

**A Declaration of Those Things Which Are
Most Surely Believed Among Us
An Expository Study of the Gospel According to Luke
Chapter 23- **Luke 23:1-25**
339- The Love of the World; The Condemnation of Jesus
and The Sovereignty of God- Part 1**

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Luke 23:1-25

- 1 Then the whole body of them got up and brought Him before Pilate.**
- 2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."**
- 3 So Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He answered him and said, "*It is as you say.*"**
- 4 Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man."**
- 5 But they kept on insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee even as far as this place."**
- 6 When Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a Galilean.**
- 7 And when he learned that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time.**
- 8 Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him.**
- 9 And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing.**
- 10 And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently.**
- 11 And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate.**
- 12 Now Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been enemies with each other.**
- 13 Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people,**

14 and said to them, "You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him.

15 "No, nor has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by Him.

16 "Therefore I will punish Him and release Him."

17 [Now he was obliged to release to them at the feast one prisoner.]

18 But they cried out all together, saying, "Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!"

19 (He was one who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection made in the city, and for murder.)

20 Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again,

21 but they kept on calling out, saying, "Crucify, crucify Him!"

22 And he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt *demanding* death; therefore I will punish Him and release Him."

23 But they were insistent, with loud voices asking that He be crucified. And their voices *began* to prevail.

24 And Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand be granted.

25 And he released the man they were asking for who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, but he delivered Jesus to their will.

Now Pontius Pilate is one of the most interesting and tragic people in the Bible. He was interesting because he lived a very full and fascinating life that saw him rise to great heights, and accumulate great power and authority in the dangerous political arenas of the Roman Empire of the 1st Century. And Pilate's conversations with Jesus during His trial are riveting, and have been the subject of much study and research over the centuries.

But, Pilate is also one of the saddest and tragic people in the entire Bible for the very same reasons that made him interesting. His political ambition, along with his love of fame, recognition, money, and power, fueled his worldliness, and encouraged him to become one of the most brutal and inhuman prefects in the Roman Empire.

Pilate is one of only a handful of people who actually stood face to face with the incarnate God and had a conversation. But, unlike those

who wanted to hear the Savior teach, or to watch Him perform great and staggering miracles, or to be touched and healed by the Master, Pilate will forever be known as the man who finally condemned Jesus to die.

Now, from the earliest days of the Church, believers from all walks of life memorized and confessed a very simple Creed that contained all of the "Essential Elements" of Christianity. And right there, among all the issues of the Incarnation and Resurrection, we find Pontius Pilate:

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;¹

And then, in AD 325, and again, in AD 381, the basic Christian Confession was *expanded* to say:

[I believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of the Father before all worlds;
God of God,
Light of Light,
very God of very God;
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.
Who, for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary,
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered and was buried;
and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures;
and ascended into heaven,
and sits on the right hand of the Father;
and He shall come again, with glory,
to judge the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.

¹ The Apostle's Creed

... so, it is impossible to discuss the Crucifixion of Jesus without mentioning Pontius Pilate. It is with Pilate that we have some of the most powerful interchanges between the incarnate God and sinful human beings that are recorded in the entire Bible. For example:

Matthew 27:13-14

13 Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?"

14 And He did not answer him with regard to even a *single* charge, so the governor was quite amazed.

John 18:33-38

33 Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

34 Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?"

35 Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests 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, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say *correctly* that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

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 guilt in Him."

John 19:10-13

10 So Pilate said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?"

11 Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has *the* greater sin."

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

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

Matthew 27:17-25

17 So when the people gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?"

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

19 While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him *a message*, saying, "Have nothing to do with that righteous Man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him."

20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to put Jesus to death.

21 But the governor said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas."

22 Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Crucify Him!"

23 And he said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they kept shouting all the more, saying, "Crucify Him!"

24 When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see *to that* yourselves."

25 And all the people said, "His blood shall be on us and on our children!"

... and I want to examine each of these Passages over the next couple of weeks.

Now it was through these interchanges with Jesus that brought His final condemnation, but it was through these same interchanges that haunted Pilate for the rest of his life. It was because Pilate chose to allow Jesus to be killed that separated this cruel politician from his wife, and eventually saw him lose everything he had worked so hard to obtain, and end his own life alone and in disgrace and sent him to a devil's hell.

So, in reality, Jesus was not on trial here, Pilate was. It was not the Jewish crowd that called for Jesus to be crucified that was in charge; no, God was sovereignly putting them on trial. And even though it was the Sanhedrin Court that had the solemn duty to administer Justice, based on the inspired Old Testament Scriptures, these pompous, self-righteous men stood in condemnation by the great Judge of Heaven.

So, there were actually three things going on here as Jesus stands before Pilate:

1. The Love of the World in Pilate
2. The Condemnation of Jesus by the Crowds
3. The Sovereignty of God

And several years after the Resurrection, this same Dr. Luke quoted the Apostles as they were praying about these issues all working simultaneously together in **The Acts 4:27-28**:

**27 "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,
28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.**

So, these men who led the Church during its formative years believed and taught that the evil actions of unsaved and wicked men were carried out under the predestined Purpose of God, Who works all things after the Counsel of Him. So, in reality, "Evil" is *not* a force that roams freely throughout the earth, but it is merely a tool that God uses to further His Own Good Will in both saving all of His elect and damning the non-elect.

We're going to take some time to go through this together, and my goal is that three things will become clear in your mind:

1. The Great Danger of Loving This Present Evil World
2. Condemning Jesus only Condemns Yourself
3. God is absolutely Sovereign in the Death of His Son

Now we have already met Judas, the betrayer of the only truly innocent Man the world has ever seen, and now we meet Pilate, the man who finally condemned the sinless Lamb of God to be crucified.

People who read and study the Bible know about Pontius Pilate because throughout the 27 Books of the New Testament, Pilate is mentioned fifty-six times:

- ✓ The Apostle Levi (Matthew) 9 times
- ✓ John Mark (Commissioned by Peter) 10 times
- ✓ The Apostle John 21 times
- ✓ The Apostle Paul mentions Pilate once

Dr. Luke, who was commissioned by the Apostle Paul to write the Gospel record that bears his name and the diary of the first 30 years of Christianity, mentions Pilate fifteen times, 12 in **the Gospel of Luke** and 3 times in **The Book of the Acts**.

But Pilate is also one of those historical characters that almost everybody has heard of, either in Church or in movies or other literature about the Bible. So, Pilate, like Pharaoh of Moses' day, is a well-known figure. And yet, like Pharaoh, much of what people *think* they know about Pilate comes from Hollywood and not from the Bible. So, I think it would be good to "camp" here in the Passage that Brother Andy just read to you so we can examine all that Dr. Luke wrote about this fascinating and tragic man.

Now to pick back up in our "journey" through Luke, we need to review all that is going on here because I just spent the last ten weeks preaching about something else. So, back in **Luke 22**, somewhere in or near the year AD29, on a Thursday evening in the Jewish month, Nisan (April), Jesus sits down with His disciples and establishes the Ordinance or the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And even though this is supposed to be a very sacred moment, it is there, at this "Last Supper", where the most sinful and wicked demonstration of pride and arrogance takes place as these twelve men begin to argue about which one of them is the greatest.

It is at this Supper that Jesus tells Judas:

John 13:27b

... **What you do, do quickly.**

... and it is at this Supper where Jesus tells Peter:

Luke 22:31-32

31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat;

32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

And when Peter begins to tell Jesus how much he loves Him and how dedicated he is to Jesus, Jesus tells Peter:

Luke 22:34b

... I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me.

It was this same night when Jesus led them to the Garden of Gethsemane, where He told them:

Matthew 26:38

My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.

And then Jesus went about 50 or 60 feet further into the Garden and fell on his Face and began to cry out to God in prayer with such fervency that the blood vessels near the surface of His skin broke and He began to sweat blood. And He prayed:

Luke 22:42b

... Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.

Jesus prayed several hours like this, and finally, well past midnight on Friday, He walked serenely to his sleeping disciples and said to them:

Mark 14:41

Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Less than an hour later, Judas comes to the Garden leading a group of over 500 men, many of them battle hardened soldiers. And they come for one reason- to arrest Jesus.

After knocking them all to the ground with just His Word and healing the man whom Peter had cut off his ear, Jesus allowed Himself to be taken. So, at some point, early Friday morning, Jesus enters the courtyard of the High Priest and his father-in-law to be interrogated, while both Peter and John follow at a distance.

And for several hours, Jesus is questioned by the high priest. And after each session, Jesus is beaten and spit on and slapped around and mocked and laughed at. And as Jesus is being dragged back and forth between Caiaphas and Annas, Peter is very busy, out in the courtyard by a fire, denying that he even knows Jesus. And during the last of his three denials:

Luke 22:59-62

59 After about an hour had passed, another man *began* to insist, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too."

60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed.

61 The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "**Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times.**"

62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

Now it's almost daylight, and they took Jesus back in, and Dr. Luke tells us:

Luke 22:63-65

63 Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him and beating Him,

64 and they blindfolded Him and were asking Him, saying, "Prophecy, who is the one who hit You?"

65 And they were saying many other things against Him, blaspheming.

So, Jesus has been up all night. He has prayed so hard that an angel came to strengthen Him as He sweat blood. And since just after

mid-night, Jesus has gone from one beating to the next, one interrogation to the next. And now it is day light on Friday morning and Luke writes:

Luke 22:66-71

66 When it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council *chamber*, saying,

67 "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, **"If I tell you, you will not believe;**

68 and if I ask a question, you will not answer.

69 **"But from now on *THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND* of the power *OF GOD.*"**

70 And they all said, "Are You the Son of God, then?" And He said to them, **"Yes, I am."**

71 Then they said, "What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."

So, Judas has betrayed Him, Peter had denied Him, the disciples have all abandoned Him, and soldiers have beaten Jesus all night long as He is man-handled and abused and questioned.

Now we need to remember that this all-night affair is *not* a sincere effort by the Jewish authorities to find either guilt or innocence; Jesus has already been condemned by the religious leaders, and this so-called "trial" is really nothing more than a kangaroo court. It is nothing more than an excuse to conduct a brutal interrogation that is being carried out in violation of both Jewish and Roman law.

Now we need to understand that Jesus is being tried and condemned here for the very same reasons for which lost people are saved:

1. Who Jesus is
2. What Jesus taught
3. What Jesus did

... which brings up one all important question:

What will we do with Jesus?

The Jews categorically rejected Who Jesus is and what Jesus taught. And nobody can be saved who rejects those two issues. Every single human being born after Adam must confess out loud that Jesus Christ is God Almighty in human flesh. And all who are saved must believe and strive to obey all that Jesus taught.

But these religious hypocrites ran into a serious problem about the many amazing things Jesus had done over the last 3 years. These men feared the people, and so, they couldn't deny the spectacular miracles that Jesus had performed in broad daylight, in front of hundreds, if not, thousands of witnesses. So, they solved that problem by simply saying:

Luke 11:15b

... He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons.

... attributing the Divine Power of Jesus to the devil. And this is *exactly* what Jesus was talking about when He said:

Matthew 12:30-31

30 "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

31 "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.

So, there is no attempt at conducting this trial fairly; no intention of ever setting Jesus free. As far as the religious leaders are concerned, Jesus is an evil imposter masquerading as the Messiah. They have condemned Him as a blasphemer and a liar, the illegitimate son of a Roman soldier, and a demon. And the result of rejecting the incarnate God is the final condemnation that Jesus gave to the Jewish religious rulers in **Luke 19:43-44:**

43 "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side,

44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

... which came to pass in 70AD with the Roman destruction of the Temple and the elimination of the entire fabric of Jewish worship, and way of life that was established under the Old or the First Covenant. But, because Israel was merely a vassal state of Rome during the First Century, these religious frauds needed the permission of the Roman authorities to kill Jesus. And so, in **Luke 23:1**, Dr. Luke says:

Then the whole body of them got up and brought Him before Pilate.

Now the phrase “**the whole body**” refers to the complete Sanhedrin Court. This was the governing body of 70 men in Israel during that time that made sure that what the nation did was in accord with Jewish law. And the reason the entire Sanhedrin sent Jesus to Pilate was to show the Roman ruler that they were all in agreement. John Mark wrote:

Mark 15:1

Early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole Council, immediately held a consultation; and binding Jesus, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate.

Now let me give you an idea about how this is *supposed* to work. We have three Elders in this Church: Brother Andy, Brother Vern, and myself. And the three of us meet together every single week. And we discuss what is going on with the Church and the people, and what we need to do, and then we pray. We pray for ourselves to have the broken, contrite and trembling nature that God sees. God has told us that we are not to “lord it over” the sheep, but we are to lovingly put our arms around the sheep and shepherd them into the Truth of God’s Word and a life of Holiness. And where there is a need to encourage, we encourage, and where there is a need for rebuke and correction, we do that. So, we pray for wisdom and purity of heart to lead this Church in Love and Truth. And then we pray for each of you.

And we are in the process right now of updating and amending our Doctrinal Statement. And I should have that for publication next week, Lord willing. But we can’t just change the Doctrinal Statement, willy-nilly. We have to have a reason. And then we have to tell you what that reason is.

And the By-laws of the Church state that for any major decision, all of the Elders must agree *unanimously*. So, no major decision will ever be made in this Church with a “two against one” vote. It is *unanimous* or we can’t move forward. And that is to protect us and the Church from making decisions based on political considerations or popularity contests, or worldly, carnal minds.

Now does this *guarantee* that we will always make the right decision? No. But, it is much harder to be wrong when three men, who constantly have their noses in the Book and their knees on the carpet, are each looking at the same issue. And as this Church grows, we will have more Elders. And the more we have, the more men we have who are genuinely godly and biblical leaders, the *harder* it becomes to make the wrong decision. And one of the most important factors of godly leadership is that the leaders themselves be men of godly integrity and humility, who go to great lengths to make sure that the sheep of God understand and know the Scriptures.

Now that is how it is *supposed* to work. That is *not* how this Sanhedrin worked. And it didn’t work not because the sheep of God were not willing to walk in God’s ways; it didn’t work because the leaders themselves were unsaved and ungodly men who went to great lengths to keep the sheep in the dark about what the Scriptures say.

And so, Dr. Luke is telling us that the whole body of these religious leaders were all in one accord about Jesus. And what they were unanimous about was that Jesus must die. And this is probably the only time in history when these religious charlatans were in agreement about anything. So, this was a display of their supposed unanimity to the pagan ruler to say, in effect, “*The Sanhedrin is 70 men strong and we can’t all be wrong about this Man!*”

But, they were all wrong. And that is an indication of how wicked and how ungodly the spiritual leadership of Israel in the 1st Century had become. Here they come, all 70 of them, to Pilate to show this man that they are in full agreement; Jesus must die.

So, just who is this Pilate? Well, Pontius was his family name that indicated that he was of the original people of ancient Italy that eventually became Romans. So, in his native tongue, his name would have been:

Pontius Pilates

... but no other credible record of his background has been found. According to history, Pilate was the fifth "Procurator" or "Prefect" or "Governor" of the Roman province of Judaea. The Apostle Levi wrote this in **Matthew 27:2**:

and they bound Him, and led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate the governor.

Pilate was not born into wealth or political royalty, and there is reason to believe that his wife, Procula, was the niece of the Emperor Tiberius, and that is why he was appointed as the "Governor of Judaea". But, in any event, Pilate began his rule in AD26 and dominated that region until he was removed from office in AD36.

Now Pilate had quickly made a name for himself from the barbaric cruelty that he used on any who would challenge his authority. The Jewish historians Josephus and Philo describe Pontius Pilate as:

"... a stubborn, inflexible, and cruel man who had no respect for the Jewish people."²

Perhaps because of his military background, he may have sometimes used force when it wasn't necessary. On one occasion, Pilate told his soldiers to disguise themselves in civilian clothes, with their swords hidden under their cloaks, and mingle with a crowd of Jewish demonstrators. After they were in position, he signaled for them to pull out their weapons and attack. And in the ensuing bloodbath, hundreds of people were killed.

Now even though the Persians, under Darius I, actually invented Crucifixion about 1,000 years before Jesus was born, the Romans had perfected it. With their advanced knowledge of human anatomy, they located the "medial nerve" which runs the entire length of the body. And by positioning the nails against the medial nerve in both the feet and hands, not only would Crucifixion bring about death by suffocation, it would also give the people unbelievable pain while they were dying. The understanding of the horror of Crucifixion under Pilate had grown

² The Works of Josephus

to such an extent that many people would readily betray their own family, even their own children, rather than face it.

Now Pilate was a very ambitious man. He loved power and the prestige that went with the power. So, for example, in order to impress his superiors back in Rome, Pilate was especially fond of imposing as much pain on his victims as possible. And so, even though he was only in power about three years when he came into contact with Jesus, Pilate had already gained a reputation of being a vicious and unmerciful man whom the people feared. It was common for the condemned to beg for mercy at Pilate's feet before he would send them off to die. So, this was the man to whom the Jewish religious leaders sent Jesus.

Now to show you the depth of the hypocrisy of the Jewish religious leaders, look at what the Apostle John wrote in **John 18:28**:

Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.

Now the "Praetorium" was the "Palace of the Governor". This was the office where Pilate would try the accused and render judgment. And because the Jews saw the Romans as being pagans, they wouldn't dare enter into the Governor's Palace because that would make them "unclean", and they would have to go through the long, drawn out purification rites before they could eat the Passover. And since it was already time to eat the Passover the day they brought Jesus to Pilate, these men could only stand outside and wait as Pilate interrogated Jesus alone.

So, it was okay for these religious fakes to lie and make up stories about Jesus so they could have Him murdered, but they were "too holy" to even enter into a Roman political ruler's office lest they be defiled. What hypocrisy! This is a perfect example of what Jesus meant when He said:

Matthew 23:23-24

23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice

and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

24 "You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!"

Now, as we get into this, we will see that Pilate didn't respect the Sanhedrin at all. In his short time as the Governor of Judaea, he saw example after example of their blatant hypocrisy, and he knew how greedy and sexually immoral they were. And he recognized all of this in them, because he was of the same caliber himself. In fact, Pilate is the perfect example of what the Apostle John was talking about when he said this in **1 John 2:15-17**:

15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

17 The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Pontius Pilate was one of the best examples in the Bible of what being "worldly" looks like. He was so ambitious, he so lusted for power and prestige, he was so in love with money and position that he would sanction the murder of a Man he knew was innocent by people he knew to be religious hypocrites. Because even though Pilate protested Jesus' innocence several times and made a weak attempt at letting Him go, John records for us why Pilate finally agreed to His Death:

John 19:1-15

1 Pilate then took Jesus and scourged Him.

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."

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 saw Him, they cried out saying, "Crucify, crucify!" Pilate said to them, "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."

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 that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?"

11 Jesus answered, "**You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has *the* greater sin.**"

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

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

14 Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!"

15 So they cried out, "Away with *Him*, away with *Him*, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."

So, the searing question that burned into Pilate was this:

What will I do with Jesus?

If Jesus is the Son of God, then Pilate must worship Him. But in order to worship Jesus and follow Him, Pilate would have to give up his position and his power and his prestige. And, if Jesus is the liar and fake that these religious hypocrites say He is, then Pilate must have Jesus killed. What will I do with Jesus?

Several times, Pilate tries to pass the buck. Several times he tries to let somebody else decide. Yet, each time, Pilate is forced to face Jesus himself. What will I do with Jesus?

Pilate knew that Jesus was not guilty. Pilate knew that the Sanhedrin had fabricated their stories. And Pilate knew something about Jesus. There is reason to believe that Pilate had conversations about this Man and had made statements about this Man before Jesus stood before Him. And the fact that Jesus stood calmly, fearlessly before him and was not begging for His Life shook Pilate to the core of his being. What will I do with Jesus?

So, he stared into Jesus' Eyes. This brutal barbarian looked deeply into the soul of the incarnate God and what he saw troubled him.

So, I ask you this morning: What will you do with Jesus? Will you fall before Him and worship Him? Will you leave father and mother behind and love Him? Will you give up worldly position and power and prestige for Jesus? What will you trade for Jesus? What is your price to betray the Lord? What is your price to turn away from Jesus? Now that Jesus has stood before you, now that you have examined all of His claims and looked deeply into His Eyes, What will you do with Jesus?

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.