

## Lent Course 2020 from Luke's Gospel

### Luke 23:1-12

#### Three Kings: Pilate, Herod, Jesus

Pilate was a corrupt, cruel and arrogant career soldier. He was also very vulnerable. At this time he was walking a political tightrope, trying to please the Emperor and placate the Jews. He is a man at the mercy of rumour rather than fact. He is a wounded beast, and the pack are circling, waiting to bring him down. The one thing he could not afford at Passover was any trouble from the Jews.

Jesus' accusers state the charges very carefully in terms that would be most likely to get the required response from Pilate: the refusal to pay taxes and the claim to be the real ruler. You could not be a king unless you had the permission of Rome.

But Jesus did not look like a king to Pilate. He was battered, bruised, deprived of sleep and covered in spit. Pilate realised Jesus was no threat to his power. He was not a king like him.

The word "Galilee" gives him the way out. Jesus is from Galilee, so send him to the king of Galilee. Herod cuts a rather ridiculous figure. He is a puppet king, who is not even given the title king by the Romans - they called him a tetrarch. Herod had heard of Jesus, and perhaps he wanted to debate with him in the same way as he had debated with John the Baptist. But Jesus would not perform for Herod, so the interview ends in mockery and contempt, as Herod dresses Jesus up like a doll.

Jesus did not look like a king to Herod. He was no threat to his power and position.

But appearances can be deceptive. Luke has prepared us to understand that Jesus is the true king, king of a kingdom far bigger than either Pilate or Herod imagined. This has endless implications. This king will win. This king is always victorious, even when it looks as if he is losing. He could not have got much lower than standing before Herod and Pilate.

Where do we struggle to believe that Jesus is the true king, and is in control? What situations make us doubt Jesus' mighty rule? Discouragement? Illness? Unemployment?

If God does not care about us, or if he isn't kind, then why did Jesus endure all of that? We all need a good king. Jesus is the king. He's our king.