

## The Discipler's Commentary

Answer Outline for the Discipler

Luke 23

23:1-5 – The Council (Sanhedrin) brings Jesus before Pontius Pilate

- *If necessary, remind the disciple who Pontius Pilate was and how he was appointed to his position by Caesar.*
- *Inform the disciple why the Council wanted to (had to) bring Jesus before Pontius Pilate in order to fulfill their plan for Jesus.*
- *Ensure that the disciple understands how Pontius Pilate responded to Jesus. Emphasize the fact that Pilate found “no guilt” in Jesus. What was the significance (and irony) of Jesus affirming Pilate’s question, “Are You the king of the Jews?”*

23:6-7 – Pilate learns that Jesus is a Galilean and transfers Him to Herod

- *If necessary, remind the disciple who Herod was, especially the fact that Herod, called king of the Jews, was not actually Jewish, but an Edomite.*
- *Remind the disciple that this was the same Herod who had John the Baptist beheaded, and who Jesus referred to as a “fox.”*

23:8-12 – Herod becomes frustrated with Jesus, sending Him back to Pilate: Jesus is silent

- *Ask the disciple why Herod was “glad” to finally meet Jesus. What was Herod’s motives, and what was Herod expecting from Jesus? Ask the disciple why Jesus never answered Herod’s questions. Have the disciple observe the accusations by the chief priests and scribes, and what kind of reaction they were displaying.*
- *How did Herod’s soldiers treat Jesus, and what was Jesus’ response to being treated badly? What is the lesson here for all followers of Jesus Christ?*

23:13-17 – The second time Jesus is before Pilate, and Pilate finds in Him “no guilt”

- *Have the disciple reread verse 13. Besides the chief priests, who else is now included in those wanting to put Jesus to death and release Barabbas?*
- *How many times has it been now that Pilate has found “no guilt” in Jesus? By Pilate’s statement in verse 15, what was the obvious request the scribes and chief priests were making of him?*
- *Ask the disciple what Pilate was referring to when he stated, “I will punish Him,” and what was Pilate’s intent on first punishing Jesus and then releasing Him? What was the apparent tradition behind Pilate releasing a prisoner at Passover?*

23:18-25 – The third time Pilate finds “no guilt” in Jesus, but because of the crowd, he acquiesces (gives in)

- *Have the disciple read verse 18. Then ask the disciple, “What was the crowd’s response that Pilate intended to release Jesus?” Who cried out “Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas”?*
- *The disciple will then need to learn who Barabbas was and why the chief priests, scribes, rulers and “people” were willing to trade Jesus for Barabbas. Of the Jews, who is left out? What is the irony and the significance of the fact that all of Israel is represented here?*
- *In verse 22, have the disciple identify the third time that Pilate declares he can find “no guilt” in Jesus. How does finding “no guilt” in Jesus relate to (1) the three days and nights in the tomb, (2) Peter’s three denials, (3) the three temptations of Jesus in the wilderness, and (4) Luke’s record of the three sayings of Jesus on the cross?*
- *Ask the disciple if he or she can identify Pilate’s fatal flaw in regard to pleasing the crowd. Whose voice, Pilate’s or the mob’s, began to “prevail”?*
- *See if the disciple can relate Pilate’s response to the mob to politicians and to some church leaders today.*

23:26-32 – Jesus is sentenced to death on the cross and gives a final prophecy about Jerusalem

- Here, the discipler may want to inform the disciple about Simon of Cyrene, where he was from, why he was in Jerusalem, and his history following the crucifixion and resurrection; that is, his role in the early church as recorded in Acts.
- Certainly the discipler will want to explain verses 27 through 31, which are not recorded by the other gospel writers. The discipler may want to point out the number of times Luke refers to woman in his gospel.
- If necessary, the discipler may want to explain the other types of “crosses,” and that no one is exactly certain on which type of cross Jesus was crucified.

23:33-38 – Jesus is crucified and a placard is attached to His cross: “King of the Jews”

- The discipler will want the disciple to face the suffering involved in crucifixion. Words like “the Skull” will need to be explained, and therefore why Christians put so much emphasis on the word “Calvary” (which may need to be separated in the disciple’s mind from “cavalry”).
- The discipler must ensure that he or she does not underemphasize the suffering endured by Jesus on the cross, and why Christians are therefore allowed to suffer, called to sacrifice, and able to find joy in their suffering in the name of Jesus. If necessary, provide details as to the mechanics of suffering during crucifixion, and why it was called “slow death.”
- Even more importantly, ensure that the disciple identifies Jesus’ suffering on the cross with Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53.
- Have the disciple reread verse 34 and then explain its significance. How does Jesus’ words here related to what the disciple previously learned in Luke 11:4, and reiterated by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:32?
- Have the disciple state the significance (and the irony) of the sign that was hung on Jesus’ cross.

23:39-43 – Jesus’ interaction with the two criminals

- This section about Jesus’ time on the cross is a good place to provide contrast concerning people’s (even Christian’s) response to Jesus. Ensure that the disciple sees the difference between what Jesus can do for someone in this early existence, as opposed to what Jesus can do for someone in a “kingdom” existence. In other words, one criminal wanted Jesus to save him back to an earthly life, but the other wanted Jesus to save him to eternal life. Which is better? Which one does the disciple believe found eternal life?

23:44-49 – Jesus’ final words on the cross, the most applicable being, “forgive them...”

- The “sixth” and “ninth” hours may need to be explained.
- Ensure that the disciple does not assume that the sky became cloudy, or that there was a solar eclipse. This was a supernatural darkness.
- The significance of the temple veil being torn in two (from top to bottom) will need to be explained. Ensure that the disciple relates this event to the end of the Old Testament law and the new covenant, and that the entrance to the Holy of Holies is now accessible to those who are “in Christ.” If time, read from the relevant passages in Hebrews. The discipler may want to read from the commentary the six important features of this event.

23:50-56 – Jesus is buried by Joseph of Arimathea before the Sabbath

- Explain to the disciple who Joseph of Arimathea was, and his position on the Council.
- Explain why the women were not able to prepare Jesus’ body for burial, and what was involved in the process.
- Relate Jesus’ burial with Isaiah 53:9.
- Ask the disciple how he or she would answer the skeptic who claims, “Well, on the morning of the so-called resurrection, the women just went to the wrong location.”
- Ask the disciple if he or she believes Jesus was really dead. How would they know this? What evidence in Luke’s account ensures that Jesus actually died on the cross? (cf. John 19:34).
- Ask the disciple if he or she can determine how Jesus’ followers must have been feeling after Jesus’ death. What were His followers’ expectations of how Jesus’ ministry would end? How were Jesus’ disciples feeling on the next day, the Sabbath?