

That You May Know The Certainty

LESSON 24: JESUS'S DEATH, PART 2 (LUKE 23:13-49)

Jesus had been betrayed and arrested. His apostles fled and Peter denied Jesus. Jesus stood before the Sanhedrin and was condemned to death. However, the Roman governor Pilate found Jesus innocent (Luke 23:4). After appearing before Herod, Jesus returned to Pilate (Luke 23:10).

JESUS IS SENTENCED TO CRUCIFIXION (LUKE 23:13-25)

23:13-16. Pilate called the Jewish leaders and people together. He announced he had examined Jesus on the charge of misleading the people. However, he had not found anything to charge Him with. Furthermore, he said Herod had reached the same conclusion, as Jesus was sent back to him. Therefore, Pilate concluded Jesus was not worthy of death! Still, apparently to satisfy the Jews, Pilate offered a compromise to have Jesus disciplined by flogging (a terrible beating with a whip that would tear the flesh) and then released.

23:17-25. Some Greek manuscripts include a reference in verse 17 to the Roman custom to release a Jewish prisoner during the festival (John 18:39). Pilate offered a choice between Jesus and a revolutionary murderer named Barabbas, knowing they handed Jesus over due to envy (Matthew 27:15-18; Mark 15:6-10). The chief priests and elders, though, persuaded the crowds (Matthew 27:20) so they all cried out to release Barabbas and take Jesus away. Still wanting Jesus to be released, Pilate addressed them again, asking what they wanted done with Jesus (Matthew 27:22-23; Mark 15:12-13). The crowds kept shouting for Jesus to be crucified (Matthew 27:24; Mark 15:14). This was a terrible form of death that involved being hung alive on a wooden cross, held by nails through the feet and hands (Luke 24:40; John 20:25). Pilate then appealed to them a third time concerning Jesus's innocence, asking what evil He had done and indicating he found no grounds for the death penalty. Again, he offered to have Jesus whipped/flogged and then released (note Pilate did have Jesus flogged at some point, John 19:1-5; Matthew 27:26-31). The crowd continued their pressure, however, and demanded Jesus be crucified – and Pilate granted their demand to release Barabbas and crucify Jesus, to satisfy the people and prevent a riot (Matthew 27:24-26).

JESUS IS LED TO HIS CRUCIFIXION SITE (LUKE 23:26-31)

23:26-31. Jesus was led away as one condemned to death outside the city (Leviticus 24:14; Numbers 15:35-36; John 19:20; Hebrews 13:12-13), carrying His own cross (John 19:17). Somewhere along the way, the Romans forced a man named Simon (from Cyrene) to carry Jesus's cross (presumably because Jesus could no longer carry it). A large crowd followed (including women) who were mourning for Jesus (their exact identification and motivation are not disclosed). Jesus turned to these women (calling them "Daughters of Jerusalem") and said they should not weep for Him but for themselves and their children because of the devastation that would come on them (likely the destruction coming on Jerusalem in 70 A.D., Luke 19:41-44; 21:5-33), indicating the women who were childless would be blessed. The people of those days would wish for their deaths, pictured as calling for the mountains and hills to fall on and cover them (Hosea 10:7-9). For, if these women were witnessing the punishment brought on a righteous Man (symbolic of green wood not easily burnt), certainly the destruction would be even greater on the wicked (Jerusalem, symbolic of dry wood quickly burnt)!

JESUS IS CRUCIFIED BETWEEN TWO CRIMINALS (LUKE 23:32-43)

23:32-38. There were also two criminals led away to be executed with Jesus (Matthew 27:38, 44; Mark 15:27), numbering Jesus among the transgressors/rebels (Isaiah 53:12; Luke 22:37). They arrived at the place called "The Skull" (Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:22; John 19:18; "Kranion" in Greek, "Golgotha" in Aramaic, "Calvary" in Latin). It is commonly believed the name is derived from a hill that looked like a skull. There, Jesus was crucified between the two thieves (Matthew 27:32-56; Mark 15:22-41; John 19:17-37). Jesus demonstrated His mercy by asking the Father to forgive those who were involved in His death, saying they did not understand what they were doing (1 Corinthians 2:6-8; though there were conditions on granting this forgiveness, Acts 2:1-41; 3:13-20). The soldiers divided Jesus's clothing and cast lots for His tunic to see who would get it (John 19:23-24; Psalm 22:18). A crowd had gathered to witness the crucifixion (Luke 23:48). The people, the Jewish leaders, the criminals, and the soldiers all mocked Jesus (Matthew 27:41-44; Mark 15:29-32). He was mocked that He saved others but could not now save Himself, including contempt toward His claim to be God's Messiah, the Chosen One to save Israel (Psalm 22:6-8). The soldiers offered Him

sour wine (Psalm 69:21) and mocked Him by saying that if He is the King of the Jews, He should save Himself! The inscription (accusation) above Jesus identified Him as Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews (John 19:19-22).

23:39-43. Although both criminals seem to have mocked Jesus (Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:32), Luke records that only one criminal was now doing such. He was hurling insults at Jesus, mocking that if He was the Messiah, He should save Himself and them. However, one of the two criminals rebuked the other for not fearing God, seeing the punishment they were enduring and the fate they were about to meet for the crimes they had committed. Yet, He knew that Jesus was innocent and did not deserve punishment. Then, he asked Jesus to remember Him upon coming into His kingdom (recognizing Jesus as Lord and as coming into a kingdom). Jesus (who had the power on earth to forgive sins, Luke 5:24) told this man that he would be with Jesus that day in Paradise (in Hades, Acts 2:27, 31; Luke 16:19-26).

JESUS DIES (LUKE 23:44-49)

23:44-49. It was now about noon (the sixth hour, according to Jewish time), indicating Jesus had been on the cross about three hours already (Mark 15:25). The sun stopped shining on the earth so that darkness filled the land for three hours (perhaps symbolic of the spiritual darkness of sin). The curtain of the sanctuary (likely in front of the most holy place inside the temple, 2 Chronicles 3:14) was torn from top to bottom (symbolic of how Jesus removed all barriers and granted access to God through Him, Hebrews 9:18-26; 10:8-13, 19-22). Jesus called out to His Father, entrusting (committing, surrendering) His Spirit into His Father's hands (Psalm 31:5), and then breathed His last. After Jesus's death, the Roman centurion (commander of 100 soldiers, likely overseeing Jesus's death) began glorifying God, concluding Jesus was a righteous Man and the Son of God (Matthew 27:54; Mark 15:39). The crowd who gathered to watch struck their chests (likely due to being disturbed and/or grieved). Those who knew Him (including women from Galilee, Matthew 27:55-56; Mark 15:40-41) stood at a distance and watched.

CONCLUSION

It is finished (John 19:30)! The Lamb of God sent into the world to provide the perfect sacrifice to take away sins had now been offered (John 1:29). God's love for humankind had been demonstrated in the greatest possible way as Jesus had died for the ungodly (Romans 5:6-11)!

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

What conclusion did Pilate reach concerning Jesus?

What option did Pilate give the crowd?

What did the Jewish crowd choose to do with Jesus?

How did Jesus reach the site of His crucifixion?

Why did Jesus say the mourning women should weep for themselves rather than Him?

What did Jesus experience while He was on the cross?

How did one thief demonstrate repentance and belief?

What happened when Jesus died?

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Written by Eric Krieg

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