

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon July 4, 2021
Luke 23: 1 – 25 “The Delusions of Rebellion”

66 As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, 67 "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will by no means believe. 68 And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go. 69 Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God." 70 Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?" So He said to them, "You rightly say that I am." 71 And they said, "What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."

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.

13 Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, 14 said to them, "You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him 15 no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. 16 I will therefore chastise Him and release Him" 17 (for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast). 18 And they all cried out at once, saying, "Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas"-- 19 who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder 20 Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. 21 But they shouted, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him! 22 Then he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go." 23 But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. 24 So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. 25 And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

I. Introduction

a. Is your eye good?

- i. Luke 11:33-36 "No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts [it] in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. 34 "The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye

is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when [your eye] is bad, your body also [is] full of darkness. 35 "Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. 36 "If then your whole body [is] full of light, having no part dark, [the] whole [body] will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light."

- b. Self-deception – the light which is in you is darkness
 - i. Rom 1:18,1 "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown [it] to them."
 - 1. Sinful men, apart from Christ's salvation, suppress the truth in unrighteousness. They bury the truth under their mountain of lies. The internal life of the lost is nothing but constant self-deception. This is also the essence of that body of death (Rom 7:24) still within each one of us. Who will rescue us from this body of death?
- c. Delusion a fixed false belief that is resistant to reason or confrontation with actual fact; in psychiatry, these are usually bizarre and obviously implausible beliefs totally inconsistent with reality, but in other situations, delusions may sometimes be plausible. The main point is that the belief is fixed, intransigent, even in the face of incontrovertible, conflicting facts. These people cannot release their fantasy. – when your eye is bad, your body is full of darkness.
 - i. 2 Thess 2:9-12 "The coming of the [lawless one] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
 - 1. Note how rejecting the truth and not loving truth and pursuing unrighteousness open the rebel up to demonic deception, but even worse, they are then the targets of God's wrath, Who sends upon them strong delusions. Those who rebel against God are enslaved by God to their fantasy world.
 - ii. Isaiah 66:4 "So will I choose their delusions, and bring their fears on them; Because, when I called, no one answered, When I spoke they did not hear; But they did evil before My eyes, And chose that in which I do not delight."
 - 1. Again, here we see the Lord God placing delusions upon those who ignore Him, those who won't listen to Him, those who do evil before His eyes.
 - iii. So, this is beyond self-deception brought on by our own sin. This is beyond the deception of even demons. This is the God-wrought delusion He places upon those who persist in hating Him and rebelling against

Him. Apart from Christ, fallen sinners create fantasy worlds for themselves, with the assistance of demonic powers. Escaping into false safety, they live in a mind prison finally barred and locked by God Himself. Sanctification frees us Christians from our own fantasy world to walk in the shocking reality of who we really are, but most wondrously, Who God Is. Is this the light within you?

- d. As we observe the words and actions of the Jewish leaders and the crowds at Christ's trial, we see this sad reality before our eyes: self-deception, demonic deception, and perhaps even the strong delusions sent by God Himself upon rebels. But, remember, ask yourself, where would you have been standing on that day? What would you have said and done? Where are you in danger of the delusions of rebellion? Do you prefer reality over fantasy? Is your eye good?
 - e. Luke 23: 1 – 25 "The Delusions of Rebellion"
 - i. False accusations of Jewish leaders v1,2
 - ii. Fierce attacks of chief priests and crowd v5
 - iii. Naïve fantasies of Herod v8,9
 - iv. Vehement accusations of chief priests and scribes v10
 - v. Mockings by Herod and his soldiers v11
 - vi. Chief priests, rulers and the people all prefer a criminal v13,18,19
 - vii. They all believe Jesus deserves crucifixion v21
 - viii. Insistent, loud demands persist and prevail v23
 - ix. Questions to know, love and obey God
- II. False accusations of Jewish leaders v1.2
- a. "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.""
 - b. So, the kangaroo court Sanhedrin has completed its early morning hearing, unable to find any witnesses whose testimonies agree and condemn Jesus, so they must base their judgment upon Christ's own words.
 - i. Luke 22:70 "Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?" So He said to them, "You rightly say that I am." 71 And they said, "What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.""
 - ii. These leaders created a fantasy world in which it was impossible for Jesus to be the Messiah foretold in their Scripture. Even in the face of incontrovertible facts, these Jewish leaders were unwilling to change their false beliefs. Think of all the ways Jesus had openly demonstrated Himself to be the foretold Messiah. Jesus cast out demons of every kind, and He healed every type of disease. Jesus raised the dead on multiple occasions, and He controlled the forces of nature with His Word, and He taught as one Who has authority in Himself. And, Jesus never sinned, showing perfection at every step of His life. Yet, these fallen sinners preferred their fantasy world.

- c. Their accusations against Jesus are false, and even their own prior hearing could not prove the truth of their accusations:
- i. “perverting the nation” – note the vague, general nature of this claim. This is the kind of subjective phrase impossible to prove or disprove.
 1. Bock “This broad charge is a matter of perception and dispute. Jesus says that he was sent from God to show the nation God’s way. Their rejection of his message shows that they do not regard him as such. It is the most subjective of the three charges. This accusation argues that Jesus disturbs the peace as a religious agitator.”¹
 - ii. “forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar” – this is a twisting of Christ’s Word from earlier in this week when He was challenged about taxes: Lk 20:21-26 “Then they asked Him, saying, “Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth: 22 “Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” 23 But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, “Why do you test Me? 24 “Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?” They answered and said, “Caesar’s.” 25 And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” 26 But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent.”
 - iii. “saying that He Himself is Christ, a King” – this is a true statement, but even Pilate and Herod do not find this a treasonous claim. The Jews want Jesus dead, but the Jews do not have legal authority to execute Jesus. Plus, the Jews want the shame and fear of Christ’s public execution to destroy His movement of followers once and for all. In this true statement about Christ is a veiled, unstated, false accusation: Christ was working to lead a political rebellion against the Roman empire.
 1. Bock “The third charge is the most important and it is true, though not in the sense that the Jews suggest: Jesus declares himself to be an Anointed One, a king. βασιλεύς (*basileus*, king) explains what χριστός (*christos*, Messiah or Christ) means, since Rome would not appreciate the significance of this Jewish title (Creed 1930: 281). Raising the issue of an alternative kingship alongside the charge about taxes attempts to paint Jesus as a revolutionary and to make his activity seem seditious. ... It is true that Jesus accepted the title (22:69–71), but not in the revolutionary sense that the Jews suggest.”²
- III. Fierce attacks of chief priests and crowd v4,5
- a. 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,

¹ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1810). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

² Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1811). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

"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."

- b. Fierce:
 - i. to give additional strength, to make stronger
 - ii. to receive greater strength, grow stronger
 - iii. to avail further, insist stoutly:—be the more fierce.
 - iv. Webster's 1828: the primary sense of which is wild, running, rushing.
 - 1. Vehement; violent; furious; rushing; impetuous; as a fierce wind.
 - 2. Savage; ravenous; easily enraged; as a fierce lion.
 - 3. Vehement in rage; eager of mischief; as a fierce tyrant; a monster fierce for blood.
 - 4. Violent; outrageous; not to be restrained.
 - 5. Passionate; angry; furious.
 - 6. Wild; staring; ferocious; as a fierce countenance.
 - v. This is the response of the deluded mind whenever it collides with reality. Fierce opposition to reality and passionate, unrestrained defense of their fantasy.
 - c. Next false accusation, twisting reality: "He stirs up the people" "throughout all Judea" – again, the Jews just want Jesus dead, so they are seeking to display Jesus as a threat to Roman rule in Judea
 - i. Bock "Jesus stirs up the people (ἀνασειῶ, *anaseiō*; Bornkamm, *TDNT* 7:198 §4), which is another way to insist that he is dangerous. He has the nation in a spin. To emphasize the gravity of the situation, the leaders note that Jesus' teaching extends throughout Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem ... The reference to Judea (Ἰουδαία) is probably broad here, meaning "the land of the Jews," and makes the danger greater because it covers a large area. The leadership wants Pilate to see Jesus as a political threat. Their approach is that if Pilate is a good governor, he will not let Jesus go free."³
 - ii. Note how this shared delusion creates a mob mentality controlled by their false views, generating vehemence and fierce escalation of accusations when their first effort fails.
 - iii. Note also that the very thing they accuse Jesus of, they are currently guilty of doing themselves.
- IV. Naïve fantasies of Herod v8,9
- a. 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.
 - i. Herod is different than the ferocious Jewish leaders and the crowd of stirred up, misled Jews. Herod does not appear to view Jesus as a threat,

³ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1813). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

but rather as a cultural curiosity, a celebrity to observe, a toy for Herod's amusement.

- ii. Bock "Rumor had it that Herod wished to kill Jesus (Luke 13:31), but now he has a chance to be entertained by the power of this wonder worker about whom he has heard so much. Luke has already warned readers what to think of those who seek signs (4:9–12, 23–24; 11:16, 29). Herod avoids confrontation and is rather frivolous in his treatment of Jesus. The Lucan portrait of Herod Antipas (Luke 3:19–20; 9:7–9; 13:31; Acts 4:27), like his portraits of the later Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:1–23) and the earlier Herod the Great (Luke 1:5; Acts 23:35), is not flattering"⁴
 - b. Herod displays the self-deception of the amusement-minded rebel, viewing God as a distant plaything, interested in God only for entertainment and curiosity, never interested enough to get involved with real discussion, real debate. What should Herod have done if he were living in reality, not caught up in his own delusions?
- V. Vehement accusations of chief priests and scribes v10
- a. 10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him.
 - b. Jesus displays His view of Herod by refusing to speak to Herod. Even Pilate and the Jews received words from Jesus, but those who trifle with Christ as a plaything get only silence from Him.
 - c. Vehemently: forcibly, mightily, intensely
 - d. The Jewish religious leaders continue in the passionate, adamant, "vehement" accusations against Jesus, well aware that if Herod doesn't condemn Jesus, their efforts toward crucifixion could fail. They "stood" up to express their arder.
 - e. Note again how their commitment to their false beliefs about Jesus continue with greater force, even in the face of another leader not condemning Jesus.
- VI. Mockings by Herod and his soldiers v11
- a. 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.
 - b. This behavior continues to display Herod as nothing but an amusement-minded rebel. If he can't get some amazement from Christ as a magician, then he can at least have some fun with his soldiers mocking Jesus.
 - c. This kind of deluded person sees everything as a game, or a joke. This is the person unable to be serious for even a moment, always using sarcasm or humor to deflect the truth. Unlike the Jewish leaders and their fierce attack on Christ and His truth, Herod and those like him use amusement and escape, humor and sarcasm, to avoid dealing with reality.
- VII. Chief priests, rulers and the people all prefer a criminal v13,18,19
- a. "13 Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people.... 18 And they all cried out at once, saying, "Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas"-- 19 who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder"

⁴ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1819). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

- b. Pilate has completed his trial, and Herod has completed his examination of Jesus. In spite of their sound and fury, the Jews and the crowd have been unable to win the argument, unable to make their case that Jesus deserves Roman execution.
 - i. Pilate: "...And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him 15 no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him."
- c. At this point, all efforts at anything even close to rationality are abandoned by the Jews and their puppet mob. No further accusations are brought. No further arguments are made. They enter into a mindless frenzy, not even attempting to justify their angry, threatening demands. These people are the ones who are "stirred up", and it wasn't Jesus Who stirred them up.
 - 1. They demand "away with this Man" – insulting Christ by not saying His Name. "Away with this Man" = they just want Jesus gone, eliminated, executed. They see no reason to justify themselves with reason. Their own emotions are justification enough. Give us a true criminal instead.
- d. Bock "Pilate's offer to release Jesus sparks a reaction in the crowd, which responds as a group (*παμπληθεί, pamplēthei*, all together; BAGD 607; BAA 1228; a *hapax legomenon*; Nolland 1993b: 1131 makes the case for the people's inclusion in the Lucan portrait). Acts 3:14–15 also blames the nation as a whole for Jesus' death. They cry for (*ἀνέκραγον, anekragon*, a second-aorist form unique to the NT; Marshall 1978: 860; BDF §75) the release of the criminal Barabbas and call on Pilate to take Jesus away. Barabbas is the equivalent of a modern-day insurrectionist and terrorist (23:19), yet the crowd would rather free this sinner than the Jewish teacher. They tell Pilate to take Jesus away, which means to execute him for the charge with which he was accused"⁵
 - i. Note how the deluded rebel will have anything instead of Jesus, anything instead of reality.

VIII. They all believe Jesus deserves crucifixion v21

- a. 21 But they shouted, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!"
- b. Pilate has again spoken on behalf of justice (v20), but the people will hear none of it. This crescendo movement of madness marks the shared delusion of the mob, when individuals enslaved to sin, stirred on by rebellious leaders, stoked by demons, and even given strong delusions from God Himself, coalesce into a seething chaos of violence. Again, note how vehemence, emotion and crowd-assurance replace sanity and reason and justice.
- c. Bock "Crucifixion had four steps. (1) The criminal had to carry the *patibulum* (the crossbeam) to the point of execution. The main stake was already fixed in the ground at the execution site. (The cross had a shape either like a capital T or, as in more traditional representations, a lowercase †.) (2) The condemned person would be bound to the crossbeam on the ground either by rope (Pliny, *Natural*

⁵ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1829). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

History 28.11 §46) or less frequently by nails (Lucan, *Civil War* 6.547; m. Šab. 6.10; John 20:25; Hewitt 1932). R. Brown (1994: 949–51) accepts the plausibility of Jesus' being nailed to the cross. (3) The beam would then be raised by forked poles and fastened to the upright pole (the length of which was so high that the condemned could get no support from his feet to breathe) or it was dropped into a slot at the top of the upright beam. (4) A tablet specifying the crime was hung around the accused to publicly declare the crime. Death came by suffocation through exhaustion or by loss of blood and body fluids (R. Brown 1994: 1088–92; Barbet 1953; Zugibe 1989). Some estimate the cross's height at seven feet. Such was the death that the crowd insisted Jesus experience."⁶

- IX. Insistent, loud demands persist and prevail v23
 - a. 23 But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed.
 - b. Once again, Pilate seeks justice for Christ (v22), but, totally enslaved to the darkness within, the mad crowd remains insistent and demanding, with persistent loud voices, and Pilate finally gives in.
 - c. Note how insistence, demandingness and shouting replace reason, rationality and justice. And, note how any human resistance to such mob madness will eventually fail and give in.
- X. Questions to know, love and obey God

⁶ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1831). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.