

## Luke's Ancient Biography of Jesus 2

### Notes on Lesson Eight: The Trials

# Lesson Eight: The Trials

Luke 22: 63 – 23: 25

## Central Message

The Jewish leaders arrested Jesus. They judged him quickly and found him guilty, even though he had never committed a crime. Pilate condemned him to death, even though he knew Jesus was innocent. However, one day Jesus will judge each one of those leaders. He will judge every person who has ever lived.<sup>1</sup>

## Life Application

From the first application question: What *do you think?* Was Jesus guilty of a crime? Was he crazy? Was he telling the truth about himself?

## Community-Building Activity and Introduction<sup>2</sup> *What Does it Take?*

**Preparation:** Write the instructions on a board, or print the worksheet or cover page from the supplementary materials. If you use the instruction strips, copy and cut enough strips for each person.

**Instructions:** Jewish and Roman leaders did horrible things to Jesus that they knew were wrong. How could they? What causes people to go against their own conscience? (One's conscience is that sense inside oneself of what is right or wrong.) Discuss this question with a small group.

**Teaching Notes:** Ask them to think about causes. They could also give examples of situations in which someone might go against what they know is right.

## Lesson Notes

Luke 22: 63 – 23: 25

### Preparation:

Note that the numbers below refer to the numbers in the workbook.

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<sup>1</sup> See Matthew 25:31 and Revelation 20:12.

<sup>2</sup> The community-building activities and the introductions are often combined in the lesson notes because sometimes the introduction is first, and sometimes the activity is first.

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1. This is a simple task, but the results will help the reader see how the language has moved from active to passive, and references to Jesus have moved from subject to object. They do not need to know grammar rules to see this. For those who are interested in how the grammar affects the meaning in this passage, there is an activity mentioned in the footnote. "A task for grammar lovers: as you find these words in the text, decide if they are direct objects, indirect objects, objects of prepositions, or something else."
- 2/3 Since there are a number of new vocabulary words, they are underlined as well as defined in the footnotes. There is a background paper in the workbook and an additional worksheet at the end of this set of lesson notes.
4. The instructions do not specify whether they should write the titles in the text or the verses in this section.
5. The students have experience working with part of the text and sharing their information, so they can work in pairs on one section and share their findings in a variety of ways.
6. Find the phrase "the Son of Man." Luke 22:69 "But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right side<sup>3</sup> of Almighty God." Jesus is using the phrase about himself. The Son of Man is the subject, the One doing the action of the sentence, the One in control.

LINK The questions in this section are about the trial system. They help to straighten out the confusion of the different trials. This section is tied to the background paper which can be read at this time. However, look over the entire lesson to decide whether you want to carefully work through this section together, assign different trials to different groups, or summarize the section with a chart. (Actually, you can use a chart to gather information regardless of how you gather that information.) Here is an example.

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<sup>3</sup> The original phrase is "seated at the right hand." The right side is the side of honor.

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Jewish Leaders with their Council	Jewish Leaders with Pilate
Their Accusation:	Their Accusation:
Their Evidence:	Their Evidence:
Was he guilty?	Was he guilty?

*Jewish accusation:* Jesus claims to be the Son of Man/Son of God: blasphemy (Luke 22:67-71)

*Evidence:* Jesus called himself the Son of Man and made a clear reference to Daniel 7: 13-14. (On the other hand, he performed miracles that only One from God could do. These miracles are evidence that he IS the Son of God, but they did not consider that possibility. He was accused of lying.

*New Jewish charges before the Romans:* Luke 23:1-2 “The whole group rose up and took Jesus before Pilate,<sup>4</sup> where they began to accuse<sup>5</sup> him: “We caught this man misleading our people, telling them not to pay taxes to the Emperor and claiming<sup>6</sup> that he himself is the Messiah, a king.”

*Evidence:* They had no evidence. Their reference to paying taxes was the incident recorded in Luke 20: 21-26. This was studied in lesson 2.5. Their second accusation is that Jesus claims to be Christ, a king. They imply that Jesus is claiming to be an earthly king, one who might overthrow Rome, but this is not true.

*Why did the Jewish leaders change their charges?* They needed to come up with accusations against the government, not just against their religion.

*Was Jesus guilty of blasphemy or insurrection (actions against the government)?* Jesus did claim to be the Christ, but does this make him guilty of

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<sup>4</sup> Pilate was the Roman governor in charge of Jerusalem and Judea.

<sup>5</sup> To accuse is to say that someone did something wrong or broke the law. A similar verb is “to charge.”

<sup>6</sup> A claim is a statement that the speaker considers true.

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blasphemy? Only if it is not true. Was he guilty of the other accusations? Listen for their opinions, but send them back into the text for their reasons.

*Compare this trial system with one in your own country.*

7. This question will be difficult for students who are new to the study, but they will be interested in the answer. Also, the answer does not need to be complete or too involved. They were jealous of Jesus' popularity, upset with his interpretation of the Law (because it called their own practices into question, and because he claimed to be the Messiah), and probably also worried about the Romans (worried they would see this popularity as a sign of insurrection). It should be noted, however, that several of these leaders were interested in Jesus (such as Nicodemus, John 3) and some became Christians after the resurrection (such as Joseph of Arimathea, John 19:38). (These details can be included in the discussion if someone asks a question.)
8. Pilate did not think Jesus was guilty. (Luke 23:4) Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man." He also said, "...I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him....he has done nothing to deserve death." (Luke 23: 14-15) It was the custom to release one prisoner, and he wanted to release Jesus. "Therefore, I will punish him and then release him." (Luke 23:16)
9. The first part of the question is an opinion question, based on the information in the text. You can ask them what Herod thinks about Jesus, what his attitude is as he asks these questions. Is he curious? Does he want to become a believer? Is he making fun of Jesus? Ask for evidence in the text. We find out what Herod thought about Jesus' guilt through Pilate's words. See if the students can discover this themselves. "Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death." (Luke 23:15)

There are many answers to this question. If they cannot answer the first part, start with the second. Who or what influenced him? Then think about what motives he might have? We already know that he does not think Jesus deserves to die. Here is an excerpt about Pilate from the NIV Dictionary by Zondervan Publishers,

Pilate never really understood the Jews, as his frequent rash and foolish acts reveal. The Jewish historian Josephus tells us that he immediately offended the Jews by bringing the "outrageous" Roman standards into the Holy City. At another time he hung golden shields inscribed with the names and images of Roman deities in the temple itself. Once he even appropriated some of the temple tax to build an aqueduct. To this must be added the horrible incident mentioned in Luke 13:1 about "the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices," meaning no doubt that Roman soldiers killed these men

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while they were sacrificing in the Holy Place. These fearful events seem to disagree with the role Pilate played in the trial of Jesus, where he was as clay in the hands of the Jews, but this may be explained by the fact that his fear of the Jews increased because of their frequent complaints to Rome.

According to his custom, Pilate was in Jerusalem to keep order during the Passover Feast. His usual headquarters were in Caesarea. After the Jews had condemned Jesus in their own courts, they brought him early in the morning to Pilate, who was no doubt residing in Herod's palace near the temple. It is surprising he gave them a hearing so early in the day (John 18:28). From the beginning of the hearing he was torn between offending the Jews and condemning an innocent person, and, apart from simply acquitting him, he tried every device to set Jesus free.

LIVE Discuss one of the questions or ask them to pick one to answer.

1. This question is included here in case someone wants to discuss it. It may not be appropriate for discussion. If it is not discussed, you can start the "Consider" section by asking the questions for them to think about.
2. What do you do when others try to influence you to do something wrong? Anyone can answer this question because it is an experience common to all.
3. This is a good question if the students were struck by how unfair these trials were.

**Be sure to read the "Consider This" section.**

The Jewish leaders arrested Jesus. They judged him quickly and found him guilty, even though he had never committed a crime. Pilate condemned him to death, even though he knew Jesus was innocent. However, one day Jesus will judge each one of those leaders. He will judge every person who has ever lived.<sup>7</sup>

FINAL WORD: This verse was chosen because it includes the phrase "Son of Man" and talks of judgment.

BACKGROUND PAPER: "Trial Systems in the Roman Empire"

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<sup>7</sup> See Matthew 25:31 and Revelation 20:12.

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## The Trials

**In the last lesson,** Jesus was arrested by the religious leaders and deserted by his disciples. Peter even said that he did not know Jesus.

**In this lesson,** Jesus was a prisoner. The Jewish leaders gave him a quick and illegal trial so they could take him to the Romans. We have to ask the question, "Who was in charge?"

## Community Time



### What Does It Take?

Jewish and Roman leaders did horrible things to Jesus that they knew were wrong. How could they? What causes people to go against their own conscience?<sup>1</sup> Discuss this question with a small group.

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<sup>1</sup> One's conscience is that sense inside oneself of what is right or wrong.

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#### **What Does It Take?**

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There is a trial when someone \_\_\_\_\_ doing something against the law. In a trial, the judge hears the testimony of \_\_\_\_\_. These are people who have seen or heard something important to the trial, and their testimony is what they say in court. The judge also facts or examples of what the person said or did and reasons why the person committed the \_\_\_\_\_ or why they are innocent. The judge considers all this \_\_\_\_\_ and then announces his conclusion, or verdict. The judge might say, "I find this person \_\_\_\_\_," and will give a statement about his punishment. This statement is called a \_\_\_\_\_. On the other hand, he might say, "This person is \_\_\_\_\_," and set him free.

#### The Words

accusations	is charged with (or "is accused of")	crime	evidence
guilty	innocent	sentence	witnesses

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