

Jesus and the Skeptic

John 18:28-40

Pontius *Pilate* was the fifth governor of the Roman province of Judaea, serving under Emperor Tiberius from 26 to 37 CE. He is best known today for being the official who presided over the trial of Jesus and ordered his crucifixion.

I've broken this narrative into 3 sections, each section consists of a question asked by the skeptic and answered by Jesus.

“WHAT CHARGES ARE YOU BRINGING AGAINST THIS MAN?”

V. 28-32.--- 28 Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. 29 So Pilate came out to them and asked, “What charges are you bringing against this man?” 30 “If he were not a criminal,” they replied, “we would not have handed him over to you.” 31 Pilate said, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.” “But we have no right to execute anyone,” they objected. 32 This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

The Jewish leaders bring Jesus to Pilate hoping for a quick rubberstamp judgment, but Pilate throws a curveball. He asks about the charges. They avoid the question. They had already made up their mind. He passes the responsibility back to them. They show their true motive. They aren't looking for justice and they know they have faulty reasons, ... they want Jesus crucified.

Many find all kinds of reasons to discard the message of Jesus. The Jewish leaders were guilty of this very thing. Some are simply looking for excuses to justify their behavior.

Can Jesus be trusted?

“Christianity does not stand or fall on the way Christians have acted throughout history or are acting today. Christianity stands or falls on the person of Jesus, and Jesus was not a hypocrite. He lived consistently with what He taught, and at the end of His life He challenged those who had lived with Him night and day, for over three years, to point out any hypocrisy in Him. His disciples were silent, because there was none. Since

Christianity depends on Jesus, it is incorrect to try to invalidate the Christian faith by pointing to horrible things done in the name of Christianity.”

The Robber next to Jesus on the Cross recognized Jesus' innocence. He said to the other dying robber. “We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong” ([Luke 23:41](#)).

Even the demons testify to the character of Jesus- “What have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know who you are-the Holy One of God! ([Mark 1:24](#)).”

Peter wrote. “Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth” ([1 Peter 2:22](#)).

John. “And you know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him there is no sin ([1 John 3:5](#)).”

Paul. “For he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).”

You can trust His message, because most importantly, you can trust Him.

The second question presented by Pilate is found in verses 33-37. Standing eye to eye with Jesus, Pilate asks a question that resonates at the heart of every skeptic, He asks Jesus **ARE YOU A KING?**

V. 33 Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” 34 “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?” 35 “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?” 36 Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.” 37 “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

In the first 3 verses of this section Pilate asks Jesus 3 questions in rapid fire.... Are you king of the Jews? Am I a Jew?

And in **v. 35** Pilate asks a pivotal question that Jesus answers with glorious insight,.. **what have You done?**

Of course, He was without sin, never doing wrong against God or man. He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, calmed the storm, walked on the water, fed the multitude, defeated demons, and raised the dead. He fearlessly confronted corruption. And the list goes on.

In contrast to the kingdoms of this world, the kingdom of Jesus *originates* in heaven (**My kingdom is not of this world**)

In contrast to the kingdoms of this world, the kingdom of Jesus has *peace* for its foundation (**If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight**)

“But now my kingdom is from another place.” Romans *thought* they knew about kingdoms. What Jesus knew was that His kingdom – though **not of this world** – was mightier than Rome and would continue to expand and influence when Rome passed away.

Earthly kingdoms are based upon force, pride, the love of human praise, the desire for domination, and self-interest – all displayed by Pilate and the Roman Empire.

The heavenly kingdom, exemplified by Jesus and the cross, is based on love, sacrifice, humility, and righteousness – and is *to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Gentiles foolishness* ([1 Corinthians 1:23](#)).

The Kingdom of Jesus stands in stark contrast to the values and pursuits of our the kingdom of the world

If Jesus is King, then we owe Him our ultimate allegiance, and this will threaten your way of life, the other kings you serve, and our very way of seeing the world.

([1 Timothy 6:13](#)). The *good confession* of Jesus was that He was a king, His kingdom came from heaven, and that it was a kingdom of eternal truth in contrast to earthly power.

1 Timothy 6:15 which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

Mark 8:35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and for the gospel will save it.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

V 38 “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him. 39 But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release ‘the king of the Jews’?” 40 They shouted back, “No, not him! Give us Barabbas!” Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

What is truth: Pilate probably did not mean that there was no such thing as truth, but that there was no **truth** in the kind of spiritual kingdom Jesus represented.

What is truth: Many in our day ask Pilate’s question, but from a different perspective. They think there is no *true truth* about God; there is only *my truth* and *your truth* and one is as good as the other.

1 Cor 15:3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.