① PASSOVER CUSTOM

v. 39 But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover.
- This was done to ease tension and lower animosity
- The release of a prisoner was to eat the Passover meal...
  - NOT TO be exonerated
  - OR TO Release "one who suffers bereavement of a close relative; a sick person, or a senile person to eat the meat of the Passover offering..." Mishnah, Pesachim 8:6
- This was also a nice trick by Pilate to release Jesus, yet say He was still guilty, thus appeasing the Jews

v. 39 Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?
- seems Pilate couldn't resist a little jab or try to sway the people in Jesus' favor.
- Pilate and the Jews do NOT like each other and it shows
- The play fails

v. 40 Then they all cried again, saying, "NOT this Man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.
- There's a lot more to Barabbas
- his full name was: Jesus Barabbas
- he was a terrorist, a murderer, and took part in a rebellion

"Barabbas who was chained w/ his fellow rebels for committing murder and rebellion." Mark 15:7

★ The Jews liked this Jesus better

- As he was a physical fighter, killing, and plundering his enemies
★ Jesus was all these things too... BUT only in the Spiritual Realm
- interesting irony that the chief priests were able to persuade the people to:
  1) Release a guy truly guilty of rebellion
  2) and convict Jesus of rebellion

"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" Luke 12:1
- The world, here symbolized by the chief Priests/Jews,
  - has a doctrine of hypocrisy
★ Pilate, representing people, is stuck in the middle
- This was his 1st attempt to release Jesus (I find NO fault in Him at all 18:38)

② JESUS SCOURGED, THEN MOCKED AS KING

19:1 So Pilate took Jesus and scourged him
- It seems this was another attempt of Pilate to set Jesus free
  - To have Him scourged, then released
- Romans had 3 types of scourgings
  1) Fustigatio - least severe and for minimal offenses
  2) Flagellatio - more severe, brutal flogging for serious crimes
  3) Verbatio - most terrible floggings, often killed them... intent was to "de-humanize" before moving to a crucifixion
    - special whip: cat of 9 tails (metal hooks at end of whip)

So, which scourging did Jesus get?
- some say the most vicious, #3 because Jesus was unable to carry the cross AND
  - Jesus was crucified... which required #3 prior
- some say #1 or #2 because Pilate did this to "appease" the Jews and NOT crucify Him. AND the verdict of crucif. was given after the scourgings.
★ But this might mean he received a verbatio once the crucifixion sentenced was passed (as required)
  - But that would mean another one
  - So most scholars believe Jesus received one scourging:

The Verbatio
- Paul was also scourged five times from the Jews (2 Cor. 11:24)
★ Clearly, the Fustigatio... # 1 or 2

v. 2 And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head and they put on Him a purple robe
- After the scourgings, the Romans have some vulgar horseplay
- Since the prisoner was accused of being a "King" they made a crown
  - the crown of thorns could have been made from a date Palm Tree
  - Some thorns up to 12 inches
- The purple robe was probably a military cloak around His shoulders
★ The soldiers then line up to pay homage to the bloody King

v. 3 Then they said, "Hail King of the Jews!" And they struck Him w/ their hands
- This does confirm the Jews official charge was that He was King
- Greek indicates this was repetitive
- One after another, they came to Jesus, bowed, spit, & punched Him
★ This does fulfill Isaiah's prophecy

"I gave My back to those who struck Me and My cheeks to those who plucked out My beard, and I did not hide My face from shame and spitting" Is. 50:6
  - This is the 3rd of 4 servant songs/poems by Isaiah (42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:4-11, 52:13-53:12)

v. 4 Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know I find no fault in Him."
- 3 times Pilate says this (18:38, 19:4, 6)
- Pilate leaves the Praetorium and is about to bring out Jesus

③ Demands made for CRUCIFIXION

v. 5 Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe
- If you could only imagine the scene
- a verbatio scourging, crown of thorns, punched, spit on, dripping blood

v. 5 And Pilate said to them, "Behold the Man!"
- The irony and mocking of Pilate to the Jews can't be missed
★ Behold, This is the Man you find so dangerous & threatening?!
- Pilate is mocking the Jews way more than mocking Jesus
★ The irony, of course, is that He truly is The Man, The King!
- one would hope this scene of an absolute bloodied & mocked Jesus would be enough...
- But it wasn't, the chief Priests want Jesus to be known as "Accursed" (hung on a tree)

v. 6 Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him!"
- notice it is NOT the crowd that demands and chants this...
- But the chief Priests
- Pilate was hoping this was enough

v. 6 Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him"
- Pilate is most likely mocking them as he knows they can't w/o Pilate
- Jews had no power to execute, let alone a crucifixion
- They needed Pilate's permission...

★ Tension is mounting, a mob forming
- Pilate wants to end this judgment but the crowd is growing
- Pilate is mocking them to do it themselves...
  But he must calm things quickly!

④ Pilate learns Jesus makes Himself The Son of God

v. 7 The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to Die because He made Himself the Son of God."
- The chief Priests know their accusation of Jesus as a Political threat has failed
  - Pilate sees no threat to Rome in Jesus (& the Jews know it)
★ So now, the chief priest are forced to show their real concern
  - Jesus is a Theological Threat to "their" law & "their" way of life
- This is, and has always been, the real issue of the Chief priests
  - Caiaphas already spoke for the Sanhedrin to kill Jesus (John 11:50)
- Jesus claims to be the Messiah - God in Flesh, the Son of God
- To the Jews, this was blasphemy and deserving of death

"Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall be put to death." Lev. 24:16
- Interesting side note:
  - The anointed King of Israel,
★ was often called God's son (Ps. 2)
- This news struck fear in Pilate!

v. 8 Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid

φοβέω: to fear, be afraid of wrath, ramifications
- also respect/awe

- Romans were known to be somewhat superstitious
- Romans believed in Divine power
- To the Greco-Roman ear, this was very concerning
- Pilate just whipped/scourged Jesus and now he is informed of the Jews real charge

v. 9 So Pilate goes back into the praetorium and says to Jesus, "Where are You from?"
- Pilate question Jesus' origin

v. 9 But Jesus gave him no answer.
- At times, Jesus did not speak to His accusers (Herod, Pilate)
★ This fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy:
  - servant song/poem #4

"He was oppressed and afflicted, Yet, He opened not His mouth, He was led as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth." Is. 53:7
- It's not as if Jesus never talked to His accusers, but at selected questions, He gave no answer

"Herod hoped to see some miracles done by Him. Then he questioned Him w/ many words, but He answered him nothing." Luke 23:8-9
- seems as if Jesus only answered genuine seekers and questions
- maybe Jesus knew Pilate couldn't handle the topic like the discussion of TRUTH

⑤ DISCUSSION REGARDING POWER ἐξουσία

- Jesus' silence seems to have irritated Pilate, so he says:

v. 10 "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You or the power to release You?

ἐξουσία: power, authority sovereignty to execute rule
- Now we enter into a brief discussion on power... its origin and responsibility

v. 11 Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it was given to you from above

ἐξουσία δίδωμί ἄνωθεν
- all power is given from above
  - God's sovereignty never mitigates man's responsibility & consequences
★ This verse clearly teaches the compatibility of sovereignty & free will

v. 11 "Therefore, the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin"
- sovereignty doesn't cause obedience
- AND there are "Greater" sins (All sin seperates us from God though - Rom 3:23)

Q: who has the greater sin and what was it?

A: some say Judas, but is that the most accurate answer...
- Did Judas deliver Jesus to Pilate?
  - NO... Judas led the Jews to Jesus
  - The chief Priest delivered Jesus to Pilate: Caiaphas
- The Religious leaders have the greater sin, this was their plan
★ Judas and Pilate are not off the hook though... they play a lesser role
  - still guilty, still sinned (Caiaphas used Judas & Pilate as a tool)
  - It was specifically the chief Priests who chanted: Crucify, crucify!

v. 12 From then on (or "for this reason") Pilate sought to release Him
- Pilate knew Jesus was innocent
- Plus, his wife was having nightmares about Jesus

⑥ WHO IS THE KING: JESUS OR Caesar

v. 12 The Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Whoever makes himself a King speaks against Caesar."
- Now, this was a legitimate threat
- The Emperor at the time was Caesar Tiberius
★ Caesar Tiberius was very paranoid and suspicious of others
  - he was quick to execute his subordinates
  - News that Pilate failed to execute a person proclaiming to be King would not go well for Pilate
- The Jews here, superficially pretend to be loyal to Rome/Caesar...
- However in 70 AD the Jews revolt and get crushed (millions dead, Temple destroyed)
- Pilate is now stuck and must make a decision
  - No doubt siding w/ Jesus would cost him everything

v. 13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the Judgment Seat

Βῆμα: Judgment Seat
★ Paul uses this as an example for Christians to be found worthy Rom 14:10, 2 Cor 5:9-11
- The Bema Seat was where official decisions were made

"All will stand before the judgment seat of Christ..." Rom. 14:10
- IT Truly is Christ OR Caesar
★ The irony is immense: Pilate judging Jesus on the Bema Seat!

v. 13 They put the Bema Seat in a place called the pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha
- The Bema Seat was movable
- many Governors had them... Paul before Gallio (Acts 18) Paul before Festus (Acts 25)
- This "pavement" or stone floor has been found near the Antonia Fortress in 1930 by Pere Vincent
  - can be visited today
  - Gabbatha: raised place of (Aramaic) Judgment

v. 14 Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover (week)
- Preparation of Passover/Feast of unleavened Bread (week)

v. 14 and about the 6th hour
- still early morning
- Mark 15:25 says 3rd hour

(Jews and Romans took time differently... watches vs. hours)

v. 14 And Pilate said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"
- This was Pilate's first verdict
- he says this to taunt the Jews
- The irony is that's it's true

v. 15 But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!"
- Pilate's comment enrages the Jews

v. 15 Shall I crucify your King?
- Pilate's words drive the Jews to blasphemy (another irony)
- Hebrew scriptures are clear that the only True King of Israel is God Himself (Judg. 8:23, 1 Sam. 8:7)

v. 15 The chief Priests answered, "We have no King but Caesar!"
- wow... an amazing statement
★ To keep their way of life they were willing to do anything...
  - murder the Messiah and
  - Blaspheme/Deny God as King

v. 16 Then Pilate delivered Him to them (their demands) to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away.
- Pilate made his official decision
- The tribunal is over...
- He is guilty of saying He is King and the offense to be posted on the cross.