

## **Jesus on Trial** **Luke 22:63-23:25**

In this passage we see satan's scheme of destruction and God's plan of salvation begin to come together in Jesus, as He is put on trial for who He says He is. What we discover, however, is that it's not really Jesus who is on trial.

**The Chief Priests:** The religious leaders want to know if Jesus is the Messiah. In fact, they have already made up their minds against Him. That can still be true today. For different reasons people can come to the Christian faith with a closed mind: they have already made their decision. The problem is, those reasons do not answer the crucial question: who is Jesus?

The religious leaders refuse to be open to believing, and that failure even to engage with the evidence about Jesus is all too common today.

Jesus goes on to claim to be the ultimate Judge, in unique relationship with God – and that is too much for the priests. But they know He must be condemned on civil, not religious grounds, if they are to have Him executed.

**Pilate:** The religious leaders bring three charges against Jesus: He's disturbing the peace, He's a financial risk to Rome, He's a revolutionary and a risk to Caesar. Pilate homes in on the third: 'are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus responds by saying, 'yes, but not the kind you think.'

Pilate vacillates. He fails to do the thing he knows he should do. He wants others (like Herod) to decide about Jesus. But none of us can duck the question: who is Jesus and what am I to do with Him? You have to decide and decide for yourself.

Pilate finds it so hard to do what is right because public opinion and his career mean more to him than Jesus. And we can shrink back from becoming a Christian, of standing up for Christ, because we worry about what others will think or the cost we might have to pay. But Jesus is of far greater value than any price we have to pay for Him.

**Herod:** Herod is happy to see Jesus because he wants to see a sign. He is superficial and frivolous: it's all a big joke to Herod. People can have a superficial interest in spirituality of Christ – but we don't find God that way. The Bible says we need to seek Him with all our heart if we are to find Him.

### **Jesus**

Jesus endures all the mocking and the violence in silence. In so doing, He fulfills Isaiah 53. He is our supreme example of how to conduct ourselves when we are unfairly treated. The next time we leap to defend our reputation – we should think about Jesus.

But why does Jesus allow the unjust trial to continue? Because of the final character in the drama.

### **Barabbas**

He is as far from Jesus as you can get, yet the crowd chooses him. Jesus dies in the place of a rebel. Barabbas's freedom is a picture of ours. We are all rebels and Jesus goes to the cross for us. That is why He lets this trial continue: satan's plan of destruction is going to be overwhelmed by God's plan of salvation.