

## Guilt and Innocence

Matthew 27:11-26

- I. **THE BALANCE OF POWER**—sources of moral reckoning and human approval
  - A. **Pontius Pilate** (11)—The Roman Civil Authority
  - B. **The Chief Priests and Elders** (12)—The Jewish Religious Authority
  - C. **The Crowd** (15)—Popular Opinion
  
- II. **THE TELLING CHOICE** (15-23)—
  - A. **Conscience or Control** (18-19, 24)—*What is right or what maintains my authority?*
  - B. **Justice or Pragmatism** (24)—*What is fair or what is useful? What will get what I want?*
  - C. **Jesus or Barabbas** (21-23)—*The Christ of God or the Christ of Man?*
    1. **Whose Wisdom?** (Isa 55:8-9; Mat 16:23)—*What we need*
      - a. **Our Thoughts**—salvation from external, systemic oppression—the Romans
      - b. **God’s Thoughts**—salvation from internal, personal sin
    2. **Whose Way?** (Zech 4:6)—*How to accomplish it*
      - a. **Our Method**—human effort; external force or manipulation
      - b. **God’s Methods**—God’s work; internal conversion and spiritual transformation
    3. **Whose Timing?** (Gal 4:4-5; 2 Pet 3:8-9)—*When it needs to happen*
      - a.) **Our Schedule**—immediately, quickly
      - b.) **God’s Schedule**—in the fullness of time, prophecy fulfilled in stages, *the Now and Coming Kingdom of God*
  
- III. **THE LACKLUSTER LEADERSHIP** (11)
  - A. **Passing the Buck**—*let someone else decide*
  - B. **Pleasing the Public**—*favors for approval rating*

C. **Washing His Hands**—*declaring himself innocent*

IV. **THE GUILTY PARTY** (Acts 3:13-15)—**Who is guilty of Jesus' death?**

A. **Corrupt Government** — Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor

All of these things are problems, but they are not *the root of the problem*.

1. **Racist Imperialism**—We need to get rid of prejudice, discrimination and xenophobia.
2. **Oppressive Government**—We need a better form of government.
3. **Justice System**—We need a better legal system.
4. **Individual Politician**—We need a better person in his position.

B. **Religious Bigotry**—The Chief Priests and Elders

1. **Religion in General** — We need to get rid of *religion*.
2. **Religious Extremism** — We need to promote pluralism and religious tolerance.

C. **Guilty Race** (25; Rom 9:3; 10:1; 11:11-32)—**Jews labeled as “Christ Killers”**

*There is NO LEGITIMATE EXCUSE in the Christian Scripture for Anti-Semitism!*

1. **Ethnic Guilt**
2. **Religious Guilt**

D. **All of Us** (Rom 10:11-13)—The gospel allows no room for boasting, racism or revenge

1. **The Collective Human Race**—*Humanity as a whole*
2. **Every Individual Person**—*My sin* caused the death of Jesus

V. **THE PRESSING QUESTION** (22)—**What will YOU do with Jesus?**

## **Ah, Holy Jesus, How Have You Offended?**

Fernando Ortega, *The Crucifixion of Jesus*

Words by Johann Heermann (1630)

Ah, holy Jesus, how have you offended  
That mortal judgment has on you descended?  
By foes derided, by your own rejected  
O most afflicted

Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon you?  
It is my treason, Lord, that has undone you  
'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied you  
I crucified you

For me, kind Jesus, was your incarnation  
Your mortal sorrow, and your life's oblation  
Your death of anguish and your bitter passion  
For my salvation

Therefore, dear Jesus, since I cannot pay you  
I do adore you and will ever pray you  
Think on your pity and your love unswerving,  
Not my deserving