

Case of Contradiction

Luke 23:13-25

- I. People of Contradiction – v. 13-16
 - a. Chief Priest, Rulers and People
 - i. Chief Priest- ruling high priests, those who had been deposed, and adult male members of the most prominent priestly families
 - 1. The uses of συγκαλεσάμενος, “called together,” τοὺς ἄρχοντας, “the rulers,” and τὸν λαόν, “the People,” suggest that this verse is largely Lukan, but the pericope in any form would have needed to reintroduce the protagonists. This is the first time Luke has used “rulers” in connection with those in authority in Jerusalem.
 - 2. The reference to “the chief priests and the rulers” is an umbrella expression for the Sanhedrin, including scribes, elders, and temple guard (v. 13, so 19:47; 24:20; Acts 3:17; 4:5–8; 13:27–29). We know, however, from vv. 4–5, 13 that the influence of the Sanhedrin was also at work on the people.
 - ii. Rulers - **one who has administrative authority, leader, official of the Sanhedrin**
 - 1. Senior official in the synagogue of NT times. It is generally understood that there was only one such official in any one synagogue.
 - iii. People- Pilate in taking the matter in hand again summons not only the hierarchy, whose bitterness against Jesus he knew, but the populace, whom he hoped to find more kindly disposed, and able to influence their rulers.
 - 1. In many ways the passion account’s real turning point occurs here. Until this point, the common people have been strongly supportive of Jesus. On a few occasions the leadership had found it prudent not to carry out its threats against Jesus because of the people (20:19; 22:2). But now the people react against Jesus, stopping Pilate’s attempt to release him.
 - 2. They are not mentioned here and in 23:4 simply serve as witnesses to Pilate’s statement concerning Jesus’ innocence, for together with the chief priests and rulers they cried out against Jesus. Thus here Luke pointed out the people’s culpability. Perhaps Luke’s loyalty to the tradition caused him to refer to the people’s involvement in the trial.
 - b. Not Guilty
 - i. Incites Rebellion

1. Incites- ***mislead*** ἄ. τὸν λαόν *mislead the people, cause them to revolt*
 2. Rebellion (to what)
 - a. *down*); turning different ways; while ἀποστρέφοντα emphasizes the turning *away* (ἀπό) of the people from their civil and religious allegiance. So., *turning away*.
 - b. the basic element in the charge, that of causing a public disturbance and possible revolt, is repeated. But public examination has shown the emptiness of the charges
 - ii. Examined - **to conduct a judicial hearing, hear a case, question**
 1. The reference to “examined” (Gk. anakrinein) again reflects the vocabulary of juris prudence (Acts 4:9; 12:19; 24:8; 25:26; 28:18). Pilate introduces corroborating testimony of Antipas that Jesus “has done nothing to deserve death” (v. 15).
 2. No Guilt- emptiness or nothing
 - iii. Punish Him
 1. Having established that Jesus is innocent, Pilate proposes to let him go, but at the same time to appease the Jews and to punish Jesus for his nuisance-value by submitting him to a scourging (παιδεύω; similarly in 23:22; elsewhere, ‘to bring up, educate’, Acts 7:22; 22:3; ‘to chasten’, 1 Cor. 11:32; *et al.* For the usage here cf. 1 Ki. 12:11, 14; 2 Ch. 10:11, 14; it arises from the fact that the education of children was understood to include whipping as well as instruction,
 2. This meaning underlies even the use of the word by Pilate, who was not likely to be nice in his choice of words. Instead of *punishing* him with death, he will *chastise* him, in order to teach him better., *I shall deliver him amended*.
- II. Criminal Contradiction- v.17-21
- a. Released
 - i. Cried Out
 1. They go on pressing (ἐπίκειμαι; cf. 5:1) their demand at the top of their voices (4:33) that Jesus be crucified, and their cries win the day.
 - ii. The request for his release is no doubt to be understood in the light of Mark’s explanation (Mk. 15:6; cf. Mt. 27:15; Jn. 18:39) that it was customary for a prisoner to be given an amnesty at the feast of the Passover.
 - b. Release Barabbas v.18-19
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- i. There is a tragic irony here. Jesus came offering peace (Luke 2:14; 19:41–44) but was rejected in favor of a revolutionary who promoted murder.
 - ii. Jesus’ opponents preferred the release of a revolutionary and a murderer rather than the one who “went around doing good and healing” (Acts 10:38). Luke perhaps suggested that Israel, by rejecting “what would bring ... peace” (Luke 19:41), chose instead the path that would lead to Jerusalem’s destruction.
 - iii. They would rather be with a well-known sinner than with the One who could forgive their sins. (This was a man who had been imprisoned in connection with a certain riot that had occurred in the city, and a murder.)
 - c. Kept Calling Out v. 20-21
 - i. Pilate wanted to release Jesus
 - ii. Kept Calling Out The verb tense (a durative imperfect) reveals the continued, unending nature of their cry. Compare 23:18, 23.
 - iii. Crucify-
 - 1. Crucifixion was a particularly Roman form of execution that was notorious for the affliction of both pain and shame (see at v. 33).
 - 2. In calling for Jesus’ crucifixion, the crowd designates him as an enemy of both Gentiles and Jews. In his passion predictions Jesus foretold his death at the hands of Jews (9:22), humanity (9:44), and Gentiles (18:32). All three of these now join in chorus for his crucifixion. “With loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified.
- III. Blind Contradiction v.23-25
- a. What Evil
 - i. I have found no guilt demanding death
 - 1. Well, perhaps He may be guilty of something: but He is not guilty of a capital offence.” He began by saying that Herod had not found Him worthy of death.
 - 2. Jesus was innocent of all charges and wrongly put to death. Furthermore he was declared innocent by the leading Roman authorities (Pilate and Herod Antipas).
 - ii. I will release him
 - b. Luke now spells out what is involved in “their voices prevailed.”
 - i. It is, therefore, the will of the Jews, not of Pilate, which leads to the sentence. They go on pressing (ἐπίκειμαι; cf. 5:1) their demand at the top of their voices (4:33) that Jesus be crucified, and their cries win the day.
 - c. Delivered to their Will
 - i. so that it is made clear that it is by their will, not Pilate’s, that Jesus is crucified.