

**Luke 23:1 ¶ And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.**

**Luke 23:2 And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.**

**Luke 23:3 And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest *it*.**

**Luke 23:4 Then said Pilate to the chief priests and *to the people*, I find no fault in this man.**

This chapter opens with the whole council and the accompanying crowd taking Jesus to Pilate, the acting governor of Judah. They charged Jesus with corruption and telling the people not to pay their taxes to Caesar while also declaring Himself to be the Messiah, a king. Obviously, these religious leaders weren't concerned with breaking the commandment about bearing false witness. They were intent on having Jesus put to death.

It seems that Pilate might have been familiar with the term "Christ" since he asked Jesus if He was the King of the Jews. Though unclear in the KJV wording, John tells us that Jesus did affirm the truth.

*John 18:37 "Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."*

Pilate declared that he could find no fault in Jesus.

**Luke 23:5 And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.**

**Luke 23:6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean.**

**Luke 23:7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.**

Determined not to be thwarted in their purpose, the crowd became much more intense and passionate in their accusation. They declared that Jesus was causing trouble throughout the country from Galilee to Jerusalem. They seemed to know that this would make Pilate take notice since he couldn't afford the reputation of tolerating insurrectionists. When they mentioned Galilee, Pilate thought he might pass the buck; Galilee was under Herod's jurisdiction and he just happened to be in Jerusalem. So Pilate sent Jesus to Herod.

Luke is the only gospel writer to tell us about Jesus before Herod.

**Luke 23:8 And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long *season*, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.**

**Luke 23:9 Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.**

**Luke 23:10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.**

**Luke 23:11 And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked *him*, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.**

**Luke 23:12 And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.**

Herod was actually pleased to see Jesus because he had heard so much about Him; he hoped to see Him do a miracle. Though Herod posed many questions to Jesus, He refused to answer him. All the while the chief priests and scribes continued pressing their accusations. It seems that Herod and his men decided to play to the crowd, so they abused and mocked Jesus. They dressed Him in a royal robe and sent Him back to Pilate. Luke then adds an interesting observation—Pilate and Herod, former adversaries, became friends that day.

**Luke 23:13 ¶ And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,**

**Luke 23:14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:**

**Luke 23:15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.**

**Luke 23:16 I will therefore chastise him, and release *him*.**

**Luke 23:17 (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)**

**Luke 23:18 And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this *man*, and release unto us Barabbas:**

**Luke 23:19 (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)**

Mark tells us that Pilate understood that Jesus was not guilty of the charges against Him; the chief priests were jealous of His popularity and the threat He posed to their authority.

*Mark 15:10 "For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy."*

He gathered the crowd to address them and again declared that his examination did not show Jesus to be guilty as accused. Furthermore, he had sent Jesus to Herod and he had not found Jesus worthy of death either. Matthew provides a little more explanation as to Pilate's hesitancy to yield to the will of the people.

*Matthew 27:19 "When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."*

In light of both his own examination and that by Herod, Pilate declared that he would punish Jesus and release Him.

It was a custom for the governor to release a prisoner at the time of Passover. The other three gospel writers tell us that Pilate gave the crowd a choice of releasing Jesus or Barabbas, a robber and murderer.

**Luke 23:20 Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.  
Luke 23:21 But they cried, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify him.  
Luke 23:22 And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let *him* go.**

Pilate appealed to the crowd yet again to release Jesus, but they were unfazed. They cried for His crucifixion. Again Pilate asks what evil He had done because he had found Jesus guilty of nothing deserving death. (I think he is still thinking about his wife's message.) Again he declares that he will have Jesus chastised and released. The chastisement Pilate spoke of was a severe beating with a multi-pronged whip that had rock and metal embedded in the leather cords that comprised the whip.

**Luke 23:23 And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.  
Luke 23:24 And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.  
Luke 23:25 And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.**

The crowd would not relent. Their voices became even louder as they called for Jesus to be crucified. Finally, Pilate gave in. Matthew tells us that he tried to absolve himself of guilt by a public display of washing his hands.

*Matthew 27:24–26 “When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.”*

It is in Matthew's account that we see the intensity of the venom of the crowd. They actually call down a curse on their own children for what they are doing. Little did they know how terrible would be the events that proved the fulfillment of that curse over the last two millennia.

Both Matthew and John tell us that Pilate had Jesus scourged before turning Him over to the will of the people. Not only did they scourge Him, but the soldiers also continued to mock Him by making Him wear a crown of thorns along with the robe from Herod. They mockingly knelt before Him as a king and then spit on Him and hit Him on the head with the reed they had used as His scepter.

*John 19:1–3 “Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.”*

*Matthew 27:27–31 “Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.”*

**Luke 23:26 ¶ And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.**

**Luke 23:27 And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.**

**Luke 23:28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.**

**Luke 23:29 For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.**

**Luke 23:30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.**

My understanding is that the condemned man was required to carry the crossbar of the cross to the place of crucifixion. Jesus had not slept in over 24 hours, had suffered intense agony as He prayed in garden, and had endured such a terrible beating that He was too weak to carry the crossbar. So the soldiers conscripted a man identified as Simon, a Cyrenian (currently known as the Libyan city of Tripoli), to carry Jesus' cross for him.

Among the crowd that followed was a group of women who were publicly displaying their grief for Jesus. Jesus turns to them and tells them not to weep for Him but to weep for themselves and their children in light of judgment that would come upon the people. He describes that time of judgment as one in which it would be better to be childless.

The words of verse 30 seem to tie directly to words describing the reaction of the people at the opening of the sixth seal as stated in Revelation.

*Revelation 6:12 & 15-16 “And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal.... And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; **And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us** from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:*

The prophet Isaiah also uses similar terminology that seems to be referencing the same time as Revelation.

*Isaiah 2:19 “And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.”*

**Luke 23:31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?**

In context, we can understand that this must be a statement to action taken against an innocent man vs. what will happen to a guilty one. I decided to do some research and found a good explanation by Wayne Jackson of the *Christian Courier* as follows:

The “green tree” is that which is not appropriate for use as fuel for a fire; “dry” wood, though, is particularly suited for that very purpose. The “green tree” illustrates the precious Son of God, the sinless Savior, who was so very undeserving of the wicked and brutal treatment that the Jews already had heaped upon him, and would bring to a violent conclusion within hours.

The “dry” wood signifies the flammable state of a considerable portion of the Hebrew populous, from whom the “sap” of sacred devotion had dissipated. Alfred Edersheim, himself an ethnic Jew, captured the spirit of the passage in this way.

“For if Israel has put such flame to its ‘green tree’ how terribly would the Divine judgment burn among the dry wood of an apostate and rebellious people, that had so delivered up its Divine King, and pronounced sentence upon itself by pronouncing it upon Him!” (**The Life & Times of Jesus the Messiah**, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947, Vol. II, p. 588).

**Luke 23:32 ¶ And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.**

**Luke 23:33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.**

**Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.**

Luke notes that two other condemned men were crucified alongside Jesus. This was also in fulfillment of prophecy.

*Isaiah 53:12 “Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”*

When they came to Calvary, the place of crucifixion, they crucified Jesus placing the condemned men to each of His sides. Matthew and John describe Calvary as the place of the skull known as Golgotha.

As always, Jesus is concerned for the sinner. He prays aloud and asks the Father to forgive them because they don't know what they are doing. This is also in fulfillment of prophecy as shown in the verse from Isaiah above.

In yet another fulfillment of prophecy the soldiers cast lots for Jesus' robe. The wording of Psalm 22 is so descriptive of Jesus' crucifixion that one cannot deny the connection.

*Psalms 22:14–18 "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."*

**Luke 23:35 And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.**

**Luke 23:36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,**

**Luke 23:37 And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.**

The crowd and especially the rulers that had pressed for Jesus to be put to death were there to see the sentence carried out. They still didn't let up mocking Him. If He was the Messiah, the chosen of God, He should be able to save Himself as He professed to save others. They just didn't understand that His death was necessary to accomplish the salvation they were mocking. The Roman soldiers joined in the mockers. They taunted Him to save Himself if He truly was the king of the Jews.

Luke points out that they offered Jesus vinegar as they mocked Him. Mark described the vinegar as a combination of wine and myrrh and notes that Jesus refused it.

**Luke 23:38 And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

A sign was placed over Jesus that was written in Greek, Latin and Hebrew that said: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. We learn from John that Pilate specified the wording and refused to change it to suit the chief priests.

**Luke 23:39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.**

**Luke 23:40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?**

**Luke 23:41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.**

**Luke 23:42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.**

**Luke 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.**

Even one of the thieves on a cross beside Him joined in mocking Jesus. He taunted Him to save Himself and them also. The other thief rebuked the one that was taunting Jesus and admitted that they were getting what they deserved, but Jesus was innocent. He then turned to Jesus and addressed Him as “Lord” and asked Him to remember him when He came into His kingdom. Jesus told the thief that he would be with Him in paradise that very day.

One can't help but wonder how much of Jesus' trial the thief had witnessed and what made him understand that Jesus was the Messiah. Maybe it was just the gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit to an open heart. This thief is the prime example from scripture that God's grace is available to the sinner to the moment of death. David Guzik makes a good point in light of this truth however: “There is one deathbed conversion in the Bible, so that no one would despair; but *only one*, so that no one would presume.”

**Luke 23:44 ¶ And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.**

**Luke 23:45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.**

**Luke 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.**

Luke now gives us a time designation and informs us that an unnatural darkness covered the earth for three hours. The sun was darkened and the veil of the temple was torn in half. Finally, with one last burst of strength Jesus cries out loudly yielding His Spirit to the Father.

Matthew gives further information.

*Matthew 27:51–53 “And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.*

What we have is a series of supernatural events. A solar eclipse doesn't last for three hours, nor does it darken the earth completely. The New Bible Commentary notes that Passover was always celebrated at a full moon, a time during which an eclipse is not possible. Not only was the veil of the temple torn in half, it was torn from top to bottom. This was a very thick curtain, so this rip was a miracle in itself. A natural earthquake does not result in people coming out of their graves. God is making a huge statement—You have just crucified my beloved Son, the Lamb of God proclaimed by John the Baptist.

*John 1:29 “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”*

By ripping apart the veil at the temple, God is declaring that access to Him is now possible by each and every person because of His Son's provision. Jesus affirmed that only through Him can one have access to the Father.

*John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

In Jewish time the 6<sup>th</sup> hour would be noon and the 9<sup>th</sup> hour would be 3:00 p.m.—the time at which the Passover lambs were being slain at the temple. Jesus died as our Passover lamb.

**Luke 23:47** Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, **Certainly this was a righteous man.**

**Luke 23:48** And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.

**Luke 23:49** And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

It seems that the supernatural phenomena that occurred when Jesus died caused many to realize that Jesus just might have been who He claimed to be. Matthew tells us that one of the centurions actually testified that He was the Son of God.

*Matthew 27:54 "Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."*

Though we aren't told what they may have said in response to events, Luke reminds us that the women from Galilee who followed Jesus were at the crucifixion. John gives us more information.

*John 19:25 "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene."*

As a mom, I truly can't imagine being the mother of Jesus watching all that happened to her Son. Yes, she had the message of the angel to hold onto; but that message must have seemed unbelievable at the time—if it ever came to mind at all. I would also think that Jesus told His mother just as surely as His disciples about what was going to happen to Him. Maybe that is what strengthened her to be able to endure the sight of His suffering.

**Luke 23:50 ¶** And, behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he *was* a good man, and a just:

**Luke 23:51** (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) *he was* of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.

**Luke 23:52** This *man* went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

**Luke 23:53** And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.

Enter Joseph of Arimathaea, a rich man who was actually a part of the Sanhedrin. He was known as a good and just man, and Luke emphasizes that he did not support the actions of the council. John tells us that this man was a secret disciple of Jesus because he stood in fear of his cohorts.

*John 19:38 "And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews...."*

Joseph was evidently a man of influence since Pilate consented to give him the body of Jesus upon his request. He took Jesus' body and wrapped it in linen and laid it in a new grave that was carved out of stone. John and Matthew tell us more.

*John 19:39–42 "And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand."*

*Matthew 27:59–60 "And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed."*

We learn that Nicodemus assisted Joseph and brought myrrh and aloes to help in preparing the body for a proper Jewish burial. We also learn that the tomb was in a garden that was close by and that it was actually Joseph's own tomb.

**Luke 23:54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.**

**Luke 23:55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.**

**Luke 23:56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.**

Evening was drawing near and they wanted to complete everything before the Passover Sabbath began. Note is made that the women from Galilee (Mary and her friends) saw where Jesus was buried and went home to prepare spices and ointments to embalm the body after the Sabbath, but they were careful not to break Jewish law.