



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. Luke

Chapter 23

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Introduction

Chapter Outline

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Jesus' Trial Before Pilate 23:1-5

- The Sanhedrin had now formally condemned Jesus to death
- They were, however, prohibited by the Roman regulations from carrying out their judgment
- A capital sentence in Judaea could only be inflicted as the result of a decision by the Roman court
- The Sanhedrin condemnation to death was, from the Jewish standpoint, illegal
- In capital cases judgment could not be legally pronounced on the day of trial
- But in the case of Jesus, the Accused was condemned without the legal interval which should have been left between the trial and the sentence



Jesus' Trial Before Pilate 23:1-5

- Secular history shows that *Pilate* was a cruel, heartless man, completely insensitive to the moral feelings of others
- Surely, they thought, *Pilate* will put Jesus to death
- Knowing that the accusation of blasphemy before the religious council would not be of concern to Pilate; the religious brought three false accusations
- *perverting the nation*, The first accusation is that Jesus was a revolutionary
- *forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar*, The second is that Jesus encouraged the people not to pay their taxes
- *He Himself is Christ, a King*, The third is that Jesus claimed to be a king in opposition to Caesar



Jesus' Trial Before Pilate 23:1-5

- St. Luke narrates the trial very briefly
- The Jewish priests had expected that on their authority Pilate would at once order Him to execution
- But, on the contrary, he meant first to hear the case, and asked them what accusation they brought, refusing to accept their bare assertion that He was “a revolutionary”
- Pilate only attends to the third charge, and asks Christ this question on the Roman principle that it was always desirable to secure the confession of the accused
- *It is as you say*, It is not a denial but neither it is an acknowledgement



Jesus' Trial Before Pilate 23:1-5

- Jesus gave Pilate the same simple reply He gave to the high priest (Matthew 26:64)
- Though Pilate was a cruel, ruthless man he was not foolish
- He could see through the motives of the religious leaders and had no problem in assessing Jesus and the whole situation by the declaration, *I find no fault in this Man*
- He only saw this beaten and bloodied Man before him
- In addition, he could not find any evidence to support the charge of treason against the Roman Empire
- Jesus didn't look especially royal as He stood before Pilate



Jesus' Trial Before Pilate 23:1-5

- In response, the religious leaders became *more fierce*, and emphasized their accusation that Jesus was a leader of an uprising, *He stirs up the people* not only here in the city, but in the northern districts of Galilee
- This was a crime that any Roman governor would be concerned with
- They saw that there was a prospect of losing their cause, and they attempted to press on Pilate the point that would be most likely now to affect him



Jesus' Trial Before Pilate 23:1-5

- *from Galilee*, While they are exaggerating the matter, they give Pilate a chance of escape
- St. Cyril the Great says, "They led Jesus to Pilate. They, too, were given up to the Roman soldiers who have occupied their minds, their land and have invaded their city, where the holy and revered places were, and the inhabitants were killed by the sword and by fire."



Jesus Faces Herod 23:6-12

- In the provinces over which the Roman state ruled directly, only the Romans had the power over life and death
- Pilate remained perplexed and unwilling to stand behind his verdict that Jesus was not guilty
- So he sent Jesus to Herod, because Jesus was from Galilee, the area where Herod ruled
- The incident that follows is peculiar to St. Luke
- Pilate feared that these Jews should make his compassion towards Jesus a ground of accusation against him at Rome
- He had enemies



Jesus Faces Herod 23:6-12

- So, moved by his cowardly fears, he refrained from releasing Jesus in accordance with what his heart told him was just and right
- And yet he could not bring himself to condemn One to whom he was drawn by an unknown feeling of reverence and respect
- Pilate was glad to seize the opportunity, when he heard the name of Galilee to sent Jesus to Herod



Jesus Faces Herod 23:6-12

- He thought he would shift the responsibility of acquitting or condemning, on to the shoulders of Herod
- And also to show Herod what a regard he had to his authority
- If Pilate and Herod were both staying in the palace, which most Bible scholars assume, Jesus was passed between the courts of the two rulers fairly quickly
- How did Herod Antipas happen to be in Jerusalem?
- He professed to be a Jew and therefore he was there to attend the Passover meal and the required Temple services for the week of Unleavened Bread



Jesus Faces Herod 23:6-12

- This was Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great
- For though Jesus had been brought up in Galilee, and had so frequently preached, and wrought miracles there, Herod had never seen Him before
- He had countless opportunities to hear Jesus again and again – Jesus did not speak in secret meetings in hidden places
- He had surely heard much about Jesus, but his only interest was a desire to be amused and entertained
- Herod gave his attention to Jesus and was even *exceedingly glad* to see Him



Jesus Faces Herod 23:6-12

- He wanted to hear from Jesus and wanted to see Jesus do a *miracle*
- Yet for all this, Herod's interest in Jesus was not sincere and was to His condemnation, not His praise
- Jesus would not give him one word in return to his many words, nor work any miracle in his presence
- A murderer of the Prophets and who had no higher motive than mean curiosity, deserved no answer
- In His judgment, whether it be with the chief priest or Pilate or Herod, the Lord kept silent, so the words be fulfilled, "*He was led as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.*" (Isaiah 53:7)



Jesus Faces Herod 23:6-12

- *the chief priests and scribes*, The accusers seem to have accompanied Jesus
- Violently or unjustly accused Him, trying to make it appear that He had been guilty of the same things they had accused Him before Pilate
- Even when others *vehemently accused Him*, Jesus had nothing to say to Herod
- *with his men of war*, With his soldiers, or his body-guard
- Herod does not enter into the charges, foolishly enough he thinks that justice will be done, not by means of investigation and punishment, but by *contempt and mockery*



Jesus Faces Herod 23:6-12

- *a gorgeous robe*, A white or shining robe, for this is the meaning of the original text
- It probably means a white robe, for it was the custom of the Jewish nobility to wear such
- In such a robe, Herod, by way of mockery, *arrayed Him*
- But, the nobility among the Romans wearing purple for the most part, Pilate's soldiers, who were Romans, put on Jesus a purple robe, Mark 15:17; John 19:2
- Both of them following the custom of their own country, when, by way of mocking our Lord as a king, they clothed Him in robes of state



Jesus Faces Herod 23:6-12

- Had Jesus in any way been guilty of *perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.*”it would have been Herod’s duty, and still more his interest, to punish Him
- *sent Him back to Pilate*, Could not convict Him, not knowing what to make of Him, or the charge against Him, and he might be unwilling to have any hand in His death, not having forgotten the case of John the Baptist; and therefore sends Him to Pilate, to do as he thought fit with Him



Jesus Faces Herod 23:6-12

- His dismissal of the case was a deliberate acknowledgment of His innocence
- It would seem that Pilate sent Jesus to Herod as a token of respect, and with a design, perhaps, of putting an end to their disagreement
- Herod returned the respect, and it resulted in their reconciliation
- The special cause of enmity is not known

Taking the Place of Barabbas

23:13-25



- After Herod had sent back Christ unto Pilate, he then gathered the chief priests, to consider what should be done to Him
- Pilate clearly declared Jesus innocent of any crime
- This was the result of his careful examination of both Jesus and the evidence brought against Him
- Now was the golden opportunity which Pilate should have seized in order to do what he knew to be right
- And he was really anxious to do it because the meekness of the Lord had made a deep impression upon him
- In addition, he was warned by his wife's dream

Taking the Place of Barabbas

23:13-25



- *neither did Herod*, Who was a Jew, and understood the nature of such charges, and the amount of them
- He had also examined Jesus in their presence, and had heard all that they had to accuse Him with, and yet found no fault in Him of any such kind, as to condemn Him to death for it
- Pilate was hesitant between two opinions, convinced of the innocence of the Accused, yet afraid to oppose the people
- So, he suggested a punishment for Jesus that was not a light one
- The Roman custom of scourging was a brutal whipping

Taking the Place of Barabbas

23:13-25



- The strikes came from a whip with many leather strings, each having sharp pieces of bone or metal at the ends
- It cut and slashed the back to raw flesh, and it was not unusual for a criminal to die from a scourging, even before crucifixion
- He thought that it would be enough that they see Him treated as guilty
- And this was the point at which Pilate began to yield to the fatal indecisiveness which soon passed into guilt and made it afterwards impossible for him to escape
- An innocent man does not deserve even a light punishment, much less the severe one suggested by the words, *I will therefore chastise Him*

Taking the Place of Barabbas

23:13-25



- Pilate believed he had a way for Jesus to escape death
- He planned to release Him according to the custom of releasing a prisoner every Passover season
- He was under the necessity of releasing one criminal at this feast
- The custom had now been so completely established that Pilate was obliged to attend to it
- Pilate perhaps thought that the people will love and sympathize with him if he let Jesus go, even though the Jewish leaders do not want Jesus to go free

Taking the Place of Barabbas

23:13-25



- The crowd, whom Pilate was convinced would release Jesus, instead condemned Him
- The chief priests, rulers, and people immediately enraged at the proposal, in a most clamorous way, and cried out as one man, not bearing to hear of His release after they had got Him in their hands
- Thus they demanded the release of a notorious criminal, who had really been guilty of the crime while they had falsely accused Jesus

Taking the Place of Barabbas

23:13-25



- *Barabbas* had made an uprising with some partners; and had also committed murder in the uprising, a crime which they could not dare to charge Christ with
- The people begged life for such a criminal, preferring him to the Son of God, who had always made it His whole concern and care to do them good
- *Away with this Man*, That is, Put Him to death, literally, take this one away to punishment - to death

Taking the Place of Barabbas

23:13-25



- Being more and more convinced of His innocence; and still seeing more clearly into the wickedness, malice, and envy of His accusers; and having received a message from his wife, Pilate tried with them again
- *they shouted, saying,* The word implies a continuous cry of increasing violence and intensity
- *Crucify Him, crucify Him,* They were fierce and furious, louder; the more they perceived that Pilate wanted to save Him; they were more desirous to have Him crucified
- This was a strange scene, a cruel, ruthless, merciless Roman governor trying to win the life of a miracle-working Jewish teacher against the persistent tireless efforts of both the Jewish leaders and the crowd

Taking the Place of Barabbas

23:13-25



- This was the third and final attempt, showing some measure of earnestness on Pilate's part
- It is very noteworthy that he took step after step to secure the release of Jesus
- 1. He emphatically and publicly announced His perfect innocence
- 2. He sent Him to Herod
- 3. He made an offer to release Him as they do every feast
- 4. He tried to make scourging take the place of crucifixion
- 5. He appealed to their compassion

Taking the Place of Barabbas

23:13-25



- *Why, what evil has He done?*, What capital crime has He committed? Is He guilty of murder? Or agitation? Or blasphemy? Or robbery, and theft? Or any other enormous crime?
- *I have found no reason for death in Him*, Why He should be put to death at all; and much less to this shameful and painful death of the cross, which was the punishment of slaves, and of most evil men?
- *I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go*, This he said, not as if he was determined to do it, whether they liked it, or not; but as signifying what he chose, and hoped they would be contented with, that He should be scourged, or beaten, and dismissed, as he at first proposed

Taking the Place of Barabbas

23:13-25



- Pilate declares Jesus innocent, and has a mind to release Him; yet, to please the people, he would punish Him as an evil-doer
- If no fault be found in Him, why *chastise* Him?
- They were overpowering insisting upon His crucifixion, and pressed hard for it
- *the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed.*, Upon Pilate to grant their request, contrary to the dictates of his own conscience, the conduct of Herod, and the message of his wife
- The people being set on by the chief priests, and the chief priests joining with them, their numbers were so great, and their requests were pressed with so much force, violence, and persistence, that Pilate could not endure them

Taking the Place of Barabbas

23:13-25



- It was a Roman officials' duty to keep order in the Provinces and bring in the taxes that kept the empire alive
- When the Jews threaten a riot, as an act of self-preservation, Pilate submits to the verdict of the crowd
- He did not find the courage to oppose both the religious leaders and the crowd
- Pilate's selfish fears for himself overpowered all sense of justice
- There was no further discussion
- Barabbas was released, and Jesus was delivered up to the will of His enemies

Taking the Place of Barabbas

23:13-25



- The crowd rejected Jesus and embraced Barabbas who was a terrorist and a murderer
- These cruel and unlawful shouts have been rebuked by the Lord in Isaiah the prophet, *“For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah, are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry for help”* (Isaiah 5:7)



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- *they led Him away*, After He had been brutally scourged and mocked, as is recorded, Matthew 27:26-31, and Mark 15:15-20
- Those condemned to crucifixion were usually tied to a wooden crossbeam and were forced to carry it to the site of execution
- *Cyrenian*, There was a large colony of Jews in the powerful African city of Cyrene, and the Cyrenians had a synagogue at Jerusalem (Acts 2:10, 6:9, 11:20)
- Simon may have come to keep the feast
- It is possible that he was a Jewish pilgrim



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- But St. Ephraim (306-363/73) wrote that Simon was a Gentile and thought it ironic that he should bear the burden of the Cross behind Jesus like a disciple
- The Gentiles would indeed carry their witness of the Cross to the "ends of the earth" in professing Christ
- St. Mark calls him "*the father of Alexander and Rufus*"
- Perhaps Jesus had become too weak from His scourging to carry His crossbeam the entire distance
- The Roman soldiers impressed Simon into service and *on him they laid the cross*



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- This seems to be specially implied by Mark 15:21
- It is not certain whether they made Simon carry the entire cross or merely part of the burden
- *a great multitude of the people followed Him*, Though many reproached and reviled Him, yet some sympathized with Him
- *women who also mourned and lamented Him*, Including many women who were probably the women disciples from the Galilee who will be named as witnesses to the crucifixion
- Here, again, we come across a characteristic incident peculiar to St. Luke, and obviously derived from the devout women to whom we have traced so many facts which he alone records



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- The only recorded words between His condemnation and crucifixion
- Jesus, who ever felt the woes of others more than He did His own, forgetting His distress at the very time that it lay heaviest upon Him, turned *to them* and with a benevolence, compassion, and tenderness addressed them
- *do not weep for Me*, Signifying, that they need not be under any concern on His account, for He was very willing to die
- He desired nothing more
- This was that He came into the world for
- Nor was He afraid to die



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- He went to the cross with the greatest courage
- Besides, His suffering, though He knew it would be very great and painful, yet that it would be soon over
- *Daughters of Jerusalem*, Many of the fathers think the words here are addressed to the Jewish nation, for He called them, 'daughters of Jerusalem'
- He declared to the Jews that it is appropriate for them that they rather weep over what would befall Jerusalem
- Jesus tells the women of Jerusalem to weep for themselves and their children, pointing to the Day of Judgment which will fall upon Jerusalem in 70 AD



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- Biblical scholars who insisted that Jerusalem and the Temple were already destroyed by the time Luke wrote his Gospel because Luke's account of Jesus' prophecies are so accurate, are denying the power of predictive prophecy
- If the events had already taken place, surely the Gospel writers would have included that Jesus' prophecies had been fulfilled, as they included that Old Testament prophecies had been fulfilled in the Advent of Christ
- *Blessed are the barren*, Normally, Jewish custom did just the opposite, praised motherhood and stigmatized the barren



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- But the days of the fall of Jerusalem would be so severe that women would far prefer not to have children
- *they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us",* Proverbial expressions, to signify their desire of any shelter or refuge
- It is an image of great calamities and judgments where they will seek to go into the holes of the rocks, and caves of the earth, as is prophesied of them, Isaiah 2:19 and as Josephus says, many of them did, when the city was taken
- Once again Jesus quotes from the book of the prophet Hosea; this time He quotes from Hosea 10:8 using the expression of agony and despair that Hosea said the hopeless people of Israel will cry out at their hour of judgment



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- Actually, hundreds of the Jews at the end of the siege hid themselves in caves, and more than 2000 were killed by being buried under the ruins of these hiding-places
- The same figure is used respecting the wicked in the day of judgment in Revelation 6:16-17
- *if they do these things in the green wood*, The expression is known; and was in frequent use among the Jews
- They compared a good man to a green tree which is hard to burn and a bad man to a dead and dry one which can burn easily



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- It is as if our Lord had said, If a righteous person suffer thus, what will become of the wicked?
- If they can put Jesus to death, being who He is, what will happen to Jerusalem when its day of judgment comes?
- So here we see Jesus going to His death, but still desiring to show grace and love and so He stopped to deliver a warning cry to all who have ears to hear



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- For more humiliation they crucified Him between two thieves, one on the right, the other on the left, and thus the words of Isaiah the prophet have been fulfilled, *“He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors”* (Isaiah 53:12)
- He was in the midst of two thieves, as if He had been the greatest criminal of the three
- Many commentators suppose that these, were companions of that Barabbas the robber who had just been released
- *Calvary* means, “place of a skull,” and it was the place where criminals were crucified



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- It is in the tradition that Adam was buried in this place where Christ was crucified, and that his skull lay here
- Crucifixion was a form of torture and capital punishment that was designed to produce a slow death with maximum pain and suffering
- Beyond the extreme pain, the major effect of crucifixion was to restrict normal breathing
- The weight of the body, pulling down on the arms and shoulders, tended to fix the respiratory muscles in an inhalation state and hinder exhalation
- The lack of adequate respiration resulted in severe muscle cramps, which further hindered breathing



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- *Father, forgive them*, Again, the silence is broken, not by the cry of anguish or sigh of passionate complaint, but by words of pity and intercession
- It was in accordance with His own teaching (Matthew 5:44), and His children have learned it from Him (Acts 7:59-60)
- They were the first of the seven words from the Cross, of which three (Luke 23:34,43,46) are recorded by St Luke only, and three (John 19:27-28,30) by St John only
- *they do not know what they do*, In this, Jesus recognized the blindness of His enemies in His prayer
- Every cross was guarded by a guard of four soldiers



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- The coat, for which they cast lots, was, St. John tells us, without seam
- Jesus' seamless tunic was theologically symbolic of the seamless tunics only worn by the priests serving God in the Temple
- As such, the garment is a symbol of Jesus' high priesthood
- St. John Chrysostom thinks that the detail is added to show *"the poorness of the Lord's garments, and that in dress, as in all other things, he followed a simple fashion."*
- *the rulers*, St. Luke uses the generic term for the members of the Sanhedrin, whom St. Matthew 27:41, called *chief priests, scribes, and elders*



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- *the people stood looking on*, It is cruel and upsetting sight; they were insulting and reviling Him, and wagging their heads at Him, as did also those that passed by
- They rejoice over Him as if they had conquered Him, at the time that He was conquering sin and death for them!
- *let Him save Himself*, The words were, like those of Caiaphas (John 11:50), an unconscious prophecy, in part also an admission of the work that He had done, as in the case of Lazarus, in rescuing others from the power of death
- These offensive actions by Jesus' tormentors are described in Psalms 22
- They challenge Him to save Himself from the cross, when He was saving others by the cross



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- Not even the prayer for their forgiveness had touched the hearts of the soldiers
- It was their duty to watch Him (Matthew 27:36), for sufferers sometimes remained alive upon the cross for days
- They too mock in their own rough way, *offering Him sour wine*
- By the word “*mocked*” seems to be meant that they lifted up to His lips the vessels containing their ordinary drink—*sour wine*
- The other Gospels include the information that the Roman soldiers tried to give Jesus wine mixed with myrrh that was prepared to reduce the prisoner's pain (Mark 15:23)



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- St. Matthew tells us, “*He had tasted it*,” Matthew 27:34, no doubt in courteous recognition of the kindly purpose of the act, but He refused to do more than taste of it
- He would not reduce the sense of pain
- The soldiers repeated what was said before about saving Himself
- Yet it was precisely because He did *not* save Himself that He can save others
- It was a common Roman practice to post the crime for which a person was being executed and the name of the condemned man
- Pilate himself ordered the wording of the sign, much to the displeasure of the chief priests



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- Luke does not tell us when the *inscription* was written
- He only observes in general that there was a title placed over Him
- In John 19:21 we read that the religious leaders among the Jews objected to this title
- They felt it was *false*, because they did not believe that Jesus was *the King of the Jews*
- They also believed it was *demeaning*, because it showed Rome's power to humiliate and torture the "*King of the Jews*"
- Yet Pilate would not alter this, and when asked to take down the inscription he answered, *What I have written, I have written* (John 19:22)



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- All four Gospels agree that Jesus was crucified between two criminals, but St. Luke is the only Gospel writer to include the story of the repentant criminal
- One of them joined in the mockery and scorn
- He reasoned that if Jesus *were* the Messiah, He should save those who are being crucified with Him
- This man did not seek salvation truly; he asked not to be delivered from his sins; if he had, Jesus would also have heard him
- Both St. Matthew (Matthew 27:44) and St. Mark (Mark 15:32) indicate that *both* criminals mocked Jesus



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- Though at first they both mocked Jesus, in the hours spent on the cross
- However, we must suppose that one of the criminals came to see things differently, and to actually put his trust in Jesus
- *Do you not even fear God*, It is clear that he feared and reverend God and knew his sin
- He knew that God is just so he was telling the other thief that now he is about to just leave the world, and neither fears God, nor regards man, and is without compassion to a fellow sufferer, adding sin to sin



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- He admitted that they both committed crimes against the law and their sentence is just
- They are righteously punished, which shows that he had a true sense of sin
- He is a genuine repentant and gives the fullest proof he can give of it; he had sinned, and he acknowledges his sin; his acknowledgment of the justice of his sentence
- While he condemns himself, he bears testimony that Jesus was innocent
- Thus, from the mouth of one of the criminals Christ suffered with, He was declared innocent



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- *Lord, remember me*, A truly humble prayer
- He calls Him Lord whom His own Apostles had left
- He believed Jesus was who Jesus said He was
- He acknowledge Him to be the Messiah, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; the Lord of all, and his own Lord
- Jesus immediately answered him, though he said not one word to the other that condemned Him, or to the multitude that mocked Him
- He promised him more than he asked for, and sooner than he expected



The King on a Cross 23:26-43

- Jesus answered the thief, assuring him that his life after death would be *with* Jesus, and be in *Paradise*, not torment
- This thief called on Jesus with such reverent faith at the moment of His deepest humiliation!
- He remembered him but not in the distant and far away "coming," but on that very day
- He would not be remembered by Him only, but would be in closest companionship with Him
- His act of righteousness in defending Jesus, his penance in acknowledging his sins, and his profession of faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah has won him Jesus' promise of eternal salvation

Jesus Dies on the Cross

23:44-49



- This verse gives us the time of the duration of the "darkness" - from the sixth to the ninth hour; that is equivalent to 12 noon to 3 pm our time
- St. Matthew gives us additional specifics about this phenomenon
- He says that besides this darkness there was also an earthquake, and that several graves were opened, and the dead during those hours of intense gloom appeared to many in the holy city
- The remarkable darkness all over the earth showed the agony of creation itself in the Creator's suffering

Jesus Dies on the Cross

23:44-49



- Early Christian writers such as Tertullian and Origen, and Eusebius quote words from Phlegon (a Roman historian) in which he makes mention of this strange phenomenon about the time of the crucifixion
- It was evidently no slight or imaginary sign, but one that was well known in the early Christian years
- *the veil of the temple was torn*, This was the inner veil, which hung between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies
- It was very heavy, and adorned with embroidery
- It is referred to in Hebrews 6:19, 9:3, 10:19-20

Jesus Dies on the Cross

23:44-49



- That temple veil got torn from the middle, for the enmity was now erased between God and man
- Thus the Holies of Holies was opened to all those who believe
- As one of the Church Fathers says, 'the holies of holies is no longer a place not be approached'
- St. Luke here omits the *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*, Matthew 27:46-50 and the effect of that cry on the multitude
- *Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'*, A reference to Psalm 31:5

Jesus Dies on the Cross

23:44-49



- None of the Evangelists use the word “He died”
- The setting His spirit free was His own voluntary act
- He already told His disciples of His own independent power to lay down and take up His life (John 10:17-18). *“No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.”*
- Jesus gave up His life when He wanted to and how He wanted to, Ephesians 5:2; Galatians 2:20
- The Father received the Spirit of Jesus; Jesus “receives the spirits” of believers as we read in Acts 7:59 about St. Stephen

Jesus Dies on the Cross

23:44-49



- *the centurion*, He was in command of the soldiers named in 23:36
- It is remarkable that St Luke gives us several instances of 'good centurions,' Luke 7:2, 23:47; Acts 10:1, 22:26, 27:43
- *he glorified God*, By confessing that Christ was the Son of God, Matthew 27:54; Mark 15:39 and declaring Him an innocent person
- Surely, this centurion had seen many people crucified before
- Yet there was something so remarkable about Jesus that he said something about Him that he could not say about anyone else

Jesus Dies on the Cross

23:44-49



- *Certainly this was a righteous Man*, Innocent of all charges against Him, and has suffered wrongfully
- He claimed that after seeing those unusual appearances, and which he considered as a sign of divine resentment
- It is noticeable, that Christ had a testimony from many, except the scribes, and priests, and Pharisees
- Pontius Pilate and Herod declared Him innocent
- Pilate's wife acknowledged Him a righteous Man
- The thief on the cross testified He had done nothing wrong
- Judas the traitor confessed he had betrayed innocent blood

Jesus Dies on the Cross

23:44-49



- Even the multitude that were gathered around the cross, *beat their breasts and returned*
- Only those who claimed to be the teachers of others are blinded and hardened to their destruction
- As St. Ambrose of Milan said, “The centurion recognizes a stranger, but the Levite does not know his own. The Gentile worships Him, but the Hebrew denies Him. It was reasonable that the pillars of the world moved when the chief priests did not believe.”
- Verse 48 reflects how the multitude very quickly regretted their cries to crucify Him and felt so guilty

Jesus Dies on the Cross

23:44-49



- *all His acquaintances*, St. Luke apparently used this word as intermediate between the multitude and the true affirmed disciples
- *and the women*, St. Luke does not name them as St. Matthew and St. Mark do, probably because in Luke 8:2-3, he had already given the names of the most known among them
- *stood at a distance*, They were disciples, but perhaps some of them were disciples in secret did not have the courage to be so close to the cross
- There is, perhaps, in the *at a distance* a sad reference to Psalm 38:11, "*My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague, and my relatives stand afar off.*"

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

23:50-56



- Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin as one of the 70 most distinguished members of the ruling classes, a notable man of high distinction in Jerusalem, and evidently of great wealth
- *a good and just man*, One who united in his character the two great principles of morality — justice and mercy
- Although Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin which condemned Jesus, he did not join them in their unjust sentence, having either declined being present when the sentence was passed, or having opposed it
- Joseph did not serve Jesus in many ways, but he did serve Him in ways no one else did or could

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

23:50-56



- It was not possible for Peter, James, John, or even the many women who served Jesus to provide a tomb, but Joseph could and did
- Joseph was a secret disciple to the Lord Jesus and was eager to listen to the Lord
- But due to fear, he could not declare being His follower
- When the time of crucifixion came, this fear was replaced with great courage and he asked boldly for the Lord's body
- As St. Augustine says that he for fear was a secret disciple but dared to ask for our Lord's body which none of those who followed Jesus dared to do

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

23:50-56



- *waiting for the kingdom of God*, Waiting for the coming of the Messiah
- St. Ephrem the Syrian says, “He who asked for His corpse was also named Joseph. The earlier Joseph was a righteous man who did not denounce Mary publicly. The other one was also a righteous man because he did not consent to the detractors. So that it might be clear that the Lord was entrusted at the beginning to one having this name when He was born, He further allowed one with this name to prepare Him for burial when He was dead.”

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

23:50-56



- Customarily, the bodies of crucified criminals were left on their crosses to rot or be eaten by the birds
- But the Jews wanted no such horror displayed during the Passover season, and Romans were known to grant the bodies to friends or relatives for proper burial
- Joseph reverently took down the pierced and bleeding body and wrapped it tenderly and carefully in the finest linen
- *where no one had ever lain before*, So that it could not be said it was another body, and not that of Christ's, that was raised from the dead

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

23:50-56



- Tombs like this were very expensive
- It was quite a sacrifice for Joseph of Arimathea to give his tomb to Jesus
- This circumstance, serves to confirm the truth of His resurrection
- Christ was buried in haste, because the sabbath drew on
- It refers not to the coming of the sunrise, but the sunset
- Earlier Luke has explained that Jesus' company of disciples traveling with Him included women
- They followed Joseph and Nicodemus to the garden tomb
- So they know the exact place of Jesus burial

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

23:50-56



- On resurrection morning there is no mistaken location
- As the sunset was now rapidly approaching, these women must have hurried home to complete their preparations before the Sabbath began
- They did not have enough time to prepare spices and ointments for the body
- No work could be performed on the Sabbath, not even attending to the burial of a family member
- *prepared spices and fragrant oils*, For the anointing, and preserving the body of Christ which sufficiently proves that they had no hope of His resurrection the third day

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

23:50-56



- St. John indicates that Joseph and Nicodemus had brought with them about 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes
- These were inserted in the wrappings as they wrapped each limb with strips of linen (John 19:39-40)
- So, most likely the women were planning to bring spices to complete the body's preparation on Sunday morning



Discussion

- Although the Jewish council want to put Jesus to death because He claims to be the Son of God (the charge-blasphemy), what charges do they bring before Pilate? What about the accusations is false?
- Explain Pilate's responsibility in Jesus' death. What should he have done?
- What did Jesus say the women who followed Him should weep about? Why



Discussion

- What are the attitudes of the people and soldiers toward Jesus? Contrast the attitudes revealed by the requests of the two criminals. What kinds of deliverance are they seeking?
- Describe the mockery Jesus endured on the cross.
- Describe the natural and religious phenomena that accompany Jesus' death. What are the various reactions of the people to these events? What is the significance of Jesus' death?



Discussion

- Why has Joseph been a secret disciple, do you think? Why does he come forward now?
- What do the Gospels tell us about the tomb and Jesus' burial. What are these details important?