

The Gospel of Luke

Lesson 40: Luke 23:1-25

His condemnation was just, he was a rebel, robber and murderer. Under the penalty of the law, Barabbas was to be crucified among those no less guilty than himself—criminals and thieves. No one could absolve his guilt or save him from the death that awaited him, not until He stepped forward. “*I am He*” (John 18:5). Barabbas had done nothing to merit salvation and Jesus had done nothing to warrant death. Even so, Christ said, “*I lay down My life... No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself*” (John 10:15, 18). “I will accept your punishment. I will bear your iniquities” (Isaiah 53:4-11), “so that you will not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Read Luke 23:1-5.

1. Jesus would face 6 trials before His sentencing: 3 religious interrogations (John 18:13, 24, Luke 22:66) and 3 civil examinations (Luke 23:1, 7, 11).

Of what did the religious leaders accuse Jesus? (See Mathew 26:59-68.) Which of these claims were true? What does this reveal about the way and what we hear?

Read Deuteronomy 13:1-11. How did the religious leaders use this law to justify their actions? Why couldn't they carry out the penalty for breaking this law?

2. Return to Luke 23. What charges against Jesus were presented to Pilate? Why might they have chosen to accuse Jesus of these things? How could such insubordination directly affect Pilate?
3. Read the account in John 18:28-32. What was the religious leaders' intent?

4. Based on his question to Jesus in verse 3 of Luke 23, what did Pilate understand about the charges that were brought against Christ? Also read Mark 15:10.
5. Turn to Matthew 27 and read verses 1-10. What occurred after Jesus was delivered to Pontius Pilate?

Read Luke 23:6-12.

6. Why did Herod want to see Jesus? Based on Luke 3:19-20, Mark 6:14-29, Luke 9:7-9, 13:31-33, what additional reasons might he have had?
7. Did these things contribute to Jesus' silence before Herod? Why or why not? Consider His interactions with other rulers. (Also consider Isaiah 53:7 and 1 Peter 2:21-23.)
8. What occurred on account of Christ's silence? (Luke 23:11)

In Herod's presence, the first of two robes was placed upon Jesus. "[He was] arrayed in a gorgeous (*lampran*) robe" (Luke 23:11), having great beauty and resplendency, sparkling and white. It was a robe worn by Jewish royalty. *Lampran* is also used to describe the robes of angels (Revelation 15:6) and the robes worn by the bride of Christ (Revelation 19:8).

9. How were Psalm 2:1-6 and Acts 4:25-28 fulfilled in Luke 23:12?

Keep reading in Luke 23, verses 13-25.

10. Also read John 18:33-19:16. Contrast Pilate's and Herod's treatment of Jesus. What does this reveal about their hearts?

11. What was Pilate's rule regarding Jesus? Was it possible for Pilate to remain neutral regarding Jesus? Why or why not? Is it possible for any man to be unbiased regarding Christ?

12. What and who influenced Pilate's decisions? What danger lies in this practice?

13. How had the crowd's mindset toward Christ changed? (See Luke 19:36-38 and 23:18, 21, 23.)

14. Barabbas, a convicted rebel and murderer was to be crucified among the thieves, but Jesus took his place. How does Barabbas represent the law? And Christ, the Father's mercy and grace?

15. Interestingly, Roman law stated that “no man should be put twice in jeopardy” (Joe Focht). This means that once a man was acquitted he could not be tried again for his crime. Once Christ took Barabbas’ place of what could he be charged? Read Psalm 103:10-12, Isaiah 43:25, and Micah 7:19.

Can a man refuse to be pardoned? Explain.

16. Return to Luke. How did the Jewish people indirectly malign their character by aligning themselves with Barabbas?

17. Why do you believe Pilate offered an alternative punishment? (Luke 23:22)

18. Again, Jesus was arrayed in a robe, this time a scarlet Roman robe (John 19:2), His blood staining its fibers. What possible significance is there in Christ being clothed in both royal Jewish and Gentile garments? (Consider Luke 2:32 and Acts 26:23; also, Revelation 7:14, Zechariah 3:3-5, and Isaiah 1:18.)

19. Per Genesis 3:18, why is it significant that Christ wore thorns upon His brow?

20. Read Jesus' words in Matthew 20:19, and then, Isaiah 53:5, 50:6 and Psalm 129:3. For what purpose was He beaten?
21. While in conflict, Pilate's wife, Claudia, was given a dream (Matthew 27:19). How did she counsel her husband? Why might this warning have been given?
22. How did Pilate react to the information given in John 19:7-10? Does Pilate's statement in verse 10 hold him responsible for his choice? Why or why not?
23. Read Matthew 27:24-25 and Acts 3:13-14. How would the Jewish people suffer for their choice? (Consider Luke 19:41-44, etc.)
24. Many years later, after having been suspended from office and tried in Rome, Pontius Pilate committed suicide.¹ While there is no solid evidence linking his actions to the execution of Christ, how does Luke 17:33 apply?

¹ Claiming a basis in ancient historical sources, Eusebius reports that Pilate came to be afflicted with such calamities that he committed suicide in 39 c.e. (*Chron.*, Helm, 178; *Hist. Eccl.* 2.7.1). Of course, we have no reason to assume that Pilate's troubles were due to his execution of Jesus or to remorse over that act; the complaints which brought about his suspension from office could well have resulted in proceedings in Rome which became unbearable (Brunt 1961). (*Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*)