

Jesus Before Herod

MEMORY VERSE: “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Peter 2:22–24).

“The mission of Christ in this world was not to gratify idle curiosity. He came to heal the brokenhearted. Could He have spoken any word to heal the bruises of sin-sick souls, He would not have kept silent. But He had no words for those who would but trample the truth under their unholy feet.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 730.

Suggested Reading: *Early Writings*, pp. 172–175. (At the bottom of this page)

1. TRYING TO AVOID THE ISSUE

Sun, Oct 19

a. Trying to evade the responsibility for Christ’s condemnation, what did Pilate do? Luke 23:5–7.

Luke 23:5–7

And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. **6** When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. **7** And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

“[The priests and elders] loudly denounced Pilate, and threatened him with the censure of the Roman government. They accused him of refusing to condemn Jesus, who, they affirmed, had set Himself up against Caesar. . . .

“Pilate at this time had no thought of condemning Jesus. He knew that the Jews had accused Him through hatred and prejudice. He knew what his duty was. Justice demanded that Christ should be immediately released. But Pilate dreaded the ill will of the people. Should he refuse to give Jesus into their hands, a tumult would be raised, and this he feared to meet. When he heard that Christ was from Galilee, he decided to send Him to Herod, the ruler of that province, who was then in Jerusalem. By this course, Pilate thought to shift the responsibility of the trial from himself to Herod. He also thought this a good opportunity to heal an old quarrel between himself and Herod. And so it proved. The two magistrates made friends over the trial of the Saviour.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 727, 728.

a. How did Herod feel about meeting Jesus, and what were his thoughts when he saw Him? Luke 23:8.

Luke 23:8

And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

“This Herod was he whose hands were stained with the blood of John the Baptist. When Herod first heard of Jesus, he was terror-stricken, and said, ‘It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead;’ ‘therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.’ Mark 6:16; Matthew 14:2. Yet Herod desired to see Jesus. Now there was opportunity to save the life of this prophet, and the king hoped to banish forever from his mind the memory of that bloody head brought to him in a charger. He also desired to have his curiosity gratified, and thought that if Christ were given any prospect of release, He would do anything that was asked of Him.

“A large company of the priests and elders had accompanied Christ to Herod. And when the Saviour was brought in, these dignitaries, all speaking excitedly, urged their accusations against Him. But Herod paid little regard to their charges. He commanded silence, desiring an opportunity to question Christ. He ordered that the fetters of Christ should be unloosed, at the same time charging His enemies with roughly treating Him. Looking with compassion into the serene face of the world’s Redeemer, he read in it only wisdom and purity. He as well as Pilate was satisfied that Christ had been accused through malice and envy.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 728, 729.

b. How did Herod’s interview with Jesus begin? Luke 23:9 (first part), 10.

Luke 23:9, 10

Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. 10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.

“Herod questioned Christ in many words, but throughout the Saviour maintained a profound silence. At the command of the king, the decrepit and maimed were then called in, and Christ was ordered to prove His claims by working a miracle. Men say that Thou canst heal the sick, said Herod. I am anxious to see that Thy widespread fame has not been belied. Jesus did not respond, and Herod still continued to urge: If Thou canst work miracles for others, work them now for Thine own good, and it will serve Thee a good purpose. Again he commanded, Show us a sign that Thou hast the power with which rumor hath accredited Thee.”—*Ibid.*, p. 729.

a. Describe Christ’s attitude before His inquirers—and the reasoning behind it. Luke 23:9 (last part); 1 Peter 2:22–24.

Luke 23:9

Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.

1 Peter 2:22–24

Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: **23** Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: **24** Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

“Christ was as one who heard and saw not. The Son of God had taken upon Himself man’s nature. He must do as man must do in like circumstances. Therefore He would not work a miracle to save Himself the pain and humiliation that man must endure when placed in a similar position. . . .

“Herod’s conscience was now far less sensitive than when he had trembled with horror at the request of Herodias for the head of John the Baptist. . . . And he now threatened Jesus, declaring repeatedly that he had power to release or to condemn Him. But no sign from Jesus gave evidence that He heard a word.

“Herod was irritated by this silence. It seemed to indicate utter indifference to his authority. To the vain and pompous king, open rebuke would have been less offensive than to be thus ignored. Again he angrily threatened Jesus, who still remained unmoved and silent.

“The mission of Christ in this world was not to gratify idle curiosity. He came to heal the brokenhearted. Could He have spoken any word to heal the bruises of sin-sick souls, He would not have kept silent. But He had no words for those who would but trample the truth under their unholy feet.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 729, 730.

b. What can we learn from Christ’s example in this instance? Proverbs 26:4.

Proverbs 26:4

Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.

“Christ might have spoken words to Herod that would have pierced the ears of the hardened king. He might have stricken him with fear and trembling by laying before him the full iniquity of his life, and the horror of his approaching doom. But Christ’s silence was the severest rebuke that He could have given. Herod had rejected the truth spoken to him by the greatest of the prophets, and no other message was he to receive. Not a word had the Majesty of heaven for him. That ear that had ever been open to human woe, had no room for Herod’s commands. Those eyes that had ever rested upon the penitent sinner in pitying, forgiving love had no look to bestow upon Herod. Those lips that had uttered the most impressive truth, that in tones of tenderest entreaty had pleaded with the most sinful and the most degraded, were closed to the haughty king who felt no need of a Saviour.”—*Ibid.*, p. 730.

a. How did Herod react when he realized he could not intimidate Jesus? Luke 23:11 (first part).

Luke 23:11

And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

“Herod’s face grew dark with passion. Turning to the multitude, he angrily denounced Jesus as an impostor. Then to Christ he said, If You will give no evidence of Your claim, I will deliver You up to the soldiers and the people. They may succeed in making You speak. If You are an impostor, death at their hands is only what You merit; if You are the Son of God, save Yourself by working a miracle.

“No sooner were these words spoken than a rush was made for Christ. Like wild beasts, the crowd darted upon their prey. Jesus was dragged this way and that, Herod joining the mob in seeking to humiliate the Son of God. Had not the Roman soldiers interposed, and forced back the maddened throng, the Saviour would have been torn in pieces.

“ ‘Herod with his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe.’ The Roman soldiers joined in this abuse. All that these wicked, corrupt soldiers, helped on by Herod and the Jewish dignitaries, could instigate was heaped upon the Saviour. Yet His divine patience failed not.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 730, 731.

b. Why did Herod send Jesus back to Pilate? Luke 23:11 (last part).

Luke 23:11

And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

“Christ’s persecutors had tried to measure His character by their own; they had represented Him as vile as themselves. But back of all the present appearance another scene intruded itself—a scene which they will one day see in all its glory. There were some who trembled in Christ’s presence. While the rude throng were bowing in mockery before Him, some who came forward for that purpose turned back, afraid and silenced. Herod was convicted. The last rays of merciful light were shining upon his sin-hardened heart. He felt that this was no common man; for divinity had flashed through humanity. At the very time when Christ was encompassed by mockers, adulterers, and murderers, Herod felt that he was beholding a God upon His throne.

“Hardened as he was, Herod dared not ratify the condemnation of Christ. He wished to relieve himself of the terrible responsibility, and he sent Jesus back to the Roman judgment hall.”—*Ibid.*, p. 731.

a. What is the condition of a person separated from God? Isaiah 53:6 (first part).

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

“Sin had become a science, and vice was consecrated as a part of religion. Rebellion had struck its roots deep into the heart, and the hostility of man was most violent against heaven. It was demonstrated before the universe that, apart from God, humanity could not be uplifted.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 37.

b. How has God opened the door for our restoration? Isaiah 53:5, 6, 11.

Isaiah 53:5, 6

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:11

He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

“The Majesty of heaven pleased not Himself. Whatever He did was in reference to the salvation of man. Selfishness in all its forms stood rebuked in His presence. He assumed our nature that He might suffer in our stead, making His soul an offering for sin. He was stricken of God and afflicted to save man from the blow which he deserved because of the transgression of God’s law. By the light shining from the cross, Christ proposed to draw all men unto Him. His human heart yearned over the race. His arms were opened to receive them, and He invited all to come to Him. His life on earth was one continued act of self-denial and condescension.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 418.

“Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Oct 24

1. What can I learn from Christ’s decision to remain silent before Herod?
2. Like Herod, under what circumstances could I be in danger of impatience?
3. How does beholding Jesus’ suffering in my behalf affect my attitude?
4. Describe the suffering of Jesus in Herod’s palace.
5. Summarize Isaiah chapter 53.

Suggested Reading: *Early Writings*, pp. 172–175.

For a short time vexation and confusion kept the priests silent. They did not wish the people to know that they had hired one of the professed followers of Jesus to betray Him into their hands. Their hunting Jesus like a thief and taking Him secretly, they wished to hide. But the confession of Judas, and his haggard, guilty appearance, exposed the priests before the multitude, showing that it was hatred that had caused them to take Jesus. As Judas loudly declared Jesus to be innocent, the priests replied, "What is that to us? see thou to that." Matthew 27:4. They had Jesus in their power, and were determined to make sure of Him. Judas, overwhelmed with anguish, threw the money that he now despised at the feet of those who had hired him, and, in anguish and horror, went and hanged himself. **(EW 172.1)**

Jesus had many sympathizers in the company about Him, and His answering nothing to the many questions put to Him amazed the throng. Under all the mockery and violence of the mob, not a frown, not a troubled expression, rested upon His features. He was dignified and composed. The spectators looked upon Him with wonder. They compared His perfect form and firm, dignified bearing with the appearance of those who sat in judgment against Him, and said to one another that He appeared more like a king than any of the rulers. He bore no marks of being a criminal. His eye was mild, clear, and undaunted, His forehead broad and high. Every feature was strongly marked with benevolence and noble principle. His patience and forbearance were so unlike man that many trembled. Even Herod and Pilate were greatly troubled at His noble, Godlike bearing. **(EW 172.2)**

From the first, Pilate was convicted that Jesus was no common man. He believed Him to be an excellent character, and entirely innocent of the charges brought against Him. The angels who were witnessing the scene marked the convictions of the Roman governor, and to save him from engaging in the awful act of delivering Christ to be crucified, an angel was sent to Pilate's wife, and gave her information through a dream that it was the Son of God in whose trial her husband was engaged, and that He was an innocent sufferer. She immediately sent a message to Pilate, stating that she had suffered many things in a dream on account of Jesus and warning him to have nothing to do with that holy man. The messenger, pressing hastily through the crowd, placed the letter in the hands of Pilate. As he read, he trembled and turned pale, and at once determined to have nothing to do with putting Christ to death. If the Jews would have the blood of Jesus, he would not give his influence to it, but would labor to deliver Him. **(EW 173.1)**

When Pilate heard that Herod was in Jerusalem, he was greatly relieved; for he hoped to free himself from all responsibility in the trial and condemnation of Jesus. He at once sent Him, with His accusers, to Herod. This ruler had become hardened in sin. The murder of John the Baptist had left upon his conscience a stain from which he could not free himself. When he heard of Jesus and the mighty works wrought by Him, he feared and trembled, believing Him to be John the Baptist risen from the dead. When Jesus was placed in his hands by Pilate, Herod considered the act an acknowledgment of his power, authority, and judgment. This had the effect to make friends of the two rulers, who had before been enemies. Herod was pleased to see Jesus, expecting Him to work some mighty miracle for his satisfaction. But it was not the work of Jesus to gratify

curiosity or to seek His own safety. His divine, miraculous power was to be exercised for the salvation of others, but not in His own behalf. **(EW 173.2)**

Jesus answered nothing to the many questions put to Him by Herod; neither did He reply to His enemies, who were vehemently accusing Him. Herod was enraged because Jesus did not appear to fear his power, and with his men of war he derided, mocked, and abused the Son of God. Yet he was astonished at the noble, Godlike appearance of Jesus when shamefully abused, and fearing to condemn Him, he sent Him again to Pilate. **(EW 174.1)**

Satan and his angels were tempting Pilate and trying to lead him on to his own ruin. They suggested to him that if he did not take part in condemning Jesus others would; the multitude were thirsting for His blood; and if he did not deliver Him to be crucified, he would lose his power and worldly honor and would be denounced as a believer on the impostor. Through fear of losing his power and authority, Pilate consented to the death of Jesus. And notwithstanding he placed the blood of Jesus upon His accusers, and the multitude received it, crying, "His blood be on us, and on our children," (Matthew 27:25) yet Pilate was not clear; he was guilty of the blood of Christ. For his own selfish interest, his love of honor from the great men of earth, he delivered an innocent man to die. If Pilate had followed his own convictions, he would have had nothing to do with condemning Jesus. **(EW 174.2)**

The appearance and words of Jesus during His trial made a deep impression upon the minds of many who were present on that occasion. The result of the influence thus exerted was apparent after His resurrection. Among those who were then added to the church, there were many whose conviction dated from the time of Jesus' trial. **(EW 174.3)**

Satan's rage was great as he saw that all the cruelty which he had led the Jews to inflict on Jesus had not called forth from Him the slightest murmur. Although He had taken upon Himself man's nature, He was sustained by a Godlike fortitude, and departed not in the least from the will of His Father. **(EW 175.1)**