

THE ACCUSATIONS CONTINUE AGAINST THIS "JESUS OF NAZARETH"

Luke 23:1-7. Pilate Says "No." Apparently, the whole group wanted in on this action⁴ against the man from Nazareth, the man who affirmed He was the



Son of God. They arose as one and took Him to the Prefect, one Pontius Pilate, a knight of the Samnite clan, and favorite of Sejanus who had good connections to Tiberius.

Ignoring blasphemy, they changed the charge to subversion, opposing Tiberius' taxes, and Yeshua's claim to be "king of the Jews." So Prefect Pilate simply asked, "Are you indeed the king of Jews?" The King said "Yes, it is as you say." The Prefect announced his findings—"I find no basis for an indictment here."

They were not happy. Look, He stirs up "the people," all over Judea by His teaching. He began way down north in Galilee and has now made a mess all the way up here in Jerusalem. The Prefect wasn't born yesterday; noticing Galilean roots, he sent Yeshua to be reviewed by Herod who was not only in charge of Galilee, he was also in Jerusalem at the time.

- Q Why is important to remember/know how Prefect Pilate got his position in Judea?
- Q Did the Christ actually reject the notion of paying taxes to Caesar Tiberius? Why not?
- Q Why did Yeshua admit to being the Christ here, yet put off that admission earlier in His ministry?
- Q What stirred up believers then so much about the teaching of Jesus? Top three fuels for the fire?
- Q What bothers people the most today about the teachings of Jesus?



LUKE 23:1-7

Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate.
² And they began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king."
³ So Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied.
⁴ Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man."
⁵ But they insisted, "He stirs up the people all over Judea [actually the "land of the Jews"] by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here."
⁶ On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean.
⁷ When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

⁴At this time the Sanhedrin did not have legal power to evoke the death penalty. That apparently ended with the end of Pilate's rule after 36AD as he was called back to Rome (see Britannica.com/biography/Pontius-Pilate) for his inadequate response to an armed Samaritan rebellion; specifically, not maintaining Roman peace (*pax*; i.e., no conflict). Believers were also incensed about his image on coins and using the temple courtyard for a shortcut through town (the Romans carried a standard with an image offensive to temple worshippers). Apparently, the Sanhedrin was granted such power later, because after 36AD when Stephen, one of the first seven deacons in the church was convicted of blasphemy; and, he was stoned to death by the Sanhedrin (see Acts 7:57-60).

Luke 23:8-25. Herod & Pilate Say "No, Again. Herod was eager to see this Jesus perform, some miracle would be cool. So, Herod asked Him lots of questions; the Christ was silent. Not a good choice to avoid more cruelty—the big wheels' accusations were verbally violent, Herod's soldiers got in on the act, mocking Him with an elegant robe, they sent Him back to Pontius Pilate. It was an interesting day: the former enemies, Pilate and Herod, became friends.

So, Prefect called the not only the chief priests and temple rulers together, he also called "the people." He charged the group:

You said this man was inciting rebellion. I have examined him, right in front of you, and have found no evidence for an indictment. And for the record, neither has Herod. He has done nothing to warrant execution. Ergo, I will punish him and release him.

The attending crowd was incensed; away with this man—give us the son of Abba. (Barabbas was in prison for storming the capitol and murder.) But, still wanting to release this Yeshua from Nazareth, Pilate appealed to them again. They wanted the Christ crucified and said so: Crucify him.

Again the Prefect challenged them: Why? What is this man's crime? And, there are no grounds to warrant execution. Again, ergo, I will have Him punished, and then released.

Again the crowd was insistent, demanding death via crucifixion. Their loudness prevailed; the Prefect caved. Releasing the son of Abba, he surrendered Jesus the Christ to fulfill their purposes.

- Q To what extent did the Prefect fulfill his duties as Prefect of Judea?
- Q Why did the temple authorities & others seek to exact crucifixion? Why not hanging? Stoning?
- Q To what extent was this Jesus of Nazareth from Galilee guilty of rebellion? Blasphemy?
- Q Why is it useful to believe that the Anointed One (μωνογεννη) was indeed innocent when on earth as Jesus of Nazareth?

LUKE 23:8-25

When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform some miracle.

⁹ He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. ¹¹ Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. ¹² That day Herod and Pilate became friends—before this they had been enemies.

¹³ Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death.

¹⁶ Therefore, I will punish him and then release him. [Some manuscripts add: ¹⁷ *Now he was obliged to release one man to them at the Feast.*]"

¹⁸ With one voice they cried out, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!" ¹⁹ (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.)

²⁰ Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again.

²¹ But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

²² For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him."

²³ But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. ²⁴ So Pilate decided to grant their demand. ²⁵ He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.

Luke 23:26-49. The Execution. Simon from Cyrene in Libya, father of Rufus and Alexander (see Mark 15:21) was given Yeshua's cross and forced to carry it behind Him. Several people followed, including women who mourned and wailed for Him. Turning, He said:

Daughters — do not weep for Me; weep for yourselves and your children. There'll be a time when you will wish for barren women, women who never bore young and never nursed. They will then say to the mountains, fall on us, and to the hills, Cover Us! If men do this evil when the tree is green, how much more when the tree is dry?

Two other men, were also led out with Him to be executed for their crimes. Arriving at the place called the Skull (aka from the Latin *Calvaria*, hence "Calvary"), He was crucified with the two, one on each side. The Christ called out to the Father — *Forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.* And just as the Psalmist predicted in Psalm 22:18, they divided up His clothes by casting dice.

Of course people watched, and the rulers sneered — *He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the Chosen One.* The soldiers were not immune from masochistic cruelty — *If you are indeed the King of the Jews, save Yourself.* Ironically, above Him hung a sign saying:



One of the criminals also got into the act, hurling a dare: *Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself, and us!* The other criminal wasn't in the mood — *Don't you fear God; you're getting the same sentence. We're getting what's coming to us, but this man did nothing wrong.*

LUKE 23:26-49

As they led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus.²⁷ A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him.

²⁸ Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children.²⁹ For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!'"³⁰ Then

They will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!"
and to the hills, "Cover us!" [Hosea 10:8]

³¹ For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

³² Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed.³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left.³⁴ Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." [Some early mss do not have this sentence.] And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. [See Psalm 22:18]

³⁵ The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One."

³⁶ The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar³⁷ and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

³⁸ There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

³⁹ One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"

⁴⁰ But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence?"⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

⁴² Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." [Some mss read *come with your kingly power.*]

⁴³ Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour,⁴⁵ for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.⁴⁶ Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

⁴⁷ The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man."⁴⁸ When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away.⁴⁹ But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Then, the criminal said something amazing—*Jesus* [note he called Him by name], *remember me when you come into your kingdom*. Jesus was gracious—*Amen*, [Ἀμήν] *today you will be with Me in paradise*.⁵

Then around noon⁶ it happened—the sky was dark until around 3pm; this was no eclipse. The curtain of the Temple was torn in two, and Jesus the Christ called out, loudly, *Father, I commit My spirit into Your hands*. With this, He breathed His last.

A centurion was watching and praising God, he claimed: Surely this was a righteous man. Others who had come to see this travesty, beat their breasts with agony, and went away... But, all those who knew Him, including the women who'd followed Him up from Galilee, stayed, watching, standing by, at a distance.



- Q Did the criminal go to heaven when Christ Jesus was resurrected?
- Q What strikes you the most about the crucifixion of Jesus the Christ?
- Q Which insult, do you suppose, did Yeshua find the most irritating?
- Q Where was Father God? Did He indeed “abandon the Christ?” Psalm 22:1ff

Luke 23:50-56. Immediate Aftermath. A Godly believer, one named Joseph, from Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin had not consented to the decision regarding Jesus of Nazareth. He was on watch for the Kingdom of God to arrive.

He went to the Prefect and oddly asked for the body of Yeshua. Pilate consented, Joseph took the body down [note the use of the word “it,” αὐτόν] and placed it in a tomb cut from a rock ledge, a tomb no one had used before.

But, it was Preparation Day—Sabbath was about to begin. It turns out the women who had followed the Christ up from Galilee followed Joseph, saw the tomb and how Yeshua’s body was laid. So, they went home, prepared burial spices and perfumes, but nonetheless observed the Sabbath and did not deal with His body until later.

- Q Why did Joseph bury the body of Yeshua the Christ?
- Q What constitutes a “good and upright” man in the time of the Christ?
- Q How long was the body of Christ neglected because of Sabbath observance?

LUKE 23:50-56

Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man,⁵¹ who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God.

⁵²Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body. ⁵³Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. ⁵⁴It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

⁵⁵The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it.

⁵⁶Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

⁵*paradise*. In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures) the word designates a garden (Genesis 2:8-10) or forest (Neh. 2:8), but in the New Testament (used only here and in 2 Corinthians 12:4; Revelation 2:7) it refers to the place of bliss and rest between death and resurrection (cf. Luke 16:22; 2 Corinthians 12:2). Many do not like “paradise” being made equivalent to “heaven,” because it is not theologically useful to equate them. People need to claim “admission” to heaven is more than what Jesus the Christ declared here to the criminal. Hence, the interpretation of the story of Abraham, Lazarus and the rich man takes place in positive bliss and negative state, versus a contrast of heaven and hell. We do love our theories.

⁶Using the Jewish method of designating time. Jesus had been put on the cross at the third hour (9:00am, Mark 15:25). The “sixth hour” of John (John 19:14) may be Roman time (6:00am), when Pilate gave his decision (but see John 19:14).