

Sunday Morning Message

March 19, 2023

Title – *Jesus Appearance Before Pilate and Herod*

Text – John 18:28 - 40

Congregational Reading – John

Introduction

We are examining the events occurring after Jesus' arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. We have discussed the denial of Peter, particularly considering the steps that led up to Peter's failure. In the last message, we studied Jesus' appearance before the Sanhedrin, which was a council of seventy members, made up of both Pharisees and Sadducees, included the high priest and was the religious authority of Israel.

Review the Timeline of Events:

1. Jesus Arrested (Matthew 26:47 – 56; Mark 14:43 – 52; Luke 22:47 – 53; John 18:2 – 11)
2. Jesus Is Brought Before Annas (John 18:12 – 14, 19 - 23)
3. Jesus Is Brought Before Caiaphas (Matthew 26:57, 59 – 68; Mark 14:53, 55 – 65; Luke 22:54, 63 - 65; John 18:24)
4. Peter's Denials (Matthew 26:58, 69 – 75; Mark 14:54, 66 – 72; Luke 22:55 – 62; John 18:15 – 18, 25 – 27)
5. Jesus Condemned by the Sanhedrin (Matthew 27:1 - 2; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66 – 71)
6. Suicide of Judas (Matthew 27: 3 – 10)

Timeline of events that will follow Jesus' appearance before the high priests, and the Sanhedrin:

7. Jesus First Appearance Before Pilate (Matthew 27:11 – 14; Mark 15:2 – 5; Luke 23:1 – 5; John 18:28 – 38)
8. Jesus Appears Before Herod (Luke 23:6 – 12)

9. Jesus Second Appearance Before Pilate and Release of Barabbas (Matthew 27:15 – 26; Mark 15:6 – 15; Luke 23:13 – 25; John 18:39 – 40)
10. Jesus Mocked and Beaten and Final Sentence Pronounced (Matthew 27:27 – 31; Mark 15:16 – 19; John 19:1 – 16)
11. Journey to Golgotha (Matthew 27:32 – 34; Mark 15:20 – 23; Luke 23:26 – 32; John 19:17)
12. The Crucifixion (Matthew 27:35 – 44; Mark 15:24 – 32; Luke 23:33 – 43; John 19:18 – 27)
13. The Last Hours (Matthew 27:45 – 50; Mark 15:33 – 37; Luke 23:44 – 46; John 19:28 – 37)
14. Miraculous Occurrences at the Cross (Matthew 27:51 – 56; Mark 15:38 – 41; Luke 23:47 – 49)
15. Jesus' Burial (Matthew 27:57 – 61; Mark 15:42 – 47; Luke 23:50 – 56; John 19:38 – 42)
16. Pilate Seals the Tomb (Matthew 27:62 – 66)

There are several different characters that play out in this drama:

The Politician, The Priests and Religious Leaders, and the Common People

The Priests influence the people, and if enough people start hollering, it will impact the Politicians.

The only way for godliness to survive in a system like this is for all involved to live their lives by principle, and not passion; to live, not by the fear of man, but by the fear of God.

Reading of passage in chronological order from the different accounts with John as the main text in dark blue, and Luke in Red

I. Jesus is Sent to Pilate (vs. 28 – 40)

Pilate was the governor of Judaea. His normal palace was at the seacoast in Caesarea but during the Jewish feasts he would be in Jerusalem so that he could put down any

unrest that might develop as there were thousands more people in the city. This would be especially true at the Pasover.

"Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover." - (John 18:28)

The Hall of Judgment (πραιτώριον – *praitōrion*) was the seat of the Roman government in Jerusalem.

You will notice that these religious leaders were concerned about becoming ceremonially unclean by entering this Gentile building. They wanted to be able to eat the Passover, which would start that night at sundown. This is significant because it proves that the meal that Jesus had shared with the disciples the night before, which we refer to as the Last Supper, could not have been the Passover meal.

It is interesting that Israel had before them the fulfillment of the Passover; Jesus is the Passover lamb, but they did not recognize him.

The timeline here is worthy to mention here: I believe that Jesus was crucified on Wednesday afternoon, and that He died and was taken off the Cross before sundown. According to Jesus prophecy regarding Jonah:

"40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matthew 12:40)

He had to be in the tomb for three days and three nights, and I believe that prophecy was literal. If Jesus was crucified and placed in the tomb on Friday afternoon, He would not have fulfilled that prophecy.

Jesus had to have been crucified just prior to the sundown on Wednesday afternoon, which would be just before the beginning on Thursday by the Jewish calendar, and He would rise from the dead sometime between sundown on Saturday and before dawn on Sunday.

"29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? 30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. 31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and

judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: (John 18:29 – 31)

The Jews were permitted to somewhat govern themselves and operate according to their own laws, but they were not permitted to put anyone to death. Capital cases had to be brought before the Roman officials.

32 That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die." (John 18:32)

Cross reference John 12:32 – 33 - *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."*

Luke's Gospel shines a little more light on the accusations made against Jesus, which if proven would be sufficient to condemn Him to death:

"And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King." - (Luke 23:2)

This is significant because they had to convince Pilate that Jesus was a threat to Caesar, not just a problem for the Jews. The Jews couldn't put a man to death legally; yet they will stone Stephen in just a few months.

Jesus was innocent of these charges. He had not subverted the nation. He clearly taught that it was right to pay taxes, and even though Jesus was a King, He was not a King in a political sense. He posed no threat to Rome.

See Acts 18:12 – 18 – The Politician wants to do whatever will make the most people happy. If he can keep the people happy, he can retain his power. A principled politician, on the other hand, does what is right.

Up until now, Pilate was outside speaking with the religious leaders, but now He will speak one on one with Jesus:

"33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? 34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? 35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? 36

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. 38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all."
(John 18:33-38)

The Word of God is Truth:

"17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17)

Jesus is the Word and He is Truth:

"1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1)

"6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6)

"But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" - (John 18:39)

"Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber." - (John 18:40)

Note - These last two verses (39 – 40) likely happened after Jesus returns from Herod.

McGee points out:

Pilate didn't dream that these religious rulers would urge the people to demand that Barabbas be released. The contrast between them was too great. The Bible makes it clear that Pilate was assured that Jesus Christ was an innocent man.

"He knew that for envy they had delivered him" (Matt. 27:18).

"... I am innocent of the blood of this just person..." (Matt. 27:24).

"For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy" (Mark 15:10).

"Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them" (Luke 23:20).

“... I have found no cause of death in him ...” (Luke 23:22).

“... I find in him no fault at all” (John 18:38).

“... From thenceforth Pilate sought to release him ...” (John 19:12).

“... Pilate, when he was determined to let him go” (Acts 3:13).

In spite of all this, Pilate did not have the courage to release Him.¹

II. Jesus Sent Before Herod (Luke 23:5 – 12)

"And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time." - (Luke 23:5 - 7)

Herod was the tetrarch of Galilee. The word, “tetrarch” means that he was the governor of a fourth part of a region. Herod was the one who put John the Baptist to death. Herod had no jurisdiction over Judaea, but since Jesus was from Herod’s jurisdiction in Galilee, Pilate figured that he could turn the matter over to him. Herod was in Jerusalem for the Passover.

"And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing." - (Luke 23:8 - 9)

Jesus will not even speak to Herod.

"And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves." - (Luke 23:10 - 12)

¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, electronic ed., vol. 4 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 489.

Conclusion

After Jesus is returned from Herod to Pilate, Pilate will once again attempt to dissolve the situation. He does not want to put Jesus to death. He knew that Jesus had done nothing wrong, and he also knew that the religious leaders were using him to do their dirty work. His wife even warned Pilate about the innocence of Jesus:

"19 When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." (Matthew 27:19)

Most lost people could care less about religious matters, but Satan will raise up some who will become very passionate about fighting against God and God's church, all the while pretending to be doing the work of God. Paul spoke to the church at Corinth about Satan's ministers:

"12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. 13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." (2 Corinthians 11:12-15)

At the beginning of this message, I mentioned that there were three characters, besides the Lord Jesus, playing their roles in this drama:

The Politician, The Priests and Religious Leaders, and the Common People

But really, there should have been four: the disciples. Where were they? They certainly were not standing for the Lord at this time. They were nowhere to be found. They are not mentioned at all here, but they likely were part of the crowd standing outside the judgment hall.

Perhaps the thing that we should all consider is this: If you were there two thousand years ago at the trial and crucifixion of Christ, which category would you fall into? We now know through the benefit of history, that the Lord was right and that everyone present at that time should have been on His side. But how would we have reacted if we were there then?

1. Would you have been silent?

The disciples appeared to be silent, and by their silence they seem to be consenting with the crowd. Maybe they weren't, but there is no mention of their taking a stand for the Lord here.

"30 He that is not with me is against me;" (Matthew 12:30a)

Christian, this is not the time to be silent. Speak up for the Lord when He gives you the opportunity to speak.

2. Would you have been a politician?

The politician just wants to please everyone. He wants to keep his job or better, advance in power. Politicians tend to not be very principled. Don't misunderstand, it is often right to be a peacemaker and try to work out the differences between people who are at odds with each other, but in this case, Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, and because of the loud cries of the people he will give in to their wishes and deliver a just man to His death. Sometimes you just need to take a stand and let the chips fall where they may.

3. Would you have been one of the people shouting "Crucify."

I know that this church congregation is made up of mostly saved people who know and love Jesus, but I bet there were people in that crowd who believed they truly loved God, and they were convinced that they were on the right side of this fight. Have you ever fought passionately for something and later found out you were wrong about what you were fighting for? As a Christian, we can be right about Christ but still be on the wrong side of something that is within His will.

I think if these folks were sincerely trying to find out the truth, they could have quietly searched the Scriptures and prayed, and God would have shown them that Jesus was truly Who he claimed to be.