



## Luke 23

**Luke 23**  
**Tape #8067**  
**By Chuck Smith**

We ended chapter twenty-two with Jesus before the religious council. He's being questioned indirectly by the high priest who asked him saying, Are you the Messiah? Tell us. And Jesus said, If I did tell you, you wouldn't believe. But hereafter, you're going to see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God. Then they said, Are you then the Son of God? And Jesus said unto them, You say that I am, or You have said it, that's correct. And then they said, What need we have any further witnesses? For we ourselves have heard Him out of His own mouth (Luke 22:67-71).

So in the morning,

*The whole multitude of them arose, and led Jesus to Pilate. And they began to accuse him (23:1,2),*

And these are the accusations.

*We found this fellow perverting the nation (23:2)*

Wrong. It is true that He was correcting the religious abuses that were going on. He had cleansed the temple from its merchandising. He sought to return it to a house of prayer for all people. But He was not subverting the nation. He was setting things right that had been wrong. They accused Him of,

*forbidding to give tribute to Caesar (23:2),*

This again is a false accusation. They sought to trap Jesus. We had this a couple of chapters ago. They were looking for cases against Him and trying to create a case against Him. And in trying to create a case and frame Him, they came to Him with the question, Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar? And they figured it was a Catch twenty-two. Either way He answered it, He would be wrong. If He said, Yes, it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, then the Jews would all hate Him and turn against Him because they all hated paying taxes to Caesar and felt that it was illegal. If He said, No, it is not lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, then they could rightfully accuse Him of encouraging the people not to pay their taxes. So Jesus, understanding their cleverness, just said, Show me a coin. And He said, Whose image and superscription do you see on that coin? They said, Caesar's. And He said, Alright, give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and render unto God the things that are God's. (Luke 20:22-25)

Let me say that if you are involved in a tax revolt, you really don't have scripture to back you. Paul said to "render every man his due: taxes to whom taxes are due" (Romans 13:7). We don't like that. But we obey that because that's the scripture.

And Jesus said, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, unto God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17). So it's a false accusation when they said that He was forbidding the people to pay their taxes to Caesar.

The third accusation was that He was,

*saying that he himself was Messiah a King (23:2).*

This is something that Jesus did assert. That He was the Messiah, that He was a King.

*And so Pilate then asked him, saying, Are you the King of the Jews? And Jesus answered him and said, You said it. [That's correct.] Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirs up the people (23:3-5)),*

Now they're making further charges. Charges that Jesus was stirring up the people. That again was a false charge. Jesus wasn't stirring up the people. They said,

*teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place (23:5).*

He's going around the whole country stirring up the people. From Galilee down here. When Pilate heard the word Galilee, he realized that that was out of his jurisdiction. When Herod the great died, Archelaus his son more or less inherited the rulership. Archelaus was ambitious. The title of king did not just automatically pass unto him. His father was known as King Herod but the title of king didn't automatically pass on to him.

So he went with an entourage to Rome to meet with the senate because he wanted the title of king to be

placed upon him. But when he left for Rome, the Jews, because they really didn't like Archelaus, sent other messengers to the senate saying, We don't want him to rule over us. And so when he came before the senate, not only did they not give him the title of king but they divided the area into three sections called the tetrarch. And so, there were then three men who ruled over the area that was once ruled by Herod the great.

Gradually in Jerusalem, that southern area, the descendants of Herod did not succeed there and the Romans made that a part of the Roman government and they sent governors from Rome to rule over that section. And Pilate was one of these Roman governors who was ruling over this southern section.

The area around the Galilee was Herod's area of rule. He was a descendant of Herod the great and he ruled in the area of Galilee.

He is the one who had John the Baptist put to death when John rebuked him for his marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife. She was upset and when her daughter danced before him and pleased him, and he asked her to make a request, she requested the head of John the Baptist. Remember the story.

Jesus never went to Tiberias. Though He traveled much around the Galilee region, He always avoided Tiberias, that's where Herod reigned. Jesus had nothing to say to Herod. One time they came to Him and they said, Don't you know that Herod's going to get you? And He said, You go tell that sly fox that I have things to do today and tomorrow. And He just called him a sly fox. He had really nothing to do because of his putting John the Baptist to death.

*So when Pilate heard that Jesus had been in Galilee, he asked the question if Jesus were a Galilean (23:6).*

And yes He was, He was born in the area of the Galilee or grew up there. He was born in Bethlehem but He grew up in Nazareth and spent most of His ministry around the Galilee region.

*So 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 (23:7).*

Because of the Feast of the Passover.

*And when Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad: because he was desiring for a long time to meet Jesus, he had heard so many things about the miracles that Jesus had done; and he was hoping to be entertained by seeing some miracle. Then he questioned Jesus with many questions; but Jesus didn't answer him anything (23:8,9).*

He wouldn't speak to him. He had nothing to say.

When a man has gone so far into sin and in debauchery where the Lord has nothing to say to him, that man's in bad shape.

*Now the chief priests and scribes were there before Herod and they were all excited and making all of these accusations against Jesus. But Herod with his men the soldiers, the men of war set him at nought, and they mocked him, and they arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and they sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: before this time there had been some enmity. And so when Pilate had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, He said unto them, You have brought this man unto me, as one that perverts the people: and, behold, I've examined him before you, and I have found no fault in this man concerning those things whereof you've been accusing him: Nor yet did Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death has been done by him. Therefore, I will chastise him, and release him. (For [Luke adds here] it was the custom to release one of the prisoners at the feast of the passover.) So they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison (23:10-19).)*

This is almost unthinkable. Here is a man who was guilty of sedition and in the uprising had committed murder. And the people are asking for his release rather than Jesus. What had Jesus done? The witness concerning Jesus says He went around doing good, healing all manner of illnesses. It's a strange world that we live in.

It's interesting to me today how that people seem to be opposed to those that desire to do good. They seek to ridicule and bring to nought those who are trying to do something beneficial. But how they love to exalt evil.

Look how Madonna is being exalted. Held up as a model. And yet when we have Purity conferences for

the girls, they always report it in a very negative kind of a, it's always with a negative slant and with ridicule and scorn. The world hasn't changed very much.

Here they were wanting Barabbas instead of Jesus.

*Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil has he done (23:20-22)?*

I would like to suggest that there's a total breakdown of justice here. When the judge is arguing with the people. Can you picture this if in the court there in Los Angeles, the people began to speak up and all and Judge Ito would start to argue with them? You know what he would do, he'd bring down the gavel and he'd say, Order in the court! And he'd have the bailiff issue the people out and cite them all for contempt of court.

So the justice has broken down when the judge is arguing with the people over the issues, which really weren't issues. The people were determined to see an innocent man put to death.

There was just enough Roman justice that Pilate was recoiling against this. This was going against his conscience. He was convinced of the innocence of Jesus. And yet, they were forcing him to do something that was a violation of his own sense of justice and right.

Over in Acts chapter three, as Peter is addressing the multitude on Solomon's porch who had gathered there as the result of the healing of the lame man, as Peter began to speak to those people concerning the healing of this lame man, in verse thirteen he said, "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his Son Jesus; who you delivered up, and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go" (Acts 3:13). Peter affirms that Pilate was determined to let Jesus go. But they insisted on His death. So "Pilate the third time said, What evil has he done?"

*I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go (23:22).*

But even the suggestion of chastising was not just. Had Jesus been a Roman citizen, they could not have chastised Him.

You remember when Paul was going through the purification rites in the temple and certain Jews saw him there and they began to beat up on him and the Roman soldiers came and rescued him and took him to the Antonia fortress and as Paul was up on the porch, he asked the captain of the guard, Can I talk to these people? And he said, Sure. And so Paul started to talk to them in Hebrew telling them his testimony of conversion. And he was sharing with them how that the Lord met him on the road to Damascus. The people were listening unto Paul intently. And then Paul mentioned how the Lord called him to go to the Gentiles and that created a whole new uproar, they began to throw dirt in the air, they began to scream out, Kill him. And they began to rush towards the fortress. And the captain said, Bring him in for his own protection and they closed the fortress doors. And the captain just walking away said to the guards, Scourge him, find out what he said. He was talking in Hebrew and they didn't understand it. Find out what he said to create that uproar. Scourge him.

So as they were preparing Paul for this chastising or scourging, Paul just said to the guard, Is it lawful for you to scourge a Roman citizen who has not been accused? And he said, Are you a Roman citizen? Paul said, Yes I am. So he ran into the captain, he said, Did you know that guy is a Roman citizen? He came out and he said, Are you a Roman citizen? Paul said, Yes sir. He said, I bought my citizenship, cost me quite a bit. How much did you have to pay? Paul said, I was free born. And so they stopped that proceeding of the chastisement because he was a Roman citizen. (Acts 21:26 to Acts 22:28)

Had Jesus been a Roman citizen, it would have been unlawful to chastise Him without accusations being proven against Him. And so Pilate in suggesting chastising, was making a very serious compromise with justice. The purpose of chastisement was to elicit confessions from the prisoners.

Today we've come a long way in civil rights. You have to be careful how you arrest a man. You have to notify him of all of his rights that he has to remain silent and to have an attorney representative and the whole thing. And if you don't give him all of his rights and all, the whole case can be thrown out because you didn't arrest him in the proper manner. It's almost ridiculous now how that you found the cocaine, a trunk full, but you had no right to open the trunk and therefore, the man can go free. You didn't have reasonable cause. And all of these little legal loopholes.

Not then. It used to be when I was a kid, they'd talk about the third degree. And in the cartoons you'd see

a guy and you'd see this bright light on him and the detectives around him and really grilling him, threatening him, punching him and all, to get the truth out of him. But that doesn't. It doesn't openly happen anymore. Prisoners have their rights.

In Roman justice, once a man had been found guilty, before he was crucified or executed, quite often they would give him this Roman third degree, this chastising which was a whipping with a leather whip in which little bits of cut glass and lead had been embedded. And they would tie the prisoner to a post and his position would be such as leaning over so that his whole back is exposed. And the guard would lay the lash down on his back and flip it back. As he flipped it back, the little bits of lead and glass would pull up bits of flesh.

Standing by would be a secretary who would write down the confessions of the prisoner. And they had sort of an unwritten code that if the man would confess to a crime, that the next lash would be a little easier. And as long as he continued to confess to different crimes, it would be easier and easier on him. By this method, the Roman government was able to clear up a lot of unsolved crimes as confession would be made so a fellow can make it easy on himself.

Conversely, if they did not confess to a crime, the next lash would be a little harder. And a little harder. Think of the dilemma that Jesus had. There was nothing to confess to. And "as a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not his mouth," the scripture tells us (Isaiah 53:7). So He received the full brunt of that chastisement which was an injustice. But it was only the beginning of the injustices; for His crucifixion was the greatest miscarriage of justice in the history of the world. Nothing compares with the injustice of man that was demonstrated in the death of Jesus Christ. Pilate, in suggesting that he would chastise Him and let Him go, was violating Roman justice.

*But they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified (23:23).*

And here I think is one of those tragic verses of scripture,

*And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed (23:23).*

They won. Not because their cause was just. Not because their cause was right. But because of their loud insistence. Their voices prevailed.

*And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required (23:24).*

Not as he knew to be just but as they required.

*And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus [notice] to their will (23:25).*

Wasn't his will. He delivered Jesus to their will. There is no question at all but that the responsibility is being placed directly upon the religious leaders. Pilate and the Roman, representing the Roman government and the Roman law, was desiring to release Jesus because that was just. It was they who were requiring His crucifixion.

We read in another gospel that Pilate ordered that a basin of water be brought and in their presence, he washed his hands in the water and he said, I wash my hands of this affair. I'm innocent of this man's blood. I want you to see to that. And they all cried out, His blood be upon us, and our children (Matthew 27:24,25). What a horrible crime.

And if you read Josephus' *The Wars of the Jews*, chapter seven, you will read the horrible consequences of their crime. "His blood be upon us, and our children."

*And so they led him away, and laid hold of one Simon, who was a Cyrenian, who was coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, don't weep for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children (23:26-28).*

How prophetic are these words of Jesus. Don't weep for me, weep for yourselves and weep for your children. Read again, I encourage you, Josephus in *The Wars of the Jews* and the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus. And the events that preceded the destruction, the anarchy that was going on within the city. Jesus said,

*For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are those who never had children, blessed are those breasts that have never nursed. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry (23:29-31).*

31)?

In other words, these are good times. If they do these in the good times, what are they going to do when things really get bad? Now we are told,

*There were also two other malefactors, who were led with him to be put to death (23:32).*

Matthew tells us that as they were being nailed to the crosses, they railed on Jesus with the crowd.

*And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary (23:33),*

Golgotha in Hebrew, the place of the skull.

*there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left (23:33).*

It's interesting, the mother of John and James had come to Jesus just a short time earlier and she said, Lord, I have a request to make of you. And He said, What is it? She said, I want when You come into Your kingdom that one of my sons be on Your right side and the other on Your left. And Jesus said, You don't know what You're asking. Are they able to drink the cup that I shall drink? And here they piped up, no doubt they've put their mother up to this whole thing, they piped up, Oh yeah, we can. Sure, you bet. And Jesus said, You indeed shall drink of the same cup but to grant this privilege is not mine but Father's. But interesting, here He's coming into His kingdom but rather than James and John on either side, there are two malefactors, one on the right, and one on the left. (Matthew 20:20-23)

*Then said Jesus (23:34),*

When? When they had come to Calvary and they started to nail Him to the cross. As they were driving the spikes through His hands, then said Jesus,

*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do (23:34).*

Here Jesus is in essence practicing what He preached. He said, "Bless those that curse you. Pray for those who despitefully use you" (Matthew 5:44). And here we find Him praying for these transgressors as they are nailing Him to the cross. "They know not what they do." They knew what they were doing but they didn't know the enormity of what they were doing.

*And they parted his raiment, and cast lots (23:34).*

As I was reading through this, I began to jot down a few references. How that in this short little portion here, so many prophecies were being fulfilled.

He said nothing unto Herod; Isaiah 53, "Like a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not his mouth."

Pilate said, I will chastise Him and release Him; Isaiah 53:5, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed."

The two malefactors, one on the right and one on the left; Isaiah 53:12, "And he was numbered with the transgressors in his death."

His prayer, Father, forgive them; they know not what they do; "And He made intercession for the transgressors," Isaiah 53:12.

They parted His raiment, and cast lots for His vesture; Psalm 22:18, "They parted my garment and upon my vesture did they cast lots."

The mocking and the derision; verse thirty-five here,

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

Psalm 22:7,8, it might pay to just look at that and see how this was being fulfilled as they were mocking Jesus, "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." The derision.

And then we read,

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

Psalm 69:21, "And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

And then we read on down a little further, verse forty-five, "And the sun was darkened [it was noon], and the veil of the temple was torn in the middle."

And in Amos chapter eight and verse nine, he speaks how that this would be dark at noon on a clear day, it

would turn dark.

And so all of these prophecies which led Peter to declare when he was addressing the crowd that had gathered on the day of Pentecost, “You according to the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, with your wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23). The death of Jesus Christ was something that God had planned and even had written out the plan in advance. All of these scriptures, as Peter had said concerning the scriptures, these scriptures must needs be fulfilled. What God has said is certain, it is sure. And what has said shall surely come to pass. And the fact that God wrote of it in advance only indicates and affirms the fact that this was God’s plan.

So much of prophecy was fulfilled right at this point in the death of Jesus. “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.” Even sins of ignorance have to be forgiven under the law there was the law that said, And if a man should sin ignorantly and it gave the sacrifices that he was to offer for the sins of ignorance. Ignorance of the law is no excuse.

They parted His raiment and cast lots and the people stood beholding and the rulers also with them, deriding Him saying, He saved others, let Him save himself if He is the Messiah, the chosen of God. And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to him and offering him vinegar. This was an act of mercy. The vinegar was mixed with myrrh and as such was more or less an anesthesia. It was to ease somewhat the pain. Because there’s probably nothing more painful than crucifixion.

It was one of the most torturous methods ever devised by man in executing another man. Your body hanging there on the cross. As time goes on, the muscles begin to give way and as the muscles give way, your body begins to actually fall out of joint and there’s an excruciating pain when the body begins to fall out of joint. And then finally, death comes by suffocation. You have to sort of lift yourself on the spike that is holding your feet, you have to sort of lift yourself to get a breath. But of course as you do, your ripping the feet and it’s extremely painful. And so you would hold on and only breathe when you had to and then you’d lift yourself, take a breath and then, but the excruciating pain. It was just extremely torturous thing.

So the vinegar was more or less to help ease the pain. However, Jesus refused it. But later on, when He cried, I thirst; they at this point gave Him the vinegar and because it was all over, He took it just before He died.

*There was a superscription that was written over his head in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS (23:38).*

That was there as Pilate’s retaliation against the Jews. He knew how deep their animosity was against Jesus and against the claim of Jesus as being the Messiah. He knew that that just was antagonistic to them to the core. And he sort of just getting even in a sense with them. Putting, This is the King of the Jews. He knew that that would antagonize them. He was angry with them because they had forced him to violate his own conscience. They had forced the issue and he didn’t appreciate it. He succumbed but still he wanted to get in his last little gig. And so this sign above the cross was Pilate’s revenge against the Jews. Just to gall them.

John tells us they came to Pilate and they were angry. They said, Don’t write The King of the Jews. Write, He said He was the King of the Jews. Pilate and I’m sure with a sneer said, What I have written, I have written (John 19:21,22). You’re not going to push this one on me. I’ve got the last push.

*And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If you’re the Christ or the Messiah, save yourself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, and said, Don’t you fear God, man? seeing that we are in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man has done nothing amiss (23:39-41).*

Two malefactors, one on the right, one on the left. Why? Don’t know. God designed it. It was part of the prophecies that He would be numbered with the transgressors in His death. It was prophesied. So this is a part of God’s plan but it opens the door for us to speculate on possible reasons why God allowed this.

Maybe God wanted one final word concerning the innocence of Jesus. You remember when Judas brought the money back and he said, Take this money back. I have betrayed innocent blood. The scripture says, God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin. And there is adequate testimony to the innocence of Jesus.

Pilate said I have examined this man and I find no fault in Him. Another witness to the innocence of Jesus.

Pilate's wife sent a message to him in which she said, Have nothing to do with this just man. I've suffered many things last night in a dream because of Him. And now one final word, This man has done nothing amiss. The witness to the innocence of Jesus that you might know that He wasn't dying for His sin, He was dying for your sin.

God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God through Him. So that you might know that He was sinless, but yet He bore our sins. It was not for Himself that He died, it was for you that He was put to death.

There's another possibility. Jesus hated the cross. He was reluctant to die. In the garden of Gethsemane, you remember He was praying, Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not what I will, thine will be done. And this was so urgent that He repeated it three times until He finally said, If it is not possible, then He committed Himself to the drinking of the cup. But the book of Hebrews tells us, "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, though He despised the shame" (Hebrews 12:2). Jesus despised all of this mocking even as you would. He despised this whole ordeal even as you would. But He endured it for the joy that was set before Him.

What was the joy that was set before Him? The ability to forgive men their sins. The joy of being able to bring you from darkness and the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. The joy of being able to make you a child of God. Washing and cleansing you from all your guilt and all your past. "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross," the joy of granting forgiveness and entrance into the kingdom of God.

Perhaps God planted this one thief next to Him so that in the midst of the pain and the suffering, after the three hours of enduring this torment, He might get the first taste of the joy that was set before Him. When He said to the man, Today you will be with Me in paradise. That's why He was dying; to bring sinners unto God. To be able to bring them into the kingdom of God. His love was fulfilled in His ability to bring men to God. Today you will be with Me in paradise. And can you imagine Jesus walking in the streets in heaven hand to hand with this thief as the first prize of the work of the cross? He was the first who was saved under the new covenant that God established. The first into the kingdom of heaven of the many that would follow because of the death of Jesus upon the cross. And there God was giving Him a foretaste of the glory divine. The ability to bring men unto God.

We don't know for sure but certainly we're able to see in this whole picture the sovereignty of God in salvation. And we see such typical case. Here are two men, two thieves. They are equally close to death. They are both of them dying. And they are equally close to life. They are on either side of Jesus. One dies in his sin and will spend eternity in hell. The other is forgiven his sin and was ushered into paradise forever.

Here tonight, side by side are people sitting. Some of them who have received the forgiveness of God have come to Jesus Christ and others who have not. Hearing the same message, some people are melted by the Spirit of God and others resist and have become hardened. One accepts and with rejoicing receives salvation. Another turns away and says, I don't want anything to do with it. I will not let this man rule over me. And so it is. What makes the difference? Salvation is of the Lord. We don't know how it is that one man's heart is open and another man's heart is closed to the Gospel but such is the case.

But the amazing thing to me is the fact that this man's request is  
*when You come into Your kingdom, will You remember me (23:42)?*

And somehow the Holy Spirit gave him faith to believe that even though Jesus was dying, yet He was coming into the kingdom. This is faith that was greater than that of the disciples. At this point, their hope for the kingdom were all over. They were dashed. It was through. They had high hopes. They kept saying, Lord, is it now? Is it now? Lord, and some even believed that Judas was trying to sort of force it. That his motives weren't so bad, that he was just wanting to get the thing going.

You remember John the Baptist earlier became impatient. He sent his disciples and said, Hey, are You the one or shall we start looking for someone else (Luke 7:19)? In other words, let's get the show on the road. I'm tired of being in prison here. And they were anticipating the immediate establishing of the kingdom. And when they saw Him hanging on the cross, their hopes for the kingdom were dashed.

His disciples on the road to Emmaus as we'll get next week, as the two of them they said, And we had

hoped that He was the salvation of Israel. But He was crucified and it's been three days. Hopes are gone. They were disconsolate. They were walking along the road discouraged. He said, Hey fellows, what's your problem? Why are you so sad? What's going on? They said, Are you a stranger around here? You don't know what's happened in Jerusalem last couple of days? No, what are you talking about? There was a man named Jesus. Imagine Jesus listening to them describing Him. And then He opened up the scriptures and their hearts began to burn. (Luke 24:13-32)

But here's a dying thief being crucified next to a man who has the sign above His head, This is the King of the Jews, and he believed it. And somehow he believed that though He was dying, He was coming into His kingdom. Lord, when you come into your kingdom, will you remember me?

How easy salvation is. How simple God has made it. If there was ever a lesson that taught us that salvation is not of works, it's right here. He couldn't do much works at this point. Not much he could do for God now. And yet, the comforting words of Jesus in response to his simple request, Remember me.

*Jesus said, To day you'll be with me in paradise. And it was about the sixth hour (23:43,44),*

Starting the day at six in the morning, the sixth hour would be noon.

*there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour (23:44).*

Which would be three o'clock in the afternoon. This was a supernatural phenomena. It could not have been an eclipse because the passover always takes place at full moon. It's impossible to have an eclipse at full moon. It's impossible for the moon to pass between the earth and the sun at a full moon. It just doesn't happen. Because you notice that full moon, it says, the sun is going down. But the moon always rises on a full moon. They sort of coincide, the sun is going down as the moon rises with a full moon. So it was a supernatural phenomena, this darkness. Some try and date even the crucifixion by the eclipse. Wrong, wrong, wrong. And they don't know astronomy.

*So when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit (23:46):*

He cried with a loud voice commending His spirit unto the Father's hands. Lord, it's over, it's finished.

*and having said thus, he gave up the ghost (23:46).*

It's a description of death, it's the separation of a man's spirit from his body or his consciousness from his body. Today it's still used as a definition for death, the separation of a man's consciousness from his body. When the brain is no longer functioning, he is considered dead medically. Jesus had said, "No man take my life from me, I give my life" (John 10:18). So we find Him giving His life for you and for me.

*Now when the centurion saw what was done (23:47),*

That is, the soldier who was in charge of the crucifixion.

*he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. And all of his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things (23:47-49).*

What a dark, dismal day for them.

*And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, he was just: (The same had not consented to the counsel and the deed of them;) (23:50,51)*

He was a man who was a ruler. He was there at the trial but he did not consent to their decision.

*he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews: and he was also a man who was waiting for the kingdom of God. This man went unto Pilate, and begged for the body of Jesus. 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 (23:51-53).*

A fresh sepulcher which we are told by John was in a garden and it was near the spot where Jesus was crucified.

*And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath was drawing on (23:54).*

It was evening now, three o'clock in the afternoon when Jesus dismissed His spirit and at sundown, the sabbath begins. It has to be that He is all wrapped and taken care of. It was a quick operation. After Jesus died, He ran to Pilate, wanted the body of Jesus. Pilate didn't know that He was dead yet so he inquired from the soldiers if Jesus had already died. And they affirmed that He had so he granted Joseph the right and Joseph got the linen, wrapped Jesus and quickly put Him in the sepulcher that was hewn out of a stone and they rolled the door over the door of the sepulcher. Had to be done by sundown when the sabbath began.

*And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, who were following after Him, they beheld the sepulchre, and how the body was laid. And they returned, and they began to prepare the spices and ointments; and they rested on the sabbath day according to the commandment (23:55,56).*

And so, chapter twenty-three sort of leaves us in a dark spot but you ought to come to twenty-four to come out of it and lifted in the glorious light of the resurrection as we finish the gospel of Luke next Sunday night.

Father, we thank You again over and over that You so loved the world that You gave Your only begotten Son. According to Your determined counsel, He came to manifest Your love for us by taking our sins and receiving the penalty and the justice of God in dying for our sins. So that Your righteous demands of justice were satisfied by Jesus who bore our sins in His own body on the tree. That we, sinners as we are, might know the joy of hearing His words, You will spend eternity with Me in paradise. O Lord, we acknowledge You as our King tonight. We gladly bow our knee before Your throne. We bow before Your scepter, Your righteous scepter. And we pledge, Lord, our allegiance, our love, our lives to You to serve You Lord in whatever capacity You ordain. For we love You, Lord, because You first loved us. Help us, Lord, to be Your disciples and to do those things always that please You. Give us the strength that we need to live in this world that is still rebelling against You. The world that is still saying, We'll not have this man to rule over us. Lord, we ask that You would rule over us. In Jesus' name, Amen.