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The Sanhedrin, Pilate, and Herod –vs.– the Kingdom of God Luke 22:63-23:12

Introduction – One Man, no disciples in sight, no army, no weapons, against the combined forces of the world. This was the foolishness of the gospel on display before the watching world (1 Cor 1:18-19).

Mocked and Beaten (vv63-65) – Luke leaves out the accounts of Jesus before Annas, Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrin at night, summarizing it all here, in this account of Jesus being mocked and beaten. In those “courts” Jesus left them without the ability to actually bring legal charges against Him. But might makes right in a world that does not submit to the King of kings, at least for a time.

Prophecy! – Of course, Jesus could have named every one of those who hit Him (they may be deriding a prophecy in Isaiah 11:3). The ironies spill out as they bully Him, and “blasphemously” speak against Him; meanwhile, *“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth...”* (Isaiah 53:7).

Kangaroo Court (vv66-71) – Def’n: “an unofficial or mock court set up spontaneously for the purpose of delivering a judgment arrived at in advance, usually one in which a disloyal cohort’s fate is decided.” After the night of illegal trials and beatings, the Sanhedrin makes sure all their paperwork is in order by having a daytime trial. They ask Jesus if He is the Messiah, and He responds that they wouldn’t believe Him if He said so, as He had shown before (Luke 20:5-7, 41-43). Jesus makes no defense for Himself, but prophetically appeals to the One who will vindicate Him (alluding to Dan 7 and Psalm 110).

Son of Man, Son of God – When these two terms are used and Jesus replies, *“I am,”* the high priest is done. Again, Jesus will not defend Himself, but neither has the Sanhedrin proven in any way that Jesus is *not* the Son of God. The whole point, however, was to make Jesus look like a threat to Caesar by calling Himself King.

Before Pilate (23:1-5) – In order to gain Pilate’s favor (which the Sanhedrin did not have), they paint Jesus out to be a rebel against Caesar (the “anointed one”) and the Roman Empire. Jesus stands there without a single charge of civil disobedience proven and says (almost in jest?), “it is as you say.” Pilate will not be a simple pawn of the Jews (he sees through their pretended zeal for Caesar) and refuses to do anything to someone who seems to be little more than a nut, and more than likely enjoyed the difficulty this placed the Jews in. They become fiercer and begin to speak of His three years of rebellion, beginning in Galilee. Pilate sees his opportunity to be done with their stupidity.

Before Herod (vv6-12) – Herod “just happened” to be in Jerusalem and so Pilate sends this Jewish man off to Herod. Herod would not be pushed around by the Jews any more than Pilate, but Herod was thrilled to receive Jesus hoping to see some of those magic tricks. Pilate’s respect of Herod’s jurisdiction, along with their mutual enjoyment of seeing the Jews in this difficulty, apparently brought these two wicked rulers together in a renewed friendship (v12, see also 13:1). In a strange way, Jesus is already uniting Jew and Gentile. Jew and Gentile, the kings of the earth, will try to stand against this King (Acts 4:26-27, quoting Psalm 2).

More Mocking – Frustrated by Christ’s lack of answers, lack of miracles, and this claim against his title as king of the Jews, Herod has his men of war deride Jesus with a royal robe. When they treated Him with contempt, it was probably far more than “mean words.” Herod had been a little nervous about Jesus, fearing he was John raised from the dead (Luke 9:7-9) and most likely had heard Jesus public ridicule of him (13:32). Disgusted, he sends Jesus back to Pilate.

King of the Jews and King over All Earthly Powers – It is so important to see that Jesus was not losing here in these scenes. He was perfectly applying Prov 26:4-5, not answering a fool at certain times, and answering the fools at other times. Before Herod, Jesus the true Prophet and King will not give a word nor reveal His authority. Before Caesar’s representative, the true Lord of the world refuses to defend Himself, for there is nothing to defend. This all foreshadows the work of Christ’s kingdom in the book of Acts, where Jesus is heralded as King of the Jews, ending with the death of Herod (Acts 1-12), and then announced as “another king” (Acts 17:7) rivaling Caesar as King of all nations, with the gospel finally reaching Rome itself (Acts 13-28).

Godly Mockery – They call Jesus a blasphemer and in turn blaspheme God themselves. They deride Jesus and find that God is holding them in derision, laughing as He does so. They plot and scheme against the Lord, only to find themselves

instruments in His hands.

Two Sides of the Same Savior – God mocks sinners who shake their fists against Him, He “*dashes them to pieces*” (Psalm 2:9) and “*executes kings in the day of His wrath....(filling) the places with dead bodies (and executing) the heads of many countries...*”(Psalm 110:5-6). At the very same time, “*He was led as a lamb to the slaughter...opened not His own mouth....(and was) cut off from the land of the living...*”(Isaiah 53:8-9). This is the scandal and foolishness of the gospel. Our response? As with the kings of the earth, we are to “*serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry...*” (Psalm 2:10-11).

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