

## Luke 23:8-12

### *Mocking the True King*

NKJ Luke 23:1 Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate.

2 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."

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

4 So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no fault in this Man."

5 But they were the more fierce, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place."

6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean.

7 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.

8 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.

9 Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing.

10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him.

11 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.

12 That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.

You'll remember that last week we read these same verses and focused on Christ's initial experience before the judgment seat of Pilate, now we are going to be looking at verses 8-12 and what happened to Jesus when Pilate sent him to Herod for judgment.

This is of course not the same Herod from Matthew Chapter 2 who had tried to kill Jesus when he was still a baby and who himself died when Jesus was very young, that Herod is Herod the Great. The Herod before whom Jesus stood for judgment was Herod the Great's Son, Herod Antipas. Herod was not even a king, he was a local ruler allowed by the Romans to govern a small territory in this case, the troublesome and unprofitable region of Galilee.

Herod Antipas was an enigmatic and pitiful character. Now to be sure, he was worldly and capable of brutality, but he was also a rich man who had a conscience that clearly troubled him throughout his life. For instance, Herod had run away with his brother Phillip's wife Herodias, a clear case of adultery. And John the Baptist in his preaching had called him out on it saying "***It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.***"

Now you would expect somebody like Herod, with his lineage and character, would be outraged by the comments of this wild Camel Hair wearing, locust eating preacher and would have arrested him and had him put to death immediately. And yet we read that that wasn't Herod's desire. In fact it was his wife Herodias who hated John was eager to Kill Him.

*Mark 6:19 Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not;*

Why couldn't she kill him? Well we find out in the next line that it was because Herod was protecting John:

*20 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.*

It's likely that Herod knew that what John was saying was true. And Herod may not have believed John's gospel, but he treated him with a superstitious awe and presumably, the odd thing was that he often sent for John to hear him preach. But aside from fulfilling his curiosity it never did him any good.

People like Herod are like those people who Christ described in the parable of the sower as having rocky hearts, they initially "**receive the word with joy**"; but there is no root. Their hearts remain stony, and when temptation comes they quickly fall away. The rich often fall into this category. Their hearts are so wedded to the world, there really is no room for the Gospel. All they have are the initial stirrings and emotions, but all the time they remain captivated by their heart idols.

JC Ryle, described them very well when he wrote this – "**God raises up some bold witness against their sins, whose testimony reaches their ears. At once their curiosity is stirred. They feel "found out," and are ill at ease. They flutter round his ministry, like the moth round the candle, and seem unable to keep away from it, even while they do not obey it. They praise his talents and openly profess their admiration of his power. But they never get any further. Like Herod, their conscience produces within them a morbid curiosity to see and hear God's witnesses. But, like Herod, their heart is linked to the world by chains of iron. Tossed to and fro by storms of lust or ungovernable passions, they are never at rest while they live, and after all their fitful struggles of conscience, they die at length in their sins. This is a painful history. But it is the history of many rich men's souls.**"

You are often tempted to envy the very rich, aren't you? That's not surprising, our entire popular culture is geared to making you want to be one of them. Think about it, "Who Wants to Be A Millionaire" "American Idol" "The Apprentice" and so on. You are also supposed to want to be rich and famous, and it's so easy to give in to that desire and begin to desire to be like the pop icons. But when you do that you forget the warnings of Jesus: **Luke 18:25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."**

Kids as you are growing up you will want to be many things, I know boys many of you want to be a fireman, or soldier, or a superhero or something cool like that today, but a day will come for you when you will be tempted to become "Moneyman" (like in that commercial) Girls, your problem on the other hand, just may be that you'll still want to be a Princess when you grow up. But remember that as you grow up it is far, far better to be godly than rich,

Parents remember that too, and seek to give your children true riches. And when you are tempted to envy the Hollywood glitterati or the CEO, ask yourself would I envy them their eternity? **"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"**

Well, Herod's own licentious lifestyle proved to be the undoing of John. Herod throws a birthday party for himself and Herodias daughter dances for him and his guests, and Herod makes this foolish offer to give her whatever she wanted up to half his kingdom, and then and there Herodias finally managed to trap her husband Herod in his own promise, she got her daughter to ask for John's head, and being a proud man Herod gave it her. He was obviously haunted by this, for we read a little while later:

***NKJ Matthew 14:1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus 2 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."***

And Luke tells us that he sought to see Jesus from that point on.

Now he finally has what he has wanted all the time. Pilate has delivered Jesus up to Him. But why? Well, lots of reasons, he wants to see the man everyone has been talking about. In that sense he is like the spiritual tourists who go to see whatever big name in the religious world is in town. One week it's Billy Graham, the next its the Pope, or Deepak Chopra, or Benny Hinn. They want a thrill, they want an experience. They want to be able to say they saw him. But none of it does them any good.

Herod also no doubt wants to replay his previous encounters with John, he snuffed out the first candle, but now the Herod the Moth has found another light to flutter around. Only this time Jesus doesn't play his game. He does no miracles, he answers no questions, Jesus remains silent in his presence. The chief priests and scribes on the other hand are ladling on the false accusations thick and furious. They did get what they wanted from Pilate, but they are determined to get the death sentence for Jesus they want so badly from Herod.

Why doesn't Jesus answer Herod either? I believe there are two reasons -

1) Well because Herod has squandered his opportunity. The time to repent and believe the Gospel was while John the one who pointed men to the Lamb of God was preaching to him. It's funny isn't it? So many men figure, ***well I'm not going to believe this preacher about Jesus. If Jesus wanted me to believe in Him, He'd come and tell me Himself.***

Well actually, friend, the grace of Christ is seen in the fact that he sent his servant the lowly preacher you're scorning to offer you salvation in His name: 2 Cor. 5:20 ***"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."***

Sadly because Herod would not heed Christ's messenger, He will someday hear from Christ, but on that day he will be standing at Christ's left hand and the sentence will be ***"Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels"***

2) The Second reason is because Jesus is not standing there for Herod's benefit, he is standing there for our benefit. How does the hymnist put it? ***"Bearing shame and scoffing rude, In my place condemned He stood"*** Jesus the innocent, stands now before Herod, just as He stood before Pilate as the *Sin Bearer for all His Sheep*. He can make no defense, not because He is Guilty of Sin, ***but Because we are***, and he is standing in our place.

So he endures the bitter mockery of Pilate and his body guard. How ridiculous the scene really is here you have this petty mortal tyrant, mocking the True King of Kings. He dresses him in a rich purple robe to make fun of Him, because from his perspective Jesus is the beggar and He the Rich Man. The said thing is, the reality is exactly reversed. Herod is poor, wretched and so blind, he cannot see the true glory of the King before Him. As Jesus said of Jerusalem: ***"If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."***

Let me leave you with a quick applications drawn from that final mocking. The world mocks Christ the King, it did then, it still does today – that's why it loves to produce things like the TV show the **Book of Daniel**, even when they know they will flop and they can't sell a lick of advertising. But you see that has always been the case, they will mock Christ even when it means they destroy themselves in the process. Herod in what he did, was like the man sawing off the tree limb he is sitting on. Shaking his fist in the face of His Creator.

If they mocked Him, well they'll also mock you for following Him. You can have all the degrees in the World, but say I believe that the Bible is the Word of God or I believe that Jesus is the Only Way, and you are instantly Gomer Pyle's dumber brother or sister.

The bizarre thing is I've experienced that from both sides of the fence first as the mocker and now as the mocked. While that is going on, you may get angry you may be tempted to repay evil for evil, don't. Do not hate worldlings, pity them. They are like ships running themselves onto the rocks out of spite. And it doesn't matter how rich the worldling is, they are empty inside. They give their lives over to idols and they are destroyed by them. Remember that too when you are tempted to be them.

Let us learn from Herod's case to PITY great men. With all their greatness and apparent splendor, they are often thoroughly miserable within. Silks and satins and official robes, often cover hearts which are utter strangers to peace. That man knows not what he is wishing, who wishes to be a rich man. Let us PRAY for rich men, as well as pity them. They carry weight in the race for eternal life. If they are saved, it can only be by the greatest miracles of God's grace.

{Martyn Lloyd Jones quote}