

## OUR LORD IS DELIVERED TO PONTIUS PILATE

### **TEXT: MARK 15:1-15**

#### **Introduction:**

1. After deciding that our Lord was guilty of blasphemy (cf. Mark 14:64), the chief priests, along with the elders and scribes and the whole council, bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate (Mark 15:1).
2. They brought Him to Pilate because the Jews did not have the power to execute Jesus. Only the Roman government had that authority.
3. Pontius Pilate was at that time the Roman governor of Judea (cf. Luke 3:1). First they conducted their religious trial, and now they delivered our Lord to Pontius Pilate for the civil trial.
4. The story of Pontius Pilate is found in all four of the Gospels (cf. Matthew 27; Luke 23; John 19). Pontius Pilate is also referred to three times in the book of Acts, and once in the apostle Paul's first epistle to Timothy (cf. Acts 3:13; 4:27; 13:28; I Tim. 6:13).
5. Many of us are familiar with the so-called "Apostles' Creed" – "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried."
6. In Acts 3:13, Peter reminds us that Pontius Pilate "was determined to let Him go." But because he was a weak and worldly politician, Pilate gave in to the Jewish mob that was demanding Christ's death.
7. From what we can gather from the Bible and from secular history, Pontius Pilate was a rich and corrupt politician, a proud, worldly-minded and selfish man, more concerned with his own career and his own comfort than with justice.
8. We know from secular history that he was appointed governor of Judea by Tiberius Caesar in 26 AD, and he held that position until 37 AD. The details surrounding his death are not clear but apparently he committed suicide.
9. In Luke 13, we are told he slaughtered some Galileans while they were offering their sacrifices in the temple (Luke 13:1).
10. Pilate had nothing but contempt for the Jews (cf. John 18:34, 35). But it is evident He had respect and admiration for our Lord (cf. John 18:38; 19:4-6; Luke 23:4).
11. And when studying the trial of Jesus, this one fact becomes clear. Pontius Pilate was distracted and torn between two conflicting feelings – a fear of offending the Jews (which could have led to an insurrection), and a conscious conviction that our Lord was innocent.
12. But being a typical politician, and a weak, cowardly man, destitute of any fixed principles, and being interested only in himself, he yielded to

the blood-thirsty mob and had our Lord crucified. So ended Pilate's part in the greatest crime which has ever been committed since the world began.

### **I. PILATE WAS CONFRONTED WITH THE TRUTH (15:1, 2).**

1. Our Lord had explained to Pilate that His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36).
2. But all Pontius Pilate could comprehend was this world.
3. Only John records this fascinating conversation.
4. Pilate said to the Jews, "Shall I crucify your King?" (John 19:15). But Pontius Pilate would not accept Jesus as his King.
5. Pilate could grasp the obvious benefits of submitting to Caesar. But he did not see any advantage in submitting to Christ.
6. In John's account, we read these words in John 18:38, "Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?"
7. Like most politicians, Pilate had a problem with the truth.
8. Lord Bacon said, "What is truth said jesting Pilate and waited not for an answer."
9. Pilate did not really want to know the answer. And unfortunately, most people do not want to know the answer.
10. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).
11. But most people really do not want the truth.
12. There is a new movie out called, "Eat, Pray, Love." Julia Roberts, the actress who stars in this movie converted to Hinduism while making the film.
13. She says she and her family are now worshiping idols at a Hindu temple.
14. This is happening all over in modern day America. People today are so shallow, and so foolish, and so ignorant of the Bible that they can be brainwashed into joining a false religion by a stupid Hollywood movie.
15. Like all lost sinners, Pilate turned away from the truth.

### **II. PILATE KNEW THE JEWISH LEADERS WERE WRONG ABOUT CHRIST (15:10).**

1. Romans 1:29 describes the depravity of man – "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers."

2. Pilate knew the Jews were wrong to demand the release of Barabbas (a murderer – Mark 16:7), and the crucifixion of Jesus (Mark 15:11-15).
3. In Luke 23:4 we read, “Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.”
4. In Luke 23:14, Pilate said to them, “Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him.”
5. In John 18:38 we read, “Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.”
6. In John 19:4 we read, “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.”
7. And in John 19:6 we read these terrible words, “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.”
8. In Luke 23:6-12 (the others do not mention this) we read that Pilate tried to avoid the problem by sending our Lord to Herod.
9. At that time, Galilee was under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas, so Pilate sought to avoid the problem by sending Him to Herod, who just happened to be in Jerusalem at that time (Luke 23:7).
10. This was the same Herod who killed John the Baptist. Our Lord referred to him as “that fox” in Luke 13:32.
11. Pilate was your typical politician. “If Herod condemns Jesus, then I’ll condemn Him. If Herod frees Him, then I will free Him. I’ll just do whatever Herod does.”
12. There are many people like that. “I will do whatever my friends do, or whatever my husband does, or whatever my wife does, etc.” They just want to follow the crowd.
13. People want to do whatever is convenient, whatever is expedient, whatever is popular – instead of whatever is right.
14. In Mark 15:12, Pilate asked, “What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?” That is a good question.
15. “What shall I do then with Jesus?” (Matthew 27:22). People have been ignoring that question for 2,000 years.

### **III. PILATE SINNED AGAINST HIS OWN CONSCIENCE (15:15).**

1. Even lost sinners such as Pontius Pilate have a conscience, which instinctively tells them right from wrong. Pilate was warned by his conscience.
2. Pontius Pilate tried to soothe his conscience by washing his hands with water (Matthew 27:24).
3. Mark, Luke, and John do not record this Scripture; only Matthew does. All the water in the world could not clean Pontius Pilate's bloody hands.
4. Pilate thought he was innocent of the blood of Jesus, but he was mistaken.
5. In Shakespeare's great tragedy *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth says, "What, will these hands ne'er be clean?" and "Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand."
6. And then referring to the murder of Duncan and Banquo, she says, "What's done cannot be undone."
7. And so it was with Pontius Pilate. "What's done cannot be undone."
8. H.A. Ironside preached a sermon entitled, "How Pontius Pilate Lost His Soul." He said, "All his life long he had the memory of this miscarriage of judgment resting in his mind and on his life."

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. Only Matthew tells us about the wife of Pontius Pilate.
2. Pilate was warned by God through his wife (Matthew 27:19). This one reference by Matthew is all we know of her but one can imagine the urgency of her warning.
3. Pilate should have listened to his wife.
4. The Bible does not tell us about her dream. It must have been frightening.
5. Perhaps she saw our Lord being nailed to the cross and as those huge nails were being driven into His hands she woke up in a panic, crying and grief-stricken. She told her husband, "I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him" (27:19).
6. Perhaps she saw the situation reversed. Instead of Pilate sitting at the judgment seat, and our Lord being judged, perhaps she saw the Lord Jesus Christ seated upon His throne up in heaven, and Pilate being judged.

7. Perhaps she saw her husband being cast off into hell and his horrible screaming and weeping and wailing woke her up, startled and terrified.
8. But instead of listening to Jesus, and instead of listening to his conscience, and instead of listening to his wife, Pilate listened to the angry mob demanding that Jesus be crucified (Mark 15:13-15).