

Jesus Before Pilate

Matthew 27:1-31

by Don Falkos

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Early in the morning the religious leaders reached the decision to put Jesus to death. They took him to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea.

Judas, who had betrayed Jesus, was filled with remorse. He went to the chief priests and returned the money he had been paid. Then he went out and hanged himself.

Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus replied, "Yes, I am."

When the chief priests made their accusations against him, Jesus didn't say a word. Pilate was amazed at his silence.

It was Pilate's custom at festival time to release a prisoner, whoever the people asked for. At the time there was a notorious prisoner named Barabbas, and Pilate knew Jesus had been arrested because the religious leaders were envious of him, so he gave the people a choice, "Do you want me to release Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?"

Just then Pilate's wife sent him a message, "That man is innocent. I've seen it in a dream."

The chief priests incited the crowd to ask for Barabbas.

Pilate asked, "Then what should I do with Jesus?"

The crowd shouted, "Crucify him!"

"Why? What crime has he committed?"

They just shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

A riot was developing. So Pilate washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood."

The people yelled back, "Let his blood be on us and our children!"

Pilate released Barabbas. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified. The soldiers mocked him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" They beat him and spit on him. Then they led him off to be crucified.