

THE GREAT DECISION

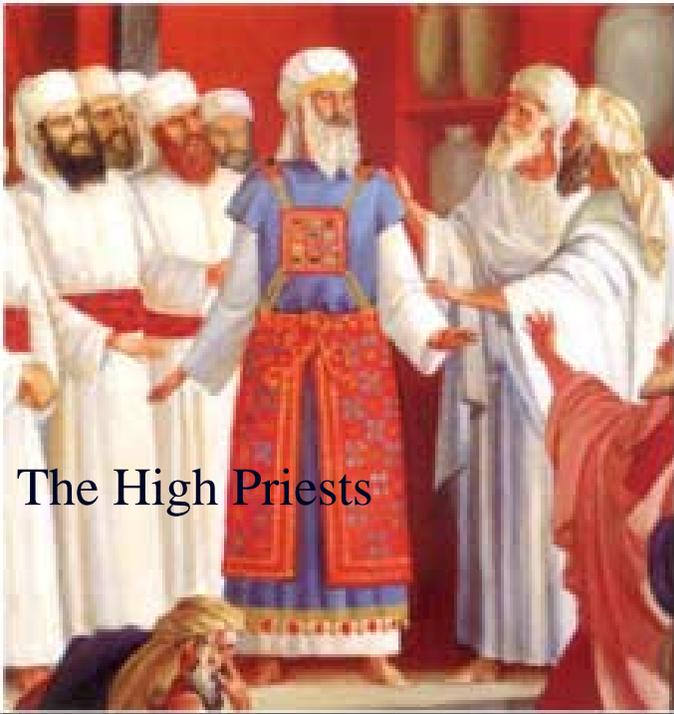
18th March 2007

Navigation!

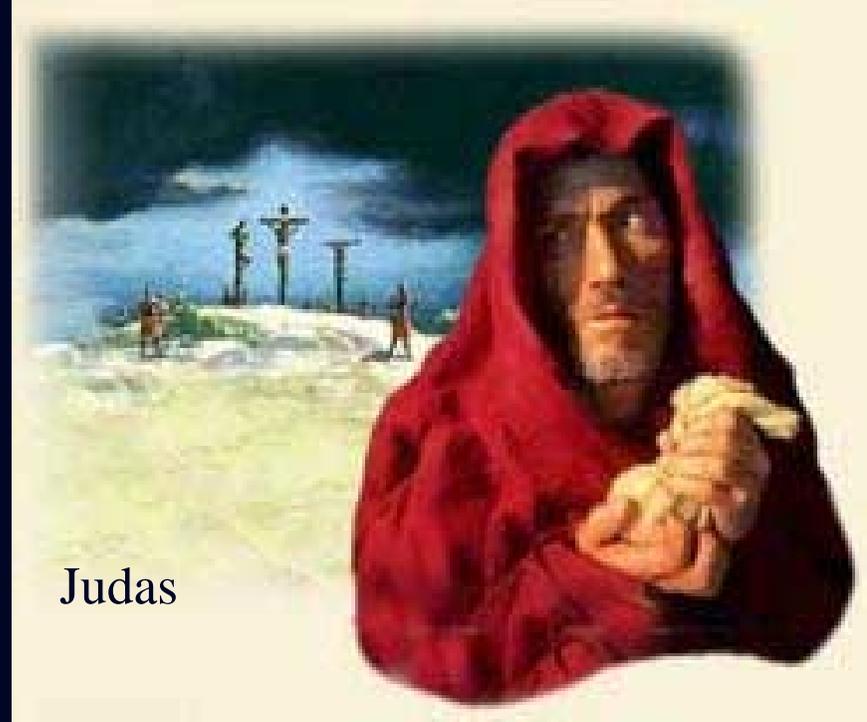


The arrest and trial of Jesus

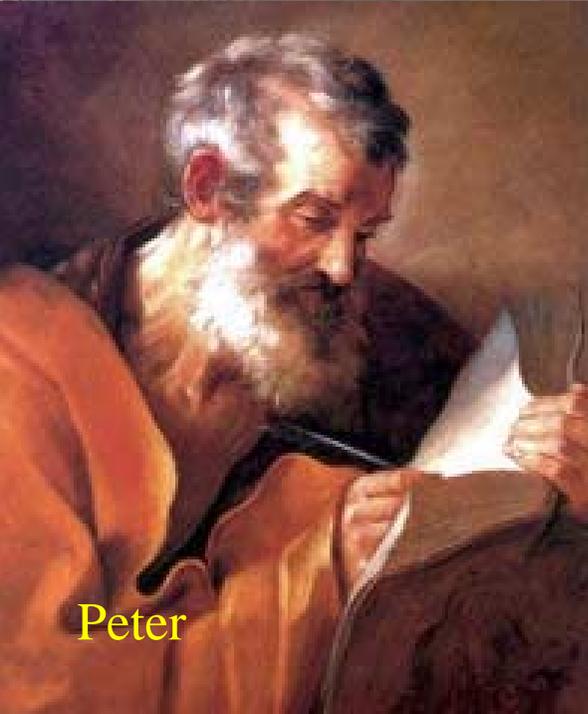
- High Priests sought to have Jesus killed
- Judas bribed to bring soldiers to Jesus
- Jesus arrested and brought to High Priests
- Peter denied being a follower of Jesus
- Jesus brought to Pilate, the Roman governor, who found no basis for a capital charge....
-but the High Priests persuaded Pilate to have Jesus crucified



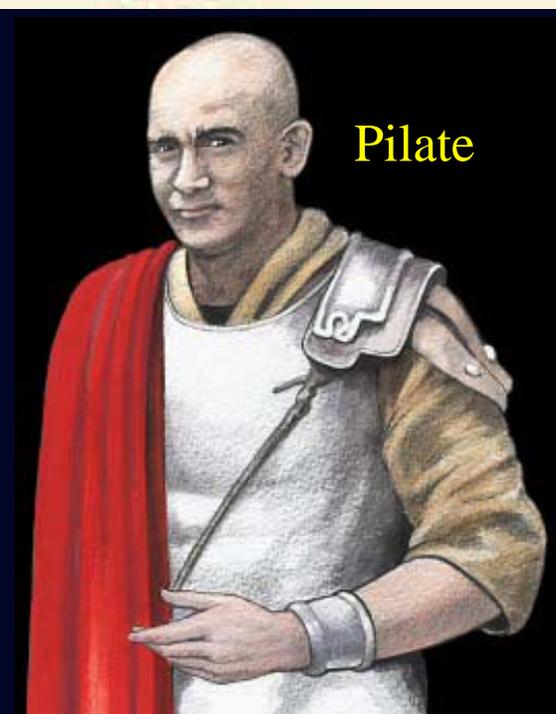
The High Priests



Judas



Peter



Pilate

Human decisions – the High Priests



- **They knew the truth:**
 - miracles and fulfilment of prophecy
- **But....they were blind to Jesus' true nature**
 - “Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him.” (John 12:37)
 - “If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” (John 11:48)
 - “The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil”. (John 7:7)

- **So they made a decision to kill him**
 - "You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."So from that day on they plotted to take his life.
(John 11:49)
 - "If he were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you"
(John 18:30)
 - “we have no king but Caesar” (John 19:15)
- **Motivated by blindness, fear and hate**



Human decisions

– Judas



- **He knew the truth**
 - Disciple from the start, witnessed miracles
 - And promised “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him” (John 7:38)
- **But...he was greedy**
 - “he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.” (John 12:6)
- **So he made a decision** to betray Jesus
- **Motivated by** greed, disappointment and impatience

Human decisions – Peter



- **He knew the truth**
 - Disciple from the start, witnessed miracles
 - “You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.” (John 6:68).
 - “I will lay down my life for you.” (John 13:37)
- **But...his courage had limits**
- **So he made “decisions” to disown Jesus**
 - As Peter entered the High Priest’s garden, “You are not one of his disciples, are you?” the girl at the door asked Peter. He replied, “I am not” (John 18:17)
- **Motivated by fear, under pressure**

Human decisions – Pilate



- **He knew the truth**
 - Jesus was innocent: “What is it you have done?” Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.” (John 18:35-36)...., “I find no basis for a charge against him.” (John 18:38)
- **But...he let himself be swayed**
 - “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.” (John 19:12)
 - Jesus had said “Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” “What is truth?” Pilate asked (John 18:37-8).
- **So he made a decision** to let Jesus be flogged and executed...
- **A decision motivated by** fear and cynicism

Divine Decisions – God the Father

- **Motivated by love, and desire for reconciliation with the human race**
 - “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)
 - “Because he looked death in the face and didn't flinch, because he embraced the company of the lowest. He took on his own shoulders the sin of the many, he took up the cause of all the black sheep.” (Isaiah 53:12 The Message)
 - “anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse” (Deuteronomy 21:23)

Divine Decisions – God the Son

- **Decisions motivated by obedience, love and truth**
- **Out of love for God, to obey his Father's will**
 - “The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life--only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.” (John 10:17).
 - Jesus commanded him, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" (John 18:11)
- **Out of love for his friends, to save them from arrest**
 - “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13)
 - “"I told you that I am he," Jesus answered to the soldiers. "If you are looking for me, then let these men go." (John 18:18)

- **Out of love for humanity**, to proclaim the truth, even at the cost of his life
 - “you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32)
 - “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned”. (John 5:24).
 - “I have spoken openly to the world,” Jesus replied. “I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. Why question me?” (John 18:22)
- Jesus’ decisions motivated by obedience, love and truth healed relationships between God and mankind.

Our decision

- “He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.” (John 1:3-4)
- “he was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.” (John 1:10)
- Will we decide to receive him, or be ruled by selfish motives?

We don't have to take wrong decisions

- “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12-13)
- “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever-- the Spirit of truth.” (John 14:16)

A chance to (re)commit

Lord Jesus Christ,

I am sorry for the things I have done wrong in my life Please forgive me. I now turn from everything which I know is wrong.

Thank you that you died on the cross for me so that I could be forgiven and set free.

Thank you that you now offer me this gift of forgiveness and your Spirit. I now receive that gift..Please come into my life by your Holy Spirit to be with me forever.

Thank you, Lord Jesus. Amen

Questions for discussion

- Do you recognise some of the human failings of the High Priests. Judas, Peter and Pilate in your everyday life?
- Do you think it is humanly possible to love God, our friends and others like Jesus did?
- Are you a child of God and a new creation? Do you believe that the Holy Spirit can help you in your decisions?