

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's pray...

[Mar 15:1-15 NKJV] 1 Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, led [Him] away, and delivered [Him] to Pilate. 2 Then Pilate asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" He answered and said to him, "[It is as] you say." 3 And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing. 4 Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, "Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!" 5 But Jesus still answered

nothing, so that Pilate marveled. 6 Now at the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested. 7 And there was one named Barabbas, [who was] chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion. 8 Then the multitude, crying aloud, began to ask [him to do] just as he had always done for them. 9 But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" 10 For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them. 12 Pilate answered and said to them again, "What then do you want me to do [with Him] whom you call the King of the Jews?" 13 So they

cried out again, "Crucify Him!" 14 Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!" 15 So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged [Him], to be crucified.

I was looking at my notes this week as I was preparing this morning's sermon and I marveled how it seemed like only yesterday that we started the Gospel of Mark and here we are three weeks from finishing it.

We have spent six months going through Mark's account of the gospel.

It actually took us five weeks just to get through the last chapter – chapter 14.

However, I wanted to make sure that I was pointing out the fulfillment of the scriptures. Everything that we have been studying – had to happen.

The abandonment, the denials, this mockery of a trial – all had to happen to fulfill scripture.

One of the problems when you break a chapter into many pieces is that sometimes we lose sight of the time frame of these events.

All that we learned from chapter 14 – happened on one night.

It started as they partook of the Passover feast in the upper room, they then went to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed and was betrayed by Judas, and then we saw

last week as Jesus is brought before the religious rulers – and they attempt to come up with a charge.

They had a verdict – guilty

They had His sentence – death

But hey still didn't have a charge against Jesus that was going to hold up in Roman court.

Their charge against Jesus was that He claimed to be God.

It is now early morning; Jesus has probably been up for 24 hours straight. And now the religious rulers bring Jesus to Pilate to do their dirty work for them.

They have rendered their verdict – now they want Rome to carry out the execution.

You see, the religious rulers could not execute Jesus because they did not have the authority as Judea was under the authority of Rome.

That is why they are bringing Jesus to face Pilate.

Now who was Pilate???

Pilate was the appointed Roman governor of Judea during this time.

For years, critics of the bible would point out that there were no records of a Roman governor by the name of Pontius Pilate ever ruling over the region of Judea.

It was until 1961, that an archaeologist discovered a tablet/stone with his name and his title.

Besides the scriptures, there were a few Jewish historians that wrote about Pilate and the way he ruled.

And by many accounts, Pilate during this time, appeared to be in trouble with Rome. They were not happy with him.

- There is an account of an attempted revolt against Rome in the region years earlier and Pilate didn't punish those responsible. Rome wasn't happy.
- There is another account of Pilate commissioning an aqueduct to be built in the region – however, he didn't have the funding by Rome. So Pilate sends his troops into the temple and they take funds from the treasury, angering the Jews – again, Rome wasn't happy.

So Pilate was on very thin ice with Rome during this time – keep that in the back of your mind during the study because

this might explain why he made the decisions that he did that day.

[Mar 15:1 NKJV] 1 Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, led [Him] away, and delivered [Him] to Pilate.

Mark uses the word immediately 40 times in his gospel.

That is more than the rest of the books of the bible combined.

And the Holy Spirit inspired Mark to write it this way, to keep the action moving and not focus as much attention to the dialogue that was taking place.

And the reason that he does it is because Mark's objective is to portray Jesus as the Suffering Servant.

So here we have the (whole council) Sanhedrin – coming together to determine how they are going to present Jesus to Pontius Pilate.

And we see that they bound Jesus – it is not that Jesus was a threat to them. It was done for visual effects – to portray Jesus as a threat to Rome.

Church, keep in mind that Jesus has also just taken a beating at the hands of the religious rulers guards – remember, we saw them blindfold Jesus and strike Him in the face.

There is no way Jesus was going to get away.

[Mar 15:2 NKJV] 2 Then Pilate asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" He answered and said to him, "[It is as] you say."

That night, the charge that the religious rulers had come up against Jesus was that of blasphemy.

And we saw this last week after Jesus disclosed to the religious rulers His deity.

[Mar 14:62 NKJV] 62 Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

But notice that Pilate doesn't ask Jesus – "Are you the God of the Jews?"

After all, that is what the charge against Jesus by the religious rulers.

Jesus claimed to be equal with God – He said “I am” when asked if He was the Christ and the Son of God.

However, claiming to be the God of the Jews was not going to be a threat to Rome as they had many gods.

So the religious rulers present Jesus to Pilate as someone who claims to be “King” – and that charge, would constitute a threat to Rome and to Pilate as his allegiance was only to Caesar.

[Mar 15:3-4 NKJV] 3 And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing. 4 Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, "Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!"

- If you read Luke account, (Luke 23) the accusations brought against Jesus by the religious rulers were that **He was perverting the nation** – meaning that He was a revolutionary, that Jesus was stirring people up to overthrow Rome.
- They also accused Jesus of forbidding His followers to paying taxes to Caesar. Even though we read in Mark 12, that Jesus grabs a coin and points to them the image of who is on the coin and clearly tells them, Render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar.

Despite the accusations brought against Him, Jesus remained and didn't respond with a defense of His own.

You see church; Jesus did not need to "answer" the accusations against Him because He had already given His testimony:

- The works He had performed for the last three-and-one-half years spoke volumes.
- So did His teaching, described as having a heavenly authority no one else on earth had ever demonstrated.
- His sinless private life prior to His public ministry was solid testimony, too.

You get the impression that Pilate wants to hear from Jesus in order so that he may release Him.

[Mar 15:5 NKJV] 5 But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate **marveled.**

The word for marveled can be translated “amazed” or “full of wonder”.

Pontius Pilate was used to defendants pleading before him, stating their innocence, refuting the charges that have been made against them.

But not Jesus.

His silence demonstrated His dignity as He did not have to answer to anyone.

Everything that needed to be said had already been said.

Church, think about all the times when we go through sufferings, or through trials. Every time we have sensed that Jesus was silent – or that He wasn't answering our questions or our cries for help.

Which in my case would describe almost every struggle or trial that I have or am currently going through.

We have to ask ourselves - Are we not like Pontius Pilate???

Demanding an answer.

Turn with me to 1 Peter 4.

[1Pe 4:12-13 NKJV] 12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

Listen, God owes us no current, updated, personal explanation.

He doesn't need to dignify us with an answer, beyond what He's already said.

Instead, we need to treat Him with the dignity He deserves by receiving His Word by faith.

You see, His silence is itself proof that He has given us all we need for life and for godliness.

He loves us too much to withhold anything we might need; therefore His silence establishes we already have everything we need.

It is only when we acknowledge who He truly is and walk by faith in His promises, that the same dignity that He demonstrated in front of Pilate will be revealed in each and every one of us.

[Mar 15:6-7 NKJV] 6 Now at the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested. 7 And there was one named Barabbas, [who was] chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion.

In the other gospels, Pilate decides to send Jesus and the religious rulers over to Herod and let him decide the fate of Jesus.

However, Herod simply passes the buck and sends them back to Pilate to make the final decision.

Now, it just so happened that because of the Passover feast, in a demonstration of mercy, one of the prisoners was scheduled to be pardoned by Pilate.

That is where Barabbas comes into play.

The name Barabbas is comprised of two words. Bar and Abbas.

Bar means son – in one of the gospels Peter is referred to by Jesus as Bar Jonah – son of Jonah.

Abba is the intimate word for father.

So the name Barabbas means **son of the father**. Meditate on that for a little bit.

Barabbas was not only accused but had already been found guilty of mounting an insurrection against Rome. And the other gospels tell us that he was also a notorious criminal and thief.

Now, in Matthew account (Matt 27) you don't have to turn there.

[Mat 27:19 NKJV]

Pilate's wife actually comes in the room and warns Pilate to release Jesus –

She sends a message to Pilate saying...

"Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."

[Mar 15:8 NKJV] 8 Then the multitude, crying aloud, began to ask [him to do] just as he had always done for them.

There is a crowd forming outside the place where Pontius Pilate made his decisions.

And they are demanding that Pilate release his prisoner in the same way he had done so in the past.

So, he sees Jesus standing before him – he feels that Jesus hasn't done anything deserving of the charges that have been brought against Him. The religious rulers haven't proven their case - He's gotten the warning from his wife. He also sees Barabbas, a convicted murderer – someone who is already scheduled to die that day by crucifixion alongside two of his accomplices.

Pilate sees this as a win – win situation.

The people will chose to pardon an innocent Jesus Christ and a convicted murder will die the death that he deserved to die.

The people get what they want and Pilate isn't coerced into doing the dirty work of the religious rulers.

There is no way that the people will actually let Barabbas go right???

[Mar 15:9-10 NKJV] 9 But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" 10 For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.

Pilate knew that Jesus was no threat to Rome.

It was the religious rulers that were threatened by the presence of Jesus.

They were worried that they were going to lose their status within the people. They were afraid of losing the influence and power they had over the people.

You see, Jesus had continuously revealed their hypocrisy – Jesus had revealed that they were indeed spiritually bankrupt.

Instead of drawing people closer to God they had been burdening people with religion.

They had been taking advantage of the people by ripping them off.

By asking the multitudes, do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?

Pilate was taking a jab at the religious rulers who had brought up that exact charge against Jesus.

[Mar 15:11-13 NKJV] 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them. 12 Pilate answered and said to them again, "What then do you want me to do [with Him] whom you call the King of the Jews?" 13 So they cried out again, "Crucify Him!"

Pilate underestimated the loyalty of the people toward the religious rulers.

You see, the religious rulers had already determined that Jesus was guilty. A vote against the rule of the religious rulers would have been a vote in favor of Rome.

And the people would never choose to be loyal to Rome over their own people.

Incredibly, illogically, irrationally, the crowd called for BarAbbas.

[Mar 15:14 NKJV] 14 Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!"

Those are words of exasperation, and desperation. He had lost control.

Pilate never really had control of this situation; Jesus did. But any thoughts he might have entertained about getting his way were gone.

He was serving God's providence.

Though making free decisions he was responsible for, God was providing for His plan in history, for Jesus to be crucified at the hands of Rome.

[Mar 15:15 NKJV] 15 So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged [Him], to be crucified.

Scourging by the Romans was taken to a new level.

In the Old Testament, the Law of Moses limited the number of times that anyone could be whipped to 40.

The Romans had no limit on the amount of lashes that one could be scourged.

The strands of the instrument that was used for scourging was weighted with lead balls and bones in order to inflict more damage to the skin.

Jewish historians write that in many cases, human organs would be visible through the gashes in the skin created by the scourging.

Many of those that were scourged actually died during the scourging and never made it to the cross.

Turn with me to John 19,

Because Pilate makes one last effort to release Jesus after He had been scourged,

[Jhn 19:14-16 NKJV] 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. So they took Jesus and led [Him] away.

Ultimately, Pilate gives into the will of the crowd.

He allowed himself to be manipulated by the religious rulers and the multitudes.

Despite having the evidence to make the decision on his own, he allows others to make the decision for him.

In conclusion, I want to make two points regarding two of the main characters in our text today.

Pontius Pilate.

Pilate becomes a picture of anyone that has ever been presented with the gospel.

Does one make the right decision or do we allow society to make that decision for us?

We cannot sit here and blame Pontius Pilate when we all have the same decision to make in our lives.

Barabbas

Every single one of us can identify with Barabbas.

Each one of us has the condemnation of death on our lives.

Each one of us has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Each one of us is separated from God for our sins.

[Rom 6:23 NKJV] 23 For the wages of sin [is] death, but the gift of God [is] eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Jesus on the other hand was totally guiltless. He did not deserve to die.

Yet Jesus died, like the Lamb led to slaughter, and because of this, we were all set free.

[2Cor 5:21 NKJV] 21 For He made Him who knew no sin [to be] sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Jesus took our place on the cross. Not because of anything that we do – but because of His love for you and me.

Amen.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I

believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please

forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I

accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

