

Almost Persuaded
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Text: The Wars of the Jews Book 2 Chapter 9.2 (Page 608)

Pilate, who was sent as procurator into Judea by Tiberias, sent those images of Caesar that are called ensigns, into Jerusalem. This excited a very great tumult among the Jews when it was day.

Text: The Antiquities of the Jews Book 18 Chapter 3.1 (Page 479)

Pilate, the procurator of Judea, removed the army from Caesarea to Jerusalem, to take their winter quarters there, in order to abolish the Jewish laws. So he introduced Caesar's effigies, which were upon the ensigns, and brought them into the city; whereas our law forbids us the very making of images; on which account former procurators were wont to make their entry into the city with such ensigns as had not those ornaments. Pilate was the first who brought those images to Jerusalem, and set them up there; which was done without the knowledge of the people, at night time; but as soon as they knew it, they came in multitudes to Caesarea, and interceded with Pilate many days, that he would remove the images; and when the Jews petitioned again, he gave signal to the soldiers to encompass them round, and threatened that their punishment should be no less than immediate death, unless they would leave off disturbing him and go their way home. But they threw themselves upon the ground, and laid their necks bare, and said they would take their death very willingly, rather than the wisdom of their laws should be transgressed; upon which Pilate was deeply affected with their firm resolution to keep their laws inviolable, and presently commanded the images to be carried back from Jerusalem to Caesarea.

Text: The Wars of the Jews Book 2 Chapter 9.3 (Page 608)

Pilate sat upon his tribunal, in the open market place, and called to him the multitude, as desirous to give them answer; and then gave a signal to the soldiers that they should all by agreement at once encompass the Jews with their weapons; so the band of soldiers stood round about the Jews in three ranks. The Jews were under the utmost consternation at that unexpected sight. Pilate also said

to them, they should be cut in pieces, unless they would admit of Caesar's images; and gave intimation to the soldiers to draw their naked swords.

Text: The Antiquities of the Jews Book 18 Chapter 3.2 (Page 480)

Pilate undertook to bring a current of water to Jerusalem, and did it with the sacred money.

The use of Corban, here applied to money dedicated to God in the treasury of the temple, illustrates our Savior's words in the Gospel of Mark. Gathered together unto Him, the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, who had come from Jerusalem, say, if a man shall say to his father or his mother, that wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban, that is to say, Given to God; ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or his mother; making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do (Mark 7: 1,11-13 ASV).

Text: The Wars of the Jews Book 2 Chapter 9.4 (Page 609)

By expending that sacred treasure which is called Corban upon aqueducts, whereby he brought water from the distance of four hundred furlongs. At this the multitude had great indignation; and when Pilate was come to Jerusalem, they came about his tribunal, and made a clamor at it. Now he was apprised aforehand of this disturbance, he mixed his own soldiers in their armor with the multitude, and ordered them to conceal themselves under the habits of private men, and not to use their swords, but with their staves to beat those that made the clamor, He then gave signal from his tribunal to do as he had bidden them. Now the Jews were so badly beaten, that many perished by the stripes they received, and many perished as trodden to death, by which means the multitude was astonished at the calamity of those that were slain, and held their peace.

Text: The Antiquities of the Jews Book 18 Chapter 3.2 (Page 480)

Pilate equally punished those that were tumultuous, and those that were not, nor did they spare them in the least; and since the people

were unarmed, and were caught by men prepared for what they were about, there was a great number of them slain by this means, and others of them ran away wounded; and thus an end was put to this sedition.

This caused enmity between Pilate and Herod. These Jews, whose blood Pilate shed on this occasion, may be those, some told Jesus of, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices (Luke 13: 1-2 ASV). Pilate was willing to correct his error of meddling in the tetrarch's jurisdiction, having slain Galilean subjects; by sending Christ to Herod, when he heard Jesus was Galilaean. He knew that Jesus was Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him unto Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem in these days (Luke 23: 6-7 ASV).

Text: The Antiquities of the Jews Book 18 Chapter 3.3 (Page 480)

Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works – a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, A.D. 33, April 3, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, A.D. 33, April 5, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.

Tiberius was slain by a secret plot laid against him (The Antiquities of the Jews Book 18 Chapter 6.9 Page 491). Caius called Caligula by the Romans, became his successor. Caius son of the excellent Germanicus, the son of Drusus, brother of emperor Tiberius, sister was Drusilla, with whom he was guilty of incest. Caius did not demonstrate his madness in offering injuries only to the Jews at Jerusalem, or to those who dwelt in the neighborhood, but suffered to extend itself through all the earth and sea, so far as was in subjection to the Romans, and filled it with ten thousand mischiefs (The Antiquities of the Jews Book 19 Chapter 1.1 Page 502).

Text: The Wars of the Jews Book 2 Chapter 11.1 (Page 610)

Now when Caius had reigned three years and eight months, and had been slain by treachery, Claudius was hurried away by the armies that were at Rome to take the government upon him. Claudius was another son of Drusus.

They lead Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium: and it was early; and they themselves entered not into the Praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover. Pilate therefore went out unto them, and saith, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If this man were not an evildoer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee. Pilate therefore said unto them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. The Jews said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should die. Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered, Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find no crime in him. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? They cried out therefore again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber. Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple garment; and they came unto him, and said, Hail, King of the Jews!

and they struck him with their hands. And Pilate went out again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him. Jesus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold, the man! When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him ! Pilate saith unto them, Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no crime in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard this saying, he was the more afraid; and he entered into the Praetorium again, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore saith unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee? Jesus answered him, Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin. Upon this Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called the Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha (John 18: 28 – 19: 13 ASV).

Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him up. And while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus (Matthew 27: 17-20 ASV).

Now it was the Preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews, Behold, your King! They therefore cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered,

We have no king but Caesar. Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified. They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha: where they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. And there was written, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title therefore read many of the Jews, for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city; and it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek. The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written (John 19: 14-22 ASV).

Report of Jesus' trial and death must have been sent to Rome. The following is an alleged copy of that report from an Apocryphal Text: *The Acts of Peter and Paul* referenced by Tertullian, Justin Martyr and Eusebius.

Pontius Pilate unto Claudius greeting,

There befell of late a matter of which I have myself made trial; for the Jews through envy have punished themselves and their posterity with fearful judgments of their own fault; for whereas their fathers had promises that their God would send them out of heaven his Holy One, who should of right be called king, and did promise he would send him on earth by a virgin; he then came when I was governor of Judea, and they beheld him enlightening the blind, cleansing lepers, healing the palsied, driving devils out of men, raising the dead, rebuking the winds, walking on the waves of the sea dry-shod, and doing many other wonders, and all the people of the Jews calling him the Son of God; the chief priests therefore moved with envy against him, took him and delivered him unto me and brought against him one false accusation after another, saying that he was a sorcerer and that he did things contrary to the law.

But I, believing that these things were so, having scourged him, delivered him to their will; and they crucified him, and when he

was buried, they set their guards upon him. But while my soldiers watched him, he rose again on the third day; yet so much was the malice of the Jews kindled, that they gave money to the soldiers saying: Say ye that his disciples stole away his body. But they, though they took the money, were not able to keep silence concerning that which had come to pass, for they also have testified that they saw him arisen, and that they received money from the Jews. And these things have I reported unto thy mightiness for this cause, lest some other should lie unto thee, and thou shouldest deem right to believe the false tales of the Jews.

Text: The Antiquities of the Jews Book 20 Chapter 7.1 & 2 (Page 533)

So Claudius sent Felix, the brother of Pallans, to take care of the affairs of Judea. While Felix was procurator of Judea, he saw Drusilla, and fell in love with her, for she did exceed all other women in beauty.

Text: Acts 24: 24-27 ASV

After certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. And as he reasoned of righteousness, and selfcontrol, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me. He hoped withal that money would be given him of Paul: wherefore also he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. But when two years were fulfilled, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to gain favor with the Jews, Felix left Paul in bonds.

Jesus lays out the choice in strong but simple language for Tiberias, Caiaphas, Herod, Caius, Claudius, Felix, Drusilla, Pilate and his bride. Like the wealthy young aristocrat who started a dialogue with Jesus (Matthew 19: 16), the cost of salvation was too high! All had great possessions and did not want to give up anything for salvation at the time. So they considered the choice carefully and reasoned not to enter into the kingdom of heaven, failing to realize you always give to get.

Jesus says unto His disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life? (Matthew 16: 24-26 ASV) It is the same today. I hear a woman say. "I have not made up my mind" or a man say, "There are times when I am almost persuaded." People trusting in their bank account, wanting to wear Christianity as an ornament to gain public plaudit, seeking the approval of Providence wanting Jehovah to acknowledge them as successful men and women.

A Christian life is not something that suddenly overtakes you like measles. It is a definite act of will. It is something you decide to do, something that you want to do. Like Tiberias, Caiaphas, Herod, Caius, Claudius, Felix, Drusilla, Pilate and his bride you have a choice before you.

I pray you follow in Paul's footsteps.