

Trial before Romans

by John Walsh

— *Pilate's wife comes on stage and calls for a servant* —

wife: “Naomi ... (pause) ... Naomi.”

servant: “Yes ma’am.”

wife: “My husband was called out early this morning by the high priest. They are trying a rabbi from Galilee. Do you know how it is going?”

servant: “Yes ma’am. I am one of the servants helping with that trial.”

wife: “Tell me about it. What’s happening?”

servant: “Your husband doesn’t want to try this man. He thinks he is innocent.”

wife: “Oh, blessed be the gods! I had a dream about this man last night. ... It was very disturbing. The governor must not do anything against him.”

servant: “Oh, I think you can feel confident of that. Your husband, the governor, won’t be forced to do anything.

wife: “What has happened so far?”

servant: “The religious leaders accused the man of saying he was the King of the Jews, which is, of course, a crime against Caesar. Then Pilate found out that he was a resident of Galilee, so he sent him to king Herod.”

wife (showing relief): “Oh good. Let Herod bear the grief that is surrounding this man.”

servant: (hesitantly) “Well, ... uh ... Jesus wouldn’t speak to the king, so Herod didn’t want to be bothered him and sent him back to your husband’s court.”

wife: “Oh that is typical of that sly fox. Well, I’m going to write a note to my husband and tell him about my dream.” (looking for paper)

servant: “Oh, I don’t think you need to worry. Your husband has made it clear that he doesn’t want to condemn this man. He told the high priest that there was no evidence that Jesus was guilty of any crimes against Rome.”

wife: “Well, how is he going to release Jesus without totally offending the Jews?”

servant: “He has it all worked out. (giggle) He told Markus his plan – and Markus told me. (smiling, swaying, and pausing)

wife: “So, silly girl, tell me what it is – before I have you whipped.”

servant: “You know how the governor always releases one criminal every Passover. Well, he is only going to put two names up as a choice. One is that hideous Barabbas – that no one likes. The other choice will be Jesus, and no one can find anything he has done wrong. The people will have to choose Jesus.”

wife: “Perfect! Sometimes my husband amazes me.” (She starts writing the note.)

servant: “You have nothing to worry about.”

wife: “Still, I think I will send this note anyway. That dream was so frightening. And somehow I still have a sense of doom about all of this.” (hands note to servant)

servant: “Yes ma’am. I will take it to him right away.”

wife (alone and talking to self) (hands together and to her face in concern): “Oh Pilate ... be strong. Don’t give in – not on this one.”