



## “Your Vote Makes A Difference”

John 18:39 – 19:7

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The scriptures chosen for this morning’s sermon are generally read during the Easter season. The story in John 11:47-54 reveals that they had decided to kill Jesus long before the Jewish leaders had Him arrested in the Garden. However, the Jewish council did not have the right to execute prisoners, so it was necessary to get cooperation and approval from Rome. There were three stages in both the Jewish “trial” and the Roman “trial.”

The three stages of the Jewish trial were:

1. Jesus taken to the home of Annas and there interrogated informally (John 18:12-14, 19-23)
2. Taken before Caiaphas and whatever members of the Sanhedrin the high priest could assemble at that hour of the night (Matthew 26:57-68; Mark 14:53-65)
3. Trial of Jewish leaders who condemned Jesus to death (Matthew 27:1; Luke 22:66-71)

The Three stages of the Roman trial were:

1. The first appearance before Pilate (John 18:28-38)
2. The appearance before Herod (Luke 23:6-12)
3. The second appearance before Pilate (John 18:39-19:16; and Matthew 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15; Luke 23:13-25)

In John’s account, we read where Pilate is seeking for some “loophole” that would please both sides. He was afraid of the crowd, but then he grew more afraid of the prisoner! At least three times he announced that Jesus was not guilty of any crime (Luke 23:14; John 19:4; Luke 23:22; John 19:6). Yet he refused to release Him!

The Roman “trial,” conducted by Pilate, revolved around four key questions.

1. “What is the accusation?” (John 18:28-32)
2. “Are You King of the Jews?” (John 18:33-38)
3. “Shall I release the King of the Jews?” (John 18:39-19:7)
4. “Where are you from?” (John 19:8-16)

I want to briefly focus on the third question, “Shall I release the King of the Jews?” In other words, Pilate was seeking “a vote” as to what he should do with Jesus. Jesus was innocent, but Pilate had to make a decision so he put it to a vote. He asked witnesses from the crowd, and they all testified as to what they had heard or seen Jesus do. Pilate asked the Jewish leaders what should be done with Jesus. In John 18:31 the Jews had already made it clear that they wanted Jesus to die. Pilate wanted to put it to a vote. Pilate did not want to be caught in the middle so he put in Barabbas—a robber (John 18:40), a notorious prisoner (Matthew 27:16), and an insurrectionist (Luke 23:19). A vote for Barabbas was a vote for Rome. When a mob is manipulated by crafty leaders, in an atmosphere of patriotic fervor, it loses itself and begins to think with its feelings instead of its brains. Their condemning vote said nothing about the Son of God, but it said a great deal about them.

They voted against Jesus’ release. Where were Peter, James, and John? Where were the lame and blind people whom Jesus had healed? Where was the woman with the blood disease, the lepers, the demoniacs, the lonely, the depressed, the folks that ate His food on the mountain? Where were they? Their vote would have made a difference!!

However, the polls had not yet closed and the final vote had not yet been cast. God looked down and decided to cast His vote and His vote made the difference.

Your vote, in this critical, historic election can and will make a difference!!

Vote today to give your life to Jesus Christ and vote Tuesday for the candidate whom you feel God has sent to change the course of destiny.

*Pastor Gerald L. Durley*