

He Suffered Under Pontius Pilate
John 18:28-19:16
August 23rd, 2026

1. Pilate _____ Jesus. (18:28-40)

2. Pilate _____ Jesus. (19:1-7)

3. Pilate _____ Jesus. (19:8-16)

4. Who killed Jesus?

Questions for Discussion/Reflection on John 18:28-19:16

1. What kind of hypocrisy is on display in 18:28? Why are people sometimes blind to blatant hypocrisy in which they are scrupulous in one area of religion but blatantly sinning in others?
2. What do you think Pilate meant by his question in 18:33? How does Jesus respond to that?
3. In what way is Jesus' kingdom not of this earth?
4. How does Pilate's question in 18:38 reflect an ongoing skeptical question that you might hear from someone today?
5. How does Pilate assess Jesus' guilt in this passage? Why does he not just let Jesus go?
6. If he believed Jesus was innocent, what do you think he was trying to accomplish in 19:1-5?
7. How does 19:8 describe Pilate's response? What do you think he was afraid of? How does that lead to his question in v. 9?
8. How can Jesus' words in 19:11 be a source of encouragement for the believer living under unjust authority?

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Big idea: Pilate was concerned about his own interests, but ended up fulfilling God's plan to crucify Jesus.

Intro

One of the earliest creeds of the Christian church is called The Apostles Creed.

It wasn't a direct product of the apostles but it did reflect the teaching of the Apostles and probably dates back at least as early as AD 140, or a little more than a generation after the death of the last living apostle, John.

Like the other ancient church creeds, it is not on par with scripture, but it does concisely summarize what scripture teaches and, as such, is a useful tool.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*

If you're not familiar with this creed, you might have questions about some of the language. But one thing that has always stood out to me is the inclusion of "He suffered under Pontius Pilate."

Why is that included? Why that detail?

It emphasizes that Christianity is not merely ideas or mythology but historical.

The death of Jesus occurred at a particular time and place, under a particular ruler, and under that ruler's authority.

We find this event in the end of John 18 and beginning of John 19. Besides being one more step towards the cross, this is a fascinating character study in Pilate who is depicted with startling detail and complexity, even as He unjustly turns over Jesus to be beaten and crucified.

1. Pilate **questioned** Jesus. (18:28-40)
 - a. The Jewish official and Roman soldiers had arrested Jesus in the previous verses, had already taken him to Caiaphas, the high priest and Jewish authority, and now they are taking Him to the Roman authority.
 - b. The Praetorium is the Roman governor's official residence in Jerusalem.
 - i. It was a mix between a home and a fortress.
 - ii. Pilate would normally be in Caesarea but he came to Jerusalem during the Passover and other feasts when large numbers of Jews traveled to the city and tensions were higher.
 - iii. There's a great irony that the Jewish official would not enter the Praetorium because they didn't want to be defiled by being in a gentile home, but their injustice of arresting and beating an innocent man and advocating for his death was not seen as defiling.
 - iv. Religion gone wrong prioritizes external keeping of certain taboos while allowing much greater sins of the heart and actions.

- c. There is a question that comes up about the Passover – didn't Jesus celebrate the Passover the previous night?
 - i. Two main options –
 - 1. "Passover" can be used broadly of the entire festival that lasts a week
 - 2. Jews and Romans marked the beginning and end of days in different ways, Jews marked it from sundown to sundown, Romans from sunrise to sunrise. Northern Jews and Southern Jews adopted those different approaches, so it's possible that some Jews celebrated the Passover after sundown the previous evening while others were celebrating it that day.
- d. Pilate asked what accusation they brought (v. 29ff)
 - i. They didn't really answer – just take our word for it! Of course he's an evildoer or we wouldn't have brought him to you!
- e. Pilate tells them to take him themselves and judge him according to their own law (v. 31ff)
 - i. It's like a game of hot potato, just much more serious.
 - ii. He doesn't want this responsibility.
 - iii. They don't have the authority to kill Jesus.
 - 1. The Roman law required the Roman government to authorize capital punishment.
- f. Pilate went inside the Praetorium and summoned Jesus (v. 33ff)
 - i. A more secluded conversation
 - ii. His question, "Are you the king of the Jews?" gets at the heart of Pilate's He
 - 1. Caesar was king and Pilate ruled as governor under him – a rival king would be dangerous and treasonous.
 - iii. Jesus doesn't answer him directly but puts it back on Pilate for how he heard this.
 - iv. Pilate presses further, "what have you done?"
 - 1. Because the text doesn't include body language and tone, we're left wondering at different times here about how this is said. Is it an accusation? Is it threatening? Angry?
- g. My kingdom is not of this world (v. 36ff)
 - i. From this world/from this realm – lit. from here
 - ii. What does that mean?
 - 1. He explains further by saying if it was from this world, his followers would be fighting.
 - 2. Peter had tried to fight and Jesus stopped him.
 - iii. Pilate wants to know if he is the king of the Jews – are you going to lead these Jewish people in a revolt against Rome? Will you try to overthrow the system? Overthrow me as governor? Rebel against Caesar? Set up a kingdom in Judea with a capital here in Jerusalem?
 - iv. "My kingdom is not of this world."
 - v. "So you are a king?"

1. His answer is a little evasive – you say that I am a king – probably because as we often see with Jesus, he can't fully affirm what someone says about him because the terms are so loaded.
2. Yes, a king who came to testify of the truth – to tell the truth.
 - vi. Jesus will eventually have an earthly kingdom – He will rule and reign in His kingdom promised in 2 Samuel 7 and will be fulfilled as Rev. 20 describes.
 - vii. But it's source is not from this world – It isn't by war and conquest and the sword.
 - viii. Rather He conquers sin and death, gathers a people to himself – the church.
 - ix. His kingdom rule is a present spiritual reality with an eventual literal fulfillment.
 - x. Those who are “of the truth” hear his voice – they respond, they follow him as Lord and King.
- h. Pilate, cynically, asks, “what is truth?” and leaves.
- i. Pilate tries again to hand him back over but fails.
 - i. There's a custom where he releases/pardons a criminal at the feast – “let's do this with Jesus, ok? You say he's a criminal, fine, I won't argue with you. Let me just pardon him and let him go.”
 - ii. They refuse and ask for Barabas, a known criminal. They put to death an innocent man and release a guilty man.
 - iii. **Prov. 17:15** He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.

2. Pilate **abused** Jesus. (19:1-7)

- a. He handed Him over to be scourged.
 - i. It means to be severely beaten with a whip.
 - ii. It is likely a less severe form of the beating he experiences after being handed over to be crucified.
 - iii. Pilate may have been trying to satisfy the crowd by merely abusing Jesus and showing the ridiculousness of His claim to be king. Would a king look like this?
- b. The soldiers mocked and tortured him further by putting a crown of thorns, long jagged thorns that pierce the skin and cause blood to run down.
- c. They place a purple robe – the color of royalty – on him and slap him.
- d. “Behold, the man!”
 - i. Look, he's pathetic. Let's call it a day.
- e. But they were not satisfied. They want him dead, not just beaten.
- f. Now they raise something Pilate hadn't heard yet – He ought to die because He makes Himself out to be the Son of God.

3. Pilate **delivered** Jesus. (19:8-16)

- a. Now Pilate is more afraid.
 - i. Implies he was already afraid, which helps explain his actions. He's trying to get out from underneath this situation.
- b. “Where are you from?”

- i. No answer.
- ii. **Isaiah 53:7a** He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth
- c. "Don't you know I have authority?"
- d. This is where the curtain pulls back again.
 - i. Pilate is the most powerful person in the region, serving as governor representing the Roman Caesar, the dominate world power that transformed the ancient world in ways we still feel today with their roads and government and art and architecture.
 - ii. It's like he is saying, "Don't you know who I am?"
 - iii. You only have power because God put you in this role. All human authority is granted by God.
 - iv. Pilate, you're not who you think you are. You're not this dominant, self-made, powerful figure who holds life and death in your hand. You're in this role because God put you there.
 - v. That shows how far above Jesus' kingdom is. He's not squabbling with Pilate on the same level.
- e. The one who delivered has the greater sin.
 - i. It's not that Pilate is innocent. He may be making an attempt to let Jesus go, but he's still pulled along by the crowd, has an innocent man beaten and crucified.
 - ii. But Judas sinned with full knowledge of who Jesus was, so his guilt is greater.
- f. He tries again to release Jesus but not the crowd turns it against him.
 - i. You're no friend of Caesar if you do that! Implies that it is treasonous.
- g. When he heard that he upped the official representation.
 - i. He brought Jesus out.
 - ii. He sat down on the judgment seat in the formal place called "The Pavement" for it's stone flooring.
 - iii. It's the equivalent of a judge who has been meeting with someone in his office but then puts on the black robe, walks up the steps to the front of the court room, sits down, and picks up the gavel.
 - iv. And he hands Jesus over to be crucified.
- h. The irony that he judges the One who will judge all people.
 - i. **John 5:22** "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,

4. Who killed Jesus?

- a. The Jews
 - i. Judas betrayed him
 - ii. The Jewish officials sought His death
 - iii. The Jews brought Jesus before Pilate
- b. Pilate – the gentiles
 - i. Roman governmental authority
 - ii. Roman soldiers who struck him and nailed him to the cross

c. All of us

- i. **Isaiah 53:5a** But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities;
- ii. **Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

d. God

- i. **Isaiah 53:6** All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.
- ii. **Isaiah 53:10a** But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting *Him* to grief;

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