

77. Jesus Was Tried by Pilate and Herod

In our last topic, we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children by our example the importance of showing love even when people accuse us falsely or even persecute us. Jesus gave us His example when He forgave those who chose to accuse Jesus of blasphemy rather than recognize Him as God and worship Him. In this topic, we will see that they took Jesus to Pilate so that he would be the one who gave the permission for Jesus to be crucified.

The Jewish Sanhedrin said that Jesus was guilty of blasphemy. However, that was not the charge that they gave when they took Jesus to Pilate. Luke 23:1-5 says, “Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, ‘We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.’ Then Pilate asked Him, saying, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ He answered him and said, ‘*It is as you say.*’ So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, ‘I find no fault in this Man.’ But they were the more fierce, saying, ‘He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.’” In this charge, we see that the Sanhedrin wanted to make it appear that Jesus was a threat to the Roman government. They made three specific charges.

First, they accused Jesus of perverting the nation. The word translated “perverting” *means to turn aside from the right path or to corrupt*. The Sanhedrin wanted Pilate to think that Jesus was corrupting the nation. Second, they accused Jesus of forbidding the people to pay taxes to Caesar. This was an effort to try and convince Pilate that Jesus was a threat to the Roman government. Of course, that charge was totally false because Luke 20:25 says, “And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” Third, the Sanhedrin accused Jesus of calling Himself Christ, a King. It was their hope that Pilate would feel that was the basis for an attempt to lead a rebellion against Roman rule.

Pilate immediately asked Jesus about this third charge when he said, “Are You the King of the Jews?” John 18:36-37 gives the full answer that Jesus gave to Pilate when those verses say, “Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.’ Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are You a king then?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’” Pilate immediately knew by this answer that Jesus was no threat to the Roman government. Pilate then answered, “I find no fault in this Man.”

The answer by Pilate only caused the Jewish religious leaders to shout louder. They said, “He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.” Pilate had an idea when the religious leaders said that Jesus was from Galilee. Luke 23:6-8 says, “When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. Now when

Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long *time* to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him.” Suddenly, Pilate saw a way to shift the decision to Herod.

Herod was the Roman ruler who was over the area of Galilee at that time. In addition, Herod also happened to be visiting Jerusalem. Pilate asked if Jesus was a Galilean. When Pilate learned that Jesus was from Galilee, Pilate immediately sent Jesus to Herod. Herod was very happy to see Jesus. He had wanted to see Jesus for a long time. There were actually two reasons why he had wanted to see Jesus. One is mentioned here. We see that Herod had heard about the many miracles that Jesus had done and he hoped to see Jesus perform a miracle.

However, there was also a second reason that Herod wanted to see Jesus. Matthew 14:1-3 says, “At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus and said to his servants, ‘This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.’ For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put *him* in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife.” Herod had later beheaded John the Baptist. Then he started hearing about the miracles that Jesus was doing. Herod said that the miracles were being done by John the Baptist whom he thought had risen from the dead.

From the time that Herod thought that John had risen from the dead, he had desired to see Jesus. This was probably due to the fact that his conscience continued to bother him. Matthew 14:6-10 says, “But when Herod’s birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, ‘Give me John the Baptist’s head here on a platter.’ And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to *her*. So he sent and had John beheaded in prison.” Here, we see that the second reason why Herod wanted to see Jesus for a long time was due to the fact that he wanted to make certain that John, the one he had beheaded, had not risen from the dead. Here, we see that a conscience can have a very powerful impact on a person because of the guilt that the person feels.

We read what happened when Pilate sent Jesus to Herod. Luke 23:9-12 says, “Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked *Him*, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. That very day, Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.” Herod was very anxious to see Jesus but we see that He had the same attitude that Pilate had shown.

Herod asked Jesus many questions. However, Jesus responded to Herod in a very different way than He had responded to Pilate. Instead of answering Herod, Jesus did not give any answer. Mark 6:17-20 says, “For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife; for he had married her. Because John had said to Herod, ‘It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.’ Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just

and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.” Herod had often listened to John the Baptist and had chosen each time to reject his message. Instead, he had John beheaded to please Herodias. As a result, Jesus knew that Herod had made the choice to harden his heart and reject the message so Jesus gave no answer to Herod that morning.

Meanwhile, the chief priests and scribes made loud accusations against Jesus. Herod heard those accusations and saw that Jesus did not answer them. Then Herod gathered his men of war. Herod and the men of war treated Jesus with great contempt. They treated Jesus as though He was worthless. Then they chose to mock and make fun of Jesus. They even chose to put a gorgeous robe on Jesus to show their contempt as they mocked Him.

Mark 15:16-20 describes the treatment that Jesus received from the soldiers, “Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison. And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His *head*, and began to salute Him, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.” Whether the Roman soldiers of Pilate did this at a separate time than Herod’s men of war is unclear but Herod and the soldiers of both Pilate and Herod showed great contempt for Jesus.

We also see that the common rejection of Jesus by both Pilate and Herod changed their relationship with each other. We see that Herod and Pilate became friends that day. Prior to that time, the two men had enmity and hatred toward one another. We see that this friendship was formed because of their mutual rejection of Jesus. They both knew that Jesus was innocent and they both chose to reject Him. Pilate said at least three times “I find no fault in Him.” (John 18:38, 19:4, 6) Pilate even tried to wash His hands of the whole thing as Matthew 27:24 says, “When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather *that* a tumult was rising, he took water and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, ‘I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see *to it*.’” Herod also knew that Jesus was innocent and he also chose to reject Jesus. Here, we see that the evil hearts of both men caused them to become friends because of the way that they chose to reject Jesus.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that when people choose to rebel and reject Jesus, many times their mutual rejection will cause them to form a friendship. However, such a friendship is based on their own fear of judgment, not on their trust of one another. That kind of a friendship will never bring inner peace. Instead, it will cause great fear and guilt. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand why such friendships can never bring inner peace.