

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

The path of our Savior's exodus has taken Him from the Mt. of Transfiguration to the Mt. Of Olives.

There, in the garden of Gethsemane, He prayed, was betrayed, and arrested.

He ascended still again, to Jerusalem... to the court of the High Priest to be arraigned, denied by Peter, mocked, and beaten.

Then He was taken to Pilate to be tried and condemned... but instead was declared innocent.

However, this was not acceptable to the mob, headed by the Chief Priests.

Pilate was in a pickle. What do you do with this innocent Lamb that you don't want to condemn?

You send Him to Herod Antipas, "**that fox**," as Jesus had called him once before. Luke 13:32

As follows in Jesus' name:

When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the Man was a Galilean. And when he learned that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see Him, because he had heard about Him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by Him. So he questioned Him at some length, but He made no answer. The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing Him. And Herod with his soldiers treated Him with contempt and mocked Him. Then, arraying Him in splendid clothing, he sent Him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.

Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said to them, "You brought me this Man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining Him before you, behold, I did not find this Man guilty of any of your charges against Him. Neither did Herod, for he sent Him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by Him. I will therefore punish and release Him." (ESV)

This is Your Word, heavenly Father; sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth. Amen. (John 17:17)

St. Luke is the only Evangelist to record this account.

For the other Evangelists it made no difference to the outcome.

Unlike his father, Herod the Great, who slaughtered the baby boys of Bethlehem to be rid of Jesus,

Herod Antipas was not concerned in the least of any threat from Jesus or his followers.

And so Herod's inquisition didn't change the course of Jesus' path to His exodus at all.

But that isn't to say that nothing happened.

Pilate was eager to send Jesus over to Herod Antipas, though previous to this, they were at **enmity**.

Perhaps Herod had more knowledge and information on this itinerant Galilean rabbi.

... and, hopefully, (fingers crossed) Herod would make the judgment call... so Pilate wouldn't have to.

And there was probably good foundation for that hope, after all,

Herod had already beheaded John the Baptist a few years earlier... because of a foolish vow.

...

And Herod was initially excited to receive Jesus;

Whereas earlier in the gospels, it's reported that Herod had, perhaps, guiltily/superstitiously thought that Jesus was St. John back from the dead,

it seems that his guilt has worn off and he was just thinking of Jesus as some magician, an entertainer.

St. Luke tells us that Herod **was hoping to see some sign done by** [Jesus].

But, as already indicated, Jesus didn't cooperate with Herod's desires.
In the face of Herod's interrogation, Jesus remained silent. He said nothing.
He wasn't a jester to please the whims of the court,
nor was He seeking to be released by courting Herod's favor.
How foolish that must have seemed to Herod.
Here was Jesus' chance to get release, for a simple trick.

But the powers given to the Son of Man were not for His own benefit nor for entertainment
(even when tempted by the devil to make bread for Himself in the wilderness, He wouldn't).
His powers were given to glorify His Father by acts of love and mercy and as a sign of Jesus' divinity.

...
But Herod isn't the only one that wants to see Jesus for his own benefit.

The world thinks it wants to see signs like this, too.

"Seeing is believing" they say.... But that isn't true.

There were lots of Jesus' opponents that saw Him perform miracles, but they still refused to believe.
But are we so different?

Aren't we sometimes tempted, like Herod and the world, to expect God to perform a sign for us.

When we selfishly want Him to do a certain or specific thing, so that we can be sure He's God?

Or when we get upset or frustrated that He doesn't answer our prayers as we want them answered,
as if He were supposed to bow to our whims and fancies?

We get mad at Him when a loved one dies.

Lord, if you were loving, you would have kept so-and-so alive.

But, like with Herod, Jesus isn't swayed by our sinful desires, and He bears with us in our weakness.

The Lord knows what is truly good for us and He acts in the most merciful way.

With Herod, He did just this.

He kept silent, like a **Lamb before the shearers, so He opened not His mouth.** Isaiah 53:

Perhaps Jesus was reciting in His mind one of Solomon's proverbs:

"Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him." Proverbs 26:5

But Jesus would not make any effort to give Herod a reason to release Him.

Jesus was on the path to His exodus.

He was there to do what was truly good, the most merciful thing,

to suffer and die for those who think of the almighty God as their personal genie,

who won't believe His Word, but seek to be entertained by a trick, or be given a sign.

He was there for Herod... for his court... for the chief priests... for you.

He was there to be the Lamb who was slain so that the Father could passover you in judgment.

...
It must have seemed so strange to have a Man accused of heading a rebellion, who wasn't rebellious.

What revolutionary wouldn't desire an opportunity to publicly share his frustrations/grievances?

But Herod perceived that the Man had no fight, no fire in His belly.

How could such a weakling be a threat to his kingdom, much less to Rome's empire?

So finally, Herod was done with Him.

Contemptuously, mockingly, he sent Jesus back to Pilate arrayed in **splendid clothing**,

as if to say, "He doesn't even look the part. Here, let's help Him along in His 'rebellion'."

I am sure that Pilate was disappointed to received Jesus back from Herod.

So what was accomplished by this extra step in Jesus' judgment?

Herod is yet another witness, along with Pilate, that Jesus was not guilty of any crime/sin.

Not up in Galilee, not down in Judea or Jerusalem.

Pilate now had another opinion to validate his own, that Jesus was innocent.

And yet, Jesus is still not released.

Against all true justice, Pilate declares: **"I will therefore punish and release Him."**

Punish Him for what? Being innocent?

Who instead should be punished?

Listen carefully to Deuteronomy 19:15-19

"A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. 16 If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing, 17 then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days. 18 The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, 19 then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst."

So we have the true testimony of both Herod and Pilate: Jesus is innocent.

Yet the priests have been making vehement accusations and testifying against Him.

What should true justice do?

Maybe a better question: What did true Justice do?

He put all, even these sins, upon the Lamb of God... and punished Him... and crucified Him.

And sent Him to His atoning exodus

so that He would purge the evil from our midst...

so that He would perform the greatest sign and miracle:

His own resurrection from the dead 3 days later,

to do the most merciful thing God could ever do: declare your sins forgiven.

Thanks be to God, that He is not the God or genie that we want, but the God that we need.

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Soli Deo Gloria