

What Shall I Do with Jesus? Part 2

Scripture: Matthew 27:19–26

Code: 2394

INTRODUCTION

Matthew 27:22 records that Pilate asked, "What shall I do then with Jesus, who is called Christ?" That is a question everyone must answer. I would like to pose another question: Why must every person answer that question? What is it about Jesus Christ that lays such a claim on every heart?

A. The Person of Christ

1. Jesus is God

a) He is the possessor of God's names Matthew 1:23 says, "They shall call his name Immanuel, which, being interpreted, is God with us. In Acts 3:14 the apostle Peter calls Jesus the "Holy One"--an Old Testament name distinctly given to God (e.g., Ps. 16:10, Isa. 48:17). b) He is one with God the Father John 8:19 says to know Christ is to know the Father. John 15:23 says to hate Him is to hate the Father. John 14:9 says to see Him is to see the Father. John 5:23 says to honor Him is to honor the Father. And Mark 9:37 and Matthew 10:40 say to receive Him is to receive the Father. c) He is omnipresent Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always" (Matt. 28:20). Omnipresence is true only of God. d) He is eternal Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and today, and forever." e) He is the Creator of the world John 1:3 says, "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." f) He is able to forgive sin Repeatedly in His ministry, Jesus said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee" (Mark 2:9). That is another divine prerogative. g) He is to be worshiped as God Philippians 2:10 says, "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." Scripture clearly indicates that Jesus Christ is fully God. Since He is God, everyone is obligated to respond to Him.

2. Jesus is the perfect God-man

Just because Jesus is God doesn't mean He is any less man. How do we know? He was born. He was circumcised. He grew. He had a human name. He had flesh and blood. He was hungry. He wept. He thirsted. He slept. He was weary. He suffered. He was tempted. He was wounded. He died. And He was buried. All are indications of His humanness. No one has ever existed like Jesus. He has the right to make tremendous demands on our lives because of who He is.

3. Jesus is the promised Savior

Jesus came into the world not only to show us what God is like, but also to bring us to God. The prophets outlined the details of His life with astounding accuracy.

a) His birth Micah 5:2 says it would occur in Bethlehem. Daniel 9:24-27 gives the approximate date. Isaiah 7:14 tells us it would be a virgin birth. Genesis 9:26 indicates He would come from the Semitic line. Genesis 22:18 says He would come from the line of Abraham. Genesis 49:10 says He would come from the tribe of Judah. Second Samuel 7:13 says He would come through the seed of David. b) His life Hosea 11:1 indicates He would be taken to Egypt. Deuteronomy 18:15 says He would be a prophet like Moses. Psalm 22:10 indicates He would trust God from His birth onward. Isaiah 9:1-2 says He would begin His ministry in Galilee. Isaiah 11:2 says He would be anointed by God's Spirit. Isaiah 53:4 says He would carry our griefs and sorrows. Zechariah 9:9 says He would enter Jerusalem on a colt. Isaiah 35:5-6 indicates He would perform miracles. c) His death Psalm 2:1-3 indicates that kings would plot His death (cf. Acts 4:25-28). Psalm 22:1 says He would die forsaken by God. Psalm 22:6-8 says He would be scorned and mocked. Zechariah 11:12 says He would be

betrayed for thirty pieces of silver. Zechariah 12:10 says He would be smitten and pierced by His own people. Isaiah 52:14 says He would be brutally treated. Isaiah 53:5, 10 says He would die for the world's iniquity. Psalm 22:18 says His garments would be divided. Psalm 41:9 says He would be betrayed by a friend. Psalm 34:20 indicates that not a bone of His would be broken. Isaiah 50:6 says His beard would be plucked out and that He would be spit on. d) His resurrection Psalm 16:10 says He would never see corruption. Psalm 22:22 indicates He would conquer death. e) His present work Psalm 110:4 indicates He would function as a priest. Amos 9:11 says He would sit on David's throne.

B. The Perfection of Christ

1. He is holy

His holiness demonstrates His perfection. Jesus was free from defilement. He loved righteousness, hated sin, was victorious over temptation, rebuked sinners, and will judge unbelievers.

2. He is loving

Jesus' love knows no limits: He loves the Father and He loves lost, ungodly sinners. He loves His own--the church. He loves children. Jesus demonstrated His love by becoming poor, giving His life, forgiving sin, seeking the lost, healing the sick, supplying the needs of others, and strengthening His people. He showed compassion on those who were lost, hungry, sick, blind, demonized, grieved, repentant--even those who were dead!

Jesus was also prayerful, meek, humble, righteous, good, faithful, truthful, just, and self-denying. In every way He is the spotless, perfect Lamb of God who came to die for the sins of the world.

It is this Jesus of whom Pilate asks: what then shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ? Jesus Christ came into the world to redeem the world from sin, to bring salvation, to remove transgressions, to destroy Satan, and to set up an eternal kingdom of peace and glory for those who love and believe in Him. To do so it was essential that He die for sin. He paid the penalty as our substitute and rose again that we might live forever. The destiny of every human being hinges on what he does with Jesus Christ.

REVIEW

Jesus' earthly ministry came to a climax as He entered into Jerusalem for His final Passover. A few days later Judas betrayed Him into the hands of the Jewish leaders. There were three phases in the Jewish trial followed by three phases in the Roman trial. It is the Roman trial we are looking at in Matthew 27:11-26.

I. THE ACCUSATION OF THE JEWISH LEADERS (vv. 11-12a)

II. THE ATTITUDE OF THE LORD (vv. 12b-14)

III. THE ANIMOSITY OF THE CROWD (vv. 15-18, 20-23, 25)

A. The Concession of Pilate (vv. 15-18)

B. The Campaign of the Leaders (v. 20)

C. The Choice of the Crowd (vv. 21-23)

Pilate asked what he should do with Christ after he discovered that the people wanted him to release Barabbas and not Christ (Matt. 27:22). Luke 23:20-22 adds some insight into this scene: "Pilate, therefore, willing to release Jesus, spoke again to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify him! Crucify him! And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him. I will, therefore, chastise him, and let him go." Since Pilate found no fault in Him, why was he going to chastise Him? It was an act of condescension on Pilate's part. He wanted to appease the blood-thirsty cries of the people. But that wasn't going to be enough. Verses 23-24 say, "They were urgent with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required." Incredible. On five separate occasions Pilate and Herod combined to announce the innocence of Jesus Christ. Then Pilate sentenced Him to death. Verse 25 says, "He released unto them him that, for sedition

and murder, was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will."

D. The Curse of the Blood (v. 25)

IV. THE APPREHENSION OF THE WIFE (v. 19)

Matthew 27:19 shows what interrupted Pilate and allowed the leaders to stir up the crowd.

A. The Setting (v. 19a)

"When he [Pilate] was seated on the judgment seat"

Pilate was presiding over the trial of Jesus at the official seat of authority. Since the Jewish leaders wouldn't go into the Judgment Hall, Pilate came out on the porch. As he took his seat outside, that constituted a genuine judicial act because he was seated on the judgment seat.

B. The Message (v. 19b-c)

1. Her conviction of Christ's righteousness (v. 19b)

"His wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man"

a) The warning Pilate must have had high regard for his wife's opinion because he stopped the proceedings to hear what she had to say. What was her verdict on Jesus Christ? That He was righteous. No doubt they had discussed Jesus the night before when Pilate gave permission for his soldiers to accompany the Jews when they went to capture Jesus. Pilate certainly was not oblivious to what was going on in the land of Palestine. He knew Jesus had virtually banished disease from the land. He knew what had happened in the past week. He heard about Jesus' cleansing of the temple. He knew Jesus had been hailed as Messiah when He first entered the city. I'm sure word of Lazarus's resurrection had even reached him. Pilate knew envy motivated the Jewish leaders to want Jesus dead (v. 18). Pilate's wife was convinced that Jesus was a righteous man-- and that is the testimony of a pagan. The nation of Israel, with all they knew from the prophets, promises, and law of God, cursed their Messiah, took His blood on themselves, and killed Him. Yet a pagan who knew nothing testified that Jesus was righteous. What a condemnation of the people of Israel! Their actions betrayed a denial of their own Scripture. b) The consequence Pilate's wife didn't want her husband to get involved with Jesus because He was righteous. She was fearful of the consequences. She was right because later on Pilate was removed from Palestine, sent to Gaul, and there committed suicide. Why did he commit suicide? For the same reason Judas did. Neither could deal with the tremendous guilt of having betrayed the only perfectly righteous person who ever lived. According to psychologists, the primary cause of suicide is retribution: it is a self-inflicted punishment. The ultimate crime brought on ultimate punishment.

2. Her suffering in a dream (v. 19c)

"I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."

Her dream may have been a providential act of God. I believe God was involved because only He could send the messenger at the right moment to allow time for the Jewish leaders to stir up the crowd. Jesus had to die. Everything that happened in this trial was by the predetermined plan of God (Acts 2:23). What Pilate's wife knew about Jesus certainly could have been directed by the Spirit of God into a dream that filled her heart with fear. She suffered because of it. We don't know what she thought might happen to her husband in dealing with Jesus, but her worst fears were coming true because he was trapped into making an unjust decision about Jesus.

V. THE ACQUIESCENCE OF THE GOVERNOR (vv. 24, 26)

A. Pilate's Intimidation Continued (v. 24a)

"When Pilate saw that he could prevail [gain] nothing, but that rather a tumult [Gk., *thorubos*, 'riot'] was made"

Pilate couldn't afford another riot. The last one brought about a direct rebuke from Tiberius Caesar. He certainly recalled the previous occasions when riots occurred because of his obstinate refusal to bend to the wishes of the Jews. Here was a similar situation.

One thing we can say about Pilate is that he tried to get Jesus off his hands. He sent Him to Herod. He suggested that He be released at the Passover. He and Herod rendered five verdicts of His innocence. He appealed to the people. He tried to give Him back to the Jews so that they would try Him themselves (v. 24c). However, they refused because they wanted Jesus' execution to appear legal. Nothing Pilate tried worked because Jesus had to be crucified to fulfill Scripture.

B. Pilate's Innocence Claimed (v. 24b-c)

1. The tradition of the Old Testament (v. 24b)

"He took water, and washed his hands before the multitude"

Pilate's actions followed a Jewish tradition based on Deuteronomy 21:6-9. When someone was murdered in ancient times in the cities of Israel, the elders of the city were responsible to find the guilty party. Sometimes that was not possible. So the elders would come to a public place in the city and wash their hands in front of the people. That signified that since they tried their best, yet were unable to find the murderer, they were free from the guilt of the murder.

God does not tolerate unrequited blood. That is a basic principle in Scripture, and is why capital punishment was instituted in Genesis 9:6. When Cain killed Abel, God said that Abel's blood cried to Him from the ground.

2. The testimony of Pilate (v. 24c)

"I am innocent of the blood of this righteous person. See ye to it."

The people followed that statement by screaming, "His blood be on us" (v. 25). The Jewish nation took the guilt for the blood of Christ. When Pilate said, "See ye to it," he might have been giving them the right to kill Jesus.

Pilate tried to get rid of Jesus, but he couldn't. Again he affirmed the innocence of Christ. Do you think Pilate wished Jesus were guilty? Of course--that would solve all his problems. If he could have found one thing that made Jesus guilty, he could have executed Him with a clear conscience. Pilate was like Judas. Do you think Judas wanted to find one flaw in the life of Christ that could justify his betrayal of Him? Yes. Do you think Annas and Caiaphas wanted to find one thing wrong with Jesus to justify their hatred of Him? Certainly. The same is true of the false witnesses. He was innocent while everyone around Him was guilty!

C. Pilate's Intention Circumvented (v. 26)

"Then released he Barabbas unto them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified."

It was Pilate's intention to scourge Jesus and then let Him go. However, things didn't work out that way. Matthew didn't give us the details of what happened immediately after the scourging, but John did, beginning with 19:1.

1. The suffering of Christ

a) The scourging A Roman scourge had a short wooden handle that held a series of leather thongs threaded with bits of lead, brass, and bones sharpened to a razor's edge. The man was taken by the wrists and tied to a post, his body taut. Two men, one on each side, would whip him across the flanks and back, exposing arteries, veins, and entrails. That often brought about death. Scourging was often done before crucifixion to speed up the victim's death on the cross. It was torture beyond description. The Jews gave forty lashes, save one. We don't know how many the Romans administered. We do know that Jesus couldn't carry His own cross all the way to the place of execution because He was so weak. If there ever was a man of strength, it was Jesus, because a man without sin would be a man of strength. However, He had been beaten so badly that even He couldn't carry the cross. b) The satire John 19:2 says that after the scourging, "the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head." They made a crown to mock Him and crushed it onto His brow. Then they put a purple robe on Him. In verse 3 they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" The Greek text indicates that they continually hailed Him and struck Him. The soldiers put kingly garb on Jesus because they were playing a game. If you were to visit the grounds of Fort Antonius in Jerusalem,

you would find that the gabbatha--the pavement--is still there. On it you can see markings of games the Roman soldiers played. The soldiers picked on prisoners or mentally retarded children as a way to pass the time. They would dress them in certain ways, and then mock them. That's what they did to Jesus. Matthew added that they spit on Him and smashed His head with a reed (Matt. 27:30).

2. The sarcasm of Pilate

a) His cowardice After the game was through, Pilate went before the mob and said, "Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him" (John 19:4). Why did he bring Jesus before the people after having Him scourged? Because He was trying to quench their thirst for blood. He was exposing a pathetic man--a man whose face had been beaten black and blue, whose head had been crushed, and whose back and sides had been ripped raw so that His internal organs were visible. It is this picture of Jesus that Isaiah 53:2 was referring to: "There is no beauty that we should desire him." b) His cruelty Then Pilate said, "Behold the man" (v. 5). He wanted Jesus to look so bad that the people would want to let Him go. He was hoping they would say, "We can't take anymore. This inhumane treatment is more than we can stand!" But the crowd had tasted blood--and they wanted more. c) His challenge Verse 6 says, "When the chief priests, therefore, and the 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." The leaders hounded Pilate to crucify Christ because they wouldn't kill Him themselves. However, Jesus couldn't have been killed by the Jews because He said He would be lifted up (John 12:32-33). If He had been killed by Jews, He would have been stoned.

3. The scorn of the Jews

John 19:7 says, "The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." Christ's so-called blasphemy (Mark 14:61-64) was what really bothered the Jewish leaders.

4. The shame of Pilate

a) His ultimate fear Pilate heard something he didn't want to hear when the Jews said Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. Verse 8 says, "When Pilate, therefore, heard that saying, he was the more afraid." Pilate knew Jesus could heal the sick and raise the dead. He knew He had unique and strange powers. Over the period of an hour Pilate had seen Christ display remarkable personal characteristics, especially the calmness with which He maintained His silence. However, Christ's claim to be the Son of God frightened him more than anything. Pilate's pagan mind had been conditioned to the existence of many gods. Superstitious fear made him wonder if he was really dealing with the son of a god. b) His ultimate fate (1) The source of Pilate's judgment (a) The suspicion of Pilate Pilate brought Jesus back into the Judgment Hall and said to Him, "From where art thou?" (v. 9). Two of the three incidents that got Pilate into trouble with the Jews had to do with false gods. The first was the image of Caesar above the eagles on the standards that his soldiers carried. The second was the engraving of Caesar on the shields of the soldiers. Pilate didn't want to get involved with the Jews one more time over the issue of false gods. Satan initiated a diabolical plan through the Jewish leaders, which forced Pilate into a problem similar to the ones he had faced before. He had already been reprimanded by Rome for interfering in the Jewish religion. So Pilate wanted to know if the Jewish leaders were trying to have the son of a false god put to death. (b) The silence of Christ John 19:9 says, "Jesus gave him no answer." He knew Pilate's heart. Pilate had already rejected the truth. Whether Jesus was the Son of God was not a matter for Rome to decide. Pilate and Herod had combined to render a verdict of innocent five times already, so there was nothing for Christ to say. (2) The source of Pilate's authority John 19:10-11 says, "Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore, he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." The people who delivered Christ to Pilate were the greater sinners. Pilate sinned through weakness--he was just a pawn in the game--the Jewish leaders sinned through willful hatred. There are degrees to rejecting

Christ, and the severer the rejection, the severer the punishment in hell.c) His ultimate failure Verse 12 says, "From then on Pilate sought to release him." Pilate wanted Jesus out of his hands because he was afraid of one more incident with the Jews involving a false god. Verse 12 continues, "But the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar." They brought up a political issue. They told Pilate he wouldn't be serving Caesar's best interests by showing complicity with an insurrectionist. Pilate knew if that report got back to Caesar, he was through.

5. The sentencing of the King

John 19:13-15 says, "When Pilate, therefore, heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour [6:00 A.M.]; and he saith unto the Jews, Behold, your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar." It was one thing for the Jewish nation to claim responsibility for Christ's blood, but to say they had no king but Caesar was their final condemnation. Is it any wonder that God destroyed Jerusalem, the center of their religion? Is it any wonder that for centuries they have been under the judgment of God, except for the remnant who are called by His grace through faith in Christ? It's frightening! They rejected their true King and accepted an earthly king for the sake of convenience.

CONCLUSION

Jesus Christ is innocent, perfect, and holy. The Old Testament said that the lamb offered for sin must be without spot or blemish (Ex. 12:5). All that Christ endured through the mock trials proved He was suitable to serve as the perfect Lamb of God to die for the sins of the world. The world of religious and irreligious men, inspired by the devil himself, could not find one spot or blemish on this Lamb. Thus Jesus was the perfect sacrifice. Although His visage was marred by the physical abuse He suffered, He shines forth as the beautiful Lamb of God.

How could the Jewish leaders and Pilate agree to sentence Christ to death? Acts 2:23 says He was "delivered by the determinant counsel and foreknowledge of God." Isaiah 53:6 says, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." God called Jesus to be the Savior.

Jesus wasn't on trial, but everyone else was. You're on trial, too. What you do with Jesus Christ determines your eternal destiny. What are your options? You can hate Him like the Jewish leaders did. You can reject him like the fickle crowd did. You can mock Him like Herod did. You can have nothing to do with Him like Pilate's wife did. Or you can get rid of Him like Pilate did. Whatever you choose will be a choice for eternity. Why not reject all those choices and choose to follow in the steps of Christ and receive the blessings of God forever!

Focusing on the Facts

1. What are some indicators that Jesus is God.
2. Give some examples from Christ's life that indicate He was human.
3. Why did Jesus come into the world?
4. What verdict did Pilate's wife render concerning Jesus (Matt. 27:19)?
5. Why was Pilate's wife afraid?
6. What Old Testament teaching might Pilate have been trying to follow when he washed his hands in front of the multitude in Matthew 27:24?
7. Why did God establish capital punishment in Genesis 9:6?
8. Explain the process of scourging.
9. What happened to Jesus after He was scourged (John 19:2-3)?
10. Why did Pilate display Jesus before the crowd after he had had Him scourged? What effect did that have?

11. Why did Pilate become more afraid in John 19:8?

Pondering the Principles

1. Review the introductory section about Christ (see pp. 1-3). Record the five attributes of Christ that have meant the most to you in your Christian life. Meditate on one each day during your quiet time next week. Use that time to grow ever closer to your Savior. Make it a time of offering special reverence and worship to Him.
2. The trials of Jesus Christ proved His innocence and exposed the guilt of His accusers and executors. Where do you stand? Are you aligned with the spotless Lamb of God, or are you still guilty as a result of your rejection of Him? If you haven't accepted the death of Christ on your behalf, you still can make that choice. But remember, by not making a choice you have made a choice (Matt. 12:30). You have chosen to reject Him. Please consider the opportunity you have at this moment. Don't let it pass by without confronting your sin and giving it to the One who can take it away.

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