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As we pick up again in John's Gospel, 1<sup>st</sup> let's read **Mt. 27:15-26, Mk. 15:6-15, Lk. 23:13-25, then read Jn. 18:39-19:16.** What a gathering of people: Annas, Caīaphas, members of the Sanhēdrin, Pilate, Herod Antipas, unnamed false witnesses, the crowds—all guilty of rejecting Jesus as Lord and King. Here we see the conclusion to Pilate's verdict: "**I find no guilt in Him, but...!**" Also see **19:4,6. 18:39 But you have a custom (practice, habit) that I release someone for you (or, to you) at the Passover; do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?**" Pilate realizes that Jesus is innocent, not guilty of the charges. But to state that Jesus was innocent would have infuriated the Jewish leaders and possibly touched off a riot that could have cost him his position as governor. So, Pilate tried to let the crowd instead of the leaders make the decision. He offered to release Jesus to satisfy a custom or practice he apparently had each year. "**Do you wish that I release for you the King of the Jews?**" He was trying to release Jesus. Look at their response!

**:40 So they cried out [shouted] again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber** [a thief who also plunders and pillages, not hesitating to use violence]. **Mt. 27:16, Mk. 15:6-8, Lk. 23:19, Acts 3:14** make it clear that Barnabas was more than just one who seizes plunder. Matthew calls him a notorious prisoner, an insurrectionist, a murderer. Probably he was one of the Zealots who had sworn to rid Israel of the Romans! "In the eyes of the crowd, Barabbas was considered a champion of a free Israel and possibly something of a hero." "Ironically the same Jewish leaders who had demanded that Pilate condemn Jesus as an insurrectionist now demanded the release of the notorious insurrectionist Barabbas!" Just think, this violent man was preferred to their King. Pilate was trapped by his own tactic. When the crowd cries out, "Not this Man but Barabbas", Pilate no longer can set Jesus free. Justice demands a penalty. It seems that at this very critical moment a messenger arrived to inform Pilate about a dream which had caused intense suffering to his wife. "Have nothing to do with that righteous Man!" **Mt. 27:19.**

**Read 19:1-7. :1 Pilate then took Jesus and scourged Him (or, had Him scourged)** [with a lead-tipped whip]. "Desperate to find a solution and reluctant to release Barabbas, Pilate hoped to satisfy the mob's bloodlust by sentencing Jesus to 'the halfway death.'" (Lk. 23:16,22) "The whip consisted of a short

wooden handle to which several leather straps, each with jagged pieces of bone or metal attached to the end, were fastened." So horrible was this punishment that Roman citizens were exempt from it (see **Acts 22:25**). "Often the muscles, bones, veins, or even internal organs were exposed by the whipping." It's amazing Jesus was able to carry His cross for any distance.

Plus, **:2 And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and put a purple robe on Him.** The sharp spikes would have cut deeply into His head, increasing His pain and bleeding. Matthew records that the soldiers put a reed in His right hand. "They continued their sadistic game by kneeling down before Him." **:3 and they began to come up to Him and say, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and to give Him slaps in the face.** They also spat on Him, seized the reed from His hand, and beat Him over the head with it. The Suffering Servant (read **Is. 50:6, 53:5,7**), Jesus, was silent.

**:4 Pilate came out again and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you so that you may know (1097) that I find no guilt in Him** [understand clearly that I find Him not guilty]." Once again, Pilate affirmed Jesus' innocence (**18:38, 19:6**). **:5 Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold, the Man!"** The Man instead of "Your King" as in **:14**. Even after the scourging, Pilate was still trying desperately to release Jesus. "Here is the man you find so dangerous and threatening. Does He look like a dangerous rebel?" Pilate hoped seeing Jesus humiliated and beaten nearly to death would satisfy the angry mob. He presents Jesus as a beaten, harmless and rather pathetic figure.

**:6 So when the chief priests and the officers [Temple guards] saw Him, they cried out [began shouting] saying, "Crucify, crucify!" Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him." 18:38, 19:4,6.** "I want nothing more to do with Him. I find no basis for a charge. You bring Him to me for trial but you will not accept my judgment." **Mt. 27:23-24; Mk. 15:14; Lk. 23:4,13-15,22.** How could a righteous God permit this? See **Is. 53:6,8, Gal. 3:13-14.**

**:7 The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God."** This was a change of the charge. They had already judged Jesus according to Jewish law and found Him guilty and deserving of death. "Part of the genius of the Roman form of occupation throughout the empire was to grant autonomy in civil matters to the conquered nations." Maintain control while upholding local laws. "He's guilty when judged by the standard of our own law. It is a capital offense among the Jewish people. He made Himself out to be the Son of God."

The specific charge at least revealed their true motives. **Lev. 24:16 Moreover, the one who blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. (Mt. 26:63-65).** The charge of blasphemy had been a rising theme (e.g. **5:18; 8:58-59; 10:33,36**). As a pagan, Pilate did not believe in one God but in many gods and in the children of the gods. Jesus was one of the sons of gods. Yet to do so again might provoke the Jews to riot or to complain to his superiors.

**Read :8-12. :8 Therefore when Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid** (dread, terrified). Remember, it was about this time Pilate's wife

had sent him her scared words. Pilate was superstitious rather than religious. **:9 and he entered into the Praetorium again and said to Jesus, “Where are You from?” But Jesus gave him no answer.** Jesus had already answered the question; there was no need to answer again. Pilate knew He was a Galilean (Lk. 23:6-7) and Jesus had already told Pilate that He was a king from another realm (18:36-37). Pilate had heard the truth and rejected it. As Jesus was silent before the high priest (Mt. 26:63; Mk. 14:61) and Herod (Lk. 23:9), so He was silent here. It is a terrible day when Jesus is silent to anyone. Jesus’ silence provokes Pilate. **:10 So Pilate said to Him, “You do not speak to me [To ME you do not speak]? Don’t You know (3609a) that I have authority (power to act) to release You [set You free], and I have authority to crucify You?”** The earlier conversation had been about kingship; this one is about authority.

**:11 Jesus answered, “You would have no authority over (lit. against) Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason, he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.”** Amazing! These were Jesus’ last words to Pilate. From the standpoint of Jesus, Pilate was a person in need; and Jesus gave him the opportunity of receiving truth if he would have it. It was a sacred trust to be in Pilate’s position. Jesus reminds Pilate that, as one who bears authority by God alone, it is he who stands at the bar of judgment. Pilate’s authority had been given to him, and therefore he is responsible to the One who gave it. The rule of evil, which prizes power over truth, will fall. Each must give account for his/her use of power, whether in defense of truth or in seeking its destruction. Pilate was subject to divine judgment. **The greater sin:** Yet there was one who bore even greater guilt. It was the greater sin because they did so with every benefit of divine revelation from Jesus’ words and the OT. The deliverer could refer to Satan/Caīaphas/Judas/Annas/Sanhēdrin.

**:12 As a result of this Pilate made efforts (lit. was seeking) to release Him, but the Jews cried out [shouted] saying, “If you release this Man, you are no friend (philos) of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes (or, speaks against) Caesar.”** The governor remained unconvinced that Jesus was guilty of anything worthy of death. Jesus had never so much as spoken a single word against the Roman government. Pilate was a governor who served at the whim of the emperor (Tiberius). On earlier occasions the Jewish authorities had communicated their displeasure with Pilate to the Emperor. “Tiberius was notoriously bitter and suspicious of rivals. Pilate had to choose. Tiberius or Jesus? The kingdoms of earth or the kingdom of heaven? Power or truth? In this case, public popularity trumped personal integrity.” **“We have no king but Caesar!”** And with that, the crowd sided with the kingdoms of the world, with power, not truth, with earth, not heaven. If you think about it, these Jews were anything but friends of Caesar.

**Read :13-16. :13 Therefore when Pilate heard these words (logos), he brought Jesus out [again], and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew (Jewish Aramaic), Gabbatha.** The bema seat was a raised platform from which official decisions were read. If he had to choose between showing his loyalty to Rome or siding with a despised and strange Jew, which would he choose?

**:14 Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour [probably 6 a.m.]. And he said to the Jews, “Behold, your King!”** Probably means Friday of Passover week. If it were reckoned from midnight, it would be about six o’clock in the morning; if from sunrise, it would be about noon (see on 1:39; 4:6; 4:52). Mark helps us with the timing. **Mk. 15:25** informs us that Jesus was crucified at the third hour, about 9:00.

**:15 So they cried out [yelled], “Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar [Caesar is our king and no one else]!” Cried out:** They are forced at last to deny their loyalty to God and to openly acknowledge the rule of the hated Roman Caesar. This was truly an act of blasphemy (what they accusing Jesus of) since God alone was Israel’s true King. The central faith by which Israel lived—that Yahweh alone is Lord—had been publicly denied by the official spokesmen of the nation. As someone said, “Great occasions do not make heroes or cowards, they simply unveil them to the eyes of men.” This mockery continued in the placard on the cross: **Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews (19:19-22).**

**:16 So he then handed Him over to them [the soldiers] to be crucified (lit. he handed Jesus over to their will).** Humanly speaking, envy had won the day. But never forget, the apostle Peter says in **Acts 2:23** that “**Jesus was delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God.**” As one wrote, “Pilate knew that the charges of the Jews were a series of lies, that Jesus was completely innocent, that he was deeply impressed with Him, and that he did not wish to condemn Him to death – and yet he did.” This was the conflict between Pilate the Roman judge and Pilate the politician. “The central purpose for which the political order exists—to defend the good and punish the evildoer—had been publicly abandoned.” Pilate tried in vain to seek a middle way, a scheme in which he could serve both or neither. Pilate chose power, earthly success, short-term comfort; he chose to do something his conscience was clearly telling him was wrong.

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In **Mt. 27:22** Pilate asks the question, “**Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?**” It’s the same question facing every person. There is no middle ground: (**Mt. 12:30**). In the end, pride and fear of man led to Pilate’s downfall. “Privileged to converse privately with the King, he didn’t take advantage of the opportunity.” He too belongs in the category of Judas. “Pilate chose compromise and ended up a murderer of an innocent man. The crowd chose Barabbas and ended up crucifying the Son of God. Jesus chose the cross and ended up King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” As we said before, the road we travel forks more than once. Our initial decision to trust in Jesus is the most crucial choice we will make, but it is the first of many. Each day, we must choose which kingdom we will serve. What is your choice? Joel

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NOTES At noon on the day of preparation, priests in the temple began slaughtering the Passover lambs in keeping with **Ex. 12:6**.

Intro before Herod “When the lictor completed his gruesome task, he draped Antipas’s royal cloak over Jesus’ tattered, swollen flesh and sent Him back to Pilate wearing a crown of thorns, in mockery of His alleged kingship.”

:40 Imagine Pilate’s surprise when the angry mob demanded the innocent take the place of the guilty on a cross. And imagine Barabbas’s shock! Did he ever realize Jesus took his place on the cross?

:40 His name means “son of a father.”

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19:1 Remember in **Acts 22:25**, the apostle Paul was scourged, but later was apologized to because he was a Roman citizen.

**Read :1-7. :1 Pilate then took Jesus and scourged Him (or, had Him scourged) [with a lead-tipped whip]. :2 And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and put a purple robe on Him; :3 and they *began* to come up to Him and say, “Hail, King of the Jews! And to give Him *slaps in the face*. :4 Pilate came out again and said to them, “Behold, I am bringing Him out to you so that you may know that I find no guilt in Him [understand clearly that I find Him not guilty].” :5 Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. *Pilate* said to them, “Behold, the Man!” :6 So when the chief priests and the officers [Temple guards] saw Him, they cried out [began shouting] saying, “Crucify, crucify! Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him.” :7 The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God.”**

**Read :8-12. :8 Therefore when Pilate heard this statement, he was *even* more afraid; :9 and he entered into the Praetorium again and said to Jesus, “Where are You from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. :10 So Pilate said to Him, “You do not speak to me? Do You not know [realize?] that I have authority to release You [set You free], and I have authority to crucify You?” :11 Jesus answered, “You would have no authority over ((lit. against) Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has *the* greater sin.” :12 As a result of this Pilate made efforts (lit. was seeking to) to release Him, but the Jews cried out [shouted] saying, “If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes (or, speaks against) Caesar.”**

**Read :13-16. :13 Therefore when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out [again], and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement [Grk. The Lithostrotos], but in Hebrew (Jewish Aramaic), Gabbatha. :14 Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour [probably 6 a.m. or perhaps]. And he said to the Jews, “Behold, your king!” :15 So they cried out [yelled], “Away with *Him*, away with *Him*, crucify Him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar [Caesar is our king and no one else].” :16 So he then handed Him over to them to be crucified.**

NLT 1 Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip. 2 The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe on him. 3 "Hail! King of the Jews!" they mocked, as they slapped him across the face. 4 Pilate went outside again and said to the people, "I am going to bring him out to you now, but understand clearly that I find him not guilty." 5 Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said, "Look, here is the man!" 6 When they saw him, the leading priests and Temple guards began shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" "Take him yourselves and crucify him," Pilate said. "I find him not guilty." 7 The Jewish leaders replied, "By our law he ought to die because he called himself the Son of God." 8 When Pilate heard this, he was more frightened than ever. 9 He took Jesus back into the headquarters again and asked him, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave no answer.

10 "Why don't you talk to me?" Pilate demanded. "Don't you realize that I have the power to release you or crucify you?" 11 Then Jesus said, "You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin." 12 Then Pilate tried to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, "If you release this man, you are no 'friend of Caesar.' Anyone who declares himself a king is a rebel against Caesar." 13 When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. Then Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, [Gabbatha]). 14 It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover. And Pilate said to the people, "Look, here is your king!" 15 "Away with him," they yelled. "Away with him! Crucify him!" "What? Crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the leading priests shouted back. 16 Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus away.

**JBP** 1 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged, and the soldiers twisted thorn-twigs into a crown and put it on his head, threw a purple robe around him and kept coming into his presence, saying, “Hail, king of the Jews!” And then they slapped him with their open hands. Then Pilate went outside again and said to them, “Look, I bring him out before you here, to show that I find nothing criminal about him at all.” And at this Jesus came outside too, wearing the thorn crown and the purple robe. “Look,” said Pilate, “here’s the man!” The sight of him made the chief priests and Jewish officials shout at the top of their voices, “Crucify! Crucify!” “You take him and crucify him,” retorted Pilate. “He’s no criminal as far as I can see!” The Jews answered him, “We have a Law, and according to that Law, he must die, for he made himself out to be Son of God!” When Pilate heard them say this, he became much more uneasy, and returned to the palace again and spoke to Jesus, “Where do you come from?” But Jesus gave him no reply. So Pilate said to him, “Won’t you speak to me? Don’t you realize that I have the power to set you free, and I have the power to have you crucified?” “You have no power at all against me,” replied Jesus, “except what was given to you from above. And for that reason the one who handed me over to you is even more guilty than you are.” From that moment, Pilate tried hard to set him free but the Jews were shouting, “If you set this man free, you are no friend of Caesar! Anyone who makes himself out to be a king is anti-Caesar!” When Pilate heard this, he led Jesus outside and sat down upon the Judgment-seat in the place called the Pavement (in Hebrew, Gabbatha). It was preparation day of the Passover and it was now getting on towards midday. Pilate said to the Jews, “Look, here’s your king!” At which they yelled, “Take him away, take him away, crucify him!” Am I to crucify your king? Pilate asked them. “Caesar is our king and no one else,” replied the chief priests. And at this Pilate handed Jesus over to them for crucifixion.