

Matthew Chapter 26-28 – The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus – Part 8  
1 Timothy 6:13 – The Good Confession Before Pontius Pilate

**Introduction**

The section begins with Jesus setting the stage (Matthew 26:1-2). Then, the leaders of Israel plot with Judas to take Jesus at an opportune time. This plan was sanctioned by Jesus when Mary came and anointed Jesus for His burial.

Jesus is arrested, and He is brought before the Sanhedrin, where they attempt to lie about Him and have false witnesses testify about Him, but these prove unsuccessful. Eventually, Caiaphas, the high priest, asks Jesus a direct question, “I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.”

Jesus responds in the affirmative and then testifies against them: “...hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, AND COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.” Caiaphas now closes the case against Jesus, and the Sanhedrin agrees that Jesus deserves death.

From the Sanhedrin, Jesus was handed over to Pilate so that the ultimate punishment would be given to Him. The cross was meant to demonstrate defeat, shame, and death. But God determined that the cross would demonstrate love, sacrifice, and atonement.

Pilate interviews Jesus, and the conversations are phenomenal; Paul records this as the Good Confession (1 Timothy 6:13).

**Matthew 27:1-2, 11-14**

While it is not obvious in Matthew, Jesus is interviewed by Pilate in a very intense manner. Jesus is accused of many things, but the main charge is that He is the King of the Jews.

Pilate’s full name was Pontius Pilate; Pontius was his family name. Pilate is mentioned in Josephus’ writings on several occasions, usually for his harsh dealings with the Jews.

Pilate made his residence in Caesarea by the Sea, a Roman city that housed the Roman legions. At Passover and other Jewish festivities, he would go up to Jerusalem to show a strong Roman presence and keep Pax Romana (The Peace of Rome).

Early in the morning, the Sanhedrin delivered Jesus to Pilate at his living quarters in Jerusalem (John 18:28-33). It is at this time that Pilate and Jesus have their first conversation.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke have very little information. They simply record that Pilate asked Jesus if he was a king; Jesus answered in the affirmative, and then the next steps were taken. However, in John, we learn more about this conversation.

**John 18:33-40**

Pilate, being compelled by the Jews to kill Jesus, decides to have an interview. Pilate withdraws within his house to conduct it without interference. He calls Jesus and says to Him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” This accusation is not exactly how the Sanhedrin phrased it. Luke 23:2 - λέγοντα ἑαυτὸν χριστὸν βασιλέα εἶναι - He says that He Himself is Christ King.

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Pilate does not come in asking: are you claiming to be a Messiah? Rather, are you the King of the Jews? The question in Greek is “σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων?” The literal translation would be, “You are the king of the Jews?” The impression is that Pilate looks at Jesus and is shocked that this unpretentious, humble, peasant-looking man would have any connection to being a king.

The way that Jesus answers is strange. Pilate’s statement is also a question. Jesus, taking the question as a statement, replies, are you saying this from your own observations (from yourself), or did others tell you about Me? Jesus’ question pushes back on Pilate and puts him on the defensive.

There is debate about this question from Jesus, but the answer from Pilate gives us a clue as to what Jesus was actually saying. When Pilate first responds, “Am I a Jew?” it indicates that Jesus is asking: “Are you stating this from a personal interest, or are you restating what others have said about Me?”

*Am I a Jew?* This indicates that Pilate is rebutting: why would I care if you are the King? “Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me.” It is their charge, not his observation.

The charge of Jesus being the King of the Jews means nothing to Pilate. Instead, he returns to the practical point, “What have you done?” But Jesus does not accept the deflection and readdresses the question of Him being king.

My kingdom is not of a worldly nature, nor is it established by worldly means. If my Kingdom were derived from this world, My servants would have striven to prevent My being surrendered to the Jews. But as things are....

There is a mistranslation in verse 36 that misses what Jesus is saying, “νῦν nun” means “now.” What does this indicate? His kingdom is not present in this world, but it will come later.

Pilate just focuses on one point: “So then you are a king?” To this, Jesus directly replies, “You said it, I am King.” Jesus then explains, “For this, I have been born, and for this, I have come into the world (hina) with this purpose, to testify to the truth. Everyone, the ones being of the truth, hear My voice.”

The word *hear* indicates a positive response to the truth. Those who are of the truth understand Who Jesus is and believe in Him. Pilate can only scoff in frustration. “What is truth?” In the modern vernacular, “Whatever!”

Pilate gives the results of the interrogation; I find no guilt in Him. That is to say, he found nothing worthy of his attention. To test the resolve of the Jews, he offered a well-known violent criminal to be released, or they could have Jesus back (Acts 3:14). When they demanded Barabbas, then Pilate had Jesus scourged.

### **John 19:1-7**

It is obvious that the conversation had no impact on Pilate; in mockery, He placed a crown of thorns on Jesus’ head and a purple robe on Him to display the now severely beaten Jesus to the people.

It appears that Pilate thought that scourging and mocking Him would satisfy the Jews, but they insisted that He would be crucified because He made Himself out to be the Son of God.

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**John 19:8-16**

The Son-of-God language and the fury of the Jews cause Pilate to have a nervous response and interview Jesus again. “Where are you from?” Do you really claim to have a divine origin? This time, Jesus did not answer.

With this silence, Pilate is frustrated and angry; “Do you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have the authority to release you and I have the authority to crucify you?”

Jesus’ response would be audacious if it were not that He is the Son of God.

The first word is *no* - οὐκ *ouk*.” For the sake of English, we translate this as “You do not have,” but the negative particle in front of the sentence negates the whole idea. Jesus says, “You have no authority, not concerning me.” Then Jesus gives the exception, “...if not from above.” God has permitted you to have authority over Me.

Then Jesus permits Pilate to do what the Jews desire. “The one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.” Jesus tells Pilate that he is acting in ignorance; they (Caiaphas is the representative of all the Jews) are acting in rebellion against God.

Pilate is now officially freaked out! He’s thinking that this man confidently asserted authority over me but then permitted me to crucify Him. Pilate does not want anything to do with this.

Pilate is pushed again by the Jews. If you do not crucify Jesus, you are no friend to Caesar. History tells us that Caesar has been frustrated with Pilate; the politics of the day do not play in the favor of Pilate. His rule and his life are on the line. Pilate reacts out of fear, not justice, and has Jesus crucified.

**Conclusion**

1 Timothy 6:12-16 – Paul encourages Timothy to stay true to the instruction that he was given and invokes Jesus Christ as the one giving the witness to Paul’s statement. In the description of Jesus, Paul says that He gave the good confession before Pontius Pilate.

What is this *good confession* (kalos homologia)? In verse 12, Timothy also made the good confession (kalos homologia).

Based on what we read in John 18-19, we must conclude that the good confession was to speak the truth of God and openly agree that Jesus is the Messiah King and soon He will return to claim both those who are of the truth and His kingdom.

Why is this confession indicated at Pilate’s interview and not the Sanhedrin?

To the Sanhedrin, Jesus made the good confession concerning who He was to the Jews. To Pilate, Jesus made the good confession about who He was to the world.