

# *Resurrection Life of Jesus Church*

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

RLJ-1982

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### PART 79: VIA DOLOROSA

#### **RETURN TO PILATE**

The scourging was over and Jesus was a bloody mess after the flagrum had struck the back, chest, arms, buttocks, and legs of the God-man. The unrelenting pain must have been intense and left Jesus in a weakened state. Then a crown of thorns was jammed on his head by the Roman soldiers and they brazenly struck Him in the face and spit upon Him. Having thoroughly humiliated the King of the Jews, the Son of God was returned to the governor.

Pontius Pilate left the Praetorium to reason with the bloodthirsty mob in a final effort to free a man he knew was innocent. **John 19:4**

The man presented to the crowd had trouble breathing. He suffered from contusions, lacerations, exposed muscles, and severe blood loss from the flagrum that had struck his back, chest, arms, buttocks, and legs. A woven crown of thorns firmly rested on His head, sending fresh streams of blood flowing down His face and neck. The Roman soldiers had reduced the skin of Jesus to something like ground meat and it was in this condition that Pilate presented Him to the crowd, hoping they might change their minds after seeing Him in such a pitiful state. **verse 5**

The Jewish leadership, seeing the man they hated, renewed their cries to crucify the God-man and Pilate agreed to let them lynch an innocent victim. **verse 6**

The religious vermin knowing they could not make the charge of sedition stick, changed tactics and charged Jesus with blasphemy under the Mosaic law. **verse 7**

- ❖ Blasphemers were put to death. **Leviticus 24:14-16**
- ❖ False prophets were also put to death. **Deuteronomy 18:20**

This charge was spurious, but lies were nothing to men willing to shed innocent blood.

#### **PILATE IS SCARED**

When Pilate heard Jesus was the Son of God, he became afraid and returned to the Praetorium and questioned the God-man about His parents. Pilate already knew Jesus was a Galilean, but what if He was also a demigod, an offspring of a god from the pantheon of deities Pilate served? Was Jesus a mere man or divine? **John 19:8-9**

The Son of God chose to remain silent and this was unnerving to Pilate, who erroneously thought he had the power to crucify or release the Creator standing in front of him. **verse 10**

Jesus responded that the only power Pilate enjoyed was that granted unto him by God the Father. Judas, the Sanhedrin, and the rest of the religious leadership would be held accountable for their crimes. **verse 11**



Pontius Pilate was between the proverbial rock and the hard place. The words of Jesus shook him and he wanted to release God-man. But the clever Jewish leadership abandoned blasphemy after finding it had no effect and returned to the former charge of sedition. They turned the tables on Pilate by stating that the governor was an enemy of Caesar if he let Jesus go free. The malice of the Jews was on full display. **verse 12**

Pilate did not want to be falsely charged with treachery and reluctantly ordered Jesus brought from the Praetorium as he sat down in the judgment to end the deplorable affair. **verse 13**

It was noon when Pilate aggravated the Jews when he announced, "Behold your King!" This was probably an attempt to shame them for the evil they were committing. **verse 14**

The Jews impatiently demanded that Jesus should be crucified. Nothing short of death would satisfy them. Pilate goaded them a final time, referencing Jesus as their king, but the religious leadership declared they had no king except for Caesar. **verse 15**

This was the final rejection; in seeking to spite Jesus with their words, the Jews had effectively snubbed the government of the Messiah. **Isaiah 9:6-7**

## **ROAD TO THE CROSS**

Then Jesus was led away to be crucified. **Matthew 27:31; Mark 15:20; John 19:16**

The Roman cross was characterized by an upright post and a horizontal crossbar. It was customary for the condemned to carry the crossbar from the site of the scourging to the crucifixion site outside the city walls. The crossbar weighed 75-125 pounds and was the equivalent of a modern railroad tie.

When the soldiers brought Jesus from the Praetorium, He was already carrying the crossbeam that would serve as the upper portion of His cross. Roman law mandated criminals carry their cross to the place of execution and the purpose of parading the criminal with the crossbeam was to remind the bystanders of Rome's power.

As the soldiers slow-walked the half mile to Golgotha (Calvary), it became obvious to the officer in charge that Jesus was unable to bear the heavy crossbeam because of the vicious scourging He had received. The multiple contusions and lacerations, exposed skeletal muscles, and severe blood loss made the task impossible. It is more than likely that Jesus stumbled and fell to the ground, unable to get back up under the weight of the crossbeam.

Roman law also dictated that any soldier could force a Jew to carry equipment for one mile. Simon, an onlooker from Cyrene, who stood watching the procession with his two sons, had come to Jerusalem to observe the Passover.<sup>1</sup> The soldiers harshly ordered Simon to pick up the crossbeam and carry it out to the execution site. **Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26**

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<sup>1</sup> Cyrene was a place in Egypt, modern-day Libya, and home to one million Jews.

Jesus was taken to Pilate around 6:00 AM. It was close to noon by the time the God-man started toward the place of execution place. Jesus had been in the custody of Pilate for six hours.

A quick time estimate puts the arrest, trial, conviction, and scourging of Jesus to somewhere between 12-15 hours. By the time the God-man was marched to Calvary, news had spread throughout Jerusalem that Jesus had been captured, beaten, and condemned to die.

## **A FINAL WARNING**

Luke records that a large crowd gathered to witness the procession as Jesus slowly made His way to Golgotha. Unlike the murderous mob that gathered in front of the Praetorium and demanded His death, this multitude was sympathetic to the God-man and revered Him. **Luke 23:27**

Even though Jesus' breathing was labored and His body burned with unrelenting pain, the Son of God turned a last time to speak publicly to the men and women who openly wept for Him. He implored them to overlook His injuries and focus on the calamities that would befall the city four decades in the future.<sup>2</sup> **verse 28**

A tragedy was coming in which they would see their children starve to death or killed by the Romans. It would have been better that the children were never born. **verse 29**

This time of tribulation would be so grievous that the inhabitants of Jerusalem would cry out for the mountains and the hills to provide shelter from the anger of the Romans. **verse 30**

This is very similar to the language used by John later on. **Revelation 6:16-17**

No one cuts down a green and vibrant tree that provides shade and yields plentiful fruit. Clearly, such a tree deserves to be preserved. Yet, that is exactly what was being done with Jesus. In comparison, why would anyone want to preserve a dead tree? What hope was there for the Jews? Jesus was plainly implying they were dead. **Luke 23:31**

The prophetic words of Jesus continued to be fulfilled.

*"...the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again." (Matthew 20:18-19)*

## **SUMMARY**

Pilate was a political hack who was appointed the lucrative position of governor of Judea. That meant that he was in charge of tax collection for Rome, and as was the custom, he was to provide a certain amount to Rome, and allowed to keep the surplus.

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<sup>2</sup> See RLJ-1966; Part 63: Abomination of Desolation

When the Jewish leadership brought Jesus to Pilate, he never held a legal trial according to Roman law; instead, he tried to wheel-and-deal with the Jewish leadership to pacify them. Pilate was a corrupt political leader. He was not a good man.

Jesus had not violated Roman law, but it was politically expedient to please the Jewish leadership, and for some 1,900 years, Pilate has symbolically tried to wash his hands of the affair in hell where there is no water. The governor sealed his fate when He ordered the soldiers to crucify the God-man.

Caiaphas and the corrupt Sanhedrin sealed their fate when they decided to hold a kangaroo court to implicate and sentence Jesus to death. They too, are in hell, lamenting how they inspired the mob to utter a blood curse on them and their descendants.

The Talmudic and Kabbalistic worldviews influenced many Jews to reject the Messiah and join the religious leadership in hell. That has been the fate of the vast majority of Jews for the past 2,000 years, except those who trusted in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

The Israeli and Hamas soldiers who are fighting and dying in Gaza will meet in hell and exclaim, "We are fools; we killed each other and perished. We have no future. The Lake of Fire is our eternal destination. I wish I could warn my family."

Are you born again? Have you repented of your sins? Is Jesus your Lord and Savior? Where will you go when you die?

***Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!***

***Do you have an ear to hear with?***