

Delivered To Pilate

The speed and urgency of the Lord's trial by the chief priests, elders, scribes and the whole council of the Sanhedrin is here laid bare. Early in the morning, likely as soon as Pilate was available, they rushed the Lord bound and bruised into the presence of the Roman governor. Every detail of the Lord's suffering deserves our attention and offers gospel parallels for our spiritual help.

Dawn on the world's greatest day

As dawn broke on this momentous day, the day of salvation in which the Son of God and Son of Man would die on the cross, God's own people the Jews handed Israel's Messiah over to their Gentile rulers. It was the culmination of a great deal of planning and effort. The aim was to persuade Pilate do for them what legally they could not do for themselves; execute the Lord Jesus Christ. In doing so they fulfilled two distinct prophecies.

The sceptre had departed

First, they showed they had no power to govern themselves by their own laws. They fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy given by Jacob, 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be'. Shiloh, another name for Christ, had indeed come and when the Jews later cried out 'We have no king but Caesar', they confessed they had neither sceptre nor lawgiver among them.

Death by crucifixion

Secondly, the Jews ensured the death of the Lord would be by Roman crucifixion and not stoning by the Jews. Here they gave the fullest meaning to Moses' words, 'for he that is hanged is accursed of God'. The Lord Jesus as surety for His covenant people stood in our legal place with our iniquities laid on Him. He was charged with our sins, cursed by the holy Law of God and delivered up to death; the 'accursed' death of the cross.

Bound and delivered

Even the binding of Jesus to be delivered to Pilate shows the fulness of the parallels supplied by the Holy Ghost for the understanding of the church. It is we who are bound over to the just judgment of God, and we who are in bondage to Satan in our sin. So, too, the wicked are pictured as being bound hand and foot and cast into hell and outer darkness at the last day. Though we are guilty, the Lord Jesus Christ was bound in our place. His substitution for us in all points is foreshadowed by His being bound and delivered to judgment.

An unclean thing

John tells us the Jews would not enter Pilate's judgment hall lest they be deemed unclean. Behold the hypocrisy of religious hair-splitters! Pilate went out to meet them. Standing without, they accused Jesus of crimes designed to provoke Pilate's sense of duty saying Jesus perverted the nation, and forbade giving tribute to Caesar. They said Christ called Himself a king. Back inside again and the Lord is brought before Pilate for questioning, rendering the Saviour ceremonially unclean. All this points to the Saviour being made sin for us and bearing our guilt.

Christ the King

Pilate asked the Lord about the truth of the Jews' charges. Was He a king? Jesus answered, 'Thou sayest' or 'It is as you say'. This is the same as saying, 'Yes, I am', and is clearly so understood in John 18:36, the sense of which Pilate accepted. What a picture this is! The eternal Son of God in human nature, the Lord of life and glory, the King of kings and Lord of lords, stands before a heathen judge awaiting his pleasure! But know this: someday Pilate must stand before the judgment seat of Christ and await His pleasure, as will all men and women.

'He openeth not his mouth'

Two further points may be added here. The silence of Jesus caused Pilate to marvel at the dignity and self-possession of the Lord. Pilate marvelled greatly that Jesus did not speak in His own defence and knew 'the chief priests had delivered him for envy'. Also, Pilate's wife, says Matthew, sent a message to her husband pleading, 'Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him'. Pilate's initial plan was to seek for

ways by which Jesus could be released.

Silent submission

Our Saviour's silence may have been due to several things. He knew denial would simply mean more charges would be laid against him. He had no desire to further allow the Jews opportunity to lie and aggravate their condemnation. The Lord's heart was already on better things. His great motivation was to atone for the sins of His people and He knew His time to do so had come.

Suffering begun

Christ's suffering had already begun in the garden of Gethsemane. It continued at the hands of the Jews and increased when Pilate sent Jesus to Herod whose officers assaulted and mocked the Saviour. Now, back in the jurisdiction of Pilate it would reach its conclusion. Christ had in view His love for His Bride and also to answer for the sins of His people. The time of His dying had come. Having anticipated this moment zealously for so long, the Saviour held His peace. He was now ready to lay down His life for His church.

Amen

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