

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

What Evil Hath He Done?

By Larry Ray Hafley

Our question was asked by an exasperated, frustrated Roman ruler, Pontius Pilate. It was posed, of course, concerning Jesus the Christ. The inquiry was ignored. It has never been answered with convincing, convicting proof. Yet, Jesus remains accused by an unbelieving world. Now, as then, he is jeered rather than feared as he ought to be (Matt. 10:28).

Jesus' personal life was above reproach. Though later, modern mockers and scoffers have accused him of all manner of sins, their charges have never been accompanied with evidence. Consider witnesses and testimony that say Jesus was sinless.

1. John 8:46. Jesus asked, *“Which of you convinceth (convicteth; cf. Titus 1:9; John 16:8) me of sin?”* Those who were asked had every reason, every desire, to answer. First, Jesus had told them, *“I do always those things that please him (the Father)”* (John 8:29). If untrue, such a statement is arrogant, egotistical blasphemy! It begs to be rebuked and refuted. Second, the audience hated Jesus. The Jew's religion was at stake. Jesus pounded them with claims and charges that bruised their religion, their souls and their character (John 8:21, 23, 24, 25-37). Thus, they were motivated to convict Jesus if they could. That they did not do so is evidence for Jesus' sinlessness.

2. Prophetic Testimony. Isaiah spoke of Jesus in Isaiah 53 (Acts 8:35; John 12:37, 38). Isaiah said, *“He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth”* (v. 9). This text, and its immediate, personal application to Jesus, must have spurred first century enemies into a frenzy of activity as they searched and probed Jesus' life for sin (cf. Luke 20:20).

3. The Lamb of God. John the Baptist, a reliable witness, creditable even to the Jews initially (John 1:19-22; 5:35; 10:41), called Jesus, *“the Lamb of God”* (John 1:29). Peter also alluded to this imagery and type of a *“lamb without blemish and without spot”* (1 Pet. 1:19). This reference to Jesus as *“the Lamb of God”* declares his sinless life. Reflect on the quality of lambs used in Old Testament sacrifice.

4. Pontius Pilate. The judge at Jesus arraignment and trial said, *“I find no fault in this man”* (Luke 23:4, 15, 22; John 18:38; 19:4, 6). *“Pilate sought to release him.”* Can there be better civil proof of innocence than the judge's verdict? Due to the intense political pressure he was under, would not Pilate, despite his misgivings, have cited an accusation for condemnation if he could have?

5. Testimony of Judas. Judas said he had sinned in that he had betrayed an innocent life (Matt. 27:4). Judas knew. He had been with Jesus *“in season, out of season.”* If Jesus were a sinful man, Judas could have let him die the death of an imposter. However, the regret and remorse Judas manifested shows that he recognized Jesus' purity.

6. “The Holy One and the Just.” Peter preached to a portion of Christ's killers. He called Jesus *“the Holy One and the Just”* (Acts 3:13-15). Had they known Jesus to be a sinner, they would have laughed at such a description. Instead, at least 5,000 men believed, repented and were converted (Acts 3:19; 4:4). How can we account for their conversion if they knew Jesus to be a sinner like themselves?

7. The Dying Thief. One of the thieves on a cross said to his fellow victim, *“Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss”* (Luke 23:40-42). He obviously knew whereof he spoke. What else but the truth of his assessment could have compelled him to testify as he did? Penitent, dying men are not given to rash exaggeration.

8. The Centurion. One of Jesus' executioners said, *“Certainly this was a righteous man”* (Luke 23:47). What

would prompt a Roman centurion to so speak of a young Jewish preacher? He had everything to lose for such a pronouncement. A hardened, calloused soldier on the execution detail had seen, perhaps, many guilty men die. He had heard their hypocritical protestations of innocence. He was steeled against such appeals. He was not fooled by them. How, then, do we account for this description of the Savior? Truly, this was the Son of God.

9. Apostolic Affirmations. *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin”* (2 Cor. 5:21). Jesus *“was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”* (Heb. 4:15). *“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth”* (1 Pet. 2:22). His death was the sacrifice of *“the just for the unjust”* (1 Pet. 3:18; cf. Acts 3:14). He was *“holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners”* (Heb. 7:26). These men knew the certainty of their testimony (Luke 1:1-4; 1 John 1:1, 2). Apart from the consideration of inspiration, their witness must be heard. They speak with one voice. Their view is clear, unequivocal – *“He did no sin.”*

Finally, the teaching of Christ contains penetrating, incisive, to the marrow of the heart, insight and knowledge. His words appeal to the highest and noblest part of man, not to base, animal lust. Neither sensual passion nor covetous greed are the objects of his allurements, judgment or teaching. The doctrine of Christ casts no carnal bait before the appetites of the flesh. It consistently calls the heart, summons the will and touches the conscience. All sins, both small and great, are condemned. His teachings at once soothe a broken heart and break a hardened one. Is it any wonder, then, that his contemporaries *“were astonished at his doctrine”*? Yes, *“What evil hath he done?”*

Jesus’ teachings, like his person and character, have been perverted to justify every kind of havoc and horror. A doctor may use a scalpel to kill rather than to heal. One may use water to drown a thirsty man. He may use the sun to torture and burn him. Should we, therefore, ban the scalpel? Should we dry up all wells of water and blot out the sun?

The word of Christ, as his life, is first pure, then peaceable, It cuts to heal. It divides and separates that it may unite and bind. It is the water of life to the thirsty soul, the bread of life to the hungry heart, and the sun of life to the spirit that now lieth in darkness. You can repose your trust in its promises and obey its commandments without the slightest fear of being slighted, left out or rejected. With the blessings of his grace, with the cleansing of his blood, with the assurance of his sinless life and the certainty of his pure and perfect word, *“What evil hath he done?”*

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PREACH A SERMON, PREACHER

(Author Unknown)

Preach a sermon preacher,
But don’t get too specific;
As long as you generalize
We think you are terrific.

Preach a sermon preacher,
Make it good and plain;
But don’t you dare to get so close
As to call sin by its name.

Preach a sermon preacher,
Preach it round or flat;
We love to play at hide and seek,
And guessing where you’re at.

Preach a sermon preacher,
Make it what we love to hear;
We’ll pat you on your spineless back
While you scratch our itching ears.

Service Times — Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM — Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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