

## THE GOSPEL OF

## JOHN

Crowned  
the King  
of Israel

## INTRODUCTION

John 19:1-16

If you have ever read an introduction to a Greek play, you have seen the Latin phrase *dramatis personae*, which means “people of the drama.” Under it were listed the choruses, characters, or groups of characters. The *dramatis personae* in John 19:1-16 would make a Greek playwright pale with envy. There are the religious leaders, so blinded by their hatred for Jesus that they do not see the deadly inconsistency of their own lives. They are so scrupulous about the smallest religious details that they will not defile themselves by entering Pilate’s residence, and yet they are so unified and intent on trapping Pilate into performing a judicial murder that when questioned they answer with the unison of a Greek chorus, “Crucify Him! . . . Let his blood be on us and on our children!” (Matthew 27:23-25). These religious men are so perverted that they prefer the release of a notorious murderer to the sinless Christ and lower themselves to crass political blackmail in order to gain their end.

Also on the list is Pontius Pilate, a representative of Imperial Rome, the greatest power on earth. He was a man to whom success meant everything. He was a native of Seville and came to his position through a fortuitous chain of events. First, he joined the legions of Germanicus, participating in the wars on the Rhine. Then he journeyed to Rome where he met and married Claudia Procula, the youngest daughter of Julia, who was the daughter of Emperor Augustus.

The last of the *dramatis personae* is Jesus, our matchless Christ. Description can never do him justice. He is the source and substance of the Eternal Song. Again, life is often not as it appears on the surface. Christ was not caught up on the tide of history and swept unwilling to his end, but Pilate was. While the tides of life swirled about Christ, he kept his course. On the other hand, Pilate, the man of the earth, the man who has set his mind on things below, was tossed about helplessly, like a twig, on the current of history. He lived according to the course of this world and was thus subject to it. He was proof that the one who fixes his mind on “earthly things” (Philippians 3:19) is not free.<sup>1</sup>

## OPEN IT

1. What is the first thing you would do as King/Queen of your own kingdom?

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<sup>1</sup> Hughes, R. Kent. *John: That You May Believe (Preaching the Word)*. Crossway. Kindle Edition.

# READ IT

John 19:1-16

## EXPLORE IT

2. What did Pilate do to try to appease the Jews?
3. What instilled fear in Pilate?
4. What does Jesus say to Pilate and how does Pilate respond?
5. What accusation do the Jews lobby against Pilate?
6. What title is ironically given to Jesus throughout this whole “trial”?

## APPLY IT

"If [Pilate] believed that Jesus was innocent, he should have let Him go. But he was afraid of the Jews. If they sent another bad report to Caesar, Pilate's career as governor and perhaps his life would be over. So, to save his career and his neck, he compromised his integrity."<sup>2</sup>

Convinced of Jesus' innocence, he tries to appease his Jewish counterparts by having Jesus flogged. Yet, "they will not be satisfied by anything other than Jesus' death. Indeed, they are aware that the charge they are bringing against him can have but one outcome if he is found guilty. Anyone not a Roman citizen found guilty of sedition could expect crucifixion."<sup>3</sup>

**7. How can Christians effectively strive to "live at peace with everyone" and not fall into the snare of "people pleasing"?**

**8. Of the three parts of the "dramatis personae" of this passage, who is truly free and who is truly enslaved? Take a minute to explain your thoughts.**

**Religious Leaders:**

**Pilate:**

**Jesus:**

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<sup>2</sup> Sermon by Steven Cole found at <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-97-friend-caesar-or-christ-john-1912-16>

<sup>3</sup> Carson, D. A.. The Gospel according to John (The Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC)) (p. 598). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.. Kindle Edition.

When their attempt to “play the system” doesn’t go as planned, the Jews change tactics and bring their own law concerning blasphemy into the “courtroom”, accusing Jesus of “making himself the Son of God”. This accusation instilled new fear into the heart of Pilate.

Many Roman officials were superstitious, believing that the gods come down and manifest themselves to men. So when Pilate hears that Jesus has made himself the Son of God, he becomes concerned (afraid) because if Jesus is a man connected with the divine, Pilate has just had him flogged and therefore has reason to fear that he could have wronged a divine man and brought judgment upon himself.<sup>4</sup>

**9. In what ways is Christianity similar and/or different from other religions and worldviews that believe that man must appease the gods to keep them happy?**

**10. How would a message such as salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone according to Scripture alone for the glory of God alone address the fears and concerns of a person like Pilate today?**

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p 599

In order to execute Jesus, the Jewish authorities make themselves out to be more loyal subjects of Caesar than the hated Roman official Pilate is. They thereby demonstrate their slavery not only to sin (8:34) but to the political thralldom they earlier disavowed (8:33).<sup>5</sup>

By vehemently insisting they have no king but Caesar, they are not only rejecting Jesus' messianic claims, they are abandoning Israel's messianic hope as a matter of principle, rejecting any claimant, and finally disowning the kingship of the LORD himself. Their repudiation of Jesus in the name of a pretended loyalty to the emperor entailed their repudiation of the promise of the kingdom of God, with which the gift of the Messiah is inseparably bound in Jewish faith, and Israel's vocation to be its heir, its instrument, and its proclaimer to the nations.<sup>6</sup>

**11. Why is the deception of earthly power and success so effective in drawing people away from the hope of the Messiah?**

**12. How is the ministry of our church calling people away from fleeting joys and enslavement to the world and calling people to the hope and joy found in Jesus' kingship?**

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<sup>5</sup> Sermon by Steven Cole found at <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-97-friend-caesar-or-christ-john-1912-16>

<sup>6</sup> Carson, D. A.. The Gospel according to John (The Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC)) (p. 605). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.. Kindle Edition.

The providence of God was remarkable in so ordering affairs that a man, flexible and yielding like Pilate, should be entrusted with power in Judea. Had it been a man firm and unyielding in his duty one who could not be terrified or awed by the multitude Jesus would not have been delivered to be crucified, Acts 2:23. God thus brings about his wise ends; and while Pilate was free, and acted out his nature without compulsion, yet the purposes of God, long before predicted, were fulfilled, and Jesus made an atonement for the sins of the world. Thus God overrules the wickedness and folly of men. He so orders affairs that the true character of men shall be brought out, and makes use of that character to advance his own great purposes.<sup>7</sup>

**13. How have you seen the providence of God in tangible ways in your own life?**

**14. It's been said that our theology (knowledge of God) should inform and influence our anthropology (knowledge of man). How does believing that God is sovereignly working out all things according to His good purposes influence how you view the world around you and live your life today?**

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<sup>7</sup> Barnes, Albert. "Notes on the Whole Bible" Found at <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/bnb/john-19.html>

Like Caiaphas before him, Pilate spoke better than he knew. The long-awaited king of the Jews stood before them, and they did not recognize him.<sup>8</sup>

**15. What comes to mind when you think about Jesus being King?**

**16. What difficulties might people have in willingly and joyfully submitting their lives to Jesus as King?**

**17. What are some tangible ways that you are honoring Jesus as King in your own life? Are there areas of your life you need to surrender to Jesus' authority?**

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<sup>8</sup> Carson, D. A.. The Gospel according to John (The Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC)) (p. 605). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.. Kindle Edition.

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