

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Outline

- A. Luke told about the trial of Jesus before Pilate and Herod (1-25).
1. The first trial before Pilate (1-7).
 - a) The charge against Him,
 - (1) Perverting the nation.
 - (2) Forbidding to give tribute to Caesar.
 - (3) Claiming that He is Christ the King.
 - b) The investigation of the charges by Pilate.
 - (1) "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered affirmatively.
 - (2) His verdict: "I find no fault in this man."
 - c) The urgent complaint: He stirs up the nation from Judea to Galilee.
 - d) The governor's decision: Send Him to Herod, the ruler of Galilee.
 2. The trial before Herod (8-12).
 - a) The attitude of Herod: Delighted at this turn of events, for he hoped to see Jesus work some miracle.
 - b) The investigation by Herod: He questioned Jesus at length, but Jesus refused to answer.
 - c) The complaint: The priests and scribes pressed their charges.
 - d) The outcome of the trial: Herod and soldiers mocked Jesus and returned Him to Pilate. Pilate and Herod became friends that very day.
 3. The second trial before Pilate (13-25).
 - a) The verdict: Pilate reviewed the case and again pronounced Jesus innocent.
 - b) The verdict of Herod: Nothing worthy of death done by Him.
 - c) The plan to release Jesus: Twice announced and twice rejected. The Jews said, "Release Barabbas; crucify Jesus."
 - d) The third and final effort to save Him:
 - (1) Pilate asked, "What evil has he done?" The Jews urged that He be crucified.

STUDIES IN LUKE

(2) Pilate gave in, passed sentence on Jesus, and released Barabbas.

B. Luke told about the crucifixion of Jesus (26-49).

1. The circumstances leading to the crucifixion (26-32).
 - a) Simon of Cyrene carrying the cross.
 - b) The crowds following and lamenting Him.
 - c) Jesus comforted them.
 - (1) "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves and your children."
 - (2) Trials of the days to come: Fortunate are the childless; asking the mountains to fall and cover them; this in the green tree, what of the dry?
 - d) The other two who were also to be put to death.
2. The crucifixion of Jesus (33-38).
 - a) The place: "The skull"—Calvary.
 - b) The prayer: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."
 - c) The people:
 - (1) Parting His garments among them.
 - (2) The people stood looking on.
 - (3) The rulers scoffed: "Let him save himself."
 - (4) The soldiers mocked Him.
 - d) The sign: **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**
3. The other two who were crucified with Him (39-43).
 - a) One scoffed, and was rebuked by the other.
 - b) The other said, "Remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." Jesus said, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."
4. The death of Jesus (44-49).
 - a) The thing that happened: Darkness and rending of the temple veil.
 - b) The word of Jesus: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."
 - c) The end: "He gave up the ghost," that is, He died.
 - d) The reaction of those who saw Him die.
 - (1) The centurion: "Certainly this was a righteous man."
 - (2) The crowds: They returned, smiting their breasts.
 - (3) His acquaintances and the women from Galilee: They stood some distance away, seeing these things.

C. Luke told about the burial of Jesus (50-56).

1. The facts about Joseph of Arimathea (50-52).
 - a) He was a righteous man.
 - b) He had not consented to the crucifixion of Jesus.
 - c) He had been looking for the kingdom of God.
 - d) He asked Pilate for the body of Jesus.
2. The facts about the burial (53-56).
 - a) Joseph prepared the body for burial and laid it in the tomb.
 - b) The time: The day of Preparation, and the sabbath was about to begin. There was still time to prepare the spices before the sabbath actually began (56).
 - c) The women prepared spices and ointments and rested on the sabbath.

*The First Trial Before Pilate
Scripture*

23:1-7 And the whole company of them rose up and brought him before Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ a king. 3 And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest. 4 And Pilate said unto the chief priests and the multitudes, I find no fault in this man. 5 But they were the more urgent, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judaea, and beginning from Galilee even unto this place. 6 But when Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. 7 And when he knew that he was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him unto Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem in these days.

Comments

and brought Him before Pilate.—In the three Jewish trials, the leaders had satisfied themselves that they had found an excuse to put Jesus to death. But what about the governor? Why should a Roman care if the God of the Jews had been blasphemed?

The Jews were well aware of this; they, therefore, brought an entirely different charge against Him when they appeared before Pilate. There were three counts against Him: (1) Perverting the nation, (2) Forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and (3) He said that Himself is Christ the King.

The most dangerous of the three, they seemed to think, was the first—perverting the nation. But it was the last—making Himself a king—that finally caused the governor to give in. Against his better judgment, against the advice of his wife, and against the concurrence of Herod in his own opinion Pilate granted the Jews' demand that He be crucified. See John 19:12.

They may have thought that such evidence as the presence of large crowds following Him wherever He went, especially at the triumphal entry where they praised Him as king, would be sufficient evidence to sway Pilate's judgment. Roman governors were responsible for keeping the peace and putting down any uprising that might challenge the authority of Caesar. The charge about forbidding to give tribute to Caesar was plainly a perversion of the facts in the case. See 20:20-26. The third charge was true but not in the sense in which they presented it, for His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:26). Moreover, Pilate was well aware of the fact that they had delivered Him up out of envy (Matthew 27:18).

I find no fault in Him.—Pilate pronounced Jesus innocent three times; yet in the end, he acceded to the demands of the Jews and ordered the innocent Christ to be crucified.

He asked whether the man were a Galilean.—Jesus' ministry, for the most part, had been carried on in Herod's territory. Learning of this, Pilate eagerly sought to shift the responsibility of Jesus' case to Herod. But Herod, after examining Him, sent Him back to Pilate who announced that Herod had found nothing worthy of death in Him (23:15).

The Trial Before Herod

Scripture

23:8-12 Now when Herod saw Jesus, He was exceeding glad; for he was of a long time desirous to see him, because he had heard concerning him; and he hoped to see some miracle done by him. 9 And he questioned him in many words; but he answered him nothing. 10 And the chief priests and the scribes stood, vehemently accusing him. 11 And Herod with his soldiers set him at nought, and mocked him, and arraying him in gorgeous apparel sent him back to Pilate. 12 And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

Comments

When Herod saw Jesus.—Herod at one time had been frightened by the reports of the miracles of Jesus. He concluded that Jesus was John the Baptism risen from the dead and, therefore, able to perform these signs. Later, a report was circulated that Herod wanted to kill Jesus. There was another shift in his attitude, by the time of His trial. He was delighted to see Jesus, for he wanted to see Him work a miracle. Jesus, of course, did not grant his wish. After he and his men had treated Him with every indignity, Herod returned Him to Pilate. On that day these two rulers who had been at enmity with each other became friends.

*The Second Trial Before Pilate**Scripture*

23:13-25 And Pilate called together the Chief Priest and the rulers, and the people, 14 and said unto them, Ye brought unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: 15 no, nor yet Herod: for he sent him back unto us; and behold, nothing worthy of death hath been done by him. 16 I will therefore chastise him, and release him. 18 But they cried out all together, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas:—19 one who for a certain insurrection made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison. 20 And Pilate spake unto them again, desiring to release Jesus; 21 but they shouted, saying, Crucify, crucify him. 22 And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath this man done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him and release him. 23 But they were urgent with loud voices, asking that he might be crucified. And their voices prevailed. 24 And Pilate gave sentence that what they asked for should be done. 25 And he released him that for insurrection and murder had been cast into prison, whom they asked for; but Jesus he delivered up to their will.

Comments

I will therefore chastise him and release him.—Pilate may have believed that this cruel and inhuman beating would satisfy the Jews' desire for vengeance. But they noisily demanded that He be crucified.

and release unto us Barabbas.—Barabbas was a notable prisoner who had been guilty of all the things that had been charged against Jesus and more, for he was actually a murderer. But the misguided mob chose Barabbas and demanded the death penalty for Jesus.

On the day of Pentecost, the 3,000 reversed that decision—repented—and accepted Jesus as Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:36-38). See also Acts 3:18-15.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

Scripture

23:26-49 And when they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, and laid on him the cross, to bear it after Jesus.

27 And there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. 28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. 29 For behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck. 30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. 31 For if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

32 And there were also two others, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

33 And when they came unto the place which is called The skull, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left. 34 And Jesus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And parting his garments among them, they cast lots. 35 And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also scoffed at him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen. 36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, offering him vinegar, 37 and saying, If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself. 38 And there was also a superscription over him, *THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS*.

39 And one of the malefactors that were hanged railed on him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us. 40 But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed

justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom. 43 And he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

44 And it was now about the sixth hour, and a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, 45 the sun's light failing; and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. 46 And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said this, he gave up the ghost. 47 And when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, certainly this was a righteous man. 48 And all the multitudes that came together to this sight, when they beheld the things that were done, returned smiting their breasts. 49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed with him from Galilee, stood afar off, seeing these things.

Comments

Simon of Cyrene.—John says that Jesus went out, bearing His own cross; that is, He started to the place of the crucifixion carrying the cross (John 19:17). His agony in Gethsemane and the ordeal of the trial could easily have been the cause of His needing help to bear the heavy burden of the cross. Simon of Cyrene—Cyrene was a country in north Africa—was compelled to bear it after Jesus.

Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No; there's a cross for everyone,
And there's a cross for me.

Daughters of Jerusalem.—Jesus spoke to the women who were following Him, trying to comfort them in this hour of His ordeal. He reminded them, however, that they were also facing an ordeal that would come at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. The suffering of that day would cause some of them to say to the mountains, "Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." What they were suffering was likened to the green tree; He asked, "What shall be done in the dry?"

The place called "The Skull."—The other writers use the Aramaic name "Golgotha," which means "skull" or, when translated into Latin, "Calvary."

And Jesus said.—Luke gives three of the words Jesus spoke from

the cross. The first is found in 23:34, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

The context seems to suggest that He was speaking of those who were actually nailing Him to the cross. The rulers and others were also there, but He had already indicated on several occasions that nothing but doom awaited them because their rejection of Him was final, and no repentance was to be expected. But, of the crowds who had become involved in their sins, many would reverse their decision and find forgiveness through repentance and baptism in the name of the one who prayed "Father, forgive them."

The second, given in 23:43, is, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

According to Acts 2:27, which is a quotation from Psalms 16:10, Jesus was in Hades while his body lay in the tomb. Paul speaks of Paradise and identifies it with the "third heaven" (II Corinthians 12:4). He also suggests that being absent from the body means being present with the Lord (II Corinthians 5:6-9). Jesus had indicated that Hades is the place where both the good and the bad are to be found after death. (Luke 16:23).

It is correct, then, to say: (1) That Paradise is the place where the righteous dead await the resurrection, and (2) that the dying thief was told that he would be there with Jesus.

The third statement, found in 23:46, is, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit" (23:46).

He had come from the Father. As He prayed in the shadow of the cross He said, "Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). See also Philippians 2:5-11.

Matthew and Mark mention only one saying of Jesus from the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34).

This is a quotation from Psalm 22:1. It reveals the real meaning of the death of Christ. It was more than physical death; it was separation from the Father. The answer to the cry of Jesus is found in Paul's statement, "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21). As Son of Man—He was also Son of God—God made Him represent sin. "The death that He died, He died unto sin once for all" (Rom. 6:10). There will never be another sacrifice for sin (Heb. 10:14, 18).

The cross, then, is not only the symbol of God's love, it is also the symbol of God's punishment for sin. Let those who would know the meaning of hell look at the death of Him who was made sin on our behalf.

John records three of the sayings of Jesus on the cross. The first, found in John 19:26-27, is: "Woman, behold thy son." Jesus committed His mother to the care of John. Then He said to John, "Behold thy mother." There is reason to believe that John may have been her nephew. Just why Jesus put His mother in John's care rather than one of her own sons is not stated.

The second saying is: "I thirst" (John 19:28). This indicates something of the torture Jesus was suffering as He was dying on the cross.

The third is: "It is finished" (John 19:30). In His prayer before going to the cross, He had said, "I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work thou hast given me to do" (John 17:4). That work was finished at the cross. The final sacrifice was made. The new and living way into the refuge which He prepared was opened (Heb. 6:19-20; 10:19-22).

He saved others.—Although they spoke out of malicious wickedness, they spoke the truth. He had saved others, and His death would save the multitude that no man can number of those who wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:9-14). But He had to die in order to do it. In His death, He brought to nought him who has power of death, that is, the devil.

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.—John says that the sign over the cross was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. Pilate wanted everyone to read the sign and know that Rome had thus disposed of the one who, the Jews said, made himself a king. He refused to change the wording of the sign so as to relieve the Jews of the ignominy of having their king die on a Roman cross. See John 19:19-22.

And one of the malefactors.—Two robbers were put to death at the time Jesus was crucified. Three crosses were planted on Calvary. The death of Jesus provided the only possible way of escape from eternal punishment (Acts 4:12). Calvary's crosses dramatize this gospel truth.

he gave up the ghost.—that is, He died. The evidence is conclusive: (1) The darkness and the earthquake provided the setting; (2) the temple veil was rent from the top to the bottom, suggesting that

something unusual had happened that it should be torn in this manner; (3) the expression of the centurion who saw Him die (Mark 15:39). A Roman soldier knew death when he saw it. He said, "Truly this man was the Son of God." (4) The soldier pierced the side of Jesus' body from which there came blood and water. It was the soldiers' judgment that He was already dead, but this was done to make sure of it (John 19:33). (5) The enemies of Jesus were concerned only that the body be kept safely in the tomb; they did not question the fact of Jesus' death.

And when the centurion.—Soldiering was never considered a soft business. Execution of criminals—and, no doubt, many innocent people—was all in a day's work for Roman soldiers. But there was something different about the death of Jesus of Nazareth. When the centurion heard Him say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," and saw all the things that were happening, he glorified God and said, "Certainly this was a righteous man." Thus he concurred in the judgment of both Pilate and Herod that this man had done nothing worthy of death; He was innocent.

According to Matthew, the centurion said, "Truly this was God's Son" (Matt. 27:54). In doing so, he recognized the deity of Jesus.

Some have assumed that a pagan soldier could not mean by this remark that He was anything other than "a son of the gods—pagan gods." But what about the centurion who loved the Jewish nation and built their synagogue? Jesus commended his faith which was unlike anything He had found in all Israel. Cornelius was another exception. God heard the prayers of this devout, God-fearing man even though he was a Gentile (Acts 10:1-4).

There is no good reason to question the meaning of the centurion's confession. He believed that Jesus was God's Son. The resurrection of Our Lord proved him right (Rom. 1:3-4).

The Burial of Jesus

Scripture

23:50-56 And behold, a man named Joseph, who was a councillor, a good and righteous man 51 (he had not consented to their counsel and deed), a man of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews, who was looking 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 that was hewn in stone,

where never man had yet lain. 54 And it was the day of the Preparation, and the sabbath drew on. 55 And the women, who had come with him out of Galilee, followed after, and beheld the tomb, and how his body was laid. 56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments.

And on the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

Comments

a man named Joseph.—Another man named Joseph had watched over Jesus in His infancy. Now this good and righteous man who was looking for the kingdom of God boldly identified himself with Him in His death. That took courage. But Joseph had not consented to this wicked deed; he had agreed with Pilate and the centurion that Jesus was innocent. It is true that he had been a secret disciple (John 19:38), but he could no longer remain so. He asked Pilate's permission to take the body of Jesus from the cross. He prepared it for burial and laid it in his own new tomb.

Nicodemus, the inquiring Pharisee whom Jesus taught the lesson of the New Birth, the bold defender of Jesus who was being condemned by all his colleagues, brought spices and helped Joseph with the burial. See John 3:1-5; 7:50; 19:39-41.

And it was the day of Preparation.—That is, Friday, for the sabbath was about to begin. The women had only time enough to prepare the spices before sundown. They rested on the sabbath and came early on the first day of the week to complete their sorrowful task.

Summary

The Jews agreed that Jesus should be put to death because, as they said, He was guilty of blasphemy. But they knew that such a charge would mean nothing to Pilate. What could they say to the governor that would get him to consent to the death of Jesus? "He was perverting the nation of the Jews!" That would do it, for the governor had to keep peace. But just to make sure, they added two more charges, forbidding to give tribute to Caesar and saying that He was a king.

Pilate examined Jesus and three times pronounced Him innocent. When he learned that Jesus was from Galilee, he sent Him to Herod who questioned Him at length but found nothing worthy of death in Him. But the Jews pressed the issue and threatened to take the

case to Caesar. When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, he ordered Jesus to be crucified.

Jesus went out bearing His own cross, but soon Simon of Cyrene was compelled to bear the cross to the place of crucifixion. Jesus tried to comfort the women of Jerusalem as they followed Him. They would suffer—perhaps at the destruction of Jerusalem—more hardships later on. They would cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them and cover them from that persecution.

On the cross, Jesus prayed, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." He said to the dying thief, "Today, shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Just before He died, He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

The centurion who commanded the soldiers that executed the three looked at Jesus as He died and said, "Certainly this was a righteous man." Later he said, "This was God's Son."

Joseph of Arimathea who had been a secret disciple of Jesus went to Pilate and asked permission to take the body of Jesus down and bury it. It was the day of Preparation and the sabbath was about to begin. The women prepared spices and ointments and rested on the sabbath.

Questions

1. Why did the Jews change their charge when they brought Jesus before the governor?
2. What are the three charges which they presented before Pilate?
3. What evidence could they present to support them?
4. What was Pilate's verdict after examining Jesus?
5. Why did he send Him to Herod?
6. What was the attitude of Herod when he saw Jesus?
7. What examination of the charges did he make?
8. What was the verdict of Herod?
9. Why did he and Pilate become friends at that time?
10. What plan did Pilate use to attempt to get the people to agree to the release of Jesus?
11. When did the people reverse the decision made at the trial?
12. Who was Simon of Cyrene? What did he do?
13. What was to happen to the Daughters of Jerusalem?
14. What does Calvary mean? Golgotha?
15. What did Jesus mean by His prayer: "Father forgive them"?

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

16. Why did He say to the thief, "Today you will be with me in Paradise"?
17. Where are the dead awaiting the resurrection?
18. What is the significance of Jesus using the words of Psa. 22:1?
19. How does Paul explain the reason for the death of Christ?
20. What was unfair about the remark, "He saved others, but he can't save himself"?
21. Why was the sign over the cross written in three languages?
22. Why did Pilate refuse to change what he had written?
23. What made the difference between the death of Jesus and that of two who were crucified with Him?
24. What proof is there that Jesus actually died?
25. What are the two statements of the centurion? What do they mean?
26. Who was Joseph of Arimathea?
27. What had been his attitude toward Jesus?
28. Why did he ask Pilate for the body?
29. Who helped him?
30. On what day was Jesus buried?