

Luke 23

Listening to Luke's story of the cross

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1



Luke as painter

St Luke drawing the Virgin
by Rogier van der Weyden
painted c. 1435–1440

2

Luke 23

- central figure is Jesus on the cross vv 32-46
- the series of hearings vv 1-25
- Simon of Cyrene v 26
- the weeping women vv 27-31
- the circumstances of the crucifixion vv 32-46
- the centurion v 47
- the people v 48
- Joseph of Arimathea vv 50-53

3

Luke's theology of the cross

Mark 10:45 'The son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

Luke 22:20 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood'

Acts 20:28 '...the church of God which he purchased with the blood of his own'

- Luke is doing theology **narratively**

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Verses 1–25

- The innocence of Jesus
 - Pilate vv 4, 14, 22
 - Herod v 15

5

Verses 1–25

- The innocence of Jesus
- Herod

When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time...
...because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign. v 8; cf. 9:9

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Verses 1–25

- The innocence of Jesus
- Herod
- Pilate
 - declared Jesus innocent three times—not just once vv 4, 14, 22 (+ v 15, reporting Herod)
 - the path of Pilate's failure vv 1-2, 3, 5, 6-7, 11b, 13-16, 18-19, 20, 24-25

So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished. vv 24-25

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Verses 1–25

- The innocence of Jesus
- Herod
- Pilate
- Responsibility for the death of Jesus
 - the Sanhedrin vv 1, 5, 18, 21, 23

But **they** kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and **their** voices prevailed. v 23

8

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It is hardly likely that the Jewish leaders, who had planned the arrest and trial of Jesus so carefully, left the composition of this crowd to chance.

R. T. France, *The Man They Crucified*, 153

9

“

Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.

Acts 4:27

10

“

Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. **They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.**

Acts 4:27-28

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Verses 1–25

- God's purposes in the death of Jesus
- the charges against Jesus v 2
 - We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.
- Jesus' real crime was blasphemy 22:70-71
- God's purposes for Israel Genesis 12:1-3

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Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**”

Genesis 12:1-3

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Verses 1–25

- God’s purposes in the death of Jesus
 - the charges against Jesus v 2
 - We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.
 - the Sanhedrin were perverting the nation
 - Jesus did not forbid tribute to Caesar 20:21-26
 - the Jewish leaders’ aims were political power

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Verses 1–25

- God’s purposes in the death of Jesus
 - the charges against Jesus v 2
 - Barabbas vv 18-19, 25

15

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Then they all shouted out together, “Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!” (This was a man who had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city, and for murder.)...[Pilate] released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished.

Luke 23:18-19, 25

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Verses 26–46

- Jesus' innocence vv 31, 41
- the two thieves vv 39-43
 - one criticises Jesus v 39
 - the other vv 40-42
- three small scenes vv 44-46
 - the sun withdraws its light vv 44-45a
 - the veil of the temple is torn in two v 45b
 - Jesus commends himself into God's hands v 46

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Verses 26–46

- Jesus' innocence vv 31, 41
- the two thieves vv 39-43
- three small scenes vv 44-46
- Simon of Cyrene v 26
 - the procession to crucifixion
 - Simon carrying the crossbeam (*patibulum*)
 - Simon may have become a believer Mark 15:21; Romans 16:13

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Carrying the cross

Then [Jesus] said to them all, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." Luke 9:23

Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:27

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.
Philippians 3:10-11

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Verses 47–53

- Jesus' innocence
 - the centurion v 47
 - the people v 48
- Joseph of Arimathea vv 50-53

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Verses 47–53

- Jesus' innocence
- Joseph of Arimathea vv 50-53
 - All of them asked, "Are you, then, the Son of God?" He said to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!" Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. 22:70–23:1

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Verses 47–53

- Jesus' innocence
- Joseph of Arimathea vv 50-53
- the centurion v 47
 - a Gentile

22

Verses 47–53

- Jesus' innocence
- Joseph of Arimathea vv 50-53
- the centurion v 47
- the people v 48
 - preparing for Pentecost
 - ...this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. Acts 2:23

23

Responsibility for Jesus' death

...this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. Acts 2:23

Because the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognise [Jesus] or understand the words of the prophets that are read every sabbath, they fulfilled those words by condemning him. Even though they found no cause for a sentence of death, they asked Pilate to have him killed. When they had carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb.

Acts 13:27-29 (in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch)

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How to respond to Jesus' death

- three negative pictures: what not to do
 - the Jewish leadership: opposition
 - Herod: ridicule
 - Pontius Pilate: fence-sitting
- three positive pictures: what to do
 - the people: sorrow for sin
 - the penitent thief: asking for help
 - Simon of Cyrene: following the way of the cross

25

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[Christ] died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

2 Corinthians 5:15

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You can get these slides from

Acts and More
<http://stevewalton.info>

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