

**"WHAT SHALL I DO WITH JESUS?"****J.R. Miller:**

Pilate's was a most unenviable distinction. No doubt he felt honored when he was made procurator of Judea. But the honor brought him a responsibility which left him weighed and found lacking. Pilate did not know when he was roused so early that April morning, that that Friday was doomsday for him. He did not know when he was going through the various stages of the trial of Jesus, that he was making such a record of infamy for himself! He would better a thousand times have missed the honor of being the governor of Judea, and thus have escaped the making of the terrible mistake he made that day.

Yet Pilate need not have failed so terribly. If he had been simply just, and had stood like a rock for what was right, the day would have become one of undying honor—and not one of everlasting obloquy for him. But the question with which Pilate met every crisis was not, "What is right?" but, "What will advance my interest?" He knew that Jesus was guilty of no wrong—he confessed that he found no fault in Him. He knew the motive of the religious rulers—that for envy they had delivered Him.

But instead of directly acquitting Him, he sought in indirect ways to secure His release. He sent Him to Herod, thinking thus to get clear of the responsibility of meeting the question himself. This failing, he begged the rulers to accept Jesus as the one prisoner to be set free at that Passover. But they refused, choosing Barabbas. At this point it was that Pilate, perplexed and beaten, asked, "What then shall I do with Jesus?" Instantly came the answer, "Crucify Him!" Still Pilate pleaded, awed by something in the prisoner before him, and dreading to send Him to the cross. But the only answer he got was, "Free Barabbas! Crucify Jesus!" He still struggled hopelessly to keep Jesus from death—but he had gone too far in his temporizing. So he yielded. He delivered the prisoner to their will.

Then taking water, he washed his hands before the people, saying he was innocent of the blood of the Just Man he was giving up to crucifixion.

Pilate lost his opportunity. He is held up before the world as a judge who knew the innocence of the Man who stood before him—yet sent Him to a cross! An imaginative writer, describing Pilate's life in the world of eternal darkness, represents Pilate as washing his hands forever, and then looking at them to find them still and forever stained. They will never come clean!