

56. Jesus Was Tried by Pilate

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to walk in the Spirit so that they are able to have victory when they experience temptation. In our topic today, we are going to see that after the Jewish religious leaders condemned Jesus to death, they delivered Jesus to Pilate.

The Jews wanted to make it look like their actions had been done legally. Mark 15:1-5 says, “Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, led *Him* away, and delivered *Him* to Pilate. Then Pilate asked Him, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ He answered and said to him, ‘*It is as you say.*’ And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing. Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, ‘Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!’ But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled.” Here we see that the chief priests held a consultation early in the morning to make it appear that they had done everything legally so Pilate would not know that they had condemned Jesus in the middle of the night.

After the consultation, the Jews put Jesus in chains and led Him to the judgment hall of Pilate. There, they delivered Him into the hands of Pilate and presented their charges against Him. Luke 23:2 tells us, “And they began to accuse Him, saying, ‘We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.’” Here, we see that the religious leaders presented three charges against Jesus. First, they said He was perverting the nation. The word translated “perverting” means *to turn from the right path*. Second, they accused Jesus of forbidding the people to pay taxes to Caesar. Third, they said He claimed to be Christ, a King. As we look at the three charges, we see that the first was a total lie. Jesus was without sin, yet he was accused of trying to get the nation to sin.

The second charge was that He was forbidding the people to pay taxes to Caesar. Jesus had specifically said, in Mark 12:17, “‘Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ And they marveled at Him.” Since Jesus said that to the Pharisees and Herodians, many of the men accusing Jesus had personally heard Jesus speak these words. The third charge was that He called Himself, “Christ, a King.” This statement was true. In Mark 14:61-62, we see that the high priest asked Jesus, “‘Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?’” Jesus had answered, “I am.”

Pilate asked Jesus about this third charge. Jesus said, in John 18:36-37, “Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.’ Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are You a king then?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’” Mark gave the summary answer of Jesus to Pilate, “*It is as you say.*”

Then, the chief priests accused Jesus of many other things. Jesus did not even answer their charges.

Pilate finally asked Jesus if He was going to defend Himself against these additional charges. Since the charges were completely false, this time Jesus did not even bother to say a word to try to defend Himself. Isaiah 53:7 says, “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.” Jesus was more concerned to fulfill this and other Old Testament prophecies than He was to defend Himself. As a result, Pilate was amazed that Jesus did not try to defend Himself.

Mark 15:6-10 goes on to say, “Now at the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested. And there was one named Barabbas, *who was* chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion. Then the multitude, crying aloud, began to ask *him to do* just as he had always done for them. But Pilate answered them, saying, ‘Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?’ For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.” It was the custom of the Romans to release one prisoner to the people at certain times if that was requested by the people. Pilate decided to see if he could get the people to ask for Jesus to be set free. He knew that just a few days earlier, Jesus had ridden into Jerusalem, and many people had followed Him.

The multitude began to ask Pilate to do what he had always done and release a prisoner. Pilate immediately saw an opportunity to get the crowd to reject the charges of the religious leaders against Jesus. As a result, Pilate began to ask the crowd if they would like for Him to release to them the King of the Jews. The answer Jesus had given to Pilate a few minutes earlier caused Pilate to realize that Jesus was no threat to the Roman government, because the kingdom of Jesus was not a worldly kingdom. Pilate may not have realized that most of the crowd there, in the early morning, had come with the religious leaders and were in agreement to condemn Jesus.

We see that the religious leaders had planted this question in the crowd to get Pilate to do what they had agreed, because they had a plan and that plan was not to free Jesus. One of the men who was in the Roman prison was a man by the name of Barabbas. Mark tells us that this man was chained to his fellow rebels. This means that he was a part of one of several different groups that had tried to overthrow the Roman government. During the particular rebellion by this group, Barabbas had committed murder. In addition, John 18:40 says, “Then they all cried again, saying, ‘Not this Man, but Barabbas!’ Now Barabbas was a robber.”

Pilate realized that the chief priests had delivered Jesus to him because of their envy. The word translated “envy” means *the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing about the blessing of others*. The religious leaders had seen the crowds following Jesus and were filled with envy because they wanted to have complete control over the people. Titus 3:3 says, “For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.” The chief priests were filled with envy and it caused them to become hateful toward Jesus.

Matthew 27:17 says, “Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, ‘Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?’” This was the question

for which the religious leaders had been waiting. Mark 15:11-15 says, “But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them. Pilate answered and said to them again, ‘What then do you want me to do *with Him* whom you call the King of the Jews?’ So they cried out again, ‘Crucify Him!’ Then Pilate said to them, ‘Why, what evil has He done?’ But they cried out all the more, ‘Crucify Him!’ So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged *Him*, to be crucified.”

We see that the chief priests immediately stirred up the crowd of people who had come with them. The crowd immediately began to ask and demand that Pilate release Barabbas to them. That was not what Pilate had expected. He had expected that the crowd would ask for Jesus to be released. As a result, Pilate asked the question, “What then do you want me to do *with Him* whom you call the King of the Jews?” John 19:6-7 says, “Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, ‘Crucify *Him*, crucify *Him*!’ Pilate said to them, ‘You take Him and crucify *Him*, for I find no fault in Him.’ The Jews answered him, ‘We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.’” Here, we see that Pilate told the chief priests and other religious leaders that he found no fault in Jesus.

The chief priests were finally forced to admit the charge of which they had convicted Jesus in the middle of the night by their answer, “We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.” Suddenly, Pilate was forced to recognize that the charge the Jews had against Jesus was a crime based on the Jewish law rather than the Roman law. However, that caused Pilate to be filled with fear. He had said three times that he found no fault in Jesus. Now, the people were calling for Jesus to be crucified.

This caused Pilate to ask the crowd the question, “Why, what evil has He done?” Instead of answering the question of Pilate, the crowd began to chant, “Crucify Him!” Pilate was more anxious to please the crowd than to do what he knew was right. Pilate made a choice that day just as the chief priests had earlier made a choice. He made the choice to release Barabbas to them. Here, we see that the chief priests, the people, and Pilate all chose to free a murderer and condemn the One who was without sin. Pilate then ordered the Roman soldiers to scourge Jesus. A scourge was a wooden handle that had leather thongs with sharp pieces of metal at the end of each of the thongs. A Roman scourging in itself often caused the person being beaten to bleed to death. Pilate gave the order that after the scourging, Jesus was to be taken out and crucified.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus was actually dying for all of our sins so He could offer each of us forgiveness as a free gift. That is the message we want to help them learn to share with others. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to share this message.