

JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS

Luke 22:63-23:56

Key Verse: 23:46

"Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' When he had said this, he breathed his last."

Study Questions:

1. What was Jesus' testimony before the council?(22:67-68) With what did they charge him? (70-71) What charge did they bring against him to Pilate? (23:2) What did Jesus answer? What does this mean? (23:3; Mt 2:2; Mic 5:2)
2. How did Pilate try, but fail, to defend Jesus? (23:6,7) Describe Herod's base character. Why did Pilate compromise? What was the result? (23-25)
3. Describe Jesus' suffering on the way to the cross. What warning did he give? (26-31) Why did he suffer like this? (1Pe 2:24b; Isa 53:6b) Describe the crucifixion. Why was he crucified? (Isa 53:12; Jn 1:29) What did Jesus pray? (34) How did he help one man on the cross? (39-43)
4. What happened when Jesus died? (44-46) How did Jesus show his total dependence on God? (46) What confession did the centurion make? (47) How did Joseph show his faith? (50-53) What is the meaning of the burial of Jesus? (44-56; Isa 53:9,10)

Today's passage tells us of Jesus' trial (22:66-23:25), his crucifixion (23:26-49) and burial (23:50-56). His death on the cross has become a marvelous light to all men. May Jesus' death on the cross give you heavenly sunlight.

First, Jesus was tried by Pilate and Herod (22:63-23:25)

As we studied, during the night Jesus was arrested and taken into the house of the high priest. The temple guards gloated over him, blindfolding him and hitting him and deriding him, saying, "Who hit you?" Jesus became unbearably tired. At daybreak they handed him over to the Sanhedrin to be tried.

The Sanhedrin members asked, "If you are the Christ, tell us" (67a). The charge they had attempted to make against Jesus was blasphemy. At that time, blasphemy deserved the death penalty. But Jesus did not give in to their conspiracy; instead, he told them who he really was. Look at verses 67b-69. "If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God." Though he was on trial like a criminal before the Sanhedrin members, Jesus told them that he is the mighty God and the judge of all mankind. After hearing his words, they did not repent. Rather, they all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" Jesus replied, "You are right in saying I am" (70). In this way their conspiracy was forged. However, the Jews had no power to carry out the death penalty. So the Sanhedrin members led Jesus off to the Roman governor Pilate (23:1). Jesus stood before Pilate, the Roman governor, to be tried again. Before Pilate, the religious leaders began to accuse Jesus, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king" (23:2). They charged Jesus with political crimes--sedition against Caesar.

Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" What did Jesus answer? Look at verse 3b. "'Yes, it is as you say,' Jesus replied." His "yes" might cause him to receive the death sentence. But Jesus answered "yes," in order to identify himself as the Son of God (Mt 2:2; Mic 5:2). Pilate learned that it was a matter of the Jewish religion and the religious leaders' jealousy of Jesus. So he announced to them, "I find no basis for a charge against this man." (4) Pilate also learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction. So he sent him to Herod so as to escape his responsibility to sentence Jesus to death. When Herod saw Jesus, he was glad, hoping he would perform some miracle to entertain him. Herod, together with the religious leaders, plied him with many questions. But Jesus gave no answer. Herod clothed Jesus in a king's robe to ridicule him and sent him back to Pilate, for Herod had no right to sentence him to death.

When Jesus was sent back to him, Pilate felt he was in deep

trouble, for the people pressed him hard with their claim, but he could not find any basis for a charge against Jesus. Pilate was a judge. But his future could be endangered by dealing favorably with Jesus, the holy Son of God. Pilate, on the basis of imperial Roman law, declared that he found no basis for their charges against Jesus (14,15,22). But he wanted to please the people and said, "I will punish him and then release him." This political compromise did not work. With one voice they cried out, "Away with this man!" Again, wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them. Still it did not work. This time they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" (21) Once this crowd of people had followed Jesus like sheep following a shepherd. But when the devil prevailed over them, they became as evil as the devil. Pilate helplessly surrendered Jesus to their hands. Because of this, down through the generations, he has been branded as the one who condemned Jesus to death. We are the ones who should be oppressed and tried. But Jesus the Son of God took up our iniquities and transgressions and was tried again and again. Isaiah 53:6b says, "The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Thank you, Jesus, who took up the iniquity of us all!

Second, Jesus was crucified and died (23:26-49)

Finally Jesus was taken from the judgment hall and led to be crucified. They laid upon his shoulders a heavy cross and led him to the place of crucifixion by the longest possible route, while before him a soldier marched bearing a placard with his crime inscribed on it: "The king of the Jews." Jesus was exhausted and fell down. Then the Roman soldiers whipped him. Blood dripped from his forehead and his back. When Jesus collapsed, they seized Simon from Cyrene and put the cross on him.

Why did Jesus have to carry the cross? Jesus carried the cross to unburden our burden of sins. Look at verse 27. "A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him." They were pious women who had tasted the love of God in Jesus. They believed that Jesus was indeed the Son of Man. When they saw this good Jesus falling down under the heavy cross, they

mourned and wailed.

What did he say to them? Look at verse 28. "Jesus turned and said to them, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children.'" We know that women's weeping is hard to bear without sympathy. But Jesus was not overcome by their weeping. Rather, he said to them, "Do not weep for me; weep for yourselves." When Jesus said this, he meant he was taking the cup of suffering for the sake of saving the women from their sins. Here, in verse 28, "Daughters of Jerusalem" alludes, in a broad sense, to all mankind under the power of sin and death. They must weep for themselves because of the impending judgment of God.

Why was he carrying the cross in this way? It was to fulfill the will of God. In his great mercy, God sent his one and only Son as the Paschal Lamb to shed his blood for the sin of the world. John the Baptist knew this and said in John 1:29, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" Jesus carried the heavy cross so that he might unburden our burden of sins. Jesus, as the Son of Man, took up all our infirmities and carried our sorrows (1 Pe 2:24b; Isa 53:6b).

Now Jesus was carrying the rugged cross. We must know that Jesus is the Judge who, in the future, will judge the living and the dead. Look at verse 29. "For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!'" Nursing and pregnant women are symbols of human happiness. But at the time of God's judgment, human happiness will be a great burden. The judgment is so severe that those wicked men who crucified Jesus will ask a favor of the mountains and hills, saying, to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" so that they would escape from the judgment. Their state of mind is full of consuming terror and melting fear. Those wicked men who crucified Jesus cannot escape the judgment of the Lamb. The Son of Man was on his way to Calvary to be crucified. But he is God who came to this world in human form and lived among men. Jesus cared for them and the people loved Jesus. But when they were bribed, they turned their backs against Jesus. Most people, in their ignorance, have treated the Son of Man at random. But they were greatly mistaken.

They are accountable to the judgment of the Lamb, and after that, eternal punishment.

Jesus died on the cross to take up our shame and guilt. The executioners deliberately crucified Jesus between two criminals in order to make Jesus as shameful as robbers. God made man with a sense of honor. So all men want to be honored; no one wants to be shamed. No one wants to expose his shame. Many people pretend to have no problem after committing sin. But it is not so. They suffer endlessly in guilt and shame under the power of Satan. They are all like Cain, who lived with a sense of guilt and constant nightmares. A young woman committed sin once when she was very young. Since then she became a slave of guilty feelings. She was supposed to marry and her marriage was well arranged. But instead of marrying, she committed suicide by sleeping in a room full of coal gas. But Jesus bore all our shame and guilt on the cross.

When they came to the place called the Skull, they laid his cross flat on the ground, laid him on it, and, stretching out his arms on the cross, they began to drive nails through his hands and feet. They hung him on a projected piece of saddlewood which bore his weight. Then they lifted up the cross and set it upright in its socket. Jesus was crucified in this way for our sins.

On the cross, Jesus prayed for sinners to be forgiven of their sins. Look at verse 34. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." How could Jesus pray for the forgiveness of sins for those who crucified him? It was because Jesus is the Son of God. No man could pray like Jesus. In history many kings and heroes died with their eyes open because of their grudges against others. They did not know how to forgive others. It is very hard to forgive others' sins. But Jesus prayed for sinners to be forgiven. When Jesus was on the cross, he felt that his heart was failing. But he prayed for sinners who did not know what they were doing. He prayed that their sins might be forgiven. We are precious children of God who received the grace of forgiveness through his Son's blood.

Jesus did not save himself. The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One" (35). The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him. "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" They didn't know why Jesus was not saving himself. Jesus did not save himself, in order to save men from their sins.

Jesus carried the cross in order to bring us back to his paradise. One criminal hurled insults at praying Jesus. Surprisingly, the other criminal said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." This man saw God in Jesus on the cross. Look at verse 43. "Jesus answered him, 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.'" On the cross Jesus accepted this man's faith, and this man became the first one to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus entered the kingdom of God with the robber, who was condemned on the cross. Jesus died on the cross to save men from their sins. Jesus died on the cross to bring us back to his glorious kingdom.

Look at verse 44. "It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour." The sun stopped shining. So darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. The death of Jesus was so unfair that even nature mourned. Look at verse 45. "...for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two." The heaven and the earth mourned over the death of Jesus. Look at verse 46. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." Jesus did not die with a sad face. Rather, Jesus died committing his soul to God. Jesus died on the cross confirming his love relationship with God.

Humanly speaking, the Roman centurion was a hardened man as a Roman soldier. But when he saw Jesus' death on the cross, the light of life came into his heart first, next to his soul. So he praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man" (47). To the mind's eye of this foreign soldier, Jesus was not a criminal, but the righteous Son of

God. Jesus' death did not overshadow the centurion with the darkness of death. Rather, bright sunlight came into his heart. Historically, many have seen the marvelous light of life looking at Jesus on the cross.

Third, Jesus was buried (50-56)

Jesus was buried in a new tomb which Joseph, a member of the Council, had originally prepared for himself (53). The burial of Jesus has deep meaning. Isaiah 53:9,10 says, "He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand." God buried Jesus in the earth to punish him for our sins. God buried Jesus in the earth to give his saving grace and utmost happiness to us and our descendants forever.

Jesus' death on the cross is the only way to save men from their sins. May God bless you to accept the meaning of Jesus' death for us.