

Jesus' Trial Before Pilate Luke 23:1-25

by R.A. Torrey

Jesus' trial before Pilate is a powerful example of the conflict between truth and falsehood, and the importance of standing firm in the face of opposition.

Scripture: Luke 23:1

Topics: "Fear Of Man", "Injustice"

Description

R.A. Torrey examines the trial of Jesus before Pilate, emphasizing the unjust treatment He received from the Jewish leaders and the Roman authorities. Despite Pilate's recognition of Jesus' innocence, he ultimately succumbed to the pressure of the crowd, choosing to release Barabbas instead of Jesus. The sermon highlights the moral failures of Pilate and the relentless hatred of the Jewish rulers, illustrating how fear of man can lead to grave injustices. Torrey calls attention to the spiritual implications of this trial, urging listeners to consider their own responses to Jesus amidst societal pressures. The message serves as a reminder of the importance of standing firm in truth and righteousness, even when faced with opposition.

Transcript

(Compare Matthew 27:2, 11-31; Mark 15:1-20; John 18:28-39)

DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. Jesus Before Pilate, vv. 1-7 What do we see done with Jesus in v. 1 of the lesson? Was it only by a few that Jesus was thus treated? Of whom was the company composed? (c. 22:66.) Why did the whole company rise up and take Him and not a delegation? What did they do with Him before they led Him away? (Matt. 27:2.) Were those bonds necessary? What was the purpose of them? Did they add anything to the indignity done to Christ and the grief He felt? What accusation did they bring against Him?

Was that the charge they had indicted Him upon in their preliminary trial? (Matt. 26:65, 66.) Is it just or legal to indict a man upon one charge and then present an entirely different charge in court? Are men today any fairer in their treatment of Christ and His claims? Was the charge that He forbade to give tribute to Cæsar true? (c. 20:20, 25.) Are the charges of Christ's enemies usually true? If the charge was not true, why did they make it? Were the men who made this charge usually accounted respectable, moral and religious men?

How did these men show before the day was out that they were not honest in making the charge of disloyalty to Caesar, and that they were not such ardent supporters of Caesar's authority as their accusation would make it appear (vv. 18, 19, 25)? Was this the first charge that they preferred against Christ before Pilate? (Mark 15:1-3; John 18:30; 19:12.) Was there any part of their charge that was true? (Compare Mark 14:61, 62.) Was their statement true in the way they put it? (Compare John 18:36.)

Is it possible to put such a statement, which is true in itself, in such a setting that the impression produced is false? Is this a common way of lying? What question did Pilate put to Jesus? What was Jesus' answer? What does that answer mean? (Compare Mark 14:61, 62 with Matt. 26:63, 64.) Did Jesus explain to Pilate in what sense He was a king? (John 18:33-37.) What was Pilate's decision about Jesus (v. 4)? Was this the only time that Pilate came to this conclusion? (v. 14; John 18:38; 19:4-6.)

Was there any one else who found no fault in Him (v. 15)? Why could they find no fault in Him? (Heb. 7:26; 1 Peter 1:19; 2:22.) If there was no fault in Him what was the proper thing for Pilate to do with Him? Why did he not do it (v. 5)? Are men nowadays ever kept from doing the right thing with Christ by the outcry of men and their own fear of man? What is the result of yielding to the fear of man? (Prov. 29:25.) When should Pilate have let Jesus go? Did he gain anything by a policy of delay or compromise?

Do we ever gain anything, when we know what is right, by delay or attempt to compromise with evil doers? Did Pilate wish to do the right thing with Jesus? (Acts 3:13.) Was Pilate's purpose to do the right thing with Jesus as strong as the purpose of His enemies to do the wrong thing with Him? When you have a man with a weak purpose to do the right pitted against men with a strong purpose to do the wrong, which will always conquer? What did Pilate end by doing (v. 24)? When a man begins by delaying or compromising what will he always end by doing?

Was there any element of truth in the second charge (v. 5) that the enemies of Jesus made against Him? How did they endeavor to carry their cause through? (v. 5, R. V.; compare v. 23; Ps. 22:12, 13, 16.) Do men often try to carry bad causes through by urgency and clamor? What was the next step Pilate took? What was Pilate's purpose in sending Jesus to Herod? Did he make any other attempts to get Jesus off his hands? (John 18:31, 39.) Did he succeed in getting Jesus off his hands? (John 19:6; c. 23:16.)

Do men nowadays ever try to get Jesus off their hands without doing anything with Him? Do they ever succeed? 2. Jesus Before Herod, vv. 8-12 How did Herod feel when he saw Jesus? Was Herod's gladness that of true disciples when they see their Lord? (Compare John 20:20.) Why was Herod glad? Are there any today whose gladness in Jesus is no deeper nor more earnest than that of Herod? What had been Herod's thought about Jesus when he first heard of Him? (c. 9:7-9; Mark 6:14.) Had this first fright of Herod's guilty conscience worn off?

What did Herod do when Jesus stood in his presence? What did Jesus answer him? Why did not Jesus answer him? (Is. 53:7; Matt. 7:6.) Has Jesus any answer today for shallow, flippant questioners? Has He for earnest-minded questioners? What did the chief priests and the scribes do? Did their bitter hate of Christ ever tire or rest until they saw Him on the cross? Are there any today whose hate of Christ never tires? Who were there that might have come to the defense of Jesus? Why didn't they?

Which today are most zealous and untiring, the enemies or friends of Jesus? Did Herod find any fault in Jesus (v. 15)? What then should he have done? What did he do? How many times was Jesus subjected to such treatment? (Compare 22:64, 65; Matt. 27:27-30.) Of what is this treatment which Jesus received at so many hands a revelation? (Jer. 17:9; Ro. 8:7.) Does the world's hatred of God and Jesus usually reveal

itself today in direct attacks upon Jesus or by attacks upon those who are dear to Him, His professed disciples? (Compare Matt. 25:40, 45; Acts 9:4.)

Did Jesus care because of these insults? (Ps. 69:20.) For whom did Jesus suffer these indignities? (Is. 53:5.) 3. Jesus Before Pilate Again, vv. 13-25 What was Pilate's statement regarding Jesus when Herod returned Him to him? What did he propose to do in view of the established fact of Jesus' innocence? Was it a very rational conclusion to arrive at that because Jesus was innocent "I will therefore chastise Him"? Why did he not release Him without even chastising Him? Did he gain anything by this attempt at compromise?

Do we ever, in the long run, gain anything for truth and right by offering to compromise with error and wrong? What was their answer to this proposition? What choice did they make? (vv. 18, 19; compare Acts 3:14.) What does that choice reveal as to the state of their hearts? Do men today ever choose a murderer instead of Jesus? (John 8:44.) Was Pilate willing even yet to deliver Jesus to the cross? Why not? (Matt. 27:19; John 19:7, 8; Matt. 27:24.) What was their reply to Pilate's proposition to release Jesus (v. 21)?

How did they show the eagerness of their thirst for Jesus' blood? Who was it who this time shouted "Crucify Him"? (Matt. 27:20-23.) What had a portion of this same multitude shouted a few days before? (Matt. 21:8, 9.) Is popular favor and enthusiasm a very good thing to rely upon? What very pertinent question did Pilate put to them? Had they any good answer to make to that question? What did they answer? Do men nowadays ever try to cover their lack of reasons with the vociferousness of their shoutings and demands?

Why did they know from the beginning that Pilate would ultimately give in? What was the outcome of it all (vv. 23, 24)? Why did Pilate yield? (John 19:12, 13, 16; Mark 15:15.) Would Pilate's record bear close scrutiny by Caesar? Had his past offences anything to do with forcing him to this present appalling sin? Are there any other instances in the Bible of weak men who wished to do right but committed awful crimes because of the fear of man? (Matt. 14:8, 9; Dan. 6:14-16; Jer. 38:4, 5.)

In a world where evil influences are so strong as in this, what will a weak man always end by being? Did Pilate save himself by this nefarious concession to these unprincipled men? Can politicians or we ourselves ever save ourselves by concessions to iniquitous demands of unprincipled men? What did Pilate finally do with Jesus? What was the great personal question that had been before Pilate that day? (Matt. 27:22.) How had Pilate decided it? What is the great personal question that is before each of us today? How are you going to decide it? CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

1. Jesus Christ

(1). His treatment at the hands of men:

Bitterly hated, 5, 10, 21, 23; compare Jer. 17:9; Ro. 8:7; dragged before Pilate by the whole assembly of the Jews, 1; falsely accused, 2; sent to Herod to stand another bitter trial though found innocent at the first, 7, compare 4; set at naught and mocked by Herod and his soldiers, 11; His condemnation clamorously urged by the Jews, 5, 10; His crucifixion demanded with shouts and cries, 21, 23, R. V.; a murderer preferred to Him, 18, 19; delivered to the cruel and murderous will of His enemies, 25.

(2). His sinlessness:

Pilate found no fault in Him, 4, 14; Herod found no fault in Him, 15; compare Heb. 7:26; 1 Peter 1:19; 2:22.

(3). His royalty:

Asserted His kingship in the most solemn manner at the most critical moment, 3.

(4). His silence:

No answer for the shallow Herod, 9.

2. The Jewish Rulers

Their unanimity:

"The whole company rose up and brought Him before Pilate," 1.

Their unfairness:

Indicted Jesus on one charge but brought an entirely different one before Pilate, 2; compare Matt. 26:63-66.

Their insincerity:

Brought a charge of insurrection against Jesus and then asked the release of one who was already convicted of that very crime, 2; cf. 18, 19.

Their falsehood:

2; compare Luke 20:20-25.

Their perversion of the truth:

Put the truth in such a setting that it produced a false impression, 2.

Their relentless hate:

5, 10, 21, 23.

Their unprincipled methods:

Sought to carry a bad cause by urgency and clamor, 5, 10, 18, 21, R. V., 23. Could tell of no fault in Jesus but shouted the louder for His crucifixion, 22, 23.

Their awful choice:

A murderer instead of the Son of God.

Their appalling sin:

Urgently and repeatedly demanded the crucifixion of the Son of God, 21, 23.

Their temporary victory:

Their voices prevailed, and Jesus was delivered to their will, 23, 26.

3. Pilate

Recognized the innocence of Jesus, 4; testified repeatedly to the innocence of Jesus, 4-15; wished to release Jesus, 16, 20; compare Acts 3:13; delayed to do what he knew he should, 4-23; tried to get Jesus off his hands, 6, 7; sought to compromise with the enemies of the Lord, 16, 22; finally yielded to the iniquitous demands of Jesus' enemies, 23; gave sentence that it should be as they required, 24; released a murderer and gave Jesus up to their will, 25; he began with pitiable weakness and ended with damnable wickedness.

4. Herod

Glad to see Jesus, 8; his gladness not that of profound spiritual appreciation, but of shallow curiosity, 8; questioned Jesus in many words, 9; but could get no answer from Jesus, 9; found no fault in Jesus; but set at naught and mocked Him, 11.

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