

Rediscovering Jesus in the Jewish Gospels
Peter's Denial, Judas' Death, Pilate's Dilemma
Matthew 26:69-75 Lesson 52

Peter's Denial Matthew 26:69-75

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me." (Luke 22:31-34) ["This day" is spoken on the Jewish day of Passover which began at sundown.]

"And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter." (John 18:15,16)

Location: The Palace of the High Priest Matthew 26:58

And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself" (John 18:17,18).

1. "without in the Palace" a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. (26:69)
"Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also *one* of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. Peter – "he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest." (Matthew 26:70)
2. "out into the porch" another *maid* saw him, and said to them This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth. (26:71)
Peter - "again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man." (Matthew 26:72)
3. "they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. (26:73)
Peter – "Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man." (Matthew 26:74)
"And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly." (Matthew 26:74-75)

Judas' Death Matthew 27:3-10

Judas "repented himself" but too late. Jesus said it would have been better that the one who betrayed him had never been born. Judas had been warned at supper, confirmed by dipping the sop, and Satan had entered him. He had taken the money to betray Jesus. He had kissed Jesus as a signal for the guards to seize Him. Jesus was arrested. Judas' repentance was useless because he had "believed not" (John 6:64). His conscious decision to reject Jesus as Savior, despite witnessing all the evidence firsthand, couldn't be remedied by emotional regrets, like in the case of Esau.

"For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance though he sought it carefully with tears" (Hebrews 12:17). "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Repentance is interconnected to redemptive faith. “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Several times in the Gospels, Acts, and in the epistles, repentance is a synonym for faith (Matt. 3:8; 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32, 15:7; 24:47; Acts 5:31; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

The significance of the interconnected nature of both is clear in Acts 20. “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

Repentance is literally a change of mind to Godward focused on His holiness and justice resulting in judgment because of our sinful violation of His Law. The most difficult sin to repent of is our self-righteousness. The change of mind is more about our good works, in which one realizes they are “dead works,” (Hebrews 6:1). Repentance is not the turning from or ceasing to do evil works. The good works that result from true repentance and faith are the opposite of the works of evil that precede faith. Good works are not a prerequisite nor part of salvation. When repentance is defined as turning away from sin it thereby corrupts and nullifies salvation by faith. A change of behavior by turning away from bad behavior cannot be confused with the change of mind but rather good works are the results of repentance which can only be produced by the regenerating and indwelling Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works through the hearing of the Gospel to convince the unregenerate person of “sin, of righteousness and of judgment” (John 16:8). At this point there is a choice “for whosoever will” (John 3:15,16). The person who receives forgiveness and eternal life will realize 1) that only God is good, holy, and just and 2) that our salvation cannot be achieved by good works because they are “dead works.” Then they realize that salvation is not of themselves and willingly receive the gift of God by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). The unrepentant person will refuse to believe, thereby returning to their false hope of salvation by their own “dead works” of self-righteousness. Cain was offended that God did not accept the best he could offer, while Able offered the only thing God required, a substitutionary though temporary blood atonement. The writer of Hebrews 6:6 addresses those Jews who in the days before the destruction of the Temple were among the congregation of those who had believed but were undecided and due to persecution were considering returning to the Levitical sacrificial system. “For *it is impossible*...If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame. For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins” (Hebrews 10:26). It is futile to leave “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” and return to “the blood of bulls and of goats” that could never “take away sins”. There remains no other sacrifice for sins that is acceptable to God. Although repentance and faith are the proverbial “flip side of the same coin,” and repentance is interconnected to faith, repentance, in this case, does not result in faith but evidence of unbelief, therefore it’s impossible ...to renew them again to repentance.” If repentance and faith are always synonymous and if repentance always produces faith then the Hebrews passage could suggest the loss of salvation which we strongly reject. Therefore, one can be brought to repentance then walk away from Christ in unbelief. This rejection is irreversible. Judas rejected due to his unbelief; although he later “repented himself,” it was not a true repentance toward God. Godly sorrow can lead to repentance, but even Godly sorrow is not repentance in and of itself. The type of repentance is the critical difference. One is worldly and the other comes from God. “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Corinthians 7:10; 2 Timothy 2:25). Judas’ self-induced repentance comprised only of worldly sorrow, led to his despair and a hopeless self-destruction. True repentance is a change of mind about our trust in our own “dead works” which compels us to place our trust in Jesus alone and His righteousness.

Prophecy fulfilled

Matthew 27:9 “Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value.”

“This is a reference to Zechariah 11:12-13 with allusions to Jeremiah 18:1-4; 19:1-3. They are ascribed to Jeremiah since in Jesus’ day the books of the prophets were headed by Jeremiah, not Isaiah as now, and the quotation is identified by the name of the first book of the group, rather than by the name of the specific book within the group.”ⁱ

This was a fulfillment of the Messianic Psalm 41:9 “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his* heel against me,” as is also quoted in John 13:18 “I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.”



“Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms,

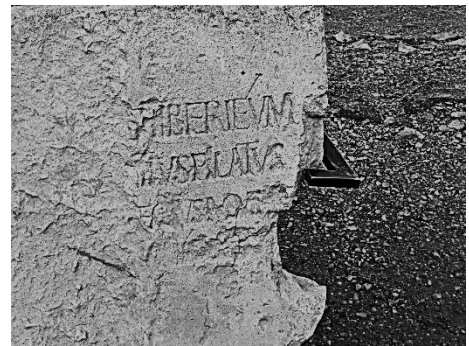
“Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.” Acts 1:18-20

(Valley of Hinnom, Field of Aceldama)

Note that Judas was numbered among the 12. He was called, and given the position of treasurer by Jesus and yet Judas never believed, betrayed Jesus for money, and self-destructed in hopeless sorrow. His worldly inward-focused “repentance” was fatal shame and regret. (John 6:64 ***Eternity is a long time to be wrong.***)

Pilate’s Dilemma Matthew 27:1-2, 11-23

Pilate was the fifth governor of the Roman province of Judaea, serving under Emperor Tiberius from 26/27 to 36/37 AD. His official title was "praefectus," which means he was a military governor with both civil and judicial powers.ⁱⁱ Until 1961 there was no concrete archaeological evidence that Pontius Pilate ever existed. This stone, 31 by 29 inches, was found near Caesaria, the Roman capital of Judea, in the ruins of a Roman amphitheater, by a University of Milan archaeological expedition. The inscription reads “To the Divine Augusti [this] Tiberieum... Pontius Pilate... prefect of Judea... has dedicated [this].”



Pilate’s Questions Matthew 27:11-14

1. Art thou the King of the Jews? Answer: Thou sayest
2. Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? Answer: Silence

Pilate's Admission "I find no fault in this man."

Pilate declared Jesus innocent but upon learning that Jesus was a Galilean, he used the opportunity to mend his relationship with King Herod by deferring Jesus' case to him. Herod accepted the political olive branch from Pilate and was delighted to personally meet the most talked about man in Israel, the miracle worker from Nazareth. Herod inflicted punishment on Jesus. He had Jesus beaten and mocked by adorning Him in purple, before sending him back to Pilate's lower court.

Jesus did not answer Pilate's question about whether He was the King of the Jews with a clear "Yes, I am." His response, "You have said so," was not interpreted by Pilate or Herod as a claim to kingship over the Jews and a threat to Caesar.

When Herod returned Jesus to the "lower court" he had by default agreed that the accusations against Jesus were baseless. A claim of deity is one thing, but a claim against Caesar's appointed tetrarch or Caesar himself would have afforded Herod the pleasure of gaining Caesar's approval by eliminating Jesus. Herod Antipas ruled as Tetrarch of Galilee from 4BC – 39 AD. It was this Herod that Jesus spoke of when He said, "The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee. And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and tomorrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected" (Luke 13:31,32). John the Baptist had condemned Herod Antipas for having his brother's wife (Mark 6, Matthew 14, Luke 3). This Herod imprisoned John. "But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison" (Luke 3:19,20). He beheaded John in 32 AD (Mark 14:3). It would have been Herod's second opportunity to have a head on a silver platter. Jesus fulfilled Isaiah 53:7 and "opened not his mouth." If Jesus even came close to declaring Himself as King, King Herod would have killed Him. "Point in case" - by 39 AD Herod Antipas was exiled to Gual due to his cruelty.

When Pilate asked, "What accusation bring you against this man?" he was asking for a definite formal charge against Jesus. The reply was: "If He were not a malefactor" (literally, one doing evil), John 18:30 or a criminal Greek - *kakos*, "evil" and *ergon* "work" meaning an evil worker, "we would not be here." (Luke 23:32, 33, 39; 2 Timothy 2:9). Pilate was not ready for such a vague charge and replied that they should handle the case according to their own Jewish law. Pilate followed Herod's lead and sent Jesus to the lower Sanhedrin Court of Religious Affairs. Pilate did not want to be involved in their religious disputes. They had already failed to produce three much less two corroborating witnesses against Jesus. Luke records the specific charges by the chief priests as:

- (1) stirring up or exciting (perverting) the people (nation),
- (2) prohibition of payment of the tribute money to Caesar, and
- (3) the assumption of the title as "King of the Jews" (Luke 23:2).

Pilate's Second Interrogation "Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release *him*. For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast." (Luke 23:13-17)

"Pilate knew the first assertion was false. The second charge was a deliberate falsehood (Matthew 22:14-22). Pilate examined Jesus privately on the nature of His kingdom and "truth." Pilate's judicial inquiry of Jesus began with the issue of treason "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus explains that His kingdom was spiritual and not a political kingdom that would threaten the Roman Empire. Pilate responded "What is truth?" (John 18:38). Pilate returned outside and

announced the official acquittal: "I find no fault in this man" (Luke 23:4; John 18:38). This meant that Pilate found no legal ground for punishment. Since there was no crime against Roman law, the charges should have been dropped. Jesus could have been released at that point."ⁱⁱⁱ "And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar" (John 19:12). They kept appealing to Pilate's "Achilles heel" the fear of Caesar. He was already on thin ice. Jesus knew of the report of the "Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices" (Luke 13:1).

When Caiaphas asked whether Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus quoted Daniel chapter 7, affirming that He was the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power in Heaven who would someday descend in great glory to set up His kingdom (26:64). In other words He was saying My Kingdom is out of this world until... But unlike His answer to the High Priest, he responded to Pilate by saying "My kingdom is not of this world..." (John 18:36).

Michael Vlach in his book *He Will Reign Forever*, said, "Some have understood Jesus' answer to mean Jesus' kingdom is only a spiritual kingdom. Yet this is a misunderstanding. When Pilate asked his question, he was not looking at the issue from a Jewish theological standpoint, and Jesus' answer was not the one He offered to Caiaphas.^{iv} "Pilates concerns are solely political. He wants peace. He wants to know if Jesus is an immediate political threat to Rome. The religious leaders told him this is the case, but he wants to know for himself. Jesus is aware of this. So, when He addressed Pilate Jesus was not answering the Procurator in the same way He answered the Jew, Caiphas. Jesus answers Pilate's concern by informing him that He is not attempting a political takeover...The source of Jesus' kingdom is not found in this earthly realm because if it were, Jesus' followers would be fighting. Hours earlier Jesus told Peter to put away his sword after Peter struck a person involved in Jesus' arrest (John 18:10,11). On the other hand, with Jesus' second coming His kingdom will have Heaven as its source (Matthew 25:31). At that time Jesus will come as a political and military conqueror (Revelation 19:15)."^v

The exact location and sequence can be determined when comparing (John 18:33 and 38; and 19:13).

"When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha." (*elevated; a platform* - the Hebrew or Chaldee appellation of a place, also called "Pavement," where the judgment seat or bema was planted).^{vi}

Pilate's Dilemma

"Pilate entered into the judgment hall again" (18:38) "he went out again unto the Jews." Pilate privately interrogated Jesus while the Jews waited outside so as to not be defiled by entering a pagan Roman court. "Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault *at all*. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the Passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" (John 18:35-39) The argument of Jesus claiming to be the King of the Jews and leading a revolt to overthrow Rome comes from these



verses. This argument comes from Bible critics who deny Jesus' claims of deity as the Son of God. They mock that this whole event was a weak attempt to lead a revolution that was quickly squashed by Rome. But both Herod and Pilate made it clear that they had found no fault of intent for political insurrection. This was not just based on the insistence of Jesus that "my kingdom is not of this world" but also on the lack of proof that "if my kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight." Peter's impulsive sword strike had been rebuked by Jesus and the wounded guard had his ear replaced. It is important to not take this statement out of context to say that Jesus never intended to offer nor establish a literal kingdom. Our entire study of this book has revealed that up until the Jewish religious leadership's rejection in chapter 12, Jesus, John, and the Apostles preached a literal kingdom was at hand. In chapter 13, Jesus began to explain a new form of the kingdom through seven parables, revealing a mystery of the interim.

When Pilate decided that someone had to die to appease the Jewish leadership, he considered the option to release another person according to the custom of placating the Jews during the Passover season. Pilate brought up Barabas a known, convicted robber. Pilate was absolving himself so that it would be their choice, not his. Apparently he hoped that they would choose death for the common criminal because of the warning from his wife about her dream not to harm this "just man" (Matthew 27:19) Their final accusation was their only accurate one, "He made himself the Son of God" (John 19:7). "the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus." (27:20-23) "Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified."

(27:24) Pilate declared his own innocence "I am innocent of the blood of this just person." But Jesus nullified Pilate's handwashing. It did not extricate him of guilt, but only that "Caiphas had the greater sin".

Pilate's statement "just person" is accurate (Isaiah 53:11) "by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."

(27:25) "His blood *be* on us, and on our children." 70 AD The Romans completely destroyed the Temple and Jerusalem leaving nearly a million dead. "Now the number of those that were carried captive during this whole war was collected to be ninety-seven thousand; as was the number of those that perished during the whole siege eleven hundred thousand, (1.1 million) the greater part of whom were indeed of the same nation [with the citizens of Jerusalem]."^{vii}

(27:26) "Then released he Barabbas unto them"

ⁱ Ryrie Study Bible, Dr. Charles Caldwell Ryrie, Moody Press, Chicago, 1994, p1474

ⁱⁱ 34 Facts About Pontius Pilate - Facts.net

ⁱⁱⁱ The Roman Trial of Jesus Christ, Harold Tabor Truth Magazine, September 25, 2012

^{iv} He will Reign Forever, Michael Vlach, Lampion Press, Silverton Oregon, 2-17, p397

^v Ibid, p 397

^{vi} Place Where Jesus Was Judged By Pontius Pilate Discovered! | Christian Learning & News

^{vii} Josephus -- Wars VI, the Destruction of Jerusalem, THE WARS OF THE JEWS

The History Of The Destruction Of Jerusalem, Book VI, chapter 9.3, Flavius Josephus, 75 C.E.
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