

PULPIT NOTES

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WHY DID THEY CRUCIFY JESUS?

I. WHY WAS JESUS ON THE CROSS?

A. The answer to this question depends upon how you approach finding the answer. If you were an investigative reporter of the first century, there would necessarily be many angles to explore as to why Jesus was upon the cross. Where would one begin? One good place to begin would be to report on **the two trials**: the trial before the **Jewish** authorities and the trial before the **Roman** authorities.

B. THE TRIAL BEFORE THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES.

1. The seizing of Jesus was not done in secret. Being seized and bound by the captain and the officers of the Jews, Jesus is first led to Annas, father-in-law to Caiaphas, the high priest – John 18:12 “Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, 13 And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.”
2. When Jesus is taken, you might have noticed that a disciple called Peter and another disciple (whom you believe to be John) follow. Because the other disciple (John) was known by the high priest, you notice that he was allowed to enter with Jesus into the court of the high priest, but Peter was standing at the door without (John 18:15-16). As you watch, you notice that the disciple presumed to be John who went in was able to talk to the woman who kept the door and brought in Peter. As Peter is coming in, you might overhear the woman asking him “Art thou also one of this man’s disciples?” and then hearing Peter deny it. Once inside, you observe that Peter was with the servants and officers who were warming themselves around the fire (John 18:17-18).
3. As you look around, you note that everyone was there at the house of Caiaphas, both scribes and elders and the whole council (Matthew 26:57-58).
4. They were all seeking witness against Jesus that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came. They eventually found two that agreed, but the testimony upon which they agreed just does not seem to be enough to put one to death. They said that Jesus said that he was able to destroy the temple and build it in three days. Jesus heard every word.
5. However, it evidently was enough for the high priest. Upon finding two to agree, the high priest stood up and said, “Answerest thou nothing?” When Jesus held his peace, the high priest said, “I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God” (Matthew 26:62-63). Jesus answered, “I am.” Rending his clothes the high priest said, “what further need have we of witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye?” They all thought that Jesus was worthy of death (Mark 14:62-64).
6. Some, then, began to spit on him. Some would cover Jesus’ face and hit him and say unto him, “Prophecy unto us, thou Christ: who is he that struck thee?” Many other

- things spake they against him, reviling him (Mat 26:67; Mark 14:65; Luke 22:63-65).
7. All the chief priests and elders of the people then took counsel how they might put Jesus to death. Binding him, they then began to lead him away to Pilate, the governor.

C. **THE TRAIL BEFORE THE ROMAN AUTHORITIES – PILATE.**

1. When they arrive at the palace of Pilate, you notice that Pilate comes out, for the Jews will not enter in that they might not be defiled during the Passover week. Pilate is to the point asking what accusation they have against this man (John 18:28-32). The charges were threefold: (1) that he was perverting their nation, (2) forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and (3) that he was Christ, a king (Luke 23:2).
2. Entering back into the palace with Jesus apart from the accusers, Pilate asks Jesus, "Art thou the King of the Jews . . . what hast thou done?" (John 18:33-35). Jesus explained that he had a kingdom, but that his kingdom was not of this world and that his servants would not fight to deliver him. Jesus explained that, yes, he was a king, but not of a worldly kingdom, saying that to this end he was born (John 18:36-38).
3. After Pilate spoke to Jesus, Pilate, comes back out (John 18:38) and tells the chief priests and the multitude that he finds no fault in Jesus. The Jews are not satisfied with the verdict. "They were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. 6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaeen. 7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time" (Luke 23:4-7).
4. Justice does not characterize the demeanor of Herod in dealing with Jesus. Herod wanted to see a miracle. Though Herod "questioned him in many words," Jesus, "answered him nothing." Even though the chief priests and scribes were vehemently accusing him, he was silent. Mocking Jesus and arraying him in gorgeous apparel, Herod sent him back to Pilate (Luke 23:8-12).
5. Luke 23:13-16 "And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, 14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: 15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. 16 I will therefore chastise him, and release *him*."
6. This release was in accordance with a custom that at the Passover the governor would release one prisoner "whom they would" (John 18:39; Mat 27:15). In prison at that time was the murderer Barabbas. Pilate asked, "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? For while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him" (Matthew 27:16-19). The chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitude to ask for Barabbas (Matthew 27:20).
7. John 19:1-15 "Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. 2 And the soldiers platted 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 smote him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye 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. 8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; 9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? 11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. 12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. 13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! 15 But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar."
8. Three times Pilate asked them and on the third time he said, "Why, what evil hath this man done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him and release him. But they were instant with loud voices, asking that he might be crucified. And their voices prevailed" (Luke 23:22-23).
 9. Matthew 27:24-26 "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye *to it*. 25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children. 26 Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *him* to be crucified."
 10. Matthew 27:27-30 "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band *of soldiers*. 28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. 29 And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! 30 And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head." "Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led *him* away" (John 19:16).

II. BUT THERE IS A HIDDEN REASON WHY JESUS WAS ON THE CROSS.

- A. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray . . . AND THE LORD HATH LAID ON HIM THE INIQUITY OF US ALL" (Isaiah 53:4-7).
- B. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3,4).
- C. We obtain this understanding not by asking those around the cross why Jesus was there, but by revelation. To truly understand the WHY of the cross, we must look beyond the immediate circumstance to an eternal purpose.