

The Gospel According to
Luke

“Religion Assisted Deicide ”

Chapter 22:63 – 23:25

Introduction

“Who killed Jesus?”

The question was on a 2004 cover of Newsweek. The motion picture, *The Passion of the Christ*, had re-ignited an ugly historical debate. Was it the Jews who killed Jesus? Or was it the Romans?

I know who it was. *It was Rembrandt!* In his painting, *The Raising of the Cross*, as Jesus hangs on the Cross while it is being lifted into place, **the soldier pulling it up is Rembrandt himself.** He put himself at the Cross as the one who killed the Lord.

Rembrandt killed Jesus. And I did. And you did. **We** are the ones for whom Jesus went to the Cross. The Jews and the Romans were merely instruments carrying-out a plan of salvation that had been determined and decreed before the world was ever created:

1. God the Father sent His only begotten Son to die on the Cross so that the sins of mankind could be forgiven.
2. God the Son voluntarily gave His life to offer mankind forgiveness and salvation.

There *are* Jews and Romans in our verses; **but they are not the main character.** They are the background. Your eyes should be fixed upon Jesus. It's like those pictures you stare at until a hidden, 3-D image, comes into focus. In this text, here is what you should see:

1. Staring at Jesus among the Jews in chapter twenty-two, you see Him come into focus as God to be your Sacrifice.
2. Staring at Jesus among the Romans in chapter twenty-three, you see Him come into focus as Man to be your Substitute.

We'll organize our thoughts around those two thoughts: #1 Jesus Had To Be God To Be Your Sacrifice, and #2 Jesus Had To Be Man To Be Your Substitute.

#1 Jesus Had To Be God
To Be Your Sacrifice
(22:63-71)

Jesus endured a total of six trials on the evening and morning before His crucifixion:

1. The first three were religious as He was examined by Annas, then Caiphas, then the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin.
2. The next three were civil trials as Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate, then Herod Antipas, and a second time to Pilate.

In-between His trials, Jesus endured cruel mockings and severe beatings. We look upon one as we pick-up the story in verse sixty-three:

Luke 22:63 Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him.
Luke 22:64 And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, "Prophecy! Who is the one who struck You?"
Luke 22:65 And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him.

The irony of their behavior is that, while mocking Jesus' ability to prophesy, *they were in fact fulfilling prophecy!* Both Psalm 69 and Isaiah 50 predicted these beatings.

Men still scoff at Bible prophecy – when all the while, they are fulfilling it in their behavior, and it is being fulfilled all around them.

Luke 22:66 As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying,
Luke 22:67 "If You are the Christ, tell us..."

Christ means *anointed one*. It was a term that identified the promised Messiah. Claiming to be the **Christ** was *not* blasphemy. The Jews were expecting the **Christ** to come.

Jesus answered,

Luke 22:67 ...“If I tell you, you will by no means believe.

Luke 22:68 And if I also ask *you*, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go.

Jesus had fully proven Himself their promised Messiah by doing the works prophesied in the Scriptures. Any dialog Jesus might have with them was pointless. They had already made up their minds.

Of course, He was the **Christ**. And He was Someone more:

Luke 22:69 Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.”

Whoa! **Son of Man** was another title for the **Christ**. But this idea of sitting **on the right hand of the power of God** put Jesus on a par equal with God. The religious leaders demanded clarification:

Luke 22:70 Then they all said, “Are You then the Son of God?”

So He said to them, “*You rightly say that I am.*”

Luke 22:71 And they said, “What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.”

Son of God was and is a divine title. It was and is a claim to be equal with God. They thought Jesus was a man claiming to be equal with God. **They were right!** For them, this was blasphemy.

Luke 23:1 Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate.

Step back now and stare into the text to see Jesus come into focus. He had just told them that their Messiah, the **Son of Man**, was also God. They responded by delivering Him to be killed. But not just killed. Among them were priests. When priests are leading a perfect victim to be killed, the proper word would be sacrificed. Jesus comes into focus as God, your sacrifice.

Sin requires there be an appropriate sacrifice. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God came and covered their sin with coats of skin. Where did He get them? He killed an animal or two – probably lambs – and established that a sacrifice was necessary in order to temporarily cover your sins.

He also promised our first parents that He would come into our world and offer Himself a once-for-all sacrifice for sin. You see, the

sacrifice of animals could not fully, finally cover our sin. Only a perfect, sinless sacrifice could do that; and since the human race was spoiled with sin, only God Himself could qualify to be that full, final sacrifice.

Don't forget that it was the Passover when Jesus was being examined by the Jewish authorities. All over Jerusalem, Passover lambs were also being examined for the annual sacrifice. They must be as perfect as possible – without blemishes or spots or defects. Jesus' three religious trials were symbolic of these examinations. He was found to be perfect, without blemishes, spots, or defects. The only thing they could accuse Him of was that He claimed to be God.

And it's a good thing He was! If Jesus is not God, then your sins cannot be covered; they cannot be forgiven; you cannot be saved. No angel can be your sacrifice; no created being can be your sacrifice; no perfect person (even if there was one) can be your sacrifice. Only the **Christ**, the **Son of Man** Who was and is God can die for your sin.

Jesus was God your sacrifice. And He was man, your substitute.

#2 Jesus Had To Be Man To Be Your Substitute (23:1-25)

It's no good God dying unless He does so instead of you, as a substitute. In order to be a valid substitute, He must be also be a real flesh-and-blood human being. The three civil trials of Jesus bring Him into focus as a man. Three times in this account Luke stressed Pilate's description of Jesus as **this Man**. Pilate, in John's Gospel, says of **Jesus, Behold, the Man!** (John 19:15). Let's do that.

Luke 23:1 Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate.
Luke 23:2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."

They had found Jesus 'guilty' of claiming to be God. But that would not matter to Roman civil authority. So they invented a series of false charges against Jesus.

Jesus is still falsely accused of many things. Unbelievers typically want whatever blessings might come from God; they typically accuse Him for any calamities that might befall them or others.

Luke 23:3 Then Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" He answered him and said, "*It is as you say.*"

Luke 23:4 So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no fault in **this Man.**"

Luke 23:5 But they were the more fierce, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place."

Pilate declared Jesus an innocent man. The Jews were understandably unsatisfied. This was a lobbying group, exerting whatever political pressure necessary to see Jesus executed.

Luke 23:6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean.

Luke 23:7 And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

Luke 23:8 Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long *time* to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him.

Luke 23:9 Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing.

Herod was in Jerusalem for the Passover. This was the Herod who had John the Baptist beheaded. He attended Passover for political reasons – as a *gesture*, not as *genuine*.

Herod had a superstitious interest in Jesus. He treated Him the way we treat mediums and psychics – by watching them perform tricks on daytime television.

Jesus' silence is terrifying. **It tells you that there can come a time when Jesus will no longer speak to unbelievers.**

Luke 23:10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him.

Luke 23:11 Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked *Him*, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate.

Luke 23:12 That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.

It was a win-win for Herod. By sending Jesus, Pilate was acknowledging Herod's authority; but Herod was under no obligation to act. In a strange way, Herod's inaction encouraged Pilate. It was like saying, *"Whatever you decide, I'll support you."*

During all this politicking, Jesus was again mocked. Luke mentioned especially the [gorgeous robe](#). Again there was irony. They intended it to show that Jesus was powerless to be anyone's king, when in reality He possessed all power and will return in power to rule over the entire earth. The robe they placed upon Him would get stained by some of Jesus' blood; when He returns, He's wearing a [robe dipped](#) in the [blood](#) of His enemies (Revelation 19:13).

[Luke 23:13](#) Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people,

[Luke 23:14](#) said to them, "You have brought **this Man** to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined *Him* in your presence, I have found no fault in **this Man** concerning those things of which you accuse Him;

[Luke 23:15](#) no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him.

[Luke 23:16](#) I will therefore chastise Him and release *Him*"

[Luke 23:17](#) (for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast).

Jesus is a second time declared innocent. Pilate agrees to have Jesus beaten – as a warning. He hoped to appease the crowd, then release Jesus – a custom Rome had adopted to show some consideration to the Jews at Passover.

No one is sure where this custom came from. It is interesting that Passover was the feast that commemorated the release of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. Each household killed a lamb and applied its blood to their door post. The death of the lamb enabled them to be set free. Just so, the death of Jesus would allow Barabbas to be set free. Not just Barabbas: All who will call upon Him to be saved. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

[Luke 23:18](#) And they all cried out at once, saying, "Away with this *Man*, and release to us Barabbas" -

[Luke 23:19](#) who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder.

[Luke 23:20](#) Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them.

[Luke 23:21](#) But they shouted, saying, "Crucify *Him*, crucify Him!"

Luke 23:22 Then he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let *Him* go."

For the **third time** Pilate declared Jesus totally innocent of any charges. Keep this in mind when you watch those ridiculous specials on the *History Channel*, and the academic 'experts' tell you that Jesus was really just a misguided social revolutionary.

Luke 23:23 But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed.

Often I've heard it said (and probably said myself) that the same crowds which earlier shouted *Hosanna!* now called for Jesus to be crucified. That's not altogether true. This crowd was a different crowd. I just think we need to be careful accusing people.

Luke 23:24 So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested.
Luke 23:25 And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

Was it Rome who killed Jesus? *Wrong focus again!* Stare into the scene. You'll see Jesus emerge as your substitute.

Barabbas means, *son of the father*. It's almost like not having a name. "Who's that?" "That's the son of his father." That's why I see him as a representative of all men and women – of all humans.

The text says he was a rebellious murderer. Thus he was no different than the Jewish authorities who were rebelling against God and seeking to have Jesus murdered.

Jesus once told the unbelieving Jews that they were really of their father, the devil. The whole human race was taken captive by Satan when our first parents disobeyed God and believed the devil's lie. We deserve to die in our sins. **Instead... In our place...** As our **substitute**... is Jesus. Bar-Gene is released, while Jesus is crucified as my substitute.

Only a man could represent mankind. Jesus was Man to be your substitute, to die instead of you for your sins, in your place.

Jesus was God, your sacrifice; He was man, your substitute. **Unless He was both, you have neither.**

Rembrandt was right. Everyone needs to put themselves at the Cross as a participant in the Crucifixion.

Applying God's Word...

Christian: Because Jesus was your sacrifice and your substitute, He has become your Shepherd. Isaiah 53:6 says, *All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.* In First Peter 2:25 we read, *You were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.*

Whatever you do; whatever you experience; whether it be *satisfaction* or *suffering*... Look hard into it until Jesus comes into focus and the rest fades into the background.

If you are not a believer... Sin requires sacrifice. If you think that your own good works can cover your sin, you don't understand the scope of sin. You are hopelessly lost unless Jesus is your sacrifice and your substitute. You are a Barabbas; you can become a Rembrandt!