

MISSING PERSON

"WHAT PILATE MISSED"

MATTHEW 27:11-26

This Week's Core Competency

Salvation by Grace – I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by his grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Matthew 27:11-26 tells the story of Christ's trial before Pilate. It belongs to a larger complex of events that takes place in connection with the passion of Christ and therefore needs to be seen in its broader context. One author does a particularly good job of that. He writes: "At the beginning of the passion account, Jesus says to the disciples, 'You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of man will be delivered up [betrayed] to be crucified' (26:1-2). These words remind both the disciples and the reader of the three passion-predictions Jesus has already given (16:21; 17:22-23; 20:18-19). In these predictions, especially the first one, Jesus made it known that he, God, and the religious leaders will be the three principals involved in his passion. Conversely, this also means that while such characters as the disciples (including Judas and Peter), the crowds, Pilate, the Roman soldiers, Joseph of Arimathea, and the women will likewise have their necessary

Jesus knows and predicts his fate, guides events both by what he does and by what he leaves undone so that they will issue in his death.

– Jack Dean Kingsbury

roles to play, by comparison they will be minor.

"All three principals, it was said, desire the death of Jesus, though for different reasons. Through the unfolding of Matthew's story, these reasons have become increasingly clear. God has ordained the death of Jesus because it is to be the crucial event in the whole of the history of salvation. Jesus freely submits to suffering and death because he is, on the one hand, perfect in his devotion to God and, the other hand, perfect in his service to humankind. *No helpless victim, Jesus knows and predicts his fate, guides events both by what he does and by what he leaves undone so that they will issue in his death,* and yet will die as one completely innocent of wrongdoing who will find in death the last and greatest test of his fealty to God. By contrast, the religious leaders desire the death of Jesus because they understand him to be a 'deceiver,' or false messiah (27:63). They rightly perceive that he stands as a mortal threat to their authority and therefore to the religion and society based on that authority (15:13; 21:43). According to their evaluative point of view, Jesus blasphemously arrogates to himself the prerogative of God to forgive sins; derives his astonishing authority from having entered into collusion with Satan; places himself above law and tradition; dismisses with antagonism the legitimate request that he prove he does indeed act on authorization of God; impugns their ethics and undermines their authority as interpreters of scripture and the leaders of God's people Israel; and threatens Israel's very existence by forming his own community of disciples who do as he does and violate law and tradition.

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"Having sentenced Jesus to death, the chief priests and the elders deliver him to Pilate, the Roman governor (27:1-2). Before describing Jesus' hearing before Pilate, Matthew digresses in order to relate the death of Judas (27:3-10). In so doing, he virtually summarizes the passion account to this point by stressing such factors as the guilt of both Judas and the religious leaders, the innocence of Jesus, and the circumstance that, ironically, the passion of Jesus serves the salvation-historical purposes of God.

"At Jesus' hearing, Pilate makes Jesus' identity the issue. He asks Jesus whether he is the 'King of the Jews,' and Jesus replies in the affirmative (27:11). To Pilate, Jesus' reply means, based on his evaluative point of view, that Jesus is an insurrectionist (27:37). But in spite of this, Pilate indicates by the way he conducts Jesus' hearing that he believes him to be innocent of this charge (27:11-24). Nevertheless, once Pilate can be satisfied that he has absolved himself of any guilt associated with Jesus' death and that the Jews have taken full responsibility for it, he consents to the legal plea that Jesus be crucified and delivers him to the soldiers (27:24-27)" (Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 84-85, 87-88, italics added).

I used to wonder why Jesus didn't do a better job of defending himself against the trumped up charges brought by the Jewish leaders. Instead of speaking up, he said little before either the Sanhedrin or Pilate-as if he wanted to die. But is that not exactly what he implied by his predictions? He wanted to die. When he said, "the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified," did he not *predict* what would happen as well as indicate what he *intended* to happen in Jerusalem? Without doubt, he freely suffered for us, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God (1Pe 3:18).

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Matthew 27:11-26

11 Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied.

12 When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. 13 Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" 14 But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.

15 Now it was the governor's custom at the Feast to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. 16 At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. 17 So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" 18 For he knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him.

19 While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with

that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."

20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

21 "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered.

22 "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!"

23 "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

24 When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"

25 All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!"

26 Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Bracket "meanwhile" indicating *continuation* of the narrative ending in v. 2.
- * Circle "governor" (2x) in v. 11.
- * Highlight the governor's question in v. 11.
- * Bracket "Yes, it is as you say" in v. 11.
- * In the margin next to v. 12 write, "See 26:62."
- * Circle "custom" in v. 15.

- * Circle "Barabbas" in v. 16.
- * Circle "judge's seat" in v. 19.
- * Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 20.
- * Underline "Crucify him!" in vv. 22, 23.
- * Underline "washed his hands" in v. 24.
- * Highlight v. 25.
- * Circle "flogged" in v. 26.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Explain the use of "Meanwhile" in verse 11.
2. Why does Pilate begin questioning Jesus by asking, "Are you the king of the Jews?" (Cf., Lk 23:1-2)
3. Pilate is amazed that Jesus does not respond to a single charge brought against him. Are you? Explain.
4. The "governor's custom" (v. 15) is not mentioned outside the Gospels. What conceivable *purpose* could it serve?
5. The notorious criminal "called Barabbas" (v. 16) was likely named Jesus Barabbas. So what? (Cf., v. 17)
6. What do you make of Pilate's wife's dream?
7. What purpose does Pilate's exchange with the crowd (vv. 20-23) serve in Matthew's depiction of Jesus' trial?
8. What did Pilate accomplish by washing his hands—historically or in the narrative?
9. **Discussion:** Talk about any sense in which the Jewish people are responsible for crucifying Jesus.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of its message to clarify your understanding of the passage.

"Faced with the Jewish conspiracy against Jesus, Pilate makes himself complicit by acceding to the demand that Jesus be crucified (27:11-26). The role Pilate plays in the passion account is thus not unlike that of Judas, for by abetting the Jewish conspiracy, Pilate is at the same time, ironically, facilitating God's plan of salvation" (Kingsbury, 88). Peter concurs with this author saying in his sermon to Jewish hearers, "This man [Jesus] was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge, and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross" (Ac 2:23).

Matthew's account of Jesus' trial before Pilate in 27:11-26 unfolds in three parts: the governor questions Jesus (vv. 11-14) in part one, questions the crowd (vv. 15-23) in part two, and afterward, hands him over to the Jews to be crucified (vv. 24-26) in part three. Part one, which resumes where verse 2 left off (cf., "meanwhile") opens with Pilate's question to Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" The question likely follows from charges leveled against Jesus by those who had found him guilty earlier at his trial before the Sanhedrin. Luke tells us the whole assembly led him off to Pilate. Then presumably before Pilate, they level the following accusation: "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king" (23:2). One version translates Jesus' somewhat enigmatic answer, "So you say" (GNT), but then he refuses to reply to any of the charges brought against him. Such an answer makes Pilate an unintentional witness to the truth of which he asks. The governor is amazed and rightly so. Normally defendants who appear before him defend themselves vigorously—especially the innocent ones.

In part two, Pilate questions the crowd. He does everything he can do to avoid condemning Jesus. He appeals to the custom of releasing a prisoner at the annual Feast of Passover—no doubt, some hero in the people's eyes but criminal in the eyes of Rome. He is certain that when he offers to release either Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ, the crowd will choose the innocent man, the one who has committed no crime. But to his surprise the

fickle crowd demands he release a notorious criminal. And when he asks, "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" with one voice the crowd replies with one word, "Crucify!" When he resists, they shout louder, "Crucify!" Releasing Jesus should have been no big problem, but as one writer observes: "He did not reckon sufficiently with the facts that the crowd now before the praetorium were the Jerusalem mob, not the Galilean pilgrims who shouted for Jesus, and that the mob's sympathies were with the freedom fighters, not with a religious figure like Jesus. So Pilate's well-meant attempts to have the people clamor for Jesus' release misfired and he was left with the mob's demand that the Galilean be crucified" (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 706).

In part three, Pilate hands Jesus over to the Jews to be crucified and releases Jesus Barabbas. The same writer explains: "Apparently he saw no way of getting around that; mob passions were high and to oppose the crowd would have been to stir up opposition. Since he had no great stake in Jesus' release, that meant that Jesus' execution was inevitable. But Matthew makes it clear that the governor had not wanted this by recording Pilate's washing of his hands in front of the crowds. Together with his words, 'I am innocent of the blood of this man; you see to it.' The washing of the hands as a gesture to indicate one's innocence of an offense was a Jewish custom (Deut. 21:6-9; Pss. 26:6; 73:13), although Plummer finds it also in Virgil and Ovid (p. 391). Pilate apparently used it as something that would be comprehensible to those who saw it; in any case, his words are plain enough. He clearly regarded Jesus' death as the crime of murder, and equally clearly he did not wish to be held responsible for it" (706-707). His action accomplishes virtually nothing in history; in the narrative it further confirms the innocence of Jesus. The people assume responsibility for executing Jesus. "Let his blood be on us and on our children!" they shout, which is exactly what God deemed true when he judged that generation in Israel by destroying Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

The Message of the Passage

Although innocent, rather than defend himself, Jesus remains silent in front of Pilate before freely accepting the governor's decision to turn him over to the Jews to be crucified, choosing instead to die as the LORD's Suffering Servant for the salvation of many.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 "living questions" to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 11 **meanwhile**

"Matthew resumes the narrative where he left off in v. 2" (Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, 409).

v. 11 **governor**

"Pilate carried the title 'procurator,' which in the Roman imperial administration indicated the financial officer of a province but was also used as the title of the 'governor' (*hegemon*; 27:11) of a Roman province of the third class, such as in Judea. A governor was a 'legate' with control over the military legions. Pilate also originally carried the title 'prefect,' a title that designated various high officials or magistrates of differing functions and ranks in ancient Rome and carried administrative, financial, military, and judicial functions. Tiberius had created a hybrid of responsibilities in Judea in Jesus' time, so that Pilate had a combination of duties as prefect and procurator/governor" (Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew*, 872).

v. 11 **king of the Jews**

"We are not told what prompted the procurator to formulate the charge in this way. Luke attempts to remedy this deficiency in Mark's account (Mark 15:1-2) by providing a Jewish accusation: 'We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ a king!' (Luke 23:2) . . . In each Gospel this question anticipates the notice on the cross that identifies Jesus'" (Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew, Interpretation*, 315). "Evidently this is the form in which the Jewish leaders expressed Jesus' claim to messiahship or, perhaps better, the way in which they led Pilate to understand it (cf. 2:2; Jews would say 'King of Israel,' as in v. 42)" (Morris, 699).

v. 11 **Yes, it is . . .**

Cf., "So you say" (GNT); "You say so" (NET); "You have said it" (NLT); "You have said so" (ESV); "It is as you say" (NASB); "You say so" (NRSV). The reply "You say so" is somewhat enigmatic, like Jesus' earlier reply to the Jewish leadership in 26:64. "Jesus' reply (*sy legeis*-you are saying [it]) echoes his words in 26:25, 64 (*sy eipas*-you said [it]), except that he uses the present rather than past tense. This reply should be interpreted as previously, Your words not mine, not as in the NIV, 'Yes, it is as you say.' Here all three Synoptics agree exactly on Jesus' response. Yes, Jesus is the King of the Jews, but not in the way Pilate fears (cf. John 18:36-37). Jesus has committed no crime against Rome. Instead, Pilate, a Gentile, has unwittingly testified to Christ's kingship, even as the Gentile magi did more consciously at the beginning of the Gospel (2:1-12)" (Blomberg, 410). "As in the previous instances of the idiom, 'You say so' (v. 11, NRSV) makes the questioner an unintentional witness to the truth concerning which he asks" (Hare, 315).

v. 14 **no reply**

"From this laconic response to the great cry of dereliction on the cross Jesus says nothing (contrast Luke 23:38-41, 44; John 18:34-37; 19:11, 26-28). Matthew does not develop the motif of the silence of Jesus. Presumably Isa. 53:7 lies in the background (see Acts 8:32)" (315).

v. 16 **Barabbas**

Cf., "Jesus Barabbas" (NIV(c)2011, NET, GNT, NRSV). "The Greek form Barabbas represents either 'son of the father' or 'son of our teacher' in Aramaic. It is probably that the person so identified also had a proper name. In some ancient sources this name is provided: Jesus . . . Since it is much more likely that pious scribes would omit 'Jesus' as a name for Barabbas than that they would add it, its appearance in verse 16 is probably authentic" (Hare, 316). "Certainly, having both characters named Jesus tightens the parallelism and makes the irony of the crowd's response all the greater. Pilate's question then becomes, Do you want Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Christ?" (Blomberg, 411).

v. 19 **judge's seat**

Gk *bema* (cf., Ro 14:1; 2Co 5:10). "Matthew records an intriguing aside about Pilate's wife that occurs while her husband is sitting on the judge's 'seat' or tribunal (*bema*, the platform on which a Roman magistrate sat, flanked by counselors, to administer justice). The *bema* was traditionally erected in some public place, as apparently here, because Pilate is able to address the assembled crowd (cf. John 19:13)"-perhaps his palace (Wilkins, 875).

v. 22 **Crucify him**

"The Greek text shows their cry was one word, 'Crucify' (*stauroutheto*). One can almost picture this scene, somewhat like a football stadium in which the crowd shouts 'Defense!' Their cheer was 'Crucify, crucify!' When Pilate sought further information from the crowd as to Jesus' crimes, the crowd simply shouted . . . louder, Crucify!" (Louis A. Barbieri, Jr., "Matthew," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 87). "This is the first time that this verb is used in the Passion Narrative, though it will recur six more times as the climactic events move inevitably forward" (Wilkins, 876).

v. 25 **his blood**

"Israel as a whole assumes the guilt of Jesus' death with the ominous declaration 'His blood be on us and on our children!' Since this text has been so sinfully misused in Christian history by those who cried 'Christ killers!' and murdered and pillaged as 'avenger of Christ's death,' it is imperative that we understand Matthew's intention. He surely does not mean the words as a self-curse, as if Israel were collectively declaring: 'We acknowledge that we are accursed murderers and that all our descendants should be treated as murderers.' The statement gives voice rather to the theological conviction that Israel as a whole has rejected its Messiah in a final and definitive way" (Hare, 318)—something for which that generation was later judged.

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

NOTE TO PARENTS: The Family Scrolls will not be using the same text as the adult Scrolls Bible Study this week. PantegoKids will be studying the triumphal entry in John 12:12-19.

A friend tells a funny story about a unique birthday present she received from her husband. Leading up to her birthday she had been hinting about a charm bracelet she wanted. It was a little expensive but it was her 40th birthday so she thought he might splurge. On the day of her birthday, her husband and three sons gave her Texas Rangers season tickets. Her family was so excited! She was disappointed. She expected a charm bracelet. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the people expected him to overthrow the government and set up an earthly kingdom. Instead, he came to submit to death on a cross and set up an eternal kingdom in their hearts. In the long run, many of those people understood and their disappointment turned to gratitude. The same thing happened to my friend. By the middle of the season she said she wouldn't give up those memories she had made with her family for all the charms in the world! My prayer for your family this Easter season is that you are fully satisfied by our Savior and that He is completely enough for all of your needs! Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read John 12:12-19

1. What did the people say as Jesus came into town?
2. How did Jesus come into town?
3. What did the Pharisees say to each other?

What Do You Think

1. What do you think it would have been like to see Jesus after hearing all the stories about him?
2. Why do you think the Pharisees were upset?

What R U Going To Do

Easter is a great time to invite your friends to church. Begin praying that God would show you who you need to invite and then do it!! These two weeks are going to be fun and full of information about how to be friends with Jesus. Bring a friend!!

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Salvation by Grace - I believe that I become a child of God through faith in Jesus, not because of anything I do.

Memory Verse

Luke 19:38 - *Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC ____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.