

# “PROFILES IN COWARDICE”

John 19:8-16

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## INTRODUCTION

For the rest of the world the sun set on that day and rose the next and everything went on the same. **But things were not the same, and would never be the same again! THE DECISION MADE BY PILATE CHANGED THE WORLD FOREVER, and he did not know it!** He made a very poor choice here and backed down in courage in order to maintain his own position, power, and privilege. He abused, punished, and executed the King of the Jews, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and the Savior of the world.

Every day the Lord gives us opportunities to make choices. Some are not that significant. But other decisions are life changers—and even changers for eternity:

- What will I do with this Jesus who is called Christ?
- Should I yield my life to Him to be and do whatever He asks?
- How does He want me to serve Him today?
- What unsaved person does He want me to witness to today?

You and I never know which apparently “little” decision might turn out to be a life-changer!

Pilate had what seemed like a “run-of-the-mill judicial decision to make for these *pesky Jews*: What should I do with this prisoner—Jesus of Nazareth. Release him or crucify him?

- Pilate had the **authority** to release Jesus.
- Pilate had the **power** to release Jesus.
- Pilate had the **desire** to release Jesus.
- Pilate’s **wife** wanted him to let Jesus go free.
- Pilate knew that it would be **unjust** to execute Jesus.
- Pilate committed Jesus to be crucified.

Pilate was **selfish, weak, cowardly. He made the wrong choice here.**

**YOU MUST CHOOSE TO OBEY GOD IN HIS WORD IN THE DAILY DECISIONS OF LIFE.** Be ready—daily decisions can be life changing decisions.

## I. FEAR AND SUPERSTITION (8-9)

## II. THE POWER STRUGGLE (10-11)

- A. Insult at the unanswered question (10a)
- B. The assertion of authority and power (10b)
  1. First for release—this is what he really wanted to do.
  2. Second for crucifixion—this is what he wanted to avoid.
- C. The Reality of Authority’s true source—“from above” (11a)
- D. The greater guilt of the High Priest

- Caiaphas had no authority to reject Israel’s Messiah—they were to watch for and accept Him!
- Caiaphas acted with clear “knowledge and grim determination” (Hendrickson).
- He performed a **base** and **unrighteous** deed in crucifying Jesus.
- He forsook His God in turning to a heathen ruler!

### III. INTIMIDATION (12)

- A. Helpless efforts to release Jesus. (What they were, we are not told.)
- B. Veiled threats to complain and “turn in” the procurator.

### IV. CAPITULATION (13-16)

#### A. By Pilate

1. Display of Power (13)
2. Presentation of the prisoner—“**Behold your King!**”
  - Once again Pilate speaks better than he knows.
  - He obviously ridicules the idea that Jesus is a real king.
  - **IN REALITY, JESUS IS NOT ONLY ISRAEL’S KING, HE IS PILATE’S KING!**
3. Deliverance to Crucifixion (16)

#### B. By the Jews

1. The demand for blood—“Away, away—crucify him!”  
*Interestingly, the verb away literally means “lift up, take away.”  
 Jesus would be **lifted up** in more ways than they realized!*
2. The Betrayal of their God—“We have no king but Caesar.”  
 They spoke more truth than they realized. **They here officially forsook their God and had their Messiah crucified—all they had left was the Caesar whom they claimed to despise!**

### CONCLUSION

When you are confronted with the choice of

- Christ or career;                      Christ or power
- Christ or popularity;                  Christ or position                  Christ or wealth

What choices do you make?

**Have you chosen Christ as your Savior?**

**Have you chosen Christ as your lord and master?**

**Do you daily choose Christ over all that life has to offer you?**

We know also what the Jewish leaders did: “Behold your King,” said Pilate.

*“Away with Him, Away with Him. Crucify Him!”* they said.

Out of self preservation, fear, love of power and position, love of friends, etc. will you send Him away?

**JESUS STANDS BEFORE YOU IN YOUR DAILY LIFE—WHAT WILL YOU CHOOSE?**