Letter of Pontius Pilate

New Testament apocrypha (2nd–7th century)

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Letter of Pontius Pilate

The Letter of Pontius Pilate, Which He Wrote to the Roman Emperor, Concerning Our Lord Jesus Christ. Pontius Pilate to Tiberius Cæsar the emperor, greeting. Upon Jesus Christ, whose case I had clearly set forth to thee in my last, at length by the will of the people a bitter punishment has been inflicted, myself being in a sort unwilling and rather afraid. A man, by Hercules, so pious and strict, no age has ever had nor will have. But wonderful were the efforts of the people themselves, and the unanimity of all the scribes and chief men and elders, to crucify this ambassador of truth, notwithstanding that their own prophets, and after our manner the sibyls, warned them against it: and supernatural signs appeared while he was hanging, and, in the opinion of philosophers, threatened destruction to the whole world. His disciples are flourishing, in their work and the regulation of their lives not belying their master; yea, in his name most beneficent. Had I not been afraid of the rising of a sedition among the people, who were just on the point of breaking out, perhaps this man would still have been alive to us; although, urged more by fidelity to thy dignity than induced by my own wishes, I did not according to my strength resist that innocent blood free from the whole charge brought against it, but unjustly, through the malignity of men, should be sold and suffer, yet, as the Scriptures signify, to their own destruction. Farewell. 28th March.

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