

# John 19:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

## Analysis

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**From thenceforth Pilate sought to release him** (έκ τούτου ὁ Πιλᾶτος ἐζήτει ἀπολῦσαι αὐτόν/ek toutou ho Pilatos ezētei apolysai auton)—Jesus's words briefly stir Pilate's conscience. The imperfect tense *ezētei* (was seeking) indicates ongoing, repeated attempts. Yet seeking isn't the same as doing.

The Jews' counterthrust is politically brilliant: **Thou art not Caesar's friend** (οὐκ εἰ φίλος τοῦ Καίσαρος/ouk ei philos tou Kaisaros). 'Friend of Caesar' (*amicus Caesaris*) was a formal title indicating imperial favor. To lose it meant losing power, position, possibly life. The threat is unmistakable: tolerate this 'king' and we'll report you as tolerating treason.

**Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar** invokes Roman law against *maiestas* (treason). By framing Jesus as a political rival to Caesar, they force Pilate's hand. Political calculation conquers conscience. Pilate chooses Caesar over Christ, temporal security over eternal truth—a choice millions repeat.

## Historical Context

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Tiberius Caesar (AD 14-37) was paranoid and ruthless regarding treason. Pilate already had a troubled relationship with the Jews (see Luke 13:1) and couldn't

afford another complaint to Rome. The title 'friend of Caesar' represented real political capital. Later sources suggest Pilate was eventually recalled to Rome and died in disgrace—the very fate he tried to avoid by condemning Christ.

## Related Passages

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**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. When has fear of losing status, position, or security led you to compromise truth?
2. How do we recognize when legitimate concerns (job security, reputation) become idols that override obedience?
3. What does Pilate's repeated seeking without acting reveal about intention versus decision?

## Interlinear Text

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ἐκ τούτου ἐζήτει ὁ Πιλᾶτος ἀπολύσης αὐτόν οἱ  
And from thenceforth sought Pilate to him G3588 G630 G3588  
G1537 G5127 G2212 G4091 G630 G846

δὲ Ἰουδαῖοι ἔκραζον λέγοντες Ἐὰν τοῦτον ἀπολύσῃ  
but the Jews cried out saying If this man go  
G1161 G2453 G2896 G3004 G1437 G5126 G630

οὐκ εἰ φίλος τοῦ Καίσαρι πᾶς ὁ βασιλέα  
not thou art friend G3588 Caesar whosoever G3588 a king  
G3756 G1488 G5384 G2541 G3956 G935

αὐτόν ποιῶν ἀντιλέγει τῷ Καίσαρι  
him maketh speaketh against G3588 Caesar  
G846 G4160 G483 G2541

