

3. PONTIUS PILATE

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. Matthew 27:11

Pontius Pilate hated the Jews.

Detested them.

Without compromise.

Every time he dealt with them and their antiquated, barbaric superstitions, something went wrong.

This time was no different.

He had just sent an obstinate, obscure carpenter, from Nazareth of all places, to His death.

But that wasn't what bothered him.

He'd sent hundreds to their death.

It was good for the population to see the enemies of the Roman Empire hanging on a cross on the road into the city.

It kept the rabble-rousers in check.

No, death did not bother Pontius Pilate.

Kill anyone you please, if it can give you any pleasure.

What bothered him was that this time, it wasn't his idea.

He'd been talked into it.

He blamed Herod.

Why couldn't he have kept Jesus with him instead of passing Him back to Pilate for trial?

Herod was curious about Jesus.

Fascinated with Him.

Everyone knew that.

He blamed the Jews.

Why couldn't they have been satisfied with the vicious flogging Jesus had endured? A flogging that would have killed most men.

Why couldn't they have considered it punishment enough?

He blamed his wife.

Why did she come between him and judgment by saying in front of everyone, *"Have nothing to do with that innocent man, because in a dream last night, I suffered much on account of Him."*

Now, if he did let Jesus go free, it would be said that a woman made judgment.

He blamed Barabbas.

When he had offered to release any prisoner to the mob as a token of Passover, they demanded freedom for Barabbas - a thief and a murderer who defied all that Rome stood for, lying bound in the filth and darkness and stench of the prison below. They chose this lion of a man. And demanded that Jesus, the lamb, be crucified. “Crucify him!” they raged. “Crucify him!” Every eye was full of hate, every finger threatening.

Most of all, he blamed Jesus. Why couldn't He have denied being the King of the Jews – told everyone it was just a hoax, apologized and moved on?

In the end, he blamed everyone.

He washed his hands in front of them all and said, “I find no case against Him. His blood is on your hands.”

And now He was dead.

The Centurion who had been there said it was so and because Roman Law called for the death penalty for any soldier that let a crucifixion go incomplete, he would not dare to have lied.

Jesus was dead.

And buried.

The Jews still pestered him though, demanding that he put a Roman guard around the tomb for the next three days.

Pilate agreed.

Grudgingly.

Still, he couldn't help but wonder, “What could possibly happen in three days that would make any difference?”

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RELATED QUIZZES

VOCABULARY

1. Detested: hated
2. Compromise: to reach an agreement by giving up something you're asking for in the agreement
3. Antiquated: very old; old fashioned; out of date
4. Barbaric: uncivilized; crude
5. Superstitions: to believe in something that has never been proven to be true, like believing that if you break a mirror you will have bad luck for seven years.
6. Obstinate: stubborn
7. Obscure: unknown
8. Population: the people living in a city, country or area
9. Rabble-rousers: Troublemakers
10. Fascinated: to be very curious about, almost like you're under a spell
11. Flogging: whipping
12. Token: symbolic
13. Crucified: put to death on a cross
14. Centurion: commander
15. Pestered: to bother all the time
16. Tomb: where bodies are buried
17. Grudgingly: doing something but not being happy about doing it

1. Pontius Pilate thought Jewish customs were old-fashioned and _____.

- A. barbaric
- B. obscure
- C. antiquated

2. Because he had never met Him or heard of Him, Pilate thought of Jesus as a _____ carpenter of little importance.

- A. obscure
- B. detested
- C. fascinated

3. Pilate thought it was good for the people, also known as the _____ to see criminals punished.

- A. rabble-rousers

- B. Centurion
- C. population

4. Pilate hoped that if he gave Jesus a _____ the people would be satisfied and leave Him alone.

- A. crucifixion
- B. flogging
- C. compromise

5. After someone died, they were placed in a _____.

- A. tomb
- B. population
- C. token

TRUE/FALSE

1. Pilate blamed everyone but himself for allowing Jesus to be crucified. True.
2. Herod wasn't the least bit interested in Jesus. False. He was fascinated with Him.
3. Pilate's wife had terrible dreams about Jesus. True.
4. The people decided to crucify another prisoner instead of Jesus. False. They demanded that only Jesus be crucified.
5. After Jesus had been crucified, the Jewish people stopped pestering Pilate. False. They pestered him until he agreed to have the tomb guarded for three days.

READING/COMPREHENSION

WHAT IS THE MAIN IDEA OF THE STORY?

- A. Never let people talk you into doing something that you don't want to do.
- B. Listen to what everyone tells you to do and then do it.
- C. Let your wife make all of your decisions for you.

WHAT BELONGS IN THE MIDDLE?

1. Pilate tells the people that the blood of Jesus is on their hands.
- 2.?

3. The people ask for a Roman guard to be placed around the tomb of Jesus.
- A. Pilate goes for lunch.
 - B. Pilate's wife is mad at him.
 - C. Jesus is crucified.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

1. Pilate thought that the Jewish customs and traditions were really _____.

- A. Antiquated superstitions.
- B. Fascinating.
- C. Boring.

2. Pilate ordered the crucifixion of Jesus because _____.

- A. He wanted the Jewish people to like him.
- B. He wanted his wife to know who was boss.
- C. He felt pressured into doing it.

INFERENCES

Pilate's wife told him about her bad dreams because she _____.

- A. Was trying to warn him that he was making a mistake.
- B. Wanted him to feel sorry for her.
- C. Wanted him to take her on a peaceful vacation.

FACTS AND DETAILS

1. Pilate ordered the death of hundreds of people because _____.

- A. He liked to show off his power.
- B. He wanted to frighten everyone into obeying the law.
- C. He wanted the musicians to write songs about him.

2. Pilate sent Jesus to King Herod because _____.

- A. He had too many other jobs to do that day.
- B. He knew Herod liked Jesus and was hoping he would take care of the problem.
- C. He knew the Jewish people wanted it that way.

3. Pilate thought that if he had Jesus flogged, the Jewish people would _____

- A. Be satisfied with the punishment and stop bothering him.
- B. Have a statue built in his honor.
- C. Forgive Jesus and make Him their friend.

4. Pilate washed his hands in front of everyone because _____

- A. He wanted them to see that he was clean.
- B. It was his way of telling them that none of what happened next would be his fault.
- C. He was trying start a new tradition.

DID YOU KNOW?

King Herod tried to get Jesus to perform a miracle. When He didn't, Herod thought He was a fake and sent Him back to Pilate. This King Herod was the same one who killed one of Jesus' best friends, John the Baptist.