

## I. The Jews Deny the Truth vv.28-32

v.28 “Then **they led Jesus** from the house of Caiaphas.....

Then “they” Who is that? Who are the “they”? Matthew 26-27 tells us the whole counsel, which means the entire Jewish court called the Sanhedrin had convened to make a decision about Jesus; the elders, the chief priest....they were all there.

Luke 23:1 says “the whole company of them arose and brought him before Pilate”

Every last one of them were IN ON THIS EVIL DEED of condemning the Lord Jesus. They plotted and schemed together. They were stalking Jesus throughout his ministry. They wanted him dead. THEY ALL were in on this.... that’s the way of evil doers. They want to be in a mob with other likeminded people. Their conscience is eased by saying ‘everyone’ is doing this.

T H E Y all were involved in the most devilish scheme ever committed - the trial to convict and execute the Son of God! To carry this out...there had to be a trial.

There were 6 phases in the Trial of Jesus. 3 phases were religious; the other 3 were civil.

### The Religious phases of the Trial

1. Soldiers, temple officers first took Jesus to the house of **Annas** (who was the former High Priest).
2. Annas sends him to **Caiaphas**, his son-in-law who was ACTUALLY the HIGH PRIEST THAT YEAR. The High Priest had to give his approval along with the Jewish court-called the Sanhedrin before the final verdict was given. (JOHN doesn’t mention this phase, but we read of it in Matthew 26:57) Night courts were illegal. Jewish law states court proceedings held at night were illegal. They already agreed to have Jesus executed. How did they make it legal?
3. That’s where the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase comes in.... early in the morning (to make it legal) they whole counsel meets together....we read this in **Matthew 27:1** *When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. <sup>2</sup> And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor.*

v.28 “Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the **governor's headquarters**

Governor’s headquarters - KJV -hall of judgment - NASB - Praetorium Pilate stayed here when he was in Jerusalem.... his usual residence was in Caesarea.. He stayed at the governor’s headquarters occasionally, especially during Passover when huge crowds were in Jerusalem. He was there to maintain order in the event of a riot.

Pontius Pilate was assigned to his position by the Emperor of Rome. It was Pilate's job to utilize Roman soldiers to keep the peace in Jerusalem and the surrounding area.

Bringing Jesus to Pilate begins **the Civil Trial** which also had 3 phases:

1. First Phase, Pilate will question and examined Jesus to determine if he is guilty of committing a crime against Rome.
2. Second, Pilate will send Jesus to see Herod after hearing of Jesus' ministry being in Galilee. Galilee was Herod's jurisdiction.

**Luke 23:7** And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

3. Third, Herod finish examining Jesus sends him back to Pilate. Pilate orders Jesus to be crucified.... *(By the way, Pilate and Herod were not on speaking terms at first.....but after dressing Jesus up like a king...and sending Jesus to Herod in a gesture of fun....Herod appreciated the joke....and Pilate and Herod became friends.)*

we're looking at the FIRST Phase of the Civil Trial.... Jesus stands before Pilate.

It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover

- The Jewish leaders....chief priests...entire Sanhedrin....whole company.....gathered OUTSIDE the residence of Pilate. **they did not enter the governor's headquarters...**
- WHY? entering the house / residence of a Gentile.... the Jew would become ceremonially unclean.... and not able to participate the eating of the Passover Lamb.
- Pilate knew about their religious practice.....that's why HE CAME OUT TO WHERE THEY WERE

We know about that.... for example... the FED-EX driver stops at your house..... you don't say, come on in....I'm back here in the den.....come on in..

or better yet... you have an Amish neighbor down the road.... he comes to your door, come on in...

certain things are not allowed.... YOU GO OUTSIDE and respect their religious, or their code of conduct dealing with the public.

The JEWS were so meticulous in keeping their law....and avoided being DEFILED... which would disqualify them from eating the Passover..... yet they had no problem of turning an innocent man...the pure, spotless, sinless, Son of God over to the authorities like a desperate criminal.

**These Jews** had NO purity in their heart..... they had MURDER in their heart.

Outwardly, they gave the appearance of being religious, upstanding, and righteous..... but INWARDLY, they were evil, ungodly, wicked and depraved.

PILATE was NOT stupid! He knew why these Jewish leaders had brought Jesus to him.

**Matthew 27:18** For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up.

PILATE Knew....why they were there..... yet he wanted to hear from them ..... *What accusation do you bring against this man?*

**29 So Pilate went outside to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this man?”** <sup>30</sup>They answered him, “If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you.”

- They couldn't even think of something Jesus had done. They had nothing on Jesus! All they could say.... *if this man were not doing evil, we would not have brought him to you.*

The Jews--- had no interest in a FAIR TRIAL.... they wanted Pilate to have Jesus executed. This was a blood-thirsty lynch mob. Forget a trial.... he doesn't need an attorney... he doesn't need to be cross-examined...just pass sentence.... They wanted Pilate to be the Executioner...skip seeing a Judge.

- Pilate only had hatred for the Jews... he didn't want to do anything with this case.... Pilate knew why they were there, so here's what he said... v.31

<sup>31</sup> Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.”

YOU TAKE HIM... you do what you want with him. Pilate knew they wanted him killed.

<sup>31</sup> .....The Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.”

Pilate was teasing them....taunting them.... HE Knew only Roman Authorities could authorize a death sentence....but he wanted these Jewish leaders to say that....

I can imagine Pilate's tone of voice.... Oh, is that what you want? You want me to do your dirty work?

**Why didn't the Jews.... put Jesus to death themselves? ? ? ?**

**You remember, they tried to.... when Jesus preached his first sermon to them in NAZARETH ---**

**Luke 4:28-29** **28** And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, **29** And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. (he slipped away...)

**His hour had not come....**

They plotted his death on many occasions..... with no success....

The Pharisees brought a woman caught in the very act of adultery.....you recall, how they brought this woman to Jesus....to see what he would do.... you without sin cast the first stone... they walked away...

We read in Acts 7... Stephen was stoned....

So why didn't the Jews.... pull Jesus aside and stone him....???

- Maybe, doing this would have backfired on them.... the people who sang his praises...sang Hosannas.... the multitude .... riot and cause such a stir jeopardizing their position as leaders in Jerusalem. Pilate and The Roman government would have arrested the High Priest, members of the Sanhedrin...for creating a riot...
- Here's the main reason...

<sup>32</sup>This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

**Jesus foretold what would happen.....he told his disciples what kind of death.....**

**Mark 10:33-34** **33** Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: **34** And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.

Jesus said--- I'll be handed over to the GENTILES... that's Pilate...the Roman soldiers....

Jesus even said.... how he was to be killed..... "lifting up" not casting down to the ground to be stoned.... but lifting up... which was the Roman gov't way of executing.... the Jews' executed their criminals by throwing down...and stoning...

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

John 8:28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he,

John 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

Nothing haphazard here in the Lord's trial... nothing was left to the will of man... God was in sovereign control as to the timing.... the procedure of execution...the entire event was under God's control. Yet... Man was guilty for the murder of Jesus. The Jews tried to prevent themselves from being DEFILED...but not entering a Gentile's residence. Yet

they stood in the presence of Jesus....which is Holy Ground....and they stood guilty before the holiness of God.

Now we come to Pilate Questions Jesus.... Pilate had no interest in doing this.... he was forced to do so because of the entire council of Jewish elders pushing it upon him.

## **II. Pilate Questions the Truth vv.33-35**

There are two questions, Pilate asked Jesus:

### **#1 Are you the King of the Jews? vv.33-34**

The reason Pilate asked this of Jesus.... the Jewish leaders already told this to Pilate.... even though John did not tell us in his gospel account...., we have it in Luke 23:2

**Luke 23:2** We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king. (this accusation was a lie...) Jesus did say, give that which belongs to Caesar, to Caesar, and give that which belongs to God, to God.

Someone claiming to be King of the Jews....that would interest Pilate.... such a person might be a threat to the national security of the Roman empire.

Jesus answers the question with a Question...“Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?”

What Jesus means.... Are you saying this of your own initiative? or did someone say this to you about me?

If Pilate is asking this from his own personal interest....he’s wanting to know if Jesus is a king with soldiers, an army, and all that defines a military king. It that’s his question... the answer is definitely NO..... and it’s obvious to Pilate Jesus had no look of being a king in that respect.

NOW...did someone say this to you about me? Pilate has no interest in the squabbles going on with the Jewish leaders..... that’s why he said, Am I a Jew? I’m not one of them....

**35** Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?”

Pilate goes to another question.... What have you done? Why are you here? What have you done to cause the Jews to bring you to me?

### **#2 What have you done? v.35**

At this point.... Jesus could have said.... I’ve preached the gospel of the kingdom.... I’ve opened the blind eyes... opened deaf ears.... healed the crippled.... the lame... healed

all manner of sickness... multiplied fish and bread to feed over 5000..... raised the dead....

Jesus didn't go there.....why? Pilate would have had no interest in such things....

Jesus stayed on a topic that would interest Pilate.... kingdom..... Pilate loved to be in charge of his assigned little kingdom...

### III. **Jesus Gives Witness to the Truth** vv.36-37

Jesus answer's Pilate's first question.... **He is a king**, but not like an earthly king...a military king.

He has a kingdom. But it's not of this world.

**36** Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."

**37** Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king.

For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."

Jesus: "**I was born**".... He is Son of Man.... "for this purpose **I have come into the world**" .....He is Son of God

King Jesus --- came into the world --- to bear witness to the truth.

Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. The true of heart will listen to the Lord.

The TRUE of HEART will BELIEVE CHRIST is the ONLY WAY to be saved.

Only the TRUE OF HEART are in the Kingdom of God's dear Son.

- Jesus is the TRUTH-----Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)
- There is a Kingdom of Righteousness... a Kingdom of Truth.... The subjects of that kingdom listens to King Jesus. They are "of the truth".
- There is a Kingdom of Darkness....a Kingdom of Lies..... The subjects of that kingdom listen to the father of lies....Who is Satan....

### IV. **The Response to the Truth** v.38

**38** Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

**A.** Question the truth.

The TRUTH was standing right in front of him.

Like Joey the Poet says, "Sometimes things are right there in front of your face, if it would have been a snake it would have bitten you."

I think there is cynicism in Pilate's voice. What is truth? Unbelief has its cynical way of saying things. Big deal, so what is truth anyway?

Jesus is Truth... He came for the purpose to bear witness to the truth.

- the truth about God
- the truth about Jesus
- the truth about the condition of the human heart
- the truth about Heaven
- the truth about Hell
- the truth about sin
- the truth about dead religion and true religion

WE are confronted with the TRUTH.... and as the Lord said in John 8:31

- <sup>31</sup> .....If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31-32)

Pilate's response is like a lot of people who ask "What is Truth?" They ask, but not because they want the answer... they want to question the truth. they want to question God.

they want to question the Bible. God's Word. John 17:17 Sanctify them in thy truth. Thy Word is truth.

**B. Escape Responsibility.** Here's How Pilate RESPONDS to the Truth---

v.38c .....After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him.

- I find in him no fault at all. ----- KJV
- "I find no grounds at all for charges in His case. -----NASB

Just because Pilate said this.... I find in him no fault at all.... no guilt in him.... NOT off the hook.

He couldn't **escape personal responsibility** with Christ.

He should have claimed responsibility....He should have said... you know..

- I find nothing wrong with him...no grounds to charge him; but I do find fault in my life...
- I do find guilt within my heart... He's innocent... I'm guilty...
- This is what one of the thieves on the cross will later confess... He's done nothing wrong.. I deserve punishment for I am truly guilty..... what would the story have been like... if Pilate had said...I'm letting you go.... another Roman official might consent to have you crucified, I'm guilty of sin.... I believe you are truly the Son of God....will you remember me when you come into your kingdom? Of course, that's not how it went....

Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. (says Jesus) "listens to my voice" that speaks of obedience. Jesus said, "my sheep hear my voice, and they follow me..... Sadly, that was not the case for Pilate....

**The Jews-** pressed hard on Pilate to have Jesus crucified..

**Pilate-** he did not have a desire to have Jesus crucified like the Jews..... he wanted NO PART... I see no wrong in this man...

He tried to ESCAPE all personal responsibility..... It was NOTHING to Pilate... no concern. at all...

Pilate represents those... who think they can straddle the fence... and not take responsibility with the death of Christ. I have no problem with Him. I have no issue with God. As we will see - Pilate will continue to press for Jesus' release.....

it gets to the point as Matthew 27 tell us...

**Matthew 27:24** <sup>24</sup> So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."

**How are we to respond to the Truth? Believe it!**

### **C. Believe the Truth**

- We are not to be like Pilate who Questioned the Truth with his cynical comment - What is truth?
- We are not to wash our hands of personal responsibility by running and escaping the truth.
- We are commanded to Believe the truth. Hear the Gospel Truth. Receive it and act upon it.
- Here's the TRUTH.... Jesus TOOK our Place on the Cross....

Jesus came to bear the punishment for sinners..... He took the blame that was for us.... He took the accusations, the ridicule...



He took the false charges.....which were really meant for us... he took our condemnation...

He stood, in our place, like a common criminal.... He took OUR SIN upon himself....

**Like John Calvin said...**

The Son of God stood, as a criminal, before a mortal man, and there permitted himself to be accused and condemned, that we may stand boldly before God."

Jesus, our Lord, STOOD taking all the accusations... the beatings... the nails, the suffering, the death of sinners.... **so that...**

we Can STAND by faith before a Holy God dressed in the Righteousness of Christ.....

**2Cor. 5:19, 21**

<sup>19</sup> In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them,

<sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

-----Outline for church bulletin-----

*Witness to the Truth*

John 18:28-38

**I. The Jews Deny the Truth** vv.28-32

**II. Pilate Questions the Truth** vv.33-35

**A.** Are you the King of the Jews? vv.33-34

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**III. Jesus Gives Witness to the Truth** vv.36-37

**IV. The Response to the Truth** v.38

A. Question the truth

B. Escape the truth

C. Believe the truth