

## Message #117

## Luke 23:8-12

One of the things I am looking forward to in heaven is meeting and talking and reuniting with our loved ones who have beat us to heaven. I am also looking forward to meeting with some of the great men of God. What a thrilling moment that will be. First of all, what an amazing moment it will be to actually see Jesus Christ. What a privilege it will be to listen to Him teach or talk about anything. Then you have all of the Biblical Apostles and prophets. Then there are the great Biblical teachers from all history. What a blessing it will be to talk to them and listen to them. That is going to be spectacular.

There is a man in the Bible who had a desire to see Jesus. His motive was not to see Him, believe in Him, listen to Him and learn from Him. His motive was novelty. He had heard a lot about Jesus Christ and he was looking forward to the moment he would have Jesus in his presence. The man's name is Herod.

There is much in the Bible about this man named Herod.

- 1) Herod was politically powerful—Luke 3:1 - tetrarch = ruler over 1/4<sup>th</sup> part of the land.
- 2) Herod was immoral—Luke 3:19 - took his own brother's wife.
- 3) Herod was spiritually convicted—Mark 6:20 - deep down he knew John was righteous and he enjoyed listening to him teach.
- 4) Herod was dominated by women—Matt.14:3 - he was controlled by women, even if evil.
- 5) Herod was controlled by public opinion—Matt.14:5 - he always wanted to please the public.
- 6) Herod was controlled by the sensual—Matt. 14:6-7 - gave wealth to exotic dancer.
- 7) Herod was a murderer—Mark 14:10; Luke 9:9 - Viciously executed and beheaded John.
- 8) Herod was emotionally unstable—Matt. 14:1-2 - Paranoid that Jesus was John came back alive.
- 9) Herod was very crafty—Luke 13:32 - Jesus, Himself, called him a fox.
- 10) Herod was curious about religion—Luke 9:9 - interested in John, Elijah, the prophets.

Herod is this smooth-operating, vicious, immoral, godless political leader who is in political power and he wants to see Jesus Christ and now he is about to get his chance to judge Jesus Christ. Imagine Jesus Christ standing in front of this creep.

When we come to this text, we come to trial #5. Before Jesus was crucified, He went through six phony trials. Three of the trials were Jewish and three of the trials were Roman. This is trial #5, the trial before Herod. What we see here very clearly is this:

**EVEN WHEN A GODLESS POLITICAL LEADER LIKE HEROD EXAMINED JESUS CHRIST AND COULD FIND NO FAULT WITH HIM, HE MISTREATED HIM AND MADE FRIENDSHIPS WITH OTHERS JUST LIKE HIM.**

The political world in Christ's day, just like our day, was a dirty and filthy swamp and you certainly get a glimpse of that dirty swamp right here. That swamp not only needs to be drained, it needs to be destroyed and one day it will be. Never is that more evident than when you come to this text concerning Jesus Christ.

There are five historical realities brought out in this passage:

**HISTORICAL REALITY #1** – Herod is happy to see Jesus Christ. **23:8-9a**

When Pilate was done questioning Christ, he sent Him to Herod (Luke 23:6-7), and Herod could not have been happier. One of his great longings of life and desire of the soul was to see Jesus Christ. From the early days of Christ's ministry, Herod desired to get a glimpse of Jesus Christ. He had heard many remarkable stories about Christ and he wanted to see Him (Luke 9:7-9).

Now that Jesus was standing before him, he was gleeful. This was his happy hour. He was very glad about this moment. He was almost giddy.

There are three stated reasons why Herod wanted to see Jesus Christ:

**Reason #1** - Because of what he had heard. **23:8a**

Herod had a guy working for him, a steward whose name was Chuza. Chuza had a wife whose name was Joanna, who had actually travelled with Jesus Christ and supported Jesus Christ (Luke 8:3). There is no doubt that Joanna would have told her husband, Chuza, many amazing stories about Jesus Christ, and Chuza would have told Herod.

Herod had heard all kinds of stories. He had heard that Jesus could heal people, forgive people's sin, control demons and speak with great power. Herod had heard a lot about that. But hearing and believing are two different things. It is one thing to hear something; it is another to believe something.

There are people who duck into a church service because they hear something about the church. That is not the same as believing in Jesus Christ and committing one's life to the word of God.

**Reason #2** - Because of what he wanted to see. **23:8b**

Herod wanted to see Jesus perform some miracle. He was a sign seeker. Jesus was standing right before Herod and Herod was hoping that He would put on a good show for him. He wanted Jesus to put on some magic show of signs like you would see in Las Vegas.

**Reason #3** - Because of what he wanted to know. **23:9a**

Herod asked Christ many questions. Probably most of the questions had to do with how He did miraculous things.

Herod certainly had a curiosity about Jesus Christ. But having a religious curiosity is not the same as having spiritual reality. Some of the most godless people in all of history have had religious curiosity.

Judas had a religious curiosity about Jesus and actually traveled with Him for 3 years. Hitler had a religious curiosity and was a member of the Catholic Church. There are many politicians who have an interest in religion. We even have some who read the book of Palms. But having an interest in religion is not even close to having a relationship with Jesus Christ. Herod was interested in religion and today is burning in hell (Acts 4:27).

**HISTORICAL REALITY #2** – Jesus Christ responds to Herod. **23:9b**

Christ was being asked questions by Herod and notice what we see: **“He answered him nothing.”**

Jesus Christ said nothing. Christ sized up this evil Herod. He saw his heart and motives and He refused to respond to any request or question he asked.

Many would say well Lord, you need to take the stand and defend yourself. Jesus stood there half-beaten to death and said nothing.

**This is a very serious moment for Herod because what is actually happening here is that God is refusing to speak to Herod.** A person can play games with Jesus Christ for so long and when Jesus Christ gets fed up, He will not respond nor will He even speak to the person anymore.

There will be no more conviction and no more invitation.

**HISTORICAL REALITY #3** – Religious leaders were accusing Jesus Christ. **23:10**

Jesus wasn't saying anything, but the big-mouthed religious leaders were saying plenty.

The chief priests ran the Temple and the scribes ran the teaching and instruction and they were there before Herod vehemently accusing Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is totally and completely innocent and Jesus is totally and completely silent, but these religious frauds are accusing Him.

These were the men who were pretending to be the most spiritual men on earth. They absolutely hated Jesus Christ and they were making false allegations against Him and they wanted Him dead.

There are people in religious power who hate Biblical truth and they hate anyone presenting it. They pretend to be pious and spiritual, but they are evil. These kinds of people have an adversity to truth. They wanted Jesus Christ dead.

**HISTORICAL REALITY #4** – Herod unjustly punishes Jesus Christ. **23:11**

Can you imagine the outcry of punishing someone who is innocent? Someone goes through multiple trials and is found innocent at every trial and then the judges say, well beat Him up for the fun of it.

Herod is a dirty politician. He wants public support and popularity. His livelihood depends on it. He knew Jesus was innocent. In fact, by virtue of the fact that he sends Jesus back to Pilate proves that because neither Pilate or Herod could find anything wrong with Jesus (**23:14-15**). Herod was not just a politician, but he had authority as a judge. A judge is not supposed to be swayed by any political agenda; they are supposed to be interested in truth and justice.

But Herod was the kind of unstable leader and judge who could be manipulated and controlled by the people in power. He saw how emotional the leaders were on this issue. Even though he knew Christ was innocent; he still wanted their approval. **This is one sad moment when the approval of the people was more important to him than the approval of God.**

There were four actions Herod took in regard to Jesus Christ:

**Action #1** - He mistreated Jesus Christ (exouqenew). **23:11a**

Herod allowed his soldiers to mistreat Jesus Christ. The word means to treat someone with total contempt in the sense that you despise the person and treat Him as nothing (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 161). Herod let his soldiers do any despicable thing they wanted to do to Jesus Christ. This was supposedly in some court of law and this was being done to an innocent man.

**Action #2** - He mocked Jesus Christ (empaizw). **23:11b**

They did not take Jesus Christ seriously. To them, He was a joke. They made fun of the fact that people said He was the King. The word means they would actually and intentionally just make a mockery of Him (*Ibid.*, p. 149).

**Action #3** - He dressed Jesus Christ. **23:11c**

They treated Jesus Christ as if He were some Barbie Doll. They dressed Him in a gorgeous robe. The adjective “gorgeous” (lamron) means that this robe was very high end. Actually the word means the clothing was brilliant at a shining and splendid level (*Ibid.*, p. 264).

This was a very expensive robe. It was probably the nicest robe Jesus ever had hanging on his back. It is possible they were making fun of Christ’s clothing so they put on a more expensive robe.

**Action #4** - He dismissed Jesus Christ. **23:11d**

Herod decided he had his fun so he sent Him back to Pilate. What this absolutely proves is that **Herod could find nothing in Jesus Christ worthy of death. This proves Jesus Christ is innocent.**

**HISTORICAL REALITY #5 – Herod and Pilate become friends. 23:12**

There are friendships formed in the godless world when people see eye to eye on godless things. There had been hostility between Pilate and Herod.

More than likely, Pilate's treatment of the Galileans had caused a great deal of friction between him and Herod (Luke 13:1). But now they are like long lost buddies. The whole basis for their new friendship was their rejection of Jesus Christ and truth.

There is a devilish unity between religious and political people who reject truth and refuse to respond to truth. There are common goals, opinions, objectives and philosophies in people who reject the word of God and truth of God.

But there is also a common goal in where they will end up; they will end up burning in hell. Both Pilate and Herod were guilty before God of the murder of His Son (Acts 4:27). The basis of this friendship is the rejection of Jesus Christ and that will be the very thing that will put them into everlasting fire.

Jesus Christ stood before Herod and looked like a loser, but there will come another moment when Herod will stand before Jesus Christ and the roles will be reversed.

There will come a time when Jesus will examine Herod. Jesus will question Herod. There will be no distortions or lies and Christ's judgment will be pure and true and Herod will be forever burning in the Lake of Fire.

Jesus Christ stands before your mind and heart today. How will you treat Him? Will you trust Him? Will you believe on Him? Will you invite Him into your life? You are the judge so you decide.