

INVESTIGATIVE BIBLE DISCUSSION

Luke 23:1-7; 13-27

[1] Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. [2] And they began to accuse him, saying, “We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king.”

[3] So Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

“Yes, it is as you say,” Jesus replied.

[4] Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.”

[5] But they insisted, “He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here.”

[6] On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. [7] When he learned that Jesus was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

[13] Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, [14] and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. [15] Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. [16] Therefore, I will punish him and then release him.” [17]

[18] With one voice they cried out, “Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!” [19] (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.)

[20] Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. [21] But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

[22] For the third time he spoke to them: “Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him.”

[23] But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. [24] So Pilate decided to grant their demand.

Questions

1. Highlight the main and minor characters
2. Where or when does the story take place?
3. What are the key events, activities or ideas presented in this passage?
4. How did the characters respond to Jesus personally, to what he said, or to what they saw?
5. How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?
6. What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?
7. What truths/principles, were taught or demonstrated by Jesus?
8. What conclusions or observations can you draw?

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BACKGROUND

Jesus had been arrested during the night and had been brought before the Jewish High Priest for a religious trial. There he was accused of breaking traditional religious laws. Failing to present a legitimate case, they raised the issue of blasphemy, his claim to be equal with God. Under oath, Jesus is finally asked, "Are you the Son of God?" His reply was in the affirmative. Their response was to demand his death.

In 30 AD, Rome had removed the death penalty from Jewish control. Under Jewish law, the death penalty would have been carried out by stoning. Under Roman law, it was carried out by crucifixion for non Romans.

Failing to have the power of death, the Jewish leaders had to turn to Rome to have their desire carried out. Therefore, they brought Jesus to Pilate and created a civil case against him. The charges they brought to Pilate were lies designed to appeal to his interests.

KEY WORDS

Pilate: The Roman procurator of the provinces of Judea and Samaria.

Herod (Antipas): The ruler of the province of Galilee. He happened to be in Jerusalem at the time of this trial.