

# **Jesus Bears Our Punishment and Declares God's Victory**

Luke 22:63-23:25

Key Verse: 23:69

**“But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.”**

In our study of Luke's gospel, we are coming to the climax of Jesus' earthly life: his death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead. These events are the core of the gospel. However, we should not overlook the prelude to these events: Jesus' suffering, his trial, and his condemnation. We want to consider these events today. They have deep spiritual meaning, for they reveal Jesus' ministry of healing and his grace, which brings peace and freedom to our souls. We also learn from Jesus, our example, in the way he overcame his trials and testified to the truth courageously. Let's accept Jesus' grace and decide to follow Jesus through this study.

## **I. Jesus was wounded to heal us (22:63-65)**

As we studied last time, Jesus surrendered to his arresters and was led away. As Jesus had predicted: "he was numbered with the transgressors" (37); he was treated like a criminal. In our American legal system, police officers must be very careful in arresting and holding people. They must inform them of their rights and treat them with respect, assuming they are "innocent until proven guilty." However, the treatment Jesus received was not fair. Jesus was taken to the house of the high priest and held overnight. During that time the men guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. They struck Jesus again and again, and insulted Jesus in many ways. Isaiah foretold, "...his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness..." (Isa 52:14). Perhaps the torture was so grotesque that Luke would not describe it in detail. Yet he does reveal one thing the guards did. They blindfolded Jesus and took turns hitting him. Then they said, "Prophecy! Who hit you." To them, it was a game, like a sport. They were cruelly indulging their sinful nature at the expense of an innocent man. Jesus had done nothing wrong. Such injustice and torture would offend any man's dignity. Not long ago, former astronaut Buzz Aldrin was despised by a filmmaker, who scoffed at his claim to have landed on the moon, calling him a liar. Then Aldrin, who is 80 years old, walked up and punched the much bigger man in the nose. This may be the natural reaction of any man of honor who is despised in a base manner.

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However, Jesus did not react like an ordinary man. Jesus did not say or do anything to defend himself or his honor. Jesus received the mocking, beating and insults quietly. Isaiah said, "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth" (Isa 53:7). Jesus did not resist the injustice. Jesus did not utter complaint. He silently bore the terrible mistreatment. Why? Isaiah said, "...the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed" (Isa 53:5). In truth, the wounding that Jesus received is what we deserve for our sins. Jesus was wounded in our places. In this way, Jesus brought true healing for our souls. Many wounded souls have been healed by Jesus.

Many of us may have heard of Joyce Meyer. She is a famous Bible teacher who regularly speaks to tens of thousands through her ministry, "Enjoying Everyday Life." She recently testified how Jesus has healed her. As a young girl, she was badly abused by her father. In fact, according to her public testimony, she was raped by him more than 200 times before she turned 18. Who can imagine the anguish she experienced. Then, by God's grace she met Jesus and accepted his love for her. Even so, she still felt that her soul was wounded by the abuse of the past. Whenever she remembered her awful ordeal, she was overcome with regret, and said to herself, "I wish that had never happened." But in time, the Lord helped her to accept that Jesus was wounded in her place. Wounded Jesus brought healing from her wounds of abuse. This did not change the wrong of what happened. But Jesus healed her pain. Then she could realize that because of her suffering, she became who she is. Through her suffering, she grew in Christian character. Through her suffering, she came to understand wounded and broken people. Through her suffering, she has become a servant of God and an instrument of healing for others. So now she thanks God for everything and she serves Jesus with great peace and joy.

Jesus' healing ministry is rooted in the very character of our God. One of the names of God in the Old Testament is "Jehovah Rophe." It means, "The Lord who heals" (Ex 15:26). God revealed this to his people when they were going through the desert after the Exodus. They felt victorious because they had been delivered from bondage in Egypt. But they had wounds in their souls that needed healing. God was leading them on a pilgrimage that would bring this healing. The healing of sinsick souls is not done in a day. They would experience many ups and downs as they follow God's leading through the wilderness. Sometimes they would not understand what God was doing.

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But God wanted them to trust him. Through it all, he is the Lord who heals. We are all wounded. But as we accept Jesus, God's love takes hold of us. Jesus heals us step by step as we follow him each day. Sometimes Jesus exposes our wounds. It is painful, but it is for the sake of healing us. The moment we call on him, Jesus comes to heal us. Jesus walks with us in his healing grace as we journey toward his heavenly kingdom day by day.

There are many people in our society who have been abused through unjust treatment. In fact, everyone has been wounded by sin in one way or another. These wounds debilitate people and make them unstable and useless. Wounded people can be compared to a scratched DVD. It may seem to play well for a while. But when the scratch is scanned, the whole picture becomes strange and even disappears. Wounded people seem to be fine for a while. But when their wound is agitated, they fall into sorrow, fatalism, bitterness and depression. Their lives seem to come to a stop. There are so many wounded people in our nation today. Can the wounded be healed? Yes. Jesus can heal us. "By his wounds you are healed." Thank you, Jesus.

### **II. Jesus testified to the truth before the Jewish leaders (22:66-71)**

Jesus spent the night being mistreated by the guards. He had no chance to eat or sleep. He must have been exhausted from the constant beating. At daybreak, the Sanhedrin, the governing body of Israel, convened in an emergency session for his trial. These were the leading men of Israel. They should have been the conscience of the nation. They should have upheld truth and justice. But they were determined to condemn an innocent man. They were motivated by jealousy and desperation to maintain their power. Worse yet, they had fallen under the influence of Satan to carry out his scheme. The Sanhedrin was composed of the chief priests and teachers of the law--the Sadducees and Pharisees. Usually they fought, like Democrats and Republicans. But now, they united in common opposition to Jesus. Wounded Jesus was led before them. They said, "If you are the Christ, tell us." Jesus had already demonstrated that he was the Christ. Just one miracle, giving sight to the blind, was enough to validate his identity. Yet Jesus had done many miracles. Moreover, John the Baptist had testified that Jesus was the Christ. But the religious leaders ignored the facts. They were baiting Jesus to find a basis to condemn him. How did Jesus answer?

Look at verses 67b-68. "Jesus answered, 'If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer.'" Jesus began by exposing the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. Jesus declared that they would not be persuaded by words or deeds, for they determined not to believe that Jesus was the Christ. They cared nothing for truth and had decided to put him to

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death regardless of the facts. Though they looked powerful and impressive, Jesus' truth exposed their cowardice to the core.

Then Jesus declared God's truth to them boldly. Let's read verse 69 together. "But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God." Jesus called himself "the Son of Man." This referred to the prophecy of Daniel 7:13-14. It says: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." Jesus is this Son of Man. In the most oppressive situation, Jesus identified himself clearly and declared his final victory over all the enemies of God. This Jesus establishes the kingdom of God in perfect justice, peace and righteousness. This Jesus will reign over all as King of kings and Lord of lords. This is how the conflict ends. It will be a time of glory to God and victory for Jesus' followers. But it will mean judgment for his enemies. This is why John foretold that "every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him" (Rev 1:7).

The religious leaders thought they were judging Jesus. They put their confidence in the flesh and in their establishment power. But Jesus stood on God's word. With this faith, Jesus boldly proclaimed God's judgment to them, even when he was on trial. Jesus wants us to have the same faith in his coming again and his final victory. In Luke 21, when Jesus foretold his Second Coming, he said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Lk 21:33). Jesus is coming again in power and great glory and King and Judge. Jesus wants us to believe his promise even if the heavens and the earth shake and testify to his gospel. We face enemies of the gospel in our times. They want to suppress the promise of Christ and make an atmosphere of tolerance for wickedness. The hidden enemy is Satan. We cannot fight these foes by human means. We can fight through prayer and by declaring God's victory boldly, even to enemies, like Jesus did. To do this, we must hold on to his word of promise. We should renew it every day. Then we can have a sense of final victory and serve God with joy and power even in the midst of enemies.

When the religious leaders heard Jesus admit that he was the Son of Man, they were shocked by his bold assertion. They knew the prophecy of Daniel.

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They realized he was claiming to be not only a man, but the Son of God. They should have considered his claim seriously. But they ignored his message. They ignored the evidence. They branded him as a blasphemer. And on this basis, they condemned Jesus as guilty and deserving of death.

III. Jesus was condemned to death by Pilate (21:1-25)

The Jewish leaders wanted to put Jesus to death. But they had no authority to execute criminals. This power was held by the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. So they brought Jesus before Pilate. The charge of blasphemy would not be serious to him, so they twisted it to make Jesus seem like a political threat to Caesar. Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus replied, "Yes, it is as you say." Jesus told the truth, for he is the king of the Jews. Jesus was ready to die for the will of God. But Pilate perceived that Jesus was no threat to Caesar. He announced, "I find no basis for a charge against this man" (4). That should have been the end of the matter. Pilate, as the Roman governor, should have released Jesus.

However, the Jewish leaders began to press him by claiming that Jesus was a dangerous man from Galilee who stirred up people all over Judea. When Pilate heard this, he sensed a chance to avoid dealing with Jesus' case, by passing it off to Herod, for Herod had jurisdiction in Galilee. Herod had no interest in justice; he just wanted to be entertained. When Jesus did not oblige him, Herod mocked Jesus further and sent him back to Pilate. So Pilate made a second proclamation to the Jewish leaders: there was no basis for the charges against Jesus. Still, however, Pilate was sensitive to their reaction. So he offered to punish Jesus and then release him. This punishment refers to the scourging that was done with a whip of torture. This scourging left the victim in great pain and often proved to be fatal. Pilate was willing to have an innocent man beaten almost to death to satisfy the bloodthirsty Jewish leaders. They smelled the weakness in Pilate and began to shout for Jesus to be crucified. For the third time Pilate proclaimed Jesus' innocence: "I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty." But the shouts of the mob prevailed and Pilate finally handed Jesus over to be crucified. In this event, we see that Pilate failed to administer justice. It is a warning that political compromise fails in spiritual battle. The only way to win in spiritual battle is to stand on the side of truth.

Luke draws out this one point very clearly. Jesus was innocent. Yet, despite his innocence, he was condemned to be crucified. Why? Jesus was condemned in order to satisfy God's justice. This condemnation is what we deserve for our sins, sins of laziness, lustful desires, idolatry, greed,

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rebellion and so on. But innocent Jesus took it in our places. This was illustrated through Barabbas. He was a violent man who was condemned to die for his crimes. But innocent Jesus took his place of condemnation. Barabbas went free. Romans 8:1 says, "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...." Let's accept Jesus' grace so that we may find freedom from condemnation. Let's serve Jesus with joy and power.

In this passage we have learned the meaning of Jesus' wounds and his trial and condemnation. It was for us. We are healed and set free by the grace of Jesus Christ. We have also learned that Jesus wins the final victory in power and great glory. Let's accept this promise from our hearts, stand with Jesus, and boldly declare his victory to the people of our times.