

Dr. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 27:1-2 / 11-14 | The Roman Trial
Sunday April 26, 2026

WELCOME:

- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.
- My sermon notes are in the foyer—please take them home with you.

REVIEW:

We've spent the last month examining the Passion narrative.

“The Passion” comes from a Greek term meaning “suffering.”

It refers to the last few hours of Jesus life, beginning in the Garden of Gethsemane and ending with His burial.

We've watched Jesus institute the First Lord's Supper, pray in the Garden, Judas betray Him, Peter try to save Him, all the Disciples abandon Him, the Jewish leaders accuse Him, and Peter deny Him.

Is it no wonder that people say that true life is stranger than fiction? Fiction has to make sense, but reality doesn't (Mark Twain)

INTRODUCTION:

Today, we're going to study a split passage—Matthew 27:1-2 and 11-14.

Sandwiched in between those passages is another story on Judas, and how he does not finish life well.

We'll circle back around to him next week.

Today, we'll watch another episode of Law and Order.

Several weeks ago, we sat in the jury box and witnessed a mockery of justice by the Jewish leaders in their trial of the Lord Jesus.

Today, we'll examine the trial of the Gentiles.

We'll meet a very prominent Gentile man—Pontius Pilate.

We'll also consider what Jesus' silence means and how this passage applies to our lives today.

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE:

† **Matthew 27:1**—When daybreak came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put him to death.

† **Matthew 27:2**—After tying him up, they led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

† **Matthew 27:11**—Now Jesus stood before the governor. “Are you the king of the Jews?” the governor asked him. Jesus answered, “You say so.”

† **Matthew 27:12**—While he was being accused by the chief priests and elders, he didn't answer.

† **Matthew 27:13**—Then Pilate said to him, “Don't you hear how much they are testifying against you?”

† **Matthew 27:14**—But he didn't answer him on even one charge, so that the governor was quite amazed.

The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith:

The Holy Scriptures are the only sufficient, certain, and infallible standard of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience. Therefore, the Holy Scriptures are absolutely necessary, because God's former ways of revealing His will to His people have now ceased.

PRAY:

The Lord is my light and my salvation— so why should I be afraid? The Lord is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble? (Psalm 27:1-2 NLT)

EXEGESIS:

Backing up to the Jewish Trial, Caiaphas asked the members of the Sanhedrin for a verdict on Jesus.

Matthew 26:63— *I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.*"

Matthew 26:64— *"You have said it," Jesus told him. "But I tell you, in the future you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."*

Matthew 26:65— *Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? See, now you've heard the blasphemy.*

Matthew 26:66— *What is your decision?" They answered, "He deserves death!"*

So, while the most powerful men in Israel were judging Jesus, Peter denied that he even knew Jesus by the least powerful people in Israel, not once, but three times.

Luke 22:60— *But Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed.*

Luke 22:61—Then the Lord turned and looked at Peter.

Most likely, this interaction happened as the police were walking Jesus out of Caiaphas' home through the courtyard to hold Jesus until sunrise.

It's probably around 3:00am-4:00am.

Both Jesus and Peter haven't slept for the past 24 hours, and now Jesus is placed in a holding room within Caiaphas palace.

Matthew 27:1—When daybreak came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put him to death.

This is Friday morning, around 6:00am. (Jesus' crucifixion will begin around 9:00am, and He'll be dead by 3:00pm.)

Verse one is more than a summary verse—it's the “rubber stamp” for their illegal trial.

According to Jewish law, they were to conduct trials during the day—they did not; they held it in the middle of the night.

This early-morning meeting was their way not only to ease their guilty consciences about the countless sins they had committed against Jesus, but also to appear righteous before the people of Israel.

Matthew 27:2—After tying him up,

To escort Jesus from the High Priest's home to the Roman governor's palace, the priests and elders tied Jesus up.

Matthew does not tell us how, but chains were normally used for dangerous criminals.

Think back to Jesus' arrest just a few hours ago at the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus did not attempt to run—he didn't offer any resistance whatsoever.

He didn't tell the police that He was a sovereign citizen!

On top of that, Jesus rebukes Peter because it was Peter who actually resisted Jesus' arrest.

There was no reason for the officers to fear that Jesus would escape.
So why did they tie Jesus up? Protocol? *No.*

Because mankind cannot resist the opportunity to humiliate God.

Why is there this internal default mode for us to hate Jesus? (Ps. 81:15, Rom. 1:30)

Answer: Because Jesus is everything that we aren't.

Jesus is holy, powerful, and sovereign—we are sinful, powerless, and dependent.

We humiliate God today primarily through idolatry and rejecting His authority over our lives.

After spitting on Him, mocking Him, and beating Him, the Jewish authorities added one more humiliating event to this trial—they led Jesus through the streets in chains for everyone to see what a dangerous revolutionary He is.

Mankind does the same today—the world can't physically spit or beat Him today, but they can certainly mock Him.

Think about the TV shows, movies, and music where they use God's name in vain—this is so commonplace that we're hearing it more and more on the news and from politicians.

Think about the social media posts that make fun of Christians because they can't get to mock Christ Himself.

So those chains ^{at Jesus} are like all the jokes and memes that we see and hear today.

The irony is that the world doesn't realize that they take the name of Jesus Christ in vain because it's the only name that saves.

Matthew 27:2—they led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

“Handed him over/deliver Him over”—this simple statement is not only a taste of history—it's prophetically profound, pointing to all the times Jesus predicted He would be betrayed.

Jesus told the Disciples...

Matthew 20:18—“See, we are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death. ↳ BETRAY

And that's exactly what happened—then Jesus said...

Matthew 20:19—They will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked, flogged, and crucified... ^{the Jews} ^{BETRAY}

This is part two—the Gentile Trial.

Matthew 27:2—they led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

Why is the Sanhedrin (Jewish Supreme Court) handing Jesus (a Jew) over to Roman authorities?

Why would Cottonwood PD hand someone over to the Fed's?

Answer: To fulfill prophecy through crucifixion.

Fascinating Fact #1:

Psalm 22 was written by King David 1,000 years before its fulfillment.

This Psalm predicts Jesus' crucifixion.

✝ **Psalm 22:1**—*My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?*

✝ **Psalm 22:7**—*Everyone who sees me mocks me; they sneer and shake their heads:*

✝ **Psalm 22:16**—*a gang of evildoers has closed in on me; they pierced my hands and my feet.*

✝ **Psalm 22:18**—*They divided my garments among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing.*

This Psalm was prophesied centuries before crucifixion was even invented.

The earliest mention of crucifixion is 500 years after David penned it—when King Darius 1 conquered Babylon in 519 BC. *invented crucifixion*

↳ favors perfect! it.

The Jews don't crucify people.

When the Jews condemned a man to death, they picked up large stones and threw them at his head—it's called "stoning."

Their form of capital punishment was called stoning because Deuteronomy 21:23 states that "Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree."

The Jews didn't want to curse anyone's soul, but they did want to implement justice.

So we see the sovereignty of God, fulfilling prophecy in His plan of redemption through King David 1,000 years before Jesus was born.

Fascinating Fact #2

The Jews lost their authority to implement capital punishment around 30 AD—this was around the same time Jesus was baptized and started His ministry.

Conceded to NO, God's Sovereignty = Providence.

Jesus was brought before a Roman governor so that He might die a Roman death—just as the Scriptures said.

Fascinating Fact 3:

Roman soldiers were drafted from any and every country throughout the empire—meaning that Jesus, who died for the sins of the Elect, did so by the hands of the whole world.

In a very real sense, the whole world participates in the murder of the Son of God.

Why is that important to understand? Because Scripture says that we have all sinned and yet Jesus died for every tribe, tongue, and nation (Rom 3:23, Rev. 5:9)

 **Matthew 27:2**—*Pilate, the governor.*

Who is Pontius Pilate?

Pilate had no idea how famous he would become—nor did he realize how God was using him to carry out divine plans.

You're familiar with the Apostles Creed:

“I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.”

Why is Pilate's name mentioned in one of the most famous creeds in Christendom?

Answer: Because of his role in redemptive history.

Pilate is the public official who was responsible for rendering a legal judgment on Jesus.

Contrary to popular belief, the Gospel didn't happen in secret or in a vacuum.

Pontius Pilate provides the historical and legal proof that validates and seals the Gospel in human history.

Pontius Pilate was the fifth governor/procurator/prefect of Israel. *Pro-cure-uh-ter* *titles mean same thing*

He was primarily responsible for keeping the peace in Israel.

His job duties included managing finances and exercising judicial and military authority. *- Very powerful man.*

Pilate is married to Claudia Procula, who is the daughter of an exiled princess, but was then legally adopted by Emperor Tiberius. *- Soap Opera*

Claudia had dual status—she was illegitimate on one hand, but then adopted by royalty on the other.

Pilate's marriage was a smart career move but a moral disgrace.

We'll learn more about Claudia in the next few weeks, as she has a dream telling Pilate that Jesus is innocent during the trial.

Pontius Pilate is about the same age as Jesus, in his early thirties.

Roman history paints Pilate as a proud, hot-tempered, short-fused man with military dreams.

Pilate did not like the Jews and intentionally made life difficult for them.

He deliberately provoked them by:

1. Bringing Roman gods into the Temple.
2. Stealing money from the Temple.
3. Sending troops to attack the Jews during one of their protests.

Both Philo and Josephus characterize him as inflexible, corrupt, and cruel.

Nothing certain is known about his later life— traditions state that he either committed suicide under Emperor Gaius or was beheaded under Nero.

Sometimes, when reading the Gospels, Christians feel sorry for Pilate—we don't want to do that.

Pilate is a ruthless, idolatrous killer.

He repeatedly chose his career over justice and truth.

Think of a powerful person—politician, celebrity, CEO—who knows what is right, but chooses what's popular or safe.

They stay silent when they should speak up or protect their reputation at all costs, or let someone take the fall to advance their career.

Even though Pilate was ambitious, Judea was known as one of the most difficult places to keep peace because of the Jews.

No Roman wanted this assignment—it wasn't a promotion for Pilate—it's more of a punishment.

By the time of Jesus' trial, Pilate had been the governor for ten years, so it seemed his career had plateaued.

He wasn't getting promoted, and the reason was that Pilate had already irritated the emperor by dealing too harshly with the Jewish people.

Matthew 27:11—Now Jesus stood before the governor.

Verse 11 marks the beginning of the Gentile Trial of Jesus.

Why does Jesus need to go through another trial?

Jesus is a Jew and was tried by the Jewish courts, and was found guilty of blasphemy.

Blasphemy is any form of disrespect for God, insulting God.

The Jewish leaders convicted Jesus of blasphemy because He called Himself “The Messiah who is the Son of God.”

Blasphemy is punishable by death because God will not be mocked. (Lev. 24).

The most famous case of blasphemy was when Goliath blasphemed God, and a young shepherd named David cut his head off.

bring Jesus to Pilate because
The Jewish leaders have two problems:

First, the Jewish leaders can't legally carry out the sentence of capital punishment on Jesus because that right was taken away from them when Jesus started His ministry.

Second, the Romans didn't care about blasphemy, and they were not going to execute someone for it.

So Jesus was sent to Pontius Pilate, not just for trial but execution.

The Jews don't only want Jesus put to death, but they also want to avoid responsibility for it. — they are religious politicians .

But don't miss God's sovereignty over every detail of His divine plan of redemption.

By demanding a Roman execution, the Jewish leaders unknowingly made certain that Jesus' prophecies about Himself would come true.

Luke 23:1—Then their whole assembly rose up and brought him before Pilate.

Luke 23:2—They began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation, opposing payment of taxes to Caesar, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king." IRS

Pilate is not dumb— he has eyes and ears all over Israel.

If Jesus had been guilty of any one of those allegations, Pilate would have known and would have already arrested and executed Jesus.

Since the Jews bring up the subject of Jesus being king, Pilate must address that.

Matthew 27:11—"Are you the king of the Jews?"

If Jesus answers, "yes," He's an enemy of Rome and would be found guilty of sedition/insurrection.

If Jesus said "no," that would be a lie, because He is the King of the Jews. → God can't lie .

Matthew doesn't record Jesus' next question, but John's Gospel does.

John 18:34—Jesus answered, "Are you asking this on your own, or have others told you about me?"

✝ **John 18:35**—“I’m not a Jew, am I?” Pilate replied. “Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me.”

✝ **John 18:36**—“My kingdom is not of this world,” said Jesus. “If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I wouldn’t be handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.”

✝ **John 18:37**—“You are a king then?” Pilate asked.

It was perhaps at this point that Jesus said,

✝ **Matthew 27:11**—Jesus answered, “You say so.”

Jesus’ answer should sound familiar.

Jesus has answered this way three times:

- 1) When Judas asked whether he was the betrayer (26:25),
- 2) When Caiaphas asked whether he was the Christ (26:64),
- 3) And now, when Pilate asks whether he is King of the Jews.

In Greek, the “you” is emphasized: “*You*, Pilate, are the one who says this.”

In other words, “These are your words not mine.”

Yes, Jesus is the King of the Jews, but not in the way Pilate fears.

Pilate is concerned About the here : NOW. Jesus must serve AS THE LAND before crowned King.

So Jesus leaves it up to Pilate to decide, in his official legal capacity— who and what Jesus was.

✝ **John 18:38**—After he had said this, (Pilate) went out to the Jews again and told them, “I find no grounds for charging him.”

But the Jewish leaders were not having that, so they turned up the heat on Pilate.

Regardless, Pilate is handling this trial with more integrity than the Jewish leaders handled their trial.

Looking at this trial carefully, combining all the Gospels, we realize that Pilate followed the four stages of a proper Roman trial without deviation: (1) the charge, (2) the evidence, (3) the defense, and (4) the verdict.

Pilate, as wicked as he is, understood what was going on, recognized that Jesus was innocent, and used every means possible to get Jesus acquitted.

Why did Pilate try so hard to acquit Jesus?

Because Pilate doesn't care about the Jews or their King.

Answer:

Clearly, one look at Jesus was enough to tell Pilate that he was no rebel, terrorist, or warlord.

Pilate knows that Jesus doesn't have soldiers for anyone claiming to be a king.

↳ ARM

Jesus had 12 Disciples—one who betrayed Him, and all the others deserted Him!

Jesus is Alone.

I'm guessing that Pilate was fascinated with Jesus.

I'm guessing that Pontius Pilate marveled at Jesus—the way that he carried himself, the way he spoke, maybe the look in His eyes.

I'm guessing that Pilate was especially impressed by the way that Jesus didn't defend Himself.

Pilate heard the charge, investigated the evidence, and knew that the real reason behind the Jews' accusations was jealousy.

So, at this moment, Pilate is between a rock and a hard place.

He can't be too offensive to the Jewish authorities, or the Jews would turn him in to the Emperor again.

On the other hand, he couldn't be soft on someone who claimed to be a king.

As a Roman governor, Pilate was pledged to uphold the law—but as a politician, he knew he had to get along with the people.

Every decision Pilate made forced him to make another decision.

John 19:4—“Look, I'm bringing him out to you to let you know I find no grounds for charging him.”

Why's that? Because there were no grounds against Rome for Pilate to find.

Unwittingly and unknowingly, in a very real sense, Pilate proclaimed the truth of God more so than the Jews.

KEYPOINT 1:

In a legal sense, Jesus is innocent of all charges. → Acquitted - INNOCENT MAN
↳ Not an opinion poll

Matthew 27:12—While he was being accused by the chief priests and elders, he didn't answer.

Jesus' silence fulfills prophecy—we saw prophecy fulfilled in the Jewish trial, we'll see it here.

Isaiah lived 500-700 years before Jesus' birth.

Isaiah 53:7—He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth.

Like a lamb led to the slaughter
and like a sheep silent before her shearers,
he did not open his mouth.

The Jews had unjustly convicted Jesus, and Pilate had justly exonerated Him.

So Jesus remains silent because there was nothing more to say.

But the Jewish leaders have a lot more to say—and they kept shouting their lies at Pilate.

Luke 23:5—But they kept insisting, “He stirs up the people...”

Matthew 27:13—Then Pilate said to him, “Don’t you hear how much they are testifying against you?”

Pilate has conducted hundreds of these trials.

All of these men were accused of some crime.

Many of them begged for their own lives.

Pilate saw these accused men yell and scream, shouting their innocence or willing to say or do anything to save their own lives.

Yet, here’s Jesus. Calm, cool, and collected.

Where is this radical revolutionary who opposes Rome?

Where is the tax-dodging protester, and the rival to Caesar’s throne?”

Jesus is not concerned about the false allegations.

Their accusations did not matter.

Matthew 27:14—But he didn’t answer him on even one charge, so that the governor was quite amazed.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. How does seeing Jesus calmly walk through betrayal, abandonment, false accusations, and injustice affect your view of God's control over painful circumstances?
2. In what ways does the detailed fulfillment of prophecy (Psalm 22, crucifixion under Rome, loss of Jewish capital punishment) strengthen or challenge your faith in Scripture's reliability?
3. Where in your own life are you tempted to think that suffering means God has lost control? How might this story correct that thinking?
4. Where do you see yourself "humiliating God?" How might you be "tying Jesus up" in your own life, entertaining certain idols or resisting His authority?
5. In what ways have you become desensitized to God's name being taken in vain or Christ being mocked? Does anything still shock you? Why or why not?
6. When have you known the right thing to do but chosen what was easier or safer socially, professionally, or relationally?
7. Pilate fears a political rival; Jesus speaks of a spiritual kingdom. How does misunderstanding Jesus' kingship still cause confusion today—in politics, church, or your own expectations of God?
8. In what ways do you treat Jesus more like a life coach, buddy or pal, rather than the King of kings with absolute authority over you?
9. Jesus is silent before false accusations and unjust charges. What does that reveal about His trust in the Father and His commitment to the Father's plan?
10. Why do we find it almost unbearable to remain silent when we are misunderstood, misrepresented, or gossiped about?

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