

Bible Study Class
Clayton Presbyterian Church
Lesson 25 Jesus
The Last Week of the Life of Jesus VII

Opening prayer Lord, we thank you for the most unlikely plan of sending Your Son to save us from our sins. In Jesus' name Amen.

Today's lesson comes all of the gospels as well as some cross references back to the Old Testament.

The Third Stage of the Jewish Trial: Jesus is formerly Condemned by the Sanhedrin and Led to Pilate

Read Luke 22: 66-71

This daytime meeting of the Sanhedrin council was necessary because by the Sanhedrin's own laws and regulations the night trial described in Matthew 26:57-68 was illegal. The Jewish leaders were breaking many of their laws and traditions. One of the most obvious was that to condemn someone they should have waited overnight. This was to allow mercy to arise. They usually didn't conduct trials during Passover.

1. What final request do the chief priests, elders and scribes make of Jesus? They wanted Him to claim to be the Messiah. What is His answer? Jesus warned them that though they sat in judgment of Him now, He would one day sit in judgment of them - and with a far more binding judgment.
2. Upon hearing His response, what does the council do with Jesus? They decide they don't need any witnesses. Why? They had heard Him themselves.

Read Luke 23:1-5

3. Where and to whom did the Jews take Jesus? They took Him to Pilate. The Roman government did not allow the Jewish leaders the authority to execute a criminal. The religious leaders sent Jesus to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor over the region of Judea. Why did the Jews not enter into the place where they had taken Him? They couldn't enter or they would be unclean and couldn't observe Passover.
4. What accusations did the Jews make against Jesus? Pilate would be unconcerned with the accusation of blasphemy before the religious council. They brought Pilate three false accusations: That Jesus was a revolutionary. That Jesus incited the people not to pay their taxes. That Jesus claimed to be a king in opposition to Caesar.

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5. What question did Pilate ask of Jesus? Are you the King of the Jews? Based on His appearance, he probably asked this somewhat sarcastically. All four Gospels record these words according to Fourfold. What was His response? So, you say.

6. What conclusion did Pilate reach concerning Jesus? Though Pilate was a cruel, ruthless man he wasn't stupid. He could see through the motives of the religious leaders and had no problem in estimating Jesus and the whole situation by the declaration, "I find no fault in this Man."

Read Luke 23: 6-12

7. Why was Jesus sent to Herod? Since Jesus was from Galilee, Herod was the governor over that area. Pilate wanted to rid of the problem. What was Herod's reaction on seeing Him? He was glad because He had wanted to see Jesus for a long time. His only interest was a desire to be amused and entertained. This son of Herod the Great never took Jesus seriously. Remember that neither Pilate nor Herod lived in Jerusalem, they were both here because of Passover a Jewish holiday.

8. What was Jesus' reaction to Herod's questioning? Spurgeon tells us Herod thought, "Let's hear an answer from the Great Teacher! Let's see a miracle from the Miracle Man!" Jesus may have thought in response, "I have nothing for you, the murderer of My cousin John the Baptist." "He who answered blind beggars when they cried for mercy is silent to a prince who only seeks to gratify his own irreverent curiosity." As a result, what did Herod and his men of war do with Jesus? "The mockery made it plain that Herod did not take the charge seriously. That is the really frightening thing about the incident. With the Son of God before him Herod could only jest." (Morris) Herod and Pilate became friends that day. They had been enemies before this, but now they were both opposed to Jesus. David Guzik points out that at this point in the chapter there are three groups who hated and rejected Jesus. Because of fear and envy the religious leaders hated Jesus. Pilate knew something of who Jesus was, but was unwilling to make an unpopular stand for Him. Herod didn't even take Jesus seriously; he was only interested in amusement and entertainment.

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Read Luke 23:13-25

9. What practice in relation to prisoners, took place at Passover? No one knows when or by whom this custom was introduced, but similar customs were not unknown. It was tradition that one prisoner be released.

10. Who was Barabbas? Josephus tells us that there had been an insurrection against Pilate's government about that time caused by his taking money from the temple treasury for the construction of an aqueduct. This may have been the affair here referred to, for in it many lost their lives. According to an article in Christianity Today, Barabbas and Jesus stand accused of the same crime: sedition, insurrection, treason.

11. What was the response of the mob when Pilate asked them if he should release Jesus? They said crucify him. While Pilate imagined that the crowd would be sympathetic, he was wrong. The makeup of this mob is really the educated guesses of commentators but probably it was followers of the scribes and Pharisees as well as some of Barabbas' group. This crowd was probably not the pilgrims who welcomed Jesus on Palm Sunday, but we don't know.

Matthew 27:19 Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream." English Standard Version.

12. What warning had Pilate's wife given him concerning Jesus? This message of Pilate's wife suggests that the name and face of Jesus were not unknown to Pilate's household. Pilate would be much influenced by such a message. Some Romans paid particular attention to dreams.

13. Even though Pilate had "washed his hands" of the matter, what did he allow to be done with Jesus? He allowed his soldiers to crucify Jesus. While Pilate wasn't a Jew he certainly knew about a lot of Jewish customs. The following passage is part of the ritual prescribed when a murdered man was found in a field.

Deuteronomy 21: 6-9 Then all the elders of the town nearest the body shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley, and they shall declare: "Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it done. Accept this atonement for your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, Lord, and do not

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hold your people guilty of the blood of an innocent person." Then the bloodshed will be atoned for, and you will have purged from yourselves the guilt of shedding innocent blood, since you have done what is right in the eyes of the Lord.

14. What did the soldiers do to Jesus before they led Him away to be crucified? We learn from Josephus and others that the law required that those about to be crucified should first be scourged. Pilate had hoped that scourging would suffice. The scourge was made of thongs loaded at the extremity with pieces of bone or metal. The condemned person was stripped and fastened to a low post, this bending the back so as to stretch the skin. Blood spurted at the first blow. This scourging was supposed to shorten the time before the person died on the cross. They also mocked him.

The Remorse and Suicide of Judas

Read Matthew 27:3-10

15. Upon seeing that Jesus was condemned to die, what did Judas do? He goes back to the council, returns the money and tells them that he has betrayed an innocent man. He finds them in the temple doing their regular morning rituals. He goes out and hangs himself.

16. What was done with the money Judas had been given to betray Jesus? The law of God made no provision as to the uses of blood money; it was the tradition of the elders which forbade to put it into the treasury. Theirs was a strange conscience indeed, which could take out the Lord's money under the then existing Jewish theocratic government, all public money was the Lord's money and spend it for blood, but when it was so spent, they could not put it back! Moreover, theirs was a strange admission. If the money given to Judas was properly expended for the arrest of a real criminal, it was justice money, and not blood money at all. The money was used to buy a Potters Field which was a cemetery for foreigners. There is a clerical error in verse 9, in Greek the names Jeremiah and Zechariah differ by only two letters. The prophecy referred to comes from

Zechariah 11:12-13 I told them, "If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it." So, they paid me thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—the handsome price at which they valued me! So, I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter at the house of the Lord. Even in those times, this was an insulting wage.

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On the Way to the Cross

Read Luke 23:26-33

17. Who was compelled to carry the cross of Jesus? The man's name was Simon, and he was from Cyrene in North Africa or modern-day Libya. He was probably a pilgrim who was just arriving in Jerusalem. There is some evidence to suggest that his sons became leaders among the early Christians. Why? Even before Jesus was to be scourged, His physical condition was weak. It is reasonable to assume that Jesus was in good physical condition up until the night of His arrest. He like all victims of crucifixion - forced to carry the wood He would hang upon. The cross bar which was what they carried weighed from 75-125 pounds.

18. Who followed Jesus as He made His way to Calvary? It was customary for a great multitude to follow a condemned criminal on his way to crucifixion. It was intended to be a public event. Hangings in America were well attended public events. A Roman guard led with a sign that carried the man's name and crime, calling out the name and the crime along the way to the place of crucifixion. They usually didn't take the shortest way so as many people as possible could see how the Roman Empire treated its enemies. What did He say to them? With good reason, certain women mourned and lamented when they saw Jesus being treated in this fashion. Jesus essentially told them, "Don't weep for Me, weep for those who reject Me." While motherhood was usually blessed, here Jesus says "blessed are the barren." Pate tells us "But the days of the fall of Jerusalem would be so severe that women would far prefer not to have children, rather than have them go through the ordeal that awaited the city." they begin to say to the mountains, fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. This language is figurative, describing one in extreme terror seeking impossible refuge. But there is a touch of literalness in the fulfillment, for Josephus tells us that at the end of the siege those in Jerusalem hid themselves in the subterranean recesses of the city, and that no less than two thousand of them were buried alive under the ruins of these hiding-places. For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry? The idea is "If this is the fate of the innocent, what will happen to the guilty?"

19. What happened when Jesus arrived at Golgotha? There was a specific place outside the city walls of Jerusalem yet still close, where people were crucified. At this place called Golgotha Jesus died for our sins, and our salvation was accomplished. Golgotha means, "place of a skull," and it was the place where

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criminals were crucified. Golgotha is Aramaic, while Calvary is the Latin equivalent. Edwards says "Although the Romans did not invent crucifixion, they perfected it as a form of torture and capital punishment that was designed to produce a slow death with maximum pain and suffering." The combination of scourging and crucifixion made death on the cross especially brutal. The most significant thing about Jesus' suffering was that He was not, in any sense, the victim of circumstances. He was in control. Jesus said of His life in John 10:18, no one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. It is terrible to be forced to endure such torture, but to freely choose it out of love is remarkable. While His life was certainly important, His death on the cross is mentioned in secular sources. A letter written by Mara bar Serapion to his son (ca. a.d. 73), Josephus, the Jewish historian (ca. a.d. 90), Tacitus, the Roman historian (ca. a.d. 110-120) and The Babylonian Talmud (ca. a.d. 200). He was crucified between two criminals.

The Crucifixion

Read Luke 23: 34-49

20. What was done with the garments of Jesus? Usually, four soldiers did the crucifixion and part of their reward was the clothes of the criminals. When they got to His tunic or undergarment, they didn't divide it. It reached from the shoulders to the knees. Ordinarily it was in two pieces, which were fastened at the shoulders by clasps; but Josephus tells us that the tunic of the high priest was woven in one piece. Guzik reminds us, even the clothes on his back were taken and divided by the roll of the dice. Jesus let go of absolutely everything - even His clothes - becoming completely poor for us, so we could become completely rich in Him.

Mark 15:25 It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified Him.

21. At what hour of the day did the crucifixion begin? Nine o'clock in the morning. Fourfold informs us that the priests, having finished their morning rituals could be present. What sign was placed on the cross of Jesus? The King of the Jews. It was a well-established Roman custom to thus place a writing above the heads of the crucified to indicate the cause for which they died. Pilate writes the accusation so as to clear his own skirts before Caesar and so as to show his

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contempt for the Jewish people. They had forced him to crucify an innocent man, and he retaliates by giving to that man the title which his enemies accused him of professing.

22. What were the actions of those who passed by the cross of Jesus? Jesus was evidently crucified near the highway. Passersby and the gathered crowd said, If you can destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, if you are the Son of God, and come down from the cross. If You come down from the cross, we will believe. The chief priests, scribes and elders? In like manner also the chief priests and the rulers also scoffed at him, mocking him among themselves said, He saved others; let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen let Him save Himself. The robbers who were being crucified with Him? Save us and Yourself. Though at first, they both mocked Jesus, in the hours spent on the cross, one of the criminals came to see things differently, and to actually put his trust in Jesus. One asked Him to remember him when He came into His kingdom. Jesus promised him that he would be with Him in Paradise. "Paradise, a Persian word meaning 'garden, park,' was used in the Septuagint for the Garden of Eden. It then became a type of the future bliss for God's people. In the present passage is represents the state of bliss which Jesus promised to the criminal directly after death" according to Pate. It hurt Jesus to even say these words. "Since speech occurs during exhalation, these short, terse utterances must have been particularly difficult and painful." (Edwards)

John 19: 25-27 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

23. What did Jesus do when He saw Mary, His mother, standing by the cross? Jesus addressed his mother at the end of his ministry with the same word which he had used at its beginning in John 2: 4. While this isn't a disrespectful term, He cut her off from all parental authority over Him. In this last hour our Lord bestows upon his helpless mother the disciple whom he loved, John.

24. What happened at the sixth hour? The remarkable darkness all over the earth showed the agony of creation itself in the Creator's suffering. A Roman historian writes about a solar eclipse and an accompanying earthquake.

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Isaiah 53:3-5 He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely, he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. *ESV*

25. What did Jesus do at the ninth hours? He cried out for His Father and then He said that it was finished. What was the reaction of the people to this? They thought that He was calling for Elijah. Immediately afterwards Jesus speaks of his thirst, and vinegar is given to Him to him to remove the dryness from his throat.

26. What happened when Jesus died? Fourfold reminds us that He gave up His spirit voluntarily. The tearing of the temple veil signified at least two things. First, now man has free access to the throne of grace by the cross. Second, no one should ever think again that God dwells in temples made with hands.

27. What conclusion did the centurion who had been in charge of the crucifixion reach? The conduct of Jesus upon the cross and the disturbances of nature which accompanied his death convinced the centurion that Jesus was a righteous man. But knowing that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, and this claim was the real cause for which the Jews were crucifying him, he concludes, since he concedes that Jesus is righteous, that he is also all that he professed to be—the Son of God. Others went home sadly; they were too close to Jesus to see how remarkable His death was, and they forgot His promise to rise again.

The Burial of Jesus

Read John 19:31-37

28. How did the soldiers make sure the ones being crucified were dead? Instead of killing the criminals, they broke their legs, which rendered recovery impossible. Why did they not do it to Jesus? He was already dead.

Psalms 34:20 He protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken. *NIV*

What did they do instead? They pierced His side. Blood and water came out.

Zechariah 12:10: "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they

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have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. NIV

What does that illustrate? John's eye-witness account shows that he attached importance to it. To him the body of Jesus gave evidence that it differed from other dead bodies. Symbolically sin is washed away by the water of baptism and the blood of Christ.

Read John 19:38-42

29. Who buried the dead body of Jesus? Joseph of Armenthia and Nicodemus How and why did he get the body? Customarily, the bodies of crucified criminals were left on their crosses to rot or be eaten by wild animals. But the Jews wanted no such horror displayed during the Passover season, and Romans were known to grant the corpses to friends or relatives for proper burial. But the Jewish law forbade that a body should hang over night; for a dead body was accursed. Guzik says of Joseph of Armenthia, he may not have served Jesus as the disciples or even as the women who supported and assisted them did, but he granted a service that no one else could. He offered his own expense unused tomb.

Isaiah 53:9 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. NIV

We too must serve in any way that we can. Briefly summarize the burial procedure. It was late in the day and there was little time to prepare the body, but Joseph and Nicodemus brought spices and a cloth to wrap the body. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Myrrh was a resin and the aloe was pulverized wood. Both were aromatic. Joseph had brought a linen cloth to wrap the body in. They prepared the body as best they could in the time that they had. We don't point to this small detail but by touching the body of Jesus these two men were unclean for the coming Passover.

Read Numbers 9:9-14

The point of the unused tomb is to point out that no one else could have arisen from that tomb. Fourfold mentions that since Jesus didn't die until 3 pm. The two men had little time for a complete embalming as it were. This explains why the women will feel obligated to come to the tomb on the first day of the week after the Sabbath was over.

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Read Matthew 27:57-66

30. How was the tomb of Jesus secured? A large stone was placed in front of it. Some of the Sanhedrin came to Pilate probably Friday night. They were concerned that Jesus had said that He would arise after three days. Remember that the Jews of that day counted any part of a day as a whole day, while we count days by 24 hours. So, He was in the tomb Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Why was it secured in such a manner? They were afraid that the disciples would steal the body and say that He arose. These Jewish rulers full of active interest in the dead Christ while his apostles and friends are listless in despair. They, of course, did not think it possible that Jesus could indeed rise, but, seeing the profound impression which the portents attending the crucifixion had made upon the multitude. Pilate granted them a guard and told them to make the tomb as secure as they could. They sealed the stone by drawing a string or tape across it and fastening the ends with wax or clay to the surface of the rock on either side. If either seal were broken, that fact would show that the tomb was entered from without.

Closing prayer Lord, we just can't comprehend the depth of Your love for us, but we thank you and ask that we gain more understanding. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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| Luke 22: 66-71 | Luke 23:13-25 | Matthew 27:3-10 | John 19: 31-37 |
| Luke 23:1-5 | Luke 23:26-33 | Matthew 27:57-66 | Numbers 9:9-14 |
| Luke 23: 6-12 | Luke 23: 34-49 | | John 19:38-42 |
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