

Luke 23:1-12 – “A Political Hot Potato”, March 12, 2023

I. Welcome

A. Good morning! Ohaiyou-gozaimasu! Welcome to Calvary Chapel Iwakuni. What a joy it is to gather together as a body of believers to worship our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1. *Welcome any new people and those who may be streaming content.*

B. Before we continue any further, let's go ahead and dismiss our elementary aged children to their Sunday School class.

1. As well as our Bible English class with Mr. Dan. (2nd Service)

C. As the kids make their way out, will the rest of you please open up your Bibles and make your way to Luke chapter 23?

1. If you don't have a Bible with you this morning, feel free to reach down and borrow one located underneath some of the chairs around you.

2. I do think it very important that we follow along in the word and read the Bible for ourselves as we gather for our time of study.

3. I want you to know what God's Word actually says and ensure that what I'm teaching aligns with and corresponds with what you are reading in your own Bible.

D. This morning, we begin to look at details that transpired the morning our Savior, Jesus Christ would ultimately lay down His life upon the cross of Calvary, taking upon Himself the sins of all humanity.

1. Last week we finished off chapter 22 of the gospel of Luke by looking at the details that surrounded Jesus' religious trials.
 - a. If you recall, Jesus faced three different religious trials that were overseen by three different leaders or entities.
 - b. The first trial occurred at the house of Annas, the father-in-law of the current high priest, Caiaphas.
 - i. Annas was a man of great prestige and power; a man of great influence upon the Jewish people.
 - ii. He had previously served as High Priest in Jerusalem, but had been deposed by new Roman authorities in the area and so he no longer held the official title of high priest as far as the Romans were concerned. But to the Jews, he was still seen to have the same clout and influence as he had as High Priest.
 - iii. Annas questioned Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine, but instead of answering Annas, Jesus replied how He had spoken openly in the public and directed Annas to go and ask the people what He had said.
 - iv. Jesus was struck by one of the officers when He answered the high priest in such a manner, but Jesus challenged the officer and proclaimed everything he said was true and accurate and that the officer had no reason to strike Him.
 - v. Annas then decided to send Jesus on His way to Caiaphas where he would go through his second religious trial.
 - c. The second religious trial occurred in the middle of the night at the home of Caiaphas, the son-in-law of

Annas and the one who currently was recognized as the “official” high priest in Rome’s eyes.

- i. At the house of Caiaphas the religious leaders tried their best to get some false witnesses to come forward to corroborate some sort of story that they could use against Jesus, but to no avail. They couldn’t get two witnesses to agree upon a single thing that Jesus did that was worthy of death.
 - ii. And that is when Caiaphas arose and took matters into his own hands and directly questioned Jesus, ultimately asking Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?”; the Son of God.
 - iii. To which Jesus responded, “I AM”. Identifying Himself with the name of God, the Great I AM of the book of Exodus.
 - iv. After hearing Jesus make this bold proclamation of who He was, Caiaphas tore his clothes and called for a verdict from those who were gathered around and they were all in agreement that Jesus was deserving of death.
 - v. This led to the third and final religious trial which we read about last week at the end of chapter 22 in the gospel of Luke.
- d. Jesus’ third religious trial was done first thing in the morning, as soon as there was the break of light in the day, the religious authorities gathered themselves together for an official meeting of the Jewish Sanhedrin where they sought to “officially” charge and sentence Jesus to death.
- i. The Sanhedrin demanded Jesus tell them whether or not He was the Christ. But Jesus knew that whatever He said, it would not make a

difference. They had already made up their mind. Whether He spoke to them and told them one thing or another it wouldn't matter.

ii. The again, pressured Him, "Are You then the Son of God?". To which Jesus again affirmed, "You rightly say that I am."

iii. And that was all they needed. They stated, "What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth." (**Lk. 22:71**)

2. And that is where we will pick up our account in Luke's gospel of what took place next.

a. Jesus went through three religious trials; one before Annas, another before Caiaphas, and a third before the Jewish Sanhedrin.

b. Now, Jesus is going to face three separate civil or political trials, overseen by two different political leaders.

c. This morning we will cover the first two of those trials and Lord willing we will cover the details of the third trial and the verdict that came from it next week.

E. Our text this morning is going to be Luke chapter 23 verses 1-12, and the title of our study is going to be "Political Hot Potato".

1. Will you all rise to your feet in honor of God and His Holy Word? I'm going to read our text from my Bible, please do your best to follow along in your own. Luke continues the details of what transpired early that fateful morning with the following... (*R & P*)

II. Luke 23:1; The Sanhedrin Led Jesus to Pilate

A. Here in our opening verse we are introduced to the Roman authority in charge at this time, the one to

oversee the first of Jesus' political trials, a man by the name of Pontius Pilate.

1. This isn't the first time we've come across Pontius Pilate through our study of the gospel of Luke. He was mentioned as the governor of Judea during the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry. (**Lk. 3:1**)
2. He was mentioned again when people brought up a past incident where he mingled the blood of Galileans in with their sacrifices. (**Lk. 13:1**)
3. While we don't have much written about him in the gospel accounts, secular historians give us some insight into this man and his background.
 - a. Pontius Pilate served as a type of governor over the Jews in the city of Jerusalem.
 - b. Historians identified Pilate as a procurator. As procurator he had full control in the province of Judea. Also, he was in charge of an army, which was actually stationed at Caesarea Maritima, where he preferred to stay, but had a detachment on garrison duty at Jerusalem in the fortress Antonia there upon the Temple Mount.
 - c. As procurator, Pontius Pilate had full powers of life and death, and could reverse capital sentences passed by the Sanhedrin, which had to be submitted to him for ratification.
4. History tells us that Pilate despised being in Jerusalem and preferred staying in Caesarea, there along the coast, away from the citizens of Jerusalem. He actually would only take up residence in Jerusalem during festivals and special holidays because that was what Rome demanded of him.
 - a. During such times he would bring additional troops with him to patrol the city and keep the peace as the

city would be inundated with masses coming to worship and keep their religious observances.

5. First century Jewish philosopher and writer, Philo, described Pontius Pilate as “by nature rigid and stubbornly harsh’ and “of spiteful disposition and an exceeding wrathful man.”
 - a. He also spoke of many ill acts of Pontius Pilate during his time as procurator, he writes of “bribes, acts of pride, acts of violence, outrages, cases of spiteful treatment, constant murders without trial, in addition to ceaseless and the most grievous brutality.”
 - b. Pontius Pilate was one very evil and malicious man.
6. Knowing the kind of man that Pilate was reported to be, helps us to better understand his actions and the situation that he is placed in from our text.
7. Pilate had some difficulties in keeping things under control in Jerusalem. And the higher ups in Rome, were keeping a close eye upon him.
 - a. Jewish historian, Josephus, tells of an incident where Pilate’s army took winter quarters in Jerusalem and during the night set up images of Caesar.
 - i. In the morning, when the Jews saw the images that had been set up there was quite an uproar. Multitudes thronged to Pilate’s dwelling demanding that the images be removed for it was a violation of the commandment of God to set up images of worship.
 - ii. However, Pilate would not listen. Instead, after six days of Jewish protest Pilate sent his men in to surround the crowd and demanded that they either leave or that he would have them killed.

- iii. Remarkably, history tells us that the Jews “threw themselves upon the ground, and laid their necks bare, and said they would very willingly take their death rather than continue to allow their laws to be violated.”
 - iv. Pilate was astonished at their resolution not to budge and commanded that the images be brought back to the base in Caesarea.
- b. Another incident that got Pontius in hot water with the locals was a work project he put together to build an aqueduct.
- i. The people weren't against his idea of building an aqueduct, just the idea of from where the funds would come from to resource such an operation.
 - ii. Pilate planned to take the money from the temple treasury to pay for the aqueduct. Of course the Jewish people protested. Tens of thousands came out against Pilate demanding he stop his plan to use the temple treasury funds for this project because that money had been given to the Lord and for His work.
 - iii. Pilate again sent troops into the crowd, but this time he had his men in regular apparel, concealing their daggers under their garments and then when Pilate gave the signal they all attacked the people.
 - iv. According to history a great number of men were slain that day by the hands of Pilate's men.
8. Word would spread and petitions would be sent to the higher up in Rome regarding a number of these types of incidents and that is why Pontius Pilate was under a close watch. He didn't have any wiggle room when it came to the authorities in Rome. Another incident

against the Jews was likely to cost him his place as procurator.

a. Pontius didn't want to lose his power and position there in Judea so he had to do whatever it took to ensure peace within Jerusalem.

b. One more huge revolt or uprising or protest could be very costly to him and his position as procurator and any hopes of advancing within the hierarchy of Roman politics.

9. So that is Pilate and the basics of his story as the Sanhedrin bring Jesus before Him.

B. Now, the first things said between Pilate and the Sanhedrin are not actually recorded for us here in Luke's gospel. We have to turn over to the book of John to get the details of what first took place. So, turn with me to the gospel of John chapter 18.

1. In John 18 verses 29-32 we get the details of how things first unfolded. As the Sanhedrin approached Pilate with Jesus in tow. Read along in your Bible as I read from mine. (**Read vs. 29-32**)

2. So, when Pilate first asked what Jesus had done, the Sanhedrin didn't give a direct answer, they simply said that if he wasn't an evildoer than they wouldn't have brought Jesus to him in the first place.

a. Remember that the charge they had officially come up with was blasphemy. They found Jesus guilty of blasphemy because He claimed to be the Son of God, to be of divine nature.

b. But such a charge before Pilate, as a Roman procurator, would be laughed off. So they don't come right out and say what it is they have accused him of.

3. Pilate didn't really care to get involved and so he told the members of the Sanhedrin, these religious elite, to take Jesus and judge Him according to their own law. As if to say, he didn't want anything to with the matter.
 - a. Pilate wants to keep himself out of any business dealing with the Jews and their religious observations. These religious leaders have proven to be too much of a headache for him in the past and he just doesn't want to deal with them.
4. But they respond saying to Pilate, "it is not lawful for us to put anyone to death."
 - a. Now this is an interesting statement. For they actually did have the power to sentence people to death. And they actually did follow through with the death sentence when it came to Stephen in the book of Acts.
 - b. But the implication here is that it was not lawful for them to put anyone to death by means of crucifixion. They could have Jesus stoned to death, that was the traditional Jewish way of execution, but that would be too messy and bring them under scrutiny.
 - i. Remember there were still a number of religious Jews who were followers of Jesus and would take issue with their own leaders stoning Jesus.
 - ii. If they could get the Romans to crucify Jesus, then it creates an opportunity for them to distance themselves from the responsibility of Jesus' execution.
 - iii. They wanted Pilate to do their dirty work for them.
 - c. Another thing to consider was that the Jewish people believed it to be a divine curse upon someone to be hung by a tree.

- i. Deuteronomy 21 states, “If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God.” (**Dt. 21:22-23**)
- ii. Paul, in writing to the church in Galatia, associated Jesus’ crucifixion upon the cross with this law. He writes, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’),”. (**Gal. 3:13**)
- iii. Peter and the other apostles referred to the cross as a tree in Acts 5:30 where they stated, “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree.” (**Acts 5:30**)
- iv. Paul also refers to the cross as a tree in his speech to the people of Antioch in Pisidia telling them of how Jesus was crucified and how they took his body down off the tree and placed Him in a tomb. (**Acts 13:29**)
- d. So, not only would it create an opportunity to distance themselves from Jesus, but it also would be seen as a curse from God above for anyone to be hanged upon a tree, upon a cross.
- e. But in addition to all of that, and unbeknownst to the religious leaders, they were actually fulfilling prophecy. For Jesus mentioned on more than a few occasions that He would be betrayed to the religious leaders and handed over to the Gentiles to be crucified.

- i. Jesus said to His disciples before entering Jerusalem, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again. (Mt. 20:18-19)

5. So, Pilate now understands why they are bringing Jesus to him. They want to have Jesus crucified and they need Pilate to be the one to make it happen.

C. But what sort of crime could they say Jesus committed that would get Pontius Pilate to agree that Jesus was worthy of crucifixion? That is where our text in Luke picks back up in verse 2.

III. Luke 23:2; Sanhedrin’s Three Accusations

A. Here we see that the religious leaders accused Jesus of three serious crimes that they hoped would get the attention of Pilate.

1. First of all they accused Jesus of being an insurrectionist, a rebel. They accused him of perverting the nation.
 - a. The meaning of this phrase “perverting the nation” implies that Jesus was trying to lead a rebellion. That he was a separatist. Trying to rally people to Himself and get them to fight against the Romans.
 - b. Now this accusation was completely false. Jesus didn’t do, nor teach, anything like that. In fact, He taught the opposite really.
 - c. He taught people to love their neighbors and to love their enemies. He taught people “to love your enemies, [and] bless those who curse you, [and to] do good to those who hate you and pray for those

who spitefully use you and persecute you.” (Mt. 5:44)

d. He taught people not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.” (Mt. 5:39-41)

e. Jesus wasn’t an insurrectionist or a rebel coming against Rome. This was a flat out lie on behalf of the religious authorities.

2. The second accusation was tax evasion. They accused Jesus of going around telling people that they shouldn’t have to pay taxes to Caesar.

a. But that wasn’t what Jesus taught at all. The religious leaders had come to him earlier and tried to trap Him into saying something like that, but to no avail.

b. When they asked Jesus if it was lawful to pay taxes or not Jesus perfectly responded with by asking them whose image and inscription were on the denarius. They replied, “Caesar’s”.

c. Then Jesus stated, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” (Lk. 20:25)

d. Give Caesar his money was what Jesus taught. But they are accusing Him of doing and teaching the exact opposite.

3. The third accusation was one of treason. They accused Jesus of claiming Himself to be the Christ, a King.

- a. Now this is the only accusation that actually somewhat resembles a truth. But it too is false in it's implication.
- b. Jesus did claim to be the Christ. The name "Christ" was a title. It referred to God's "anointed One", the Messiah.
- c. He also did claim to be a king, but not the kind of king that the people are trying to make him out to be. The accusation, or implication of the accusation at least, is that Jesus is trying to claim that He is King over this land.
- d. That He should be ruling and reigning instead of Rome, or any of the appointed officials Rome has put in place; people like Pilate, people like Herod who will read about shortly. That was the implication. And that certainly was not true of Jesus.
- e. There's actual biblical evidence that Jesus didn't want to have anything to do with being the kind of King the religious leaders were accusing Him of.
 - i. In the book of John, we read of how after the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 occurred the people wanted to come and take Jesus by force and make Him their king. But Jesus didn't want anything to do with that. John writes how He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone. (**Jn. 6:15**)
 - ii. He had opportunity to do what the religious leaders were accusing Him of, but never did so. Once again, these accusations the religious leaders are bringing are false.

B. Well, let's see how Pilate responds to these accusations against Jesus. Read verse 3 with me.

IV. Luke 23:3; Pilate Questions Jesus

A. Pilate seems to key in on the final accusation of the three and asks Jesus very plainly, “Are You the King of the Jews?”.

1. Now the “you” is written emphatically here. Pilate’s question was one of shock and surprise, Jesus didn’t look the part of a king. “Are You the King of the Jews?”.

B. Now Jesus responded, “It is as you say”.

1. The wording here is interesting. Again, you may note how the words “*It is as*” are written in italics in some of your Bibles. That is because those words weren’t part of the manuscripts used for translation. They are English words added in for us to make sense of what Jesus actually said. He literally said, “You say”.

2. And the “You” here is also emphatic. “You say”. Jesus’ answer is a bit cryptic here in Luke’s gospel. It’s not as direct as our translation makes it out to seem. It’s more of yes, with a qualification attached to it.

3. When we cross reference the other gospel accounts, we find out that there was more in fact said than just this.

4. According to John’s gospel Jesus told Pilate that He was a king, but that His kingdom was not of this world. (**Jn. 18:36a**)

5. He also said that it was for this cause that He was born and for this cause that He came into the world, that He should bear witness to the truth.” (**Jn. 18:37**)

6. So, Jesus’ answer was more of a “*Yes, I’m a king, but I’m not a king of this world, and my main purpose is to bear witness to the truth.*”

7. Upon hearing this, Pilate balked at the idea of truth stating, “What is truth?” and went out to the chief

priests that had brought Jesus to him and stated, “I find no fault in Him at all.” (Jn. 18:38)

C. Take a look at verse 4 & 5 as we continue our way through our text.

V. Luke 23:4-5; Pilate’s Verdict and Sanhedrin’s Response

A. Things are beginning to unravel for the religious leaders.

1. They brought three of the worst possible accusations against Jesus hoping Pilate would immediately seize Jesus and sentence Him to death upon a cross. But instead, after some initial questioning of Jesus by Pilate, He comes out and testifies that he finds no fault in him at all.

B. So, the religious authorities start to scramble a bit and they start throwing out other additional accusations becoming more and more fierce in their attitudes and behavior.

1. They claimed that He stirs up the people through His teaching everywhere He goes throughout all Judea but beginning up in Galilee.
2. Now Galilee was a known hotbed for political zealots. Pilate, as alluded to earlier, had some run ins with some people from Galilee that He had executed, and he mixed their blood with the blood of their sacrifices.
3. Josephus, the Jewish historian, writes about those from Galilee as “the most turbulent and seditious people, being upon all occasions ready to disturb the Roman authority.”
4. So they are trying to associate Jesus, who had based much of His earthly ministry in the area of Galilee, with the zealots and rebels in Galilee who were causing problems all the time for Rome.

5. Luke's gospel doesn't tell us how Jesus responded, but in Matthew and Mark's gospel we are told that Jesus answered nothing.
 - a. Even after Pontius Pilate questioned Him and said, "Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!" (**Mk. 15:4**)
 - b. Jesus still answered nothing causing Pilate to marvel greatly at Jesus' silence and unwillingness to defend Himself against these many accusations the religious leaders were bringing against Him.
6. No doubt, Pilate has seen many men grovel for their lives before him. He also would have stood in judgment over many men as the procurator of a Roman province.
7. Yet there was something different about Jesus that Pilate marveled at, something about Him, something about His silence, that caused Pilate to be amazed.
8. Jesus had spoken in private with him previously telling him about His kingdom, but now Jesus remains silent.
9. Even with all these charges being thrown against Him, He simply remained silent and at peace. He gave no defense.

C. What was Pilate to do? **He had investigated the claims regarding Jesus and was left amazed, marveling at Jesus.**

1. But Pilate still needed to do something. He was amazed, He marveled at Jesus, but that wasn't enough. He had to do something with Him still.
2. He tried to send Him back to the religious authorities after finding no fault in Him, but all they did is cry out all the more. What could He do?

D. Well, read verses 6-7 to find out what Pilate does.

VI. Luke 23:6-7; Pilate Looks to Herod

A. When the Sanhedrin mentioned Galilee they hoped it would remind Pilate of the danger of the people from that area and the potential problem Jesus could be, but what it really did is remind Pilate of an opportunity to pass Jesus along to someone else; namely Herod.

1. The Herod that is mentioned here by Pilate is Herod Antipas. This is not the first time we've heard about Herod Antipas in our study of the book of Luke.

a. Initially he is mentioned in the same place Pilate was at the onset of John the Baptist's ministry. He is listed as the tetrarch of Galilee. A tetrarch is someone that ruled over a fourth of a kingdom. (**Lk. 3:1**)

i. Before Herod Antipas reigned as king over Galilee, His father Herod the Great ruled and reigned over all the land of the Jews.

ii. But at his passing, he divided his kingdom into four parts giving different children of his opportunity to rule and reign over various parts. Herod Antipas ruled over the area of Galilee.

b. We are also told about some interactions Herod had with John the Baptist in Luke's account and also in the other gospel accounts.

i. Herod Antipas actually threw John the Baptist into prison because John the Baptist spoke out against his marriage with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and many other evil things which Herod had done. (**Lk. 3:19**)

ii. Now according to Mark's gospel, Herodias wanted to kill John the Baptist for the things he said about their marriage, but she couldn't because Herod actually feared John and believed him to be a just

and holy man, and he protected him against his wife's desire to kill him. (**Mk. 6:20**)

- iii. We are also told that Herod met with John the Baptist and heard from him often and that he enjoyed hearing from him; that he heard him gladly.
- iv. But all that changed one night at a drunken birthday party of Herod Antipas. He and a bunch of his friends were being entertained by Herodias' daughter as she danced before them.
- v. And as a reward to Herodias' daughter for pleasing him and the men at this party he offered Herodias' daughter a gift; the opportunity to name her prize and at the counsel of her mother, Herodias' daughter asked for the head of John the Baptist on a platter and Herod acquiesced because he didn't want to look the fool in front of his friends and go back on his promise of reward.
- vi. So, he ordered the beheading of John the Baptist. And this event haunted him. For when he heard news about the ministry of Jesus taking place in Galilee he feared that Jesus was John the Baptist come back from the dead. (**Mk. 6:16**)

2. Herod Antipas ruled over the area of Galilee and he happened to be in Jerusalem at the time in order to take part in the feasts and the happenings within the city.

- a. Now previous to this time, Herod and Pilate did not have a great relationship. Some people wonder if the execution Pilate ordered of the Galileans I mentioned earlier may have sat wrong with Herod because they were people under his jurisdiction.

- b. We can't say with certainty what exactly was the problem with them, but it seemed to have something to do with jurisdiction and authority.
 - c. Pilate saw this as an opportunity to not only pass the responsibility of dealing with Jesus off to someone else, it could also be seen as a sort of political favor towards Herod, showing that Pilate was willing to yield jurisdiction to Herod on cases that involved people who came from Galilee.
- B. So, Pilate passed Jesus on to Herod in hopes that Herod would take responsibility for Him and deal with Him however he saw fit.
1. Even though Pilate believed Jesus to be innocent, and that he had done nothing worthy of crucifixion, he was willing to send Jesus off to be tried again, perhaps to even be found guilty of the charges and killed by Herod.
 2. It was of no care to Pilate as long as he didn't have to deal with it himself, as long as he could distance himself from Jesus and claim that Jesus wasn't part of his jurisdiction, he felt he was safe.
 3. Basically, Pilate was trying to say, "*Jesus isn't my responsibility. I'm not responsible for having to decide on what to do with Jesus. Let Herod deal with Him.*"
 - a. People still try to do the same thing even today. Some people will balk at the identity of Jesus and who He is. They'll say that the answer to the question about who Jesus is, is a question that needs to be answered by religious people. And that they aren't religious.
 - b. They think that they can escape having to make a decision about Jesus because they will claim that Jesus is outside of their jurisdiction in essence, that Jesus is for the religious people of this world.

- c. Having lived in Japan for nearly 20 years, I've come across a number of Japanese people who try to do similarly, stating that Jesus is the god of the westerners. That they don't need to know about Him or make a decision about Him because Jesus is not part of their jurisdiction here in Japan. He's for the westerners to decide.
- d. But Jesus isn't just for the religious of this world, or for the westerners of this world. Jesus died for the sins of the entire world!
- e. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever [whether American or Japanese or any other nationality, religious or agnostic or atheist] whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (**Jn. 3:16**)
- f. Jesus is the God of this entire world. He died for us all. And **we all have a responsibility to decide what to do with Jesus.**

C. Well, let's get back to our text and take a look at verse 8.

VII. Luke 23:8; Herod Glad to see Jesus

A. When Herod heard that Pilate was sending Jesus his way he was very excited. He was glad to have Jesus come before him because he had heard so much about Him and had hoped to see Jesus perform a miracle.

1. Now, this is interesting to me. Previously, the scriptures spoke about how Herod heard about Jesus and feared that he was John the Baptist come back from the dead. He thought this primarily based upon the works Jesus was doing. He heard of the works he was doing, namely the miracles, and thought that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead.
2. At one time while Jesus was journeying towards Jerusalem a group of Pharisees came to Him and told

Him to get out and depart from the area because Herod actually wanted to kill him. (Lk. 13:31)

3. Jesus responded to them saying, “Go, tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.’”

(Lk. 13:32)

4. So, while Herod may be intrigued by Jesus and His ability to perform miracles, Jesus was not a fan of Herod’s. Jesus obviously did not approve of the way Herod treated John the Baptist and we get the sense that He saw him as a deceitful and crafty man; an evil and cunning person. That’s why he referred to him as a “fox”.

B. Read with me verses 9 & 10 to see what transpired next.

VIII. Luke 23:9-10; Jesus Remains silent before Herod and His accusers

A. As Jesus arrived before Herod, Herod began to question Him, but to no avail, for Jesus remained silent before Herod.

B. Not only did he remain silent before Herod, Jesus remained silent before all of His accusers as well, the religious authorities, who had traveled to Herod in order to present their case against Him.

C. Nothing Herod said nor the religious leaders said, got a response out of Jesus. He was silent before both of them.

1. This begs the question “Why?”. Why would Jesus not defend Himself here in this second political trial he was facing? Why didn’t He answer any of Herod’s questions? Why not answer against the accusation of the religious authorities.

2. We asked the same question last week, and I think the answer could be the same. We noted a few reasons

why this could have been during Jesus' second religious trial before Caiaphas where He remained silent before Caiaphas and the accusations of many of the false witnesses that had come forward.

- a. For one, it could have been that Jesus knew the accusation weren't true and so He wasn't even going to dignify their words with a response of His own.
- b. Two, it could have been that Jesus was looking to fulfill scripture. That just like he remained silent during his religious trial, so too he does here in his political trial in order to fulfill what was written by Isaiah the prophet.
 - i. Isaiah 53:7 states, "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth." (**Isa. 53:7**)
- c. Three, Jesus was giving us an example to follow.
 - i. Peter writes to us describing this example He left for us, describing Jesus as the one "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth'; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;" (**1 Pt. 2:22-23**)
 - ii. Jesus committed Himself to the Father who judges righteously. And we should do the same when people say all sorts of negative things about us and make up all sorts of lies about us.
 - iii. Commit it to the Lord. Let God deal with it. God knows the truth and He knows how to take care of His own.

- d. His silence could be explained by any of these same reasons we considered during His religious trial.
- 3. But I also think that there is something unique for us to consider in regard to Herod specifically. Herod had spent a lot of time with John the Baptist. We highlighted the fact about how Herod liked to hear what John the Baptist had to say. He went to him and heard him often.
 - a. He believed John the Baptist to be a good man, a just and honorable man, a godly man.
 - b. Nearly every time we hear from John the Baptist in the NT, his message is the same. “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand”.
 - c. I have to believe with all my heart, that John the Baptist shared the good news of Jesus with Herod on multiple occasions.
 - d. I have no doubt that John had already testified to Herod who Jesus was.
 - i. John preached a message of repentance and baptism through water, but proclaimed there was one coming after him, One mightier than him, One whose sandal strap John wasn’t even worthy to loose, He would come and baptize with fire and the Holy Spirit. (**Lk. 3:16**)
 - ii. John proclaimed Jesus as the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (**Jn. 1:29**)
 - iii. He had seen and testified to the fact that Jesus is indeed the Son of God. (**Jn. 1:34**)
 - e. Do you think Herod did not already hear these things? I imagine every single time John spoke to Herod, that he told him these things. They seemed to be the only things that ever came out of John the Baptist’s mouth.

f. And so, with that understanding, it makes me wonder if Jesus remained silent before Herod because Herod had already been given all the information He needed. There was nothing left to say.

g. **Herod didn't need more information**, He didn't need to see a miracle. He needed to finally make a decision upon Jesus once and for all. This was his opportunity to repent, an opportunity that he unfortunately squandered.

D. Let's finish off our text and see what Herod ended up deciding to do with Jesus. Read verses 11 and 12 with me and we'll wrap this all up.

IX. Luke 23:11-12;

A. Instead of bowing before Him as king, Herod decided to have his soldiers mock and ridicule Jesus. They treated Him with contempt, as if he was worthless, despicable and without any value whatsoever. They were disgusted by Him and made a mockery of His kingship.

1. They dressed Jesus up in a gorgeous royal robe. The word gorgeous in the Greek is the word "lampros" and it speaks of something that shines brightly; most likely a dazzling white robe that Herod had on hand.

B. After mocking Him some more, they sent Jesus back to Pilate. In next week's study, we'll see that Herod ended up sending Jesus back having found that Jesus did nothing wrong; that He hadn't done anything that was deserving of the death the religious leaders were clamoring for.

C. So the verdict from Jesus' second political trial before Herod Antipas was that Jesus was innocent. That He did nothing deserving of death and that there was no fault at all in Him.

- D. Lord willing, next week, we'll look at the details pertaining to Jesus third political trial as He once again is set before Pontius Pilate and the sentencing that resulted from it.
- E. But before we wrap things up here this morning, I want to make one more point.
1. The religious authorities presented Jesus to Pilate claiming that Jesus said He was the Christ, a King.
 2. Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"
 3. I imagine Herod questioned Jesus about the same thing seeing as how he mocked him as a king by placing a royal robe upon Him.
 4. All these people were given an opportunity to question Jesus about His kingship and each of them came up with their own decisions.
 - a. The religious leaders questioned Jesus about His position as King as their Messiah, and they rejected Him. When Jesus told them He was the Christ, their Messiah, the long-awaited King they had hoped for, they accused him of blasphemy.
 - b. Pilate examined for himself the evidence presented to Him. He listened to the claims of the religious authorities, and He questioned Jesus to find out the truth of the matter Himself. But then when presented with truth, he mockingly questioned what truth was in the first place. He was convinced Jesus was innocent. He didn't believe He had done anything deserving of death. But he couldn't bring himself to surrendering to the truth of who Jesus is.
 - c. Then there was Herod. Herod had been given plenty of opportunity to know everything He could have ever wanted to know about Jesus while spending time with John the Baptist. He had all the information needed to make a decision about Jesus

being king. But instead of bowing before Him, he mocked Him and ridiculed Him.

5. Each had their own opportunity to respond. To decide for themselves whether Jesus was in deed a king worthy of their allegiance, their surrender and their service.
6. And I think the question for us all to ask and ponder is quite similar. **“Is Jesus your king?”** Have you surrendered your life to His Lordship.
 - a. Or are you like these religious leaders who think it blasphemous to even consider surrendering your life to Him. Or like Pilate who thinks that this really isn't your responsibility and that you don't need to make a decision.
 - i. A silent decision is still a decision. A decision to not make Jesus your king is a decision against Him. The scriptures teach us that you are either for Him or against Him. There is no neutral ground when it comes to Jesus.
 - b. Or are we like Herod. We've been coming to church and listening to people talk about Jesus for quite some time. We've heard all there is to say about the matter, but yet, we're still not willing to submit ourselves to the Lordship of Jesus?
7. Who is Jesus to you? Is He your king? I pray He is!