

Sermon #121 — John's Gospel

Title: “**PILATE SOUGHT TO RELEASE HIM.**”

Text: John 19:1-12

Subject: *Christ Before Pilate*

Reading: *Isaiah 52:13-53:12*

In John 19:12 the Holy Spirit tells us that “*Pilate sought to release*” the Lord Jesus. “*Pilate sought to release Him.*” Pilate was the man who signed the order of execution; but the Spirit of God tells us that “*Pilate sought to release Him.*” Pilate had no regard for God or for the things of God; but “*Pilate sought to release Him.*” Without Pilate’s order the Lord Jesus would not have been crucified; but Pilate gave the order. Still, “*Pilate sought to release Him.*” That is the title of my message: — “**PILATE SOUGHT TO RELEASE HIM.**” When I read those words, I have to ask, “Why, then, did Pilate issue the order of execution? Why did Pilate have the Lord of Glory crucified?” Only one answer can be given. — God ordained it before the world began and brought it to pass in providence.

“**PILATE SOUGHT TO RELEASE HIM.**” I have chosen those words of Inspiration for my title because I want you and all who hear this message to

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understand that throughout this scene, indeed, throughout every scene of history...

Proposition: It is always the will of God that rules, never the will and devices of men.

GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY

There are countless illustrations of God’s absolute sovereignty in the Holy Scriptures. Everywhere the Book of God shouts, “**The heavens do rule!**” But nothing so marvelously and wondrously sets forth God’s absolute sovereignty as His sacrifice of His darling Son in the place of sinners at Calvary.

- The Triune God purposed to save His people by the slaughter of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the cursed tree before the worlds were made.
- The Lord God sovereignly ordered all the affairs of providence to bring it to pass, exactly according to His eternal purpose, by Pilate’s hand (Acts 4:27).
- When our Lord’s hour had come, when the due time had arrived when God would commend His love toward us in the sacrifice of His darling Son, Pilate gave the order and the hellish deed was

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performed. — The Son of God was murdered by the hands of wicked men!

- Thus, by the sacrifice of Himself, the Lamb of God obtained eternal redemption for sinners.
- If you would have that salvation that Christ obtained by the shedding of His own precious blood, trust Him. — Believe on the Son of God, and that salvation is yours! — Faith is the evidence of redemption and of redemption applied.

I repeat — Nothing displays God’s glorious sovereignty like the wondrous accomplishment of redemption by Christ. And, perhaps, the one aspect of our Lord’s crucifixion that shows God’s sovereign character as God is the fact that Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, gave the order of crucifixion. Let’s look at the record given in John 19:1-12.

Here we see our Lord Jesus Christ in Pilate’s judgment hall. **This passage presents us with a very strange event.**

- Here the Judge of all the earth stands to be judged of wicked men!

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- He that shall soon judge the world in righteousness is judged most unrighteously.
- He that shall one day set upon the throne of judgment with ten thousands of His saints and angels, stands as a prisoner before the bar of men.

JUSTICE PERVERTED

Never in the pages of history was justice so violently and deliberately abused. **The Son of God was denied the rights of justice given to a common thief or murderer.** Before one witness was produced to testify against Him, before any evidence was weighed, the Lord of glory was beaten, mocked, stripped, and abused by the vile hatred of men.

Who can comprehend the depths of humiliation endured by the God-man? That One “*Who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God,*” now “*made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, ever the death of the cross!*”

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Judas made good on his bargain to betray our Lord. No sooner did he kiss the Savior than the chief priests and Pharisees had His hands bound and led Him away. These wolves of the night thirsted for the blood of the Lamb of God. Their malice would not allow any delay. They could not sleep until they had His precious, innocent blood. Therefore, they resolved to kill Him as soon as possible. But, so that it would not look like downright murder, they formalized it with a trial. You are familiar with the story.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Let me just remind you of the events of that night. — Our Redeemer was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane and hurried along the road which crosses the brook of Kidron. Like David, who passed over that brook weeping as he went, our great David passed over the brook weeping as He went. The brook Kidron was that into which all the filth of the Temple sacrifices was thrown. And our dear Savior walked through that black stream, as though He were

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some foul and filthy thing. He was led into Jerusalem by the sheep-gate, the gate through which the lambs of the passover were always led. Little did those men understand that they were fulfilling to the very letter those types which God had ordained by the law of Moses. These wicked men led the Lamb of God to slaughter.

May the Lord Himself sanctify our hearts as we follow our Redeemer through His trial and cruel mockery.

1. *First*, they led Immanuel to the house of Annas, the ex-high priest. – There they made a brief call to gratify the blood thirsty wretch with the sight of his victim.
2. Then they hurriedly brought the Son of God to the house of Caiaphas. – There the members of the Sanhedrim were assembled, to take counsel against the Lord and against His Anointed.
3. *Third*, they drug the Lamb of God through the streets to Pilate’s judgment hall. There they sought a legal sentence of execution to be pronounced upon the Lord of Glory.

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4. *Fourth*, Pilate sent the blood thirsty crowd to Herod, the governor of Galilee.
5. *Finally*, the Lord of Glory is returned to Pilate’s judgment hall. — Here He was tried, beaten, mocked, and sentenced to die. This is where we find him in our text.

JOHN 19:1-12

Let’s read the first twelve verses of John 19 together.

(John 19:1-12) “Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged [him]. 2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put [it] on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, 3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. 4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And [Pilate] saith unto them, Behold the man! 6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify [him], crucify [him]. Pilate

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saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify [him]: for I find no fault in him. 7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. 8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; 9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? 11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power [at all] against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. 12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.”

PILATE OVERRULED

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You will not find a more striking and vivid demonstration of God’s absolute sovereignty than in Pilate’s treatment of the Lord Jesus.

- *First*, Pilate was assured of His innocence, acknowledging, no less than seven times, — “**I find no fault in Him.**”
- *Second*, Pilate desired to release Him. — “*Pilate therefore willing to release Jesus*” (Luke 23:20). — “*I will let Him go*” (Luke 23:22). — “*Pilate sought to release Him*” (John 19:12). — “*Pilate was determined to let Him go*” (Acts 3:13).
- *Third*, Pilate’s wife urged him not to sentence the Lord Jesus, but to let Him go (Matthew 27:19).
- *Fourth*, Pilate tried to bring about His acquittal, telling the Jews to judge Him themselves (John 18:31). — He sent Him to Herod, only for Christ to be returned (Luke 23:7). — He tried to get the Jews to have him execute Barabbas (John 18:39-40). Yet, in the end, Pilate sentenced the Lord of Glory to be crucified! — Why? Because thus it was ordained from eternity!

Man’s will is nothing, when it runs contrary to of God’s will! Here was Pilate, the Roman governor of

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Judea, determined to release the Savior. Yet, he was prevented from doing so. From all eternity God had decreed that Pilate would sentence His Son to death, and all earth and hell combined could not thwart the purpose of the Almighty. — He would not be all-mighty if they could! — Christ was “*delivered (up) by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*” (Acts 2:23).

As God’s servant Peter fearlessly announced, “*Both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done*” (Acts 4:27-28). This is not simply “Calvinism,” it is the explicit declaration of Holy Scripture; and woe be unto the one who dares to deny it.

As **Arthur Pink** put it, — “Christ had to be sentenced by Pilate because the eternal counsels of Deity had foreordained it.” The Lord Jesus died for sinners both of the Jews and of the Gentiles. Therefore Divine wisdom determined that both Jews and Gentiles have a direct hand in His death.

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Many object to this. We are told, “Such doctrine reduces Pilate to a mere robot!” Were that the case, so be it! It is far, far better to reduce a man to a robot than to deny the Word of the living God and reduce the Almighty to something less than man! Whether we understand the teaching of Scripture or not, it is not ours to argue with or alter the Word of God, but to bow in absolute submission to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

PILATE’S RESPONSIBILITY

Yes, God is sovereign, always, everywhere, and in all things. Yet, every man is totally responsible for his own sin. The Gospel records present Pilate to us as a man responsible for his crimes against God.

- The Lord Jesus addressed Himself to Pilate’s conscience. — *“Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice”* (John 18:37).
- God faithfully warned him that the Savior was a just Man and to do nothing against Him (Matthew 27:19).

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- Finally, the Savior Himself told Pilate that he was sinning in holding Him (John 19:11).

See that you understand the teaching of Holy Scripture in this regard.

- God is absolutely sovereign.
- Man is fully responsible.

Divisions: Let me show you five things in this passage of Holy Scripture.

1. *First*, in verses 1-3, the Spirit of God reminds us of our Savior’s scourging and mockery as our Substitute.
2. *Second*, our Savior’s perfect innocence is publicly proclaimed (v. 4).
3. *Third*, there is a striking sentence in verse 5 that demands our attention. — “*Behold the Man!*”
4. *Fourth*, we see the judge and executioner trembling before the One he condemned (vv. 6-9).
5. *Fifth*, our Lord Jesus, even as He stood before Pilate as a common malefactor, wrongfully accused and unjustly condemned, asserted God’s

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sovereignty over His judge and executioner (vv. 10-12).

CHRIST MOCKED

First, in verses 1-3, the Spirit of God reminds us of our Savior’s scourging and mockery as our Substitute.

(John 19:1-3) “Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged [him]. 2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put [it] on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, 3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.”

Having failed in his attempt to release the Lord Jesus by forcing the Jews to choose between Him and Barabbas, Pilate ordered the Lord to be scourged, — stripped naked, tied to a post, and severely whipped. It appears, from verse 12, that Pilate thought that the Jews might be satisfied with that torturous procedure. — *“And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this*

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man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar”
(John 19:12V)

Let us never forget that even here, in Pilate’s judgment hall, our dear Savior endured all that He endured as our Substitute, in our room and place (Psalm 89:30-34; Isaiah 53:5).

(Psalm 89:30-34) “If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; 31 If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; 32 Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. 33 Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. 34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.”

(Isaiah 53:5) “But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

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This scourging was followed by a mock coronation in the soldiers’ hall (Matthew 27:26-31).

(Matthew 27:26-31) “Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered [him] to be crucified. 27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band [of soldiers]. 28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. 29 And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put [it] upon 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! 30 And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. 31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify [him].”

The soldiers wanted to torture Him and to mock Him, particularly mocking the fact that He was said to be “*the King of the Jews.*” The cruel, thorny crown

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served both purposes. No doubt, that crown of thorns reaches back to Genesis 3:18 in connection with the thorns and thistles promised Adam’s sons as a result of the fall. Our blessed Lord “*bore our sins in His own body own the tree.*” And, when He was made sin for us the curse of our sins was made His. — **He became a curse for us!** — “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree*” (Galatians 3:13).

Then the soldiers threw a purple robe over His shoulders, put a reed in His hand to represent a king’s sceptre (Genesis 49:10), and mockingly marched around Him, beating Him with their fists, spitting upon Him, and saying, “*Hail, King of the Jews!*”

Our Savior was delivered to Pilate charged with making himself King. He was mocked by the soldiers as a king, and He was crucified with this charge written over His head, — “The King of the Jews.” He is indeed the King of kings and Lord of lords.

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- **He is owned, received, and acknowledged as such by all who are saved by His grace** (Romans 10:9-10).

(Romans 10:9-10) “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

- **And one day every creature in heaven, earth, and hell will bow before Him and acknowledge Him as King of kings and Lord of lords** (Philippians 2:9-11).

(Philippians 2:9-11) “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth; 11 And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

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INNOCENCE PROCLAIMED

Second, our Savior’s perfect innocence is publicly proclaimed. — “Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him” (v. 4).

Pilate was a troubled, confused man. He was afraid of this man, Jesus Christ (Matthew 27:19). He did not want to get the Jews stirred up against him. He was worried that word of this tumult might reach Caesar’s ears and endanger his position. When he found no fault in Christ, knowing the Jews had an evil motive in the whole affair (Matthew 27:18), he tried one more scheme. — Pilate went out before the people and said, — *“Behold, I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him.”* — Three times Pilate publicly proclaimed our Savior’s innocence (John 18:38; 19:4; 19:6 — Compare Exodus 12:5; Deuteronomy 17:1; 1 Peter 1:18-20).

(Exodus 12:5) “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take [it]

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out from the sheep, or from the goats.”

(Deuteronomy 17:1) “Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God [any] bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, [or] any evilfavouredness: for that [is] an abomination unto the LORD thy God.”

(1 Peter 1:18-20) “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, [as] silver and gold, from your vain conversation [received] by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.”

“BEHOLD THE MAN”

Third, there is a striking sentence in verse 5 that demands our attention. — “*Behold the Man!*” No doubt, Pilate hoped to stir some sympathy and compassion in this mob by pointing to the Lord

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Jesus, as He stood before them beaten, covered with His own blood, and the foul spit of men, crowned with thorns, and wearing a purple rag, and said, “*Behold the Man!*” I do not doubt at all that Pilate was saying, “Look at Him. He is a man like you. Surely, He deserves some sympathy!” But there is much more here than Pilate’s intention.

There stood the Lord of Glory, our God-man Mediator, our Substitute and Surety, wearing the crown of thorns, the mocking robe, bloody and beaten, his face and body marred as no other man (Isaiah 52:14).

(Isaiah 52:14) “As many were astonished at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.”

I say to you, “Behold the Man!” Christ is the Man spoken of throughout the Book of God (Genesis 3:15; Revelation 12).

- The Sinless Man!
- The Suffering Man!

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- The Substitute Man! — *“There is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus”* (1 Timothy 1:5).
- The Sympathizing Man!
- The Sovereign Man!
- The Saving Man!

But look at the text again. Notice that in verse 5 *“Pilate”* is italicized. His name was added here by our translators. So, if we read verse 5 omitting Pilate’s name, it may convey another message altogether. — *“Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe, and saith unto them, Behold the man!”*

If it was the Lord Jesus Himself who said, “Behold the man,” the text has another altogether. How often in the Old Testament we see our Savior calling us to behold Him. — *“Behold me! Behold me!”* (Isaiah 65:3). — *“Look unto me, and be ye saved”* (Isaiah 45:22). **God the Father** calls for us to behold this Man as His Righteous Servant and our unfailing Savior (Isaiah 42:1-4; Matthew 12:18).

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(Isaiah 42:1-4) “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, [in whom] my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. 2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. 4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.”

(Matthew 12:18) “Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.”

God the Holy Spirit gives us the same sweet call (John 1:29, 36).

When the Lord Jesus came forth before the chief priests and rulers, having given “*His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair,*” as the Prophet said He would, our ever-

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gracious, all-glorious Christ calls upon the very sinners who heaped such foul cruelties upon Him to “*Behold the man!*” Oh, may God the Holy Spirit give you eyes of faith to “*Behold the Man!*”

(Zechariah 12:10) “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for [his] only [son], and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for [his] firstborn.”

(Zechariah 13:1) “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”

Blessed Holy Spirit, graciously cause me ever to “*Behold the Man,*” to so behold Him that my whole heart erupts in ever-increasing faith in and love for Him who loved me and gave Himself for me!

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PILATE’S FEAR

Fourth, we see the judge and executioner trembling before the One he condemned (vv. 6-9).

(John 19:6-9) “When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify [him], crucify [him]. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify [him]: for I find no fault in him. 7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. 8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; 9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.”

It was not the people, but the chief priests and officers of the temple, who cried, “*Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*” These were men who made great pretensions to piety and religion. They were the religious leaders of the nation. — **How wicked is the unregenerate heart, especially when it is clothed in religious garb!**

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Pilate said, “You crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.” This was the third time Pilate declared our Lord’s innocence. By means of this wretched, worthless, wishy-washy politician, our God declared the innocence and holiness of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:21-22; Isaiah 53: 9-10).

(1 Peter 2:21-22) “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.”

(Isaiah 53:9-10) “And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither [was any] deceit in his mouth. 10 ¶ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put [him] to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see [his] seed, he shall prolong [his] days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.”

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Our Savior is the perfect Man, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. As such He is our Representative and our Righteousness before God (Romans 5:19; 1 Peter 3:18). In His holy life He honored the law of God for us; and in His death He satisfied Divine justice (Romans 4:25).

Be sure you do not miss this: **The Jews knew exactly what our Lord Jesus claimed about His eternal Deity.** Liberals, Mormons, Russellites and others may not be able to discern the meaning of His words, but the Jews did. They understood perfectly what the Lord Jesus had said to them (John 10:30-33). He declared himself to be God; and according to the law, if He were not God, as He claimed, He was to be put to death.

On top of all his other doubts and fears, this new revelation caused Pilate to be terrified. Is it possible that this Man is related to Deity? He remembered his wife's dream and her warning. He knew that the Lord Jesus was innocent. He had heard of His life and miracles. He had to have been impressed with the

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Lord’s conduct throughout this whole affair. So Pilate took the Saviour back into the judgment hall and asked, “Where are you from?” But Christ gave him no answer. He deserved no answer! He had totally ignored every word Christ spoke, compromised justice by scourging an innocent man, and had no other motive through it all except his own welfare.

Our Savior gave Pilate no answer because He did not wish to escape the cross. He was willing to die for His us, as our sin-atonement Substitute (Isaiah 53:7).

(Isaiah 53:7) “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”

SOVEREIGNTY ASSERTED

Fifth, our Lord Jesus, even as He stood before Pilate as a common malefactor, wrongfully accused and

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unjustly condemned, asserted God’s sovereignty over His judge and executioner (vv. 10-12).

(John 19:10-12) “Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? 11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power [at all] against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. 12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.”

Pilate’s reply is natural. He is fearful and afraid. His conscience is troubling him. His whole domain is up in arms over this one Man, and being totally confused at the serenity and calmness of this Jesus, who refuses to defend Himself while facing death on a cruel cross, he cried, “Do you stand in silence and refuse to answer me when you know that I have the power to crucify you or release you? How dare you!

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Do you know who I am and what power I have?” Our Lord replied, “You could have no power or authority over me at all, except the power my Father gives to you” (John 3:27; Acts 4:26-28).

Our Lord is saying that Pilate, as Pharaoh, was an instrument used by God to accomplish His purpose and glory (Romans 9:17). **Robert Hawker** rightly observed...

“Jesus looked over the heads of all his foes, to eye the hand of Jehovah in this appointment. And it would be always well for you and for me, and for all the Lord’s people to do the same, in all the lesser considerations we meet with in life.”

Pilate’s sin was great, but the greater sin belonged to these religious leaders who so grossly sinned against the Scriptures they claimed to believe and the light God had given as they heard Christ speak (Luke 12:47-48). Israel knew the Scriptures concerning Messiah; Pilate did not; and the “*greater sin*” was

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committed by men who, with the Scriptures in their hands, had greater light.

Be warned! — Do not heap upon yourself the greater condemnation by trampling under foot the blood of the Son of God, by crucifying the Lord Jesus afresh by your willful unbelief!

Let me wrap this up by reminding you that Pilate’s power was God-given power. Pilate’s power was “*from above.*” He was the governor of Judea because God made him governor. There is no power that is not of God. — “*The powers that be are ordained of God.*” The source of all earthly power is heavenly. It is not in man or from man, but from the King of kings, the Prince of the kings of the earth. — The God of Glory put Pilate in his place when the fulness of time was come, so that His darling Son would be crucified by Roman law, as the Scriptures of the Old Testament and our Lord Jesus Himself had declared He must be.

(Acts 2:23) “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,

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ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”

(Acts 4:27-28) “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

(Acts 13:26-30) “Men [and] brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. 27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled [them] in condemning [him]. 28 And though they found no cause of death [in him], yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. 29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took [him] down from the tree, and laid [him] in a sepulchre. 30 But God raised him from the dead.”

“PILATE SOUGHT TO RELEASE HIM.”

(Acts 13:38-41) “Be it known unto you therefore, men [and] brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; 41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.”

“Pilate sought to release Him” but he couldn’t because He was Jehovah’s Righteous Servant, Jehovah’s voluntary Bond-slave, who sought no release from service because of His love for His Master, His love for His wife, and His love for His children!

Amen.