

Read Mark 15:6-15

6 Now it was a custom each year during the Passover celebration for the governor to release one prisoner—anyone the people requested.

7 One of the prisoners at that time was Barabbas, a revolutionary who had committed murder in an uprising. **8** The crowd went to Pilate and asked him to release a prisoner as usual.

9 “Would you like me to release to you this ‘King of the Jews?’” Pilate asked. **10** (For he realized by now that the leading priests had arrested Jesus out of envy.)

11 But at this point the leading priests stirred up the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas instead of Jesus. **12** Pilate asked them, “Then what should I do with this man you call the king of the Jews?”

13 They shouted back, “Crucify him!” **14** “Why?” Pilate demanded. “What crime has he committed?” But the mob roared even louder, “Crucify him!”

15 So to pacify the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He ordered Jesus flogged with a whip then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified.

What was the custom at the Passover feast (v. 6)? For the Roman governor to release a prisoner who was a favorite of the Jewish people. **Why did the governor do that?** So the Jewish people would like him and not cause any trouble.

Who was Barabbas (v. 7)? A terrorist who had been involved in a riot and killed someone.

What did the crowd ask Pilate to do (v. 8)? To do what the governor always did at Passover and release a prisoner.

What did Pilate ask the crowd (v. 9)? Do you want me to release Jesus? **Why did Pilate ask them that (v. 10)?** He knew it would make the chief priests mad. He didn’t like the chief priests or any of the Jewish religious leaders. **What did the chief priests do (v. 11)?** They got the crowd all excited so they would ask Pilate to release Barabbas instead of Jesus.

What did Pilate ask the crowd this time (v. 12)? What do you want me to do with Jesus? **How did the crowds respond (v. 13)?** Crucify Him!

The previous Sunday Jesus rode into Jerusalem and the crowd was excited and shouting “Hosanna.” **Why did they change their minds and now – five days later – want to crucify Him?** Because Jesus didn’t live up to their expectations. He didn’t kick the Romans out of power and set up His own kingdom on earth. They were very disappointed in Jesus and their hearts became hard toward Him.

What did Pilate ask the crowd (v. 14)? Why crucify Him? He hasn’t committed any crime. **How did the crowd respond?** They kept shouting crucify Him even louder. **What did Pilate finally do (v. 15)?** He released Barabbas and handed Jesus over to be crucified.

Why did Pilate decide to hand Jesus over to be crucified? To satisfy the crowd. And to get the Jewish religious leaders off his back.

What do you think of Pilate? He didn’t do the right thing. He did the popular, easy thing. He was not a man of character. He was not a nice person. He sent an innocent Man to die.