JOHN WILTON III
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SEEKING JESUS

Visuals With Points To Ponder
To Help You Find Jesus' Principles

TO GUIDE YOU SEEKING JESUS THE WAY, SCAN THE QR CODE

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JESUS CHRIST BEFORE CAIAPHAS AND PILATE

OUR PREVIOUS CLASS ENDED WITH CHRIST'S ARREST IN GETHSEMANE

Picking up in Matthew 26:57 we read, ———

"And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end."

(Matthew 26:57-58)

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PETER'S DENIAL

NOTICE the PHRASE

"THE HIGH PRIEST'S PALACE"

reminds us that Caiaphas and the chief priests lived in mansions. And the description of Peter sitting with the servants to "see the end" touches our heart. You and I know how the story is going to unfold, but try to imagine yourself as Peter who sees his whole world collapsing.

As Jesus is in trial before Caiaphas and other Jewish authorities, they bring false witnesses to testify against him, but their testimony doesn't agree.

After some false witnesses came forward,

"I indeed think by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Matthew 26:63-64

NOTICE HOW CAIAPHAS REACTS

He tears his clothes and says, "He hath spoken blasphemy: what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. *What think ye?"*

Matthew 26:65-66

Clearly the Savior's response was provocative. "What was it about Christ's words that caused Caiaphas to rear his clothes?

To answer that question, let's return to Daniel chapter 7, passage we looked at in an earlier class. In Daniel's vision after seeing four terrible beasts, he says, *"I saw, and the like Son of man came with the clouds of heaven. And there was given him dominion. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away."* Daniel 7:13-14

I AM THE MESSIAH

ONE LIKE THE SON OF MAN
COME WITH CLOUDS OF HEAVEN
JESUS

In the Savior's response to Caiaphas, Jesus connects himself to the "Son of Man" of Daniel 7. In essence, he is saying, *"I am the Messiah."*

That's what causes Caiaphas to tear his clothes, and say — *"This is blasphemy."*

In response to Caiaphas' question "What think ye? (Jewish authorities) answered and said, *He is guilty of death!* (Matthew 26:66). Remember that in Jesus' time and culture, blasphemy was a capital offense.

I AM
THE
MESSIAH

LET'S PAUSE FOR A MOMENT, AND GO BACK A FEW HOURS TO THE LAST SUPPER

EVENTS OF THE LAST SUPPER

At the Last Supper, Jesus had said, *"All ye shall be offended because of me this night…* Peter answered and said unto him,

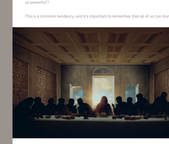
"Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended."

Matthew 26:31-33

We emphasize that phrase because it highlights an aspect of human nature. Have you ever been in a situation where somebody tells you to be extra careful and you think,

"Even though everyone else might need to exercise caution I don't need to. I am so strong, so powerful!"

This is a common tendency, and it's important to remember that all of us can stumble.



CONSIDER THIS

Christ is on trial, and Peter is warming his hands by the fire. To help us imagine this scene, consider a modern photo of the palatial mansions at the time of Christ (looked like. This isn't necessarily the place where Jesus was on trial, but it was probably similar to this model.

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THE IRONY

The right hand portion of this image, would have been a roofed in area. It was a large meeting place, where a group like the Sanhedrin, a council of Jewish authorities could have met together. Adjacent to this large room, still a part of the same home, is an open courtyard, where fires could be lit. Can you see Peter in an open courtyard, warming his hands by the fire, and then, just a few feet away, Jesus is in an adjacent room in the palace on trial before Caiaphas?

NOTICE the POWERFUL JUXTAPOSITION:

In Mark 14:53-66 it says, ———

"Jesus began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, Prophesy!"

The guards also took him over and beat him. While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, "You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth." But he denied it, saying, "I do not know or understand what you are talking about." And he went out into the forecourt."

CAN YOU SENSE THE IRONY?

In the very moment that servants are smacking Jesus and saying "Prophesy! Prophesy!" a prophecy that Jesus had literally made just a few hours previously is being fulfilled. Peter denies Christ.

NOTE

In Luke 22:58 we read,

"A little later someone else, on seeing him, said, *"You also are one of them."* But Peter said, *"Man, I am not!"*

Then about an hour later still another kept insisting, *"Surely this man also was with him, for he is a Galilean."* But Peter said, *"Man, I do not know what you are talking about!"*

At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord how he had said to him,

"Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times."
And he went out and wept bitterly". Luke 22:58-61, NRSV)

DENIAL

CAN YOU IMAGINE THAT MOMENT?

Maybe then eyes locked for a split second before Peter went out.

How do you feel if you're Jesus? How do you feel if you're Peter?

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DENIAL

FROM DISTRACTED SERVICE
TO MIGHTY DEFENDER

Although Peter denies Christ at this moment, he will go on to be a great defender of the faith. That's a hopeful message for us.

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught,

"If there be any within the sound of my voice today who by word or act have DENIED THE FAITH, *I say that you may draw comfort and resolution from the example of Peter who, though he had wobbled daily with Jesus, in an hour of extremity dressed both the Lord and the testimony which he carried in his own heart. But he rose above this, and became a MIGHTY DEFENDER and a POWERFUL ADVOCATE.*

So too, there is a way for you to turn about."

Remember—Jesus reaches out to strengthen those who stumble.

CONSIDER

HIS FINAL 24 HOURS

If we step back and look at an approximate timeline of the final 24 hours of Christ's life, we have the Last Supper, and then the Savior suffering in Gethsemane. He arrived, and his trial, before Caiaphas and Jewish authorities.

Consider how exhausted Jesus must have been. Likely having gone 24 hours without sleep. That takes us to early Friday morning when Jesus then is brought before Pilate to be tried.

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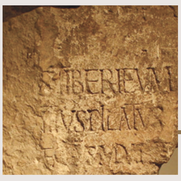
As an aside, in Caesarea, scholars have discovered a stone inscription with Pilate's name on it that dates to the time he was governor. This is one of a few archaeological artifacts that both dates to the time of the New Testament, and specifically includes the name of an individual mentioned in the New Testament.



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PONTIUS

PILATUS

prefect of Judea

The partial inscription reads (conjectural letters in brackets):[1]
[DIS AUGUSTIS TIBERIEUM]...PONTIUS PILATUS...PRAEFECTUS IUDA[EAE]...FECIT D[EDICAVIT]The translation from Latin to English for the inscription reads:
To the Divine Augusti (this) Tiberieum...Pontius Pilate...prefect of Judea...has dedicated (this)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pontius_Pilate_inscription.JPG

It appears that Pilate became prefect or governor of Judaea in AD 26. Christ's Crucifixion likely occurred in AD 30 or 33, in the middle of Pilate's tenure. According to the John's account, Pilate closely questioned Jesus. He asked the Savior,

"'Are you the KING OF THE JEWS' Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?'

Pilate replied, *'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?'*

Jesus answered, *'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here'"* (John 18:33–36, NRSV).

At this point, Pilate may have been puzzled. The Jewish authorities accused Jesus of claiming to be a king—insinuating a revolt against Rome.

But Jesus said his kingdom was from another place.

WHAT COULD THIS MEAN?

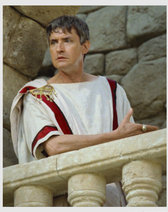
"Pilate asked him, *'So you are a king?'* Jesus answered, *'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice'"* (John 18:37, NRSV).

In this conversation we see that JESUS IS NOT ON TRIAL BEFORE PILATE - PILATE IS ON TRIAL BEFORE JESUS.

Christ had previously declared, *"I am the . . . truth"* (John 14:6) and now tells Pilate that if Pilate were on the side of truth, he would listen to the Savior's voice. Pilate failed to acknowledge the capital "T" Truth standing in front of him and instead ironically asked,

"What is truth?" (John 18:38).

Pilate then returned outside to the Jewish authorities and proclaimed,
"I find no case against him" (John 18:38).



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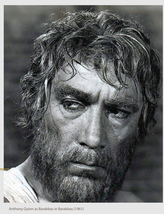
At this point in the narrative, we learn that a custom allowed Pilate to release a prisoner during the Passover. Pilate offered the people a choice—he would release either Jesus, the Son of God, or Barabbas, a "notorious prisoner," one "who had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city, and for murder" (Matt. 27:16; Luke 23:19).



Anthony Quinn as Barabbas in *Barabbas* (1961)

DON'T MISS THIS

Wikipedia

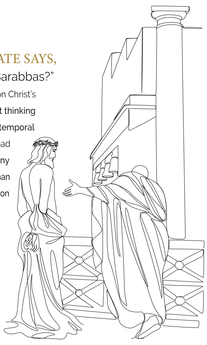
Some ancient manuscripts of Matthew refer to "Barabbas" as "Jesus Barabbas." They give Barabbas the first name of Jesus, which was a common Jewish male name at the time.

Thus Pilate asks, "Do you want me to release Jesus Barabbas or Jesus the Messiah?"

One possible meaning of the word Barabbas is "son of the father." Perhaps Matthew is emphasizing the choice between Jesus, son of the lowercase f father, or Jesus, son of the capital F Father.

TO YOU AND ME, WHEN PILATE SAYS, "WHO DO YOU WANT? Jesus or Barabbas?"

the choice is obvious because we are focused on Christ's atoning sacrifice. But many in the crowd weren't thinking about spiritual salvation—they were fixated on temporal salvation. For nearly one hundred years Rome had ruled over Jerusalem. Taxes were high, and many people desperately wanted to throw off their Roman overlords. Barabbas had been part of an insurrection in the city, which some may have supported—a rebellion against Rome was what they wanted!



Maybe they believed Barabbas was a freedom fighter who could lead a revolt. But Jesus of Nazareth? He had performed some miracles, but he hadn't done anything about Roman oppression. Perhaps because some members of this crowd focused on the wrong problem —

temporal instead of spiritual salvation—they chose the wrong solution.

CHOOSING
JESUS

METAPHORICALLY SPEAKING,
WE OFTEN CHOOSE BETWEEN
JESUS AND BARABBAS

Between a spiritual approach (redemption through Christ) OR a worldly approach (revolution through Barabbas).

In a sense, Pilate says to each of us, "WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Advice from worldly experts OR counsel from prophets?

More time on social media OR more time ministering?

To buy a luxury item you don't really need OR to pay a more generous fast offering?"

Unlike the choice offered by Pilate, our options are not always mutually exclusive; nevertheless, HOW OFTEN DO WE CHOOSE BARABBAS OVER JESUS?

In Revelation, we see a powerful personification of God's phrase:

"Behold, we were not ashamed, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6)

Revelation represents each of us. We have sinned, fallen short, and are guilty.

BUT CHRIST STANDS IN OUR PLACE
and bears the punishment that
WE SHOULD FACE.

HIS CRUCIFIXION
allows us to live a new life

JESUS IS ENOUGH
for all of us.

CONSIDER

Jesus stepped in EVERYTHING we could stand against with him in A SINGLE SPACE.

So far, we've seen immense pressure put upon Peter and pressure put upon Pilate. And they turn away from the Truth. Is possible that at some point in our lives you will feel immense pressure to turn away from Jesus? When this happens, how will we respond?

THE SCOURGING

CONSIDER

Where Peter's pressure to compromise, Pilate's pressure to be contrary, or Judas's pressure to betray, Jesus's pressure was to be scourged.

Roman Flagrum – Bible Scourge Replica

Could it be that the scourging is part of Christ's atoning sacrifice? Often we focus on Gethsemane and the Crucifixion, but there are upcoming moments in between where Jesus is suffering, and so Isaiah says, "With his stripes (or by his wounds) we are healed" Isaiah 53:5, NIV.

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Matthew, Mark, and Luke all mention a man named Simon, from North Africa, who assisted the Savior in carrying his cross to Golgotha. Matthew and Mark emphasize the fact that Simon was bearing his (meaning Christ's) cross.

Do we pause to consider the significance that the Son of God himself was served? Christ is indeed the ultimate example, not only of serving others but also of accepting service.

To serve and be served.

Movie: The Greatest Story Ever Told
https://www.netflixmovies.com/the-greatest-story-ever-told-1965

Matthew and Mark both use the word compel to describe the fact that Simon was forced into service. Simon didn't choose to carry the Savior's cross. Likewise, we rarely get to pick the burdens we bear, but we can choose whether we become resentful or allow our crosses to draw us closer to Christ.

LUKE ALONE RECORDS THAT SIMON CARRIED THE CROSS "AFTER," OR IN OTHER WORDS, - "WHILE FOLLOWING," JESUS.

In this respect, Simon set an example for each of us. He didn't simply suffer with a trial, doing the best he could on his own; he carried his cross while following Jesus. We can do likewise. When we struggle under burdens of circumstances and sin, we can continue to move forward, step by step, following Christ.

CONSIDER

The words Jesus spoke on the road to Calvary

According to the Gospel of Luke, Jesus had not said a word since his initial interview with Pilate. However, on the road to Calvary, he breaks his silence to address a group of women who were following him.

It probably doesn't surprise you to know that, given his emphasis on women, Luke is the only Gospel author to record this encounter. In fact, more than half the words Luke records Christ saying on the day of his death are addressed to them.

Jesus turned to these women and said, *"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me."* This is a powerful theme repeatedly in the Savior's life: when he is going through difficult times, he turns outward to help others. When Jesus fasts for 40 days and is tempted by the devil, he sends angels to go help John the Baptist. When Jesus was discouraged because of the death of John the Baptist, he wanted to be alone, but instead he fed the 5000. Before entering Gethsemane, Christ prayed for other people. When Jesus is walking to the cross, he stops to comfort a group of women. When Jesus is being nailed to the cross, he'll say *"Father forgive them for they know not what they do."*

As Elder David A Bednar said,

"Throughout His mortal ministry, and especially during the events leading up to and including the atoning sacrifice, the Savior of the world turned outward."

In this class, we've traveled with the Savior from Gethsemane to Golgotha. Along the way, we've seen how Peter and Pilate turned away from Christ, in the face of extreme pressure. We've also seen how Jesus Christ does not shrink from the work his Father sent him to do and did not turn his back on us. One message we hope we will remember from these hours of the Savior's suffering, is encapsulated in these words from Elder Cook. He said,

"If the grim realities you are facing at this time seem dark and heavy and almost unbearable, remember that in the soul-wrenching darkness of Gethsemane and the incomprehensible torture and pain of Calvary, the Savior accomplished the Atonement, which resolves the most terrible burdens that can occur in this life. He did it for you, and He did it for me. He did it because He loves us." I love those words—He did it for you. He did it for me. Why? Because he loves us. We'll talk more about that love in our next class, which will focus on the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

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visuals & points to ponder / printables

all to help **F I N D** Jesus' Principles

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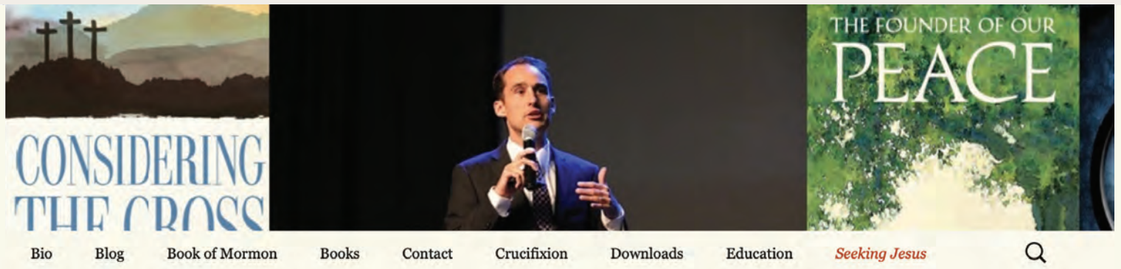

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