



G R A C E

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SOLI ◇ DEO ◇ GLORIA

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Sermon Notes

The Arrest, Trials, and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ

Jesus before Pilate

John 18:38b - 19:6

September 10, 2006

The Gospel Accounts of the Trials, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Christ:

Matthew 26:30-27:66

Mark 14:26-15:47

Luke 22:39-23:56

John 18:1-19:42

I. THE ARREST OF JESUS

- a. In the Garden of Gethsemane

II. THE SIX PHASES OF THE TRIAL(S) OF JESUS

a. The Jewish (Religious) Trial(s)

- Peter's denials begin
 1. Matt. 26:69-71a; Mk. 14:66-68; Luke 22:56-57; John 18:16-18
- ii. Before **Annas** – the former High Priest in Jerusalem
 1. John 18:13-23
- iii. Before Joseph **Caiaphas** – the current High Priest in Jerusalem
 1. Matthew 26:57-68; Mark 14:53-65; [Luke 22:67-71]; John 18:24
- Peter's final denial at cockcrow
 2. Matt. 26:71b-75; Mk. 14:69-72; Luke 22:58-62; John 18:25-27
- iv. Before **the Sanhedrin** at dawn – the Jewish governing body
 1. Matt. 27:1; Mark 15:1a; Luke 22:66-71; John 18:28b
 2. Sentenced to Death
- Remorse and suicide of Judas Iscariot
 1. Matthew 27:3-10; Acts 1:18-19

b. The Roman (Civil) Trials

- i. Before **Pontius Pilate** – the Roman procurator
- ii. Before **Herod Antipas** – the tetrarch of Galilee
- iii. Before **Pontius Pilate**
 1. Sentenced to be Crucified

III. THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST

- a. Nailed to the cross at 9:00 a.m.
- b. Jesus gives up His spirit and dies at 3:00 p.m.

- Throughout this passage (John 18:38b-19:6) an ironic pattern will begin emerge that, in a sense, foreshadows the manner in which the Gospel will eventually spread. This pattern begins with one fundamental truth that is powerfully displayed here:

Jesus Christ is rejected by His own people, the Jews. “He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.” John 1:11

Verse 18:38a

- Immediately after Pilate’s first discussion with Jesus, he went out on the porch of the Praetorium and declares to the Jewish officials and crowd, “I find no guilt in Him.”
 - This will be the first of **three** such declarations of Pilate.
 - The irony, here, of course, is quite clear: Jesus is declared guilty by the Jewish religious leaders and innocent by the pagan Gentile ruler.

Verse 39

- Pilate, now, suggests that, in accordance with a certain custom, he release Jesus.
- This custom, which occurred during the feast of Passover, commemorated the great feast by freeing a criminal from punishment or even death. This custom was intended to parallel how God freed the Israelites from death during the Passover – that is the death of the firstborn through the blood of the Passover Lamb.
- According to Roman law, two types of amnesty could be offered to a criminal:
 1. Pardoning the criminal **after** he was sentenced/condemned (*indulgentia*); or
 2. Pardoning the accused **prior** to receiving a guilty verdict (*abolitio*)
- Notice, as well, that Pilate refers to Jesus as “the King of the Jews.” This is likely because Pilate was attempting to antagonize the Jews by referring to Jesus – a pitiful and unthreatening sight to Pilate – the very title which angered the Jews so greatly. Of course the title also reflected the charge for which the Jews wanted Christ condemned and subsequently crucified for in the Roman trials.

Verse 40

- Immediately after Pilate’s declaration of Jesus’ guilt, as well as his offer to release Christ, the crowd cried out, “Not this Man, but Barabbas!”
 - According to Matthew 27:16-17, Barabbas was ‘notorious.’ Mark 15:7 states that Barabbas had been involved with an insurrection that resulted in murder. Luke 23:18-19 calls Barabbas a murderer.
 - Here, John refers to Barabbas as a *lestes*, ληστης, that is ‘one who seizes plunder’, or, simply, a ‘robber.’

- Essentially, Barabbas was a Jewish ‘terrorist’ (to use a modern term) or guerilla fighter, who actively participated in rebellion against the Roman authorities, doing whatever it took to disrupt the stability of the occupying Roman government.
- It is quite clear, then, that many in the crowd likely viewed Barabbas as a national hero and had no problem choosing him over Jesus, a Galilean nonetheless.
- Once again, the irony here is profound: the crowds [and, no doubt the Jewish authorities] call for the release of a man who is guilty of the very crime in which they unjustly...and knowingly so...accuse Christ.
- But the irony goes even deeper, for the name Barabbas, Βαραββας, בר-אבא, comes from the form: *Bar*, meaning ‘son’ and *Abba*, meaning ‘Father’; therefore, Barabbas means ‘Son of the Father.’
 - The Jews demand the release of the ‘Son of the Father;’ while condemning the true ‘Son of the Father.’

Chapter 19:1

- John, now, simply informs the reader that Pilate took Jesus and ‘scourged’ Him. Of course, Pilate *had his soldiers* scourge Jesus.
 - Luke records Pilate stating, ‘I will punish him and then release him.’ (Luke 23:16, 22).
 - Therefore, it seems clear that Pilate was simply trying to release Jesus by having Him severely punished and hoping the Jewish authorities would have pity on Him and accept His release.
 - However, Mark records that Jesus was flogged, or scourged **after** He was condemned to be crucified. Here, in John, it is **before** the verdict.
 - This apparent contradiction can be resolved when one understands that there were three types of floggings administered by the Romans:
 1. *Fustigatio*: a beating that was the least severe of the three [although still a significant beating] that was used to deal with relatively insignificant offenses such as ‘hooliganism.’ It was also often used in conjunction with a severe warning.

2. *Flagellatio*: This was a ‘brutal flogging’ that was used when the offense was serious.
3. *Verberatio*: This was the most severe beating. It was truly horrific and was reserved for the most heinous of criminals. It was almost always used in conjunction with another form of punishment, such as crucifixion. In this flogging, the criminal was stripped of his clothing and tied to a post. He was then beaten by often multiple torturers “until they were exhausted, or their commanding officer called them off.” Assuming the criminal was neither a Roman citizen or soldier, the most common instrument used in this type of beating was a whip, with multiple leather thongs; at the end of which were balls of leather, bone, metal or other sharp objects [a ‘cat-of-nine-tails’]. This instrument would literally rip the flesh from the victim’s back.

The Jewish historian Josephus tells of a certain Jesus, son of Ananias, who was brought before Albinus and ‘flayed to the bone with scourges’ (*Bell.* 6.304)

Eusebius says that certain martyrs at the time of Polycarp ‘were torn by scourges down to deep-seated veins and arteries, of that the hidden contents of the recesses of their bodies, their entrails and organs, were exposed to sight’ (*HE* 4.15.4).

According to Cicero, often times the victim died from this type of scourging.

- Therefore, it is entirely possible that Jesus received **two floggings**: (1) the *Fustigatio*, which would have been the one recorded, here, in John, prior to Him being sentenced to crucifixion. The purpose of this, again, would have been to cause the Jewish leaders to have pity upon Him. (2) the second flogging, then, would have been the most severe of all the floggings, the *verberatio*, and would have occurred **after** the sentence of crucifixion. This would have been the flogging recorded in Mark 15:15. This would have, then, explained why He was too weak to carry His cross to Golgotha.

Verses 2-3

- After flogging Jesus, the Roman soldiers ‘twisted together’ a ‘crown of thorns’ and put it on Jesus’ head.
 - The crown was made, most likely, from the long spikes of the date palm.
 - The crown was also, likely, intended to imitate the ‘radiate’ crowns of the Oriental god-kings. These ‘radiate’ crowns had spikes that went outward and was meant to present the ruler as not only king by divine [i.e. God, or god-like].

- As they mocked Jesus with the ‘crown of thorns’ the soldiers placed a purple robe on Him, and went up to Him, saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ while also slapping Him in the face.
 - In Matthew and Mark, the soldiers place a reed in the hands of Jesus, to serve as the scepter in the hands of a king. They, then, take the reed and hit Jesus in the head with it.
 - Further, they not only hit Jesus in the head, but they also kneel before Him and spit in His face.
 - The purple robe, ‘a mock royal garment,’ the soldiers placed on Jesus was, most likely a military robe, worn by Roman officers.
 - There is no doubt that the soldiers were intentionally mocking Jesus; yet, it is, yet again, ironic that, as they attempt to torture and humiliate Jesus, they are speaking better than they know. For, in fact, Jesus IS King – He is the King of Kings and the LORD of lords. He is crowned with splendor and majesty! But to make the situation even more ironic – **the truth of Jesus’ identity is on the lips of Gentiles!**
 - Imagine the moment that these soldiers breathed their last and stood in the presence of the risen Christ!

Verses 4-5

- Following the mocking of Jesus by the Roman soldiers, Pilate brings Him out before the Jewish leaders and the crowds, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and he [Pilate] says, ‘Behold, I am bringing Him out to you so that you may know that I find no guilt in Him.’
 - This is Pilate’s **second declaration of innocence** of Jesus.
 - Pilate is bringing Jesus out, beaten, bruised, pitiful, even pathetic, before the people and says, ‘Behold, the Man!’
 - On the surface, it is quite clear that Pilate is mocking the Jewish authorities, demonstrating how insignificant Jesus truly is. No doubt, to Pilate, it is absurd that Jewish authorities would consider this pitiful sight of a man a threat to them or the Roman government!
 - Yet, what is so powerful is that Pilate declares, ‘**Behold the Man!**’
 - Once again, one cannot escape the profound irony in these words.
 - As Jesus stands before the crowd, beside Pilate, crowned and robed, He does so as a demonstration of His glory! – obedient to the will of

the Father unto death...even, as will soon be evident, death on a cross!

- And Pilate's declaration ['Behold the Man!'], although spoken with irreverence, demonstrates the power and sovereignty of Almighty God by putting the truth concerning the nature of Christ on the lips of a Gentile pagan!
- For, Jesus truly is *the* Man...the Word made flesh who tabernacled among us (John 1:14).
- Not only this, Jesus is not merely *a* man...He is the Son of Man...the God-Man!
- "Adam (a Hebrew word meaning 'man') was created by God to be king over the whole created world; all creation was to be ruled by a son of man (Hebrew, *ben adam*) (Psalm 8...). In Christ, the Son of Man, God's original intention in the creation is fulfilled. He is the new Adam, the messianic King. Thus, we have in Pilate's words a striking example of John's *double entendre*; whereas Pilate might merely have meant, 'Look, here is the fellow,' his words contain the deepest truth about the person of Christ." Richardson
- "Jesus summed up in His own Person the ideal Humanity – and this was how humanity treated Him." Pilcher
- "Seen in the context of the whole Gospel, and of John's use of the 'Son of Man', it seems very probable that the title [Son of Man] is implied here." F.J. Moloney

Read ROMANS 5:12-21:

¹²Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned-- ¹³for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ¹⁴Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. ¹⁵But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. ¹⁶The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. ¹⁷For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. ¹⁹For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. ²⁰The Law came in so that the transgression would increase;

but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Verse 6

- ❑ Pilate's plan to punish Jesus in order to appease the Jews fails terribly. Rather than moving the Jews to have compassion on Christ, the sight of the beaten Man only causes the Jews to cry out once again, 'Crucify, Crucify!'
 - The Jewish leaders are likely aware of the fact that in 88 BC, Alexander Jannaeus crucified 800 rebels in Judea (Josephus, *Bel.* i. 97).
 - Once again, **the Jews did not merely want Jesus humiliated; they wanted Him accursed!**
- ❑ Out of frustrations, Pilate tells the Jews, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him..."
 - Certainly Pilate knows that the Jews do not have the authority to crucify anyone; but, his comment reflects a certain level of exasperation, whereby, Pilate is likely thinking something like, "You want me to try Him for sedition; but you also want to tell me how to rule in this case."
- ❑ Pilate, then, makes his third, and final, declaration of innocence with respect to Jesus, saying, 'I find no fault in Him.'
- ❑ There is an interesting pattern that John presents in this passage:
 - The Jews outright reject Jesus, demanding His crucifixion.
 - The Roman authority declares His innocence, and even the soldiers, albeit unknowingly and unwillingly, profess that Jesus is the King.
 - Through all of these events, God displays His power and glory.
 - It is as though this pattern, in an ironic way, foreshadows the means by which God ordains for the Gospel to spread to the ends of the earth. Read **Romans 11**.

❖ Read **Isaiah 50:6**.

❖ Read **Isaiah 53:1-6**.