

Who Is Guilty?

John 19:1-7

Hello and thank you for joining us. This program is produced by *Heralds of Hope*, and we are honored to share this teaching with you. We believe the Word God and are committed to teaching from it, the reason for this is because our experience has shown the Bible has the best answers to our big questions and we have experienced its life giving and life changing truth. This is also why we count it a privilege each time we open the Bible and teach from it

Today is no exception and we will continue our study in the book of John. We just finished John 18 and now we will go with Jesus to His trial before Pilate in John 19. Today's lesson is titled Who is Guilty?

In every land the government has some process by which to administer justice. There is surely in all countries a system of courts. They are not all the same, but there are processes to deal with lawbreakers. The tragedy is when innocent people are assumed to be guilty before evidence of guilt has been established.

In the trial of Jesus, we must raise the question, WHO IS GUILTY? His life was full of loving acts of kindness, healing the sick, and teaching the people. Yet, because He was misunderstood, He had to stand trial before the Roman court.

As John reports what happened during Jesus' trial before the Roman ruler, we wonder really who was on trial. We will consider John 19:1-7 in this meditation.

- 1 *Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged him.*
- 2 *And the soldiers braided a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,*
- 3 *And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they struck him with their hands.*
- 4 *Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that you may know that I find no fault in him.*
- 5 *Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!*
- 6 *When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.*
- 7 *The Jews answered him, we have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.*

Heavenly Father, these words of Scripture fill our hearts with a mixture of sorrow and joy. Sorrow to see how unjustly Jesus was treated; joy because of His willingness to secure our eternal salvation. These words remind us again of a very important truth. God uses the free choices of men to accomplish His purposes but holds men accountable for their choices. History has judge Pilate harshly. If there is no repentance, eternity will judge him even more harshly.

And so, as my friend and I examine this portion of Scripture, helps us to consider our choices as they relate to Jesus the Christ. I ask this in His name, Amen.

Who is guilty? To answer this question, we must carefully weigh several OBSERVATIONS.

We turn our faces away as we observe **He was Scourged by the Soldiers.**

Yes, He was beaten. Perhaps they beat Him to force a confession of wrong. That is a method often used to bring a forced confession: whip him, torment him, hurt him and perhaps he will say something that will give an occasion to pass sentence against him. It may well be that Pilate planned that kind of an approach. He was scourged, brutally beaten, by the soldiers.

It may also be that it was simply to humiliate the prisoner. We are told that in the time the Romans ruled, the soldiers had a game they played with the prisoner. They called it “the game of the king”. Even today in the city of Jerusalem under the Church of the Ecce Homo there’s the Pavement, the courtyard of Antonia, the Roman fortress paved with huge stones. The game is laid out on the pavement, cut in the stones, exactly where and what these soldiers did. It was “the game of the king”. They plaited a crown of thorns and put it on His head. They took off His own garment and put on Him a purple robe, to mock Him, to humiliate Him. With open hand they smote Him. Others of the Gospels report that they spit upon Him.

I raise the question, “who is guilty”? This whipping, scourging by the soldiers, the mocking and humiliation, does this indicate who is guilty?

When we turn our eyes upon Jesus we observe, **He was Faultless before Pilate.**

After the soldiers had done their awful work of beating Jesus, Pilate brought Him forth to the people. But Pilate had violated due process of the law, because he had punished a man before his guilt had been established. He had him beaten before there was any evidence of guilt. Every civil court should protect the innocent, instead of bringing punishment upon him. Pilate, I tell you, violated the due process of Roman law.

It may be that Pilate needed to satisfy the accusers of Jesus. By having Jesus beaten, he could bring Him out and show them that he had taken stern measures against Him. This might satisfy them. The evidence of His humiliation might satisfy the accusers.

I can almost see Jesus right now standing there beside the Roman governor: Jesus with His crown of thorns and purple robe. Pilate declared, "I find no fault in him". He called their attention to Him standing there with the crown of thorns and purple robe by announcing, "Behold the man!" Did this answer the question, who is guilty? Pilate concluded, "I find no fault in him". Who then is guilty? That is my question.

I'm making some observations, some searching observations from this account: He was scourged by the soldiers; He was faultless before Pilate.

Then the only other way to look is to the mob and we observe **He was Condemned by the Crowd**.

When they saw Him crowned with thorns and decked with a purple robe, they cried out saying, "Crucify him, crucify him". A mob spirit prevailed. Justice could not be carried out and seldom is when a mob spirit prevails.

Pilate responded by a most carefully stated proposition, "You take him and crucify him, because I find no fault in him." I would think, and so would you, that an innocent person should not be punished. Twice we have heard Pilate declare he had found nothing in Jesus worthy of death: "I find no fault in him".

They then responded by referring to one of their laws. Here before the civil court, these people bring up a religious law. They say, "Our law calls for his death because he made himself the Son of God."

Yes, they were right. Anyone who blasphemed the Name of God, according to their law, was to be executed. But just suppose that this One who is on trial is, indeed, the Son of God.

Now our question of who is guilty begins to focus. Suppose they are wrong, that He is really the Son of God. How shall we answer the question, who is guilty?

I have answers. The soldiers are guilty for tormenting and beating an innocent person. Pilate is guilty of punishing before guilt was established; he did not live up to his oath of office as a Roman governor. The people are guilty of condemning when there was no conclusive evidence. Just suppose He is the Son of God. Then all the world is guilty. That means you and I are guilty, too.

Thank you, J Mark for this teaching from God's word. He has answered the question loud and clear, who is guilty? All of us are. This understanding is foundational to Christianity. We must understand and realize we are guilty before God. When our guilt is understood it leads us to God's solution for guilt, Jesus Christ. However, if we don't see ourselves as guilty there will be no need for Christ's sacrifice.

Romans teaches us the law was given so that we become conscious of sin. In chapter 3 Paul quotes about seven Old Testament passages. His summary is verse 19 and he says, "Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God." This describes all of us. We are guilty before God just like the soldiers, Pilate, and the crowd who screamed for the crucifixion of Christ. If this were the end it would be very disappointing, and we would all be doomed, hopelessly stuck in guilt.

Imagine Paul writing these words with tears in His eyes and a heavy heart. Guilty all of us are guilty. It is important for every person to understand this truth. Many people tell themselves; I am not that bad; I am a good person. After all God wouldn't condemn me, He is a loving God.

Let's think about these things, its true if you compare yourself to others, you can always find someone who is more sinful than you. You shouldn't feel safe because of this, it just means both of you are guilty. And it is true God is a loving God, however, don't think in His love he will ignore your sin. Imagine you are on trial for bank robbery. Do you think you could convince the judge to let you go because you Read your Bible, go to church, and you are a good person? No matter how many good deeds you do it doesn't cancel the fact that you are guilty, you robbed a bank and justice will be served. So yes, God does love us, but we are still guilty our sin needs to be dealt with.

Paul clearly explains and proves all humans are guilty. In today's teaching we heard again that we are guilty. Praise God the story doesn't end here, but our journey with Christ must start at this point. We must recognize our guilt before Him then we will be ready to accept His solution for being made right. This is what Paul switches to in the very next verses. Listen to Romans 3:21-22, but try to imagine the change in Paul, his demeanor changes and he becomes happier, he wipes away His tears and begins to smile, as he writes verse 21. But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses[a] and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

That's incredible; that's exactly what we are looking for to take care of our guilt problem. It is exciting to hear this wonderful news after we spent so much time thinking about guilt. We can be made right with God, no need to stay guilty. This is what we need, this is what the world needs. I don't know about you but this brief study on guilt has challenged me and renewed my appreciation for Jesus Christ.

Thank you for joining us. It is a privilege for us to study God's word and learn from it. Now take what you heard and put it into practice. The teaching and instruction in the Bible are for us and are meant to be lived.

Don't be like the man in James chapter one who see himself in a mirror then goes away and forgets what he looks like, instead be like the man in verse twenty-five, who looks intently into the word and is a doer of the work. God says, "that man will be Blessed in what he does."

And we want to bless you as you follow Jesus and share Him with those around you. If you have any questions or if you would like today's teaching just contact us and ask for it by title or tell us the passage. We also have a study guide available designed to help you learn more from each lesson, it is called the Hope Herald. Please let us know if you are interested, and we would be happy to give you one.

Here are several ways you can reach us. The quickest and easiest way is through email. Our email is mail@heraldsofhope.org. If you don't have email, you could send us a letter, send it to *Hope for Today*, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. And the 3rd way you can contact us is through our website. Our website is heraldsofhope.org. Please look on our website for this teaching and other similar teaching. There you will also find other resources available from Heralds of Hope. Again the website is heraldsofhope.org

We thank you again for joining us for today's program. I encourage you to join us again next week as Pastor J. Mark continues teaching from the Gospel of John. We look forward to being with you then and will leave you with this blessing from Number 6. The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.