

HEROD SENDS JESUS BACK TO PILATE (23:13-25)

¹³ Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. ¹⁶ Therefore, I will punish him and then release him.”

¹⁸ But the whole crowd shouted, “Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!”

¹⁹ (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.) ²⁰ Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. ²¹ But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

²² For the third time he spoke to them: “Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him.”

²³ But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. ²⁴ So Pilate decided to grant their demand. ²⁵ He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.

1. In Jesus’ final appearance before Pilate, Pilate affirms his original verdict (v. 14), highlights Herod’s verdict (v. 15), punishes Jesus for no apparent reason (v. 16), renders his verdict for the third time (v. 22), and is finally shouted down by the crowd (v. 23).

How should Pilate have responded to the demands of the crowds?

2. While the chief priests and the rulers of the people are making very little progress convincing either Herod or Pilate, their demand that Jesus be executed becomes increasingly more intense throughout the narrative. At first they simply inquire of Jesus (23:67). Before Pilate “they began to accuse him (23:1),” and end up “insisting ‘he stirs up the people (23:5).’” By the time they reach Herod they are “vehemently” accusing him (23:9).” When they make their way back to Pilate the whole scene turns into a shouting match: “the whole crowd shouted (23:18),” then, “with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified (23:23),” and finally, “their shouts prevailed (23:23).”

Why do you think Pilate gives in to the demands of the crowds?

3. What do these scenes reveal about the nature and depth of our fallen condition?
4. How is God working in and through these events for his glory and our good?
5. Who is ultimately responsible for Christ’s death?

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2023



LUKE

A PROMISE KEPT

JESUS ON TRIAL | LUKE 22:63-23:25

The most important decision you will ever make is how you respond to the claims of Jesus.

Most would agree that Jesus was an important historical figure and insightful teacher. Others are quick to twist his words to their own ends. Some, of course, dismiss his claims altogether. Then there are those who find Jesus to be everything Scripture claims he is, and much more.

C. S. Lewis reminds us that the claims of Jesus cannot be easily dismissed. In “Mere Christianity” he warns us:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. Nor did he intend to.

While our judgment of Jesus is vitally important, it is even more important to consider his judgment of us. While Jesus may be on trial in the court of public opinion, Scripture reminds us that one day the world will be judged by him.

In Luke 22-23 we find Jesus on trial. He appears before the high priest, the Jewish ruling council, Pilate and Herod. While Pilate and Herod find him innocent, he is never the less sentenced to die. Jesus reminds the elders and the teachers of the law that one day the roles will be reversed.

IN THE COURTYARD OF THE HIGH PRIEST (22:54, 63-65)

⁵⁴ Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance... ⁶³ The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. ⁶⁴ They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophecy! Who hit you?" ⁶⁵ And they said many other insulting things to him.

Jesus has proven to be far more than a prophet. He has predicted all that is taking place (Luke 9:22). He knew when and where the disciples could find a colt that had never been ridden and how the owner would respond (Luke 19:28-34), and he knew exactly when and where his disciples would run into a man carrying a water jar who would lead them to the room already prepared for their celebration of Passover (Luke 22:7-13). He predicted the painful realities of Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial (vv. 33-34).

1. What is ironic about the guards treatment of Jesus?
2. How might Jesus have responded to their brutal assault?
3. What does their treatment of Jesus reveal about the nature of the trials Jesus will face and the character of those who sit in judgment over him.

JESUS APPEARS BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS (22:66-71)

⁶⁶ At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. ⁶⁷ "If you are the Messiah," they said, "tell us."

Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, ⁶⁸ and if I asked you, you would not answer. ⁶⁹ But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God."

⁷⁰ They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied, "You say that I am."

⁷¹ Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips."

1. What does the ruling council want to hear Jesus say?
2. Why is Jesus a bit evasive in his response?
3. How does Jesus answer their question?
4. If Jesus is indeed the Son of Man, how will that eventually fair for those who are sitting in judgment over Jesus?

JESUS APPEARS BEFORE PILATE (23:1-7)

¹ Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. ² And they began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king."

³ So Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "You have said so," Jesus replied.

⁴ Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man."

⁵ But they insisted, "He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here."

⁶ On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. ⁷ When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

1. The claim that led to Jesus' conviction before the Jewish Council was that he claimed to be the Son of God (or blasphemy).
 - a. What is the charge they lodge against Jesus before Pilate?
 - b. Is there any truth to their claims?
2. What is Pilate's assessment of their charges?
3. What does the fact that Pilate, who is so quick to render judgment, reveal about the credibility of the Ruling Council's case against Jesus?

PILATE SENDS JESUS TO HEROD (23:8-12)

⁸ When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. ⁹ He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. ¹¹ Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. ¹² That day Herod and Pilate became friends—before this they had been enemies.

1. What was Herod's chief interest in Jesus?
2. As a ruler of the people, what should have been Herod's primary concern?
3. What role are the chief priest and the teachers of the law playing in this scene?
4. What does the fact that Luke records their intensity rather than the substance of their claims tell us about the nature of their accusations?
5. What does the treatment of Jesus by Herod's entourage suggest about the overall environment of Jesus' hearings?