

Commentary on Luke Chapter 23, by Chuck Smith 11.20.22

Pastor John Donovan, cell phone 508-380-0471

Pastor Terry Gerlarneau, cell phone 603-455-4399

Web site todbc.org email us at opendoorbiblechurch@todbc.org

November memory verse Isaiah 7:14 (KJV)

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

REMINDER

Wednesday November 23, Thanksgiving Eve Service, no afternoon Bible Study.

Please bring a dessert or cookies we can share after service

Commentary on Luke Chapter 23, by Chuck Smith 11.20.22

And the whole multitude of them arose, and they led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ [or the Messiah,] a king ([Luk 23:1-2](#))

Now notice, their accusation against Him was blasphemy, "You're saying You're the Son of God." When they brought Him to Pilate to accuse Him before Pilate, they didn't make that charge at all before Pilate. Why? Because they knew that Pilate would throw it out. He would say, "It's just your own problem if your own religious superstitions don't come to the Roman court with that." So when they came to the Roman court, they came with a whole different set of charges. The charges before the Roman court was that of perverting the nation, seditious. "He is a man who said you shouldn't pay taxes to Caesar." That's not true. He said, "Give to Caesar that which is Caesar's." And then they also accused Him of declaring Himself to be the King.

And Pilate asked him, saying, Are you the King of the Jews? And he answered and said, [You said it] Thou sayest it ([Luk 23:3](#)).

Equivalent today of saying, "Hey, you said it!"

And then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this Man. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all of Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place ([Luk 23:4-5](#)).

Now Galilee was the place where all the rebellions against Rome started. So by placing Him in Galilee, they were seeking to place Him at the heart of rebellion against Rome.

Commentary on Luke Chapter 23, by Chuck Smith 11.20.22

"This man is stirring up people everywhere, up there in Galilee." And it was one of those buzzwords by which they intended to get Pilate excited.

But when Pilate heard Galilee, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that [he was a Galilean,] he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself was also was at Jerusalem at this time ([Luk 23:6-7](#)).

This is Herod Antipas.

And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad: for he was desiring to see him for a long time, because he had heard so many things about him; and he had hoped that he might see some kind of a miracle done by him. Then when he questioned him in many words; but Jesus answered him nothing ([Luk 23:8-9](#)).

This is the Herod, of course, who had beheaded the cousin of Jesus, John the Baptist. And Jesus had nothing to say to him at all.

And so then Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: because there had been enmity between them for quite some time. And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers of the people, he said unto them, You've brought this man unto me, as one that is perverting the people: and, behold, I have examined him before you, and I find no fault in this man touching those things whereof you accuse him: no, nor did Herod: for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death has been done by him. I therefore am going to chastise him, and release him (for of necessity it was a custom that he would release unto them one prisoner at the feast). And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.) ([Luk 23:11-19](#))

Now Barabbas was guilty of these very charges which they were making against Jesus. False charges against Jesus; they were true against Barabbas.

Pilate, therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil has he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I therefore will chastise him, and let him go. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified ([Luk 23:20-23](#)):

And the tragic scripture...

and the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed ([Luk 23:23](#)).

How sad when the voices of the mob prevail.

Commentary on Luke Chapter 23, by Chuck Smith 11.20.22

And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will. And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus ([Luk 23:24-26](#)).

Now the procession, typical Roman procession, was, they had four Roman soldiers; two going slightly ahead and two slightly behind, and the prisoner in the middle. And then, one soldier would lead the procession. And the soldier leading the procession had a sign with the accusation against the person to be crucified. In this case, the sign said, "The King of the Jews." And when they came to the place of crucifixion, this sign was then nailed to the top of the cross so that the people would all know the reason why this man was being put to death by the Roman government. As they would go through the streets of the city, they would usually take the longest route. And, of course, there was always a lot of noise and a lot of clamor, and this was intended to draw the people out to see what was happening. And they would see this man walking in the midst of the Roman soldiers, pulling his cross along, and they knew that he was going to be crucified and the accusation against him was in front. And it was like terror in the hearts of the people against trying to rebel against Rome.

Jesus, weakened by the chastening, was probably physically unable to bear the cross any further. And so they compelled this man Simon, who was a Cyrenian, to bear the cross. What the Roman soldier did was just take his sword and lay it flat on your shoulder, and he could order you to carry his bags for a mile. And that was Roman authority; you couldn't say no. You couldn't say, "Well, I'm busy. I have to get this quart of milk home to my wife. She's baking cookies and expecting me to come home with milk." You couldn't do that. He laid that sword flat on your shoulder and if he'd tell you to do something, no arguments. You had to do it. And so they laid the sword flat on Simon's shoulder and said, "Carry this man's cross," and Simon began to carry the cross.

And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also were bewailing and lamenting him. And Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, don't weep for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they will say, Blessed are the barren ([Luk 23:27-29](#)),

To be barren was a curse. They'd always say, "Cursed are the barren." If a woman could not bear a child, that was cause for divorce, legal cause for divorce, an acceptable cause for divorce. If you could not bear a son for your husband, that was an acceptable cause for divorce in those days. And they would say, "Oh, she's cursed; she can't bear children." But Jesus said, "The day is going to come when they're going to say, 'Blessed are the barren.'"

Commentary on Luke Chapter 23, by Chuck Smith 11.20.22

and the womb which has never born, or the breasts which have never nursed. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree ([Luk 23:29-31](#)),

That is, while I am here, the light of the world...

what are they going to do in the dry? ([Luk 23:31](#))

These days did come. In less than forty years, the Roman troops came and ravaged the land of Palestine. And the vast majority of the Jews were killed. In the final assault upon Jerusalem, according to the account of Josephus, over a million Jews were killed. And 96,000 were carried captive back to Rome to be slaves for life.

There were also two other, malefactors, who were led with him to be put to death. And they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots ([Luk 23:32-34](#)).

This statement of Jesus, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do," according to Luke's gospel here, was made as they were preparing them for the cross. That is, they would lay the cross down on the ground, which was in a shape sort of a "T." And they would stretch out the prisoner's hands on the crossbars and they would drive these spikes through his hands on the crossbars. And in the case of Jesus, they drove the spikes also through his feet, as they nailed Him to the cross. And then they would implant the cross in the ground. Now, while they were nailing Him, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them. They know not what they do."

And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Messiah, the chosen of God. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself. And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS ([Luk 23:35-38](#)).

Now this was the cry, the taunt, the jeer of the people: "Save Yourself!" You know where the inspiration for that cry came? From the pit of hell. For had Jesus saved Himself, He would not be able to save you. That cry was coming from the pit of hell. It was a taunt, it was a jeer. The high priest said, "He saved others. Himself He cannot save. Let Him come down now if He is the Son of God. Let God save Him, if God will have anything to do with Him, because He said He's the Son of God." And this was the mockery, this was the cry. The soldiers, "Hey, if you're the King of the Jews, save Yourself, man." The people, they picked up this chant, this cry, "Save Yourself!" "Let Him come down now from the cross and we will believe Him," the priests said.

Commentary on Luke Chapter 23, by Chuck Smith 11.20.22

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us ([Luk 23:39](#)).

So, the same taunt that was coming from the crowd, this thief picked up. During the time of great psychological experiences, emotional experiences, emotions are close to the surface and there's this mob psychology and people begin to act like something other than people when they get into crowds many times. Even in football games. You know, people put on chicken suits and do all kinds of weird things. And everybody accepts it, everybody laughs. And you watch some of these people, you know, the weird get-ups and people do weird things in a crowd. There's sort of an anonymity in a crowd that people like. "Nobody knows me so I can act like a freak," and everybody laughs and has a good time. And there is that thing with the crowd of wisecracking. Have you ever been in a crowd when things were going on and people begin to make their smart remarks, and then it gets a little competition of who can make the smartest or cutest remark? And of course, you measure them on the laugh scale. You know, "You got an eight." "Well, you got a five." "Well, I got a ten." And these things to play on the emotions of the people, especially if it's a very shocking thing.

I can imagine that to watch a man dying on a cross would be an extremely shocking thing to your psyche. I would think that that would be extremely difficult to just watch a man hanging there, watching him as he is fighting for breath, watching him as his body heaves, knowing the pain and just seeing him as he is gradually being worn down by the pain and the suffering and know that he is dying. That must be a tremendously shocking thing for the psyche. And so, I imagine that because you can't really think on that too long without really getting bugged by it, that there would be those that would make these off-handed remarks to divert the attention for awhile and to bring laughter, because just the shock of this thing settling in would be too hard to take.

And because it was the cry of the crowd and the common mockery and jeering against Christ, the thief, probably just to get a rise out of the crowd and maybe some sympathy towards himself by joining with them, reviled Jesus and said, "Hey, why don't You save Yourself and us?" Ho-ho-ho! Funny! And there probably went the ripple of laughter through the crowd.

But the other thief turned to him, and he said, Don't you fear God, seeing that you're in the same condemnation? ([Luk 23:40](#))

Hey, you're in the same boat, man, you're dying. Don't you fear God? It's the hour of death. Don't you realize that we're going to be facing the judgment of God soon? Don't you fear God?

We indeed are here justly [justice is being served]; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds: but this man has done nothing amiss ([Luk 23:41](#)).

Pilate said, "I find no fault in Him." The thief testified, "He has done nothing amiss."
Judas said, "I have betrayed innocent blood."

Commentary on Luke Chapter 23, by Chuck Smith 11.20.22

And he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom ([Luk 23:42](#)).

How did he know that Jesus was a King? Because above the cross there was written the word, "The King of the Jews." But this shows us that for salvation, faith has to come from God. For somehow his faith transcended even that of the disciples. And somehow, by God, he knew that though this Man was dying, He was yet to come into His kingdom. He had a faith greater than the disciples, because at this point the disciples had been wiped out; they had forsaken Him and they had fled, they had given up hope. "We had trusted in Him for the salvation of Israel, but He now is crucified. It's all over." But somehow, God planted faith in the heart of this man. For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is a gift of God and not of works, lest any man should boast. God planted faith, saving faith in the heart of this man. And he somehow realized that even though he was dying, there was a message, just a short message, "This is the King of the Jews." And he believed it. It had to be the faith of God planted in his heart. And so he said, "Lord, when You come into Your kingdom, would You remember me?" Not, "Would You honor me?" Not, "Would You exalt me?" Just, "Remember me, Lord." The disciples were the ones that were saying, "Lord, when You come into the kingdom, exalt me. Let me sit at Your right hand, let me sit at Your left hand, let me be prime minister This man was just saying, "Lord, would You just remember me when You come into Your kingdom?" Oh, what a simple prayer! But it brought him salvation. Oh, how close each of us are to salvation! It's just a simple prayer; "God, be merciful to me, a sinner. Lord, remember me." We read, "Wherefore He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him." Where Jesus said, "And whosoever cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." Even a dying thief in his last hour who says, "Lord, remember me," can find salvation." And Jesus said,

Today you will be with me in paradise ([Luk 23:43](#)).

This word *paradise* is a word that was used for the garden of the king, where he would invite his special guest to come and walk with him. Jesus said, "Today you will be with Me in paradise."

It was about the sixth hour ([Luk 23:44](#)),

That is noon. It's interesting that this all transpired before the miracles of the day. Before the earthquake, before the sun became dark, God had planted the faith in the heart of this thief to bring him salvation. "It was about the sixth hour,"

and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour ([Luk 23:44](#)).

Three o'clock in the afternoon.

And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst ([Luk 23:45](#)).

Commentary on Luke Chapter 23, by Chuck Smith 11.20.22

"The sun was darkened," that is, nature refused to look at this horrible sight. Nature revolted against man. There was a great earthquake, the rocks were torn, nature revolting against man. Had God not restrained it, I'm sure that nature would have destroyed man at that point for his heinous crime.

"The veil of the temple was rent in the midst." We are told in another gospel, "from the top to the bottom." Oh, how significant! The veil of the temple was the testimony of how unapproachable God was to man. No man dared to enter in beyond that veil, except the high priest, and that only one day in the year. And that only after many sacrifices and washings. And that only with great reverence and fear, having these bells tied on the bottom of his coat and a rope tied around his foot, so that those outside of the veil would listen for these bells to be tinkling inside. And if they would stop, then they would pull the guy out by his foot, knowing that he went into the presence of God with some blemish and God smote him dead. And so the rope, so they could pull him out and wouldn't even have to go in to get him. God was unapproachable by man. Man's sin had alienated from God. God's hand was not short, His ear was not heavy, but sins had separated people and the veil represented that separation of the unrighteous man from God. But at the death of Christ the way was made by which man might come to God, and God ripped that veil from the top to the bottom, saying, "Come, come, it's open." The way is now made through Jesus Christ for you, for me, to be able to come directly to God.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice ([Luk 23:46](#)),

Luke doesn't tell us what He said, but the other gospels do. He cried, "It is finished!"

he then said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he dismissed his spirit. Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. And all of the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and they returned. And all of his acquaintances, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things. And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counselor; and he was a good man, and a just: (And the same had not consented to the counsel and the deed of them;) he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews: and who also himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. And this man went unto Pilate, and he begged for the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never before a man was laid. That day was the preparation, and the sabbath was drawing on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after him, beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared the spices and the ointments; and they rested the sabbath day according to the commandment ([Luk 23:46-56](#)).