

Message #97**Matthew 27:11-26**

When Pilate was brought into the scene of having to evaluate and judge Jesus Christ, here is what he knew—he knew the motive for the Jewish leaders getting him involved was their envy or jealousy (27:18). What he didn't know was exactly who Jesus was and that is why he looked Him straight in the face and asked Him. As we come to **verse 11**, we observe that Matthew really zeroes in on one key question that Pilate asks Jesus—"Are you the King of the Jews?" This phrase "King of the Jews" has not been used in Matthew in reference to Jesus Christ since Matt. 2:2. The reason why Matthew focuses on this question and once again brings up this title of Jesus Christ is because this is what the book of Matthew is all about—Jesus is the King, He is the King of the Jews. He is the King of Kings. He was Israel's Messiah. He was Israel's King. He was Israel's Savior. That was established in Matthew when His life on earth began and it is again established when His life on earth ends.

WHEN JESUS CHRIST WAS CONDEMNED TO DIE, IT WAS CLEARLY KNOWN AND UNDERSTOOD BY PILATE AND ALL INVOLVED THAT HE WAS THE KING.

Now let us carefully look at **verse 11**—Jesus is standing before Pilate, the governor (27:2), and Pilate asks Him a direct question, which is "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus knows full well that His answer here will end up killing Him. But He does not back away from truth so He can save His own neck. In fact, His hour had come and it was time for Him to die. Jesus responds by emphatically saying to Pilate, "You are saying." The Greek means this—"Pilate, you yourself are testifying of the truth—yes, I am the King." Now the Apostle John gives us some important information on this discussion (John 18:33-40). Pilate did not see this truth as a threat against him or his Roman rule. Jesus made it clear that at this point in time, His kingdom was not physical or political, but spiritual (John 18:36-37). The opportunity for Israel to experience a political kingdom had ended with Christ's words in Matt. 23:37-38.

FACT #1 – Jesus Christ did not respond to the false accusations being made against Him by the religious leaders of Israel. **27:12-14**

What amazed Pilate was that Jesus did not answer one of their charges. The word "amaze" is one that means Pilate marveled, that is he considered it an amazing wonder that Jesus would listen to all of their charges and not respond. Now of course the real question is why didn't Jesus respond? Why didn't He offer a defense to Pilate? It would seem that Pilate was looking for any way to get out of condemning Christ. The reason is because Jesus had to die. He was allowing Himself to be led to the cross like a lamb to the slaughter.

FACT #2 – Pilate asks the people whether they want him to pardon Barabbas or Jesus. **27:15-18**

Verse 16 says that in custody was a "notorious prisoner." The word "notorious" is one that means Barabbas was a bad prisoner. In fact, the word literally means he is the stamped image; he bears the stamped marks of what a bad prisoner is (Smith, p. 173).

We know from Mark 15:7 and Luke 23:19 that he was a murderer and we know from John 18:40 that he was a robber. Barabbas was the ultimate example of a guy who should be locked up. I truly believe that when Pilate offers them the choice between the notorious Barabbas or Jesus (27:17), he really believes there is no way they will choose to release Barabbas because he is such a terrible convict. In fact, notice what Pilate says in **verse 17**; Jesus is called the Messiah, the Christ, he is not called an evil prisoner who deserves to be locked up.

FACT #3 – Pilate’s wife exhorts Pilate to let Jesus go free. **27:19**

The words “suffer greatly” mean this dream really shook up Pilate’s wife in a negative way. This is amazing for a heathen woman is the only person with enough courage to stand up and speak out for Jesus Christ. Even when His own disciples had abandoned Him, Pilate’s wife came to His defense.

FACT #4 – The religious leaders were persuading the crowds to release Barabbas and kill Jesus. **27:20**

The religious leaders were involved in evil politics.

FACT #5 – The people cry out to Pilate that they want Barabbas released and Jesus crucified. **27:21-23**

The word “all” refers to all who were at this setting, not to all people all over Israel. It is a reference to all the people who were actually there. It was shouting that got louder and louder and louder.

FACT #6 – Pilate washes his hands in front of the people. **27:24**

Pilate washes his hands in an attempt to symbolize that he was innocent of putting Jesus to death (Deut. 21:6-9). This was an O.T. Jewish practice, but it would not work in this case. Pilate could wash his hands, but not his heart.

FACT #7 – The crowd admits their own guilt. **27:25**

They admit responsibility for themselves and their children for killing Jesus Christ. Their words did come to pass in A.D. 70 when God let Titus go into Jerusalem and kill men, women and children, many of whom were responsible for the murder of His Son.

FACT #8 – Pilate releases Barabbas and beats Jesus and hands Him over to be crucified. **27:26**

Pilate knows this whole thing is wrong. Pilate tries to appease the mob by beating Christ. Luke tells us Pilate was hoping to beat Christ then release Him (Luke 22:16, 22), but the crowd would not listen.