

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ

Jesus' 1st Appearance Before Pilate

Last time...closed the loop on Judas Iscariot, the betrayer

Judas regretted his actions because the chief priests condemned Jesus to death

Judas did not repent...did not think differently

Judas, the son of perdition, did not believe in Jesus Christ

His betrayal was rooted in covetousness, which is idolatry (Col 3:5)

This time...Jesus' 1st appearance before Pontius Pilate

This is recorded in all 4 Gospels

We will start in John 18

John 18

v28 from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment:

In Caiaphas' palace, the Jews orchestrated what they want – a Guilty verdict
worthy of death against Jesus

This result is fabricated and false; everything about the “trial” of Jesus was illegal

They do not have the power or authority to enforce their verdict, so they go to the
man who does – Pontius Pilate, Roman governor of Judea

Pilate was responsible for keeping the peace and for administering Roman Law in
his jurisdiction

He is the most powerful man in the province; the power of the Roman Empire is
behind him

Normally, Pilate would govern from the “Roman” city of Caesarea,
a city built in the Roman style by Herod the Great

But the times of the Jewish feasts, like Passover in this case, were anything but
normal

The population of Jerusalem would swell by a factor of 10 and Jewish
nationalistic fervor would be high, so Jerusalem became a volatile tinder
box 3 times per year

Roman power would be on full display to maintain control and Pilate would be
“hands on” in town

While in Jerusalem, Pilate governed from Antonia Fortress, an imposing
fortification on the north (vulnerable) side of Jerusalem,
overlooking the Temple Mount

Antonia Fortress was built by Herod the Great when he built the massive platform
on Temple Mount, naming it for his good friend, Mark Anthony

Pilate's hall of judgment in Antonia Fortress was known as the Praetorium

Early in the morning, sunrise on this Passover morning, the Jews marched Jesus to stand trial before Pilate, which meant taking Him to Gentile turf; Antonia Fortress was a distinctly Roman place

Standing on Gentile turf (unclean) would defile them until the next morning, which was out of the question because then they would be ceremonially unclean this day, Passover

So they could observe Passover, the Jews stayed outside Antonia Fortress and the Praetorium

The hypocrites were so religious!

With murder in their heart, they are worried about being unclean by stepping into the Antonia Fortress.

Religion and hypocrisy walk hand-in-hand

Truly, Matt 23:23-33

btw, what do you think the Roman reaction was to being considered "dirty dogs" by the Jews?!

v29 Pilate went out to them:

The Jews would not enter to Pilate so Pilate, to keep the peace, had to go out to them...as if he were inferior to them

This undoubtedly rubbed Pilate the wrong way, but Pilate was eager to keep the peace

Pilate is a man on edge

- Totally responsible for Roman law and peace in his jurisdiction (iron fist, Zero Tolerance to any "competing throne")
- Jews were an ungovernable people
- The Passover was a major event
- Roman army on high alert
- A dangerous time for an ambitious career man like Pilate

Any civil disruption by the Jews could have career-threatening and even life-threatening implications for him...so protocol went out the window to appease the Jews

Obviously at his post at sunrise, Pilate asks the chief priests and elders what their accusation was against Jesus

Roman Law, the basis for Western Civilization, was to

- establish order
- prevent anarchy/tyranny
- protect the Empire and its citizens

“What do you accuse this man of doing...what illegal thing has he done?”

v30 If he were not a malefactor:

The Jews did not answer the question.

Jesus' accusers/judges just want a “rubber stamp” from Pilate

They respond with to his proper legal question with smugness, arrogance,
and contempt

“If this man were not a bad guy, we would be here in this (unclean) place!”

Just our being here should tell you he is guilty.

Trust us, he is guilty!

Reality (according to Roman Law): We got nothing...but with some bluster
maybe you will just take our word for it.

The Jews have no true accusation (Jesus has not broken the Law of Moses
or the Law of Rome), they have only false accusations.

They attempt to cover their deceitful plot with volume and indignation.

v31-32 judge him according to your law:

Pilate despises the Jews as much as the Jews despise him

Their bluster has no effect, he knows they got nothing

“This is not my problem, go away and judge Him according to your law.

Rome does not care about your religious matters.

The Jews essentially tell Pilate they have already done that and they found Him
guilty of a capital crime...which is why they are here talking with the
Roman governor;

They cannot execute the verdict, only Pilate can

If they were to execute Jesus themselves, the iron fist of Rome
would crush them

“We cannot do what we want to do because you took the scepter away from us.
So you must do what we want.”

An amazing revelation of their motive and the verdict they want from
Pilate

Remember, Gen 49:10 has just recently been fulfilled, in 6AD when Judea became a Roman province

The Jews mourned the “failure of the Word of God” because the Messiah had not come, as prophesied/promised

But the Word of God had not failed – Jesus Christ was a boy growing up in Nazareth, increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man (Luke 2:52)

Contrary to their belief that the Word of God had failed, the Messiah was in their midst and would reveal Himself in the fulness of time

Jesus did and they hate Him with a murderous hatred; He is not the Messiah they want

The Jews failed the Word of God, the Word of God did not fail them
Luke 16:17

The Jewish method of execution was stoning, the Roman method was crucifixion; the Cross is “enabled”...stoning is “disabled”

Fulfilling what the Word and the Messiah had said

Num 21, quoted in John 3:14

Deut 21:23

Ps 22:14-17

John 12:32-33

The Lamb of God would be sacrificed not by Jewish stoning (Lev 24:16), but by Gentile crucifixion

Luke 23

v1-2 perverting...forbidding...saying:

The bluster of the high priests was insufficient in moving Pilate to do according to their wishes

So, they claim Jesus was guilty of these “Roman crimes”

1. perverting the nation...

- corrupting, turning away the Jewish people...
the insinuation is from Caesar but it was from them
(John 11:47-48)
- He is God’s salvation of a crooked and perverse nation
(Matt 17:17, Phil 2:15)

2. forbidding the paying of taxes...

- while the Jews tested the Passover Lamb in the House of God (Ex 12:1-6), Jesus said Matt 22:16-22

3. saying He is Christ a King...

- Jesus had halted all such efforts of the Jewish people

The people wanted to make Him a King (John 6)

They hailed Him as a King in His Triumphal Entry (John 12:13)

But Jesus never said He was a King, for He did not come to be

King

Jesus said "I am" when asked if He were the Christ, the Son of God

To the Jews, the Messiah was their King

To God, the Messiah was His Servant, His Lamb/sin sacrifice

The charges spoken to Pilate are false and twisted

v3 Art thou the King of the Jews:

Perhaps Pilate only addresses, nervously, the most serious charge, the one, if true, would be a direct challenge to Caesar and the entire Roman Empire... and his career and life

Perhaps Pilate only addresses, disdainfully, the most ludicrous of the charges

You, a king?

You are a poor itinerant preacher, you have no money or power (worldly)

You road into town last week on a colt of a donkey...not a mighty horse

You have no army, you have no people – your people have rejected you

You, a king?

How did Jesus answer Pilate's question?

"You said it."

Translation: Yes

Matt 27

Note: Mark 15:1-5 reads very much the same so we will not look at it

v1-2 last time, then the parallel event of Judas Iscariot

v11 Are you king of the Jews:

Jesus' answer to Pilate's question is the same as His answer to Caiaphas' question in Matt 26:63b-64a...Yes

v12 accused of the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing:
Jesus response to all the false accusations of the chief priests and elders is...
silence ala Matt 26:62-63a

They have Moses and the prophets, which spoke of Him (John 5:45-47)
They have the Word, the Truth of God, by which to judge Him...including Is 53:7
He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is
brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is
dumb, so he openeth not his mouth

Jesus did not defend Himself, the Lord and the Word of God is His defense
How are we to respond to false accusations and slander?
Do we rush to defend ourselves...or let God defend us?

v13-14 the governor marveled greatly:
Pilate has never seen a defendant like Jesus
So many accusations...and no defense offered

Is 53:7 before the Gentile(s) also

John 18

v33-34 Art thou the King of the Jews:
Marvelled greatly by Jesus' silence in response to all the (false) accusations by
the Jews (Matt 27:13-14), Pilate goes again...
he's going back and forth (getting his exercise, like some messenger boy),
in and out of the judgment hall because the Jews refuse to enter his
courtroom (v28)...

to ask again the question of his primary interest:
Are you the King of the Jews?
Are you challenging the power and authority of Caesar and the Empire?
Are you a king?

Jesus answered Pilate's question with...a question
Are you saying this of your own self or are others telling you that about
Me?
Are you asking an honest question or are you, like them, wanting to start
an argument or trick Me into saying something self-incriminating?

To ask an accused man to incriminate himself is a violation of both Jewish law
and Roman Law

Therefore, who is on trial?
Jesus before Pilate as an opposing king?

Pilate before Jesus as to Who Jesus is and his upholding the law?

Jesus has flipped the script; Pilate is on trial
“Who do you say that I am?”

Jesus is giving the governor responsible for law and order in this jurisdiction to investigate and decide Who He is

v35 Am I a Jew:

Pilate thinks this is a Jewish religious problem, of no concern to Rome or him
had the day not been the Passover

He is not interested in delving into the identity of this poor itinerant preacher by whom the Jews are threatening his career and maybe his life

I sense he answered Jesus with a disdainful tone of voice, for the Romans
disdained the Jews

Pilate asks Jesus a follow up question, looking for information relative to the charges levelled against Him by His “own nation and the chief priests” (Luke 23:2):

What have you done?

What is your crime against your own nation and against Rome?

v36 My kingdom is not of this world:

Jesus ignored the Jews’ attempt to get Him to incriminate Himself and now He ignored Pilate’s attempt.

Jesus answers the follow-up question by more directly answering the original question (v33)

My kingdom...yes, I am a King

is not of this world...does not belong to this world, is other-worldly

if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight...Yes, I am a

King and have servants who fight; 12 legions of angels for example

that I should not be delivered to the Jews...for I have committed no crime against

My nation (or the Roman Empire)

but now is My kingdom not from here...Yes, I am a King, but not here and

not now (i.e. not yet; Rev 19-20)

Keywords: “of” and “now”

I would think Pilate’s mind is spinning

What kind of a crazy and foolish answer is that?

This poor itinerate preacher is delusional!

v37 Art thou a king then:
 Pilate asks his original question again, wanting to be sure he understands Jesus' answer

 Jesus' reply:
 You said it.
 That is why I was born (to redeem/reclaim this world...John 3:16)
 This is why I came into the world (I am from "another world"):
 to bear witness of the truth (John 17:17)...
 this is My mission, this is what I have done (v35b)
 Every one that is of, belongs to, the Truth hears/receives/obeys
 My voice...follows Me, are citizens in My other-worldly kingdom

 Jesus leaves Pilate responsible, not only for law and order, but for learning the Truth about Him

v38 What is truth:
 Pilate gets philosophical, and cynically so...but maybe religious also
 What is truth...what is *Veritas*?
 The principal goddess of Rome, dressed in white robe

 But what is the answer to Pilate's question?

 John 17:17

 John 1:1, 14

 John 14:6

 So...Pilate was standing there talking with The Truth...
 he was interrogating The Truth and being questioned by the Truth!

 Pilate is done with this line of questioning

 In Pilate's Roman mind, this man who had the Jews all riled up was

- eccentric or insane, but not a criminal, much less a criminal worthy of death
- a harmless dreamer
- a waste of his precious time on this potentially catastrophic day

 He walks away from Jesus and back out to the Jews eagerly awaiting his "Guilty" verdict...to announce his verdict of "Not guilty."

 "I find no fault at all in this man."
 even though Jesus plainly said he was a King, a truth apparently and summarily dismissed by Pontius Pilate

Luke 23

v4-5 they were the more fierce:

How did the chief priests and elders respond to Pilate's judgment?

They did not go away, they did not remain silent, their murderous hearts erupted!
They doubled down on the false accusation that Jesus is mounting an insurrection
against Rome, claiming He has done so

- everywhere He goes, and He's gone everywhere
- starting in the Galilee and even in Jerusalem

The word that caught Pilate's ear and immediate attention: Galilee

So ends Jesus' 1st appearance before Pilate

Outcomes: Jesus is declared innocent by Pilate
He's done nothing wrong
Roman law has not been broken
Pilate's 1st attempt to release Jesus

In Matt and Mark: The Lamb is silent

In Luke: The false accusations to the Roman court of Law

In John: The King questions the Roman governor

Application

The history of mankind testifies that man cannot govern himself
Mankind needs his Creator to govern

Jesus Christ

- The Servant King
- The King of Kings and Lord of lords

He came from heaven to earth to set people free with the Truth, rather than to enslave them by
force (kingdoms of man)

The question of the high priests and elders:
Are you the Christ, the Son of God?
I am.

The question of Pontius Pilate:
Are You King of the Jews?
You said it (Yes)

Jesus Christ said He was a king...do you believe Him?

Jesus said His kingdom is not **now** from here...do you believe Him?

Yes?

Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works

Rev 1:5-6 And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen

No?

Rev 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen

Rev 6:15-17 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

1. Believer: Worship our King

Worship Him in the congregation; the Good Shepherd desires His flock be together

Make Him known outside the congregation just as He made Himself known

Titus 2:15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee

2. Unbeliever: Who do you say Jesus Christ is?

Consider the testimonies of

- God (the Word of God)
- Creation
- Man, who once was blind but now he sees

You MUST answer Jesus Christ's question: Who do you say that I am?

Your eternity hangs on your answer.