The Giving Up of Pontius Pilate

New Testament apocrypha (2nd–7th century)

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Authorship. These books were written in the names of apostles and others long after their time. They are not scripture, and what they tell is legend, not history. They are kept here as ancient writings that show what some early Christians read and believed.

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And Pilate said: O almighty king, I am innocent of these things; but the multitude of the Jews are violent and guilty. And the Cæsar said: And who are they? Pilate says: Herod, Archelaus, Philip, Annas and Caiaphas, and all the multitude of the Jews. The Cæsar says: For what reason didst thou follow out their counsel? And Pilate says: Their nation is rebellious and insubmissive, not submitting themselves to thy power. And the Cæsar said: When they delivered him to thee, thou oughtest to have made him secure, and to have sent him to me, and not to have obeyed them in crucifying such a man, righteous as he was, and one that did such good miracles, as thou hast said in thy report. For from such miracles Jesus was manifestly the Christ, the King of the Jews. And as the Cæsar was thus speaking, when he named the name of Christ, all the multitude of the gods fell down in a body, and became as dust, where the Cæsar was sitting with the senate. And the people standing beside the Cæsar all began to tremble, on account of the speaking of the word, and the fall of their gods; and being seized with terror, they all went away, each to his own house, wondering at what had happened. And the Cæsar ordered Pilate to be kept in security, in order that he might know the truth about Jesus.

And on the following day, the Cæsar, sitting in the Capitol with all the senate, tried again to question Pilate. And the Cæsar says: Tell the truth, O most impious, because through thy impious action which thou hast perpetrated against Jesus, even here the doing of thy wicked deeds has been shown by the gods having been cast down. Say, then, who is he that has been crucified; because even his name has destroyed all the gods? Pilate said: And

indeed the records of him are true; for assuredly I myself was persuaded from his works that he was greater than all the gods whom we worship. And the Cæsar said: For what reason, then, didst thou bring against him such audacity and such doings, if thou wert not ignorant of him, and altogether devising mischief against my kingdom? Pilate said: On account of the wickedness and rebellion of the lawless and ungodly Jews, I did this.

And the Cæsar, being filled with rage, held a council with all his senate and his power, and ordered a decree to be written against the Jews as follows:—To Licianus, the governor of the chief places of the East, greeting. The reckless deed which has been done at the present time by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the cities of the Jews round about, and their wicked action, has come to my knowledge, that they have forced Pilate to crucify a certain god named Jesus, and on account of this great fault of theirs the world has been darkened and dragged to destruction. Do thou then speedily, with a multitude of soldiers, go to them there, and make them prisoners, in accordance with this decree. Be obedient, and take action against them, and scatter them, and make them slaves among all the nations; and having driven them out of the whole of Judæa, make them the smallest of nations, so that it may not any longer be seen at all, because they are full of wickedness.

And this decree having come into the region of the East, Licianus, obeying from fear of the decree, seized all the nation of the Jews; and those that were left in Judæa he scattered among the nations, and sold for slaves: so that it was known to the Cæsar that these things had been done by Licianus against the Jews in the region of the East; and it pleased him. And again the Cæsar set himself to question Pilate; and he orders a captain named Albius to cut off Pilate's head, saying: Just as he laid hands upon the just man named Christ, in like manner also shall he fall, and not find safety. And Pilate, going away to the place, prayed in silence, saying: Lord, do not destroy me along with the wicked Hebrews, because I would not have laid hands upon Thee, except for the nation of the lawless Jews, because they were exciting rebellion against me. But Thou knowest that I did it in ignorance. Do not then destroy me for this my sin; but remember not evil against me, O Lord, and against Thy servant Procla, who is standing with me in this the hour of my death, whom Thou didst appoint to prophesy that Thou shouldest be nailed to the cross. Do not condemn her also in my sin; but pardon us, and make us to be numbered in the portion of Thy righteous.

And, behold, when Pilate had finished his prayer, there came a voice out of the heaven, saying: All the generations and families of the nations shall count thee blessed, because under thee have been fulfilled all those things said about me by the prophets; and thou thyself shall be seen as my witness at my second appearing, when I shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel, and those that have not owned my name. And the prefect struck off the head of Pilate; and, behold, an angel of the Lord received it. And his wife Procla, seeing the angel coming and receiving his head, being filled with joy herself also, immediately gave up the ghost, and was buried along with her husband.

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