

Luke 23:1 - 12 The Lynch Mob Takes Jesus to Pilate

1 Then the whole body of them arose and brought Him before Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." 3 And Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He answered him and said, "It is as you say." 4 And Pilate said to the chief priests and the multitudes, "I find no guilt in this man." 5 But they kept on insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee, even as far as this place." 6 But when Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. 7 And when he learned that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time.

8 Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him. 9 And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing. 10 And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently. 11 And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate. 12 Now Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been at enmity with each other.

M27:22 Pilate said to them, ***"Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"***

This is Satan's hour, and everyone thinks they are doing something to Jesus. The Jews want Him dead and they are working hard to make that happen. Legally. They want the Romans to kill Jesus. They have held their phony illegal trial. They have had their guilty verdict long ago with zero evidence and zero defense.

So we have a large mob that wants to do something to Jesus. Pilate says what shall I **do** with Jesus. Everyone thinks they're exerting control over what becomes of Jesus. Everybody's doing something to Jesus.

But that's just backwards. Nobody does anything to Jesus. Jesus does something to you! Jesus is the final judge of every person ever born. In John 5:22 He says; *“For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,*

Did you get that. All judgement is given to the Son. Pilate doesn't do something to Jesus, Jesus will judge Pilate. No one renders a verdict on Jesus. Jesus will render a verdict on every person who ever breathed. Every one.

Jesus is like a rock. You can take refuge in the rock, or you can stumble over the rock and be crushed by the rock. Every man, woman, child will be judged by the Rock who is Jesus.

Hebrews 4:13 says; *And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of **Him with whom we have to do.***

Jesus is the single person who controls every soul for all of eternity. He isn't on trial. We are.

The stone metaphor continues throughout the Bible, old and new testament. In Daniel, He is the stone cut out without hands that grows into a mountain that crushes all of the nations.

In Isaiah He is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense that many will stumble over. They will fall and be broken. In Zechariah Jerusalem becomes the heavy stone that will severely injure the nations who try to cast it off. Talking about Jerusalem when Jesus returns.

Jesus Himself refers to Himself as this stone in Matthew 21:44 *He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.”*

But to those who love Him and bow down in acknowledgement of His Lordship, He is both a refuge and a precious cornerstone.

Peter combines Isaiah 28 and Psalms 118 and says: *6 For it stands in Scripture: "See, I lay in Zion a stone, a chosen and precious cornerstone; and the one who believes in Him will never be put to shame."* *7 To you who believe, then, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,"* *8 and, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense."* *They stumble because they disobey the word—and to this they were appointed.....* 1Pet.2:6-8

So we come to our appointed text this morning with incredulity that the judge of all the earth is being held by His own chosen people who hate Him and have condemned Him to die but don't have the teeth to actually accomplish His death legally.

Thus we find ourselves at a civil trial in front of the Roman appointed governor, Pontius Pilate who does have the power to inflict capital punishment. Roman style. The Jews would stone you to death. That was their method. But the Romans have perfected the most gruesome death of all.

They nail their victims onto a cross and wait for the body to die of numerous causes over hours of suffering. It is the cruelest death ever devised. Blood loss, trauma, dehydration, unimaginable pain, calculated to be spread out over hours.

So the Stone who is cut out without hands who will crush the nations to powder is hauled before a puny human who doesn't have a clue that he is holding trial on the judge of all the earth. The irony is compelling.

Luke's audience is greeks. Non jews. And Luke is incredibly brief as he approaches this trial. Like last week we want to do a survey of bits and pieces of all of the gospel writers who give us a combined picture of these events.

Matthew actually approaches the trial of Jesus before Pilate by noting what else was happening coincidentally. Judas. Judas would like to undo what he has caused. Judas is an individual case study of stumbling over Jesus and being broken to pieces. From Matthew 27;

1 Now when morning had come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death; 2 and they bound Him, and led Him away, and delivered Him up to Pilate the governor.

That's our time stamp. That's where we're at. When morning light comes they put the phony legal stamp on their illegal trial held at night time by reconvening and going through the motions in the daylight. Early morning daylight. Then they march Jesus, bound, off to the governor's palace.

They want Him dead and they want the Romans to do it. A combination of wanting to inflict the most suffering on Jesus possible plus they want to have clean hands. Let the Romans get this done. We're in the middle of a feast day. We don't want to become ceremonially unclean dealing with a dead body that has been stoned.

Plus Rome would punish them for doing that. So the Jews deliver Jesus up to Pilate, condemned to die. But meanwhile, one person in this drama is troubled. Things have gotten out of control. For Judas, his conscience is dealing with the incredible guilt of inflicting death on an innocent man. His conscience is tormenting him.

3 Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to that yourself!"

The word here for remorse is not the common word the Bible uses for real repentance. Judas is remorseful because his conscience is charging him with the guilt of being the cause of death for an innocent man.

Judas doesn't want Jesus. He doesn't want restoration. He wants relief from his guilt. And what do the Jews do when they want relief for guilt. Well you go to the priest. So Judas goes to the chief priests and says I'd like to undo what I did because my conscience is killing me. I sinned betraying innocent

blood.

That single act according to the rules of the sanhedrin should have stopped the capitol trial in it's tracks. According to their own rules of a capitol trial where a death is involved they are to wait 2 days to see if new evidence is discovered before the life is taken.

Here is their evidence of innocence. Judas has come to tell them that he sinned by betraying an innocent man. That should have stopped the death of Jesus in it's tracks. But they have ignored all of the other rules designed to be a safety net for justice, and they will continue in their murderous track.

And the priests are like, buzz off Judas. Scram. We don't care about your sin. We don't care about your pain. We don't want the blood money back. You go deal with your problems yourself.

5 And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.

Throwing the blood money into the sanctuary is Judas acting in spite to these useless priests. That sanctuary is the Holy Place where only the priests could go. Not the Holy of Holies, but one step removed. Throw the blood money into the Holy place so the priests will be forced to deal with it.

And then he solves his human torment by entering eternal blackness and terror. All of that is happening as the council of the jews is hauling Jesus before Pilate, the roman governor. They can add Judas blood to the blood they are seeking at Jesus death.

The irony of a false religion that cannot offer relief for sin but instead is so hypocritical that it tells someone who is dealing with crushing guilt to go take care of that yourself, we don't care, we're right in the middle of murdering the one person who can offer full pardon and relief from all guilt.

False religion is always about power and money and hypocrisy. The priests

take the money and they won't put it back into the temple treasury where it came from. Why, you ask. They reasoned among themselves that this was now blood money. Astonishing hypocrisy.

So they bought the potters field as a burial place for strangers. And in doing that they fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy;

“AND THEY TOOK THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER, THE PRICE OF THE ONE WHOSE PRICE HAD BEEN SET by the sons of Israel; 10AND THEY GAVE THEM FOR THE POTTER’S FIELD, AS THE LORD DIRECTED ME.”

We assume they dealt with that little problem later. Right now their hands are full convincing the Roman governor that an innocent man deserves to die.

From Matthew's account, M27:11 Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor questioned Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?” And Jesus said to him, “It is as you say.” 12 And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He made no answer. 13 Then Pilate said to Him, “Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?” 14 And He did not answer him with regard to even a single charge, so that the governor was quite amazed.

Now remember, they all aren't in a room together. This is on the governor's portico, outside, because these righteous jews will become ceremonially unclean if they enter the governor's palace. More irony. Murdering God in human flesh and concerned about becoming unclean.

Pilate has Jesus inside the praetorium and there's this weird back and forth. He goes out to the jews and speaks to them and then he goes in where Jesus is and repeats the charges against Jesus, and He is silent.

John 18:28 They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium in order that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. 29 Pilate therefore

went out to them, and said, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?”

Pilate isn't a stupid man. You don't get to be governor of a region on Rome's behalf because you're stupid at politics. Pilate is plenty sharp, plenty wicked. He isn't fooled by these jews.

We go to Luke for the accusations the jews have brought to Pilate;
1 Then the whole body of them arose and brought Him before Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.”

This isn't Pilate's first rodeo with the jews. Pilate knows very well that if Jesus were a troubler of Rome, he would have hero status with these jews. Their accusations don't hold water. Pilate knows very well that this is baloney. If Jesus was a real threat to Rome these men would be right behind Him.

Jesus is silent before him. Jesus doesn't refute the accusations. Their's no defense. So Pilate goes back out to the jews. He knows the jews want Jesus dead, but there's no logical reason to Pilate, and Jesus simply isn't a threat to Pilate or Rome. Jesus models obedience to those in authority.

And when taxes were due, He has Peter catch a fish and pays the tax for both Him and Peter. What was it, the day before yesterday that He taught in the open forum . . . *Render unto Ceasar the things that are Ceasars and to God the things that are God's*. Pilate knows this is a baloney accusation. So he goes back out to the jews; I find no guilt in this man worthy of death.

And the jews respond fiercely; *M27:30 They answered and said to him, “If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.”*

They take the angry righteously indignant approach. Do you have the gall to question our authority in matters of righteousness. We're the experts in righteousness. We wrote the book on righteousness. We told you this man is

an evildoer and that's all you really need to know. How dare you come back and question our authority on right and wrong.

The astonishing audacity of some people to question the experts! We said He's guilty, that means He's guilty. Stop questioning our motives. Stop questioning our authority. Just do what we say.

So Pilate wisely says; J18:31 *Pilate therefore said to them, "Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law."*

This was actually a blanket permission for them to carry out their law with Rome's consent. If your law says to stone Him, go ahead and do according to your own law. You kill Him.

Pilate would like to wash his hands of the whole matter and get back to his football game he was watching. You've got permission to carry out your law.

But these men want Jesus dead, they want to get back to their feast day and celebrate passover. Unsoiled by killing someone and touching a dead body. They very much want Rome to take over the unsavory part of killing Jesus. They want clean hands during passover. So they throw it back onto Pilate.

The Jews said to him, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death,"

Funny how that's a rule of convenience. It didn't seem to come into play when they gathered stones and stoned Stephen. But there's a deeper reason that they have ignored Pilate's blank check to murder Jesus. A sovereign one.

J18:32 *that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.*

Jesus said; *And I, if I be . . . what? **lifted up**.* When you're stoned, you go down. When you're crucified, you are lifted up. Jesus prophesied the method of His own death, and even though these jews have a blank check to carry out whatever their religion dictates, they won't do it because sovereign God is

calling the shots.

If the jews had stoned Jesus to death after He said He would be lifted up, you could throw your Bibles away. They've got a blank check to kill Him, but they won't do it. God has chosen crucifixion as the method by which Jesus will die. It will be a collaboration between the chosen people and the gentiles to cause the murder of the Son of God.

3 years earlier when Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, Jesus had told him; Jn.3:14 *Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life*

Jesus must be lifted up in death to complete this prophetic type. The jewish method of capitol punishment by stoning cannot complete prophecy. The jews will need to force this death onto a reluctant Pilate.

L23: 3 And Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He answered him and said, "It is as you say."

We have geneologies for both Mary and Joseph. Do you understand that they are both in the direct lineage of David. Even though Jesus did not have DNA from Joseph, if Israel was still a sovereign nation with a king on David's throne, geneologically it would have been Jesus.

Son of David, Son of God. Pilate asks Him if He is King of the jews. And Jesus says, It is as you say. As stated. He is in fact King of the jews but He is more than that. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Ceasar is king in Rome. Jesus is King of Ceasar. Pilate is a lord. A governor. Jesus is Lord over Pilate. He is King over all kings, and Lord over all lords.

Jeff read to us last week that every knee will bow down before Jesus. Ceasar will bow. Pilate will bow. Herod will bow. Pilate has no idea who he is talking to.

Pilate's in a tough spot. He has caused two riots with the jews previously.

Rome can and will replace governors who cannot keep control over their realms. It's the 3 strikes and you're out thing, and Pilate has two strikes.

Pilate doesn't want the responsibility of crucifying an innocent man. He's actually going to do everything within his power to keep Jesus alive. Even Roman despots try to render basic justice. Jesus is innocent. This pressure to murder Jesus inflicted on Pilate the governor by these ruling Jews is nonsensical to him.

He has tried to offload Jesus back onto the Jews. He has given them a blank check to carry out their religious capital punishment in their own method, Rome will look the other way. He has a mob shouting at him on one side, and an innocent man inside the praetorium whose blood they are screaming for.

This must have been the most bizarre of problems to a gentile, a Roman. Appease a mob and murder an innocent man? Why? This is madness. Pilate has no concept of what is going on behind human vision in the spirit realms.

He's a secularist Roman governor. He has no concept to begin to understand that this is Satan's hour, that the blackness of hell has encompassed these mad men who are crying out for innocent blood, that they have been duped into non reason by hell itself. He is the wrong man in the wrong place at the wrong time. And God is sovereign over all of it. Pilate is in a pickle.

And then suddenly a little ray of hope. Luke 23: Luke writes;
4 And Pilate said to the chief priests and the multitudes, "I find no guilt in this man." 5 But they kept on insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee, even as far as this place." 6 But when Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. 7 And when he learned that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time.

The providence of God is at work in this. It's no accident that Herod is in Jerusalem just at this moment. Herod's complicity in the death of Jesus includes a huge swath of the occupied land of Israel.

He is Herod the tetrarch. Tetrarch means quarter. Ruler of a quarter. When Herod the great died, the emperor in Rome recognized and gave control of different territories to his progeny. Herod Antipas is ruler over two disconnected portions of Israel.

He is ruler over the area surrounding the Sea of Galilee and he has built himself a palace and fortress there at the shore of the Galilee and named it Tiberias in honor of Ceasar.

He is also ruler over the land of Perea which is east divided by the Jordan river. He is an Edomite, an Idumean and has a second palace in this territory at the north end of the Dead Sea named Machaira. This is where John the baptist was imprisoned and met his death by beheading at the hands of this wicked ruler under sordid circumstances.

When Pilate hears that Jesus began in Galilee he wants to know if He is a galilean. And when he learns of this, he immediately sends Jesus to be judged by Herod Antipas because Jesus is a citizen of Herod's realm, not Pilate's.

It's interesting that Luke is the sole gospel writer that brings in this twist with Herod. It's an interesting sidebar, but I don't think Herod can order an execution outside of his territory that he reigns over. So he's only useful to Pilate who would like to wash his hands somehow of the whole affair and be rid of both Jesus and the lunatic bloodthirsty jews.

The jews aren't going to let that happen. That would be a successful derail if Pilate could pull it off. Both Pilate and Herod Antipas have zero respect for these fanatic jews. We'll see that as both men show contempt for the pathetic jewish King. Both will mock the jews by insisting this powerless silent Jesus is their King. What irony. He IS the King of kings.

8 Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him.

Herod has heard about the miracles. Herod wants to see Jesus do a trick. Do some magic Jesus. If you please, a trick. Show me what you can do. I've been wanting to see the Jesus show, but I've been too busy, but this is perfect.

9 And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing.

Jesus refuses to perform for Herod. He doesn't speak. He doesn't answer any of Herod's questions. This situation must have made the jews more frantic. Their effort possibly de-railed. Pilate who has capitol power in the district has left the room. Temporarily. This tetrarch is powerless over Jesus, the non-responsive jewish King. So the jews turn up the volume.

10 And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently.

Herod is useless to the priests and scribes and jewish lynch mob. A sidetrack to nowhere. They turn up the volume. Nobody wants a riot. But Herod will save face by both mocking the jews and Jesus. He hates these fanatical idiots with their religious zeal, so he's going to spin the King thing as mockery of the jews that he has contempt for. Here's your King you impotent jews.

11 And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate.

Herod extricates himself from the cries of the angry mob. But not without some style. He dresses Jesus up in a gorgeous robe and elevates the mockery of Jesus as king.

You jews are ridiculous, and so is your King. You have a mute powerless King. A ridiculous figure, described by Isaiah 700 years before this event;

Isa. 53:2b-3

*He has no stately form or majesty
That we should look upon Him,*

Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.

*3 He was despised and forsaken of men,
A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
And like one from whom men hide their face,
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*

Jesus is hard to look at. He's pathetic, powerless, disfigured, broken, mute, and the occupiers of Israel present to the jews . . . their helpless ridiculous pathetic King.

12 Now Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been at enmity with each other.

Pilate and Herod discovered common ground that day. They both despise the jews. The enemy of my enemy . . . is my friend. Pilate thinks the King motif is brilliant. Show these jews how impotent they are by presenting to them . . . their King. Your king is pathetic and you're pathetic. Here's your King, Israel!

Do you think Satan is having fun with this. He's got his puppets, Herod and Pilate combining their contempt to mock God's people and to make a mockery of God's Son. This is the hour of darkness and Satan is having a heyday.

Who is this man that the world hates and mocks with derision? Paul tells us; *5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 **And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.** 9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus **EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW**, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

In this hour of darkness, given to Satan, allowed by the Sovereign God for His perfect purposes, these men mock Jesus and bow down to Jesus as a pathetic King in mockery.

But an hour is coming when all of these men who were there that day, plus all men everywhere, both dead and alive, will bow down before this same Jesus, risen from the dead, the King of Kings and Lord of Lord's.

Do it now. Bow the knee to Him now. Take refuge in the rock so that you won't be crushed into powder by the Rock.