

Terrified of Jesus

“Therefore when Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid; and he entered the Praetorium again and said to Jesus, ‘Where are You from?’ But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to Him, ‘Are you not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?’ Jesus answered him, ‘You would have no authority over Me at all, if it had not been given to you from above; for this reason the one who handed Me over to you has the greater sin.’”

John 19:8-11 (NASB)

The amazing sight of Jesus before Pilate is remarkable in various ways. Our text is the record of the Friend of sinners terrifying the Roman governor Pilate. It is indeed frightening to reconstruct the scene and try to determine how the disheveled harmless looking prisoner before Pilate could frighten anyone. But He did!

When Pilate heard the prisoner’s accusers say that the man claimed to be God his fear became even greater. In Pilate’s view of the world, gods would occasionally visit earth in human form. So, Pilate was terrified because he had Jesus flogged a few moments earlier and so had possibly mistreated a god!! Small wonder Pilate was terrified of this prisoner. He needed to establish just Who it was who stood before him. So, he asked Jesus where He was from.

Pilate already knew that Jesus was from Galilee so he was wanting to know if Jesus was also from another world. After all (so he thought) he was

possibly dealing with a god and such rough treatment of a god as Pilate had administered might bring great grief to him.

Jesus did not answer Pilate’s question regarding where He was from. So Pilate became desperate and blurted out, “Don’t you know who I am? I have power to release you or to crucify you!” Jesus calmly responded by saying two things. First, Jesus reminded Pilate that his power was given him from above (therefore he would answer for how he used his power). Second, that others in this drama had greater sin (in other words He was calling Pilate a great sinner).

It is worth noting that Jesus crafted His words very carefully even under great pressure. Clearly, when circumstances were pushing very hard against the Son of God, He won the battle. It is hard to imagine more challenging opposition to the Saviour than that which is seen in Pilate’s court. It is clear that no pos-

sible situation can overcome the Redeemer’s infinite resources. So, when the issues in life overwhelm our finite reserves, it is time to turn once more to the all-sufficient reserves of our beloved Good Shepherd and find safety in Him. Then, as we witness how the Captive took captive His captors, we bow once more lost in wonder, love and praise.

Those, like Pilate, who seek to oppose the Good Shepherd do well to be terrified of Him. He cannot be successfully opposed.

May all of my readers today be among those who have surrendered to the Good Shepherd and found themselves moved from fear to faith, from indifference to love and now long for His coming in great glory and majesty.

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