

Judgment Without A Crime

The Jews bring Jesus to Pilate to be judged. The difficulty involved in their task is that according to Roman law, Jesus needed to be guilty of something that could be considered a breaking of Roman law. The crafty Jews come up with a charge that will seemingly leave them innocent of judging and killing Jesus and throw all of the blame upon Pilate. Thus, the Jews tell Pilate, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King" (Luke 23:2).

Now appreciate the true politician seen in the crafty, worldly wisdom of Pilate.

Pilate apparently looks at Jesus and sees a rather ordinary looking man, just as the prophet described: "He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is not beauty that we should desire Him" (Isaiah 53:2). Additionally, Jesus had been beaten, berated, humiliated and rejected by the very people of whom He was claiming to be king (Isaiah 53:3, Mark 15:2). Compounding matters are the facts that Jesus is not wearing royal clothing and until recently (within the past few years) was unknown to the Jews and to the Roman government, including Pilate. No doubt, Pilate is puzzled, befuddled, and confused to say the least and perhaps such is why he asked the question as he does, "Are you the King of the Jews?" (Mark 15:2)

Jesus explains His kingship to the likely bewildered Pilate. "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here" (John 18:36). Pilate's bewilderment seems to continue, as Pilate once again asks Jesus the same question, "Are you a king then?" (John 18:37) Had Jesus responded that He were indeed a physical king over a physical kingdom, Pilate may have had reason to be concerned. However, Jesus throws a truthful wrench into the cogs which prompts Pilate to tell the Jews, "I find no fault in Him at all" (John 18:38).

Although Pilate probably had a degree of knowledge regarding the Old Law, his lack of true knowledge regarding who Jesus was and what He was there to establish is seen in what he does. Pilate uses his political prowess and throws the blame back on the Jews by releasing Barabbas according to a custom the Jews themselves had put in place (John 18:39-40). Pilate's rule and the rule of any other man who sits in a position of earthly authority exist only at the will of God (Romans 13:1), which Pilate failed to see. True authority now, and then belong to God, Who gave full authority over man to Christ (Matthew 28:18, Ephesians 1:20-22).

The failure of the Jews and Pilate to recognize and submit to the authority of Jesus Christ was spiritually a costly mistake. Let us each purpose not be guilty of the same.