

## PONTIUS PILATE

Pontius Pilate was the prefect or Roman official (governor) of Judea from 26-36 A.D., serving under Tiberius, Emperor of Rome. Pilate will forever be known as the man who yielded to political and mob pressure, surrendering Jesus to Jewish leaders and the crowd who demanded his death. Pilate is mentioned in all four gospels related to the trial and crucifixion of Jesus.

### Pilate's Tormented Decision

Jewish elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, had already examined Jesus, heard false testimony against him, yet could not find him guilty of anything worthy of death. They believed Jesus was guilty of blasphemy when he said “I am” the Son of God (**Luke 22:70**). Living under Roman rule, the Jews did not have the authority to put anyone to death, so they sent Jesus to Pilate who, **three times**, tried to release him.

On the first occasion In front of Pilate, Jesus was falsely accused of many charges. Pilate told the crowd, “I find no basis for a charge against this man” (**Luke 23:4**). The crowd continued their shouting, insisting he was subverting the nation saying he started all of it in Galilee (**Luke 23:5**). When Pilate heard he was a Galilean and under Herod’s jurisdiction, he attempted to pass the buck by sending Jesus to Herod. However, Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate, finding no reason for sentencing him to death.

Pilate, with Jesus standing before him a second time, said to the crowd “I have found no basis for your charges against him. Neither has Herod . . . therefore, I will punish him and then release him” (**Luke 23:14-17**). The crowd refused to bend. Since it was the custom of the governor during the Feast time to release a prisoner chosen by the people, the crowd demanded that notorious murder and insurrectionist, Barabbas, be released, rather than Jesus (**Luke 23:18-19**). The crowd continued their insistence on crucifying Jesus.

At some point in these proceedings, Pilate’s wife sent him a note with this message, “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him” (**Matthew 27:19**). That surely increased the pressure on Pilate to do the right and just thing.

For a third and last time, Pilate appealed to the crowd, saying “Why? What crime has this man committed?” (Luke 23:22). But the crowd continued their shouting and finally prevailed. Before releasing Barabbas and surrendering Jesus to them for crucifixion, Pilate “took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. “I am innocent of this man’s blood,” he said. “it is your responsibility!” All the people answered, “Let his blood be on us and on our children”” (Matthew 27:24-25).

### Why Pilate Caved

Why did such a powerful man as Pilate allow an innocent man to be executed? It is quite possible that Pilate was not in good standing with Caesar. The mighty Roman Empire still had to walk a fine line between their might and the support of people under their rule. Disturbances often led to insurrections not healthy to Roman rule. If Pilate had not relented to the crowd to appease them, riot in the land could have led to Pilate losing his job or his life.

### Closing Thoughts

Pontius Pilate is an interesting study. He could have done the right thing but passed. The following quote from [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org) says it all:

“Pontius Pilate’s brief appearance in Scripture is full of tragedy. He ignored his conscience, he disregarded the good advice of his wife, he chose political expediency over public rectitude, and he failed to recognize the truth even when Truth was standing right in front of him. When given an opportunity to evaluate the claims of Jesus, what will we decide? Will we accept His claim to be the King, or will we follow the voice of the crowd?”\*

---

This is an introduction on the subject of **Pontius Pilate**. Here are a few other resources you may wish to explore:

[\\*Who was Pontius Pilate? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

[Meet Pontius Pilate, Roman Governor of Judea \(learnreligions.com\)](http://learnreligions.com)

[What Does the Bible Say About Pontius Pilate? \(openbible.info\)](http://openbible.info)

[Topical Bible: Pilate \(biblehub.com\)](http://biblehub.com)

[Who Was Pontius Pilate and Why Did He Allow Jesus to Be Crucified? \(biblestudytools.com\)](http://biblestudytools.com)