

Luke 22:54 – 23:11

1. Four of the five stages of Jesus' trial are in this text. Read them through and delineate what happened in each phase.
2. Go back and read Luke 22:31 – 34. How do you think Peter felt when Jesus looked at him in verse 60? What do you think was in Jesus' heart at that moment? (Scripture doesn't say specifically so we must be careful w/ conjecture but knowing a good bit about Jesus' character from the gospels what can you surmise?)
3. The Scribes and Pharisees want Jesus to perjure himself. Instead, he turns the question back on them. In essence he is saying, "you won't believe, or confess so why the charade of questions?" What do you see about the authority and honesty of Jesus here?
4. Jesus gives the Pharisees one final warning in verse 69. Do you think any of them heeded his offer to understand he was the LORD? See Acts 6:7
5. What does Jesus' response to Pilate in 23:3 indicate about his attitude toward Pilate's skepticism? (In the Greek, Pilate's question emphasizes "you." Are YOU the king of the Jews?)
6. The only person with whom Jesus refused to speak in his earthly ministry was Herod Antipas. 23:9. What does Jesus' silence say? Could it be redemptive even though no words were spoken or is it simply Jesus' judgment on an unbelieving fool?

I have included a brief excerpt out of Hendriksen's commentary on Luke concerning Herod which should be helpful for your preparation if you are a study leader.

From the New Testament Commentary "Luke" by William Hendriksen.

8. Now Herod was highly pleased when he saw Jesus, because, having heard about him, he for a long time had been eager to see him, and now he was hoping to see him perform some sign.

To understand what now takes place it is necessary to give a brief review of the story of Herod Antipas up to this point.

It will be recalled that in the year 4 B.C., upon the death of his father, Herod Antipas had been made tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (Luke 3:1). Later on, while visiting his half-brother, Herod Philip, he had become infatuated with the latter's wife, Herodias. The two illicit lovers had eloped. For the sin of having "his brother's wife" he was sternly and repeatedly rebuked by John the Baptist (3:19, 20). But instead of repenting, the tetrarch imprisoned John. At the occasion of his birthday celebration Herod Antipas foolishly promised to give the daughter of Herodias whatever she might ask, so fascinated was he with her dancing exhibition. Instructed by her mother she asked for and received "the head of John the Baptist on a platter" (Matt. 14:6-12; Mark 6:22-29; Luke 9:7-9).

Afterward, when Herod heard about the marvelous deeds of Jesus, he exclaimed, "This is John the Baptist, risen from the dead" (Matt. 14:1, 2). He was eager to see Jesus (Luke 9:9).

Toward the close of Christ's ministry certain Pharisees warned Jesus, "Get out and move on from here, for Herod wants to kill you!" Did the presence of Jesus anywhere within the realm of the tetrarch bother his conscience?

Whatever may be the answer, now Jesus, as a prisoner, is being brought before this same impenitent, restless, inquisitive, superstitious Herod Antipas. The latter is still as wicked as he was before. Though he had been repeatedly warned, there is no evidence whatever of even an inkling of repentance. He simply wants to be entertained by Jesus. He is hoping to see him perform a miracle.

9, 10. So he questioned him at some length, but Jesus gave him no reply whatever. Meanwhile the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, vehemently accusing him.

Though Jesus did not perform any miracle in the presence of Herod, the latter seems to have thought that the captive would at least talk to him, would certainly answer his questions. But he did not, not at all. This is significant. To be sure, other silences on the part of the Savior are also reported. There was a time when he was silent before Caiaphas (Mark 14:60, 61), before Pilate (Mark 15:4, 5), and again before Pilate (John 19:9b). But these silences were balanced by testimonies. In the case of Herod it was different. *He* never heard Jesus say anything at all! This man had had his full opportunity. He had been talked to and reasoned

with again and again and again (Mark 6:20). But he had ignored all these warnings. And even now his only interest in Jesus was that born of perverse, contemptuous curiosity. He received no answer and deserved none.

But when Jesus refused to speak, his enemies, the chief priests and the scribes, talked all the louder and the more incessantly, vehemently accusing him before Herod. Were they afraid that Herod might pronounce Jesus innocent and might even release him? They need not have feared, for although Herod, too, could find no basis for any charge against Jesus, he did not set him free. On the contrary, being utterly disgusted with him, he made him the object of ridicule:

11. Then Herod, together with his soldiers, having treated Jesus with contempt and having mocked him, put a gorgeous robe around him and sent him back to Pilate.

Herod was probably *too scared* to condemn Jesus to death. His conscience had not allowed him to forget what he had done to another innocent person, John the Baptist. He was filled with haunting superstition. But also, he was probably *too angry* with Jesus to acquit him, for his curiosity had not been gratified. Jesus had refused to perform a miracle or even to answer any of his questions. So he and his bodyguard started to treat the manacled prisoner with contempt and ridicule. They dressed him in a brilliant robe, as if he were already an earthly king, and sent him thus arrayed back to Pilate. From the Hasmonean Palace, where Herod was probably staying, the procession returned to Pilate and the Praetorium.