

VOICES FROM HEAVEN AND HELL

by

J. MARCELLUS KIK

Copyright © 1955

edited for 3BSB by Baptist Bible Believer in the spirit of the Colportage Ministry of a century ago

~ out-of-print and in the public domain ~

CHAPTER NINE

"I Condemned JESUS To Be Crucified"

by Pilate

"My name is Pontius Pilate. For centuries I have washed my hands in protest against being condemned to hell. My greatest sin has been declared to be the unjust condemnation of CHRIST. But I did not realize that JESUS was the Son of the living GOD. I worked hard to free him. Seven times I declared that he was innocent of any crime. I was forced by the people to condemn him to crucifixion. Openly before the nation of the Jews I took water and washed my hands, protesting by this action that I was innocent of the blood of him whom I felt at the time was a righteous man. And I continue the washing of my hands to this day in protest of my being adjudged guilty of unrighteous judgment. It was neither my will nor desire to condemn JESUS. It was due to political expediency. But in spite of my protest the stain of guilt is still upon my hands. I have discovered nothing in hell which will wipe off the stains of sin.

"However, let me tell you my story of that eventful day when I officially condemned JESUS to be crucified. It was while I was procurator over Judea by appointment of Emperor Tiberius. You will see how I was forced into that action against my will and that I am actually innocent of the blood of JESUS CHRIST.

"It was before seven o'clock on a Friday morning that I was summoned by the Jews to pass judgment on a certain JESUS whom they had arrested and tried before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish court. With my wife I was in residence at the Palace in Jerusalem. It was our custom to stay in Jerusalem during the Jewish Passover Feast. Ordinarily I would have tried this man within the Palace but the Jews had a prejudice against entering into it. They claimed that it would defile them and would prevent them from taking part in their Feast. I yielded to their prejudice and superstition and met with them outside of the Palace.

"I immediately asked them what their accusation was against this JESUS. Evidently they expected me to condemn the man without any formal accusation and without a trial. But I refused to sit down to judgment without a formal accusation. They tried to get around my request by stating: **'If this man were not an evildoer, we should not have delivered him up unto**

thee.'

What kind of a judge did they think I was by insinuating that I should condemn a man simply on their statement that he was an evildoer! Knowing that their action was based on a question of their religious law I replied: **'Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law.'**

"I thought that they would take advantage of this offer but their reply was: **'It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.'** So - they wanted this man to be crucified. Our Roman government had taken away from the Jewish Court the right to pass the death sentence. What amazed me was that they wanted the death sentence passed upon this man because they said he was perverting their nation by forbidding to give taxes to Caesar and because he claimed to be a king. They did not fool me by this accusation. They had no love for Caesar nor were they zealous in paying taxes. The hypocrites! However, I did think it wise to question this JESUS about his claim to be a king. If he was thinking of leading a rebellion against Rome, I would condemn him immediately.

"I went into the palace where my soldiers had taken him. I summoned him to me and asked: **'Art thou the King of the Jews?'** He had the impertinence to reply: **'Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me?'** I answered: **'Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?'**

"Then this JESUS gave a strange answer. It was fantastic. He said: **'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.'** How could he have a kingdom if it was not of this world? How could he establish a kingdom without fighting? The man was out of his mind. However, it was evident that he did not plan to set up a rival kingdom to Rome. It was not his plan to lead a rebellion against Caesar. That was my only concern. And yet he seemed to think that he was some kind of king. So I asked him: **'Art thou a king then?'** He answered in the affirmative. He said: **'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. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice.'**

"Truth! Everyone that is of the truth would hear his voice! I supposed he thought that if I knew the truth that I would be his follower - his subject. How ridiculous! Who in the Empire of Rome knew the truth? The Stoics? The Epicureans? These fanatic Jews? This JESUS? Truth does not exist. You cannot believe any man. So I replied: **'What is truth?'** Nevertheless, I determined to release this man. The kingdom he had in mind was one of fantasy and not like the kingdom of Rome. He was not out to rebel against Caesar. The idea of putting this man to death for his fantastic ideas was abhorrent.

"So I went outside of the Palace and spoke to the Jews. I told them frankly that I could find no crime in this JESUS. But the chief priests made one accusation after another. Not one amounted to anything. They also stated that he had stirred up the people in the province of Galilee. Herod Antipas was Tetrarch over Galilee. He and I were enemies because I had put some Galileans to death without consulting him. And so I thought here was my chance to make up with him and to get out of my difficulty concerning this JESUS whom I felt to be innocent. Therefore I sent him to Herod.

"The chief priests also had gone to Herod. From what I heard later they vehemently accused JESUS of many things. But JESUS refused to answer their accusations and would make no reply to Herod. Herod and his soldiers set JESUS at nought. They mocked his pretensions to kingship. They arrayed him in gorgeous apparel and sent him back to me. Herod felt that JESUS should come under my jurisdiction. That was a nice gesture on his part and we became friends from that day.

"So I again called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, and said to them: **'Ye brought unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: no, nor yet Herod: for he sent him back unto us; and behold, nothing worthy of death hath been done by him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him.'**

"It was my thought that by scourging him it would give sufficient satisfaction to his persecutors. Then another thought struck me. It was my custom to release any prisoner at the request of the Jews during the Passover Feast. I had a notable prisoner by the name of Barabbas. He was guilty of insurrection, murder, and theft. He was not particularly loved of the people. Surely if it came to a choice between Barabbas and JESUS the people would choose JESUS. After all, it was only because the Jewish leaders were jealous of JESUS that they wanted his death. By giving this choice of Barabbas or JESUS I would put a wedge between the people and the leaders. When I asked whether it would be Barabbas or JESUS they were not ready for their decision. I gave them a little time to think it over.

"While I was waiting for their answer my wife sent me a message. It read: **'Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.'** This message startled me and - I must confess - frightened me. Who is this JESUS? Are the gods interested in him that they would send a message to my wife in a dream? What manner of person is he?

"As I reflected on this dream of my wife the multitude gave a sign that they were ready with an answer. I asked them whether it was JESUS whom they wanted released. They cried out: **'Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas.'** This stunned me for I felt sure they would ask for a righteous man rather than a thief and murderer. I learned later that the chief priests had influenced the people to that decision. I cried out to them: **'What then shall I do unto Jesus which is called Christ?'** And they replied: **'Crucify him, crucify him.'** I cried out: **'Why, what evil hath this man done? I have found no cause of death in him.'** Then the frenzied mob cried out the more: **'Crucify him, crucify him, crucify him!'**

"I knew that nothing would still them but the crucifixion of JESUS. With reluctance I gave way to their will. I did not want trouble. However, to show them that it was their decision and not mine, I called for a basin of water. I washed my hands before that entire multitude and declared: **'I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man: see ye to it!'** They accepted the responsibility by crying out: **'His blood be on us, and on our children.'** Then I released Barabbas and ordered JESUS to be scourged.

"The soldiers did a thorough job in this scourging. The strongest of them ripped open the back of

JESUS with a cruel scourge. The men thought they would also have some fun with him. They heard that he had claimed to be a king. So in mockery they crowned him. They plaited a crown out of thorns and pressed it into his brow. They put a purple robe on him and placed a reed in his hand as a scepter. Each one bowed before him and cried: **'Hail, king of the Jews!'** Then each soldier spit upon him. After this treatment they brought him to me. I am not easily moved. But knowing that he was innocent, it did move me to see him, scourged and crowned with thorns. The thought struck me that if the people saw him now they would be satisfied and no longer demand his crucifixion. It would be worth trying for I was troubled about this man.

"I went out to the people again and said to them: **'Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him.'** Then my soldiers led JESUS out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. What a pitiful object he presented to the people: pale as death; his face covered with blood and spittle; his brow pierced with sharp thorns; and his hair matted with blood. But the sight of him did not change their hearts and again I heard that cry: **'Crucify him, crucify him, crucify him!'** I did not want that responsibility and said to them: **'Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.'**

"The Jews then made a statement which sent fear into my heart. They said: **'We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.'** The Son of GOD? The Son of GOD? What manner of man is this JESUS? He impressed me as a righteous man but was he actually a son of one of the gods? I was not religious but I knew that sometimes the gods did visit the earth. Into what trouble was I getting? I better question this JESUS again. I ordered the soldiers to take him into the Palace.

"I asked him to tell me who he really was. He gave no answer. This angered me and I said: **'Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee?'** To this he gave reply: **'Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin.'** This frightened me all the more because I did not desire to have the vengeance of the gods upon me. Therefore I worked hard to influence the Jews to be satisfied with the scourging I had given him and consent to his release.

"But the Jews cried out: **'If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend: everyone that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.'** So they would accuse me of treason. This was a ridiculous charge. And yet I would not desire to have the Emperor hear even a false charge of treason. My enemies at Rome might try to make capital of it. There were many that wanted my position. Why should I risk my position and reputation for this JESUS? I knew that he was innocent and time and time again I declared that he was innocent of any crime. I labored hard to influence the Jews to be satisfied with his release. But I could not go against their will. That would not be good politics. They might petition the Emperor to remove me. Again I called the soldiers to bring out JESUS. I placed him in the charge of the centurion and ordered him to proceed with the crucifixion. They led him away to Calvary where criminals were crucified.

"From that time on one ill fortune after another was my lot. A Samaritan impostor promised his countrymen that he would show them where Moses had hidden certain golden vessels of the tabernacle. He gathered a multitude. I learned that they carried arms. I ordered my soldiers to attack them. Many of the Samaritans were slain. A complaint was made to Vitellius, my

immediate superior. He appointed a new procurator and ordered me to proceed to Rome to give an account of what happened to the Emperor. Here again ill fortune followed me. Emperor Tiberius died before I arrived in Rome. I tried my best to influence Emperor Caligula to appoint me to office. But he was influenced against me by my enemies and I was banished to Gaul.

"My life in Gaul was unbearable. My wife did not help matters. She constantly reminded me that I had failed to heed the warning of her dream about that righteous man JESUS who was crucified in Judea. Finally I could not bear the torment of my life upon earth. I determined to commit suicide. Why bear torment on earth when death will remove it? Torment on earth? It is Heaven in comparison with the eternal torment of hell. The guilt of a thousand sins sears my hands with red hot flames. Nothing will wash away that searing guilt! I wash and wash to no avail. And the deepest stain of guilt - that which sears with greatest intensity - is the condemnation of the righteous man JESUS whom I know now to be the Son of GOD, the Judge of the earth."

~ end of chapter 9 ~
