**Luke 22:39-23:49 – The trial and death of the Messiah**

***22:39-46: the prayer***

**Jesus’ instructions to his disciples were emphatically to pray they that might not enter into temptation. This is consistent with his “Lord’s prayer” in 11:1-4, which closes with “and lead us not into temptation.” Also with the instruction in 21:36 to “Be awake and pray at all times to be strong enough to escape all these things that are about to happen and to stand before the Son of Man.” Sadly, the disciples fail even to stay awake and pray. Jesus’ prayer is similar – he asks to be released from the “cup” (of his suffering and death), but accepts and submits to the Father’s will and the purpose for his coming. In vs. 32, Jesus assures Peter that he had prayed that Peter’s faith would not fail. We will see later that Peter indeed succumbed to temptation to deny Jesus, but that his faith ultimately did not fail, and (as Jesus had prayed) he returned and strengthened the rest of the disciples. Similarly, Jesus was strengthened by angels because of his prayer. Escape from temptation and strength to stand seem to be some of the primary objectives of prayer in Luke.**

***22:47-53: the arrest***

**As before, Luke calls attention to the fact that Judas was “one of the twelve.” This serves as a warning that Jesus’ followers may be betrayed even by those who had been in the church. As pre-arranged, Judas brings the chief priests, elders, and temple guard to the place that Jesus had been staying on the Mount of Olives so that they could arrest him apart from the crowds of Jesus’ followers. One of the disciples attempted to defend Jesus with the sword, but Jesus refused and headed the high priest’s wounded slave. Jesus’ challenge calls them out for coming at night as upon a criminal, when they could have taken action any day. Their hour is the night, and their power is the power of darkness, implying there company with the prince of darkness.**

***22: 54-62: the denial***

**As predicted, Peter (apparently the only one brave enough to follow at a distance) denied knowing Jesus three times. The rooster’s crowing and the Lord’s glance shamed him, and he left and wept. This indicates that our predilection to fail is shameful but is not final. We too can return and repent. The fact that he “went out” may imply that escape from temptation is the wiser course in this case.**

***22:64-71: mocking, torture, and interrogation***

**As predicted in 18:32, Jesus is mocked and beaten, joining the ranks of the prophets who were also rejected (11:47; 13:33-34) and to be joined by the blessed (6:22: “Blessed are you when everyone hates you…”). The initial interrogation before the high priests and elders was only about Jesus’ claim to be Messiah. Until now Jesus had avoided the title, had silenced demons who were declaring him to be Son of God, and at first warned some of those who were healed not to tell anyone. After declaring their failure to believe him or even to answer his questions (as when he asked about the authority of John the Baptist in 20:7), he declared that their unbelief would not protect them from seeing the Son of Man (Himself) seated at God’s right hand.**

***23:1-12: civil interrogation and trial***

**To the first accusation, that Jesus claimed to be king, Jesus replies “You (singular) have said so.” He seems to be rejecting the title, but is only rejecting the political intent of Pilate’s question. In 22:70 the same phrase (but with plural “you”) seems to be accepting the title “Son of God,” possibly because of the correct understanding of the phrase.**

**Herod’s interest was simply interest and the hope of seeing a miracle. Jesus had nothing to say to him. So after further accusations and mocking, Jesus was returned to Pilate for sentencing**

***23:13-25: the sentencing***

**Neither Pilate nor Herod had found Jesus to be guilty of any capital crime, so Pilate proposed to punish him and release him. Three times Pilate wanted to release Jesus, and three times the people (who had only the day before welcomed him as king) insisted on crucifying him, and releasing instead Barabbas who had been arrested for insurrection and murder. 3,000 of these same people would become the first converts to faith in Jesus in Acts 2:41 in response to Peter’s sermon. Pilate acceded to their demands and handed over Jesus (to the Roman soldiers) to be crucified, fulfilling Jesus’ prediction in 18:32.**[[1]](#footnote-1) **Contrary to some anti-Semitic propaganda, it was the Roman ruler and army that was ultimately responsible for Jesus’ death.**

**The innocent one was delivered to death in place of the guilty – a temporal, political foreshadowing of the eternal, theological meaning of the crucifixion.**

***23:26-43: the crucifixion***

**Simon of Cyrene bears the cross, following behind Jesus as the example of all who would become Jesus’ disciples (9:23; 14:27).**

**Not all of the crowd called for Jesus’ crucifixion. A great crowd of people and women (an odd expression) followed and mourned for him. Jesus advises them to mourn for themselves because of the terrible days to come (destruction of Jerusalem and/or end time tribulation).**

**Jesus is being mocked by Jews (“if he is the Christ”) and Roman soldiers (If you are the Jewish king). But he prays for their forgiveness on the grounds of their ignorance. He is compassionate and forgiving to the end, especially toward the ignorant. Those of us who have understanding may bear greater responsibility.**

**While one of Jesus’ fellow-convicts mocks him, the other fears God, accepts the justice of his own sentence, acknowledges Jesus’ innocence, and in recognition of Jesus’ kingship asks to be remembered in Jesus’ kingdom and receives the promise that he will join Jesus in Paradise. This serves as a model to all who come to Jesus who are called to acknowledge our sin in the fear of God, acknowledge Jesus as the righteous coming King, and beg his forgiveness and acceptance.**

***23:44-49: the death of the Messiah***

**Jesus had predicted signs in the sun and moon in 21:25 and the destruction of the Temple in 21:20-24. At the moment of his death the first of such signs occurs with darkness coming upon the whole earth (see 21:35). The second is foreshadowed when the curtain that covered the holy place in the temple was ripped open, symbolizing the end of the Temple as the locus of God’s presence and universal access to God through Christ.**

**In faith, Jesus commits himself finally to his Father. In response the Roman soldier declared Jesus’ righteousness, and the crowd (at least some of whom had called for Jesus to be crucified) mourned his death (and presumably their part in it). About a month and a half later, many will repent and believe as seen in Acts 2. Jesus’ followers (those known to him) and the women who followed him stood at a distance and watched, as witnesses of his death. This is the 3rd mention of the women who followed Jesus in the gospel (8:2-3, 23:27). They will appear again as witnesses of his resurrection.**

1. **Contrary to some anti-Semitic propaganda, it was the Roman ruler and army (in collaboration with the Jewish leaders) that were responsible for Jesus’ death (Acts 2:23).** [↑](#footnote-ref-1)