

John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and Politics (as translated in the New American Standard Bible)

John the Baptist and Jesus Christ

The beginning of the gospel [good news] of Jesus Christ ["Christ" is Greek for "Messiah"], the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "Behold I send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins... And he was preaching and saying, "After me one is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. (Mark 1:1-5, 7-9)

John the Baptist Responds to Tax Collectors and Soldiers

And some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Collect no more than what you have been ordered to." Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, "And what about us, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages." (Luke 3:12-14)

Jesus Launches His Ministry

Now after John [the Baptist] had been taken into custody [by Herod], Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." As he was going along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. Going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow him. They went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and began to teach. They were amazed at his teaching; for he was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him. They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." Immediately the news about him spread everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee. (Mark 1:14-28)

John's Execution by Herod and Jesus's Reaction

...Herod the tetrarch heard the news about Jesus, and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him." For when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. For John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." Although Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded John as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. Having been prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." Although he was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his oaths, and because of his dinner guests. He sent and had John beheaded in the prison. And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. His disciples came and took away the body and buried it; and they went and reported to Jesus. Now when Jesus heard about John, he withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by himself; and when the people heard of this, they followed him on foot from the cities. When he went ashore, he saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick. (Matthew 14:1-14)

Jesus on Paying the Poll-Tax

...they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to him in order to trap him in a statement. They came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are truthful and defer to no one; for you are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not? Shall we pay or shall we not pay?" But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why are you testing me? Bring me a denarius to look at." They brought one. And he said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" And they said to him, "Caesar's." And Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." (Mark 12:13-17)

Pilate's Atrocity and Jesus's Reaction

Now... there were some present who reported to him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. And Jesus said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:1-5)

Jesus Arrested

Having arrested him, they led him [Jesus] away and brought him to the house of the high priest... (Luke 22:54)

Jesus before the Jewish Leaders

When it was day, the Council of Elders of the [Jewish] people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led him [Jesus] away to their council chamber, saying, "If you are the Christ, tell us." But he said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I ask a question, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." And they all said, "Are you the Son of God, then? And he said to them, "Yes, I am." Then they said, "What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from his own mouth." (Luke 22:66-71)

Jesus before Pilate

Then the whole body of them got up and brought him [Jesus] before Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a King." So Pilate asked him, saying, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him and said, "It is as you say." Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man." But they kept on insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee even as far as this place." When Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time. (Luke 23:1-7)

Jesus before Herod

Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see him for a long time, because he had been hearing about him and was hoping to see some sign performed by him. And he questioned him at some length; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing him vehemently. And Herod with his soldiers, after treating him with contempt and mocking him, dressed him in a gorgeous robe and sent him back to Pilate. Now Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been enemies with each other. (Luke 23:8-12)

Back to Pilate for the Verdict

Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said to them, "You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against him. No, nor has Herod, for he sent him back to us; and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by him. Therefore, I will punish him and release him." [Now he was obliged to release to them at the feast one prisoner.] But they cried out all together, saying, "Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!" (He was one who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection made in the city, and for murder.) Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, but they kept on calling out, saying, "Crucify, crucify him!" And he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in him no guilt demanding death; therefore I will punish him and release him." But they were insistent, with loud voices asking that he be crucified. And

their voices began to prevail. And Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand be granted. And he released the man they were asking for who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, but he delivered Jesus to their will. (Luke 23:9-25)

Additional Words Jesus Spoke during His Trial

Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered you to me; what have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, my kingdom is not of this realm." Therefore Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, "I find no guilt in him..." (John 18:33-38)

The Judgment at the End of History

"But when the Son of Man [Jesus] comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him; and he will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on his right, and the goats on the left.

Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited me in; naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you, or thirsty, and give you something to drink? And when did we see you a stranger, and invite you in, or naked, and clothe you? When did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?' The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them, you did it to me.'

Then he will also say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite me in; naked, and you did not clothe me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit me.' Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matthew 25:31-46)