

# Pilate's Attempts to Release Jesus John 19:1-16

by R.A. Torrey

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*R.A. Torrey's sermon explores Pilate's attempts to release Jesus amidst the pressures of the crowd and the implications of rejecting Christ as King.*

**Scripture:** John 19:1

**Topics:** "Authority", "Moral Compromise"

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## Description

R.A. Torrey explores Pilate's attempts to release Jesus, emphasizing the profound injustices Jesus faced, including scourging and mockery, while highlighting Pilate's internal struggle and ultimate failure to act justly. Despite recognizing Jesus' innocence and being moved by fear and awe, Pilate succumbed to the pressure of the crowd and the Jewish leaders, ultimately renouncing his responsibility. The sermon reflects on the nature of true authority and the consequences of compromising one's convictions, as Pilate's fear of man led to his moral ruin. Torrey challenges listeners to consider their own responses to Jesus and the implications of rejecting Him as King.

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## Transcript

(Compare Matthew 27:25-30; Mark 15:16-19)

### DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. Behold the Man, vv. 1-7 To what indignity do we see Jesus subjected in v. 1 of the lesson? For whom was He scourged? (Is. 53:5.) What is the result of His stripes? (1 Peter 2:24.) What was Pilate's purpose in scourging Him (vv. 2, 3)? What further indignities were heaped upon Jesus? Why did the soldiers do these things? What is revealed in all this treatment of Jesus? Is it true that "if we live as Christ lived all men will love us"? (John 15:18-20.) How did Jesus receive all these indignities? (Is. 53:7.)

What did Pilate next do? What was Pilate's testimony regarding Jesus? Did he give this testimony more than once? (c. 18:38, v. 6.) Did anyone else give a similar testimony? (Matt. 27:4, 19, 24, 54; Luke 23:41, 47; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb. 7:26; 1 Peter 1:19; 2:22; 1 John 3:5.) What did Pilate say as Jesus appeared? Is that a good thing to do? Is there anything better to do? (John 1:29.) What did they behold as they looked? What feelings did Pilate expect the sight would awaken? What feelings might we expect the sight would awaken?

What feelings did the sight awaken? What is here revealed? What feelings does the sight of Jesus, bruised and torn, with mocking robe and crown of thorns, awaken in your heart? Are there any who are moved to anger at the sight? What did Pilate say to their yell, "Crucify Him"? Could they crucify Him? Why then did Pilate say this? Could He get Jesus off His hands? Can we? Was there much logic in Pilate's "Take, crucify Him; for I find no fault in Him"? What was the answer of the Jews (v. 7)?

Had they such law (Lev. 24:16; Deut. 18:20.) Were they right in saying He made Himself the Son of God? In what case then would they have been right in demanding His death? 2. Behold Your King, vv. 8-16 What was the effect of that statement upon Pilate? Was he afraid already? What made him afraid? (Matt. 27:19.) What did he do (v. 9)? Was not that a proper question? Was it asked seriously? Did Jesus answer it? Why not? Had Pilate received the declarations that Jesus had already made as he ought? (18:37-39.)

If we do not rightly use the light we have, of what may we be pretty sure? How do we know that Pilate would not have acted upon the truth if Jesus had told him? Did he have truth enough already to act upon? Do men who are asking for more light usually have enough to act upon already? Was it more light he needed? What was Jesus doing in all this strange silence (Matt. 27:12-14; Mark 15:3-5. "Silent communion with God, silent submission to His murderers, in silent pity for us, in silent contemplation of the joy that was set before Him.") What was the effect upon Pilate of Jesus' silence?

What does that show as to the depth of his awe and earnestness in his question? What was Jesus' answer (v. 11)? From whom had Pilate received his power? (Ro. 13:1; Acts 2:23; Dan. 5:21.) Has any one power for good or evil except from above? Is there any comfort in that thought? Where does our responsibility come in? What does Jesus further add? How had he the "greater sin"? Did these words of Jesus rebuking Pilate's arrogance and reminding him of his dependence go as deep as an answer to his question would have gone?

How does this come out in the text? Had Pilate sought to release Him up to this point? How was Pilate kept back from this good design? Would the reigning emperor have been likely to listen to a charge like that? Ought that fact to have influenced Pilate? (Acts 4:19.) Was Pilate very different from many men today in the way he acted? Give some illustrations of men acting on similar principle today? What was it proved Pilate's ruin? (Prov. 29:25.) What did Pilate do (vv. 13, 14)?

What day was it? What hour? What did he say? What was the purpose of these words? Was there more in these words than Pilate realized? What can we say as we set Jesus before men? Would it have been well for them if they had beheld their King in Him? What would they have escaped? Will one today who beholds His King in Jesus escape as much as the Jews would if they had beheld their King in Him? What was their answer? What does the world say today when Jesus is held up before it and it is said, "Behold your King"?

What was Pilate's last attempt to bring them to a better mind? What was their answer? What were they renouncing? What goaded them on to this frightful renunciation? What kind of a King was the Cæsar then reigning? If one will not have Christ as King to what sort of a master must he bow? What did Pilate finally do? What made it sure from the beginning that this would be the issue? When we have on the one side determined champions of wrong and on the other side, weak, vacillating, compromising champions of right, what will the issue be? How does compromise always end? CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

## 1. Jesus

(1). What He was:

Divine, 7; human, 1-16; sinless, 4, 6.

(2). What He suffered:

Bitter hatred, 1, 2, 3, 6; scourging, 1; mockery, 2, 3; a crown of thorns, 2; smiting, 3; the hearing of clamorous cries for His crucifixion, 6, 15; condemnation as a blasphemer, 7; crucifixion, 16.

(3). What He received:

Testimony to His guiltlessness, 4, 6.

(4). What He did:

Kept silent under all the indignities heaped upon Him, 1-16; kept silent before the inquiry for further light by the one who was not acting up to the light he had, 9; rebuked Pilate's arrogant assumption of power independent of God, 11; taught Pilate his utter impotence and dependence upon God, 11.

## 2. Pilate

Yielded temporarily to the wicked demands of the Jews, 1; reported temporarily and attempted again the release of Jesus, 4, 5; testified to Jesus Christ's immanence, 4, 6; made many vacillating attempts to dissuade the Jews from their hellish purposes, 4, 12, 14, 15; lacked the courage to do right at any cost, 6, 12, 13, 16; tried to get Jesus off his hands, 6; was moved to fear at Jesus' claim to be the Son of God, 8; sought to learn the truth of this claim, 9; received no answer to his inquiries--the failure to act upon the light he had debarred him from receiving more light, 9; was piqued in his pride at Jesus' refusal to answer his question, 10; imagined he had some power independent of God, 10; possessed no power but what God allowed him, 11; received a crushing rebuke to this baseless profession of power, 11; moved by Jesus' words, he sought the more to release Jesus, 12; was desirous of doing right by Jesus but not willing to risk his own position or head to do it, 12-16; ruined by the fear of man, 12-16; his weak, vacillating, compromising desire to do right finally and utterly overcome by the determined, unyielding purpose of the Jews to make him do wrong, 16.

## 3. The Jews

Hated Jesus, 6, 15; cried for His blood, 6, 15; could not be turned from their hellish purpose either by the sight of His suffering or the declaration of His majesty, 5, 6, 14, 15; moved only to fury by the sight of the suffering Saviour, 5, 6; demanded the crucifixion of Jesus when presented to them as the suffering one, 5, 6; cried "Away with Him" when presented as their King, 14, 15; defended their murderous hate by an appeal to Scripture, 7; greater guilt than Pilate's, 11; renounced Christ as King and chose a monster of tyranny, 15.

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