

Behold Your King - Crucifixion

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, I don't know if you know this, but just recently there was a very public display of terrorist suspects in Russia who were tortured and then brought into the court.
- The images and the footage shocked people, but it was clear that Russia were not trying to hide what they did to these men. Well, similarly, in the first century, Rome did not try to hide what they did to those who were a threat against them. Instead, what they would do would be to publicly display what would become of you as a punishment for your crimes and as a deterrent for others.
- To some, it's too much. It's merciless. It's inhumane. Yet to others, it's what they deserve. It's not enough. They should die as well. Now, all of this, whether in Rome or whether in Russia, all of this is based on apparent crimes and guilt. But what if such a thing was done to an innocent man? What if it was not only done to an innocent man, but to a truly good man, to the best of us?
- What if it was done to a man who had never done anything wrong all his life? What if it was done to a man who had done more good than any other living person?
- [1 : 4 4] And what if this good and innocent man was actually a king? In John 19, it says, Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him, and the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns, and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. They came up to him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews, and struck him with their hands.
- Pilate went out again and said to them, See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him. So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe.
- And Pilate said to them, Behold the man. Behold the man. What was Jesus guilty of?
- According to those who hated him, he was doing too many miracles. That was what he was guilty of. John 11, 47, What are we to do?
- For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe him. The Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. His only fault was that he did too much good for other people.
- [3 : 1 2] But in the Gospels, it says that Pilate perceived that it was out of envy that they delivered him. It was not because of any guilt in Jesus. He had no sin.
- Rather, it was out of their own sinful, envious ambitions that they delivered their Messiah and their King to be crucified. You see, the fallen human nature simply wants to do what is right in their own eyes.
- All the while, we want to keep our hands clean, excusing our own conscience and hoping for plausible deniability.
- The Gospel writers don't go into all the details of the true horrors of Jesus' suffering, but history tells us what it was really like. It wasn't just the Jewish forty lashes minus one.
- No, the Roman scourging was far more brutal. Multiple strips of leather knotted with pieces of metal, so that when a criminal was whipped, it also tore their skin apart into strips.

[4 : 17] In fact, the Roman scourge was so brutal that this kind of flogging easily resulted in death. And the centurion in charge often had to halt it to keep the criminal alive long enough to be publicly crucified.

You see, the flogging could easily do the job itself, but it wasn't enough of a punishment for Rome. They had to put fear into their enemies, so they would halt it, and they would take them from inches within death so that they could then publicly crucify them.

Now, Pilate had already attempted to release Jesus, but to no avail. They wanted blood. You must understand that Pilate had a very checkered history with the Jews.

He would face riots before all of this many times, and because of that, he was already on thin ice with Emperor Tiberius. He was in a real precarious position here.

But he doesn't want to arbitrarily execute a person, even a Jewish man, without a fair trial. In some ways, this Roman governor is performing his God-given duties in a more honorable way than the chief priests are.

[5 : 35] But he cannot afford another riot. He cannot afford to face the repercussions from Caesar if another riot is on his hands.

And so he gives them some blood, at least more than enough blood, in the hopes that the sight of it would sober them up enough from their desires to crucify one of their own people.

But he told them in doing so that he finds absolutely no guilt in Jesus. And so he says to them, Behold the man!

Behold him! And what they beheld is described in Isaiah 52, verse 14. His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind.

Again in Isaiah 53, verse 3, He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not.

[6 : 42] Not only was he brutally tortured, he was also humiliated, made to wear a purple robe over his lacerated flesh, a crown of thorns thrust upon his head.

The soldiers mocked and ridiculed him. They were paying pretend homage while taking their turns to hit this half-dead innocent man.

Yet both with the Jewish and the Gentile authorities, Jesus made himself subject. As it's written, as we heard in Isaiah 50, I gave my back to those who strike.

I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. And so it's like in that moment, in that moment, Pilate forces Jesus' accusers to look at what their hatred has resulted in.

Now, pause for reflection. I imagine that we don't really want to behold the man. I don't know a single person who feels comfortable with actually beholding what our sin really does.

[7 : 55] Can you imagine beholding what your sin really does? Behold the man. Look at what our sin leads to.

And so Pilate, in effect, says, look at what this man has endured. Is it not enough? Behold the man. Are you not satisfied? I have found in him no guilt.

How could you possibly want him to suffer anymore? And the truth is, he shouldn't have suffered at all. He shouldn't have suffered at all. And so would there not be one single conscience awakened?

Would there not be one single heart that is moved when they behold the man? At the sight of his suffering, would there be any compassion for one of their own people? Would they sober up from being drunk with blood?

Would there be any cries for mercy among the crowds? When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, not for mercy, but they cried out, crucify him.

[9 : 06] Crucify him. And Pilate said to them, take him yourself and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him. But the Jews answered him, we have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the son of God.

There were no cries for mercy at the sight of Jesus, only cries to crucify him. And while Pilate found no guilt in him, the Jews accused him of a crime worthy of death, saying he made himself the son of God.

Just as he said to Pilate, for this purpose I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth, his crime was that he told the truth about who he is, the son of God.

He told the truth about who he was, and they wanted to kill him for it. With hard hearts and blind eyes, the thought that a man would make himself the son of God was too much for them.

But as Trevon Wax said, this was not just a man who made himself to be the son of God, this is the son of God who has made himself man.

[10 : 28] This is what Philippians 2 says, though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

We read on in John 19 when Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. He entered his headquarters again and he said to Jesus, where are you from?

But Jesus gave him no answer. And so Pilate said to him, will you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?

Jesus answered him, you would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore, he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.

Jesus already told Pilate that his kingdom is not from this world, and now, perhaps with the words of his wife in his mind and a growing fear about doing any wrong to Jesus.

[11 : 41] Pilate asks, Jesus, where are you from? But Jesus remains silent. Never, never has Pilate seen a man with such composure, such dignity, such strength and resolve, not pleading for mercy, not insisting on his own innocence, not even feeling the need to reply.

And it is deeply unsettling for the Roman governor. Why won't you speak? I have authority to release you or crucify you. Help me help you.

But Jesus has entrusted himself to a greater authority, for his food is to do the will of God. And it was the will of God to crush him, to be crushed for our iniquities.

Nevertheless, those who did this to him were accountable. See that Jesus declares that the Jewish leaders of God's people are guilty of the greater sin.

Now, he doesn't absolve Pilate of his part, but he says that his own people have a much greater sin. Pilate already sinned in scourging Jesus.

[12 : 56] After declaring him innocent. And Pilate would be guilty of sin again, giving in to the crowds and delivering Jesus to be crucified. However, his own people, one of his own disciples, the chief priests and the Pharisees, leading the nation under God, the high priest himself, have all out of greed and malice and envy delivered up a man who by many signs showed them in far greater light than Pilate who he really was.

He didn't hide from them who he was, both in word and deed, and therefore, they will be judged according to the light they received. Not only did they have the Scriptures and the feasts and the prophets which all pointed to Jesus, but it was to them that God sent his very Son, to them.

And the light shone greatly before them, so their sin is the greater sin. John 19 reads on, from then on, Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, if you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend.

Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar. Imagine the Jews saying that. So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and he sat down in the judgment seat at a place called the Stone Pavement and in Aramaic, Gabbatha.

But he didn't sit in the judgment seat to judge Christ. Now it was the day of preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour, and he said to the Jews, Behold your king.

[14 : 44] And they cried out, Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him! And Pilate said to them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priest says, We have no king but Caesar.

So they delivered him over to them to be crucified. What kind of king is Jesus? At this point, to Pilate, he's not a king that is a threat to Rome.

But even when the Jews were trying to blackmail Pilate with a threat of telling Caesar, Pilate all the more insisted on presenting Jesus as their king.

To the Jews, he wasn't a king that they wanted. In the ancient world, if a king was on the battlefield and his army was losing, it was standard practice for the king to leave his soldiers behind and escape to safety.

because if the king falls, the kingdom falls. But in this way, the king would sacrifice his own soldiers for the sake of king and kingdom.

[16 : 01] Jesus, however, is a different kind of king. Behold your king. Jesus takes on the full force of fallen human hatred and hell itself for me and you.

He takes every insult, every blow, every stripe, every thorn. There isn't a sacrifice this king would not make. His flesh and his blood would be the first spilled on the battleground and his life given for all the people.

Behold your king, innocent and dignified, humble and righteous, the perfect man and the Son of God. fully human.

He didn't cheat on righteousness. In his humanity, he never sinned. In his humanity, he overcome every temptation. In his humanity, he was obedient to the point of death, doing the will of the Father at every point, a Son well-pleasing to the Father, and yet fully divine, not a person like him and nothing more glorious.

What put such a king on the cross? What put such a king on the cross? Well, firstly, it was literally the sin of the Sanhedrin and the sin of Pilate, the sin of both Jews and Gentiles.

[17 : 27] Their direct sinful action sent him to the cross. Their condemnation, they cried, crucify him, and they stopped at nothing until the nails were driven in.

firstly, literally, it was their sin that put him on the cross. However, he went there willingly for our sin, for our sin.

The collective sin of humanity, my sin and your sin, crucified this king. Jesus went willingly to take every trace of darkness within us and to nail it to the cross.

And by doing so, in Colossians, it says, he disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them. You see, what no one realized was that the cross wouldn't be a failure for the Christ.

It would be his victory over all hatred and hell to save humanity from darkness, death, and destruction. It was the battleground of the ages, and his sacrifice was the winning move.

[18 : 38] You see, the way that fallen, sinful humanity responds to God, the way that we respond to God is to say, away with him, crucify him.

But the way that God responds to humanity is the cross. The way we respond to God, away with him, crucify him.

Yet the way a holy and merciful and loving God responds to fallen, sinful humanity is the cross. Behold your king, and when he is lifted up, whoever looks upon him and believes will be saved.

Let us say it.