anthony (see Cleopatra) by Herod The Great, which was connected to the Temple (see Temples). Gabbatha was covered with a mosaic of colored stones, known in Greek as *lithostroton*, meaning *stone-paved*, and hence as "The Pavement." It was the custom of the Roman governors to conduct their tribunals in open areas, so a judgment seat was placed on this pavement outside the judgment-hall, or Praetorium."

A modern pilgrim to the Holy Land stops to see and experience the Stone Pavement ("lithostrotos" in Greek and "Gabbatha" in Hebrew) where Pilate condemned Jesus to death. This rock pavement would have been the location where Pilate judged Jesus of Nazareth to death. This particular stone pavement was built by the Roman Emperor Hadrian a century after Christ.



A sign: Lithostrotos or stone pavement where Pilate judged Jesus



This stone pavement of judgment is the place where Jesus is thought to have stood before Pilate.

-Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover;

-And it was about noon. The Bible says about “the sixth hour” which meant noon.

-He said to the Jews, ‘Here is your King!’ Circle the words, “your king.” Pilate caves into the crowd and announces that Jesus is “your king,” implying that Jesus was a threat to Caesar.

-They cried out, ‘Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!’ It is not longer simply the chief priests and scribes who were accusing Jesus. Now, it is the masses, the crowd, the hysteria of the mob that could incite a riot.

-Pilate asked them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ Circle the words, “your king.” Pilate was taunting the crowds but also finding a way that he could absolve himself from guilt of falsely sentencing a man who he knew was innocent.

-The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but the emperor.’ The chief priests were still a powerful presence in that crowd. They had been planning the execution of Jesus all along and now they were getting close to having the dirty deed done.

#341. Pilate Delivers Jesus to be Crucified

Matthew 27:24-26, Mark 15:15, Luke 23:24-25, John 19:16

We will focus our study on Matthew’s account of the story.

-So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, (Only Matthew) Here was the motivation for Pilate. He needed to avoid a riot. Pilate experienced thirty-two riots during his term in office and he knew first hand how ugly a riot could be.

-He took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, (Only Matthew) This gesture has become symbolic for the human race. “Wash your hands” of the mess. By washing his hands, Pilate thought that he could wash his guilt and collusion away. He could not. History passed the verdict on Pilate: “Crucified under Pontius Pilate.” Washing hands or not, Pilate was guilty.

Paintings of Pilate Washing his Hands



[Pilate Washing His Hands, Mattia Preti](#)



[Pilate Washing His Hands, Jan Lievens](#)

-Saying, **‘I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.’** (Only Mathew) What a pretense. Pilate was not innocent at all.

-**Then the people as a whole answered, ‘His blood be on us and on our children!’** (Only Matthew) Underline. Highlight. This saying sparked a historical precedent that has lasted for centuries. For centuries, people have blamed the Jews and the children of the Jews for the death of Christ. People have used these famous words to support their prejudicial bigotry against the Jews.

These words of this sentence have been used to support prejudice against the Jews more than any other words in history.

One fascinating point in the movie, *The Passion*, was any omission of this famous line that has been used to legitimize prejudice against the Jews.

Gibson was painstakingly faithful in trying to reproduce the exact Biblical lines from the gospel narrative. That Gibson chose to not include this line was ingenious from my perspective. If any line could have been included in the movie to substantiate prejudice against the Jews, this line could have been. Gibson chose to not include these famous words from the Bible and history.

Some people have suggested that this famous line was originally included in the first showing of the movie, but after the initial showing of the film, there was such an uproar about the movie being anti-Semitic that Gibson removed that famous line from the final version of the movie.

It seems that Gibson caved into the mob of reviewers who would not allow those incendiary words to be included in that famous movie. It wasn’t Gibson himself who wanted to omit those words but the reviewers in the crowds.

Knowing the history of prejudice against Jewish people and how people like to use words from the Bible to support their deeply held prejudices, I was glad that Gibson did not include these inflammatory words in his film.

- **So he released Barabbas for them;**

-**And having flogged Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.** Notice the passive tense in Mark (and therefore Matthew’s) account of the flogging/scourging. Mark does not dwell on a detailed description of Jesus’ scourging.

Paintings of Jesus Being Scourged



[Flagellation, Caravaggio](#)



[Flagellation of Christ, Gioacchino Assereto](#)

#343. The Road to Golgotha

Matthew 27:31b-32, Mark 15:20b-21, Luke 23:26-32, John 19:17a

-Then they led him out to crucify him. They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross. It was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Simon of Cyrene became a symbol of people who picked up a cross that life forced on them. Earlier in his ministry, Jesus invited his true disciples to pick up their cross and follow him. Simon has become a symbol of a person who was willing to pick up the cross that life forced on him.

-“As Jesus was carrying his cross out of Jerusalem to the place of execution, a man named Simon of Cyrene was coming in (Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26), and the soldiers compelled him to carry the cross of Jesus. (The word *angareuo* (Greek *gamma* corresponds to English “ng” as in “finger”), here used for “compel,” is a technical one, perhaps better translated “impress”, and referring to the legal right of a soldier to require a provincial to carry his gear one mile for him. The word occurs in the New Testament only here and in Matthew 5:41.) Mark calls him “the father of Alexander and Rufus” without further explanation, apparently taking it for granted that his readers would all know who Rufus and Alexander are. [The Christian writer Papias \(died around 130\) tells us that Mark originally wrote his Gospel for the Christian community in Rome. This suggests that Alexander and Rufus were well known to, and probably part of, a Christian congregation in Rome.](#)”

Paintings of Jesus Carrying His Cross on the Way to Golgotha



[Christ Carrying the Cross, Bosch](#)



[Christ Carrying the Cross, Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld](#)



[Christ Carrying The Cross, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo](#)

Which of these paintings speaks most deeply to you and why?

Paintings of Simon of Cyrene Carrying Jesus' Cross

 [The Way to Calvary, Domenichino](#)

 [Jesus Falls](#)

 [Simon Compelled to Carry the Cross, James Tissot](#)

(Click on the painting to enlarge)

In the following images of Jesus' crucifixion, notice the antiseptic quality of the *next two* modern American depictions of Jesus.

While both *Jesus of Nazareth* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* were shocking for their decades in history, as we look back at these pictorial representations, they seem dreadfully anemic and antiseptic.

In Zefirelli's film, Jesus even has soft beautiful blue eyes. In the picture that advertised his film, Jesus has only a hint of blood on him from the thorns.

In the picture from the rock opera, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Jesus has become a rock star from the early seventies, with a perfect hairdo, a trim beard, strong looking eyes, a crown with "traditional" thorns two inches long which don't seem to hurt.

 [Zefirelli's Film, Jesus of Nazareth](#)

 [The Rock Opera, Jesus Christ Superstar](#)

Discussion Question:

What does Jesus' crucifixion on the cross mean to you?

The crucifixion demonstrates God immense love for us in paying the penalty for our sins, in loving us *so much* that Jesus was willing to die for us.

Good Friday and Easter.

The Death and Resurrection.

The Crucifix and the Empty Cross.

These two dominant themes of Christ and the Christian life can never be separated from each other.

Closing Prayers

Assigned Readings for Session 49: Arrest, Crucifixion, Burial (3)

- Day 1 #344 The Crucifixion
- Day 2 #345 Jesus Derided on the Cross
- Day 3 #346 The Two Thieves
- Day 4 #347 The Death of Jesus
- Day 5 #348 Witnesses of the Crucifixion
- Day 6 #349 Jesus Side Pierced
- Day 7 #350, 351 The Burial of Jesus, The Guard at the Tomb

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