

Palm Branches to the Cross, Luke 19-23

March 16, 2008 - Skip MacMillan

1. Biblical Account of Jesus' Death, Luke 19-23

When will the kingdom come? (review from last week)

The people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once" (Luke 19:11).
Jesus' responses: Luke 21:7-9.

Entry into Jerusalem on a colt – Luke 19:28-40

This was a unique event, never before had such a big public deal been made of Jesus.

Something big was happening; prophecies were being fulfilled:

"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord" - Psalm 118:26 and Luke 19:38.

"The Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples!' ' I tell you', he replied, 'if they keep quiet the stones will cry out' " - Hab. 2:11 and Luke 19:39-40.

"The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone" - Psalm 118:22 and Luke 20:17.

"Yes, what is written about Me is reaching its fulfillment" (Luke 22:37).

Jesus is saying: something large is occurring here, the events prophesied are happening, this was meant to be, all of it was planned long ago before the foundation of the earth, no one can stop it, salvation has come.

Jesus' Perspective on the People of Jerusalem - Luke 19:41-44

He wept over Jerusalem for: "if you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace."

The Romans will destroy Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD.

"You did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

This reveals the heart of God, to weep over those who have rejected Him, and still move toward the Cross.

The Last Supper, Communion – Luke 22:7-23

Judas is identified and runs away.

The Passover of Exodus 12 is fulfilled in Jesus as the Passover lamb: His is the blood over our doorway, He is the One who releases us from slavery, He is the One who parts the seas and takes us to the promised land.

"For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5:7).

Gethsemane (Mount of Olives) – Luke 22:47-53

It is here He is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. It is here He asks, if it is possible, may this cup pass from Me. It is here He sweats drops of blood falling to the ground. It was after this that Judas the betrayer kissed Jesus on the cheek identifying Him for the false accusers.

Questioned by the Pharisees, Pilate, Herod and then Pilate again – Luke 22:63-25

Peter disowns Jesus - Luke 22:54-62.

Pharisees, priests, elders and teachers try to falsely accuse Him and rest their case on His claim to be God.

Jesus answers when asked "Are You the Christ, the Son of God?" "Are You the king of the Jews?" Yes!

Otherwise Jesus remains silent to all the false accusations.

Verdict by Pilate, "he has done nothing deserving death" (23:15).

The People – Luke 23:13-25

The priests, elders and teachers manipulated the crowds to release Barabbas (a murderer) and crucify Jesus.

They shouted "Crucify Him, crucify Him" and "They insistently demanded that He be crucified" (Luke 23:21-23).

Warning here about crowds: question the crowd's direction, watch emotionalism, think and pray.

Pilate gives into the people's demands after washing his hands clean of this atrocity – Luke 23:24

Jesus was beaten: Matthew 27:27-31.

They led Jesus away to be crucified.

Luke 23:26-56

2. Why did God the Son have to die? Christ's atonement is the answer.

1. God is holy, just and loving.
2. God's holiness defined the Law, His commandments: what is required to interact with Him and each other.
3. The problem, we have all failed to follow the Law - sinned, i.e. haven't loved our neighbor; "for all have sinned" (Romans 3:23).
4. God made clear in the Law that **sin deserves punishment** (satisfaction of justice), His wrath, and death.
"He will **punish** those who . . . do not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus. They will be **punished** with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thess. 1:8-9).
"The **wrath of God** is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men" (Romans 1:18). "The wages of sin is **death**" (Rom. 6:23).
We are all headed toward punishment, God's wrath, and death because we all have sin.
5. **God is just:** therefore He will always follow through with His Law; never 'side stepping' or make exceptions.
That would make God and His law something less than just and true.
6. So God established in the Law a **sacrificial system** to atone for our sins.
An animal had to die as payment for our sin and to atone (reconcile God and you).
Atonement = to be or cause to be at one (at-one-ment); to reconcile, satisfaction, compensation paid.

Leviticus 17:11 "For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life."

Explained:

Life for life.

"...the guilt is transferred from the sinful upon the innocent substitute, in order to make amends to violated justice, and to cover (atone) or put out of sight the guilt and to save the sinner from the wages of sin which is death" -Fausset.

The sacrificial system stated that an innocent and perfect animal was to die for the sins of the people. This had to be repeated every year; it was a temporary fix.

This was to heighten their awareness of the seriousness nature of sin; sin cost the animal its life.

It was also to point to the grace and mercy of God in that He made a way to maintain a relationship with His people. Although the people were sinful and at great cost to His creation, He made a way.

7. Then **Jesus entered the world** to make the final, complete, and eternal sacrifice once and for all.

Like the innocent animal of the OT, Jesus Christ, is perfect and innocent of any and all sin. His perfection was validated by perfectly fulfilling the law.

As the perfect and innocent Lamb of God, He **substituted Himself in our place**, receiving all the punishment, wrath, and death due us for our sin.

"He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. We all like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 55:5-6).

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us . . ." (Galatians 3:13).

Jesus' perfect life is given up to death in our place; what we should have received He received.

"Vicarious suffering is suffering endured by one person in the stead of another" -Hodge. "Jesus suffered in the place of sinners. He is our substitute."

He satisfied God's justice.

"God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood. He did this to demonstrate His justice" (Romans 3:25).

"He died in order that God might be just in justifying the ungodly" -Hodge.

That is why there is nothing to do but to believe in Him; Christ has done it all. That is why our forgiveness is complete in Jesus Christ; God did it all.

8. What moved God to such a sacrifice is His love for you. John 3:16-17. The greater appreciation we have for the price Jesus Christ paid in suffering punishment, wrath, and death for our sin, the greater our appreciation of His love for us.

If my sin is not that big of a deal, His death and love are not that big of a deal. But when we see the depth of our sin and what it truly deserves, and we see the willingness of the perfect and innocent Christ substituting Himself for us, we begin to understand the infinite love He has for us.

"It was an act of unparalleled love that the Son consented to assume our nature, bear our sins, and die, the just for the unjust, to bring us near to God" -Hodge.

"For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that . . . we may live together with him" (1 Thess. 5:9-10).

9. The Cross was an event where God's holiness, justice and love were displayed.

3. You and Me

A. Without Jesus Christ and the Cross:

You continue to have your sin slung around your chest.

The punishment, wrath, and death due your sin is coming for you.

You will have to bear the consequences for your sin, because you have denied Christ's substitution.

That is why the Cross is absolutely essential for our forgiveness and our relationship with God; there is no other way!

Who else has done this for you?

What other belief system has God atoning for my sin? Did Buddha or Muhammad?

No other belief system or religion in all the world has God atoning for you, only Christianity.

B. With belief in Jesus Christ's atonement on the Cross:

We are forgiven forever: *"he sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered Himself" (Hebrews 7:26-27).*

We are freed men and women.

Free from the punishment, wrath, and death due our sin.

Free from any accusation brought against us before God the Father.

Free to live, to glorify God, to enjoy God and the life He has given to us.

We become the sons and daughters of God Himself; we are at one with God forever and ever.

"God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

C. Jesus Christ's Atonement causes us:

To see the seriousness of sin, by seeing what it cost Christ to make atonement for it.

To see the holiness, justice, and love of God.

To respond with thankfulness and awe over what He accomplished for me on the Cross.

Ask yourself, "What must He think of me that He would die for me?"

3. You, me and the man on the cross – Luke 23:32-43

Think about the criminals who experienced the events of the Cross with Jesus.

They were beaten, carried their crosses, sweat, bled, were exhausted, gasping for breath, roped, felt the pain of a nail driven through their body, lifted up, hung there side by side with Jesus Christ, seeing the people below, the landscape and sky, recognizing that this is the end; they were experiencing this moment with Christ like no one else in all of history.

The first one mouths off to Jesus: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" (v. 39).

What the second one did:

The other criminal **fears and respects God.** " 'Don't you fear God', he said; we are getting what we deserve (v. 40).

He **acknowledges and owns his sin**, "we are getting what our deeds deserve" (v. 41). Sin deserves punishment.

He **sees Christ's perfection and innocence.** "This man has done nothing wrong" (v. 41).

He **humbles himself and asks Jesus:** "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom".

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

What he did not do:

The criminal did nothing but believe in Jesus Christ from the depths of his soul.

He never attended church, gave money, helped his neighbor, became a deacon, gave to the poor, read the Bible, did any good deed and yet Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

How is this possible? Through what Christ accomplished for him on the Cross.

Own your sin, accept His sacrifice and then He will make you into a new creation, the light on the hill.

"Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain - He washed it white as snow."