

best in the ancient world." His headquarters or "pretorium" may have been in the fortress of Antonia adjoining the temple on the north side, but many think that they were in the palace of Herod, a magnificent building on the northwest hill of Jerusalem. He had taken Jesus into an inner hall to question Him privately, while our Lord's accusers remained on the steps leading up to the residence. *Art thou*; one without any worldly position or wealth or following. *King of the Jews?* Jesus' claim to be a king was one of the charges brought against Him by the Jews (see Luke 23 : 2). They hoped that the Roman governor would see in Jesus a rival to the emperor, whose claims made Him worthy of death. John 18 : 36, 37 gives Jesus' answer to this charge more fully, and also His explanation of the nature of His kingdom. *Thou sayest*. A Greek and Hebrew way of saying "Yes," still in use in Palestine.

Vs. 12-14. *Accused*. See again Luke 23 : 2. *Answered nothing*; since no defence would have been of any avail. *Hearst thou not . . . ?* Jesus had answered Pilate's questions. The governor was surprised that He would not answer His Jewish accusers. *Answered . . . never a word*. Our Lord answered Pilate because the Roman governor had a right to be answered; but He would not answer the Jewish accusers, because their accusations were false, and they knew them to be false. *Marvelled greatly*. Pilate saw that Jesus was a wonderful person, though clearly He was not a king whom Caesar need fear.

II. Pilate's Offer, 15-26.

V. 15. *The feast* (Rev. Ver.) ; the Passover. *Was wont*, etc. The custom of releasing prisoners was usual at certain festivals at Rome, and may have been introduced amongst the Jews by Herod the Great, who brought in many other Roman usages, and the Roman governor, finding the practice established, observed it for the sake of gaining popularity with the Jews. *They*; the crowd which had gathered, and were demanding the annual boon, Mark 15 : 8.

Vs. 16-18. *Notable*; well known. *Barabbas*; literally, "son of a rabbi," a title. He was a murderer, Mark 15 : 7; Luke 23 : 19. Tradition says that his name was Jesus. Thus

the choice would be between Jesus the son of a rabbi and *Jesus which is called Christ*. *For envy*; jealousy because Jesus was a public favorite. *They*; the rulers of the Jews. Pilate sought to set the people against the rulers and thus save Jesus.

V. 19. *Judgment seat*; a raised platform in the court where the judges sat. Here a portable platform is meant, which was placed on a tessellated pavement called Gabbatha, John 19 : 13. *His wife*; Claudia Procula, said to have been a convert to the Jewish religion. If so she may have seen and heard Jesus. *Suffered . . . in a dream*. At any rate she knew of the plots against Jesus and His face haunted her in her sleep.

Vs. 20-23. *Persuaded the multitude*. While Pilate was hesitating, the rulers had a chance to incite the crowd to ask for Barabbas. *Whether of the twain*; as if Jesus were in the same class with Barabbas. *They said, Barabbas*; and so the rulers were successful. *Do . . . with Jesus . . . ?* Of course Pilate ought to have released Jesus as an innocent man. *Let him be crucified*. This was what the rulers were set upon from the outset. *What evil . . . ?* Pilate wished to save Jesus, but he was not brave enough to defy the people. *Cried out the more*; resolved to have their evil way.

Vs. 24-26. *Washed his hands*; as if to say that he was free from the responsibility of Jesus' death. *His blood . . . on us . . . our children*. The Jews took upon themselves the guilt of putting Jesus to death and bitterly have they suffered for it. *Scourged Jesus*; as was the Roman custom with one who was to be crucified. The scourge was a terrible whip of several thongs each loaded with a corn-shaped ball of lead or sharp pieces of bone.

Light from the East

GOVERNOR—Archelaus, tetrarch of Judea, Samaria and Idumæa, was deposed for tyranny and his territory made an imperial province under procurators, of whom Pilate was the fifth. His term of office lasted from A.D. 26 to 36, from the ministry of John the Baptist until the establishment of Christianity in Judea. The procurator commanded the troops, held full legislative, financial and judicial authority with the power of life and death. But each province was permitted a