

# The Christian Arsenal

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JOHN 18:28-19:37

Last week in our lesson we saw Jesus arrested and His trial begin. We noted that He was subjected to two different trials:

**The Jewish trial**  
**The Roman trial...**

John doesn't give us a lot of details about the Jewish trial. But, we said last week that Jesus appeared before Pilate twice, Herod once, Annas once, Caiaphas once, and the San Hedrin once.

The bottom line is that although the Jews had gone through the motions of condemning Jesus for committing blasphemy, they had a problem...

By Jewish law...

Blasphemy was a capital offence, but **the Jews had no authority to carry out the death sentence**. The only way they could get Pilate to agree to have Jesus put to death was to accuse Him of an offense that the Romans took seriously.

The Romans didn't worship Jehovah God so why would they consider blasphemy against Jesus worthy of death? Well they wouldn't...So, the Jews had a dilemma before them. Let's see how they go about solving their problem.

We see a strange thing begin to take place with this man, Pilate. Historians tell us that he was extremely anti-Semitic. He had done many things to intentionally offend the Jews.

But, historians also tell us that by this time in his career, he had fallen into some sort of disfavor with Rome and so he considered his position in the Roman government to be in jeopardy. Because of this, he sought to placate the Jews so there would be no reason to release him from his job.

**And we're going to see this morning that Pilate, as the governor or procurator of Judea, was used by the high priests to do what they could *not* do.**

Notice in **verse 30**, they called Jesus a "**malefactor**" (KJV)...an "**evildoer**" (NAS)...a "**criminal**" (NIV)

- **a criminal...one who is engaged in evil!**

Let's see, Jesus had healed the sick, given sight to the blind, fed the multitudes, raised the dead, and taught the truth about God, the Father. No one could look at His life and find one bit of evil...**yet they called Him an evildoer...a common criminal!**

Don't miss the sovereignty of God as we go through this...Don't miss the numerous fulfilled Scriptures as we go along...

**(Don't read...)**

**In Verses 31-32...**We see that the word of Jesus was fulfilled. What was this word?

Well, back in **John 12**, the Lord Jesus spoke of being "**lifted up from the earth.**"

See, if the **Jews** had executed Jesus...if the Jews **could** have executed Jesus...they would have done so by stoning.

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Crucifixion was a **Roman** form of execution, not a **Jewish** form of execution.

Jesus must be crucified, not stoned! Can you see how God's sovereignty prevails?  
Nothing thwarts His plans...Nothing thwarts His purposes!

(Don't read...)

**Verses 33-40** tell us of the charge against Jesus that would finally stick. **Blasphemy** wouldn't stick in a Roman court of law...but **treason** would.

So, Pilate asks Jesus in **verse 33**... **"You are the King of the Jews?"**

And Jesus often answered a question with a question...**verse 34**...

Pilate must have wondered about this. Pilate must have thought,  
"If this man is a king, He's certainly a different kind of king than I've ever seen before."

I wonder what would have happened had Pilate said,  
"Well, Jesus, as a matter of fact others **did** tell me about You. I'd like to hear You tell me about Yourself."

**Would Pilate have believed Jesus? Would Pilate have given his heart to Jesus? Would Pilate then have done all in his power to stop the Jews from their course?**

**Of course, we know he could not stop the pre-determined plan of God, but his life may have been forever changed had he asked Jesus more than this surface question.**

(Don't read...)

**In Verse 36...we see Jesus say, "My kingdom is not of this world."**

Jesus made no attempt to hide from Pilate the fact that He was indeed a King and He indeed had a kingdom. But, His kingdom was not a **worldly** kingdom...not an **earthly** kingdom... It was **spiritual** kingdom. And He indeed had servants!

In fact, He could have called twelve legions of His heavenly servants...any one of whom could have wiped out the entire Roman army...

Well, I guess this confused Pilate even more.

Jesus **was** a King.  
Jesus **had** a kingdom...**but it was not of this world!**

There is so much sadness about all this...

It's so sad that these Jews didn't see past their desire for an earthly king to deliver them from Roman oppression.

It's so sad that they didn't accept Jesus for who He claimed to be...

- the Savior of the world...
- the promised Messiah...
- the One who could have brought them into His spiritual kingdom and then into His earthly kingdom to come!

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It's so sad that this man, Pilate, didn't stay around for the answer to his question, "**What is truth?**"

It's so sad that Pilate attempted to walk both sides of the street and even he attempted to wash his hands of all this, he still went down in history with "bloody hands."

It's so sad that Pilate didn't listen to his wife when she came to him as **Matthew** records, and told him to have nothing to do with this righteous man, Jesus.

It's so sad that the Jews preferred a real criminal, Barabbas, a real evildoer to be released in place of our Lord Jesus.

It's also sad that folks today have this same Truth presented to them at every turn...Truth is imparted in more ways this day and age than ever before...

RADIO, TAPES, TV, BOOKS, MASS CRUSADES...

## **But, it's still rejected!**

People have **always** sought their own way.

People have **always** sought to compromise.

People have **always** rejected Truth...even when He stands before them...longing to give them eternal life and make them a part of His kingdom.

By the way, John doesn't tell us this, but when Pilate sent Jesus to Herod **Luke** tells us that Herod was hoping Jesus would perform a miracle for him because he had heard of His signs and His miracles.

Isn't it sad that Herod desired more to see a miracle rather than to see Jesus?

And wouldn't it be a shame for you and me...if we know all the facts of this precious gospel...all the miracles and locations...and yet miss Jesus Christ? **Wouldn't it be sad if we miss being a part of His kingdom?**

## **John 19:1-3...**

The purpose of scourging was to get the one being scourged to say something that could be used against him.

I know you've all heard the horrors of scourging. But, I think we must never forget what our Lord went through for us.

Scourging **knocked the breath from the body.**

Scourging **laid open the skin.**

Scourging **ripped the flesh from the bone.**

Scourging sometimes **exposed the vital organs.**

Scourging sometimes **caused death.**

And if it didn't cause death, it **many times maimed its victims for life.**

And I believe what the Lord Jesus endured through this scourging says something to us about the strength of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. In His humanness, Jesus wasn't a wimp.

He was strong enough to take this torture without opening His mouth...not a word of complaint passed His lips...He simply endured this punishment, knowing there was much more to come, and He did it for you and for me.

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We also need to understand that the average Roman had little love for the average Jew. So, these soldiers decided to have a little fun with this “king” of theirs.

**One soldier may have said, “Well, a king certainly must have a crown.” So he wove thorns together and shoved it down on the precious head of the Lord Jesus.”**

**Another soldier may have said, “Well, a king must also have a robe!” So, they found perhaps a military cloak and they threw it on our Lord’s precious, bleeding back and shoulders.**

## **Verses 4-6...**

We see Pilate trying desperately to compromise with the Jews. He’s appealing to their sense of compassion...But, Pilate was fighting a losing battle, wasn’t he?

Three times we see Pilate say, “I find no guilt in this Man.”

However this statement fell on deaf ears. They were not interested in justice. They were only interested in crucifixion.

“Behold the Man!”

The chief priests beheld Jesus.

The temple officers beheld Jesus.

Caiaphas and Annas beheld Jesus.

And what they saw was man as God intended...man inhabited by God!

Each one of us responds to Jesus one of two ways. We behold Jesus and we cry out “crucify Him” or we cry out “crown Him.”

There never has been a middle ground. Pilate would soon find that out for himself. But, first Pilate attempts to shift the responsibility... “Take Him and crucify Him yourselves...”

**But, we can’t shift the responsibility. When it comes to Jesus...each of us must take a stand!**

## **Verses 7-9...**

Don’t you hear folks say that Jesus never claimed deity? That’s the test of a true faith and a false one. Cults today will say that Jesus never claimed to be God!

**But, this is exactly what had infuriated the Jews! They knew He had claimed to be the Son of God...but He also had claimed to be one with the Father!**

This claim of theirs sent Pilate back into the Praetorium again...

Remember, this man, Pilate, was a pagan. He worshiped, as all Romans did, many gods.

So, he must be thinking by now...

“Well, what if this man really is a god? What if it’s true?”

These were superstitious folks. According to **Matthew** Pilate had already been sent a message by his wife that she had had a troubling dream about Jesus.

Why do you suppose Jesus didn’t answer Pilate?

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Well, what do you suppose Pilate would have done with any additional truth from Jesus? He had already proclaimed the innocence of Jesus,

But,

He had also had Jesus scourged...and he had stood by while Jesus was slapped and humiliated.

Is this the way you treat an innocent man?

No! Truth was beyond Pilate's comprehension. Pilate had not acted on the truth He already had...what good would it do to reveal more to him?

## **Verse 10...**

Pilate did have authority, but he had relinquished that authority to the compromise he was involved in.

Pilate had made himself a prisoner...he was captive of his own fear that these Jews would make trouble for him in Rome!

## **Verse 11...**

Pilate's authority came from Caesar, but both Pilate's and Caesar's authority came from God!

Who is this one who has the greater sin? And what does this mean?

**Are there degrees of sin?**

**Are there degrees of guilt?**

**Are there degrees of punishment?**

YES! Jesus told a parable in **Luke 12** about folks who did and did not know the will of the master. Jesus said that those who knew the will of their master but didn't do it, would receive greater punishment than those who didn't do the will of their master because they didn't know it.

**He said that those who know more are held more accountable. And He said that those who don't know as much are held less accountable.**

Jesus said, ***"To whom much is entrusted, much is required."***

**The unbeliever in dark Africa will be held much less accountable than the unbeliever in America.**

Think about it...

Who had the power to see that these charges were dropped or pressed?

Who had delivered Jesus up to Pilate?

Caiaphas had!

Caiaphas knew the Scriptures and he had been given every opportunity to examine the evidence.

Caiaphas had made sure that Jesus had not received a fair trial!

Pilate, on the other hand, was a spiritually blind person...a pagan. But, Caiaphas was a Jew with a vast knowledge of Scripture. He knew all the prophecies concerning the Messiah.

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**Therefore, it was Caiaphas, not Pilate, who had the greater sin.**

**NEVER FORGET THIS PRINCIPLE!**

God holds folks accountable for what they know and don't act upon!

**Verses 12-16...**

It seems that Jesus' words affected Pilate at least momentarily. And we see him trying to compromise again. Pilate wants it both ways!

And we see the Jews choosing Caesar as their king...over the Son of God! **These folks didn't love Caesar...they hated Caesar!**

So, now Pilate was forced to make a choice. Would he stand for Jesus? Or would he bend to the Jews?

Think about it... **Judas sold Jesus for money...**

**Caiaphas sold Jesus out of religious jealousy...**

**Pilate sold Jesus in order to hang on to his job...**

**Verses 17-22...**

The Lord Jesus had been both physically and mentally tortured...

We know that His hands were nailed to the crossbeam.

His feet were nailed to the upright of the cross.

There was a projection of wood so that He could push himself up to get a breath of air.

**This actually prolonged the agony...**

It's impossible to even imagine how horrible this must have been, isn't it? Our Lord Jesus, the sinless Savior, hanging on a cross for you and me!

It's an overwhelming thing to me that He would love me that much! I hope we never take that love for granted. I hope we never get over the wonder of that love!

Crucifixions always took place so they would be seen by many people. They were to be an example to those who saw them.

And many more people than usual would be in Jerusalem for Passover...people came from all over to be there...

Because of this, the inscription was in different languages.

In that day,

Hebrew was the language of the **Jew...**

Latin was the language of the **Romans...**

Greek was the language of the **educated...**

The Jews didn't like this inscription, did they? They wanted it to read "**I am** the King of the Jews" (**NAS**) or "that He **claimed** to be the King of the Jews." (**NIV**)

Pilate must have been weary of the whole thing by this time...

Pilate said, "**What I have written I have written.**"

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Well, we can finally find something to applaud Pilate for, can't we?

Do you see just a little "poetic justice?" This was probably the only satisfaction Pilate had gotten out of this whole business!

## **Verse 23-24...**

Only the outer garments were divided. The custom of the day was for the men assigned to do the actual work at a crucifixion to be rewarded by claiming the clothes of the victim. They usually simply just divided the garments...but they didn't want to divide this one without seams...

I wonder who had woven this garment for Jesus...was it Mary? Or was it one of His sisters?

**Little did these soldiers know that by casting lots for this garment that they were fulfilling prophecy that had been written 1,000 years before!**

You see...God is still in control here! Not one word of God will ever fail! EVER!

## **Verses 25-27...**

I believe there were many things about all this that Mary had not understood! I don't believe Mary knew from the beginning all that would happen...

But, she must have remembered that  
many years before, a man named Simeon had prophesied  
that **a sword would one day pierce her own soul.**  
And today she deeply understood what the old man had meant.

And we see Jesus, in all His pain and suffering, making provision for His mother. The disciple mentioned here is thought to be John, the apostle.

Joseph apparently had died because nothing was written about Joseph since Jesus' childhood.

Jesus knew His brothers and sisters were not believers at this time. Some and maybe all would later accept Him as Lord and Savior and do great works for His kingdom. But here, we see Jesus wanting His mother to be taken care of by one who had followed Him and loved Him for who He claimed to be.

Doesn't this also tell us that many times spiritual bonds are more binding than natural ties? Don't we sometimes see that in our very own lives?

## **Verses 28-30...**

More Scripture is fulfilled here...

**"I thirst..."**

Can you see the irony?

The Creator of the rivers, the streams, the lakes, the oceans, and the seas... is thirsty!

The One who provided water to the children of Israel in the wilderness is thirsty!

The One who turned water into wine is thirsty!

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Do you think that Jesus suddenly had lost the power to do the things we just mentioned? No, Jesus chose to hang on a cross with parched lips in order to do the will of God...in order to fulfill His Word...in order to save you and me!

"It is finished..." This phrase in the Greek means:

"...it is **made an end**"... "it is **paid in full**"... "it is **performed**"...  
"it is **accomplished**"...

**What** would we be and **where** would we be if Jesus had not **finished** all these things? **If He had not finished what He had started? If He had decided He couldn't go through all the pain and suffering?**

Praise God! He **did** pay our sin debt.

Notice the last phrase... "**He bowed His head...**"

His head didn't simply fall forward because He was out of control...He bowed His head!

Remember what He had said,

**"I lay down My life, that I might take it up again. No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down Myself.**

**I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again."**

Jesus submitted willingly to the Father's will!

**Verses 31-34...**

What is the significance of the breaking of the legs of one who is being crucified?  
It hastened death!

The whole weight of the body, because it was no longer supported by the legs, dropped down and the lungs could no longer function. Death was hastened by asphyxiation!

The Jews wanted to get these men buried before Passover!

**They were still concerned with what defiles a man outwardly and they've just put to death the One who could cleanse them inwardly!**

They broke the legs of the two thieves in order to hasten their death...But, when they came to Jesus, He was already dead. **What does that tell us?**

Well, I hate to repeat myself, but I truly believe it bears repeating...

**Jesus was in control even to the end.** He gave up His spirit when the sin debt was paid...not a moment sooner or later!

"blood and water"...

Some commentators explain this by saying that the **heart of Jesus ruptured...**

Some say it pointed to two ordinances of the church...  
**the blood of the Lord's Supper**

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## and the water of baptism...

Some say the **blood symbolized remission**... "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins..."  
And the **water symbolized purification**.

Which is it? I don't know. We can just add this to our long list of questions to ask when we get to heaven, can't we?

### (Don't read...)

In **Verse 35**...

John emphasizes more than once that he was there!

### **Verses 36-37**...

Scripture fulfilled again! Have you thought about this before?

Regardless of the desires of the Jews...  
Regardless of the desires of Pilate...

All the armies of Rome...

All the legions of Caesar **could not have broken a single bone!**

They didn't have enough mallets!  
They didn't have enough strength!  
They didn't have enough muscle to break the legs of the Lord Jesus!

For 1500 years, the Jews had been observing Passover. The lamb was **never** to have any bone broken. For all this time they had observed this Holy Day and had no idea of the meaning...the significance...the fact that it pointed to the crucifixion!

Another example of God's sovereignty:

The soldiers had received instructions to break the legs of Christ, but they did **not!**

The soldiers had **not** received instructions to pierce the Savior's side, yet they **did!**

Don't miss the accuracy of Scripture.

**Verse 36**... this has been fulfilled.

**Verse 37**... the word "fulfilled" is not there. Why? Because this prophecy is yet future. This is from **Zechariah** and *the prophet was speaking of the end times*.

One day, the Jews will look upon Him whom they pierced! The veil will finally be lifted! They will see that Jesus was and is indeed their Messiah!

We're going to have to stop here. The crucifixion is over. But, the gospel, according the letter Paul wrote to the Corinthians, is the **death, burial and resurrection** of the Lord Jesus Christ.