

# The Good News About Jesus as Luke Wrote It

## Chapter 23:1-56

HoneyBee base version for oral translation

September 2023 Draft<sup>1</sup>

### Background

- Roman officials met the public only before midday.
- In popular belief, the Messiah would be born a descendant from David.
- Both religious and political leaders in Jerusalem opposed popular preachers trying to stir up revolutionaries.
- Pilate had strained relations with the leading priests in Jerusalem, so gave in to their request despite Roman law.
- The Zealots were nationalists who preached that God alone was the ruler over Israel, urging that no taxes should be paid to the Roman government.
- there was a prevailing Passover custom in Jerusalem that allowed the governor of Judea to reduce one prisoner's death sentence if the people desired it.
- Devout Jewish pilgrims from throughout the Mediterranean world came to Jerusalem during Passover.
- Condemned criminals normally were forced to carry the horizontal beam of their cross to the place where they were killed.
- Roman soldiers had the right to force anyone to carry loads for them.
- Golgotha, "Place of the Skull," was where the temple "head tax" was collected.
- A "friendship," in upper classes often meant a political alliance.
- Crucifixions were held in public places as a warning to everyone.
- Flog = whip with ropes or straps that has sharp pieces which cut the skin till it bleeds.

### History

- Herod Antipas (Jewish) and Pontius Pilate (Roman) had their disagreements. For example, Antipas had intervened over Roman votive shields, and Pilate had pilfered the temple treasury for funds to build an aqueduct.
- Herod Antipas (Jewish) was in Jerusalem for the Passover feast. It was he who had murdered John the baptizer.
- Judas bar (son of) Abbas was a Galilean Zealot who had instigated a riot against the Romans..

### Themes

- "He has done nothing to deserve death."
- "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."
- "This is the Jews' King."
- "Today you will be with me in paradise."

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## Jewish leaders accuse Jesus to Governor Pilate

<sup>1</sup> Then the whole group got up and took Jesus to Pilate, *the Roman governor*. <sup>2</sup> They began to accuse Jesus, saying, “We<sup>(exc)</sup> arrested this man for causing political trouble in our country. He has been telling people that they should not pay taxes to the Roman government. Also, he says that he is our Messiah, a king!”

<sup>3</sup> Pilate asked Jesus, “Do you<sup>(sg)</sup> *claim that you are the Jews’ King?*” He replied, “Yes, I am who you<sup>(sg)</sup> just now said.” <sup>4</sup> Pilate said to the chief priests and to the crowd, “There is no reason to accuse this man, *because he has committed no crime.*”

<sup>5</sup> But they kept insisting, “Jesus has been inciting the people *to riot/revolt!* He has been teaching his ideas throughout all Judea *district*. He has started doing so in Galilee *district* and now he is doing so here!” <sup>6</sup> When Pilate heard this, he asked, “Is this man from Galilee *district?*” <sup>7</sup> When they said to him, “Yes, Jesus is from Galilee,” Pilate said to them, “Take Jesus to Herod Antipas!” Herod Antipas ruled over Galilee, and he was in Jerusalem at that time *to celebrate Passover*.

<sup>8</sup> So they took Jesus to Herod. When Herod saw Jesus, he was very happy. He had heard about Jesus, and he had been hoping for a long time that he could see Jesus perform a miracle. <sup>9</sup> So, he asked Jesus many questions, but Jesus did not reply to him. <sup>10</sup> The chief priests and the scribes also stood there, accusing Jesus very strongly. <sup>11</sup> Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed Jesus. They put a *king’s fancy robe* on him to mock him, mocking him. Then Herod *ordered the chief priest to take Jesus back to Pilate*.

<sup>12</sup> Until that day Herod and Pilate had felt very hostile toward each other, *because they did not agree on political decisions/issues*. But that very day they became friends, *agreeing to support each other’s political decisions*.

## Pilate orders Jesus to be killed/crucified

<sup>13</sup> Pilate then called the chief priests, other Jewish leaders, and the crowd that was still there, *to listen to him*. <sup>14</sup> He said to them, “You brought this man to me, saying that he had caused people to riot. So, I examined him while you were listening. I conclude that he is not guilty, because he did nothing for which you are accusing him. <sup>15</sup> “Also, Herod concluded the same thing, because he sent Jesus back to me without punishing him. So it is clear that this man Jesus has done nothing for which I should execute/kill<sup>3</sup> him. <sup>16</sup> So, I will order my soldiers to flog<sup>4</sup> him for you, because he pretends/claims to be the Messiah, and then release him.”

[<sup>17</sup> *It was a custom that the governor release one prisoner during the Passover feast.*]

<sup>18</sup> So, the whole crowd shouted, “Execute/kill this man *Jesus!* Release Barabbas for us<sup>(exc)</sup>!” <sup>19</sup> Barabbas was a rebel who had persuaded some people in Jerusalem to rebel against *the Roman government*. While they were doing so, he murdered some officials. But *The Romans caught him and put him in prison until they were ready to execute/kill him*.

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<sup>2</sup> OR loudly insisting that Jesus was guilty.

<sup>3</sup> The Jewish religious leaders usually judged people who claimed to be the Messiah.

<sup>4</sup> OR beat/whip severely.

<sup>20</sup> Because Pilate wanted to release Jesus, he tried to persuade the crowd again. <sup>21</sup> But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”<sup>5</sup>

## How to be great in God’s Kingdom<sup>6</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Pilate spoke to them a third time, asking them, “Why? What crime has he committed? I have concluded that he has done nothing for which he deserves to die. So, I will have my soldiers flog him for you, *because he pretends/claims to be the Messiah*, and then release him.” <sup>23</sup> But they kept shouting loudly that Pilate *must* order his soldiers to nail Jesus to a cross. Finally, because they continued shouting so loudly, <sup>24</sup> Pilate decided to do what *the crowd* was demanding.

<sup>25</sup> Pilate released Barabbas, the man who was in prison because he had rebelled against the government and he had murdered some people. This was the man whom the crowd had asked Pilate to release. Then Pilate ordered Roman soldiers to do to Jesus what the crowd wanted *them to do*.

## Soldiers nail Jesus and two criminals to crosses

<sup>26</sup> *As the soldiers were leading Jesus away outside the city gate*, they stopped a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene city *in Africa*. He was returning to Jerusalem from the countryside. They took from Jesus the crossbar<sup>7</sup> that he had been carrying. Then they put it on Simon’s shoulders, and ordered him to carry it *walking* behind Jesus.

<sup>27</sup> A large crowd followed Jesus, including women who were beating their breasts and wailing to show how sad they were for him. <sup>28</sup> Jesus turned to them and said, “You women from Jerusalem, do not weep for me! Instead, weep for what is going to happen to yourselves and your children! <sup>29</sup> A time will come when people say, ‘Women who have never borne children or nursed babies are the happiest,<sup>8</sup> *because their children have not died!*’ <sup>30</sup> And *when armies come and destroy this city, many people will go dwell/live in mountain caves*, saying, “Hide us from our enemies!”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>31</sup> I have done no sin/wrong and do not deserve this punishment. Since God is causing suffering like fire to burn me who am and *like* a living/green tree, certainly God will cause suffering like fire to quickly/completely burn the evil people in Jerusalem who are *like* a dead/dry tree.

<sup>32</sup> The soldiers also led away two other men who were criminals whom the soldiers were going to execute/crucify with Jesus. <sup>33</sup> When they came to the place which is called ‘Skull’, they removed Jesus’ clothes and nailed him to a *wooden* cross. They did the same thing to the two criminals.<sup>10</sup> They crucified one at Jesus’ right side, and the other at his left side.

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<sup>5</sup> OR Execute/kill him! OR Kill him on a cross!

<sup>6</sup> Jesus settles a squabble among his apostles over who is the greatest.

<sup>7</sup> OR the cross wood/beam.

<sup>8</sup> OR more blessed. OR very blessed.

<sup>9</sup> When people were being threatened by their enemies, they often ran away from their homes in the cities to the mountains and hid in caves to try and save themselves from being killed. (See Joshua **10:16-27** for an example.)

<sup>10</sup> OR thieves/robbers. OR law-breakers/rebels. OR bandits/outlaws. See Mark **15:27**. (Consistently translate this in the same way throughout the chapter.)

[<sup>34</sup> Jesus prayed *aloud to God saying*, “My Father, forgive these *soldiers*, because they do not realize to whom they are doing this!”<sup>11</sup>] Then some soldiers gambled with something like dice,<sup>12</sup> to decide which clothing *piece belonging to Jesus* each one would take for himself.

<sup>35</sup> Many people stood nearby, watching, while the Jewish leaders ridiculed/mockd Jesus. One leader said, “People say that Jesus saved other people! So, if he is the Messiah whom God has sent, then he should save himself from his cross!” <sup>36</sup> Some soldiers also ridiculed/mockd him because he had claimed to be a king. They came near to him and they offered him some cheap/sour wine to drink.<sup>13</sup> <sup>37</sup> They said to him, “If you<sup>(sg)</sup> are really the Jews’ King, then save yourself!” <sup>38</sup> They also had fastened a sign high on Jesus’ cross. It declared his crime: “This is Jesus, the Jews’ King.”

<sup>39</sup> One criminal who was hanging there *near Jesus* on a cross began to insult Jesus, saying, “If you<sup>(sg)</sup> really were the Messiah, then you would be able to save yourself, and to save us, too!” <sup>40</sup> But the other criminal rebuked him, saying, “You<sup>(sg)</sup> should be afraid that God will condemn you,<sup>14</sup> since you, too, will die *today*!” <sup>41</sup> The government courts justly decided that we<sup>(inc)</sup> two must die. They are punishing us as we deserve for the evil things that we did. But this man has done nothing wrong!” <sup>42</sup> Then he said, “Jesus, please remember me *and raise me back to life*, when you become king!” <sup>43</sup> Jesus replied, “Believe what I tell you: today, you<sup>(sg)</sup> will be *alive* with me in Paradise/God’s beautiful garden in Eden!”

<sup>44</sup> At about noon time,<sup>15</sup> It became dark over the whole land, and it stayed dark until three o’clock in the afternoon.<sup>16</sup> <sup>45</sup> While there was no light from the sun, the thick curtain that closed off the most holy place in the temple split into two halves.<sup>17</sup> *This signified that all people could now go into God’s presence.* <sup>46</sup> As that was happening, Jesus shouted loudly, “Father, I put my spirit<sup>18</sup> into your care!” When he had said that, he stopped breathing<sup>19</sup> and died.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>47</sup> When the Centurion/ soldiers’ officer saw *and heard all* that happened, he honored God by saying, “This man was certainly innocent!” <sup>48</sup> A crowd had come *only* to watch an execution. But when the people saw what happened, they returned to their homes, beating their chests *because they felt remorse for having demanded an innocent man’s death*.

<sup>49</sup> Many people who knew Jesus, including the women who followed along with him, had come with him from Galilee. They were standing a short distance away, watching everything that happened.

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<sup>11</sup> OR what they are doing. OR that what they are doing is a terrible sin.

<sup>12</sup> OR by throwing something like marked stones. (The Greek is literally “casting lots.”)

<sup>13</sup> OR they offered Jesus some cheap wine to drink, *pretending to be like royal servants serving their king his wine*. See Mark **15:36**. (The soldiers were pretending to act like royal servants humbly serving a king in a palace. Mark **15:36** suggests that they offered the wine to Jesus in a sponge on a stick .)

<sup>14</sup> OR call out to God to forgive you.

<sup>15</sup> OR about hour six. OR mid-day when the sun was high overhead. (The Jews counted time beginning at sunrise or **6** a.m.)

<sup>16</sup> OR until hour nine. OR for three hours.

<sup>17</sup> OR God split into two halves the thick curtain that separated the most holy place in the temple, opening the way into the most holy place.

<sup>18</sup> OR my life. See Psalm **31:5**. (Psalm **31:5**. David may have meant ‘my breath’ = my physical life. This is likely Jesus’ belief that he would soon be resurrected. Breath = pneuma. Stop breathing = ek-pneuo.)

<sup>19</sup> OR breathed his last breath.

<sup>20</sup> OR his body died.

## Joseph buries Jesus's body in a cave/tomb

<sup>50</sup> There was a man named Joseph who came from a town named Arimathea in Judea district. He was a good, righteous man, who was a Jewish Council member.<sup>21</sup> <sup>51</sup> Joseph was waiting expectantly for the time when God would send his Messiah as king. And he did not agree with the other Council members<sup>22</sup> when they decided to kill Jesus, and when they went to arrest him.

<sup>52</sup> Joseph went to Pilate and asked him to allow him/Joseph to take Jesus' body down from his/the cross. After Pilate allowed him to do so, <sup>53</sup> he/Joseph and some others took Jesus' body down *from the cross*, and they wrapped it in a linen cloth. Then they laid Jesus' wrapped body in a new tomb. This tomb had been cut/carved/chipped out from a rock cliff, and no one had ever laid a body in it before.

<sup>54</sup> They had to do this quickly, because the Sabbath *rest day* would begin at sunset. <sup>55</sup> The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee district followed Joseph and the men who were with him. They saw the tomb, they saw how the men laid Jesus' body inside it, and they saw the men roll a huge stone before its entrance. <sup>56</sup> Then the women returned to the houses where they were staying. They prepared spices and ointments to put on Jesus' body. But since the Sabbath rest day began that evening at sundown, they *stayed home and* did no more work, in order to obey what *God* had commanded *in the scriptures*.

<sup>61</sup> *Just then* the Lord Jesus turned around and looked right at Peter. When Peter saw the Lord look at him, he remembered what the Lord had said to him, "This night, before the cock/rooster crows,<sup>23</sup> you <sup>(sg)</sup> will deny three times that you know me." <sup>62</sup> Then Peter went out of the courtyard and wept/cried very sorrowfully.

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<sup>21</sup> OR Jewish leader/elder.

<sup>22</sup> OR leaders/elders.

<sup>23</sup> OR the Romans blew their morning trumpet.