

We have been considering our Savior's sufferings or passion. Thus far, we have examined the first three of five stages: His arrest in the garden, His trial before the Jews, and His trial before the Gentiles. We come this morning to finish the third of these, wherein Christ is further mistreated by the Gentiles, openly rejected by the Jews, and formally condemned by Pilate.

Now, before we examine these verses, let me simply point out that throughout them, our Savior is taken back and forth from the Praetorium and paraded before the Jews. It's likely Pilate brought Him out to a porch (possibly a balcony), that overlooked the courtyard, where the Jewish mob gathered. Thus, we read that Pilate "went out again" (v4), "then Jesus came out" (v5), and "Pilate went again into the Praetorium" (v9), as Jesus is repeatedly moved back and forth from the Praetorium to the courtyard.

I. Jesus and the Romans (vv1-4)

II. Jesus and the Jews (vv5-7)

III. Jesus and the Judge (vv8-16)

I. Jesus and the Romans (vv1-4)

1. As we consider our Savior and (before) the Romans, we can summarize these verses in three words—scourging, mocking, and beating.
2. But before we come to these, I want to begin by saying a few things about Pilate and the various ways he sought to relieve himself from the unwelcome situation He found himself in.
3. That he knew Christ was innocent is evident, in that several times he openly affirms that Christ was without guilt.
4. It's for this reason he sought to excuse himself in at least three ways: (a) he appealed to the Jewish custom of releasing a prisoner at the Passover (they chose Barabbas instead).
5. (b) He sent Christ to Herod, the ruler of Galilee, in hopes that Herod would assume responsibility and take Him off his hands (but Herod, like Pilate, found no fault in Him).
6. (c) He had Jesus scourged in hopes this would satisfy the Jews, and relieve him of having to put Him to death (but as shall see, this plan also failed).
7. (1) He was scourged, v1—"So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him"—that is, Pilate had the soldiers scourge Him.
8. The Romans had largely perfected the art of scourging—because they estimated 40 lashes was enough to kill a man, they usually gave 39 blows.
9. Bruce Milne—"The victim was stripped, bound to a post or pillar, and beaten by a number of torturers until they grew tired and the flesh of the victim hung in bleeding shreds. In the case of slaves or criminals such as Jesus, scourges or whips were used, the leather thongs often fitted with a spike or several pieces of bone or lead joined to form a chain. It is not surprising to hear that prisoners often collapsed and died under this procedure."
10. (2) He was mocked, vv2-3a—"And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. Then they said, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'"
11. If Jesus claimed to be a king, then He should be treated as one—thus, the soldiers wickedly dressed Him as royalty.
12. (a) They twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head—they found vines with thorns and meshed them together.
13. This was not only a source of great mockery, but it also added to His physical pain as the thorns were pressed into His head.
14. (b) They put on Him a purple robe—it's possible that they used one of the robes ordinarily worn by Roman soldiers.
15. We learn from the other Matthew, that they first "stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him (a red or deep purple color)."
16. We learn from Lk.23:11, that Herod robed Christ with a "gorgeous robe" while He was there and it's possible this is that same robe.

17. (c) They said, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'"—that is, they rendered to Him mock honor and loyalty as their regal king.
18. (3) He was beaten, v3b—"And they struck Him with their hands"—that is, either with their hands or a rod in their hands.
19. Matthew tells us they gave Him a reed to imitate a scepter, and that they took it from Him and beat Him with it.
20. Matt.27:29-30—"When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head."
21. Isa.50:6—"I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting."
22. Thus, I want to take a few minutes, and invite you to come with me, to 1st century Jerusalem, and the Governor's Palace.
23. In the words of Pilate in v5, I want you and me, to BEHOLD THE MAN—I want you to behold His humility, beauty, and glory.
24. (a) Behold His humility—here is our beloved Savior sitting alone in the Praetorium, surrounded by a great multitude of soldiers.
25. And yet we must remember, our Savior is not here merely being mistreated by wicked and evil men, He is suffering in our place.
26. Remember, all of our Savior's sufferings are redemptive—that means, His physical and spiritual suffering constitute one sacrifice for sin.
27. Now, this doesn't deny that His spiritual sufferings, especially on the cross, are in many ways the heart of His suffering.
28. But His entire life of humiliation, including now His physical abuse and shame, all constitute a single sacrifice.
29. Isa.53:5—"And by His stripes we are healed"—that is, we have been spiritual healed through His atoning sacrifice (and a part of that sacrifice was the very strips He received through scourging).
30. Thus, there is a sense in which this is a very fitting scene—there is happening in Praetorium more than appears.
31. They put a crown of thorns on His head, because He was bearing the punishment of the curse, often associated with thorns.
32. Gen.3:17-18—"Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it: Cursed *is* the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat *of* it all the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field.'"
33. He is dressed in a scarlet robe because He is bearing our sins, Isa.1:18—"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."
34. A.W. Pink—"Here is the Gospel of our salvation: the Savior was scourged, that we might go free; He was crowned with thorns, that we might be crowned with blessing and glory; He was clothed with a robe of contempt, that we might receive the robe of righteousness; he was rejected as king, that we might be made kings and priests unto God."
35. (b) Behold His beauty—beauty is truly in the eyes of the beholder—native man is blind to see true moral beauty.
36. But this is not so with regenerate man—he doesn't merely see a pitiful Man, but one who deserves all of his heart.
37. For example, think of a woman who was woken up to a serious fire that was consuming her house and children.
38. Her husband carries her out to safety, and then returns into the building three times to rescue her three young daughters.
39. Although he survives the fire, he received 3rd degree burns over 2/3 of his body—he will be seriously scarred for life.
40. How do you think she will view his scars? Do you think she will look upon her husband with disgust and abhorrence?

41. No, not if she has any sense about her. Instead, there is a sense in which she will love him more for every scar he bears.
42. There is a sense in which his scars render him beautiful to her—never did he look more beautiful than he does now.
43. And so too, Christ is here saving His bride—He is saving His children—and in the process, He is receiving scars.
44. J.C Ryle—"That our blessed Lord, the eternal Word, should have meekly submitted to be led out after this fashion, as a gazing-stock and an object of scorn, with an old purple robe on His shoulders, a crown of thorns on His head, His back bleeding from scourging, and His head from thorns, to feast the eyes of a taunting, howling, blood-thirsty crowd, is indeed a wondrous thought! Truly such love 'passes knowledge.'"
45. (c) Behold His glory—I suggest there is a sense in which we can look at our Savior from several different perspectives.
46. On the one hand, we can behold His humility in that He is bearing the mistreatment and mockery of evil men.
47. On the other hand, we can behold His beauty in that He is bearing the just punishment our personal sins deserve.
48. But there is another sense in which, we can behold His glory as He's dressed in these make-shift royal garments.
49. Yes, it was true that our Savior was at present crowned with a crown of thorns, covered with a dirty robe, and bruised and bloody.
50. And yet, in three short days, He would be raised from the dead, and return to His Father, the King of kings and Lord of lords.
51. He would return to His Father and sit on a real throne, crowned with a crown of glory, dressed with a robe of glory.
52. And one day, these very men who mockingly bowed before Him, will be forced to bow the knee and confess He is King (Phil.2:10-11—'[one day] every knee will bow...every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord').
53. Leon Morris—"John sees a deeper irony in this situation. The one whom the soldiers were treating so mockingly was indeed a king, not a petty ruler like even the great Caesar, but King of kings and Lord of lords. John's readers are to see the real kingship shining through, even though none of those taking part in the events at that time realized quite what they were doing."

II. Jesus and the Jews (vv5-7)

1. V5—"Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purples robe. And Pilate said to them, 'Behold the Man!'"
2. There is no doubt Pilate presented Jesus to the Jews in hopes that the pathetic scene would satisfy their lust for blood.
3. V6—"Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!'"
4. In other words, far from creating sympathy, the sight of His blood, only excited them more and intensified their hatred.
5. V6b—"Pilate said to them, 'You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him'" —Pilate isn't claiming they had the power to crucify, but is merely underscoring their wickedness is wanting an innocent Man crucified.
6. V7—"The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.'"
7. Now, what I want to do under this second heading, is rather quickly, suggest two important facts about Christ.
8. (1) He was despised—this is another aspect of our Savior's suffering—He was abused, ridiculed, and despised.
9. It's here in these chapters, that we have the clearest display of man's depravity anywhere in the history of mankind.

10. Man abuses, ridicules, and despises Christ, the only perfectly innocent Man, who is no mere Man, but the GodMan.
11. AW Pink—"Never were the desperate wickedness of the human heart, the fearful enmity of the carnal mind, and the unspeakable vileness of sin's ways, so unmistakably evidenced as when the Son of God was 'delivered into the hands of men.'"
12. But the point I am attempting to underscore here is this—being despised was one large aspect of Christ's suffering.
13. To endure mistreatment and suffering is one thing, but to be despised and ignored in the process, is a heavy burden.
14. The word "despise" means "to treat us unimportant or insignificant"—to hate something so much it means nothing to you.
15. Ps.22:6—"But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people. All those who see Me ridicule Me."
16. Isa.53:2-3—"There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrow and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."
17. (2) He was divine—there's often been a debate as to why Christ was crucified—what was the reason He was killed?
18. Well, humanly speaking, there were two reasons—the Romans put Him to death for fear that He was a rival King.
19. But what was the primary reason the Jews found Him worthy of death? What was the actual crime He committed?
20. Well, here we are told—"He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God"—that is, He claimed to be God Himself.
21. My friends, it amazes me that people such as the Jehovah Witness, continue to teach, Jesus never claimed to be God.
22. This was the precise reason the Jews condemned Him for blasphemy—He claimed to be God's only begotten Son.
23. This was nothing less than a claim to be divine—that He and the Father share the very same Essence or Being.
24. Now, surely at this point, this makes the events that occurred this Friday morning, 2 thousand years ago, amazing.
25. Who is this Person being mistreated in this way—my dear friends, He is the very Creator of heaven and earth.

III. Jesus and the Judge (vv8-16)

1. By "the judge" I refer to Pilate, and I suggest Pilate interacts with Jesus in three ways—he questions, judges, and delivers Him.
2. (1) Pilate questions Jesus (vv8-11)—from v8, we learn that Pilate become "greatly afraid" at the mention, that Christ claimed to be the Son of God.
3. Seemingly, Pilate was afraid that Christ may have come down from heaven—he, as did all Romans, believed in deities.
4. Not in the sense that the Jews did, or in the sense that Christ meant by the phrase "Son of God," but the Greeks believed in demi-gods who were offspring of the gods.
5. Thus, Pilate grew exceedingly afraid, and returned to question Jesus on His origin—his question is given in two parts.
6. (a) Where are You from—by this Pilate was not asking whether He was from Galilee, but was He from heaven.
7. To this question, our Savior refused to answer—"But Jesus gave him no answer"—why did He not answer Pilate?
8. (i) As a judgment against Pilate—if you remember, Jesus already told Pilate in 18:37—"You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world."

9. Thus, there is a sense in which Christ's silence was a judgment against Pilate's refusal to believe previous revelation.
10. (ii) As a fulfillment to prophecy, Isa.53:7—"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth."
11. Our Savior never defended Himself because He was suffering as the sinless Lamb in the place of guilty sinners.
12. (iii) As an example for His people, 1Pet.2:21-23—"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps... who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously."
13. (b) Do you not know I have power to crucify You and to release You—to this our Savior answers in the form of a rebuke.
14. V11—"Jesus answered, 'You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.'"
15. Our Savior responds to this, because it's not a defense of Himself, but a correction or rebuke of Pilate's assertion.
16. It is true Pilate had authority to crucify or to release Him, but this authority was only given to Him from above.
17. In other words, while the Jews and Pilate were both guilty for their actions, God Himself used them for His purposes.
18. Acts 2:23—"Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death."
19. (2) Pilate judges Jesus (vv12-15)—from v12, Pilate again sought to release Jesus, but the Jews were not having it.
20. V12—"If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."
21. In other words—they appealed to Pilate's fear of Caesar—if Caesar found out that Pilate was sympathetic to a rival king, Pilate would not only lose his authority but his life.
22. V13—"When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha."
23. Now, it seems evident that this Pavement was located either within the Praetorium or else outside in the courtyard.
24. It seems it was visible to the Jews, and if this is true, then it was a public trial that took place before the Jews and Gentiles.
25. The fact that Pilate sat on the judgment seat formalized the verdict, and publically rendered Jesus worthy of death.
26. John tells us in v14, that it was "the Preparation Day of the Passover," which has been understood in one of two ways.
27. (a) It's possible this refers to the day prior to the Passover and thus the day to prepare for it (this means it was on this day the Passover lamb was killed).
28. The only problem with this option is that we were told earlier that Jesus and His disciples already ate the Passover the night before.
29. Some have suggested that by the first century, to accommodate the amount of people celebrating the Passover, the Jews kept the feast on two days (the Galileans on Thursday and Judeans on Friday).
30. (b) It's possible it merely refers to the fact it was the preparation day for the sabbath that fell in Passover week.
31. The Jews treated Fridays as preparatory to Saturday (Sabbath), and because of the Passover, here refer to it as the Preparation of the Passover (the Sabbath of Passover week).
32. Mk.15:42—"Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath."
33. Thus, while it makes for good preaching to say that Jesus died on the same day the Passover lamb was killed, it seems best to say He was killed the day after Passover or else, during the week of Passover.

34. But either way, the principle point is this—John intends to remind us that Jesus is the fulfilment of the Passover.
35. (3) Pilate delivers Jesus (v16), v16—"Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led Him away."
36. Again, I find it interesting that John specifically uses language of Jesus, used in the OT, of sacrificial animals.
37. According to Lev.17:5, all sacrifices, including the Passover, were led to the priest for slaughter—"that they may lead them to the LORD, to the priest, and offer them to the LORD."
38. Thus, we find the Holy Spirit describes our Savior in this passage as our Passover Lamb, in at least three ways.
39. (a) He was without spot or blemish, Ex.12:5—"Your lamb shall be without blemish" 1Pet.1:19—"a lamb without blemish" Jn.19:4—"I find no fault in Him."
40. (b) He was crucified in relation to the Passover feast—either the day after Passover or else in preparation for the Passover, 1Cor.5:7—"Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us."
41. (c) He was led (not dragged) to the slaughter, Isa.53:7—"He was led as a lamb to the slaughter"—to be crucified.
42. And so, it's here we must leave our blessed Redeemer, on the verge of being taken outside the gate to be crucified for us.
43. But let me end this morning by reminding you of two important facts—First, all that happened to Christ happened by us.
44. There is a sense in which we too were there that morning in the Praetorium—we were with the soldiers who scourged Him, mocked Him, and despised Him.
45. We were there with the Jews who rejected Him, crying out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him. We have no king but Caesar."
46. We were there with cowardly Pilate, who pronounced judgment upon Christ, and gave Him over to be crucified.
47. And how or in what way were we there you may ask—BY OUR SINS—it was our guilt that made these things necessary.
48. Secondly, all that happened to Christ happened for us—that is, He was willingly led to the slaughter in our place.
49. Oh, my dear friends, before we can see the cross as something done FOR US, we must first see it as something done BY US.
50. Poor sinner, look here at this scene we've been considering—do you see what your sins have caused—can you see your face among the soldiers, Jews, and Pilate? Then see your face in Christ also. See Him enduring this treatment not only because of you but for you!