



JESUS IN A ROMAN HOUSE

Matthew 27:1–2, 11–31
and John 18:28–40, 19:1–16

¹When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. ²And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

¹¹Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?” Jesus said to him, “It is as you say.” ¹²And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. ¹³Then Pilate said to Him, “Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?” ¹⁴But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly. ¹⁵Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. ¹⁶And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. ¹⁷Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” ¹⁸For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.

¹⁹While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, “Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.” ²⁰But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. ²¹The governor answered and said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” They said, “Barabbas!” ²²Pilate said to them, “What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said to him, “Let Him be crucified!” ²³Then the governor said, “Why, what evil has He done?” But they cried out all the more, saying, “Let Him be crucified!”

²⁴When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.” ²⁵And all the people answered and said, “His blood be on us and on our children.” ²⁶Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged

Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified. ²⁷Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. ²⁸And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. ²⁹When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. ³¹And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

—Matthew 27:1–2, 11–31

²⁸Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. ²⁹Pilate then went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?" ³⁰They answered and said to him, "If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you." ³¹Then Pilate said to them, "You take Him and judge Him according to your law." Therefore the Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death," ³²that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die. ³³Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" ³⁴Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" ³⁵Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?" ³⁶Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." ³⁷Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." ³⁸Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all. ³⁹But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the

Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" ⁴⁰*Then they all cried again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.*

—John 18:28–40

¹*So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.* ²*And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe.* ³*Then they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands.* ⁴*Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him."* ⁵*Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, "Behold the Man!"* ⁶*Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him."* ⁷*The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."* ⁸*Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid,* ⁹*and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.* ¹⁰*Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"* ¹¹*Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."* ¹²*From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."* ¹³*When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.* 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.*

—John 19:1–16

Read Matthew 27:1–2, 11–31 and John 18:28–40, 19:1–16
(This account is also found in Mark 15:1–20 and Luke 23:1–25)

There is a struggle that takes place in each of us when we are confronted with the choice between doing the right thing and doing the wrong thing. You would think that such a choice would be a no-brainer, right? However, when self-interest enters the reasoning process, it can cause us to veer toward the wrong choice. This is exactly what happened in the Garden of Eden with Eve when she was confronted with the choice between doing good and doing evil. Before the Devil told her that the tree would enhance her life, the choice to do good and not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was easy and always chosen. However, when Satan suggested to her that *in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good from evil* (Genesis 3:5), the choice between good and evil became challenging. Eve was no longer considering what was right according to God's Word, but rather according to what seemed most advantageous for her. At that point her whole evaluating process changed. Now her considerations hinged on: *What will it taste like to my senses? What beauty will it bring into my life? How will it enrich my life?* (Genesis 3:6, paraphrased). When her evaluation process changed, the choice to do the right thing became a deliberation. In the end, Eve made the wrong choice.

Often, we are quick to condemn and judge Pilate, even as we have often condemned Eve. The decision to exonerate Jesus would have been right and just. Yet Pilate, for the sake of self-interest, allowed the voice of the crowd to prevail and made a choice against Jesus.

The same deliberations concerning Jesus continue to take place in every heart. Many are persuaded by the words and person of Jesus, but choose against Him because of self-interest. They reason that having Jesus in residency in their heart would cost them friends, prestige, livelihood, and indulgences. They

weigh the value of Jesus against the value of the fleeting, fanciful, and fickle pleasures of this life and choose the favor of this world over the favor of God. Though most people would agree that the trial of Jesus was unjust and the verdict was despicable, they fail to realize that they are, in fact, making the same decree as Pilate.

All of us wrestle with making the right decision, but the ultimate right decision is when we choose Jesus. Every other right decision comes from placing Jesus at the center of our deliberations.

As you visit this Roman house, consider Jesus' composure, compassion, and perseverance. Keep in mind, it would have been easy for the Son of God to choose to avoid the humiliation, the rejection, the judgment, the torture, the pain, the ridicule, the whipping, and the cross. Yet, Jesus made the right choice—though it was costly—so that we might be saved by His righteous and sacrificial choice. Now by choice we are *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God* (Hebrews 12:2).

1. After brutally beating, haranguing, and trying Jesus, the high priests, with the council, bound Jesus and took Him to where Pilate was residing in Jerusalem (Matthew 27:1–2; John 18:28). Use Matthew 27:11–12 and John 18:29–31 to capture the mayhem that ensued at this Roman residence when Jesus was brought there.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Pilate was the fifth Roman governor of Judea. An inscription was found by archeologists in 1961 verifying Pilate's position as governor of Judea. He ruled from AD 26–36.

2. From the following Scriptures, form a profile of Pilate as you remark on his questions, perceptions, concerns, and actions.

a. Questions:

1) Matthew 27:11; John 18:33

2) Matthew 27:13

3) Matthew 27:21–22; John 18:39

4) Matthew 27:23

5) John 18:35

6) John 18:37

7) John 18:38

8) John 19:10

9) John 19:15

b. Perceptions:

1) Matthew 27:14

2) Matthew 27:18

3) John 18:38, 19:6

4) John 19:6

5) John 19:14

c. Concerns and reactions:

1) Matthew 27:14

2) Matthew 27:19

3) Matthew 27:24

4) John 19:8

5) John 19:12

d. Actions:

1) Matthew 27:26; John 19:16

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

According to Roman law, the refusal to offer a defense counted as an admission of guilt.⁴⁰

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.

—Isaiah 53:7

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Pilate was superstitious, and Romans at that time believed the gods could appear at any time (see also Acts 14:11).

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The crowd chose Barabbas, whose name means son of the father, over the true Son of the Heavenly Father.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Flogging was done with a leather whip with many thongs. Each thong was laced with sharp pieces of iron and/or bone. Jewish authority was limited to thirty-nine lashes, but Roman law had no limit.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

*The crown of thorns might have been from a date palm, whose thorns can exceed twelve inches. There are Greek coin images showing such crowns.*⁴¹

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

—Isaiah 53:5

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Many scholars believe that there were two scourgings by Pilate. The first to elicit a confession and the second to appease the crowd.

- e. What is your estimation of Pilate?
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3. Note and comment on Jesus' words and demeanor in the Roman house using the following verses:
 - a. Matthew 27:11
 - b. Matthew 27:12, 14
 - c. Matthew 27:27–30; John 19:1–3
 - d. John 18:34
 - e. John 18:36
 - f. John 18:37

g. John 19:11

- 1) As you examine Jesus' words and comportment in the Roman house, what is your estimation of Jesus?
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4. What is your greatest takeaway from Jesus in a Roman house?