



(1) "Jesus as Savior"

HIGHLIGHT: Luke 23: 1-56, 24:1-12 NLT

H

Below are excerpts from the overall passage for use with the APPLICATION and RESPOND. It will be beneficial for the group to read the whole passage to understand the entire context.

Luke 23 (NLT)

vv. 1-56

1 Then the entire council took Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor. **2** They began to state their case: "This man has been leading our people astray by telling them not to pay their taxes to the Roman government and by claiming he is the Messiah, a king."

3 So Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus replied, "You have said it."

4 Pilate turned to the leading priests and to the crowd and said, "I find nothing wrong with this man!"

5 Then they became insistent. "But he is causing riots by his teaching wherever he goes—all over Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem!"

6 "Oh, is he a Galilean?" Pilate asked. **7** When they said that he was, Pilate sent him to Herod Antipas, because Galilee was under Herod's jurisdiction, and Herod happened to be in Jerusalem at the time.

8 Herod was delighted at the opportunity to see Jesus, because he had heard about him and had been hoping for a long time to see him perform a miracle. **9** He asked Jesus question after question, but Jesus refused to answer. **10** Meanwhile, the leading priests and the teachers of religious law stood there shouting their accusations. **11** Then Herod and his soldiers began mocking and ridiculing Jesus. Finally, they put a royal robe on him and sent him back to Pilate. **12** (Herod and Pilate, who had been enemies before, became friends that day.)

13 Then Pilate called together the leading priests and other religious leaders, along with the people, **14** and he announced his verdict. "You brought this man to me, accusing him of leading a revolt. I have examined him thoroughly on this point in your presence and find him innocent. **15** Herod came to the same conclusion and sent him back to us. Nothing this man has done calls for the death penalty. **16** So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him."

18 Then a mighty roar rose from the crowd, and with one voice they shouted, "Kill him, and release Barabbas to us!" **19** (Barabbas was in prison for taking part in an insurrection in Jerusalem against the government, and for murder.) **20** Pilate argued with them, because he wanted to release Jesus. **21** But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

22 For the third time he demanded, "Why? What crime has he committed? I have found no reason to sentence him to death. So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him."

23 But the mob shouted louder and louder, demanding that Jesus be crucified, and their voices prevailed. **24** So Pilate sentenced Jesus to die as they demanded. **25** As they had requested, he released Barabbas, the man in prison for insurrection and murder. But he turned Jesus over to them to do as they wished.

26 As they led Jesus away, a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene, happened to be coming in from the countryside. The soldiers seized him and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. **27** A large crowd trailed behind, including many grief-stricken women. **28** But Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, don't weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. **29** For the days are coming when they will say, 'Fortunate indeed are the women who are childless, the wombs that have not borne a child and the breasts that have never nursed.' **30** People will beg the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and plead with the hills, 'Bury us.' **31** For if these things are done when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

32 Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. **33** When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left.

34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.

35 The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. "He saved others," they said, "let him save himself if he is really God's Messiah, the Chosen One." **36** The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. **37** They called out to him, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" **38** A sign was fastened above him with these words: "This is the King of the Jews."

39 One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, "So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you're at it!"

40 But the other criminal protested, "Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? **41** We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong." **42** Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom."

43 And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."

44 By this time it was about noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. **45** The light from the sun was gone. And suddenly, the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn down the middle. **46** Then Jesus shouted, "Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!" And with those words he breathed his last.

47 When the Roman officer overseeing the execution saw what had happened, he worshiped God and said, "Surely this man was innocent." **48** And when all the crowd that came to see the crucifixion saw what had happened, they went home in deep sorrow. **49** But Jesus' friends, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching.

50 Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph. He was a member of the Jewish high council, **51** but he had not agreed with the decision and actions of the other religious leaders. He was from the town of Arimathea in Judea, and he was waiting for the Kingdom of God to come. **52** He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. **53** Then he took the body down from the cross and wrapped it in a long sheet of linen cloth and laid it in a new tomb that had been carved out of rock. **54** This was done late on Friday afternoon, the day of preparation, as the Sabbath was about to begin.

55 As his body was taken away, the women from Galilee followed and saw the tomb where his body was placed. **56** Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to anoint his body. But by the time they were finished the Sabbath had begun, so they rested as required by the law.

Luke 24 (NLT)

vv. 1-12

1 But very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. **2** They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. **3** So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. **4** As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes.

5 The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? **6** He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, **7** that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day."

8 Then they remembered that he had said this. **9** So they rushed back from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened. **10** It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several other women who told the apostles what had happened. **11** But the story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn't believe it. **12** However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look. Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had happened.

EXPLAIN

The purpose of this section is to deepen everyone's understanding of the Word.

I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
 How Jesus the Savior did come for to die.
 For poor on'ry people like you and like I...
 I wonder as I wander out under the sky.
 —Appalachian Carol

Luke 23

vv.1-7 Jesus has spent the evening celebrating Passover with His disciples. He has gone through the agony of Gethsemane and the betrayal of Judas with a kiss. He has gone through the the mockery of a trial by the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin has no power of execution, so they **took Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor**. The charges of **subversion (NIV) and forbidding giving tribute to Caesar (ESV) are lies**. Pilate may know this to be the case; those false accusations do not alarm him. But **claiming to be the Messiah, a king** strikes a note of curiosity in him, if for no other reason than Pilate hates the Jews and the Jews hate him. Maybe this is another way he can antagonize the Jews: *Are You the king of Jews?* Jesus' reply, *You have said it*, must have brought a **smile to Pilate's face** and a **grimace to the priests and crowd**. Pilate finds **no basis for a charge against Jesus**, and sends Him to Herod Antipas who happened to be in Jerusalem. It was a political move: Pilate had neither time nor desire to deal with these petty religious issues of the Jews. Plus, giving Him over to Herod might heal some the animosity between Herod and Pilate (see v.12).

vv.8-12 Herod had no interest in justice. To him Jesus was a sideshow that might take his mind off his own wretched life. Come on, Jesus, **perform a miracle for me**. I've heard a lot about you; is it for real? Not satisfied with Jesus' lack of response, **Herod and his soldiers began mocking and ridiculing [Him]**. **They put a royal robe on Him and sent Him back to Pilate**. We may be more like Herod than we want to admit: clothing Jesus with royal words but denying Him lordship over our lives.

vv.13-25 Pilate, **having examined Jesus thoroughly, comes to the same conclusion as Herod**: *"Nothing this man has done calls for the death penalty."* He compromises with his own conscience and with justice. Jesus has done nothing, but Pilate is willing to make Him suffer just to get the religious leaders off his back. *"I'll flog Him, and then release Him."* But the crowd will have no part of that. They demand **the release of Barabbas, an insurrectionist and murderer, and that Jesus, the Prince of Peace, be crucified**. Pilate restated the insanity of the crowd's demands **to put Him to death**, but caves to the pressure and **turns Jesus over to them to do as they wished**. Pilate might not be that far away from us. How many times have we turned Jesus over to hostile crowds, so that we could save our own necks, reputations, and popularity? It is just by such compromises that Jesus suffers indignity today.

vv.26-49 ...give Luke's account of the Crucifixion of Jesus. I would like to focus on the first word Jesus spoke from the cross. In fact, the Greek tense lets us know that Jesus kept repeating this word: **"Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing"** (v.34). When they drove great nails into His hands and feet, *"Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."* When one of the criminals lashed out at Him for not orchestrating a jail break—freeing Himself and them, *"Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."* When the soldiers gambled for His clothes and the

leaders mocked Him for not being able to come down from the Cross, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." But also, there is indication Jesus may have been asking the Father to hold off His wrath until people could understand what they were doing. This is born out by the Greek word translated "forgive" in our text. The same word is translated "let the little children come to me; do not hinder them" in Matthew 19:14 (ESV). Jesus was saying, "Don't interfere with them." In Matthew 27:49 the soldiers were offering Jesus wine, but the objectors said, "Wait," using the word Jesus used in His prayer. They were saying, "Hold on, don't do this until we see if Elijah comes." Could it just be that Jesus knew the Father was watching what was happening to Him, and that He would have scorched the earth if Jesus had not constantly prayed, *Don't interfere now, Father*. We have come too far in this. Hold your wrath. Don't short-circuit our plans. I'm in this thing, till salvation's work is done. Don't stop it now, for they know not what they do? It was not the nails that held Him to the cross, but His love for us.

vv.50-59 Jesus has died. The Sabbath is near. Joseph of Arimathea takes the body of Jesus and lays it in an unused tomb. The women make preparations for anointing His body with spices and ointments once the Sabbath is over.

Luke 24:1-12

The women have gone to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body. They are startled to see **the stone had been rolled away from the entrance and the body of the Lord Jesus was gone**. Then comes the question that rocks their world: **Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive?** We have that problem too. We look to the world for the answers to life's dilemmas—a world that is dead, spinning in darkness, corrupt and decayed—when the risen, alive Christ is waiting to give us life. If we would just **remember what He has told us!** They did remember and ran back to **tell everyone else what had happened**. It sounded like nonsense, but Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look. He went home, wondering what had happened. Are we desperate enough to take what looks like nonsense and allow it to saturate our hearts. Listen to the Living Lord: "Come to me, all of you who are weary, and I will give you rest" (*Matthew 11:28*). Our greatest gift this Christmas would be to learn the sense of wonder as we wander out under the sky. "*Why Jesus our Savior did come for to die. For poor on'ry people like you and like I.*"

APPLY

A

Be comfortable with some silence as people think back to the sermon or reread the text. Answer honestly. You don't have to answer every question.

1. What stuck out to you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text?
2. Why does Pilate give in to the request of crowd to kill Jesus?
3. There are many pieces that must fall into place for the sentencing of Jesus to take place the way it did. What can we conclude about the sovereignty of God in Jesus's death and resurrection?
4. The angel appears to the women at the tomb and tells them what has happened — Jesus is alive, just as he said! The women believed them and went to tell the disciples, who questioned what was happening? What reactions do we see from people today upon hearing that Jesus was raised from the dead?

R

RESPOND

The purpose of this section is to take action with the truths you're learning. Answer honestly. Find someone who will hold you accountable to living out your response to Scripture.

1. Take a moment to think about Jesus's sentencing (the beatings and embarrassment he endured), about the abandonment of his friends and disciples, and about Jesus's crucifixion (the mocking and pain he suffered). Let it sink in the weight of all those things.

Now think about the pronouncement of his resurrection. That Jesus did exactly what he said he would do. Let the beauty of God's faithfulness to unfaithful people sink in.

Reflect and meditate on these things. Record any thoughts or prayers of praise that come to mind.

2. It is beautiful enough for God to be born in the form of a baby to walk among us, but it should floor us to consider his purpose was to bring salvation to the world through the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection.

How does taking time to think about Jesus as Savior impact how you view this advent season? Share this with your family and/or your friends this week.