

## **Jesus is Beaten, Ridiculed, and Rejected** **(John 19:1-15)**

Hatred and injustice know no bounds. The human heart is desperately wicked, seeking its own will over that of God. No place is this truth more evident than in the treatment Jesus received at the hands of the Roman governor and the Jewish leaders leading up to His crucifixion. The path to the cross included torture, ridicule, injustice, hatred, and rejection. Jesus deserved none of this, of course. However, He endured it all in order to save us from our sins. By submitting to ridicule and rejection Jesus pursued our redemption.

### **Jesus submitted to torture and ridicule to offer us redemption (19:1-6).**

While Jesus could at any moment have called on the armies of heaven to rescue Him, He instead submitted to the harsh and demeaning treatment of Pilate and his soldiers.

#### ***Under Pilate's orders the soldiers mocked and flogged Jesus (19:1-3).***

Having had no success at uncovering any crime in Jesus and recognizing the extreme political pressure of the situation Pontius Pilate ordered that Jesus be flogged. Possibly this cruel torture would extract new information from Jesus or at least satisfy the hatred of the Jewish leaders. The soldiers took great delight in torturing and ridiculing their prisoner. They wove together a crown of thorns and forced it on Jesus' head, the thorns pressing painfully into His scalp. They took a purple coat, the color of royalty, and wrapped it around Jesus in mockery of His claim to be a king. The soldiers then paraded by Jesus over and over again (the verb form indicates the repeated nature of their actions), mockingly proclaiming, "Hail, king of the Jews," while striking Him with painful blows. The scene is appalling to any merciful mind. Jesus submitted to this treatment because He was determined to secure our salvation.

#### ***Pilate stated that he found no fault in Jesus and presented Him to the crowd (19:4-5).***

Having exposed Jesus to this cruel and unjust torture, Pilate then went outside his palace once again to encounter the religious leaders. He declared that he still found no fault in Jesus. He then presented Jesus, beaten and bearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Jesus would have looked like a fool, a defeated claimant to a pretended throne. Displaying Jesus before the crowd, Pilate declared, "Behold the man!" There stood Jesus, all human dignity destroyed, all divine authority unrecognizable apart from the eyes of faith.

#### ***The religious leaders shouted for Jesus to be crucified (19:6).***

At the sight of Jesus the chief priests and their attendants called for His execution. "Crucify, crucify," they shouted. Pilate held to his conclusion that Jesus was innocent, undeserving of death. Tauntingly he told the religious leaders, "You take him and crucify him," knowing full well that they had no authority to carry out this sentence. Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent and likely hoped that the religious leaders would stand down from their demand for

Jesus' death. After all, Jesus had been completely humiliated and thoroughly tortured by the soldiers. We know that Jesus submitted to this most horrible treatment as a necessary step on the path to the cross.

**Jesus demonstrated silence and  
restraint to offer us redemption (19:7-11).**

Regrettably, Jesus' torment wasn't finished. His work of redemption had to be completed. Therefore, Jesus responded to Pilate's further questioning with silence and restraint.

***The religious leaders accused Jesus of claiming to be the Son of God (19:7).***

The religious leaders refused to stand down from their demand for Jesus' crucifixion. They informed Pilate that Jesus claimed not only to be a king but to be the Son of God. This claim violated their Jewish laws, and their charge of blasphemy demanded the death penalty. Jesus truly is the Son of God, God in the flesh, the Savior of the world. Unrecognized by the religious leaders of His day, Jesus' divine nature has been recognized by His followers down through the centuries and around the globe.

***Pilate became fearful and questioned Jesus further, but Jesus remained silent (19:8-9).***

While Pilate cared little about Jewish law, he was deeply concerned about this new charge because Roman superstition allowed for divine involvement in human affairs. To claim to be a king of a heavenly kingdom was one thing. To claim divinity was another. Pilate, who apparently already feared the political repercussions of his involvement with Jesus, now sensed a deeper fear. Did Jesus in fact possess deity? Pilate took Jesus back inside the palace and asked Him, "Where do you come from?" Was there any truth to the accusation that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God? But Jesus remained silent. Pilate's actions didn't warrant a response. Nor did Jesus need to defend Himself. He knew that the cross was a necessary part of His redemptive work.

***Pilate warned Jesus that he had the authority to execute Him but Jesus declared that all authority comes from above (19:10-11).***

Incensed over Jesus' silence, Pilate warned Jesus that he possessed the power to either release or crucify Him. At this Jesus declared that Pilate's authority was not his own. Pilate could do nothing apart from the will of God. His authority had been granted to him not by any earthly powers. Pilate's power had been given to him from above. God is still in control of His world, and He grants authority as He pleases for the fulfillment of His purposes. Since Pilate wielded no independent authority, Jesus concluded that the one who had handed Him over for crucifixion—Caiaphas and the religious leaders—bore a greater sin. Pilate bore the sin of injustice, but the religious leaders bore the greater sin of rejecting the Messiah, the rightful King of the Jews, the very Son of God.

**Jesus endured injustice and  
rejection to offer us redemption (19:12-15).**

Even though Pontius Pilate knew Jesus was innocent he unjustly sentenced Jesus to death. He cowered to the threats of the Jewish leaders who blatantly rejected Jesus. Injustice and rejection further characterized Jesus' path to the cross.

***The religious leaders threatened Pilate with the accusation of disloyalty to Caesar (19:12).***

Having held his final interview with Jesus, Pilate was eager to release Him. He knew that Jesus was innocent. He may have even surmised that Jesus possessed some supernatural qualities. However, Pilate was also intimidated by the clout of the Jewish leaders who could undermine his political career. These religious leaders demanded Jesus' death. They threatened Pilate by saying that if he released Jesus he would not be counted as a friend of Caesar. After all, Jesus claimed to be a king, and anyone who made such a claim was, in their minds, speaking out against Caesar. How could Pilate claim to be loyal to Caesar and release someone who claimed to be a king? This was no idle threat. Pilate's political position was often tentative. He had mistreated the Jews on several occasions, and word had reached Rome about some of these indiscretions. Another political blow could ruin his career.

***Pilate took his seat to pronounce his official sentence and declared that Jesus was the king of the Jews (19:13-14).***

These threats on the part of the Jewish leaders seem to have tipped the scales of injustice. At this point Pontius Pilate brought Jesus out to the people and sat at his official judgment seat to pronounce his verdict. John mentions the location as a place called the Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha, the Aramaic word for "ridge." This site would have been well known in the first century and probably added to the official nature of Pilate's pronouncement. John further mentions that these events took place on preparation day of the Passover, most likely meaning Friday of that Passover week. Preparation day had come to refer to the day before the Sabbath, that is, Friday. John also mentioned that Pilate handed down his sentence at about the sixth hour. There is some debate as to the actual time involved. Mark 15:25 says that Jesus was crucified at the third hour. The Romans calculated time differently than the Jews. John's "sixth hour" was likely calculated from midnight, meaning that Pilate pronounced his sentence at 6:00 a.m. Mark's "third hour" may have been calculated from sunrise, meaning that Jesus was actually crucified at 9:00 a.m. Having heard the arguments and threats, Pilate finally made his decision. He presented Jesus to them and said, "Behold, your king." He agreed to the charge that Jesus claimed to be a king and was therefore worthy of death. He also, apparently, wanted to goad the Jewish leaders by describing Jesus as their king, thereby reinforcing their impotence in the light of Rome's authority. But Pilate had stated his verdict. Jesus would die as the king of the Jews.

***The religious leaders demanded Jesus' crucifixion and acknowledged homage to Caesar alone (19:15).***

The religious leaders once again demanded that Pilate send Jesus to His death, repeating their demand, "Take him away, take him away, crucify him!" Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your

king?” Again, the animosity between Pilate and the religious leaders was palpable. The chief priests retorted, “We have no king but Caesar!” This in itself was a remarkable statement since the Jews deeply resented their subservience to Rome. To declare Caesar as their king was a stunning admission. Furthermore, to prefer Caesar over Jesus Christ, to reject Jesus as their Messiah, proved to be a tragedy of history. Jesus was unjustly condemned by Pilate and maliciously rejected by the Jewish leaders. He endured this injustice and rejection as necessary steps on the path to the cross. By submitting to ridicule and rejection Jesus pursued our redemption.