

Bible Reading 1

At every Passover Festival the Roman governor was in the habit of setting free any one prisoner the crowd asked for.

At that time there was a well-known prisoner named Jesus Barabbas.

So when the crowd gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to set free for you? Jesus Barabbas or Jesus called the Messiah?"

He knew very well that the Jewish authorities had handed Jesus over to him because they were jealous.

While Pilate was sitting in the judgment hall, his wife sent him a message: "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, because in a dream last night I suffered much on account of him."

The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask Pilate to set Barabbas free and have Jesus put to death.

But Pilate asked the crowd, "Which one of these two do you want me to set free for you?" "Barabbas!" they answered.

"What, then, shall I do with Jesus called the Messiah?" Pilate asked them. "Crucify him!" they all answered.

But Pilate asked, "What crime has he committed?" Then they started shouting at the top of their voices: "Crucify him!"

When Pilate saw that it was no use to go on, but that a riot might break out, he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said, "I am not responsible for the death of this man! This is your doing!"

The whole crowd answered, "Let the responsibility for his death fall on us and on our children!"

Then Pilate set Barabbas free for them; and after he had Jesus whipped, he handed him over to be crucified.