

The Judgment of Christ



The Story

John 18:28–19:16

28 Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.

29 Pilate then went out to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?”

30 They answered and said to him, “If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.”

31 Then Pilate said to them, “You take Him and judge Him according to your law.” Therefore the Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,”

32 that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die.

John 18:28–19:16

33 Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

34 Jesus answered him, “Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?”

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

36 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.”

John 18:28–19:16

37 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.”

38 Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all.

39 “But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”

40 Then they all cried again, saying, “Not this Man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.

John 18:28–19:16

- 1 So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.
- 2 And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe.
- 3 Then they said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they struck Him with their hands.
- 4 Pilate then went out again, and said to them, “Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him.”
- 5 Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, “Behold the Man!”

John 18:28–19:16

6 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.”

7 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.”

8 Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid,

9 and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, “Where are You from?” But Jesus gave him no answer.

John 18:28–19:16

10 Then Pilate said to Him, “Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?”

11 Jesus answered, “You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.”

12 From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, “If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar’s friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.”

13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

John 18:28–19:16

14 Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, “Behold your King!”

15 But they cried out, “Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar!”

16 Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away.

Main Characters

Pharisees and Jews

- Delivered Christ out of envy
- Concerned about outward worship only
- **Driven by self-righteousness**



Pontius Pilate

- Prefect of Judea
- Cruel man who dealt harshly with the Jews
- Driven by fear and self-preservation



Jesus Christ

- Does not defend Himself
- All His efforts are for the salvation of others
- Driven by love and self-denial



Pharisees and Jews



Outward worship

- **18:28** ...But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.



False Accusation

- **Luke 23:1-2** ...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.”
- Accused Him of a political crime that falls under Pilate’s jurisdiction
- Christ told the people to pay taxes
- Christ refused to be crowned a king by force



Self Justification

- **18:31** ...Therefore the Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,”
- **19:7** “We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die...”
- They hoped that Pilate would do their dirty work
- The stoning of Stephen
- Pilate told them to crucify Him



False Justice

- **18:39-40** “But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” Then they all cried again, saying, “Not this Man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.
- Where is justice then?



Unstable

- **19:7** 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.”
- Originally they charge Him with crimes against Caesar
- **James 1:8** he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.
- **St. John Chrysostom** “...Tell me, is this a ground of accusation, that He who performed the deeds of the Son of God should call Himself the Son of God?”

Blinded to their sin

- **Matthew 27:25** And all the people answered and said, “His blood be on us and on our children.”



Pontius Pilate



Extra-Biblical Background

- Ordered statues of Caesar to be brought into Jerusalem, outraging the Jews.
- Threatened protestors with death.
- Used Temple funds to build a 30-mile aqueduct.
- Pilate's tenure was associated with "briberies, insults, robberies, outrages, wanton injustices, constantly repeated executions without trial, and ceaseless and grievous cruelty." (Philo)
- Rebuked by Caesar for excessive cruelty.
- Eventually removed and exiled to France.

Biblical Account

- **Luke 13:1-3** ...some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things?
- Pilate appears indecisive, weak, and afraid
- Possible Explanations:
 - Previous rebuke from Caesar for cruelty
 - His wife’s dream
 - The person of Jesus Christ

Interested in Christ's kingship

- **18:33** Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”
- **18:37** Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?”
- If He were a king, He might be a threat to the Roman Empire.



Pragmatic, not principled

- **19:1** So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.
- **19:4** Pilate then went out again, and said to them, “Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him.”
- **19:5** Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, “Behold the Man!”
- He wanted to free Christ, and felt that scourging Him would appease the crowd



Afraid of Christ's identify

- **19:7-8** 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.” Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid



Afraid of Christ's identify

- **St. Cyril of Alexandria** I think he believed that, though Jesus was a man, he might also be the Son of God. This idea and belief of his was not derived from holy Scripture but the mistaken notions of the Greeks. Greek fables call many men demi-gods and sons of gods. The Romans, too, who in such matters were still more superstitious, gave the name of god to the more distinguished of their own monarchs, and set up altars to them, and allotted them shrines and put them on pedestals. Therefore Pilate was more earnest and anxious than before in his inquiry of who Christ was and where he came from.

Afraid of Christ's authority

- **19:11-12** Jesus answered, “You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.” From then on Pilate sought to release Him...



Afraid of losing his position

- **19:12,14** ...but the Jews cried out, saying, “If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar’s friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.” When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat...And he said to the Jews, “Behold your King!”
- **19:15-16** But they cried out, “Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar!” Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified...

Jesus Christ



Words of salvation

- **18:33-34** Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered him, “Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?”
- Christ speaks, and does not keep silent
- These words are for Pilate’s sake
- Why did He ask the question?

Reveals His Identity

- **18:36** 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 would be motivated by power
- Christ appears weak, so He elaborates:
 - Servants
 - Fight
 - Kingdom

Invitation to listen to the Truth

- **18:37** ...“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.”
- Now it was Pilate that was hearing the truth
- **Psalms 84:11 LXX** Truth has sprung out of the earth, and righteousness has looked down from heaven.

Pilate changes his line of questioning

- **18:38** Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?”...
- First time Pilate says something that does not have to do with being king of the Jews.
- Christ was telling him, “I am your king.”
- Pilate does not wait for the answer

Pilate misses the message

- **18:38** ...And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all.
- Pilate tried to “save” Christ while Christ was trying to save Pilate.
- Actually Pilate was trying to save himself without realizing that the true Savior stood before him.
- Christ was not seeking release, but sought to release Pilate

Scourged and mocked

- Like a lion they roared to seize. The life of the lamb, Christ.
- Pilate, fulfilling their plan, Flogged you, the meek One. So he set to work on your back....
- The Redeemer endured the whip. The Deliverer was in chains, Stripped and stretched out on a pillar,
- He who in a pillar of cloud. Previously spoke to Moses and Aaron.
- He who laid the pillars of the earth, as David said, is bound to a pillar.
- He who made known to the people the way in the desert—for the pillar of fire showed [the way] before them—is fastened to a pillar.
- The rock is on a pillar, and hewn for me is The church.

Romanus Melodus

Who has the power?

- **19:9-10** and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, “Where are You from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, “Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?”
- Pilate had the authority to free Christ, but not the character to use his authority rightly.
- Christ had the power to escape, but also the character to choose to remain bound.

Pilate exposed

- **19:11** Jesus answered, “You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.”
- Christ was not intimidated by the “power” of Pilate
- He also reminded him of his responsibility
- It is because Pilate was given the authority by God to free Christ, that he would be condemned for not doing so

Conclusion

Pharisees	Pilate	Christ
Self-righteousness	Fear and self-preservation	Love and self-denial

