



Grace Fellowship Church
Pastor/Teacher, Jim Rickard
Sunday, February 5, 2023

Luke Chapter 23

E. Wednesday – Jewish, Thursday- Roman, **Luke 22:54-23:56.**

4. Christ before Pilate, Luke 23:1-5. This is the 4th Trial that Jesus would endure at the hands of man, the first before Gentiles. This trial is paralleled in **Mat 27:1-2, 11-14; Mark 15:1-5; John 18:28-38.**

Vs. 2

Luke 23:2, “And they began to accuse Him, saying, “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King”.”

Only Luke and John provide this detail, and John gives us much more of the conversation, **John 18:29-32.**

In Luke’s account, they “**accuse Him**,” uses KATEGOREO, “accuse or speak against,” from KATA “against,” and AGORAUO, “marketplace,” that literally means, “to speak in the assembly.” The Preposition KATA gives the term a negative connotation; thus it literally means “to speak against (someone), to accuse, or to bring charges against.”

Notice that the charges they now bring against Jesus were not previously mentioned in the counsel. There, the charges were of blaspheme, as He claimed to be the Son of God. Now, they change the charges in the hopes of placating Pilate to succumb to their desires.

In Luke’s Gospel, the crimes they accused Him of were threefold, all linked together with the use of the Coordinating Conjunction KAI, “and, even, or also.”:

1. “**We found this man misleading our nation**,” uses the Verb HEURISKO, “find, discover, obtain, ascertain, etc.,” where we get our word eureka from. With this is the Verb in the Present, Active, Participle, Accusative of DIASTREPHO that means, “pervert, turn away, seduce, oppose, corrupt, etc.” It is used 7 times in the NT, 5 times by Luke, **Mat 17:7; Luke 9:41; 23:2; Acts 13:8, 10; 20:30; Phil 20:30.** It is a compound word from DIA, “through or because of,” and STREPHO, “turn.” It is literally used for “make crooked or misshape” as in a craftsman’s poor workmanship. As a technical term it acquired moral overtones, therefore “perversion.” The ones Jesus was “corrupting,” were HO ETHNOS, “nation, people, heathen, pagans, or Gentiles.” Here, the Pharisees meant their nation or people, the Jews, yet use ETHNOS to combine them with the Romans as they were now part of the Roman empire. This too was a sly and hypocritical act, as they hated the Romans and Roman government, and did everything they could to keep the people separate from Roman influence. Yet, now, for expediency’s sake they are joined as one.

Therefore, Jesus was accused by the Sanhedrin of “subverting and turning the people away,” due to perverse teachings. The charge of perverting or misleading the nation implied seditious agitation. This was a very general accusation and one that Pilate would not respond to, so they added more charges to prove their point.

2. “**Forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar**,” uses the Verb KOLUO, “stop, hinder, prevent, forbid, restrain, withhold, etc.,” with the Verb DIDOMI, “give, hand over, etc.,” and the Nouns PHOROS, “tax, tribute, payment,” and the Dative of the Noun KAISAR, “Caesar or Emperor.”

As we know, this was a bogus accusation that Jesus never taught. In fact, it was the Pharisees who wanted to refuse the people from paying taxes to the Romans, as they questioned Jesus about this in **Luke 20:22.** In the

scene the Noun PHOROS is also used, as it is used 5 times in the NT, **Luke 20:22; 23:2; Rom 13:6**, and twice in **vs. 7**.

In **Luke 20:19-26**, the Pharisees (Scribes and Chief Priests) sent spies to Jesus trying to trick Him into making a statement they could use against Him before Pilate to destroy Him, which He sniffed out and thwarted. In this scene, Jesus knew their hypocrisy and actually commanded that people pay their taxes to Caesar, using the Verb APODOTE, which is the Imperative Mood of the Verb APODIDOMI that means, “pay, pay back, give out, etc.,” in all three Gospel accounts of this scene, **Mat 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25**. The famous phrase is: **“Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s.”** Interestingly, the Biblical principle to pay our taxes is also commanded by Paul in **Rom 13:6-7**.

Rom 13:6-7, “For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.”

Therefore, when the Pharisees used this tactic against Jesus earlier in the week, they failed to get Him, but they hung on to that act and now make it a false accusation against Jesus. Old dogs keep to their old tricks. They used this false accusation thinking it would be impactful to Pilate who was already having problems in his relationship with Caesar.

3. **“Saying that He Himself is Christ, a King,”** is actually two accusations rolled into one, as they approached this first from the Jewish perspective and then quickly turned it into a Roman perspective.

“Saying that He Himself,” is LEGO HEAUTOU EIMI that means, self-proclaiming here; “He says He is.” The proclamation by Jesus according to them is that He is the CHRISTOS, **“Christ, Anointed One, or Messiah.”** This was a true charge, but not one Pilate would care very much about, so they quickly added, BASELEUS, **“a King.”**

Now this was a charge they hoped would resonate with Pilate, as the Roman Empire did not want any internal king or kings to rise up against the Empire. This accusation is also what led Pilate to ascribe on a placard above the Cross of Jesus, **“Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews,” Mat 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19.**

Therefore, the accusations against Jesus were a mix of lies and truths, as all false doctrine and Satan’s cosmic viewpoint are. They accused Him of subversive anti-nationalism, commanding that people do not pay their taxes, and insurrection, claiming to be King. In **vs. 14a**, apparently Pilate interprets their accusations against Jesus as “inciting a rebellion.”

Luke 23:14a, “And (Pilate) said to them (the Pharisees), “You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion...”

Now, John adds some details to this portion of the Fourth Trial, **John 18:29-32.**

John 18:29-32, “Therefore Pilate went out to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?” ³⁰They answered and said to him, “If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you.” ³¹So Pilate said to them, “Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law.” The Jews said to him, “We are not permitted to put anyone to death,” ³²to fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.

In **vs. 29**, Pilate uses a cognate Noun to what Luke noted, KATEGORIA, that means, “accusation, charge, complaint.” It is used 4 times in the NT, **Luke 6:7; John 18:29; 1 Tim 5:19; Titus 1:6.**

In the first use, **Luke 6:7**, the Pharisees were previously trying to find fault in Jesus in order to destroy Him. In that scene it was in regards to healing on the Sabbath, which they thought was against the Law, since healing was a work, read **vs. 6-11**.

Its use in **1 Tim 5:19**, is Paul reiterating a principle from the Law that should be maintained throughout the Church Age. **1 Tim 5:19**, **“Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.”** Cf. **Deut 17:6; 19:15; Mat 18:16**.

Notice in John’s account how Jesus is referred to as **“Man,”** ANTHROPOS, by both the Pharisees and Pilate. Clearly, they did not view Him as the Son of God, or God, or their Lord, etc., as He truly is. Instead, He is just a man! This is only half of the equation of His hypostatic union.

In **vs. 30**, John boils down the Pharisees accusations against Jesus to simply being an **“evil doer,”** KAKOS POIEO, which is literally “evil, bad, or wicked doer.” Some ancient translations have combined this word to KAKOPOIOS that means, “evildoer or malefactor,” also used in **1 Peter 2:12, 14; 3:16; 4:15**.

In **vs. 31a**, Pilate viewed this as petty and commanded them to **“Take Him yourselves, and judge (KRINO) Him according to your law (NOMOS).”**

In **vs. 31b**, the Jews replied, **“We are not permitted to put anyone to death,”** uses OUK EXESTIN, “it is NOT lawful, permitted, or possible,” with OUDEIS, “no one,” the Verb APOKTEINO, “kill,” or sometimes “deprive of spiritual life,” but kill is in view here.

As I have stated many times, this is a curious statement as this did not hinder them in times prior to this week or after this week in stoning people to death, cf. **John 5:18; 7:1; 10:31-33; 11:8, 53; Acts 5:26; 7:58-59; 14:5, 19; 21:31; 25:2-3**. But now, they can not kill Him. This is not well explained in the Scriptures, as we have no record in the Bible of a Roman law that prohibited Jews from applying capital punishment to a criminal.

Yet, there is some extra Biblical evidence that the Jews could not put a man to death at this time. First, they stated the fact; if we assume the context is based on Roman law. Second, the Jewish historian Josephus wrote that the high priest could not call for a judicial trial by the Sanhedrin without the governor’s permission; but many times, they did not wait for a trial to stone someone, as noted in the passages above. And third, the Talmud states that the Jews lost authority to execute the penalty 40 years prior to the destruction of the Temple, which occurred in 70 A.D. This would have been right around the time of Christ’s trials and crucifixion. Another account implies that around 6 A.D., the Jews, when Archelaus was disposed, were not permitted capital punishment. (cf. Complete Biblical Library Commentary.)

But possibly, this statement is the result of it being the High Holiday, the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread, as they said, OUK EXESTIN, **“not lawful.”** Just as they did not enter into Pilate’s home, the Praetorium, because it would render them unclean for the Feast, **John 18:29**, so to, if they killed someone on the Day of Preparation, it would render them unclean. Therefore, they did not want to commit capital punishment according to their own Law, as Pilate commanded, because it would put them in proximity of a dead body that would render them unclean for 7 days, cf. **Lev 22:4; Num 19:11-13**. This reasoning is also why they wanted to take the body of Jesus off the Cross when He had died before sun down, **Deut 21:23**.

Num 19:11-13, **“The one who touches the corpse of any person shall be unclean for seven days. ¹²That one shall purify himself from uncleanness with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, and then he will be clean; but if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean. ¹³Anyone who touches a corpse, the body of a man who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water for impurity was not sprinkled on him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is still on him.”**

Deut 21:22-23, “If a man has committed a sin worthy of death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, ²³his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed of God), so that you do not defile your land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.”

In support of this, the Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary states regarding the use of the Word EXESTIN: *“In the New Testament the word EXESTIN means “it is permitted.” It is found most frequently in the Synoptic Gospels and in Acts. In almost every case it refers to things permitted or to things not permitted by the Torah (the Law). The Law was called the Torah (Hebrew, meaning “teaching,” or Greek, NOMOS). It had to do with the standards of conduct which the Word of God either required or prohibited among the people of God. EXESTIN implies and acknowledges the authority of the Word of God or an authority prescribed by what is proper and permitted. Hence the Word of God (Torah) was the “yardstick,” or the standard of motivation and conduct that continually guided the conversation and actions of Jesus and the disciples. It had to do with what the Word of God said about eating (Matthew 12:4), about the Sabbath (Matthew 12:2, 10), about marriage (Matthew 19:3-5), and about taxes (Matthew 22:17). Sometimes the use of the word EXESTIN was put as a question, “Is it permitted?” (Acts 21:37).”*

So, there is good reasoning from both perspectives, Roman Law and Jewish Law, as to why the Pharisees said, “it was not lawful for them to kill Him.” Maybe it is a combination of both? Nevertheless, this raised Pilate’s eyebrows, as he previously did not understand the severity of punishment the Jews were looking for in this situation. Now He did!

Communion

John concludes his narrative of this scene in vs. 32, with, **“To fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.”** As we have noted, Jesus prophesied about this entire process previously to His disciples in **Mat 20:19; 26:2; Mark 10:33f.; Luke 18:32f.; John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32f.**

If Jesus was killed by the Jews, they would have stoned Him to death, but because He would be killed by the Romans, He would be crucified, i.e., hung on a tree. This was his prophecy.

John 3:14, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”

Mat 20:19, “And will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up.”

Interestingly, *“Had the Jews killed Jesus by their method of execution (stoning till dead), Jesus' prophecy would have proven false. But in their ignorance the Jews helped to verify who Jesus was by fulfilling His prediction.”* (Complete Biblical Library Commentary.)