



Encounters—Pilate

“...He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried...”

Who was Pontius Pilate?

- He grew up in a middle class equestrian family.
- He was married to Claudia Procula, the granddaughter of the Emperor Caesar Augustus.
- His first act as prefect of Judea was to march into Jerusalem carrying images of the emperor on his standards. (Roman images declaring the emperor as god)
- He caused another riot by taking money from the temple treasury to build an aqueduct.
- It was said he slaughtered Jews on their way to make sacrifices to God in Jerusalem.
- Pilate was eventually banished and, in some traditions, believed to have committed suicide. Many believe this act was a result of his remorse for his role in Christ's death

Matthew 27:12-24 (NLT) ¹² But when the leading priests and the elders made their accusations against him, Jesus remained silent. ¹³ “Don’t you hear all these charges they are bringing against you?” Pilate demanded. ¹⁴ But Jesus made no response to any of the charges, much to the governor’s surprise. ¹⁵ Now it was the governor’s custom each year during the Passover celebration to release one prisoner to the crowd—anyone they wanted. ¹⁶ This year there was a notorious prisoner, a man named Barabbas. ¹⁷ As the crowds gathered before Pilate’s house that morning, he asked them, “Which one do you want me to release to you—Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” ¹⁸ (He knew very well that the religious leaders had arrested Jesus out of envy.) ¹⁹ Just then, as Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him this message: “Leave that innocent man alone. I suffered through a terrible nightmare about him last night.” ²⁰ Meanwhile, the leading priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas to be released and for Jesus to be put to death. ²¹ So the governor asked again, “Which of these two do you want me to release to you?” The crowd shouted back, “Barabbas!” ²² Pilate responded, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” They shouted back, “Crucify him!” ²³ “Why?” Pilate demanded. “What crime has he committed?” But the mob roared even louder, “Crucify him!” ²⁴ Pilate saw that he wasn’t getting anywhere and that a riot was developing. So he sent

for a bowl of water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood. The responsibility is yours!”

The question for us today is the same one Pilate asked—**“Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?”**

We can choose to...

- IGNORE Him.

Luke 23:6-7 (NLT) ⁶ *“Oh, is he a Galilean?” Pilate asked.* ⁷ When they said that he was, Pilate sent him to Herod Antipas, because Galilee was under Herod’s jurisdiction, and Herod happened to be in Jerusalem at the time.

- Allow our PAST MISTAKES to keep us from Christ.
- Allow the CROWD to dictate our response.

John 19:12 (NLT) *Then Pilate tried to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, “If you release this man, you are no ‘friend of Caesar.’ Anyone who declares himself a king is a rebel against Caesar.”*

- ACKNOWLEDGE Him and work to find TRUTH.
- BELIEVE and be CHANGED!

Life Groups

Scriptures that Relate:

Monday: Matthew 26
Tuesday: Matthew 27

Wednesday: Mark 11
Thursday: Mark 15

Friday: Luke 22
Saturday: Luke 23

Talk it Over:

1. How did Judas and Pilate become the “bad guys” of the Easter story? Did they deserve this classification?
2. What parallels can we find between the stories of Judas and Pilate and our own? (Greed, peer pressure, ambition, past mistakes, etc.)
3. What do you think Pilate really thought of Jesus as the Messiah stood before him and the crowd?
4. Why do you suppose Pilate ultimately submitted to the will of the angry crowd?
5. In what ways can you make your relationship with Christ stronger in this Easter Season?