



Key Verse: *“So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.”* – John 19:16 ESV

- **A damning admission**

*He said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” They cried out, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your king?” The chief priests answered, “**We have no king but Caesar.**” So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.”* – John 19:14-16 ESV

- Pilate is caving into the demands of the Sanhedrin
  - They have demanded the death of Jesus
  - So, Pilate mockingly presents Jesus as their King
  - But their rejection of Jesus is accompanied by a damning admission  
*“We have no king but Caesar!”*
  - Who said this?
    - The two chief priests: Annas (retired) and Caiaphas (current)
    - The office of high priest was the highest-ranking religious position in Israel

Highest office in the hierarchy of priests and Levites. It was the chief priest who alone went into the Most Holy Place of the temple once a year to make atonement for the sins of the whole nation of Israel. – *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*

- The high priest was a member of the tribe of Levi
- These men should have known better
  - They were priests who were educated in the Hebrew Scriptures
  - They were intelligent and well-trained

- But their response speaks volumes
  - They have no love affair with Caesar
  - But their positions were dependent upon his approval
  - These are self-aggrandizing men who seek only their self-interest
  - And they were completely blind to the truth
  - Consider what Jesus said about these men:

*You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. – John 8:44 ESV*

- They are guilty of cultural compromise and spiritual complacency

- Standing convicted
 

*“Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone...” – John 8.7 ESV*

  - Spoken by Jesus to the Pharisees, but It applies to us
  - Are we guilty of cultural compromise?
  - Do we exhibit spiritual complacency?
  - Have we too placed other “kings” over the King of kings?

- **A dishonorable coronation**

*Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. They came up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and struck him with their hands. – John 19:1-3 ESV*

- Don't miss the imagery here
  - Jesus is being given a mock coronation
  - Everything was meant to lampoon His declaration to be the King of the Jews
    - A crown of thorns
    - A cheap purple robe
    - A scepter made of reeds (Matthew 27:29)
    - And their mocking adulation: “Hail, King of the Jews!”
  - Even in their scorn, they were unknowingly identifying Jesus as the King
- Jesus' kingship was not of this world (18:36)
  - He needed no crown
  - He required no royal robes
  - He had no use for a scepter
  - His power and authority came from God

*“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” – Matthew 28:18 ESV*

*The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. – John 3:35 ESV*

*Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. – John 13:3 ESV*

- **Innocent, yet condemned**

*“See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him.” So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man.” When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out “Crucify him, crucify him.” – John 19:4-6 ESV*

- Pilate will repeatedly affirm Jesus’ innocence  
*...he went back outside to the Jews and told them, “I find no guilt in him.” – 18:38*

*“See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him.” – 19:4*

*Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.” – 19:6*

- This assertion by Pilate is significant
  - He is unwittingly affirming what the Scriptures had long predicted

*He was despised and rejected—  
a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.  
We turned our backs on him and looked the other way.  
He was despised, and we did not care.*

*Yet it was our weaknesses he carried;  
it was our sorrows that weighed him down.  
And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God,  
a punishment for his own sins!  
But he was pierced for our rebellion,  
crushed for our sins.  
He was beaten so we could be whole.  
He was whipped so we could be healed.  
All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.  
We have left God’s paths to follow our own.  
Yet the LORD laid on him  
the sins of us all. – Isaiah 53:3-6 NLT*

- Jesus was the **guiltless** dying on behalf of the **guilty**

*“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” – John 1:29 ESV*

*For the Messiah also suffered for sins once for all, an innocent person for the guilty, so that he could bring you to God. – 1 Peter 3:18 ISV*

- What the chief priests and the Sanhedrin were about to do was an abomination

*Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent – both are detestable to the LORD.*  
– Proverbs 17:15 NLT

- They demand Jesus’ death – “Crucify Him!”
- And unwittingly, they were demanding the very sacrifice their sins required
- The death of the Lamb without blemish

- **The accusations**

*“We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.”* – John 19:7 ESV

- The Jewish leaders’ objections were both political and religious
  - Up to this point the Jews had been focusing on the political objections
  - After this failed, they turned to the religious objections
- The Jewish leaders leveled seven indictments against Jesus
  1. Threatening to destroy the Temple (Matthew 26:61)
  2. Being a criminal (John 18:30)
  3. Misleading the nation (Luke 23:2)
  4. Forbidding them from giving tribute to Caesar (Luke 23:2)
  5. Stirring up the people (Luke 23:5)
  6. Claiming to be a king (Luke 23:2)
  7. Declaring himself to be the Son of God (John 19:7)

*“This sevenfold indictment witnessed to the completeness of their rejection of Him!”*  
– A. W. Pink

- Only two of these charges (6 & 7) had any semblance of truth
- The rest were lies or exaggerations
- For the Jews, the greatest charge was Jesus’ claim to be God
  - This was considered blasphemy according to the Mosaic Law
  - The penalty for this was death
  - They were going to kill Jesus for being exactly who He claimed to be

- **A petrified and over-confident Pilate**

*When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid.* – John 19:8 ESV

- Pilate was fearful
  - This whole affair had confused and shaken Pilate
  - He didn’t understand what was going on
  - He believed he was being forced to kill an innocent man

- And his wife had warned him about a dream she had concerning Jesus

*While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream." – Matthew 27:19 ESV*

- Pilate misjudged his authority
  - He was having a difficult time controlling the Sanhedrin
  - But he still believed he had power over Jesus

*He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have the authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" – John 19:9-10 ESV*

- But Pilate was only a pawn in God's grand redemptive plan

*Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin." – John 19:11 ESV*

- Pilate was operating under the authority of God Almighty
- All that he had done had been according to the sovereign will of God

*...for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, **to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.** – Luke 4:27-28 ESV*

- God is in complete control
- Every person in this passage was under the sovereign rule of God
- They were instruments in the hand of God as He sought to accomplish His will

- **Behold your King!**

- Just like Caiaphas in John 11, Pilate was unknowingly speaking truth
  - Jesus truly was the King of the Jews
  - Everything in this story continues to point to the reality of Jesus' identity
- John makes the kingship of Jesus the central theme moving forward
  - The "kingly" attire
  - The mocking adulation
  - Pilate's declaration and presentation of Jesus as the King of the Jews
- But the high priests and the Sanhedrin reject Jesus King
  - They refuse to acknowledge His rightful rule and authority
  - They reject the divinity and sovereignty of the Son of God

- The Jewish leaders boldly proclaim, “We have no king but Caesar”
  - They thought they were condemning Jesus to death
  - But in reality, they were condemning themselves

*“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, **but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.** And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.” – John 3:17-19 ESV*

- **What about us?**

- Are we innocent bystanders in this story?
- Do we get to stand back and cast stones at the religious leaders of Israel?
- Or are we complicit and culpable as well?
  - Making Caesar king
    - We too can be guilty of replacing Jesus as King
      - When we demand our own way
      - When we battle for our rights
      - When we place our faith in men
      - When we put our hope in the things of this world
  - Are we guilty of submitting to the rule of a king other than Jesus?

**For Further Discussion**

- What are the false kings in your life? Take a few minutes to consider the following statement and share what you might put in the blank: “I have no king but \_\_\_\_\_!”
- Pilate was a bit overconfident when it came to his authority. In what ways do you suffer from the same problem? Why is it so important that we understand and submit to the authority of Jesus in our lives?
- Peter reminds us that “the Messiah also suffered for sins once for all, an innocent person for the guilty, so that he could bring you to God” (1 Peter 3:18). Why is it so important that we recognize the innocence of Jesus and our own guilt?