SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

Luke

Chapter Twenty-Three, Verses 1–56

The Innocent One Crucified — a governor who found no guilt, a murderer set free, a thief welcomed into Paradise, and a borrowed tomb

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

Pilate says three times that he finds no guilt in Jesus, Herod mocks Him, and the crowd trades Him for a murderer; on the cross He prays for His killers, promises Paradise to a dying thief, and commits His spirit to the Father — and a good man lays His body in a new tomb. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind Luke's key words.

THE PASSAGE

Luke 23:1–56

trial · exchange · cross · death · tomb

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Six movements from Pilate's judgment seat to Joseph's tomb

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"And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."" — Luke 23:43

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Luke 23:1–56

The Innocent One Crucified — Pilate, Herod, Barabbas and the Skull — the day the Righteous One died for the unrighteous

† How to Read This Study

This study walks Luke 23 in 6 movements, in Luke's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where Luke is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions; Command / instruction; Key repeated word; Sin / warning; Promise / blessing; Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · LUKE 23:34

"But Jesus was saying, "△ Father, forgive them; for ⚠ they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves."

† Before the Passage

Luke 22 ended at daybreak with the Council of elders, chief priests and scribes asking Jesus, "Are You the Son of God, then?" and hearing Him say, "Yes, I am" (22:70). That was blasphemy to them, and blasphemy deserved death. But, as Guzik notes, "The Roman government did not allow the Jewish leaders the authority to execute a criminal." So chapter 23 opens with "the whole body of them" marching Him to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate (v. 1), and the charge changes from blasphemy to politics: misleading the nation, forbidding taxes, claiming to be a king (v. 2).

Luke is the Gospel of the careful historian (1:1–4), and here he shows his case like a lawyer. Pilate declares Jesus innocent three times (vv. 4, 14, 22); Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee who had beheaded John the Baptist (9:9), finds nothing deserving death (v. 15); one of the crucified criminals says "this man has done nothing wrong" (v. 41); and the centurion at the cross says, "Certainly this man was innocent" (v. 47). Only

Luke tells us of the hearing before Herod, the women of Jerusalem on the road, the prayer "Father, forgive them," and the thief who asked to be remembered.

The day is Passover Friday, "the preparation day" before the Sabbath (v. 54). Tens of thousands of pilgrims fill Jerusalem; Pilate, who usually lived at Caesarea on the coast, is in the city to keep order, and Herod has come up for the feast too (v. 7). The place of execution, "The Skull" (v. 33), lay outside the city (Hebrews 13:12); the tomb was cut into rock nearby. Luke's times are exact: the sixth hour (noon) to the ninth hour (3 p.m.) the land is dark (v. 44).

Long before, Isaiah wrote of the Servant who "poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12). Jesus quoted that verse the night before (22:37). In Luke 23 it happens before our eyes: He is crucified between criminals, He intercedes for those who nail Him there, and He dies with the words of Psalm 31:5 on His lips.

I
MOVEMENT

LUKE 23:1–12

I Find No Guilt in This Man

False charges before Pilate, silence before Herod, and two enemies made friends

> 1 *Then the whole body of them got up and brought Him before Pilate.* 2 *And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found* ↻ *this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."* 3 *So Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He answered him and said, "It is as you say."* 4 *Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "*△ *I find no guilt in this man."* 5 *But they kept on insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee even as far as this place."* 6 *When Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a Galilean.* 7 *And when he learned that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time.* 8 *Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him.* 9 *And he questioned Him at some length; but* △ *He answered him nothing.* 10 *And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently.* 11 *And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate.* 12 *Now* ⚠ *Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been enemies with each other.*
>
> LUKE 23:1–12

FIGURE · SIX VERDICTS OF INNOCENCE



Read down the left: governor, king, criminal and soldier all say Jesus is innocent — and on the right, the only voice that prevails is the crowd's.

αἴτιον

AITION · "GUILT, CAUSE" · G159

A legal word: the ground or cause for a charge — the neuter of *aitios*, "responsible" (Strong's lists the noun as G158; biblehub tags these verses G159). Luke puts it three times on Pilate's lips — "I find no guilt (*aition*) in this man" (vv. 4, 14, 22); the KJV renders it "fault." Hebrews 5:9 uses the same word of Christ, "the source of eternal salvation." Pilate is not saying Jesus is a good man; he is saying, as a Roman judge, that the case has no legal ground. The charge sheet of verse 2 is empty.

ἐξουθενήσας

EXOUTHENĒSAS · "TREATING WITH CONTEMPT" · G1848

From *ouden*, "nothing": to make nothing of someone, to treat him as a zero. Herod had wanted to see Jesus "for a long time" (v. 8), hoping for a sign; when Jesus gave him no answer, Herod and his soldiers made Him nothing (v. 11). Peter uses the same verb of "the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS" (Acts 4:11). The one they treated as nothing is the cornerstone.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reminds us why the Council needed Pilate at all: "The Roman government did not allow the Jewish leaders the authority to execute a criminal." So the charge was rewritten as treason — misleading the nation, forbidding taxes, claiming a crown. Pilate saw through it and said so, but he "remained perplexed and unwilling to stand behind his verdict that Jesus was not guilty," and the word Galilee gave him an exit: send the prisoner to Herod. Herod had long wanted to see Jesus, "Yet for all this, Herod's interest in Jesus was not sincere and was to his condemnation, not his praise." And the two rulers' new friendship had one foundation: "They found no common ground except their opposition to Jesus."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

In "Jesus on Trial" (19 June 2016) Sproul takes the charges one at a time. Of the claim that Jesus forbade paying taxes to Caesar he says simply, "That was not true" — Jesus had already settled that question in the temple (20:20–25). Pilate examined Him and declared the charges empty, and Sproul presses us to ask the governor's own question: "Why did he find no fault in Him?" When the accusers mentioned Galilee, Pilate passed the problem to Herod. Sproul pictures Herod treating the prisoner like a court magician, asking, "Will You give sight to a blind man or the hearing to the deaf?" Jesus gave him nothing — no sign and no word.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry notes that Pilate soon tired of the case — he "was already sick of the cause, and desirous to rid his hands of it" — and so seized on the word Galilee. Herod, who had long wished to see a miracle, found Jesus silent and turned to mockery; of Herod and his soldiers Henry writes, "He was ringleader in that abuse." And he finds a strange grace in the rulers' reconciliation: "Christ is the great peace-maker; both Pilate and Herod owned his innocency." The very men who would not save Him had to confess that He had done nothing worthy of death.

II
MOVEMENT

LUKE 23:13–25

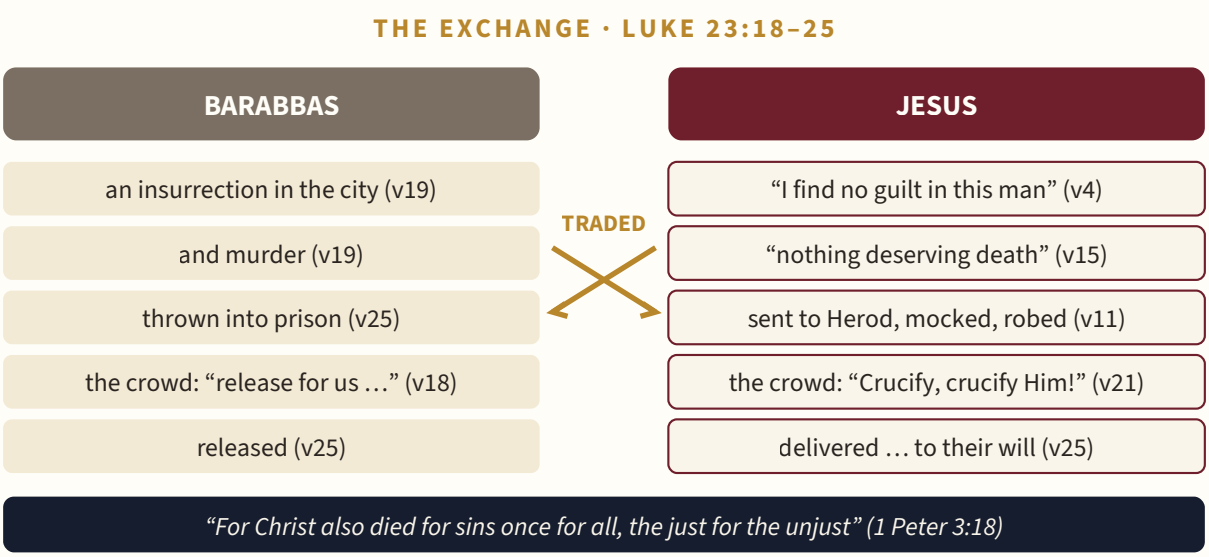
Release for Us Barabbas

Three verdicts of innocence, a crowd that prevails, and a murderer set free

13 *Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people,* 14 *and said to them, "You brought* ↻ *this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you,* △ *I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him.* 15 *"No, nor has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; and behold,* △ *nothing deserving death has been done by Him.* 16 *"Therefore I will punish Him and* ↻ *release Him."* 17 *[Now he was obliged to* ↻ *release to them at the feast one prisoner.]* 18 *But they cried out all together, saying, "*⚠ *Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!"* 19 *(He was one who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection made in the city, and for murder.)* 20 *Pilate, wanting to* ↻ *release Jesus, addressed them again,* 21 *but they kept on calling out, saying, "*⚠ *Crucify, crucify Him!"* 22 *And he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has* ↻ *this man done? I have found in Him no guilt demanding death; therefore I will punish Him and* ↻ *release Him."* 23 *But they were insistent, with loud voices asking that He be crucified. And*

> *their voices began to prevail.* [24] *And Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand be granted.* [25] *And he* ↻ *released the man they were asking for who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, but* ⚠ *he delivered Jesus to their will.*
>
> LUKE 23:13–25

FIGURE · THE EXCHANGE



Follow the crossed arrows: the guilty rebel walks out of prison, and the innocent Jesus takes the cross that was waiting for him.

Βαραββᾶς

BARABBAS · "SON OF THE FATHER" · G912

An Aramaic name: *bar*, "son," and *abba*, "father." Sproul: "Ironically, the name meant "son of the father."" Luke tells us only what he did — insurrection and murder (vv. 19, 25). Peter later put the choice to the same city: "you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you" (Acts 3:14). One son of a father went free because the true Son of the Father was condemned.

σταύρου

STAUROU · "CRUCIFY!" · G4717

Stauroō, to fix to a *stauros*, a stake or cross. Verse 21 is a present imperative repeated — "Crucify, crucify Him!" — the shout of a mob that will not stop. Verse 23 adds that "they were insistent, with loud voices," and "their voices began to prevail" (*katischyō*, to overpower). Jesus had told the twelve He would be handed over to the Gentiles (18:32); here the hand-over happens, by acclamation.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik traces Pilate's attempts to escape. His offer to "punish" Jesus was not mild — "Pilate did not suggest a light punishment for Jesus." Then he reached for the Passover custom of releasing a prisoner: "Pilate believed he had a way for Jesus to escape death." But the crowd had other plans: "The crowd rejected Jesus and embraced Barabbas." Guzik's verdict on the governor fits in a sentence: "Because of this, Pilate did not find the courage to oppose both the religious leaders and the crowd." Yet beneath "their will" in verse 25, Guzik sees another will at work — the Father's plan, which the Son had embraced in Gethsemane.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul lingers on the prisoner's name: "Ironically, the name meant "son of the father."" The crowd was offered a choice between two sons of the father — a rebel who had shed blood, and the Son who had healed their sick — and they chose the rebel. Three times Pilate declared Jesus innocent, and the people answered, in Sproul's telling, "With one voice they hollered: "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"" His judgment on the judge is unsparing: "Pilate, in the supreme act of cowardice, acquiesced to the cries of the people." The man who had the power to free an innocent man handed Him over to the mob.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry follows the governor's wavering. Before the rulers and the people Pilate cleared Him plainly — "Pilate solemnly protests that he believes he has done nothing worthy of death or of bonds" — and Herod had found no crime either. Yet in the same breath Pilate offered to chastise Him, hoping a flogging would satisfy the crowd. It did not. They demanded Barabbas, a rebel and murderer, and cried for crucifixion, and the judge who had declared the prisoner innocent yielded and gave Jesus up to their will.

III
MOVEMENT

LUKE 23:26–31

Weep for Yourselves

Simon of Cyrene, the daughters of Jerusalem, and the green tree and the dry

26 *When they led Him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus.* 27 *And following Him was a large crowd of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting Him.* 28 *But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.* 29 *"For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.'* 30 *"Then they will begin TO SAY TO THE MOUNTAINS, 'FALL ON US,' AND TO THE HILLS, 'COVER US.'* 31 *"For if they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"*

LUKE 23:26–31

"Also the high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, will be destroyed; Thorn and thistle will grow on their altars; Then they will say to the mountains, "Cover us!" And to the hills, "Fall on us!""

HOSEA 10:8

ὄπισθεν

OPISTHEN · "BEHIND" · G3693

Simon carried the cross "behind Jesus" (v. 26) — *opisthen*, "after, at the back of." Luke alone adds the word, and it echoes Jesus' call: "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me" (9:23). A stranger from North Africa, pressed into service, becomes the first picture of the disciple's road.

ὑγρός · ξηρός

HYGROS · XĒROS · "GREEN · DRY" · G5200, G3584

Hygros is moist, sappy, living wood — its only New Testament use is here; *xēros* is dried out, withered, ready for burning. Green wood is hard to set alight; dry wood catches at once. If Rome does this to Jesus — innocent, alive, the green tree — what will happen to a guilty city and a dried-up generation? Sproul: "His wood was green." "We are the dry wood."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik explains Simon simply: "The weakened condition of Jesus required this." Up all night, beaten and scourged, Jesus could not carry the beam. Simon, a pilgrim coming in from the country, had no vote: "Yet, the Romans were the law, and Simon was not given a choice." Guzik wonders whether the errand led to faith, since Mark names his sons as men the church knew (Mark 15:21). The crowd was normal — "It was customary for a great multitude to follow a condemned criminal on his way to crucifixion" — and the women's grief was right: "With good reason, certain women mourned and lamented when they saw Jesus being treated in this fashion." But Jesus turned their tears toward the judgment coming on Jerusalem.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

In "The Crucifixion (Part 1)" (3 July 2016) Sproul sees the procession leaving the walls as the scapegoat driven outside the camp on the Day of Atonement. On Simon he insists on providence: "It was God, not the soldier, who ultimately chose this man, Simon, to carry the cross of Jesus." Yet the errand bought him nothing: "I do not think that Simon's act of bearing the cross for Jesus earned him one scintilla of merit before God." Jesus' word to the women looks ahead to Jerusalem's destruction and to Revelation 6, where men beg the mountains to fall on them. Then the proverb: "His wood was green." "He was not kindling for God's wrath." But "We are the dry wood."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's morning reading on verse 26 (*Morning and Evening*, 5 April) sees in Simon the whole church walking behind its Lord. "He bears a cross, not that you may escape it, but that you may endure it." The believer is spared the curse but not the load: "Christ exempts you from sin, but not from sorrow." Yet the road is not lonely — "You have blessed company; your path is marked with the footprints of your Lord" — and the weight is not shared evenly: "you do but carry the light end of the cross, Christ bore the heavier end." So he urges Christians not to shrink from it, for the burden is short and the reward lasting.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry lets the women weep, but rightly. Jesus does not scorn their tears — "Christ's tears should set us a weeping" — yet He redirects them: "When with an eye of faith we behold Christ crucified we ought to weep, not for him, but for ourselves." The coming days when the barren would be called blessed show "the vanity of the creature and the uncertainty of its comforts." And the proverb of the trees argues from the lesser to the greater: if the innocent Son suffers so, judgment on a dry and fruitless city will be worse.

IV
MOVEMENT

LUKE 23:32–43

Today You Shall Be with Me in Paradise

Crucified between criminals, praying for His killers, and opening Paradise to a thief

32 *Two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with Him.* 33 *When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.* 34 *But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.* 35 *And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One."* 36 *The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine,* 37 *and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!"* 38 *Now there was also an inscription above Him, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."* 39 *One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!"* 40 *But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?* 41 *"And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."* 42 *And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"* 43 *And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."*

LUKE 23:32–43

"They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots."

PSALM 22:18

FIGURE · THREE WORDS FROM THE CROSS

THE THREE WORDS FROM THE CROSS IN LUKE

FOR HIS ENEMIES 23:34	FOR A SINNER 23:43	TO HIS FATHER 23:46
"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."	*"Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."*	*"Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT."*
a priest interceding	a King opening Paradise	a Son at rest (Psalm 31:5)

He begins and ends with "Father"

The other four sayings are in Matthew, Mark and John:
"My God, My God," "Woman, behold, your son," "I am thirsty," "It is finished."

Luke records three of Jesus' seven sayings on the cross — one for His enemies, one for a sinner, one to His Father — and two of them begin with "Father."

ἄφες

APHES · "FORGIVE" · G863

The imperative of *aphiēmi*, to send away, release, let go — the verb of the Lord's Prayer, "forgive us our sins" (11:4), and of Jesus' teaching to forgive "seven times a day" (17:4). Luke 23:34 is the first of His sayings on the cross, and Luke writes that Jesus "was saying" it (imperfect): He kept on praying it. Stephen will pray the same way as the stones fall: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" (Acts 7:60).

παράδεισος

PARADEISOS · "PARADISE" · G3857

A Persian loan-word for a walled garden or royal park. The Greek Old Testament used it for the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8). Only three New Testament uses: here; "caught up into Paradise" (2 Corinthians 12:4); and "the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7). The thief asked to be remembered some day; Jesus answered with a garden, His own company, and a date — "today" (*sēmeron*).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik will not let us see Jesus as a victim: "The most significant thing about Jesus' suffering was that He was not, in any sense, the victim of circumstances." "It could be rightly said that love kept Jesus on the cross, not nails." The prayer for His killers was nothing new: "Jesus probably prayed in this manner for His enemies all through His ministry." Around Him was only scorn — "Jesus was not honored or encouraged as He hung on the cross" — from rulers, soldiers and a criminal. Yet the other criminal, who had joined the mockery at first (Matthew 27:44), turned: he feared God, owned his guilt, confessed Jesus' innocence and asked to be remembered, and Jesus promised him Paradise that day.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

In "The Crucifixion (Part 2)" (24 July 2016) Sproul calls the first word from the cross priestly: "He was acting in intercession as a priest for His tormentors, pleading for their forgiveness." Their ignorance was real but not innocent; had they known "the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8), they would not have crucified Him. The mockers all said one thing: "The point of the mockery was very simple: Jesus had been able to save other people, but He was not able to save Himself." Sproul answers, "the reason Jesus did not save Himself was not because He could not do it." "It is because of the covenant of redemption that Jesus stayed on the cross." And "this very day" leaves no room for soul sleep.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon preached verse 34 as "The First Cry from the Cross" (24 Oct 1869). Under the nails, Jesus kept praying: "The Lamb of God was silent to men, but he was not silent to God." That prayer is a window into His work in heaven now — "Christ is no careless advocate for his people" — and a charter for the church: "Not for thyself, O church, dost thou exist, any more than Christ existed for himself." In "The Dying Thief in a New Light" (No. 1881) he notes the thief heard no sermon; the sight of the suffering Lord won him. "Never did a poor sinner trust Christ too much." "This robber breakfasted with the devil, but he dined with Christ on earth, and supped with him in Paradise."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry reads Christ's words on the cross as more than they first appear: "Now the sayings of Christ upon the cross as well as his sufferings had a further intention than they seemed to have." The prayer for His crucifiers shows what He died for: "The great thing which Christ died to purchase and procure for us is the forgiveness of sin." The penitent thief proves that great sinners who truly repent find pardon through Christ, and that "While there is life there is hope, and while there is hope there is room for prayer." But Henry adds a warning: "This gives no encouragement to any to put off their repentance to their death-bed."

V
MOVEMENT

LUKE 23:44–49

Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

Darkness at noon, a torn veil, a loud cry, and a centurion's verdict

44 It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, 45 because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. 46 And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." Having said this, He breathed His last. 47 Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent." 48 And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts. 49 And all His acquaintances and the women who accompanied Him from Galilee were standing at a distance, seeing these things.

LUKE 23:44–49

"Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, O LORD, God of truth."

PSALM 31:5

καταπέτασμα

KATAPETASMA · "VEIL" · G2665

From *kata*, "down," and *petannymi*, "to spread": a curtain hung down. In the Greek Old Testament it names the curtain before the holy of holies (Exodus 26:31–33), which only the high priest passed, once a year, with blood (Leviticus 16). Six New Testament uses: the three Gospel accounts of the tearing, and three in Hebrews, which explains it — we enter "through the veil, that is, His flesh" (Hebrews 10:20).

παρατίθεμαι

PARATITHEMAI · "I COMMIT" · G3908

To place beside, to set before, to hand over for safekeeping — a deposit entrusted to a guardian. Jesus prays Psalm 31:5 and adds the word "Father." Luke uses the verb again when Paul and Barnabas "commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed" (Acts 14:23), and Peter tells suffering believers to do the same with their souls (1 Peter 4:19). Then Luke says simply, "He breathed His last" (*ekpneō*).

δίκαιος

DIKAIOS · "INNOCENT, RIGHTEOUS" · G1342

The centurion says Jesus was *dikaios* (v. 47) — just, righteous; the NASB renders it "innocent," the KJV "a righteous man." Both are right: in a courtroom the righteous man is the one the law cannot convict. Luke uses the same word of Joseph a few verses later (v. 50). Peter calls Jesus "the Holy and Righteous One" (Acts 3:14), and he writes that Christ died "the just (*dikaios*) for the unjust" (1 Peter 3:18).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reads the darkness as creation's grief: "The remarkable darkness all over the earth showed the agony of creation itself in the Creator's suffering." The torn veil means the way into God's presence now stands open through the cross. The loud cry and the last words show a Man in command of His own death: "No one took His life from Him; He gave it up when His work was finished." So we should not stand at the cross in pity: "Jesus is not a victim we should pity, but a conqueror we should admire." And the centurion's praise carries weight because he knew what dying men looked like: "Surely, this centurion had seen many people crucified before."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

In "Jesus Dies" (7 Aug 2016) Sproul hears in the noon darkness a reversal of creation's first word, "Let there be light": "God turned out the lights." "It was not a momentary blotting of the sun." Darkness in Scripture means judgment, and it silenced Calvary: "Every mouth was silenced as the people were plunged into total darkness." Then the veil, torn from the top down: "He tore down the sign that said no admittance." "For the first time since the fall, we could go home, without shame or fear, to the presence of God." Most astonishing of all, "Jesus committed His spirit into the hands of the One who had just poured out every drop of wrath upon Him."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "Our Lord's Last Cry from the Cross" (9 June 1889) notices that Jesus died quoting Psalm 31:5: "He was as full of Scripture as the fleece of Gideon was full of dew." The lesson for our prayers: "There are no prayers so good as those that are full of the Word of God." Jesus added one word to David's line — "Father" — and Spurgeon draws from it that, for the believer, dying is going home to the Father who receives His children. Because the work is done — "Redemption is all accomplished; it is all complete; it is all perfect" — a Christian can commit his spirit to God every day, in storms and pain as well as at death.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry sees in the torn veil the end of an age: "By this rending of the veil was signified the taking away of the ceremonial law." Jesus' last words, borrowed from Psalm 31, are a pattern for believers: "Christ has hereby left us an example, has fitted those words of David to the purpose of dying saints." The centurion's confession shines because of who made it — "He was a Roman, a Gentile, a stranger to the consolations of Israel" — and the crowds went home stricken, for "They looked upon it as a wicked thing to put him to death."

VI
MOVEMENT

LUKE 23:50–56

Laid in a Tomb Cut into the Rock

Joseph of Arimathea, a borrowed grave, and women who rested on the Sabbath

50 And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man 51 (he had not consented to their plan and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was ☆ waiting for the kingdom of God; 52 ⟳ this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, ◷ where no one had ever lain. 54 It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. 55 Now the women who had come with Him out of Galilee followed, and saw the tomb and how His body was laid. 56 Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And ◷ on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

LUKE 23:50–56

προσεδέχετο

PROSEDECHETO · "WAS WAITING FOR" · G4327

To receive, to look for, to wait expectantly. Luke uses it for the faithful remnant at the start of his Gospel — Simeon "looking for the consolation of Israel," and Anna's friends "looking for the redemption of Jerusalem" (2:25, 38) — and here for Joseph, "waiting for the kingdom of God" (v. 51). The Gospel that opened with waiting Israelites at the temple closes its passion story with one more, at a tomb.

παρασκευή

PARASKEUĒ · "PREPARATION DAY" · G3904

Literally "a getting ready": the day before the Sabbath, when food was cooked and work finished before sunset. In Jewish use it became the name for Friday. Luke's note — "the Sabbath was about to begin" (v. 54) — explains the haste: the body had to be in the tomb before dark, so the women watched where it lay, went home, prepared spices, and "rested according to the commandment" (v. 56).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik honors Joseph's particular gift: "Joseph did not serve Jesus in many ways, but he did serve Him in ways no one else did or could." The lesson reaches every disciple: "We must serve God in whatever way we can." A member of the Council who had not consented to its plan, Joseph risked his standing by going to Pilate. The burial was hurried because sunset would begin the Sabbath — "They were unable to properly prepare the body of Jesus for burial because of the coming Sabbath" — so the women went home to prepare spices. And Guzik adds a smile: "It was quite a sacrifice for Joseph of Arimathea to give his tomb to Jesus, but Jesus would only use it for a few days."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

In "The Resurrection" (25 Sept 2016) Sproul argues that the turn from humiliation to exaltation began not on Sunday morning but at the burial. The bodies of men executed as traitors were normally left to the vultures; God would not let His Son be treated so. "Joseph was a secret disciple, the Scriptures tell us, along with another secret disciple, also a member of the Sanhedrin" — Nicodemus (John 19:38–39). "Through the providence of God, whose hand was on the heart of Pilate," the request was granted. With a hundred pounds of spices, it was, Sproul says, "lavish treatment." And the women, having seen the place, went home and rested on the Sabbath.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry observes that Joseph sat in the Council that condemned Jesus but had not consented to its plan (v. 51), and draws a rule from it: "That evil counsel or deed to which we have not consented shall not be reckoned our act." He honors the women who, grieving, still prepared spices — "Weeping must not hinder sowing" — and who then rested on the Sabbath, because "Our worldly affairs must be so ordered that they may not hinder us from our sabbath work."

VII
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From Isaiah's Servant to the open way into the holy place

"Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors."

ISAIAH 53:12

"For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment."

LUKE 22:37

"But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses."

ACTS 3:14–15

"And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed. When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb."

ACTS 13:28–29

> *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*
>
> ROMANS 5:8

> *"Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,"*
>
> HEBREWS 10:19–20

> *"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;"*
>
> 1 PETER 3:18

> *"and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;"*
>
> REVELATION 6:16

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul links Jesus' word to the women (v. 30) with Revelation 6, where at the end of history men again beg the mountains to fall on them; the judgment that fell on Jerusalem in the first century is a preview of the wrath of the Lamb.

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one chapter. Guzik walks the text and refuses to let us pity Jesus as a victim; Sproul presses the history and the doctrine — Barabbas's name, priestly intercession, the covenant of redemption, the torn veil; Spurgeon pleads with sinners to trust the Christ who prayed for His killers; Henry draws counsel from every verse. They agree that the Innocent One died willingly, in the place of the guilty.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · Pilate and Herod	Rome alone could execute; Herod's interest was insincere; enemies united only against Jesus.	"That was not true" — the charges were empty; Herod wanted a magic show.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Pilate sick of the cause; Herod ringleader in abuse; both owned His innocence.
II · Barabbas	No light punishment; the Passover custom failed; Pilate lacked courage.	Barabbas means "son of the father"; Pilate's supreme act of cowardice.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Pilate protests His innocence, offers a flogging, then yields to the crowd.
III · The road	Jesus too weak to carry it; Simon had no choice; the women rightly mourned.	God chose Simon, but no merit earned; Jesus the green wood, we the dry.	Carry the light end of the cross — Christ bore the heavier end.	Weep not for Him but for yourselves; the vanity of earthly comforts.
IV · The cross and the thief	Not a victim; love, not nails, held Him there.	A priest interceding; He would not save Himself; Paradise "this very day."	Silent to men, not to God; the robber dined with Christ.	He died to purchase forgiveness; room for prayer — but don't delay repentance.
V · Darkness and death	Creation in agony; a conqueror to admire, not a victim to pity.	God turned out the lights; He tore down the "no admittance" sign.	Full of Scripture as Gideon's fleece of dew; dying is going home.	The veil ends the ceremonial law; a Gentile's confession.
VI · The burial	Joseph served as no one else could; Jesus used the tomb only a few days.	Exaltation begins at the burial; a secret disciple, lavish spices.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Unconsented evil is not our act; weeping must not hinder sowing.

LUKE 23:1–56 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **Six witnesses say "innocent."** Pilate three times (vv4, 14, 22), Herod (v15), a dying criminal (v41) and a Roman centurion (v47). Luke builds his case like a lawyer: the One who died was guilty of nothing. THE TEXT
- **The charge sheet is empty.** *Aition* (vv4, 14, 22) is a legal word — the ground for a charge. Sproul on the tax accusation: "That was not true." THE GREEK
- **Enemies make friends over Jesus.** Guzik: "They found no common ground except their opposition to Jesus." Herod wanted a show and got silence (v9). GUZIK
- **A son of the father goes free.** Bar-abbas means "son of the father." Sproul: "Ironically, the name meant "son of the father."" The guilty one walks out; the true Son takes his place. SPROUL
- **Cowardice is a choice.** Sproul: "Pilate, in the supreme act of cowardice, acquiesced to the cries of the people." Guzik: he "did not find the courage." Knowing the truth is not the same as standing on it. SPROUL
- **The light end of the cross.** Spurgeon on Simon: "you do but carry the light end of the cross, Christ bore the heavier end." The disciple walks "behind Jesus" (v26; 9:23). SPURGEON

- **Love kept Him there.** Guzik: "love kept Jesus on the cross, not nails." Sproul: He did not save Himself "not because He could not do it" but because of the covenant of redemption. GUZIK
- **He prayed for the men driving the nails.** "Father, forgive them" (v34) — Spurgeon: "The Lamb of God was silent to men, but he was not silent to God." Stephen prayed the same way (Acts 7:60). SPURGEON
- **Today, Paradise.** The thief asked to be remembered some day; Jesus answered with "today," "with Me," and "Paradise" (v43). Sproul: no room for soul sleep. THE GREEK
- **The veil came down from God's side.** Sproul: "He tore down the sign that said no admittance." Hebrews 10:20 — the way is opened "through the veil, that is, His flesh." SPROUL

† Questions for the Table

1 **Pilate knew Jesus was innocent and still gave in to the crowd. Where do I know what is right but go along with the loudest voices around me?**

Knowing the truth is not the same as standing on it.

23:4, 20–25; Prov 29:25

2 **Barabbas walked out free because Jesus took his place. What would change in me this week if I really saw myself as Barabbas?**

The just for the unjust.

23:18–25; 1 Pet 3:18

3 **Simon was forced to carry a cross he did not choose. What burden am I carrying that I can carry "behind Jesus"?**

You do but carry the light end of the cross (Spurgeon).

23:26; 9:23

4 **Jesus prayed "Father, forgive them" for men who were not sorry. Who is the person I most need to pray that prayer for?**

He kept on praying it.

23:34; Acts 7:60

5 **The thief had no time to clean up his life — only to fear God, own his guilt and ask. What keeps me from coming to Jesus that simply?**

Never did a poor sinner trust Christ too much (Spurgeon).

23:40–43

6 **Joseph served Jesus in a way no one else could. What can I give Jesus that only I am in a position to give?**

We must serve God in whatever way we can (Guzik).

23:50–53

Luke 23 puts the whole world on trial and finds only one innocent man in it. Pilate hands Him over to the crowd's will, the crowd trades Him for a murderer, and He dies praying for them all. If you have ever felt like Barabbas or the thief, this chapter is for you: the Innocent One took your place, and Paradise opened for a dying criminal who simply asked to be remembered.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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