

# **Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Gospel of Luke, Session 33, Arrest and Crucifixion, Luke 23**

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This is Dr. Daniel K. Darko in his teaching on the Gospel of Luke. This is session 33, Arrest and Crucifixion, Luke 23.

Welcome back to the biblical e-learning lecture series on the Gospel of Luke.

So far, we have covered a range of issues in the Gospel of Luke, but particularly, we have followed the text of the Gospel of Luke closely, paying attention to every verse and every chapter and reading every line. And that's exactly what we will be doing as we come to the end of this Gospel. Some have said that perhaps the Gospel of John is the most important Gospel in the way it communicates the Gospel, namely, the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ to the world.

Others have said perhaps Mark gives us a succinct understanding of what Christ came to do and the price he came to pay for us. I may add, if I may, that perhaps Luke provides us with a detail, an aspect of the Gospel that is so crucial and relevant to understanding what Jesus did in graphic detail. Mark shows us the dramatic elements of the suffering of Jesus, and so those of you who are familiar with the Passion of Christ movie, much of that movie builds on Mark's account to emphasize the dramatic nature of the suffering.

Today, we are going on in the last but one lecture on the Gospel of Luke to look at the Arrest and Crucifixion of Jesus. When we go through this text, one of the things I'll be doing is, beyond telling you the basic account, as Luke points out, I will highlight how different Gospel writers present this account, and then I will also go on to emphasize some things that Luke is very particular in conveying to us so that we will be able to grasp the message he tries to convey to Theophilus and the wider audience in his readership. So, let's begin to read from Luke chapter 22, if you like, the end of Luke chapter 22, the pericope that ends that particular chapter, from verse 54.

Then they seized him, led him away, and brought him into the high priest's house, and Peter followed at a distance. And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, this man was with him, but he denied saying, woman, I do not know him.

And a little later, someone else saw him and said, you also are one of them. But Peter said, man, I am not. After an interval of about an hour, another insisted, saying, certainly, this man was with him, for he too was a Galilean.

But Peter said, Man, I do not know what you are talking about. And immediately while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter.

And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times. And he went out and wept bitterly. This particular account is very interesting as we go through the events of Jesus's last days on earth.

A companion, a disciple, one whom he had selected to follow. One of the closest allies who would be with him when he even retreated to pray. One of the allies who would be with him on the day of transfiguration would deny him.

Perhaps I should take that word back: betray. Let me use the word deny. But what are the events leading to this? Lest we go too fast and forget from the previous lectures about what Jesus had said about Peter.

Jesus told Peter, if you may recall, that Satan had wanted to sift him, but he had prayed for him. In other words, the Satan who would instigate Judas to betray him was also asked to use Peter and take Peter astray. But Jesus mentioned in earlier discourse that he had prayed for him.

And yet Peter, being human, was still trying to later express overconfidence in his ability to follow Jesus. That under no circumstance would he let Jesus down. But Jesus reminded him that he would deny knowing him.

For this, he departed and said that would not be possible. If you like in paraphrase, that could not be. In this account of Peter's denial, one becomes aware of a few things.

When Jesus was arrested after the meal, and Judas gestured to kiss, they brought him to the house of the high priest. The scene was the mansion of a high priest in Jerusalem. Some of the gospel writers have named this high priest as Caiaphas.

Luke does not mention the name. Now, we see this event unfolding in the evening. We are told in the early part of chapter 22 that they had met in the evening for the Passover, and his arrest and everything were playing out in the evening.

As they came to the yard, the weather was apparently getting cold, so they set fire in the middle of the mansion. Some people surrounded the fire, trying to keep warm, while Jesus stood to be interrogated by the high priest. We are told by Luke that it was on such occasions when Jesus was within a hearing distance of what Peter could say and when Peter and Jesus could see each other quite well that the events would

turn as Jesus had predicted to Peter. We find in Luke's account that Luke wanted to portray Peter to us as a disciple.

Luke used the word following. He followed Jesus, the word he likes to use to actually emphasize discipleship. So, Peter followed Jesus, but Luke also wants us to know that he followed as a disciple, but he followed with hesitation, so he followed at a distance.

Circumstances looked very fragile and threatening. And so, Peter, for the sake of his own well-being and security, remained a follower but a follower at a distance. Lest we think Peter was too weak and too insensitive, let me remind you that the rest of the disciples were not in the scene, but Peter alone is here at this time.

When he got in there, he mingled with the people around the as if Luke is trying to portray to us that with the gathering of the crowd, Peter was trying to fit in so that nobody would know that he was present. Was it not cool? You know, I have tried sometimes to remind students when we read the gospel of Luke that we should remember Peter and remind ourselves about him. We follow Jesus as disciples, but when life situations are threatening, we follow at a distance to the point that in the workplace, in a place where claiming to be a follower of Jesus will not make us popular or subject us to ridicule.

We just hope against hope that people will not know that we are even Christians. Peter was doing some of that. When he mingled with the crowd, he actually thought that he was still keeping his eye on what was going on with his master, but he was able to have a covering enough.

Oh, but Luke will say Peter got it wrong. Peter got it wrong because we would see something else unfold. Unlike the gospel of Matthew and the gospel of Mark, where Peter would deny Jesus three times before the cock crows.

In Luke, all these denials will take place in one courtyard. You should know that in Matthew and Mark, some of the denials took place outside the courtyard. In Luke, all three would take place in the same courtyard.

I will highlight some differences between Luke and the other three gospels later on, but I also want to remind you about the fact that when Peter denied knowing Jesus, a few things must be borne in mind. One, when Peter denied knowing Jesus, it was as if it did not matter until he made eye contact with Jesus. The cock crows as he makes eye contact with Jesus, they both know Jesus has heard what Peter is saying, and it is clear that something has gone on.

And then, for me, in these narratives, one of the most important words came out, and he remembered. Remembrance. Peter, remembering what he had been taught or told by Jesus, is going to set the platform for repentance.

He will go out and weep. Peter could falter and deny Jesus, but the same Peter will remember what he had been taught. On that basis, he would repent, he would weep, he would express his grief, and we are told he wept bitterly.

This bitter weeping could be a manifestation of shame, remorse, and repentance. Yes, he denied Jesus, but something is changing in this man. Before I go on to highlight a few things about the denial of Jesus, which I think you want to know more about, to really understand some of the things going on in Luke, more so than the other Gospels, I want to show you a parallel between Luke and the other Gospels.

In Luke, Peter denies Jesus first to a young girl, and then the second person he denied Jesus to in the courtyard was a man. And then the third person was a man in Luke. But what are the actors in Mark? Mark says that Peter indeed denied knowing Jesus three times before the court crew.

But unlike Luke, Mark indicates that the seventh girl, or if you like to translate it, slave, the slave girl, asked him twice. So, one girl was instrumental in getting Peter to deny Jesus two times. And then the third time where you would deny Jesus, it will be something that will be prompted by the question of bystanders.

In Matthew, the actors are presented slightly differently as well. In Matthew, it was a seventh girl, and then a different girl, and the third is bystanders. That is to say that in Matthew, two women ask Peter whether he knew Jesus, and Peter denies knowing Jesus.

Eventually, what will go on to unfold is that in Mark, when he denied knowing Jesus to these two girls, the bystanders will come in later on when Jesus was not even in the yard. There, the bystanders are also going to ask if he knew Jesus, and he would deny knowing Jesus. John's portrait of the actors is quite interesting.

In John, John tells us that Peter denied Jesus, but John does not even give us a vivid description of whether Peter denied Jesus three times or two times. Because John only portrays them as asking Peter if he knew Jesus once, and Peter denied knowing Jesus at that time. And then after that, a servant of the high priest, according to John, would also ask Peter if he knew Jesus.

And Peter is going to say he did not. Now, lest you get confused about these things, I drew your attention to the differences of the actors who would prompt Peter to deny Jesus, not to show a massive discrepancy in the gospels, but to show you that perhaps Luke, in particular, is interested in showing a servant girl first a deep act of

humiliation, where a grown-up man, in fear of his life before a young girl, would deny knowing Jesus, someone he had been following, someone who had been such instrumental to his life. We find out that Luke tried to save Peter a little bit by showing that after the denial of Jesus to a servant girl, Peter will be given two other chances by men with which he would deny knowing Jesus.

That's a very interesting thing to observe there. But for those who are following this as bible students or New Testament scholars or as church members who are curious trying to investigate more, I want to urge you to explore more. This is one of those subjects I urge you to study more, to dig in more, to find out what the actors are different in Luke than in Mark and Matthew and even in John.

I did three that prompted the denial. But coming back to Luke, I want to draw your attention to something I consider very, very significant in the programmatic nature of Luke's portrait of Peter's denial of Jesus. Luke actually makes something very interesting in his account.

He presents that Peter told the young girl, woman, I do not know him when he was asked if he knew Jesus. Luke draws our attention to the fact that Peter actually denied Jesus as a person, single, in that instance. Then, in the second instance, when a man came to Peter, the man actually put it in the collective whole as if Peter belonged to a group of disciples.

And so, he said, you also are one of them. You are one of those who follow Jesus. It moves from the exclusive or particular Jesus to the group of Jesus, the disciples of Jesus, of which Peter will also deny belonging to the in-group.

And then Luke gives us another portrait in which the third question that came from the man was going to ask about his region, his identity, where he comes from. You too, you must be, you must be one of them, invoking his origin to invoke the identity, the region from which he comes, and Peter will still deny that. In other words, even three times, he denied knowing Jesus personally.

He denied belonging to the disciples of Jesus. And he denied even the very core of his identity as one who came from Galilee, who happened to share that collective identity with Jesus and even broader others. In the high priest court, it was not only going to be an occasion for Peter to deny knowing Jesus three times before the cork roll, but we would also be told that Jesus would go through some serious mocking.

Here, I would like to remind you when you read from verse 61 or 63 that the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, prophesy, who is it that struck you? And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him. Here, I want to draw your attention to a very, very important Mediterranean cultural issue.

In the arrest and crucifixion narratives, you come across the word mocking again and again. Now, if we are in America, it's not a big deal. As one of my former students in a different university, who is a priest, an African priest from East Africa and East African country, said, oh, in America, it seems like they have no shame.

I remind him that this is not a shameful culture. This is a shameless culture. This is the land of the free and home of the brave.

We just do things. But you see, in the ancient Mediterranean culture, in honor and shame culture, mocking could be as damaging as somebody stabbing you. Ridiculing someone in public to put them to shame can destroy them mentally and emotionally.

That is the reason you come across the events of trials where there is a constant attempt to mock, ridicule, or shame someone. Because shame is the reason somebody may want to die because they have been shamed publicly. In other words, what was being done to Jesus was to destroy him before the crowd publicly.

And what would they do? As we are told here, the mocking will even include physical mocking. They will blindfold him and ask him to prophesy. They will, sorry, they will blindfold him, and then when they blindfold him, they will get somebody to beat him.

And then they will say, if you are truly spiritual enough if you are truly the Messiah from Galilee, can you now tell us the one who beat you? Because we have blindfolded you, and you could not see that person. And in an attempt to humiliate him to the core in the public arena. Spiritually, it almost undermines all the spiritual enterprise that God has used him to accomplish the things that he has done, proclaiming the kingdom of God and bringing the kingdom of God to effect in people's lives.

Verbally, they abused him. They said all kinds of things, as Luke writes there. They spoke all kinds of things to him.

Friends, what did he do to deserve that? He did nothing. Why was he arrested? There were false charges against him. We know that in the last days in Jerusalem, his ministry in the temple had already prompted so many reactions, as I pointed out to you when we looked at chapter 20.

He had done nothing wrong. But at this point, they were trying to kill him. They were trying to destroy him mentally and emotionally, mocking him.

But then, let's take a look. From the high priest, the chief priest's house, they will bring him to the Sanhedrin. He has spent all the night in the home of the chief priest going through all this torture if you like.

When the day came, the assembly or council of the elders of the people got it together, both chief priests and scribes, and they led him away to their council and they said, if you are the Messiah, if you are the Christ, tell us. But he said to them, if I tell you, you will not believe. And if I ask you, you will not answer.

But from now on, the son of man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God. So, they all said, are you the son of God then? He said to them, you say that I am. Then they said, what further testimony do we need? We have had it ourselves from his own lips.

Jesus was brought to the Sanhedrin. So quickly, let me just remind you what this council entails. We read about a council and you may have heard about the Sanhedrin more and more.

But let me just clarify as I try to introduce you to various groups in Second Temple Judaism. The Sanhedrin, or the council in question here, is the supreme religious council of the Jews. This particular group dealt with all kinds of laws and regulations dealing with the religion and the religious traditions of the Jews.

People who break the laws are decided, and matters relating to their religious culture are decided by this council. The council comprises 23 or 71 at a time. And if the council is in a city, which some cities will have their own Sanhedrin, if you like mini-Sanhedrin, there will be 23 in the group of judges that decide on religious matters.

But the supreme council, which is the Sanhedrin that met in Jerusalem, will be the one Jesus will be presented to with 71 elders and priests, including the chief priest who will be deciding. They normally met in the temple and decided on matters of religion, whether Jesus was breaking the Jewish laws or not. You should know that as far as we know about the dating of their existence, the constitution of the Sanhedrin came into being by 57 BCE, following the Romans coming to take over. Then, the Romans set up this regime and had the Jews make a lot of decisions that would be made on their religious matters.

After 70 CE, when the temple was destroyed, the influence of the Sanhedrin diminished significantly. However, Second Temple Judaism scholars have drawn our attention to the fact that they continue to exist, only being marginal in their powers until the 5th century CE. This group was influential in a sense that in this time frame, whether it was Roman law or customary rules in play if anything came up that had to do with the Jewish religion, this council decided where people had broken the law

and this council would then determine the due penalty or the necessary steps that are required to address that particular issue.

The Sanhedrin we know met daily in the daytime except during the Sabbath or special festivals of the Jews. That is where you should know about the difference between Luke's account and the account of other gospel writers who suggested that the council was meeting at night. We don't have historical precedence to suggest that these supreme Sanhedrin actually met at night.

We know that unless, on this particular occasion, it was so spectacular and so exceptional that they met for the sake of Jesus. Otherwise, they met in the daytime, and they would normally not meet on the Sabbath, but they would meet specifically in a chamber in the temple that they actually found suitable for their meetings. When Jesus was brought to the Sanhedrin, remember that he was brought to the Sanhedrin from the home of the chief priest after he had been ridiculed, mocked, and shamed in many ways.

Before the Sanhedrin, as I read earlier on, Jesus would face a few accusations. Unlike Mark, I should note that their appearance and the trial before the Sanhedrin did not include witnesses. In Mark chapter 14, verses 56 to 59, we will be told that Jesus will be tried by the Sanhedrin, and there will be false witnesses who will come and testify that this is the man who said he will destroy the temple and he will rebuild it and all that.

Luke does not bring those witnesses into the conversation. That is in the Markan account. The first question that we put before him in the Sanhedrin is whether he is the Christ or the Messiah.

The second question would be whether he is the son of God. In both instances, he gives the reluctant answer. The answer is not quite satisfactory, but it seems that in Luke's account, Luke is presenting to us that this is a group of people who had already made up their minds on what to do with Jesus before the trial; they began the formalities.

And so, it seems like Jesus was also playing on them. Oh, you say the son of God. Okay, I can tell you that you will see the manifestation of the power of the son of God. And you say, oh, so you just said you are the Messiah then? He said, no, no, no, you have said so.

That exchange was tentative but implied that exchange was an issue where the Sanhedrin had already decided on what they wanted to do with him. Because they did not have legitimate grounds for trial and legitimate cases to be made against him, they are going to go back and forth to try to see what will stick. If something will stick, then they can use that as a central charge.



They are not qualified to issue a death sentence by crucifixion. On religious grounds, they can issue a death sentence by stoning if it is a matter of blasphemy. But because they are not in place to issue death sentences by crucifixion, they will try to try some of these charges.

If they do stick, they will bring them to Pilate, and eventually, Pilate would then decide because Pilate is in town. Remember, it is the Passover feast. Pilate's palace is mainly in Caesarea.

But he comes to his small place in Jerusalem during festivals to be there, for which he would join the Jews to celebrate this event. There, he will also make the Jews happy by pardoning one or two people of their choice to show a gesture in participation of this Passover in which to celebrate God releasing his people from the captivity or the enslavement of the Egyptians. Now beginning from 23.

We find here, then, that their whole company arose and brought him before Pilate, that is, the Sanhedrin. They began to accuse him, saying that we found this man misleading our nation, forbidding us from paying tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king. And Pilate asked him, are you the king of the Jews? And he answered him, you have said so.

Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the cross, I find no guilt in this man. But there were agents saying he stirred up the people, teaching throughout Judea and Galilee, even to this place. When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean.

And when he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him, to see some sign done by him. So, he questioned him at some length, but he made no answer.

The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. And Herod, with his soldiers, treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid clothing, he sent him back to Pilate and Herod.

And Pilate became friends with each other that very day. Before this day, they had been at enmity with each other. Quickly, part of the observations to be made here is that Jesus was brought to Pilate, who is in town because of the festival, and the level three charges against him.

One, they said that Jesus was actually leading the entire nation astray. The second charge, the level against him, was that he was forbidding people to pay taxes to Caesar. And three, they said that he is claiming to be the king of the Jews.

One should note that these charges before a Roman official have severe implications. They did not frame these charges as a matter of know-nothing. They frame it because if Jesus is leading the whole nation astray, then he is undermining the structures of Roman jurisprudence and the structures that the Romans have put in place to ensure that there is peace in the place.

If he forbids people to pay taxes, that is an affront to Caesar himself in Rome and, therefore, falls on the hands of Pilate to decide the fate because this then is not a religious matter. If he claimed to be the king of the Jews, he is claiming to be, if not a subsidiary of Caesar, someone who is trying to take the place of the king. Serious charges.

Are they grounded in anything? No. In fact, the closest is in chapter 20, when Jesus was asked and was given the coin, if you remember when he was asked to explain whether they should pay taxes to Caesar or not, and he explained that well, as I elaborated on in this lecture series. Jesus never said anywhere in the gospel of Luke that we know of that people should not pay their taxes to Caesar, but that was made against him.

Did he claim to be the king of the Jews? Others say something to that effect he did not deny. He implied that perhaps the Jewish expectation of the Messiah is unfolding in his work, but he did not alter that himself to merit these charges against him. But these charges were well crafted because if you don't understand the jurisprudence and the issues at stake here, this is a hindrance to settling the Jewish religious matters.

They need to frame charges that are wider civic and criminal issues that will get into the Roman prefect's desk for him to be the one to decide. It's a good try, but they will not stick. Pilate will mention that he will not find much in what they are bringing forward.

As the prefect, it is clear that Pilate has the powers, what is called in the Latin expression *ius gladi*, the powers to issue the death penalty to bring that and they were doing all those to appeal to Pilate to invoke the death penalty. But Pilate states on three occasions that he finds no evidence that goes with the charges leveled against Jesus. So, knowing not what to do as he has this exchange with the members of the Sanhedrin, Pilate was trying to find an easy route, and he had them say that he caused commotion and taught all these things even in Galilee.

He said oh yeah, you mentioned Galilee. Is it likely that it's from God? He said yeah, okay then, then Herod is in town. Herod was the one who is in charge of Galilee. So, send him to Herod and see if Herod can address that issue.

Pilate, in effect, has already said he doesn't he doesn't find any fault with this man. But the people insist they did not know that they were giving him leeway out when they mentioned Galilee. So, he now says, send him to Herod.

Well, we know that Herod was very glad to see Jesus because he heard about the ministry of Jesus in Galilee and was hoping to see him, even anticipating that Jesus would perform some miracles for him to see. But something else that is going on this day is what I am passionate about if I am in the pulpits. On this day when the trier formalities were playing out, when Peter's denial is going to lead to remembrance and, therefore, repentance, we are also going to see that two secular leaders who did not have a good relationship are now going to become friends because of Jesus.

Let me tell you what was going on here. Herod was obsessed with power. He liked power.

But Pilate didn't want to recognize Herod's power. So, Pilate had had problems with Herod all this while. So, for Pilate to refer a case to Herod is to validate the status of Herod.

If you are Herod, you are saying for once Pontius Pilate's pink. Remember that Herod has an Idumean origin, claiming to be from Palestine. Pilate is the direct emissary of Rome.

And this tension has existed for a long time. But now Pilate sends Jesus to Herod. There, we will see that Herod also finds no particular case against Jesus.

So his soldiers will join his soldiers to mock Jesus, to ridicule him publicly, to try to superimpose more psychological torture, and return Jesus to Pilate. What is going on here is this. Luke is saying that before we try to put the blame on all the people, it is the leaders who are in to get Jesus, not everybody.

Unlike other Gospels where you have the rest of the populace screaming and crying to try to get Jesus arrested and crucified. And Luke, all this orchestration is coming from the leaders, from the house of the high priest to the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin taught that under normal circumstances, you want to send a criminal or somebody who deserves to be brought to Pilate to him.

You don't need the whole Sanhedrin. Luke says that the entire Sanhedrin walked to Pilate's palace to deliver Jesus. He did not find anything.

They screamed. He said, go to Herod. Herod was happy.

He told Jesus we're going to perform miracles. He asked him several questions. Jesus did not mind.

So, they mock him more. They laugh. They demean him and send him back to Pilate.

Two counts. Pilate, in the first instance, did not find any fault with Jesus. Second, Herod did not find any fault with Jesus.

Even the Jewish leaders who were trying to find fault with Jesus were just trying. They tried to see what would stick, but things were not sticking from verse 13 of chapter 23.

But all did, all did, but they all cried out together, away with this man, and released to us Barabbas, a man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection, stuttered in the city, and for murder. Pilate addressed them once more and desired to release Jesus. But they kept shouting, crucify, crucify him.

At that time, he asked them why. What evil has he done? I have found in him no guilt deserving death. I will, therefore, punish and release him. But there were agents demanding the Lord Christ that he should be crucified.

And their voices prevailed. So, Pilate decided that their demand should be granted. And he released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder.

And for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus to their will. As they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country and laid on him the cross to carry it behind him, behind Jesus. And there followed him a great multitude of people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him.

But turning to them, Jesus said, Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, days are coming when they will say, blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breast that never nest. Then they will begin to say to the mountains, follow us, and to the hills, cover us.

If they do these things with wood, when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry? Let me quickly walk you through some of the things playing out here. Jesus is condemned to die, not for the wrong he had done. But without elaborating as other gospel writers would do, Luke had just informed us that Pilate was about to pardon one person in prison to appease the audience as part of the Passover celebration.

And the audience had opted to let the man who was responsible for the riot and murder go and let Jesus be killed. Have you been to an environment where you knew the innocent was being sent to jail, and the guilty was being released back into society? Jesus was in that chorus, and they cried out to crucify him. And because it is the custom of Pilate to release one person as a pardon for the people, he released Jesus.

We find here that Pilate repeats three times that Jesus is innocent, but that will not suffice. The public choice for pardon is Barabbas and not Jesus. Here comes a Jew from Cyrene, Simon, who lived in the diaspora in North Africa.

In fact, Mark reminds us of his children's names. They saw him as they were leading Jesus to be crucified. And they say, here comes an African, let's get him.

I mean, you know where I'm going because I'm African. This is a Jew who lived in diaspora in North Africa. You know, I like to mention that whenever we think of Africans and whatever troubles Africans have, one of the portraits of Luke about this account is to try to show that there were women disciples of Jesus, and Simon of Cyrene became a disciple of Jesus, who will bear his cross to the place to be crucified.

So even when those intending to crucify Jesus thought they were putting Simon of Cyrene in a bad place, little did they know that they were putting him in a place of honor to be the one who would save the savior of the world for collapsing on the road to be crucified, for bearing additional pain and heaviness. Simon was forced; please do not misunderstand what I mean here; Simon did not volunteer to carry the cross. He was forced to do so, but from hindsight, it would be a privilege.

Simon and the woman will not be worthy of Luke. Luke is very interested in highlighting the incident with the women who are supposed to be outcast in society. Luke mentions that on the road to the cross, there will be women following Jesus, and these women were in sorrow; they were beating their breasts, and they were wailing in loud voices.

Jesus hears this woman, and Luke tells us that even on the way to the cross, Jesus will pay attention to the outcasts who are following him. Jesus will tend to the women; instead of mourning for him or being sorrowful for him, he will tend to console them and also tell them about their fate in prophetic terms. He will let them be aware that the time is coming, that it's not going to be good for the daughters of Jerusalem, and the daughters of Jerusalem would much rather weep for themselves because it will be so bad, it will be so bad for them.

Jesus, on the road to the cross, is becoming a savior, an encourager, one deserving a following by Simon of Cyrene. If you like an unexpected figure in that scene in Jerusalem, women who are not expected to have the courage to follow will be the

ones following, and we will see that Jesus will tell them that it will be so bad for Jerusalem that people will wish to die, and yet death will not come. Jerusalem is going to go through all kinds of difficulties, but the daughters of Jerusalem should be aware of this ahead of time and not be taken by surprise, as much as he appreciates their mourning for him.

While all these are unfolding, we were told that when they came to the scene, two others who were criminals were led away to be put to death with him. Notice that Luke mentions that the innocents were brought to two others who were criminals as if they were even in the procession alone, and they were brought to that place with him. When they came to the place that is called the skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left, and Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do, and they cast lots to divide his garments, and the people stood by watching, but the ruler scoffed at him, saying, he saved others, let him save himself, if he is the Messiah, the Christ of God, his chosen one.

The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sore wine, saying, if you are the king of the Jews, save yourself. There was also an inscription over him, this is the king of the Jews. Then one of the criminals who were hanged, railed at him, saying, are you not the Christ, save yourself and us, but the other rebuked him, saying, do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation, and we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong, and he said, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom, and he said to him, truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.

It was now about a sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land in the ninth hour. While the sunlight-filled, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, then Jesus called out with a loud voice, said Father, into your hands I commit my spirit, and having said that, he breathed his last on the way to the cross. Luke omits the expression Golgotha, and he does not talk about the wine mixed with myrrh, but I want you to know that the sore drink that was offered to him was a way to mock him, as if to say, if you are the king, this is the finest wine we can give you, just to mock him. In other Gospels, like Mark, they mistook his cry to mean perhaps his thirst and tried to give him some drink.

You see, the prophetic Jesus on the cross will pray that God will forgive his killers for their ignorance, but here in Luke, Luke does not use the Aramaic words in this crucifixion scene. Luke tells us that there were many eyewitnesses in this account, yet he omits the expressions in Mark such as Elohim, Elohim, Lema Sabachthani. He omits expressions like Golgotha and translates the place of Skull.

He omits the sore wine being mixed with myrrh to give to Jesus, but he highlights that Jesus went to the cross with so many eyewitnesses present. One, there was the crowd. The crowd watched, but the crowd would not mock him in Luke.

The rulers were present. They scoffed at him, and then the soldiers mocked him. They offered him vinegar or sour drink if you liked, and they teased him if he was the king of the Jews.

And then the two criminals, one of those criminals, make a mockery of Jesus. Another silences him, to which Jesus is saying that today, the one who asked for him to be with Jesus in his kingdom will be with him in paradise. Two wonders will take place that day.

The sun will go dark very quickly from the sixth to ninth hour, and the veil of the temple will be torn. Let me just quickly say something here as this particular lecture will be longer than all the others I have given so far. I will try to be succinct while I maintain some details here.

First, with the two criminals with Jesus on the cross, Jesus offers that that day, one of those criminals who acknowledged that they deserved what they were suffering and wanted to be with Jesus, Jesus said, today you will be with me in paradise. We don't actually know exactly what paradise refers to as it is something that we know in tradition to refer to that garden that aided the spirits, a place where God dwells with his people. Sometimes, it is synonymous conceptually with heaven, a place of God's presence.

So, when the argument is advanced as to when Jesus said today, you will be with me in paradise, is he talking about going with him to heaven? Is he talking about what heaven? If Jesus was going to go to Hades to defeat the forces of darkness, whatever your theory is on that, what did Jesus, excuse me, Jesus mean? That is a point where I would like you to study more on this subject because there are a few views and a few insights that will be supplied that a lecture of this kind would not be able to give an exhaustive discussion on that. But knowing that some of my friends in other countries follow this particular lecture series, let me say that for those of you in Latin-speaking countries, the concept paradiso carries that sense of heavenly bliss that Jesus offers this criminal on the cross. But those in Slavic countries, let me tell you what Jesus is not saying.

And for those who always understand or who speak English and don't speak Slavic language, as I know at least one of them a little bit, the in the Sebo-Croatian-Slavic language, there is a word for tomato. Tomato is actually Rochester. Rochester is not used often these days.

When I'm on the land, what I hear more about the word tomato is paradise. Now, as I also find other similar Slavic languages, such as Macedonia, Bulgaria, and others, you may likely call tomatoes paradise. As it is in the expression love apple.

But Jesus is not talking about the nice tomatoes that you want to eat your fresh bread with garlic as we try to do in the mornings. No, no, no, that's not what Jesus is talking about here. Yes, it's not offering a nice tomato to the criminal on the cross.

He's offering a place with God. I thought I should clarify that. If possible, and you are discussing this around the table, use Rochester for tomatoes and not paradise.

Because the love apple will sound good, but the point of Jesus is a place with God, a place of God's bliss. The veil will be torn. Three views advance as to why the veil.

Some suggest that when we read about the curtain in the temple being torn or the veil being torn, it should be understood as a symbol of the impending destruction of the temple. Some have also suggested that it symbolizes the end of the old covenant and its ritual sacrifices, and the turning of the veil actually opens the way for the new covenant to take effect. Others have suggested a third view that says it refers to the opening of equal access for Jews and Gentiles, where a curtain between the court of the Gentiles and the court of Jews is erased, and people have access to God.

What is the preferred view? I don't know, but I offer you the three views that are often brought out because I think you may want to know. As Joy Green puts it, as he thinks about this particular incident and events unfolding on the day Jesus would die, he says, look portraits of the rending of the temple veil as a symbol of the destruction of the symbolic world surrounding and emanating from the temple neutralizing the centrality of the temple in preparation for the centrifugal mission of Jesus' followers, not to Jerusalem but from it, and to the ends of the earth. In other words, when the temple is torn, all the rituals and the conceptual framework of religion surrounding Jerusalem opens up.

The kingdom's advancement opens up from Jerusalem and goes from there on. Another thing I want to bring out to for the discussion on crucifixion is the reminder that an inscription was put on the cross of Jesus. What was the inscription? Again, for Bible teachers and Bible students, I give you an assignment to explore more because each of the gospel writers tells us that the inscription was slightly different.

John says that the inscription read Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews. Mark says that the inscription read the king of the Jews. Matthew says the inscription reads this is Jesus, the king of the Jews.

And Luke says the inscription reads this is the king of the Jews. But why at all would inscription of that be necessary? Scholars speculate about this, but three suggestions



have been put forward as to why Pilate would like to have such an inscription. The first view states that Pilate would like to curb potential accusations that he is easy to curve into the pressure and demands of the Jews.

So, putting that inscription there is to establish clearly that he is there to actually be someone who stands for justice and renders justice on behalf of the Jews. The second view says that it is a mockery, especially given the site of the crucifixion to appease the Jews and Jewish leaders. As people walk by the main road, they see the inscription, and they say yes, this is the guy who claimed to be the king of the Jews. The third view that more and more scholars seem to subscribe to is the view that the inscription was meant to serve as a deterrent to those who would like to run a revolution against the empire whenever they saw it, it will remind them that if they run any coup d'etat against the Roman system, they too will end up on the cross.

Which one of these is the best view? Answer I don't know. I bring some of this view forward to remind you that scholars are trying to make sense of things that we don't have a lot of facts over. We know that the inscription was supplied partly because part of the charges leveled against Jesus, though unsubstantiated, are reflected in the inscription.

Which perhaps should just signify the reason why Jesus is on that cross. Why on that cross? Jesus ministers. He prays for his ignorant killers.

He desires forgiveness for his killers. He even offers a place in paradise for a criminal. He commands his own spirit to the Father.

And as John Green puts it, in these last days of Jesus on the earth, as a means of execution, he will go through this horrible experience of crucifixion. Crucifixion, as Green points out, was particularly heinous. This has as much to do with the public humiliation accompanying crucifixion as the act itself.

Bound or nailed to a stake, he writes. Tree or cross, the victim faced death with all organs intact and relatively little blood loss. As a consequence, death came slowly, sometimes over several days, as the body succumbed to choking to a shock or asphyxiation.

We will be told that Jesus, who died, will rise again. We will see these witnesses not only in his resurrection but also in his crucifixion. Luke will remind us that in the death of Jesus, even the centurion who is presiding over the event will praise God and say that this man is certainly innocent.

Luke will remind us there will be a crowd that will be assembling on the scene, and when the clouds see what is going on, they will be beating their breast. They will see what is going on and will be disturbed. Luke will remind us that there will also be

women in the scene, and the women will be eyewitnesses of what is going on, and they will say to themselves that it is important for them to go and prepare some oil, later on, to come and honor the body to anoint the body.

And yet Luke will tell us that on the scene, there will be this figure that we should all know about very well from verse 50, the name Joseph of Arimathea. Now, there was a man named Joseph from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man who had not consented to the decision to their decision and action, and he was looking for the kingdom of God.

The man went to Pilate and asked for Jesus's body. Then, he took it down, wrapped it in a linen shroud, and laid it in a tomb cut in stone where no one had ever been laid. I have four major witnesses in this scene. And friends, as you follow this particular lecture, let me just pause here and interject.

I urge you to be patient with me as I focus on this particular scene because I want to make sure that I cover the death of Jesus as a collective whole, and that will make it a little bit longer than our usual lectures, but this is a very important story in Luke that I cannot divide. Who is Joseph of Arimathea? Luke reminds us that he was a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council that brought Jesus to Pilate, and Luke was careful to tell us that he did not consent to the decision or the action of the Sanhedrin. He was an outlier.

He was a disciple of Jesus who was ready to be isolated publicly in the gathering of the audience. Luke also tells us that he was a good man and righteous. Not only did he disagree with the Sanhedrin, Luke said he was a disciple who was awaiting the coming of the kingdom, unlike other gospels which tell us that this man Joseph of Arimathea was like a secret disciple in Luke he was a disciple some open disciple of Jesus awaiting the coming of the kingdom of God.

Using his influence, he petitioned Pilate to secure the body of Jesus, wrapped the body in linen, and buried it in a brand-new tomb. Coming to the end of this particular session of arrest and crucifixion of Jesus, let me remind you about this important day and event. Jesus will be laid in the tomb.

Joseph will be responsible for that. But I also need to tell you more about some of the things playing out here. When somebody is crucified, typically, the body is laid there until it is later taken and dumped into a mass grave or a valley somewhere.

Something is happening here. With the death of Jesus, he is going to be given the most decent treatment you can think about. When Simon got the body he wrapped it in linen a valuable clothing to say I am treating this body with honor.

Luke shares with us that right at the scene, there were women who intended to prepare special ointment for the body. That is not what happens to people who are crucified. The other thing you should note is what does not happen to people who are crucified usually is to be put in a tomb, let alone a brand-new tomb.

As I mentioned earlier, the body of the crucified will usually be tossed into a common grave and be left there. But here, a tomb that is not used typifies preeminent standing in the family. This tomb will be used to bury Jesus.

Normally, a reputable head of the family will carve this kind of tomb for themselves, and then when they carve the tomb themselves when they die, they will be buried there. Their bones will be gathered later, and then subsequent members of the family will be buried there and the tomb will even be named sometimes after the head of the family who made that tomb. A tomb that has not been inhabited by anybody will be a place where Jesus will lie. A few things about a tomb.

First, Jesus was not buried six feet under. As I showed you on the screen, the tomb will be carved into a rock, and the kind of description of Luke tells us that it is almost a two-chamber tomb and when they do that normally, they will set up platforms as part of the tomb, they will create stone platforms and these stone platforms will be covered in sand and usually the body will be laid on the stone platform covered in sand for a year or so when the body will be decomposed and then they will gather the body and put it in ashore. That one tomb then can be a place where the entire family will rest.

Jesus became the first person to be in the tomb, so when we read about the resurrection narrative, it was not as if someone else was in the tomb and something else had happened in the tomb prior. It's a brand-new tomb, and everything that is playing out is playing out with this Jesus and Jesus alone. The other thing you should know about the ancient burial is Jesus's body will not be covered with sand.

As I mentioned, the stone platform in the tomb covered with sand is what the body will be laid on, so as fluid from the body decomposes, it settles in the sand on the stone platform, and then after the year when they come, it would just be right to have the bones and all that you take, and then you put in the ossuary. The other thing to note is that the robe gave him royal status, but you should know that after the resurrection, Jesus refused to take that robe with him. The woman will come and see evidence of that robe, and Jesus will be gone.

I like how the crucifixion site or the tomb was described by Joel Greene, and I'll end this lecture soon. The tomb imagined by Luke, as I said Roger Green, I mean Joel Greene. As Greene puts it, the tomb imagined by Luke's account was fashioned by quarrying into the side of a rock face such as a tomb might have included a forecourt

before the cave, the mouth of which could be covered by a large disk-shaped stone set in a groove cut into the rock beneath it.

The entrance will lead into the barrier chamber with a stone step and central pit of sufficient height to allow persons to stand in order to prepare a corpse for internment in one of the stone benches carved into the rock along the side of the chamber. Joseph's apparent possession of such a tomb, as evidenced by his membership in the Jerusalem council, is an indication of his elite status. Jesus died on the cross, a major landmark in Luke's narrative, but Jesus is also buried with witnesses seeing what was going on.

Unlike other gospels, they will not be sealed on the tomb. Luke doesn't think that is important, but let's pause one minute, and I'll wrap up. What did he do to deserve death? We know at the end of chapter 19, when he was he came to Jerusalem, he went to the temple, cleansed the temple, and started using the temple as a place of teaching.

We know that in chapter 20 he provoked too many people as he engaged the Jewish authorities in the temple and challenged the authority in the place. Luke tells us that the crowd did not betray Jesus nor ridicule Jesus, but it was the authorities who arrested him and tried him from the house of the high priest to the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was so upset even when they had no charges against him.

They came as a collective whole and presented him to Pilate as if to say you need to do something about this. Three times, Pilate said I have found no fault in this man. They say crucify, crucify him.

Pilate says take him and crucify him as I release Barabbas for you. He was crucified. He was crucified among criminals as if he was a criminal.

Why did he go through this? He went for you and me. Luke's narrative almost suggests that he was paraded to the site, the place called Skel, to be crucified with those criminals also carrying their crosses and marching in that direction. Why should he be accompanying criminals? Oh, because you and I perhaps deserved to be there, and he took our place.

Jesus went to the cross for us. He died innocent. Pilate found no fault in him.

Harold found no fault in him. The thief on the cross says we deserved our fate but not this man. The centurion said this man is an innocent man.

Yes, he was innocent. He died for you and me. This is at the heart of the Christian gospel.

As you followed the longest lecture in this series, perhaps one and a half hours or so, let me remind you Jesus went through all this for you and for me. If we would accept him as Lord and personal savior, if we would acknowledge that he did this in our stead and repent of our sins he would forgive us. He will give us a place like that thief on the cross, that criminal on the cross.

He will give us a place to be with him. I remember a very old hymn that says all to Jesus, I surrender; whenever I think about that hymn, I am reminded of my weaknesses, my sins, and my shortcomings.

And why Jesus came to die for me and why I should surrender to him. My hope and my prayer is you are certain that you are a sinner just like me. That you are certain that he died on the cross for you and for me.

And you are certain that by believing in him, you may find salvation as I have and as I continue to strive to walk faithfully. As we do that, may we also remember that we may go through suffering because it's also part of a walk with Jesus. We are not exempted.

May God bless you for following us in this lecture series. And I hope and pray that at this point, you have allowed Jesus to be the Lord of your life, and you are committed to a discipleship that will follow him even if it means death, death on the cross. Thank you and God bless you.

This is Dr. Daniel K. Darko in his teaching on the Gospel of Luke. This is session 33, Arrest and Crucifixion, Luke 23.