



WEEKLY CHRISTIAN FOCUS

Greetings everyone.

God bless you. This week we start off looking at the strange title: **'Pilate and the Jews'**!

I hope to also move into another edition called 'Jesus and the Jews!' I believe you will find this mini-series very enlightening.

Pilate himself is not an 'easy' person to fully figure out. I will offer my final opinion at the end, about him among several contradictory opinions by scholars over Millennia.

Let's first start off with minimal key information about Pontius Pilate and this will include links at the end.

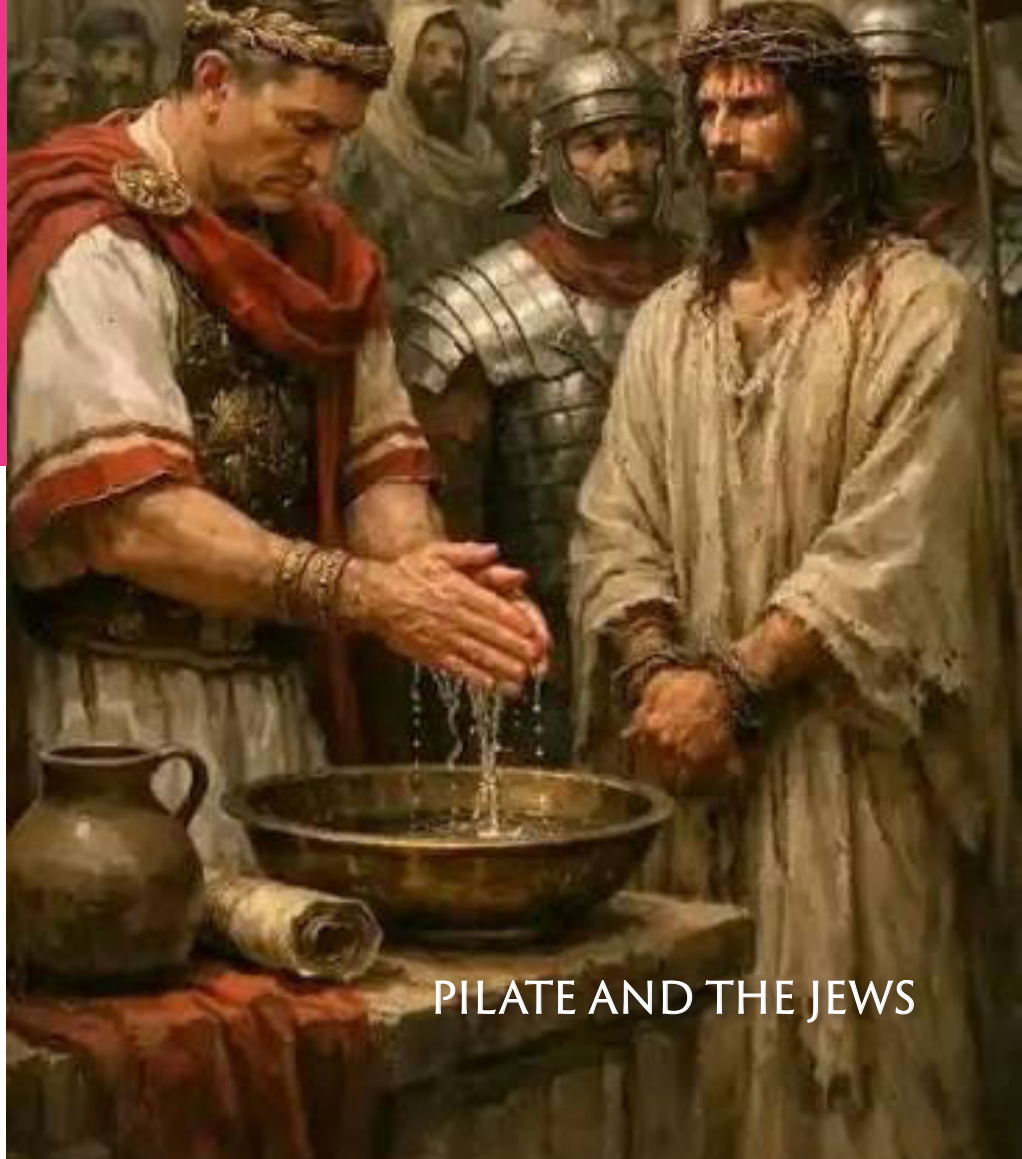
We find out the following about the Roman officer.

Pontius Pilate was an Equestrian (the mid-level Roman noble class) appointed by Emperor Tiberius



to serve as the Prefect (Governor) of Judea from 26 to 36 AD. He answered directly to the higher-ranking Legate of Syria, who in turn reported to the Emperor.

This certainly shows us that the Romans were quite an organised and methodical people. So we see him having been given power by the Emperor over all of Judea! Quite a big and challenging job, I would imagine.



PILATE AND THE JEWS

Pilate began his commission as Governor over the Jews in Judea around A.D.26. Obviously when we go to another country as either a missionary, or a business person or in the military it is going to take you some months to adapt to the huge changes of culture. Judea was no different.

It does not seem that Pilate particularly liked the Jews of that time, in fact one could excuse him, since these were the same humans who were about to reject their own Messiah, so as a generation they were according to Jesus Christ Himself, a wicked generation and that upon them, was going to come 'all the blood of God's prophets and righteous men; that had ever been there!

Matthew 23: 35

(Jesus speaking) So that upon your heads may come all the blood of the righteous (those who correspond to the divine standard of right) shed on earth, from the

blood of the righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar [of burnt offering].

36 Truly I declare to you, all these [[n]evil, calamitous times] will come upon this generation.

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, murdering the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a mother fowl gathers her brood under her wings, and you refused!

So if Christ had such a hard time with them, it is not surprising that Pilate, a mere human, was even less 'successful'. Apparently he did the following one time:

Luke 13:1-33

There were present at that season some that told him (Jesus) of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?

3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Pilate is also having been recorded as putting down very violently a Samaritan rebellion against the Romans, at Mount Gerizim. See the link below; this appears to have been Pilate's last major act as governor, before being ordered by His Legate in Syria, to return to Rome to explain himself to the Emperor in AD 36. Yikes!

What I learned and feel about Pilate.

1. I have been reading Luke chapters 23 and 24, it has been a very moving time for me, and I have especially been deeply touched by all Jesus endured in those last 24 hours of his life.

But before that terrible suffering finally kicked in, we see Pilate's



main interaction with the Jewish leaders. In this time of reading the Lord showed me that Pilate, one could say, zealously defended Jesus Christ. I had not seen this so clearly before,

If you will bear with me I will show you this amazing pattern we find throughout this chapter of Luke 23. The pattern is this:

1. The Jewish elders and Priests accuse Jesus to Pilate. (This is after they had been interrogating Jesus and slapping him around half the night since his arrest in Gethsemane).
2. Firstly Pilate speaks to Jesus himself (one time only)

3. Pilate delivers his judgement of 'not guilty' on Jesus Christ.
4. The Jewish elders and quite a big crowd, have a big push back against Pilate
5. The pattern repeats itself.
6. Finally Pilate gives up and yields to the screeching and screaming and shouting and belligerence of the Jews.
7. Here are the examples of this:

Luke 23 Then the whole assembly of them got up and conducted [Jesus] before Pilate.

2 And they began to accuse Him, asserting, We found this Man perverting (misleading, corrupting, and turning away) our nation and forbidding to pay tribute to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One), a King!

3 So Pilate asked Him, Are You the King of the Jews? And He answered him, [It is just as] you say. [I Am.]

4 And Pilate said to the chief priests and the throngs, I find no guilt or crime in this Man. (PILATE'S FIRST DEFENCE OF JESUS)



5 But they were urgent and emphatic, saying, He stirs up and excites the people, teaching throughout all Judea—from Galilee, where He began, even to this place. (PUSH BACK)

Then Pilate sends Jesus to Herod who was visiting Jerusalem at the time. After returning: the situation continues:

13 Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the

people,

14 And said to them, You brought this Man before me as One Who was perverting and misleading and turning away and corrupting the people; and behold, after examining Him before you, I have not found any offense (crime or guilt) in this Man in regard to your accusations against Him;

15 No, nor indeed did Herod, for he sent Him back to us; behold, He has done nothing deserving of death.

16 I will therefore chastise Him and [d]eliver Him amended (reformed, taught His lesson) and release Him. (PILATE'S SECOND DEFENCE OF JESUS)

17 For it was necessary for him to release to them one prisoner at the Feast.

18 But they all together raised a deep cry [from the depths of their throats], saying, Away with this Man! Release to us Barabbas! (MORE PUSH BACK)

19 He was a man who had been thrown into prison for raising a riot in the city, and for murder.

20 Once more Pilate called to them, wishing to release Jesus; (PILATE'S THIRD DEFENCE OF JESUS, and look here, the Scripture clearly says that Pilate wanted to release Jesus.)

21 But they kept shouting out, Crucify, crucify Him! (THE JEWS PUSH BACK EVEN LOUDER AND HARDER)

22 A third time he said to them, Why? What wrong has He done? I have found [no offence or crime or guilt] in Him nothing deserving of death; I will therefore chastise Him [[f]in order to teach Him better] and release Him. (PILATE'S LAST DEFENCE OF JESUS)

23 But they were insistent and urgent, demanding with loud cries that He should be crucified. And their voices prevailed (accomplished their purpose). (THE JEWS FINAL PUSH-BACK AND

‘VICTORY’ FOR THEM).

24 And Pilate gave sentence, that what they asked should be done. (PILATE GIVES UP AND SURRENDERS)

25 So he released the man who had been thrown into prison for riot and murder, for whom they continued to ask, but Jesus he delivered up to be done with as they willed.

26 And as they led Him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross and made him carry it behind Jesus.

No turning back from this point.

We must remember that Pilate was the key element in the crucifixion. But it was actually God who gave Pilate the authority over all this. There are other sections of the Gospel which cover this same situation, another significant part about the Jews, Pilate and Jesus is found here in John 19!

John 19:8

So, when Pilate heard this said, he was more alarmed and awe stricken and afraid than before.

9 He went into the judgment hall again and said to Jesus, Where are You from? [To what world do You belong?] But Jesus did not answer him.



10 So Pilate said to Him, Will You not speak [even] to me? Do You not know that I have power (authority) to release You and I have power to crucify You?

11 Jesus answered, You would not have any power or authority whatsoever against (over) Me if it were not given you from above. For this reason the sin and guilt of the

one who delivered Me over to you is greater.

12 Upon this, Pilate wanted (sought, was anxious) to release Him, but the Jews kept shrieking, If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar! Anybody who makes himself [out to be] a king sets himself up against Caesar [is a rebel against the emperor]!

Jesus summed it up for Pilate, (perhaps to even comfort him, strange as it may seem! As we see in verse 11 second sentence directly above).

Let's make a final summary:

We know that Pilate did not wish to crucify Jesus. The very furthest he wanted to go was to flog him according to Roman justice and then release Jesus.

Finally after quite a big effort, we can say Pilate was heavily pressured to deliver up Jesus to His death.



Jesus basically tells Pilate, ‘it’s OK, you have sin, but yours is not the biggest sin in this situation’.

That is my take on Pilate in the crucifixion story, and so the crucifixion begins.

We don’t know all the behind the scenes invisible work that God did to bring Jesus to the earth, have him grow up and finally bring the ‘right’ man, Pilate to deliver him up to die for us. Was Pilate weak, maybe so, but if he hadn’t been put there by God Himself, the crucifixion may not have happened.

Even his wife warned him not to deliver Jesus up to the Jews,



as the decision came to release either Barabbas or Jesus to the cross. (Matthew 27:19) But Pilate succumbed to fear.

On the cross, Jesus prayed ‘Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do’, as the ROMANS, the Gentiles with no background of faith were killing Him. For them Jesus asked His Father’s mercy.

Jesus won his last soul on the cross with the repentant thief at his side.

And what happened to Pilate after all this?

Historically, we know he continued in the country for almost 3 years more. He was then ordered to Rome, and that’s where the picture gets murky and harder to trace. These are the options as far as I know of what ‘history’ offers to us:

1. He became a believer in Jesus Christ along with his wife. They are both revered among parts of the Ethiopian Orthodox church, and the Coptic Church. He later became revered by other branches of historians in the middle ages. He is also mentioned in the ‘Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds. (links below)
2. He committed suicide due to financial and career pressures, in either Vienne, France or in Mount Pilatus in Switzerland, through pressure exerted upon him by Emperor Caligula. This would have possibly been 3-5 years after the crucifixion.

3. History has no definite proof of his final death or location. Perhaps God allowed it this way. Pilate had played his part.

In my opinion, and speaking with absolute zero historical proof, I suggest Pontius Pilate did become a believer in Christ, because I know how merciful the Lord is.

His wife was already a convert of sorts, and it makes pure spiritual sense to me that by the influence of all he had gone through himself, that he found a way through the sweet influence of the Holy Spirit

and the spread of the gospel, that he did become a believer, how he died or where, I don't know. We will find out one day! Praise the Lord.

Until next week,

Love in Jesus,

Jerry for the WCF Team



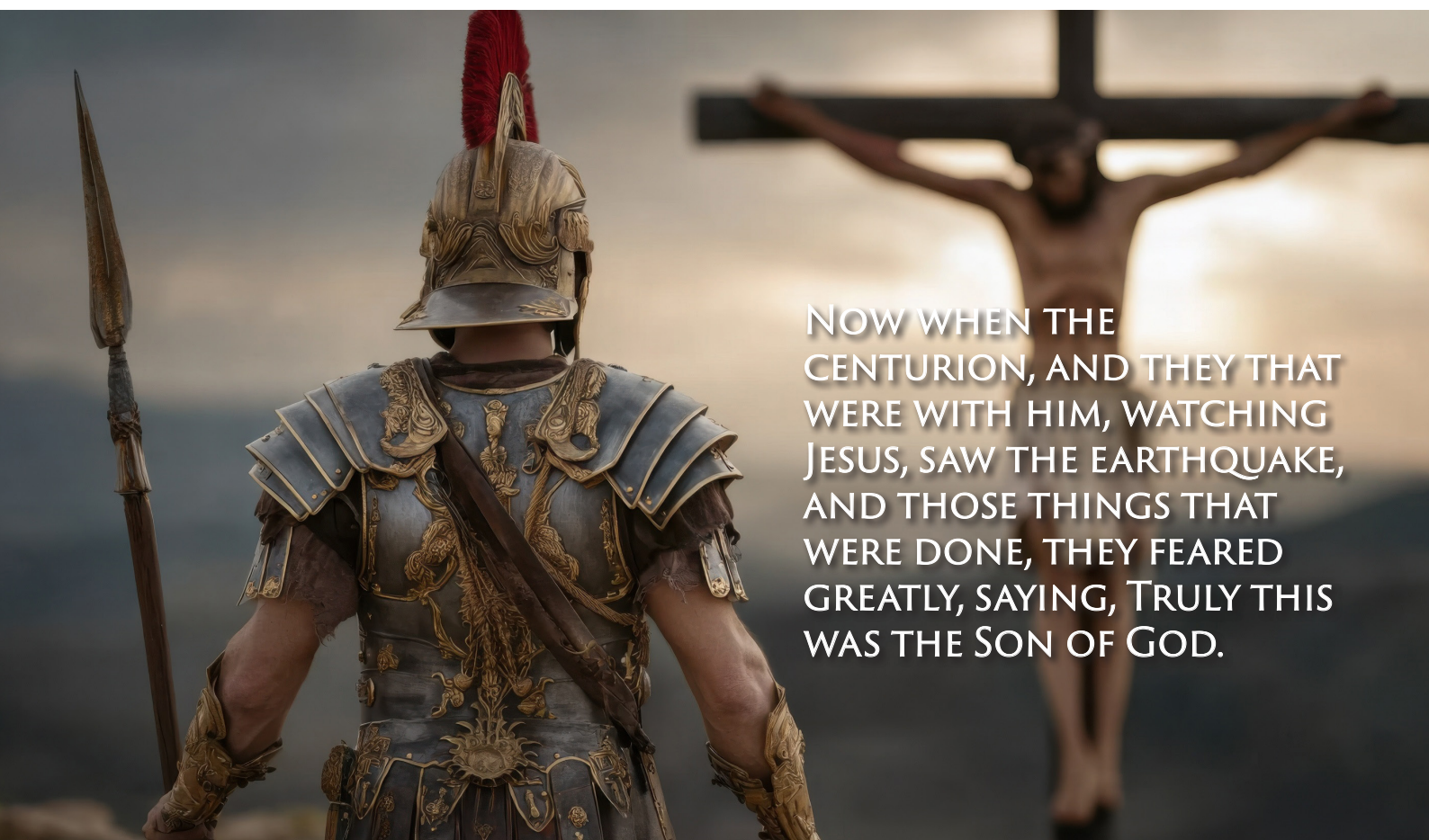
[Pontius Pilate](#) - Wikipedia a well written piece showing the two or three opinions about Pilate in history both secular and Christian.

[Pilate against the Samaritans.](#)

Google search.

[The Tragedy of Pontius Pilate](#)

- Christian Courier. Interesting information, however I don't believe the third to last paragraph in this explanation.



NOW WHEN THE CENTURION, AND THEY THAT WERE WITH HIM, WATCHING JESUS, SAW THE EARTHQUAKE, AND THOSE THINGS THAT WERE DONE, THEY FEARED GREATLY, SAYING, TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD.

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