

## **The Trials of Pilate, part 2**

John 19:1-16

The apostle John recorded much more about Jesus' trial before Pilate than did any of the other gospel writers. As you read John's account, you have to ask the questions: Who is really on trial? Jesus or Pilate? Who is courageous and who is compromising? Who has the courage of his convictions and who will give in to the pressure of the crowds?

John 19:1-16 is like a drama where the scene keeps shifting from inside to outside. Pilate speaks to Jesus inside his headquarters and then goes outside to speak to the Jewish leaders, and then back and forth again. The account reveals Pilate's heart and motivation: **Pilate decided that career survival was more important than truth, or even life.**

### **Inside: The Roman soldiers mistreat Jesus (1-3)**

Pilate had Jesus flogged, hoping that the Jews would be satisfied with punishment (1).

The Romans had three forms of flogging. A lighter version for mischief-makers; a severe version for criminals; a brutal version for the worst criminals. The severity depended on the ruthlessness of the officer in charge.

The crown of thorns (2) came from a date tree. The spikes or thorns could reach twelve inches long. The purple coat might have been a Roman troopers' coat or even a rag. The crown, robe, and ridicule (3) were an obvious attempt to mock Jesus' claim to be king. The Roman soldiers viewed Jesus as a pretender to the throne of Israel, and despised him as a loser.

### **Outside: Pilate presents Jesus to the people and declares him innocent (4-8)**

Pilate brought Jesus outside so that the Jews could see their King in his humiliation. Pilate announced that he had found Jesus not guilty (4-5).

The Jews were not satisfied with Jesus being bruised and bloodied. They cried out for the ultimate punishment: Crucifixion! (6)

Pilate's response showed his disgust with the Jewish leaders.

The Jewish leaders' objection to Jesus was both political and religious. They now switch back to religious objections and demand his execution for blasphemy (7).

Pilate realizes he is caught between two difficult options and was fearful of the consequences (8).

### **Inside: Pilate talks with Jesus about authority (9-12)**

Pilate asked where Jesus was from. Jesus remained silent because he had already answered the question (9).

Pilate did not like Jesus' silence and threatened him by reminding Jesus of his authority over his life (10).

Jesus reminded Pilate who was truly in charge (11). Pilate was acting like a bully and Jesus reminded him that the only authority he had came from God.

Caiaphas was guilty of greater sin because he had sent Jesus bound to Pilate.

Jesus' reminder of authority moved Pilate to press for Jesus' release (12). Pilate is faced with a dilemma, doing what is right or pleasing people and assuring his future with his boss.

### **Outside: Pilate yields to the Jews' demand for crucifixion (13-16)**

The implied threat about falling out of favor with Caesar led Pilate to decide to execute Jesus (13).

The day of Preparation was the day before the Sabbath (14).

The sixth hour was 6:00AM, the time when the lambs were being prepared for the Passover.

The Jewish mob, led by their leaders, showed their rejection of their King and demanded his crucifixion (15).

Handing Jesus over to the Jews constituted Pilate's sentence against Jesus (16).

Will you pursue power or truth? Riches on earth or riches in heaven? Earthly success or spiritual purity? Short-term comfort or eternal reward? Which kingdom will you serve?