

“BEHOLD THE MAN”
John 19:1-7
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INTRODUCTION

Jesus is suffering. Where is His protector? Why does no one step up to save Him?

Read Isaiah 53:3-6.

His Father “bruised” Him and let Him suffer FOR US!

Even more, Jesus willingly laid down His life for His sheep—John 10:15, 17-18. **We must understand this powerful truth!** It makes all the difference in the world.

Here, Pilate at least three times states that **Jesus is innocent**.

But even more than that he makes a profound statement about who Jesus Christ is when he says, **“BEHOLD THE MAN”**

YOU MUST BEHOLD AND MARVEL AT THIS MAN, AND MUST TOTALLY SURRENDER YOUR LIFE TO HIM.

In this context we see both **the helpless and innocent prisoner** (vv. 1-5) and the **persistent and unjust accusers**.

I. THE HELPLESS AND INNOCENT PRISONER (1-5)

A. The Scouring (1)

- Generally a Roman governor would scourge a condemned prisoner as part of his punishment and as a precursor to his execution by crucifixion. In this case, Jesus had not yet been condemned and was undeserving of any punishment—let alone crucifixion.
- Pilate’s motive here seemed to be to play upon the natural human sympathy of the Jewish leaders and to shame them into dropping their unfounded case.
- Pilate obviously underestimated the hatred of these leaders for Jesus and their determination to be rid of Him!
- John makes a simple unemotional statement about Jesus’ scourging (v. 1)
- One really needs to understand the brutal nature of the process
- Quite often the scourging was so severe that the prisoner died in or shortly after the process.
- Is it any wonder that Jesus was unable to carry His cross and that Simon needed to help?

B. The Mockery (2-3)

- Although Pilate does not seem to be directly responsible for this behavior, he did nothing to prevent it, and did not discipline those participating.
- The entire incident seems to be directed more at the Jewish leaders and people than at the prisoner.

- The entire idea of a Jewish “king” was absurd to the Romans.
- That this man could be taken to be a rival to the throne seemed even more absurd!

1. The “kingly crown”

- In actuality this was not called a diadem but a wreath of ceremonial victory.
- It was likely the best they could improvise under the circumstances.
- There were many plants in the area producing thorns.
- The commonly identified plant resembles ivy and has long, ugly spikes.
- The “crown” was intended to mock the actual diadem worn by real kings.
- Kings did sometimes wear such “crowns” to games and during certain ceremonies.
- The thorns would have produced excruciating pain and profuse bleeding.
- Along with the scourging, Jesus would have been a bloody mess.

2. The “kingly robe”

- The color “purple” was the color of royalty. Purple garments were very expensive and extremely rare.
- The purple color came from a certain shellfish
- Soldiers would not likely have access to such a garment.
- Matthew calls the color “scarlet.”
- Ancients frequently failed to distinguish these colors.
- Scarlet was less expensive and was the color worn in the uniform of military officers and men in high position.

3. The pretended “homage”

- The text uses three imperfect tense verbs—indicating continuous activity.
- The men ceremoniously paraded up to Jesus and “humbled” themselves before Him.
- They “saluted” Him with, “Hail, King of the Jews!”
- Instead of the usual “kiss of homage” (cf. Ps. 2:12), they each gave Jesus a “blow to the face.”
- Comparison with Mt. & Mk. shows possibly 2 stages of mockery.

C. The Presentation (4-5)

1. Pilate comes out first and announces the appearance of Jesus.
2. He makes clear that the presentation is to clarify his finding of innocence in the prisoner.
3. Jesus comes out still wearing the mock crown and robe.
 - The site must have been “pitiful” to anyone with normal human sympathy.
 - Jesus looked humble and helpless to the naked human eye.

- What possible claim to kingship could such a character have?
4. The words of presentation: “**BEHOLD THE MAN.**”
- Surely Pilate meant no more than “look at this pitiful fellow” and recognize your error in claiming Him to be some kind of threat.
 - Pilate did not realize how the Spirit of the Lord was using his statement to give genuine homage to Jesus as the “King of kings and Lord of lords.”
 - There is likely an allusion to the Son of Man passage in Dan. 7:13-14, and then to Jesus’ favorite title used for Himself to indicate both His divine and human origin.
 - He is the second Adam; the first Adam lost the dominion given him at creation (Gen. 1). The second Adam regained it by becoming flesh and conquering his adversaries (Psalm 8; Hebrews 2).
 - Yes, **JESUS IS THE MAN**. There is no other true rival to Him.

II. THE PERSISTENT AND UNJUST ACCUSORS (6-7)

So, how overawed were these religious leaders?

They were not even affected!

A. The Demand for Crucifixion (6a)

- Note who cried out—the chief priests and their officers
- They did not give a chance for any sympathy to be expressed from the crowd.
- Their cry was short, concise, and such as would elicit a chant—“crucify, crucify.”
- They intended to start a mass reaction.

B. The Contempt of Pilate—“Take him and crucify Him yourselves.”

- **You** take—I find no fault.
- He wanted no part of this process, yet was afraid of the consequences if he ignored their demands. They could complain to the Roman authorities.
- He knew that they could not practice crucifixion—this was a Roman prerogative.

C. The Response of the Jews

1. **WE** have a law: see Lev. 24:16—the law of blasphemy. Cf. Mt. 26-63-66.
2. Jesus had broken that law and deserves to die.
3. Claimed to be the Son of God—see 5:18; 8:53; 10:33 etc.
Such a claim could be of concern to the Roman ruler—“a divine king”.
Pilate, being a superstitious Roman was concerned about this.
Next week we see his confrontation with Jesus and Jesus’ response.

CONCLUSION

Yes, **Behold the Man**—the man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Yet, **Behold** the Son of Man—the one to bring in the Kingdom and restore it to His followers.

Behold the Son of God—according to His rightful claim.

Submit yourself to Him and serve Him!