

Pt. 4: The Last Week of the Savior's Life

The *Anderson Tours* Holy Land Scripture Series;

Understanding God, Scripture, & Self

Episode 9: *Jesus before Pilate*

“Knowledge of ‘the only true God, and Jesus Christ’ (John 17:3)
is the most important knowledge in the Universe...”

President Marion G. Romney of the First Presidency (“Except a Man Be Born Again,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 14)

➤ **BACKGROUND...Jesus on Friday Morning is taken to Pontius Pilate**

Thursday evening Jesus spends the night in the “*Sacred Pit*” following His illegal trial with the High Priest and Sanhedrin. First thing Friday morning they take Him to Pilate, the Roman leader of the area, to be tried and put to death! (See [John 18:28](#))

? How many times did Pilate present Jesus to the Jews “*finding no fault in Him*”?

***We are going to argue that he does this 5 times and would like to back it up!**

(I know I am unique in this. The most popular answer is 3 times, but a careful look at the account argues for more than that. See below for our defense of Pilate presenting Jesus 5 times).

➤ **#1 JESUS BEFORE PILATE - (Pilate's initial interview + Wife input):**

John 18:28-38 “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...”

***Wow!** The hypocrisy is intense here! They are bringing an innocent man to be put to death, but refuse to enter this gentile hall because it would make them unworthy to participate in the Passover feast and celebration! Are you kidding me!?

“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: **32** That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die...”

*They did indeed put people to death like those found caught in adultery, so this may not be entirely true, but why did they want Rome to put Him to death? (Pride, status, etc.)

“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...”

*If you were Pilate, what might you think about this response? (Koo Koo!? One might think that this man is speaking crazy talk). Pilate’s response to me indicates that he felt something. That he was touched in this initial interview...that he was taking Jesus seriously or at least could detect that He was a good man. His response and actions lead me to believe this. Watch for evidence of this...

“**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 18:28-38](#))

*The account says “*again*” as if this was the 2nd time Pilate declared His innocence, however let’s just count this as **#1**. Pilate questions Jesus fairly extensively here in this initial interview and declares emphatically that he finds no fault in Him. **Let’s call this #1!**

Pilate’s Wife:

*There is another detail that the Matthew account adds that we need to consider here that HAD to play a part in this situation...

Matt 27:19 “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.”

*If you received a message like this from your wife how much would it weigh on you? Would you ignore it or would it affect you? (Most would take it very seriously)
Bottom line is, Pilate had more reasons to declare His innocence than just his own interview. We are not completely certain when this message came to Pilate but the account suggests that it was early on in this process. Let’s move onto **#2**...

➤ **#2 JESUS BEFORE PILATE - (Pilate & Herod’s interviews):**

*We now switch to the Luke account for the next part of the story...

Luke 23:3-16 “And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it. 4 Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, **I find no fault in this man...**” (This is **#1**)

*I believe this is Luke’s version of **#1**...Now here is number **2**...

“5 And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. 6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. 7 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...”

*I can only imagine this was a relief to Pilate to be able to send Jesus over to Herod and be done with this situation. Pilate heard that Jesus was from the Galilee area and Herod Antipas, who had jurisdiction over the Galilee area, was in town visiting. What a relief for Pilate!

“8 ¶ 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. 9 Then he questioned with him in many words; but he **answered him nothing**. 10 And the chief

priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. 11 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...”

*Oh no! If you are Pilate, what are you thinking now? The plan didn't work and now Jesus is coming back and Pilate needs to continue to deal with Him. (Why do you think Jesus was silent when talking to Herod and yet He spoke with Pilate?).

*Herod's guards would mock Him and make fun of Him. Keep track of the many times this happens to Jesus in the final 24 hours of His mortal life. He was already mocked and spit upon the night before by the Jewish leaders and also was betrayed by one of His apostles (Judas). On with the story...

“12 ¶ And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves. 13 ¶ And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, 14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, **I, having examined him** before you, **have found no fault in this man** touching those things whereof ye accuse him: 15 **No, nor yet Herod**: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. 16 I will therefore chastise him, and release him.” ([Luke 23:3-16](#))

This is #2! Both Pilate and Herod had interviewed Jesus and neither one find fault in Him.

On to #3...

➤ **#3 JESUS BEFORE PILATE - (Barabbas released, wash hands, scourging):**

[Luke 23:17-25](#) “17 (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) 18 And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us **Barabbas**: 19 (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.) 20 Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. 21 But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. 22 And he said unto them the **third time**, Why, what evil hath he done? **I have found no cause of death in him**: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go. 23 And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the *chief priests* prevailed. 24 And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. 25 And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.” ([Luke 23:17-25](#))

*The Matthew account adds some important detail to this one...

[Matthew 27:24-31](#) “24 ¶ When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, **he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude**, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this **just person**: see ye to it.

*Pilate washed his hands in front of the crowd to symbolically let them know that this was on them and NOT on him. What happens next is critical to understand...

“25 Then answered all the people, and said, **His blood be on us, and on our children...**”

*What the Jews tell Pilate at this point (“His blood be on us, and on our children”) will be used by many Christians as justification for their anti-Semitism and hate towards the Jews. We have to be VERY careful with this and unfortunately there is a long history of Christians justifying angry and hostile acts towards them because of this statement by the Jews here taking credit for killing the Savior. (FYI one of the first rooms you enter at Yad Vashem, the holocaust museum in Jerusalem, is one that shows how Hitler and the Nazi's were Christian and how this was a large reason for the hostility towards them.)

“26 ¶ Then released he Barabbas unto them: and **when he had scourged Jesus**, he delivered him to be crucified. 27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into *the common hall*, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. 28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. 29 ¶ And when they had plaited a **crown of thorns**, they put it upon 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! 30 And they **spit upon him**, and took the reed, and **smote him on the head**. 31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.”
([Matthew 27:24-31](#))

***Scourging:** this was a cruel practice used by the Romans to punish and torture their prisoners. They would whip their prisoners 39 times with the whip (40 save one). The whip they used was like a cat of 9 tails with sharp bone, glass, or metal along the leather strands. When the whip would hit the prisoners back (or thighs and buttocks) it would stick in due to the sharp objects. Then when they would pull it out it would take chunks of flesh with it. Can you imagine what His back would have looked like after 39 whips with the scourge? He would have been a bloody mess!

***Now we go back to the John account for #4 and #5...**

➤ **#4 JESUS BEFORE PILATE - (wearing the crown of thorns After the scourging):**

[John 19:1-7](#) “1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and **scourged him**. 2 And the soldiers plaited a *crown of thorns*, and put it on his head, and they put on him a *purple robe*, 3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they **smote him** with their hands. 4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that **I find no fault in him**. 5 Then came Jesus forth, **wearing the crown of thorns**, and the *purple robe*. And Pilate saith unto them, **Behold the man!**

[*FYI: This is the name of the Convent built over this spot where this took place in the Antonio Fortress and also the name of the arch in Jerusalem (Ecco Homo or Behold the Man)].

“6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for **I find no fault in him**. (#4) 7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because **he made himself the Son of God**. 8 ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, **he was the more afraid**; 9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou?...” ([John 19:6-9](#))

***This is #4** directly after the scourging when Jesus would have been very bloody and in really bad shape. Could this have been Pilate’s plan to present Him in this state and certainly that would appease the crowd? (Remember this is all after having suffered in Gethsemane by descending below all things, being mocked and spit on by the Jewish leaders, also mocked by Herod’s guards, now a brutal scourging, a crown of thorns and more mocking from Pilate’s guards). In this state Pilate presents Jesus again stating he finds no fault in Him (#4). The crowd (chief priests) would not relent and say something that gets Pilate’s attention and what would lead to **one last interview by Pilate...**

Now the final #5...(After the final interview by Pilate)...

➤ **#5 JESUS BEFORE PILATE - (After final interview & pledge to Caesar):**

“7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because **he made himself the Son of God**. 8 ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, **he was the more afraid**; 9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou?...”

*When Pilate heard that “*He made himself the Son of God*” this made him afraid? Why would this frighten Pilate? He must have felt something during his initial interview (and throughout) and this scared him. Interesting!!! This motivates Pilate to take Jesus back into his chambers to ask Him about this. Wow!

“...because ***he made himself the Son of God***. 8 ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, **he was the more afraid**; 9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?...”

*Now Jesus is silent. Why? (At this point He may just want to get to it and get it done??). Jesus does finally speak to Pilate...

“11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore ***he that delivered me*** unto thee hath **the greater sin...**”

*Jesus is letting Pilate off the hook a little here. He could discern that this was obviously weighing on Pilate's heart a bit and maybe he was trying to ease his conscience a bit (this of course only speaks to Jesus character and empathy even when He himself is in pain and suffering). What the Jews tell Pilate at this point is really revealing and what pushes Pilate over the edge. After this interview Pilate takes Jesus back out to the crowd...

“12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, ***thou art not Cæsar's friend***: whosoever maketh himself a king ***speaketh against Cæsar***. 13 ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called *the Pavement*, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, **Behold your King!** (**This is #5**) 15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, ***We have no king but Cæsar...***”

*Now the Jews are pledging their allegiance to Caesar! This is fascinating on many levels. They are basically telling Pilate that if he doesn't give them what they are asking for then they would go above his head and report this treason to Caesar. It is believed that Pilate was already on shaky ground with Caesar and didn't want this to happen. It is directly after this that he finally relents.

*Another interesting fact is that Josephus reports that when they first built the Temple they wanted to hang a banner of Caesar in the Temple and the Jews refused. The story is told that the Jews got on their knees and bared their necks and were willing to lose their head rather than have an image hung in their Temple. Now in this situation they are pledging their dedication to Caesar. Bruce R. McConkie says that at this point these Jews “*committed spiritual suicide*” (DNTC ???). Nevertheless, this is evidently the straw that breaks the camel's back and this is when Pilate relents...

“16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. 17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew **Golgotha...**”

? Who is **MOST** responsible for Jesus' death?

*Pilate's Role? Is Pilate responsible?

*Elder Holland said of Pilate's role that “***Pilate was a coward.***”

*Chief Priests bear the majority of the blame (Remember their council after Lazarus' raising and also their voices are the ones that prevail with Pilate)

*This is where we will end and pick up the story next time as Jesus carries His cross on the Via Dolorosa (Path of Suffering) to Golgotha!

➤ “Conclusion...”

Jesus is now condemned to be crucified by Pilate and He will now go from the Antonio Fortress where this interview takes place with Pilate and He will carry His cross to Golgotha. The path He takes has been named the *Via Dolorosa* which interpreted is “*path of suffering*”. This is the topic of our next lesson!

➤ ANTONIO FORTRESS in JERUSALEM (Ecco Homo Convent):

In Jerusalem there is a convent built over the Antonio Fortress which was where Pilate ruled. The Antonio Fortress overlooked the Temple and was strategically built to be able to monitor Jewish life and religious rituals and observances (See Model City pictures/videos).

The Convent is named “Ecco Homo” which is Latin for the phrase, “*Behold the Man*”. There is an ancient arch that remains that they call the “Ecco Homo” arch or the “Behold the Man” arch. That phrase is what Pilate said to the Jews as he presented Jesus to them in His crown of thorns, robe, etc. They gave that name because that is the location where that conversation took place. This convent is built over what they believe is the original stones that they call the Lithostatos, Gabbatha, or “The Pavement”. This is where we like to have this discussion is on those stones in the basement of the Ecco Homo Convent (“Behold the Man”)

President Uchtdorf gave a fantastic talk recently in General Conference with the same title, “Behold the Man”. In it he asked what the most important day was in history. These are his words,

“Is it any wonder that we strive with all our hearts to truly **behold the Man (Christ)**? My beloved brothers and sisters, I testify that ***the most important day in the history of mankind*** was the day when Jesus Christ, the living Son of God, won the victory over death and sin for all of God’s children. And ***the most important day in YOUR life*** and mine is the day when we learn to “**behold the man**”; when we see Him for who He truly is; when we partake with all our heart and mind of His atoning power; when with renewed enthusiasm and strength, we commit to follow Him. May that be a day that recurs over and over again throughout our lives. I leave you my testimony and blessing that as we “**behold the man**,” we will find meaning, joy, and peace in this earthly life and eternal life in the world to come.” (“*Behold the Man*”, **Deiter F. Uchtdorf, Apr 2018**)

Links to the Scriptures:

Old Testament:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/ot/gen/1?lang=eng>

New Testament:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/nt?lang=eng>

Book of Mormon:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bofm?lang=eng>

Doctrine & Covenants:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/dc-testament?lang=eng>

Pearl of Great Price:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/pgp?lang=eng>

Quotes & Resources:

[Holy Land Scripture Series](#) pt. 1 FOUNDATION Series; pt. 2 PROPHECIES OF THE LAST DAYS; pt.3 LIFE & MINISTRY OF CHRIST

[Jesus Is Condemned Before Pilate](#) Bible Video

[“Behold the Man!”](#) by Dieter F. Uchtdorf (April, 2018)

[“The Eye of Faith”](#) by Neil L. Andersen (April, 2019)

[“What Is Truth?”](#) by John H. Vandenberg

[“For This Cause Came I into the World”](#) by Alexander B. Morrison (Oct, 1999)

[“Jesus the Christ”](#) Chapter 34: The Trial and Condemnation

[“The Factor of Fear in the Trail of Jesus”](#) by John W. Welch (John W. Welch, “The Factor of Fear in the Trial of Jesus,” in Jesus Christ: Son of God, Savior, ed. Paul H. Peterson, Gary L. Hatch, and Laura D. Card (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2002), 284–312.)

[“The Trial and Death of Jesus”](#) By John W. Welch (New Testament Commentary, This entry was posted in Easter, John W. Welch, Mark 15 on March 24, 2016)

[“None Were with Him”](#) by Elder Holland (April 2009)

[“Christlike Poise”](#) by Mark A. Bragg (April 2023)

[“The Paths Jesus Walked”](#) by Thomas S. Monson (April, 1974)

New Testament Study Guide for Home-Study Seminary Students

ANTONIO FORTRESS:

Christ before Pilate (Scripture Chain) showing the 5 times Pilate presented Jesus to the Jews “*finding no fault in Him*”:

- 1: [John 18:28-38](#) & [Matthew 27:19](#)
- 2: [Luke 23:3-16](#)
- 3: [Luke 23:17-25](#) (22) & [Matthew 27:24-31](#)
- 4: [John 19:1-7](#)
- 5: [John 19:1-16](#)

President Uchtdorf Quote:

“Is it any wonder that we strive with all our hearts to truly behold the Man (Christ)? My beloved brothers and sisters, I testify that the most important day in the history of mankind was the day when Jesus Christ, the living Son of God, won the victory over death and sin for all of God’s children. And the most important day in YOUR life and mine is the day when we learn to “behold the man”; when we see Him for who He truly is; when we partake with all our heart and mind of His atoning power; when with renewed enthusiasm and strength, we commit to follow Him. May that be a day that recurs over and over again throughout our lives. I leave you my testimony and blessing that as we “behold the man,” we will find meaning, joy, and peace in this earthly life and eternal life in the world to come.” (“Behold the Man”, Deiter F. Uchtdorf, Apr 2018)

The Serenity Prayer: “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, and Wisdom to know the difference.”