

## Suggested Reading

### A Recommended Reading

Luke 23:56b - 24:53

### B Read Carefully

Luke 24:13-35 The Road to Emmaus  
Luke 24:36-49 Jesus appears to his Disciples  
Luke 24:50-53 The Ascension

### C Further Reading

The Catechism of the Catholic Church pg 145 - 151

## Prayer

God of our forefathers and Lord of creation,  
you have made us in your image.  
As we have listened to the word of God;  
may its power renew us,  
and its grace refashion us,  
so that in time we may assume the full likeness of Christ,  
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

*(From the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.)*

PFV v7/2026

## Sacred Heart Catholic Church

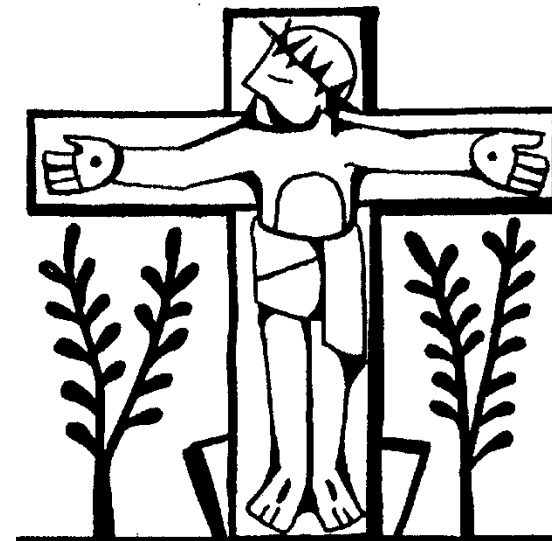
Henley on Thames



## The Passion according to Luke

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*Luke 22:1 - 23:56a*



### Jesus in the Passion of Luke.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is portrayed as a rejected prophet, who must travel to Jerusalem to suffer and die. Throughout the Passion following his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus has a dignity and a silence as one who is intent upon carrying out the Father's will and finds strength and comfort in this.

Luke's account of the institution of the Eucharist is especially close to that of the Pauline tradition – *Luke 22 19-20 & 1 Corinthians 11, 23-25* and the supper at Emmaus (*Lk 24, 30*) and the practice of the Early Church (*Acts 2, 42 ff*), until today.

Jesus progresses to his cross aware and concerned for those who suffer along the way. Jesus prays for Peter, welcomes Judas gently; heals the servant's ear; gives Peter heart again by his glance; speaks to the woman who lament his fate; forgives those who would crucify him and offers paradise to the Repentant Thief.

The passion according to Luke lacks the darkness of Mark. This is seen most clearly at Jesus' death. The cry of abandonment *'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?'* (Mk 15:34) has become the prayer of one who trusts in the overwhelming power and mercy of God: *'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.'* (Lk 23:46)

We will study the Passion according to Luke by looking at the central characters in the narrative:

- Peter, Judas and the Apostles.
- The Women, the Crowd, and the Onlookers.
- Pilate, Herod, and the Jewish Authorities.
- The Repentant Thief

### **Peter, Judas and the Apostles.**

The Passion narrative begins with the Passover meal. We see examples of Jesus' foreknowledge as he directs his disciples to prepare the Last Supper (Lk 22:7f) Luke alone tells us that *'Satan entered into Judas.'* (Lk 22:3)

This is *'the hour'* which Jesus has longed for – a Johannine theme. Luke's account of the Passion has many similarities to the Passion according to John; it is probable that they share the same tradition or source.

The account of the Last Supper emphasises Jesus' prophecy of Judas's treachery and Peter's denial. It is at this point that a dispute arises among the disciples over who is the greatest. Jesus teaches them the meaning of Christian service which concludes with the promise to the apostles that they shall sit on thrones in God's kingdom judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Jesus knows that Peter will deny him and characteristically he has prayed for him. Peter's role of leadership will be to strengthen the faith of others. The disciples are to equip themselves with the essentials. The disciples misunderstand Jesus' reference to the sword, which may be a symbolic reference to suffering.

## Next Week

# The Resurrection and the Ascension of Jesus

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Next week we will conclude our study of the Gospel of Luke by studying the Resurrection appearances. This includes many passages singular to Luke, particularly the Road to Emmaus and the Ascension. I would like you to reflect upon these passages, upon the meaning of the Resurrection and identify any of Luke's concerns.

You may wish to study the section on the Resurrection in the New Catechism which begins on page 143.

### IN BRIEF

619 *'Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures'* (1 Cor 15:3).

620 *Our salvation flows from God's initiative of love for us, because 'he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins' (1 Jn 4:10). 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself' (2 Cor 5:19).*

621 *Jesus freely offered himself for our salvation. Beforehand, during the Last Supper, he both symbolized this offering and made it really present: 'This is my body which is given for you' (Lk 22:19).*

622 *The redemption won by Christ consists in this, that he came 'to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mt 20:28), that is, he 'loved [his own] to the end' (Jn 13:1), so that they might be 'ransomed from the futile ways inherited from [their] fathers' (1 Pt 1:18).*

623 *By his loving obedience to the Father, 'unto death, even death on a cross' (Phil 2:8), Jesus fulfils the atoning mission (cf. Is 53:10) of the suffering Servant, who will 'make many righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities' (Is 53:11; cf. Rom 5:19).*

### 'He died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures'

601 The Scriptures had foretold this divine plan of salvation through the putting to death of 'the righteous one, my Servant' as a mystery of universal redemption, that is, as the ransom that would free men from the slavery of sin.<sup>397</sup> Citing a confession of faith that he himself had 'received', St Paul professes that 'Christ died for our sins *in accordance with the scriptures*.'<sup>398</sup> In particular Jesus' redemptive death fulfils Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering Servant.<sup>399</sup> Indeed Jesus himself explained the meaning of his life and death in the light of God's suffering Servant.<sup>400</sup> After his Resurrection he gave this interpretation of the Scriptures to the disciples at Emmaus, and then to the apostles.<sup>401</sup>

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus is praying to his Father, who sends an angel to strengthen him. From this moment onwards Jesus is resolved to fulfil the Father's will single-mindedly. The prayer of Jesus becomes a model for the disciple in a time of testing or crisis, with the two-fold instruction, '*Pray that you do not enter into temptation*' (Luke 22, 40, 46).

Luke has described the disciples with extraordinary sensitivity throughout Jesus' ministry (unlike Mark who dwells on their misunderstanding.) Jesus withdraws from his disciples and returns only once. They are asleep 'exhausted with fear.' (Lk 22:46) Luke alone mentions that Jesus greets Judas by name, and that he forestalls his kiss. How Jesus looks at Peter after his denial is particular to Luke.

The disciples do not flee in Luke's Gospel, the friends of Jesus at found at Calvary. '*All his friends stood at a distance, and also the women who had followed with him from Galilee, watching these things.*' (Lk 23:49). They see where Jesus is buried and will return to the Tomb, which in turn will form the link from the Passion to the Resurrection of Jesus.

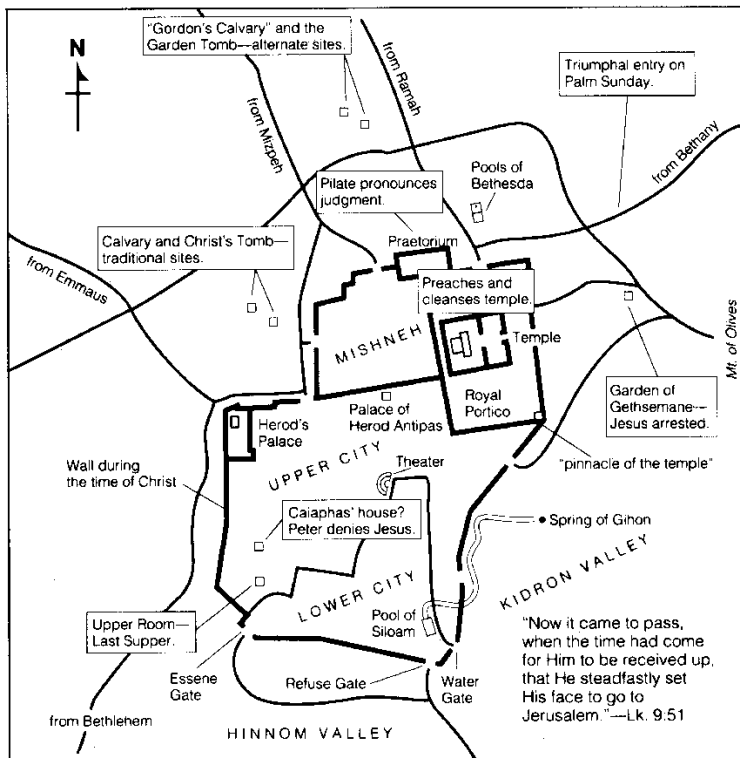
### The Women, the Crowd and the Onlookers.

Luke presents a positive picture of the Women of Jerusalem, the Crowd and the onlookers. The chief priests act because '*they were afraid of the people*' and Judas begins to '*look for an opportunity to hand him [Jesus] over to them away from the crowd*' (Lk 22, 2, 6).

Throughout the Gospel the crowd have been attentive to Jesus' teaching. They have often listened to him in vast numbers. Luke portrays them in a more sensitive light than the other evangelists. The crowd will be moved by Peter's first sermon on Pentecost day and present themselves for baptism in vast numbers.

'*A large number of people followed him, and women who beat their breasts and mourned for him.*' (Lk 23:27) Amongst the crowd are the women who lamented him. Jesus carrying his Cross has concern for them. He calls for repentance from the people of Jerusalem and predicts the impending destruction of the city.

Jesus offers forgiveness towards the people who would crucify him. '*Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.*' (Lk 23:34)



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The crowd are not one of the groups who abuse Jesus on the cross, rather they return *'home beating their breasts.'* (Lk 23:48)

Luke's Passion reveals the forgiveness of Jesus who seeks the repentance of Jerusalem, forgives those who would crucify him and offers paradise to the repentant thief. The cross for Luke is the moment of God's forgiveness.

The burial of Jesus has a calm and respectful note. Joseph of Arimathea is described as a 'good and righteous man' untainted by the or the decision to arrest Jesus or his trial. It is important that that Jesus is laid in a new Tomb, in which no one has been laid before.

### **Pilate, Herod, and the Jewish Authorities.**

Luke has still to explain one major question: Why was Jesus crucified under Roman law? His answer which becomes a refrain during Chapter Twenty-Three is *'Jesus was innocent.'* Luke lays the blame for Jesus' death at the feet of the Jewish authorities while treating the Roman authorities with respect.

The account of the Passion begins with the statement that *'the chief priests and scribes were seeking some way of doing away with him, for they were afraid of the people'* (Lk 22, 2) It is out of fear, that they act.

The trial of Jesus before the Council differs from Mark. Jesus' trial takes place in the morning, there are no false witnesses, there is no charge that Jesus claimed to destroy the Temple, the whole council conducts this trial rather than the High Priest. They accompany Jesus to Pilate, to Herod and to Pilate again. It is the Jewish Authorities who petition Herod and Pilate and demand the death sentence – not the crowd.

The trial before Herod is singular to Luke. However, it becomes the model of many of the trials within *the Acts of the Apostles*. Luke alone has previously referred to *'Herod the Fox.'* It is Herod's soldiers who mock Jesus. Following this encounter with Jesus, Herod and Pilate are reconciled. Even now Jesus can bring about the reconciliation of enemies.

When Jesus is brought before Pilate it is evident that the charges made against him are false. He is accused of perverting the nation, while his upbringing was in total fidelity with the Law of Moses.

(Lk 23,2 = 2:22.27.39.42.) He is accused of opposing payment to Caesar, when he had recently *declared 'pay Caesar what belongs to Caesar.'* (Lk 20:25) Pilate three times declares Jesus' *innocent* (Lk 23,4, 15, 22). Luke has omitted the mockery and scourging of Jesus by the Roman soldiers including the crowning with thorns.

The second appearance before Pilate only confirms Pilate and Herod's judgement that *Jesus is innocent.* (Lk 23:14-15) However, Pilate lacks the courage of his convictions and acquiesces to the demands of the Jewish authorities.

At the crucifixion, three groups mock Jesus: the leaders, the soldiers and one of the criminals. The crowd are absent from this group. Finally, following the death of Jesus the Roman Centurion *'gave glory to God and said, 'Truly this was a just man,'* (Lk 23:47)

### **The Good Thief**

The possibility of repentance, conversion and forgiveness is a central theme within the Gospel of Luke, as seen Chapter 15, *'the Gospel within the Gospel'* (the lost sheep, lost coin, lost boy) or the encounter with Zacchaeus. Recounting the dialogue with the good thief is typical of Luke. It reminds us of the ongoing possibility of repentance, conversion and forgiveness, even at the end. It reminds us that Jesus is innocent, *'he has done nothing wrong'* (Lk 23, 41) and that salvation occurs *'today'*. This dialogue transforms the Crucifixion scene from focusing on the humiliation of Jesus, to a further expression of his mercy and forgiveness: *'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.'* (Lk 23:34), *'Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise'* (Lk 23,42).