

The Apostles' Creed



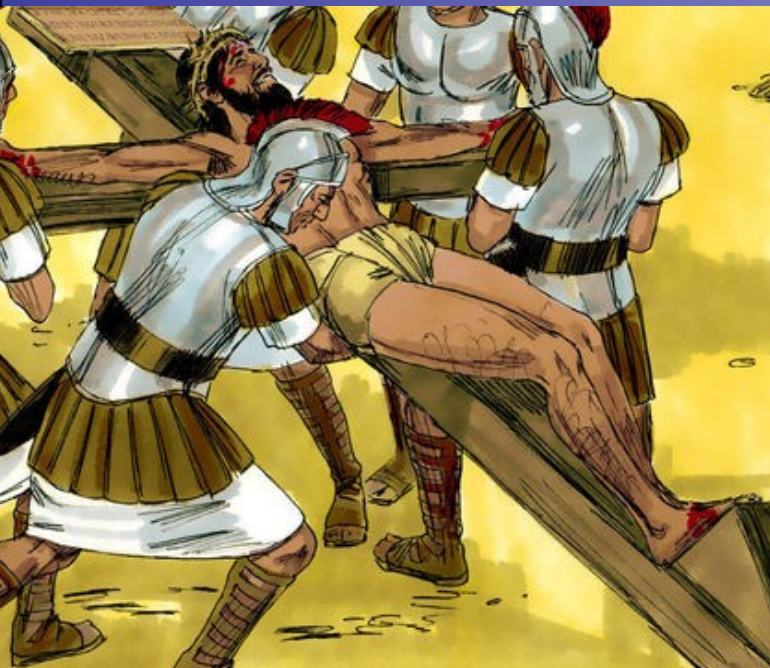
The Apostles' Creed

- *Intro to the Creed Itself*
- *God the Father*
- *God the Son*
 - *Christ's Birth*
 - *Christ's Crucifixion and Death*



Christ's Crucifixion and Death

- “We believe in... Jesus Christ... Who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried...”
 - We should probably start by defining some terms
 - “Suffered”
 - In the original Latin of the Creed, that's “*passus sub Pontio Pilato, crucifixus, mortuus, et sepultus...*”
 - This word, “*passio*,” obviously meant “to suffer” (which is why we have “Passion Plays” about the crucifixion, or the movie “*The Passion*”) (and why our word “compassion” means “suffering *with* [someone else]”) (and why poets of the 16th century equated fervent, *romantic* love with “passion” because true love is, by definition, *torment...*) (and why philosophers of the 15th century coined the concept of “passivity” as “suffering without resistance”) (which has no etymological overlap with “pacifism”—which is from Latin “*pax*” + “*facere*” or “peace-making” and has no logical connection with necessarily being “passive” at all)



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(and why poets of the 16th century equated fervent, *romantic* love with “passion” because true love is, by definition, *torment...*)

(and why philosophers of the 15th century coined the concept of “passivity” as “suffering without resistance”)

(Mother Teresa was a proponent of the theology that our personal suffering itself is redemptive because it connects us to Christ:

“Pain, sorrow, suffering are but the kiss of Jesus—a sign that you have come so close to Him that He can kiss you”)



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 - This word, “*passio*,” obviously meant “to suffer” and in the central-Asian, syncretistic religion called Manichaeism, Jesus is *eternally* suffering
 - Mixing John's Gospel in with gnostic sources, Mani presented Jesus as the soul of the world—the cosmic Light, imprisoned in this clay
 - So just as Jesus' spirit suffered within His physical body on the cross, so is His spirit *continually* crucified within this world for us
 - Our salvation is dependent in part upon Christ's eternal, continual suffering by being trapped in corporality
(contrast this concept with verses such as 1 Peter 3:18, Hebrews 7:27, 9:25-28, etc.)



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 - “Pontius Pilate”
 - Pilate was the fifth governor of the Roman province of Judaea, serving under Tiberius from 26 to 36 AD
 - He was an educated noble, but not a particularly nice guy—in fact, he seemed to have been shipped off to Judea primarily for two reasons:
 - 1) He had torqued off too many people with his brutality to rate a *good* posting
 - 2) He was nonetheless intelligent and ruthless enough to get things done, and controlling Judea required a strong hand



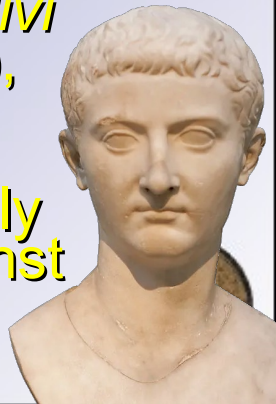
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 - He was an educated noble, but not a particularly nice guy
 - We know snippets about a handful of incidents that speak to his leadership characteristics
 - He used money from the Temple treasury to pay for a new aqueduct
 - Riots broke out from the Jews, and Pilate ordered the people to be beaten with clubs and trampled by horses



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 - He supported the imperial cult, so he brought in Roman standards with Caesar's image as well as shields calling Tiberias the “*divi Augusti filius*” (“son of divine Augustus”), placing them all around Herod's palace
 - Riots broke out from the Jews and even Tiberius felt the need to strongly reprimand Pilate and warn him against any further unrest
(note John 19:12, Matthew 27:24)



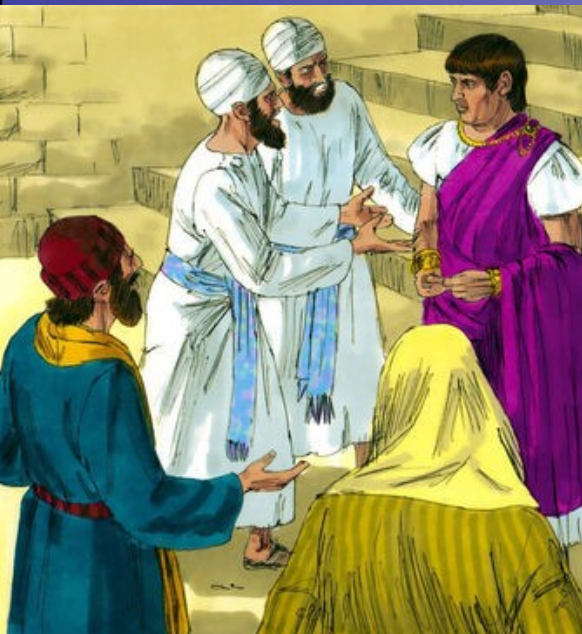
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 - And somewhere along the line, Luke 13:1 happened (though that's all the information that we have about the incident)
 - How would you summarize Pontius Pilate?



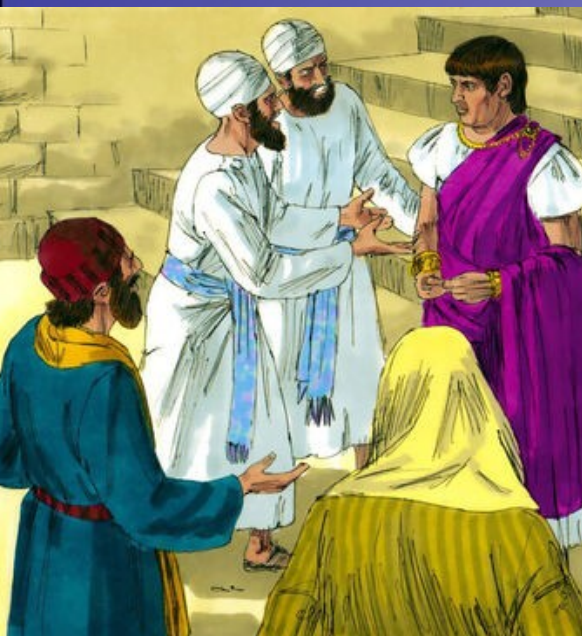
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 - So when Pilate was told about a crazy rebel from Galilee who was calling himself a king and preaching against Rome, what was his natural reaction?
 - Read John 18:28-32
(note: Luke 23:2 is essentially John 18:30½)



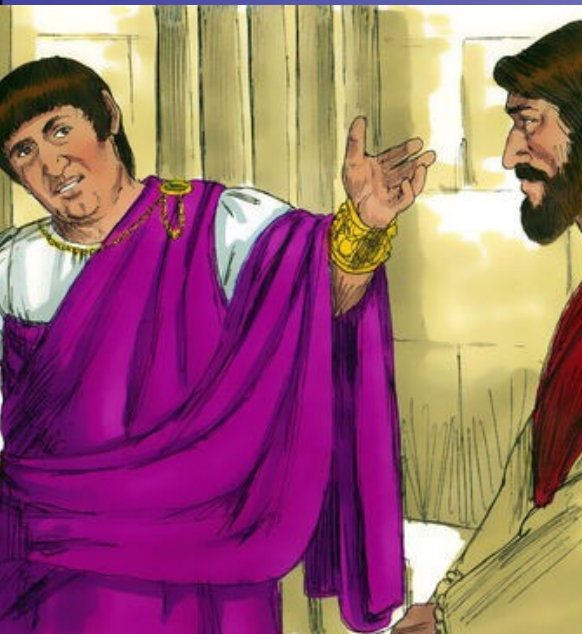
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 - How did Pilate react to the Jews' request—and what does his relationship with them seem to be like, and why?



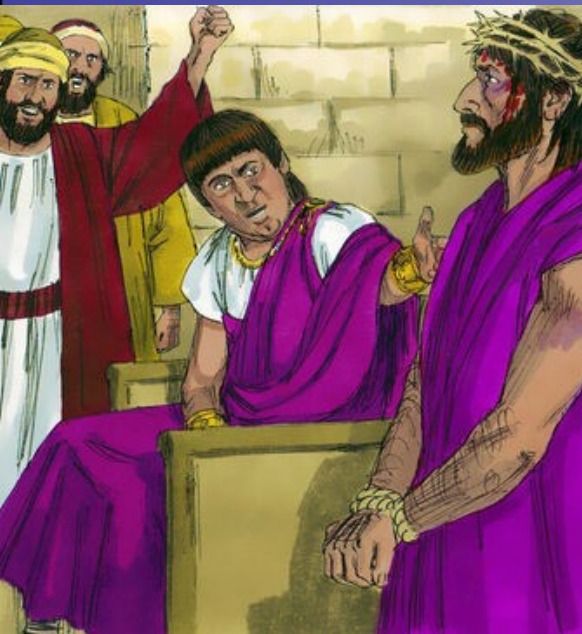
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 - Read John 18:28-32
 - Read John 18:33-38
 - How did Pilate react when speaking to Jesus—and how are the questioning and Pilate's conclusions different here from when he was speaking with the Jewish leaders, and why?



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 - Read John 18:28-32
 - Read John 18:33-38
 - Read Luke 23:13-16
 - How did Pilate summarize his findings here—and why was he specifically concerned with incitement to rebellion, and why was he still going to punish Jesus even though he found no basis for the charges against Him?
 - So why did he ultimately relent and give in to the people's demands?
(again, see verses like John 19:12, Matthew 27:24, etc.)



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 - Read John 18:28-32
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 - Read Luke 23:13-16
 - Read John 19:17-22
 - Why did Pilate prepare this sign for the cross—and what does his terse response to the leaders' concerns suggest about Pilate's motivations?



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 - Whackadoodle Fact of the Day—
 - Based on this sign, on Pilate's reticence to crucify Jesus, and on his wife's comments about her dream (in Matthew 27:19) that Jesus was an “innocent man,” the Ethiopian and Coptic churches believe that he *converted*
 - In fact, they've both *canonized* the Roman who crucified Jesus as a *saint*...



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 - “Crucifixion”
 - This was the most excruciating death-by-torture that the Romans could come up with
(actually, our word “excruciating” comes from the Latin “ex-” + “*cruciare*”—“from the cross”)



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- Technically—as in Christ's case—the crucifixion would often be prefaced by flogging

- That's not the same as whipping a victim

Roman flogging made use of whips that have ragged pieces of metal, broken glass, shards of bone, lead weights, etc., knotted at the ends of the cords in order to rip the flesh and cause massive tissue damage, leaving the victim physically exhausted



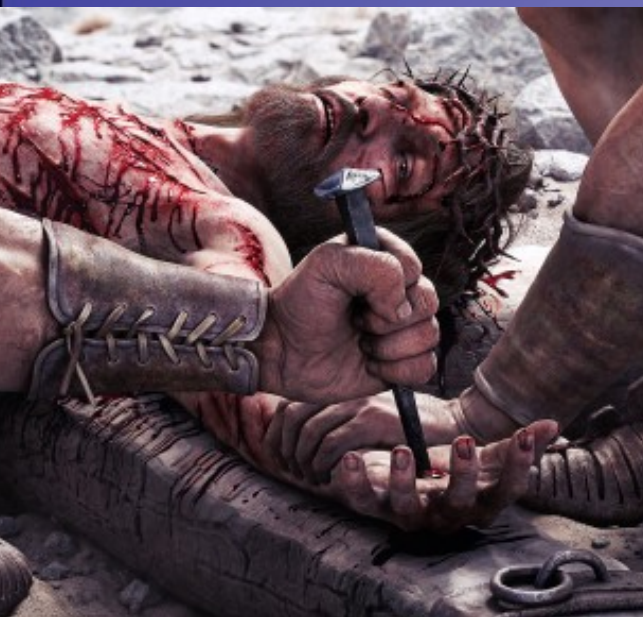
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 - Technically—as in Christ's case—the crucifixion would often be prefaced by flogging
 - Later, a victim would be tied and sometimes—as in Christ's case—nailed to a crossbeam
 - It was usually done through the wrist, so that the nail could pierce the medial nerve and cause tremendous pain
 - But if the victim's arms were lashed tightly enough, the nails could instead be pounded through the palm



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 - The point is that the nails were never intended to keep the victim on the cross—the ropes did that—but rather simply to cause as much pain as possible



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 - Ultimately, the victim would be hoisted onto the cross itself and left there to die slowly
 - You didn't die from blood loss, but from *asphyxiation* as your lungs slowly fill with fluid from having your arms up like that for so long (which is why they'd sometimes also pound nails through the feet, so that the victim would have to repeatedly, painfully push up against the nails in order to try to catch their breath)



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 - It thus often took several days for people to die on the cross like this
 - (usually under Roman guard, in part to beat away birds and to give water—not to relieve the pain and suffering, but to make sure that it would last)



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 - It thus often took several days for people to die on the cross like this, and the victim would finally die gasping for breaths
 - Note Pilate's surprise in Mark 15:44 that Jesus had died after only *six hours* on the cross



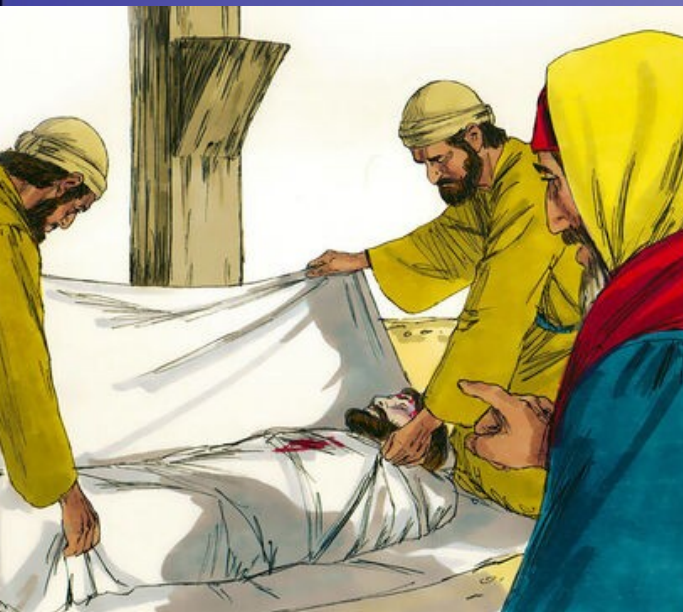
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 - It thus often took several days for people to die on the cross like this, and the victim would finally die gasping for breaths
 - Note Pilate's surprise in Mark 15:44
 - But note also how Dr. Luke describes Christ's death in Luke 23:46...



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 - “Dead and buried”
 - The Romans made sure that Jesus was dead before they even took Him off the cross by stabbing his side with a spear
 - Read John 19:38-40
 - How significant is it that these two wealthy, important men so publicly took charge of Christ's body and took such good care of it?
 - For the record, wrapping His body in linen soaked with 75 pounds of thick, gooey, aromatic spices such as myrrh and aloes
 - A) would've totally killed Jesus if He wasn't already dead
 - B) would've cost something in the neighborhood of \$150,000-\$200,000 in today's prices
 - Note the prophecy in Isaiah 53:9...



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 - Why is it so important to clarify that Jesus really was honest and truly *dead*—so important that all four Gospels made a point to emphasize it?
 - And why were the Jewish leaders so concerned in Matthew 27:62-66?





- Why was it so absolutely crushing to the disciples to know—to *know*—that Jesus was truly dead on Friday?
- And why did that make such a difference on Sunday?