

What should we do with Jesus?

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Preacher: Rev.Prof. F. Dalrymple-Hamilton

- [0 : 00] Matthew chapter 27, beginning to read at verse 15 to 26. Matthew 27, 15 to 26.
Matthew 28, 15 to 26.
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But they shouted out all the more, Let him be crucified. So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, I am innocent of this man's blood.
- [2 : 02] See to it yourself. And all the people answered, His blood be on us and our children. Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.
We'll come to this in a minute. For that, we sing, When I was lost, you came and rescued me. We come together in this church for the proclamation of the gospel.
The gospel is based on a certain number of facts, such as, Christ has died for our sins, and he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.
But what makes all of this pertinent to us is the fact that these things are presented to us and made real to us by one simple question.
And that question is to be found on the lips of Pilate. What shall I do with Jesus, who is called Christ?
- [3 : 22] Now this interview that you see there in the 27th chapter of Matthew's gospel, is an interview that was conducted by Pilate the governor and the people in the presence of Jesus.
We find that in this narrative of the interview, the chief priests and the rulers, they are determined to get rid of Jesus.
Why? Because he's disturbed the establishment. And you will find in today's world, that anybody who stands up for the gospel and so disturbs the establishment, will find the same result.
Let's get rid of them. Now I'd like to suggest tonight that we consider this question in four different ways, each of them quite short.
First of all, a question for Pilate. What shall I do with Jesus, who is called Christ?
- [4 : 27] Pontius Pilate occurs four times in the New Testament. 27 verse 1 in Matthew's gospel, they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.
Luke is a good historian and he likes to date things. So you'll find in Luke 3 verse 1, he talks about the commencement of the ministry of John the Baptist in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea.
Then in the sermon we have Peter saying in Acts 4, Truly in this city they were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you have anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate.

And Paul in his letter to Timothy says, And of Jesus Christ, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made a good confession.

Now what brings the name of Pontius Pilate home to us is the fact that archaeologists in 1961 discovered an inscription in Caesarea.

[5 : 49] And that inscription indicates that Pontius Pilate was appointed by Tiberius Caesar as prefect of Judea.

Now this first name that we give him, Pontius, it's not a title, but it's a tribal name. Because Pilate came from the north of Italy, where there is a settlement called Pontia.

According to this evidence, Pilate was born in Italy not later than 1 BC. We know that he was married, for his wife is mentioned in that text I've just given.

He was of middle class and may have inherited an amount of wealth. Prior to this appointment, he would have held a number of civil or military appointments. But he took the office of procurator of Judea in AD 26.

And his area of jurisdiction was Samaria, Judea, the area south of Gaza and the Dead Sea. So this is the person who can determine the fate of Jesus of Nazareth.

[7 : 09] What shall I do with Jesus, who is called the Christ? Now the build-up to this situation in the mind of Pilate started in the Jewish Sanhedrin.

We read in Mark 14, You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision? And they all condemned him as deserving death. And so they convey this to Pilate.

When he was accused by the chief priests, he made no answer. Because what was going on in the mind of Pilate, there were two distinct forces.

On the one hand, there's this Jewish Supreme Court. And Pilate knows how difficult they can be.

And how they can cause a riot at any moment. But there's something else happening. And that's his conscience. Made clear to him by his wife, who says, I have suffered much today in a dream on account of him.

[8 : 25] So there's the one hand, there's the pool, which is the political pool, to satisfy these people. And on the other hand, there's another pool.

And that's the pool of conscience. What is the right thing to do? So in the agony of his heart, he cries out, What shall I do with Jesus, who is called the Christ?

Second, a question for the Jews. What shall I do with Jesus, who is called Christ?

In the Gospel of John, we read this, in John 18. So the band of soldiers, and their captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus, and bound him.

First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. Now historical sources tell us, that Annas had been high priest, from AD 6 to AD 15, but he had been deposed.

[9 : 34] But he's still very much, in the background. And although he's no longer, the high priest, he in fact, is the virtual head, of this priestly party, in Jerusalem, that wants rid, of Jesus.

His power and influence, were so great, that five of his sons, as well as his son-in-law, Caiaphas, also became, high priests. So although he has this ability, and force of character, he was virtually, the high priest, although Caiaphas, had the title.

In John 18, we find it was Annas, who asked Jesus, all the questions, and instructed the officers, to strike them with their hand, strike Jesus with their hand.

So, he's undoubtedly, very high up, in the stakes, about all this. What, shall I do with Jesus, who is called Christ?

Christ. He sent him, to his son-in-law, Caiaphas. The high priest, then questioned Jesus, about his disciples, and his teaching.

[10 : 55] Now, Caiaphas, was on the scene, from about, AD 18, to AD 36. So, his priesthood, lasted some 18 years.

But, his particular contribution, in this matter, comes, when we find, the Sanhedrin, discussing, what to do, about Lazarus, whom Jesus, had raised, from the dead.

But, one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest, that year, said to them, you know nothing, at all. You do not understand, it is expedient, for you, that one man, should die, for the people, and that not, the whole nation, should perish.

So, from that day, they took counsel, on how, to put him, to death. So, these two people, Annas, who had, was the controlling force, and Caiaphas, who was the legitimate, high priest, they have, a responsibility, for what they did, in condemning, God's son.

The Jewish people, of that time, also, bore, a responsibility, and on the way, to the cross, there followed him, a great multitude, of people, and of women, who bewailed, and lamented him.

[12 : 21] But Jesus, turning to them, said, daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep, for me, but for yourselves, and for your children. There's a great responsibility, placed on governments, who deny, the Christian faith, by their policy, who want to get rid, of Christianity.

It is Caiaphas, who said, are you the Christ, the son, of the blessed?

This, is a question, for the Jews. It's a question, for disciples. What shall I do, with Jesus, who is called, the Christ?

The Greek noun here, which means, a disciple, means basically, a learner, of mathematics. And we can see, that what it means, to be a disciple, of someone, is to be a learner, a pupil, or a follower.

So Jesus, in his teaching, said to his own disciples, take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle, and lowly in heart, and you will find rest, for your souls, for my yoke, is easy, and my burden, is light.

[13 : 53] Because on one occasion, Jesus had said, to his disciples, after his teaching, where is, your faith?

That incident, is recorded, in Luke 8. One day, he got into a boat, with his disciples, and said to them, let us go across, to the other side, to the other side, to the lake.

And as they sailed, he fell asleep. And a storm of wind, came down in the lake, and they were filling, with water, and were in danger. And they went, and woke him, saying, Master, we are perishing.

And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and the waves, and they ceased, and there was, a great calm. Whereupon, Jesus says, to his disciples, where, is your faith?

Where is, your faith, in what I have taught you? Where is, your faith, in me, as a person?

[14 : 59] But there's another moment, which comes about, in the life, of the disciples. And this moment, occurs in Matthew 16.

Where he needed, to determine, the depth, of their faith in him, and in God's, saving purpose. It took place, in a place, that is called, Caesarea Philippi.

If you look, in your Bible map, you'll find, it's right at the north, of Galilee. So here, the three years, of teaching, are almost over. And he will, as soon, ascend, Golgotha's cross, to die, for the sins, of mankind.

Therefore, he has to establish, what the faith, of the disciples is. So when Jesus, came into the district, of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, whom do men say, that the son of man is?

And they say, well, some, John the Baptist, others Elijah, others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. But he's not satisfied, with that answer, because he says, who do you say, that I am?

[16 : 13] And it is Peter, who is bold enough, to say, you are the Christ, the son, of the living God. this is a question, which comes to every believer, and disciple of Jesus.

Who do you say, that I am? So the disciple, has this question too. What shall I do, with Jesus, who is called Christ?

Christ. If we are to be, faithful disciples, there can be, only one answer, and that is, to crown him, Lord of your life, for now, and for eternity.

And if you do that, you will know, of his, keeping power, over your life. And when this world, passes away, and all with it, that confession, will stand you good, in the courts, of eternity.

[17 : 25] But finally, it's a question, for me. What shall I do, with Jesus, who is called, Christ?

Now in the, what I've said so far, we looked at, how Pilate was, in his mind, there was a swarm, of different emotions. What shall I do, with Jesus, who is called, Christ?

This indeed, is the very thing, he wanted to avoid. And in the agony, of the moment, he has these, two different, emotions, going on.

There's the emotion, of the Jewish leaders, he knows, he knows only, too well, what they can be like. They can stir up, a riot, at a moment's notice. Then there's the emotion, of his conscience.

Because he wanted, to release Jesus. Realizing, what was actually, going on here. They had delivered him, because of envy. a question, for me.

[18 : 41] A question, for you. A question, on the Damascus road, to the apostle Paul. Why, do you persecute me?

In Paul's ministry, he gave testimony, before, Herod Agrippa II. Another, government official, who is faced, with, this question.

And after Paul, had related, all the facts, about Jesus, saying, this was not done, in a corner, Agrippa said to Paul, in a short time, you think, to make me, a Christian.

So, it's a question, for me. And a question, for you.

And so, the build up, of this situation, in the mind of Pilate, goes on. And what he would have liked, would for someone else, to take the decision.

[19 : 48] But that won't work. each of us, is responsible, to God, for the way, that we answer, this question.

There are people, in the world, who think, that the claims, of Jesus Christ, would cost them, too much. So, when Pilate saw, he was gaining nothing, but rather a riot, was beginning, he took water, and washed his hands, before the crowd, saying, I am innocent, of this man's blood, see to it yourself.

So, Pilate's got the wrong answer, because he gave in, to the religious party. So, what happened, to Pilate?

Legend has it, that he committed suicide. A Samaritan, had put forward, the claim, that Moses, had hidden, certain golden objects, relating to the tabernacle, on Mount Gerizim, that's in Samaritan land, and he knew, where to find them.

And as the Samaritans, climbed the mount, they were armed, with weapons, which action, which action, was interpreted, by Pilate, as, a terrorist, insurrection. And so, he commanded his soldiers, to put this rising down, with the result, that many Samaritans, were killed.

[21 : 28] Some of the leading Samaritans, put in a complaint, to his superior, Vitalius, the Roman governor, of Syria. Pilate, was deposed, and called, to face trial, before the emperor, Tiberius, and Rome.

While awaiting trial, Pilate took, his own life. Did he ever think, of these words again?

What, shall I do, with Jesus, who is called Christ? He took, the wrong decision.

But thank God, there are many, and we include ourselves, in the number, who have taken, the right decision. Who have surrendered, to the claims of Christ, and have faithfully, sought to answer, the question, what shall I do, with Jesus, who is called Christ, by simply saying, he is my Savior, and Lord.

That's the question. That's what we're about. We're here, to consider, the question, and to consider, our response, to it.

[22 : 50] Amen. May the Lord, bless to us, these remarks. Just as I am, without one plea, is how we sing this, how we close, our service this evening.