

Exegetical Notes - Luke 23:1-25

“The Hour When Darkness Ruled, Part 2”

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen, Pastor, Cornerstone Fellowship

101 Kylies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320

610-384-1375

charleshjensen@aol.com

Luke 23:1-25

Verse 1-2

Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. 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 Christ, a king.”

- After their own investigation of Jesus (Luke 22:66-71), the Jewish authorities concluded that Jesus was guilty of blasphemy and that, according to their laws, he should be executed. However, the power of execution belonged to the Roman governor of the province. So they took Jesus to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. They explained the situation to Pilate accusing Jesus of inciting the people to rebel against Rome by telling them not to pay taxes and declaring himself to be Israel’s Messiah. They explained to Pilate that the Messiah was a type of king.

Verse 3-4

So Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?” “Yes, it is as you say,” Jesus replied. The Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.”

- Pilate asked Jesus if Jesus was, indeed, the king of the Jews. Jesus replied that he was, but explained that he was a religious figure not a military king (see John 18:33-38). Apparently, Pilate saw no threat to Rome in Jesus’ assertion for he announced that he did not find any charge against Jesus worth consideration.

Verse 5-7

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.” On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. When he learned that Jesus was

under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

- Pilate was the governor of Judea. Galilee was in the area governed by Herod Antipas. When Pilate learned that Jesus was from Galilee, he hoped to escape from the case against Jesus by sending him to Herod. Thus Jesus was passed from one ruler to another.
- Herod was also in Jerusalem at that time because of the Passover. Herod would normally have been in Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee.

Verse 8-12

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 some miracle. He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. That day Herod and Pilate became friends -- before this they had been enemies.

- At first, Herod was delighted to see Jesus because he was hoping that Jesus would do some miracle to amuse him. He asked Jesus many questions but Jesus would not answer him. Pilate quickly grew tired of Jesus.
- Herod and his soldiers dressed Jesus up in a fancy robe and sent him back to Pilate without passing judgment of him.

Verse 13-17

Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, 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. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. Therefore, I will punish him and then release him."

- Three times, Jesus was examined to determine if he was innocent of the charges brought against him by the chief priests. Three times, no guilt was established.
- Even so, Pilate agrees to have Jesus beaten to appease the chief priests. There is no reason to punish Jesus. He is not declared guilty of any crime.

Verse 18-21

With one voice they cried out, “Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!” (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.) Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

- The religious leaders of the Jews actually wanted a man guilty of the charges of insurrection released, and Jesus held in his place. They are so eager for Jesus’ death, that his innocence or guilt no longer matters to them.
- Pilate still wants to act in accord with the law. He wants to release Jesus.

Verse 22

For a 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.”

- This is now the fourth time that Jesus’ innocence is established. It is the third time that Pilate himself declared Jesus to be innocent. Clearly, the civil authorities found Jesus innocent of the charges brought against him!

Verse 23-25

But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. So Pilate decided to grant their demand. 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.

- Even though Pilate knew Jesus to be innocent, he gave in to the Jews and ordered Jesus to be executed for crimes he had not done.
- The fourth sign of the reign of evil was the denial of justice to the innocent and the rule of the mob.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *The Hour When Darkness Ruled, Part 2*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by *Cornerstone Fellowship & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen*. They are used here by permission.)