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10 Following the Messiah Episode 9 (19:02-31:45) The Final Day: Roman Trials

Opening:

1. You have viewed the video "Following the Messiah Episode 9" at www.appianmedia.org and have worked through the study guide Lesson Ten available by request at wtg2@hughes.net
2. In the previous lesson we studied about the Jewish trials before Annas, Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. The charge was blasphemy. Jesus had confessed that He was the Christ, the Son of God and that He would be exalted to the right hand of God. As far as the Jews were concerned this was good reason to execute Him. But they did not have the power to condemn to death. For this they had to go to the Roman authorities. Thus, Jesus will be tried before Pilate (twice) and before Herod Antipas.

Into the Text:

1. Our study begins in Lk. 23:1-5. Note their accusation before Pilate. "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ a king." First, Jesus had not forbidden giving tribute to Caesar. You may recall that He said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:15-22). Their charges are designed to present Jesus as one opposed to the Roman authorities. They are implying that Jesus is an insurrectionist against the Roman government and that He has done it from Galilee to Jerusalem.

After learning that Jesus was a Galilean and therefore came under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas Pilate sent Him to Herod. Herod was in Jerusalem at the time.

2. Lk. 23:8-12 describes what happened there. Herod seems to have been interested in perhaps seeing a miracle. He attempted to question Jesus but his questions went unanswered. The chief priests and the scribes accused Jesus vehemently and Herod and his soldiers treated Jesus with contempt and sent Him back to Pilate.

3. Matt. 27:11-25; Mk. 15:1-15; Lk. 23:13-25; Jn. 18:28-40 give additional information about Pilate's on-going investigation.

The Jews had accused Jesus of being a king. Pilate asked, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus had answered in the affirmative. He said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm"

(Jn. 18:36). Pilate knew that it was because of envy they had delivered Him up (Matt. 27:18). Pilate said, "You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him. Nor has Herod for he sent Him back to us and behold, nothing deserving of death has been done by Him" (Lk. 23:14-15). Thus, Pilate finds him "not guilty."

His dilemma is evident in John's account. Jesus had been brought into the Praetorium where Pilate was. John records that Pilate went out to the Jews because they did not want to be defiled and not be able to eat the Passover. At this time they declared their intention that Jesus should be put to death and openly declare that this is the reason that they had brought Him before Pilate. Pilate entered again into the Praetorium and talked to Jesus. "Are you the King of the Jews?" He goes out again to the Jews and reports finding no fault in Jesus. He scourges Him and presents Him to the Jews and they cry out, "Crucify Him!" He says they should take Him themselves and crucify Him and emphasizes again that He finds no guilt in Him. Pilate entered back into the Praetorium and talks to Jesus. Again he tried to release Him, coming out to the judgment seat (The Pavement/Gabbatha) but the Jews would have no part of releasing Him. Crucifixion is their only answer.

While they have accused Jesus of being an insurrectionist they ask for Barabbas, a known insurrectionist and murder, to be released and Jesus to be crucified. Pilate wanted to release Jesus. He attempted to do so three times. They said, "Crucify Him!" Pilate asked, "Why, what evil has this man done? I have found no guilt demanding death." Pilate's wife had warned him, "Have nothing to do with this righteous man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him" (Matt. 27:19). But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd, a riot was starting and so Pilate took water and washed his hands saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood." They said, "His blood be on us and our children" (Matt. 27:24-25).

Barabbas was released and Jesus was delivered over to be crucified.

Applications:

1. In what ways is Jesus "on trial" today? Are people investigating Him to make a determination about whether He is the Son of God? A King? What does it mean to accept Him as the Son of God and King? How does one go about doing that?
2. Had you been Pilate how would you have responded to the Jewish leaders and their pressure to get you to execute an innocent man?
3. If you were Pilate's wife and had had a dream about Jesus how would you have pursued this with your husband? How insistent would you have been?

4. Herod wanted to see a miracle. If Jesus had performed a miracle what do you suppose Herod's response would have been? Would he have become a believer? Would he have asked to see another miracle?
5. If you were one of the soldiers and others began to treat the innocent Jesus with contempt and mock Him what would you have done? Defended Him? Mocked Him? Done nothing?
6. How does what Jesus did illustrate that He entrusted Himself to God who judges righteously (1 Pet. 2:21)? How do you do that?
7. 1 Pet. 2:21ff says, "You have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." What does it mean to you for Him to have done this for you? How do you follow in His steps?