

## The Trial

### Three Days

The Sanhedrin, with the High Priest Caiaphas, presented witnesses against Jesus. No two witnesses, however, could agree. Finally, Caiaphas asked Jesus, *"Whether 'You are the Christ, the Son of God.'* Jesus said to him, *'You have said it yourself'"* (Matthew 26:63-65). With that, they sent Jesus to the Romans for sentencing for declaring to be the Son of God and King of Israel.

**The superior authority, bows to lesser** - Jesus indicated to Peter that the temple tax was due to Himself as the Son of God. To satisfy the tradition of the collection, however, He provided the required coin for both Himself and Peter (Matthew 17:24-27). A similar incident occurred at Jesus' baptism by John in the Jordan. The Son of God submitted to a baptism that He did not need because *"in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness"* (Matthew 3:15). Jesus also submitted to the lesser authority of Rome to complete the sacrifice for the sins of the world. Only Rome could carry out what the chief priests wanted, as the Jews said to Pilate, *"We are not permitted to put anyone to death"* (John 18:31).

**The Good Confession** - *"Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor questioned Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' And Jesus said to him, 'It is as you say'"* (Matthew 27:11). For the Jews, this should be enough of the statement Jesus made, but for the rest of the world, Mark includes more. *"Pilate said to Him, 'So You are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice'"* (John 18:37). Many years later, Paul wrote to Timothy and referred to Jesus' statement as *"The good confession before Pontius Pilate"* (1 Timothy 6:13). Christians make a continual confession that Jesus is the Lord and Christ, the savior, and our King.

**Pilate knew** - Jesus was no threat to Rome. Jesus did not desire to take Rome's earthly authority nor form an armed rebellion against Rome. Pilate had four prisoners at that time. Two were considered common thieves and not noteworthy. One was a notorious murder, and the fourth was the innocent Jesus. Considering that no one would want the evil Barabas, Pilate offered to turn either Jesus or Barabas free. The Jews chose evil over the good. Sometimes we do the same thing. At times, with or without thought, we push Jesus out of the way to do something He and our Father would not approve. That is the reason Jesus prepared for the verdict that Pilate would give.

**Maybe a Way Out** - Because the Roman Empire contained people honoring many different deities, the official position was to not interfere in religious matters. Therefore the Jews accused Jesus of crimes against the Empire. They said, *"We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King"* (Luke 23:2). In reality, He explained Moses' Law, told them to render to Rome what was due to Rome, and proved Himself to be the Christ. Pilate's response was simple, *"I find no guilt in this man"* (Luke 23:4). They insisted that from Galilee to Judea, Jesus stirred up the people, in essence, disturbed the peace of Rome. Pilate thought He found a way out when He heard the word Galilee and sent Jesus to Herod Antipas.

**Herod Wanted Miracles** - This Herod beheaded John the Baptist and thought that Jesus might be the resurrected John, and now wanted to satisfy his curiosity. *"Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was*

*hoping to see some sign performed by Him” (Luke 23:8). Herod was still hoping to witness things he had heard of but not seen. But Jesus would not even talk with him as John had done. “And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate” (Luke 23:11).*

**Crucify Him** - Pilate said again that both he and Herod found no guilt in Jesus, but the chief priests and elders incited the crowd to shout out to crucify Jesus. *“And he said to them the third time, ‘Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt demanding death; therefore I will punish Him and release Him.’ But they were insistent, with loud voices asking that He be crucified. And their voices began to prevail. And Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand be granted” (Luke 23:22-24).* Justice lost to mob rule.

### **How do you judge Jesus?**

**Like the Jews** - Jesus is not what I want in a savior.

**Like Herod** - He does not speak to me. There is nothing to enjoy.

**Like Pilate** - He is harmless but not worth the fight to free Him.

**What He is** - Savior, Redeemer, Lord and Christ, King of Kings!