

# OpenTheo

## Condemned by Pilate (Part 1)



### **The Life and Teachings of Christ** - Steve Gregg

In "Condemned by Pilate (Part 1)," Steve Gregg discusses the trial of Jesus before Pilate in John 18:28-38. Topics discussed include Judas' repentance, Pilate's skepticism regarding the charges against Jesus, the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders, Pilate's knowledge of Jesus prior to his trial, and Jesus' commitment to the kingdom of God superseding all other loyalties. Despite Pilate and Herod's reluctance to condemn Jesus, he is ultimately sentenced to death, and remains a peacemaker even in the face of his enemies.

### **Transcript**

Returning to John 18, we break it up in order to interject parts from other Gospels that I feel are chronologically in-between. Today we turn to John 18, verse 28-38, and before we go beyond verse 38, we're going to interject something from Luke, after which we'll come back to John. Then, if we have time, we'll even be going into Matthew at the end of our session.

I don't know that we'll come to that because we may not have the time. This is the way that things mix now. We have already found the arrest of Jesus, then his trial before Annas, the night of his arrest, then before the Sanhedrin, also the same night.

Then when morning came, there was another hearing before the Sanhedrin, and then they took Jesus before Pilate. The last we read, actually, was about Judas hanging himself, which Matthew interjects none of the other Gospels mention. When he saw that the Sanhedrin had condemned Jesus, or perhaps even when he saw that the Romans had, he went out and he gave back the money and was remorseful, and he went out and hanged himself.

I didn't mention this point yesterday, partly because, like I said, when we read that passage about Judas hanging himself, there are a whole lot of different things to consider about it. But one of the things that I didn't bring up that is to be considered is whether he was repentant enough to be saved, because it actually does say that he repented when he saw that Jesus was condemned. So on that basis, we would probably like to think that

he was saved.

However, I think a couple of factors would suggest that Judas' repentance was not a repentance such as leads to life, but just a sorrow, a worldly sorrow that leads to death. One of the evidences of that is that it did lead to death. He hanged himself.

Paul made a difference in 2 Corinthians 7, 10, between a worldly sorrow that results in death and a godly sorrow that results in genuine repentance. Genuine repentance, of course, leads to salvation, but there can be no doubt looking at the result of Judas' repentance. Since he killed himself, it clearly wasn't genuine repentance.

That's not the fruit of repentance. That's the worldly sorrow that leads to death. Furthermore, Jesus had said in the upper room, Woe unto him who betrays the Son of Man! It were better for that man had he never been born.

And there might be any number of reasons why you might think it better for a man that he not be born, even if he just had a terrible life, or if he left behind a terrible reputation. After all, Judas is remembered for his treachery and no one thinks well of him. And some might think that alone is why Jesus would say that, even though the man may have repented, sort of a deathbed repentance and been saved.

However, no matter how bad your life is, and no matter how miserable your reputation you leave behind is, if you spend eternity in heaven, then no one can say it was better for you that you were never born. Life is short, eternity is long, and if Judas is in heaven today and will forever be there, I think we could hardly say that it was better for him never to have been born. The fact that he is called the Son of Perdition.

When Jesus prays in John 17, he speaks of how he has not lost any of the sheep the Father gave him, except for the Son of Perdition. The Son of Perdition is an expression that means the Son of Hell. And certainly that would not indicate that Jesus considered that Judas was going to be living in heaven with us.

Okay, so Judas hanged himself, he is dead, he went to hell. By the way, in Acts chapter 1, where it records the death of Judas, the record of it says that he went to his place after dying. And it seems to me obvious that his place was hell.

But there are some who have suggested that the Antichrist might be a return of Judas Iscariot. This is not a mainstream idea, but I have heard it suggested by more than one teacher. Because the man of sin in 2 Thessalonians 2 is also referred to as the Son of Perdition.

Only two people in the Bible are referred to by that title, the Son of Perdition. Judas Iscariot is called that by Jesus. And the man of sin is given the same title by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2. And because of that similarity or that coincidence of identification, some have felt maybe Judas has not really gone to his reward yet.

Maybe he has been taken aside by the devil and waiting for a time for the devil to launch him on the world as the Antichrist. I would say that is more sensational speculation than anything the Bible can support. It is clear that the man of sin could be somebody other than Judas and both of them be sons of hell.

After all, Paul says that all of us were children of wrath at one time. In Ephesians 2, verse 2 I think it is, or 3. And so to be a child of hell or a child of God's wrath is not an exceptional thing. It certainly would apply to many people.

Jesus said that the Jews who opposed him were all sons of the devil. Which cannot be very different, I think, from being sons of hell or perdition. Okay, now, verse 28, John 18, 28.

Then 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 should eat the Passover. It has been speculated that Jesus had the Passover one night early of the ordinary Passover meal.

Because he and his disciples had the Passover already the night before, and now these Jews were still anticipating taking the Passover. So it is possible that Jesus had a special Passover meal a day early for them. Because he would not be able to do it with them after his arrest.

Excuse me. After all, it was necessary that Jesus die on the Passover itself in order to fulfill the meaning of that feast. It was the type of what he was about to do.

And he fulfilled it on that very day. Now, the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders here is no doubt alluded to. They do not want to defile themselves ceremonially by going into a Gentile's house.

That is where the praetorium was. That is where Pilate was. That is where he lived.

And a Jew would not go into the house of a Gentile. That would make him ceremonially defiled. And if you are in a state of defilement, you cannot participate in the festival and so forth.

So they did not wish to be excluded from the festival by being defiled. So they would not go into a Gentile's house. However, they would go into an illegal courtroom the night before.

And against their own laws and principles, condemn an innocent man to death. Which seems to me, again, that they are straining at gnats and swallowing camels, as Jesus said. Pilate then went out to them and said, What accusation do you bring against this man? Now, apparently this question that he asked must have had a bit of a tone of reluctance on his part to believe that they really did have criminal charges against Jesus.

Now, nowhere in the Bible does it say that Pilate had prior knowledge of Jesus. Prior to the time that Jesus was brought to him on this occasion. And one gets the impression, because of that silence, that Pilate was perhaps totally unaware of Jesus of Nazareth.

However, it seems impossible that that could be true. For one thing, Jesus caused disturbances, public disturbances, in Jerusalem. Where Pilate was positioned there by the Romans to keep the peace.

The Jews were a volatile, riotous sort of people. And that's exactly why Pilate and the Roman guard were there, to stop riots and things like that from happening. It seems almost inconceivable that on the two occasions that Jesus dumped over the tables the money changers and drove animals out of the temple with a whip, and all the people shouting and screaming and so forth going on there, and animals running through the streets.

It seems inconceivable that the Roman guards would not have at least reported this. They would have certainly investigated it, when they saw the commotion. And it seems likely that Pilate would have gotten at least a written report about that.

And Jesus had done that twice. And then of course, when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey a week prior to this, and people were hailing him as king, even the Pharisees were concerned that the Romans might be alarmed by this. They told Jesus to silence his disciples, that they might get the Jews in trouble with the Romans.

Again, I don't believe that the Roman eye that was keeping tabs on the activities of the Jews could possibly have missed this great parade that hailed Jesus as king of the Jews as he came into Jerusalem a week earlier than this. And Pilate certainly must have heard about this too. What's amazing is that Pilate himself made no attempt to arrest Jesus in these cases.

Which may mean that Pilate knew even more about Jesus than just about those things. He may have required, in fact it's almost certain that he would have under these circumstances, would have required his men to find out something about Jesus. And if they had, he would have perhaps learned that the Pharisees and the scribes and the Sanhedrin themselves were trying to kill Jesus.

Now, Pilate was no friend of theirs. And therefore, if they wanted to kill Jesus, Pilate would probably do so. This guy is no threat to us.

He's not going to have a popular uprising against us among the Jews. He's hated by the Jews. Any enemy of theirs is a friend of mine, kind of an attitude he might have had.

Because Pilate had continual conflicts with these Jewish leaders. There was a rivalry and an anger and a bitterness that existed between them. So when they finally bring Jesus to him, we're not told prior to his asking this question, whether it was told him who this

Jesus was, whether he'd ever seen Jesus and recognized him, or whether unrecorded here it was announced, this man is Jesus of Nazareth, we're bringing him to you, or whatever.

There was something in his tone when he said, what accusation do you bring against this man that insinuated that he had doubts that this man had done anything seriously wrong? Now, I know that that tone was there because of the response the Jews gave him. In verse 30, they're indignant, they answered and said to him, if he was not an evildoer, we would not have delivered him up to you. Now, they wouldn't say that if they didn't catch in his tone some skepticism about their own legitimacy on this point.

If he was just asking it for information, their answer doesn't answer his question. He said, what's the accusation? If they didn't see this as sort of a jibe against them, they would have said, well, the accusation is that he's speaking things against Caesar. But they don't include that in their answer, they protest.

He really is a wrongdoer, whether you believe it or not, is essentially what they're saying. We wouldn't have brought him to you if he hadn't done something criminal. Well, that's not what he asked.

And therefore, they're making that point, suggests that that's how they understood his comment. And maybe that's how he intended to comment. That he didn't trust these guys, to be honest.

A little later on, we read that Pilate knew that for jealousy they'd brought Jesus to him. How he knew that, we don't know, but he may have known it because of prior investigation he'd done into the relations between Jesus and the leading Jews. And that he may have had a file on Jesus by this time, for all we know.

Anyway, Pilate said to them, you take him and judge him according to your law. The Romans had given the Sanhedrin a lot of authority to judge people that they didn't like, or that did things they disapproved of. And he says, therefore the Jews said to him, it is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.

Which was true, of course, the Romans had withheld that one power from the Jews. Now, when he says, you take him and judge him according to your law, Pilate is assuming they're not planning to kill him. And when they say, it's not lawful for us to put anyone to death, Pilate becomes aware that this is serious to them, they're really out for blood.

And it says in verse 32, that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spoke signifying by what death he would die. Now, that particular statement that is referred to here is in John 12, 32 and 33. In John 12, 32 and 33, it says, and I, if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself.

And John says, in John 12, 33, this he said signifying by what death he would die. So to

be lifted up from the earth was an indication of how he would die, namely on a cross, he'd be lifted up on a cross. And that's what John is reminding us of here in chapter 18.

They said it's not lawful for us to put a man to death, although it's interesting that a few weeks later they stoned Stephen without asking for the Romans' permission. And, you know, they tried, made attempts on the other apostles and Paul and so forth on other occasions. So, you know, they're being a little hypocritical here.

Why is it they want to crucify him? Why don't they just stone him? Perhaps, I mean, I really don't know. It was just in the will of God. God sovereignly made that something they were going to stick on.

You know, they weren't going to let it go another way. By the way, their stoning of Stephen was equally a violation of Roman law, and they would have no doubt stood trial for it if it hadn't become such a mob scene and been completed so quickly that probably the Romans couldn't intervene before the crowd dispersed. But with Jesus, they wanted it to be a cold and calculated execution.

They wanted it to be something public, probably a public discrediting of Jesus because to die on a cross was a lowly, criminal sort of way to die. And they no doubt were going to hold out for this rather than have just a stoning riot. For one thing, maybe because the crowds wouldn't, at that point, weren't ready to stone Jesus and wouldn't have done it.

So they had to go through the law to do it. In any case, they said, it's not lawful for us to put a man to death. And John says that was to fulfill what Jesus said about the method of his death, namely to fulfill the fact that he died by crucifixion.

Now, how does that fulfill it? Well, because by turning the matter over to the Roman law, it guaranteed that Jesus would die by crucifixion rather than some other means. It was not the Jews who crucified people. So the Jews not taking it on themselves to kill Jesus by stoning and then try to get away with it later, but submitting to the Roman law and saying, you kill him, was a way of guaranteeing that he would die in just the manner that he had predicted he would, that is by crucifixion.

Verse 33, Then Pilate entered the praetorium again, called Jesus, apparently for a private talk, and said to him, are you the king of the Jews? Which is interesting that they haven't mentioned that claim in the narrative. Now, it is possible that they had said it before, but I don't think so. Because when he asked them what the charges were against him, the fact that he claimed to be king of the Jews is what you'd expect them to answer, but they didn't answer that.

They just said he's an evildoer, blah, blah, blah. And then he took them aside, and as far as we know, never heard the charge that Jesus claimed to be king of the Jews, and yet asked him that very question. Once again, that suggests that Pilate had a file on him

already.

Pilate no doubt knew just the kinds of things the Jews didn't like about Jesus, and just the kind of claims that were made about him. And you can see Jesus, Pilate is much more sympathetic toward Jesus in this interview than he is toward the Jews, although he gets a little frustrated with Jesus, because Jesus doesn't try to deliver himself. But he says, are you the king of the Jews? Jesus answered him, are you speaking for yourself on this? Or did others tell you this about me? Pilate answered, am I a Jew? Now, Jesus' question, are you asking this because you're interested to know, seems to Pilate to warrant the question, well, am I a Jew? I mean, if you're a king of the Jews, what does that matter to me? I'm not a Jew.

You wouldn't be my king. You know, I'm a Roman. So, I mean, why would I ask out of my own curiosity whether you're a king of the Jews? I'm not one of those people that you'd be claiming to be king over.

He says, you're own people. Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you to me. What have you done? Now, the fact that he says, what have you done, suggests that he had not heard any specific charges from those who brought Jesus to him, and so he's interviewing Jesus to see if there were any.

And Jesus 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.

Now, this is one of the statements of Jesus that I think is most informative about the issue of fighting and war, a subject that comes up from time to time because the Bible speaks things relevant to the subject frequently. And this is perhaps one of the most relevant things for getting a balanced theology about war. First of all, Jesus said, if my kingdom was of this world, my servants would have fought, suggesting that Jesus felt that he was a king.

That physical war was the rightful activity of kingdoms of this world. Or at least it's what they could be expected to do. I mean, given the scenario he suggests, namely that he, Jesus, intended to set up a kingdom of this world, then he would have approved of his servants fighting to defend him, to keep him from the Jews.

Which means that Jesus does not decry all war. He considers it to be the business of the kingdoms of this world, however, to defend themselves and their kings in that way, because they have nothing but worldly interests. Their interests, their borders are geographical, their citizenship is ethnic, their power is political.

They're from beginning to end, worldly empires that rise and fall in history and will never have any significance in eternity. They're of this world. Therefore, their warfare is of this

world.

And to defend their king is a loyal thing for citizens to do who are of this world. But Jesus' kingdom is not of this world. And therefore, he says it's not appropriate for his disciples to fight in order to promote the interests of his kingdom.

And upon that basis, and many others in the scripture, I personally think that Christians shouldn't fight in war. But some would say, but wait a minute, wait a minute. When America is fighting against, you know, Germany, let's say, in the last war, America is a worldly nation, Germany is a worldly nation, and therefore it seems appropriate for them to fight over their security, their mutual security against each other.

And we Christians, as Americans, probably should fight against Germans in such a scenario as that. And German Christians, as Germans, should fight against us in a scenario like that, and so forth. But see, this fails to understand that we are not, in the Bible anywhere, described as citizens of this world.

Now, people sometimes say, well, Paul appealed to his Roman citizenship to avoid a beating. Yeah, he did. He fought to get through borders, too.

But that doesn't mean that I really identify myself as an American citizen. It is a concession that we make to deal with this world, that we use the documents and the institutions of this world to the advantage of our goals, no doubt. And that's not a wrong thing to do.

Paul did that to avoid getting unjustly beaten. But we are ambassadors to this world, Paul said. Our citizenship is in heaven.

And I personally disagree with many Christians who think we have dual citizenship. You know, on one level, we do have citizenship in the country we're born in. There's no question about that.

We live here, we have certain rights, we have certain obligations, and so forth. But so do ambassadors who live in a foreign country. They submit to the laws of that country.

And they have the protection temporarily of that country, as long as that country is not at war with their own home country. So, we are ambassadors. That's why we're here.

We're here to represent a kingdom that we have citizenship in, and that is the kingdom of God. And Jesus said you can't serve two masters. Now, he said that about God and mammon, but I mean, it's stated in Acts 3 in Matthew.

You can't have two separate masters with different agendas. The kingdoms of this world are contrary to the kingdom of Christ. And therefore, we have to decide, am I a citizen of one master or of the other master? Who is my sovereign? Yes.



Go ahead. As far as heathens fighting the war, the approach I take is the approach Paul said in 1 Corinthians 5. He said, what do I have to do to judge those who are outside the church? Those who are inside the church, we judge. Those who are outside the church, God judges.

So, I mean, it's not my place to go telling the heathen what they should or shouldn't do, except to accept Christ and follow his lordship. And once they do that, then they're in the realm that I can make a disciple out of them, and there is some authority to speak into their lives. I mean, they're on their particular actions.

I mean, they're on their way to hell anyway. Who cares about the individual acts of sin they commit on the way there? I mean, the fact is, God judges them. Paul said.

Those are some of the closing verses of 1 Corinthians 5. So, that is my thought. I mean, the church, yes, it must regulate its own members. It must discipline sin in its own ranks.

It must, the leaders of the church or teachers must disciple the sheep and make sure that they learn the worldly people's behaviors. In fact, Paul even makes a distinction between that and what we are to do when he talks about, in 1 Corinthians 5, 9, he says, I wrote to you in an epistle not to keep company with fornicators or covetous or drunkards or whatever, gave a long list of extortioners and so forth. And he says, but I didn't mean not to associate with those of those categories in the world, or else you'd have to go out of the world.

But those who claim to be brothers and behave that way have nothing to do with them, don't even meet with them. In other words, you do judge sin within the body among those who profess to be brothers. But sinners in the world, we're not there to judge them or disassociate ourselves from them or excommunicate them.

They're not in the body of Christ. There's no kicking them out. And so, when you ask, should the heathen fight wars? I personally think that there should be a war where one side acted entirely defensively.

You know, there are such wars as that, where one side is acting entirely defensively. They don't leave their own country. They just fight the invasion force on their borders, in which case they're doing very little more than executing criminals, as it were.

The invaders are the criminals. The invaders want to kill them. And frankly, I don't know that God would call that unjust.

And that's exactly the kind of thing Jesus said his servants would do if his were an earthly nation. My servants would have fought to keep me from being delivered to the Jews. Now, there's no defensive war against those who came to arrest their king.

So, Jesus seemed to think that maybe an entirely defensive war would be appropriate for

a kingdom whose interests might have been like that, where one side just really totally was on the defensive. In which case, I wouldn't condemn anybody who fought in it, any non-Christian who fought in it, certainly, because that's the highest loyalty they have is to their nation. But the thing is, Christians have a higher loyalty, not only a higher loyalty, a unique and sole loyalty to Jesus Christ, because all authority in heaven comes from his righteousness and the other things we add it to.

The kingdom of God is our first priority and our whole priority. And when Jesus talked about the kingdom, he said it was like a pearl the man sold all his other pearls to get. Like a treasure in the field, the man sold everything he had to buy it, to get the kingdom.

The kingdom can only be had at the loss of every other idol, at the loss of every other pursuit. There's only one pursuit legitimate to the Christian, and all that can be done in ways that people call secular, of course, working in jobs, raising a family, doing things like that. Those are not in conflict necessarily with the pursuit of the kingdom of God, if those things are in fact done in order to pursue the kingdom of God, in order to do the thing God wants you to do and to be God's representative on this planet.

But that you do those things doesn't mean that you're a citizen of this world. You're simply domiciled here from a foreign country, from heaven, from God's kingdom. And that means, of course, that the wars of this world are not your wars.

You may live in America or Canada, but the wars of Canada and the wars of America are not yours. You're not a citizen, you're an ambassador there. The only wars that we're involved in are the wars of the kingdom of God, and those are spiritual wars.

So Paul says, there are no worldly wars, which are. So there is a commitment to the kingdom of God that supersedes and actually nullifies any loyalties to race, gender, nationality, or any of those things that divide men on a worldly scale. And I've told you before, I think that nationality is idolatry.

That is nationalism. Nationalism is idolatry. It's simply to be arrogant and to idolize something that doesn't have any intrinsic claim to superiority.

And to be loyal to your nation to the point that you'd kill someone from another nation just because your nation is threatened means that you value your nation as an abstract entity above the lives of people for whom Christ died. And to me, that's putting a nation above God's interest, above the interest of the kingdom of God. Now, when he said, my kingdom is not of this world, by the way, he didn't say my kingdom is not in this world.

He had made it very clear his kingdom had come to the world, but it's not of the world, which means it doesn't arise from the world like all other kingdoms do. It originates from somewhere else, from heaven, and therefore it operates on different principles and it's different in nature. There's no appropriateness of a king would be legitimate for an

earthly nation to be involved in.

I think now my kingdom is not from here may suggest that prior to this, in Old Testament times, his kingdom was associated with Israel. It was an earthly kingdom, which may be why it was appropriate for Israel to fight in wars because they were in fact a kingdom of this world and they were God's people. Remember when he first said this in Exodus 19, 5 and 6, he said, if you, Jews, if Israel will keep my covenant and obey my voice, then you will be a kingdom unto me, a kingdom of priests, so that that earthly nation was capable of bearing the identity of being the kingdom of God also, and they were God's kingdom so long as they were true to the covenant and obedient to his voice, but of course he transferred that through the disobedience and it was at this very point where they delivered him up to Pilate that their rejection of him as their king became most evident.

In fact, it was not much later than they screamed out, we have no king but Caesar, crucify this guy, and so they denied that they had any claim to the kingdom of Christ. So his kingdom was now to be an international global entity made up of people who had a spiritual connection to him at that point. Well, he had a kingdom already in the Old Testament, but the spiritual kingdom was in fact coming through him in his earthly ministry and through his death.

It's hard to really nail down the point in Jesus' life where we can say the kingdom came because John the Baptist said the kingdom was at hand, Jesus said the kingdom was at hand, but later he began talking about the kingdom has overtaken you, and he spoke of a time when the kingdom would come in power within the lifetime of some staying there. So, I mean, the kingdom of God came in the spiritual and ultimately eternal sense of that concept sometime associated with Jesus' earthly career, but the exact moment where it transferred from being at hand to being here is kind of hard to nail down. But I often think of the life of Christ as treated by God and we think of it as three and a half years or whatever, and it was, but in terms of human history, I think the coming, the ministry, the death and resurrection of Christ are all treated as one event, as it were, and that was the coming of the kingdom.

And that is at least my thoughts on that. The question is a good one though, and I'm glad you asked it because I hadn't really thought of it representing a change from Israel being his kingdom, which was an earthly kingdom, to being a spiritual kingdom, which was no longer a worldly kingdom. Verse 37, Pilate therefore said to him, Are you a king then? Jesus' comment seemed to be an admission that he really was a king.

Pilate had first asked, Are you the king of the Jews? And Jesus had dodged him and said, Well, are you asking this for yourself because your kingdom is not of this world? Twice he speaks of his kingdom, and therefore Pilate says, Oh, then you do claim to be a king. Are you a king then? And 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. Now, he is a king, but his kingdom is not a kingdom where he can talk and heed the truth. I mean, many people hear the truth and are in his kingdom, but those who receive the truth that he has come to give us, the truth of God, he is the truth.

And so those who heed them, heed the truth that Jesus preached, are the ones that are in his kingdom. Pilate said to him, What is truth? And that's a very powerful question. Unfortunately, Pilate apparently did not wait around for an answer, although he stood before the one who could most authoritatively answer that question.

And when he asked the question, he said, it must have been a little cynical about Jesus' statements about being absolutely true. He said, What is truth? And when he had said that, he went out again to the Jews and discriminated against Pilate just because he was a Roman if he was hungry for the truth. I think his question of what is truth is sort of a cynical remark as if he could say, you know, well, you say you've got the truth, everybody thinks they've got the truth.

Who's to say what's true? And then he turns away and goes out. But even though Pilate has sort of not spoken all that respectfully to Jesus, he still can't find any criminal act because I find no fault in him at all. Now, from here we need to go to Luke, briefly, to Luke chapter 22.

We'll pick it up from where that verse in John leads off. In Luke 23, and we need to look at verses 6 through 12. Luke 23, actually, we need to start a few verses earlier than that.

Look at verse 3. Luke 23, 3, we'll see some overlap in what we've come to. So Pilate asked him, saying, are you the king of the Jews? And he answered him and said, it is as you say. Now, that is a compression of the longer account we just read.

What really happened is Pilate said, are you the king of the Jews? And Jesus said, do you ask this for yourself? And he says, am I a Jew? Blah, blah, blah, blah. And finally, Jesus said, my kingdom is not of this world. And the man said, what is the difference between those two comments? Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, I find no fault in this man.

That's where we left off in John 18. But Luke carries on at verse 5. But they were the more fierce, saying, he stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the man were a Galilean.

Apparently, it wasn't all that obvious that Jesus was a Galilean. Even though Galileans had a strong accent, because Pilate was unaware until this moment that he was Galilean. How did he get that knowledge? Well, he deduced it.

They said he began in Galilee. And he's even come and stirred things up around here. So the fact that they mentioned he began in Galilee, he thought, oh, that's an interesting thing.

Is he a Galilean? And as soon as he knew that Jesus belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, which Galilee was, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. Because of the feast, no doubt. So Pilate, you know, he didn't want to have to handle this situation.

And he was very happy to learn that Jesus really fell into someone else's jurisdiction and that that guy happened to be nearby enough that he could just kind of send him off and try to wash his hands of it, so to speak. And of course, he literally washed his hands later on, hoping to do the same thing. In verse 8, Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad, for he desired for a long time to see him, to know things about him, and hoped to see some miracle from him.

Earlier, I think it's in Luke 9, we read that Herod had heard about Jesus' miracles. And actually, initially, he had been kind of fearful when he heard about it, although he seems to have gotten over his fear and just been more curious now. But in Luke chapter 9, it says in verses 7 through 9, Now Herod the Tetrarch heard of all that was done by Jesus, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again.

And Herod said, John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things? And he sought to see him. Herod wanted to see Jesus. The way Matthew tells that story, in Matthew 14, beginning of verse 1, tells of Herod being a little bit uncomfortable.

It says in Matthew 14, 1, At that time Herod the Tetrarch heard the report about Jesus, and said to his servants, This is John the Baptist. He has risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him. Then it goes on to tell how Herod had previously killed John.

It's almost like, wow, the guy I killed, he's come back from the grave to haunt me, and he's got more powers than ever, because John never did any miracles, and I was hearing about Jesus' miracles. But in Luke's passage there, in Luke 9, 9, it says that Herod sought to see Jesus, but apparently never managed to, because Jesus never went, I guess, near enough to Herod's palace to make that easy. So now Herod, in Luke 23, is very happy that Jesus is sent to him, because he'd been hearing about those miracles, and he was very eager to see some.

And in verse 9 it says, Luke 23, 9, Then he questioned Jesus with many words, but Jesus answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. Their accusations had not worked before Pilate, and they were getting a little tired

of this, but they raised their case again before this new tribunal.

But Herod, with his men of war, treated Jesus with contempt and mocked him, arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him back to Pilate. That very day, Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for before that they had been at enmity with each other. Now, we're not told exactly what it was about this situation that made Pilate and Herod friendly to each other.

One might think that it was because Herod was relieved that Herod, I mean that Pilate was relieved that Herod could take this hot potato off his hand. However, that hardly seems likely because he didn't get it off his hands permanently. Herod sent him back to him.

I suppose we are to learn from Luke that it was their mutual contempt for Jesus or their mutual rejection of Jesus that provided a means of identification between these two men who had formerly had nothing in common. They both had encounters with Jesus. And Jesus was a peacemaker even among his enemies.

He made peace between these two guys. Jesus is the great polarizer. And while people may, on many different minimal and minor points, differ about many things, the issue of how they treat Jesus, how they respond to Jesus, is the one thing that separates people into two camps.

You know, outside of Christ, you might find your identity in being, you know, a jock or a surfer or a biker or a hippie or a Mennonite or something like that. But in Christ, all these distinctions vanish and everybody is one. And you associate with people that wouldn't have been in your circle before.

These other areas all become minor and negligible in importance because of the greater issue of your agreement about Christ. And in the world, it's that way too. We even saw it in the earlier parts of the life of Christ, that when Jesus first enraged his enemies by healing the man with the withered hand in the synagogue, that it says the Herodians and the Pharisees took counsel together to get rid of Jesus.

Well, Herodians and Pharisees were politically adversaries. But when it came to wanting to get rid of Jesus, they both agreed and they at least worked together. Pilate and Herod apparently had something of a similar reconciliation by both taking the same side against Jesus.

Okay, so Jesus didn't say anything to Herod. He didn't humor him. Herod wanted to see miracles and Jesus didn't do any.

Jesus was not a carnival performer. Jesus was one who, in order to do the works of God, would heal and do miraculous things to help people. But he was not there just to put on a show for anybody and there was nobody there sick or in need, so there was no need

for him to do any miracles.

The word was spoken by Jesus in this particular hearing. There were vehement accusations made by the Jews, but the fact that Herod did not rule on those accusations means that he, as well as Pilate, knew darned well that they were lies. He knew that the Jews just didn't have a leg to stand on in what they were saying against Jesus.

If they did, he would have humored them and said, okay, kill the guy. I mean, Herod had the power to do that. If the Jews wanted his permission to kill Jesus, then Herod had no love for Jesus.

In fact, he was probably frustrated with Jesus that Jesus wouldn't perform. And yet, Herod does not give the Jews what they want. He doesn't hand Jesus over to them.

He just sends him back to Pilate, which means, although Herod didn't have any particular concern for sparing the life of a guy like Jesus, he also didn't want to go down on record condemning men that were in the defense, but just from listening to his accusers. It was obvious that he was innocent. So Pilate and Herod, neither one of them really wanted to condemn Jesus.

They didn't stand up for him. They didn't say, I acquit this man of all charges. You Jews leave him alone.

But they didn't want to really take a stand against him as the Jews preferred also. Okay, from here we need to go back to John 18 because that little interlude in the verse we last read, which is John 18, 38, and the following verse where we now pick it up. And the passage we'll now consider without a break is John 18, 39 through 19, 17.

John 18, 39 through John 19, verse 17. After that we'll turn to another passage. Okay.

Now, Pilate has Jesus again before him. John has not recorded anything about the trip to Herod, so the story continues as if there was an unbroken conversation between Pilate and the Jews. The last time he spoke to them he said, I find no fault in him.

He says, but 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? And he said, but Barabbas, now Barabbas was a robber. And other gospels that talk about Barabbas tell us he also was a murderer and he was put in jail for insurrection and so forth.

You can get a long list of this you can get his rap sheet by comparing the various gospels. But here it just mentions he was a robber. The point is Barabbas was a real criminal.

He really had done something wrong, Jesus was innocent, and the Jews, given the opportunity to make a choice to release an innocent man or a criminal, would rather

release a criminal than Jesus. Peter points this out as he preaches to them in Acts. I'm trying to remember whether it was in his first or second sermon.

Maybe you remember. It was in Acts chapter 2 or in Acts chapter 3. But his statement, I believe it was in Acts chapter 2, he said, well let's look at verse 20. Acts 3.14 is it? Thank you.

You're probably right. I knew it was one of those two sermons. I just didn't remember which.

Yeah. That's it. While Peter is preaching his second sermon.