

Message #118

Luke 23:13-25

There is an interesting statement that was made by Jesus Christ in Matthew 7:13-14 concerning those who would be saved and go to heaven. He said, “Enter through the narrow gate (*faith in Him*) for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

What Jesus said is I am the only door of entrance into eternal life and it will not be the majority who will walk through that door and be saved. **Another way to say this is the vast majority will be wrong and will end up in hell. The majority of religious people are wrong.**

When it comes to God and truth, the vast majority of religious people are dead wrong in what they believe will save them and will be eternally condemned. When it comes to spiritual matters, it is not the majority who are right; the majority is wrong.

Never is that point more obvious than when it comes to what happened to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was killed because of a majority vote and voice of the people. What is so clear is that the majority voice and vote of the people was the voice and vote of hell.

FROM A HUMAN PERSPECTIVE JESUS CHRIST WAS EVENTUALLY CRUCIFIED AND EXECUTED BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE WANTED.

The people at this event seemed so religious and so concerned. They were Satanically wrong and Pilate knew it. He knew Jesus was innocent but he didn't dare take a stand against the majority of people. He was too much of a politician. What you see here is Satanic democracy. It is a democracy that stands against what is right and stands for what is evil.

This is the sixth and final trial of Jesus Christ prior to His crucifixion. He had appeared before Annas, Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. He had appeared before Pilate, before Herod and now back again before Pilate.

This is the last trial our Lord had to endure and this is the worst of all. There are twelve narrative parts to observe here:

NARRATIVE PART #1 – Pilate's calling of the leaders and crowd. 23:13

After Herod sent Christ back to Pilate, the first thing he did was to call together the chief priests, the rulers and the people. This was the same group who captured Christ, mocked Christ, beat Christ and lied about Christ (22:24, 52, 63, 64; 23:12-15). Pilate wants to discuss this matter further with those who are godless.

We know that Pilate is one who does not always cater to the Jews (Luke 13:1). However, Josephus claims that when Pilate first went to Jerusalem and put up busts of the emperor of Rome, the Jews were upset and went to Pilate and demanded he remove the statues and he refused and threatened to kill them, but later gave in to them. So Pilate was swayable and this group knew it.

Pilate is a powerful Roman ruler who is not accountable to these people, but when he calls them to this meeting, it will be a major downfall. Pilate's mistake is that he wants to discuss the matter of Jesus Christ with people who hate Him. These religious people are not interested in truth of the will of God and this is the last group Pilate should be consulting.

NARRATIVE PART #2 – Pilate's conclusion of Jesus' innocence. **23:14**

In this verse we see that Pilate gave his judicial verdict concerning Jesus Christ—He is innocent. The Greek construction is emphatic and it emphasizes that Pilate himself had examined Jesus Christ regarding all allegations against Him and concluded He is innocent.

NARRATIVE PART #3 – Herod's conclusion of Jesus' innocence. **23:15**

Pilate reinforces his own conclusion by citing Herod's conclusion that he too concluded Jesus was innocent. Neither Pilate nor Herod could find anything wrong with Jesus Christ. Both concluded He had done nothing worthy of death.

What you have here is two of the most powerful men in the Roman world examining and concluding that Jesus Christ is completely innocent. Pilate and Herod represent the most powerful judicial system in Palestine and both came to the same conclusion that Jesus Christ was NOT GUILTY.

This then leads us to wonder how is it possible to give an innocent man the worst form of Roman execution when the two leading judges of the Roman world say He is innocent. How does Jesus end up hanging on a cross?

NARRATIVE PART #4 – Pilate's compromise to punish Jesus. **23:16**

Verse 16 gives us great insight into Pontius Pilate. Pilate was willing to compromise. If Jesus Christ is not guilty, by all legal rights, He should be set free. If He is innocent, He should not be punished for anything, He should be released.

But Pilate is willing to make a deal with the people, which is really making a deal with the Devil. Pilate is willing to do what he considers to be a lesser wrong—punishing an innocent man; rather than doing the greater wrong—executing an innocent man.

The fact is, Jesus is innocent and should be set free. But Pilate is willing to illegally beat up Jesus Christ just to appease the people. He is willing to demean God in order to impress people.

So many people lower their standards just to get along with the majority.

NARRATIVE PART #5 – Roman custom of releasing a prisoner. 23:17

At the Passover, it was the custom to release a prisoner. This apparently was some token of goodwill that Rome devised for the Jewish people. Pilate figured that this social custom of releasing a prisoner at Passover time would be a good way to release Jesus Christ.

Pilate was too much of a politician to stand up and say this is wrong and we need to do what is right. He figured he could use this social custom to release Christ and still look good.

Do not ever depend on social customs to be the authority for what we believe and do. We must always depend on the word of God and will of God.

We are not too far removed from this very point. When it comes to the matter of abortion or homosexuality, most politicians try to appease the people by referring to the constitutional norms of society. Forget what God's word says; just appease the majority of people and avoid making waves or taking a stand.

NARRATIVE PART #6 – People's choice of a released prisoner. 23:18

When the crowd heard the idea of releasing a prisoner, they collectively and democratically voted to release Barabbas. They want Jesus executed and Barabbas released.

A powerful, Roman government official is allowing a godless mob to decide the verdict. **Take a serious look at this verse because what you see here is the voice of the majority is certainly NOT the voice and will of God.**

NARRATIVE PART #7 – Barabbas' crimes for being in prison. 23:19

Jesus is totally innocent and the one the people want released is an insurrectionist and murderer.

The word "insurrection" means that Barabbas was one who caused political uprisings and revolts against Rome. Barabbas was also a murderer. Apparently in one of his political uprisings, he killed someone.

This crime of insurrectionism, of which Barabbas is guilty, is the exact crime of which Jesus Christ is innocent (Luke 23:2, 14). Jesus Christ never incited people to rebel, Barabbas did. Satan is a liar and those connected to him are liars.

These religious leaders are hypocritical liars and they are demanding that one who is actually guilty of the crime be released and Jesus, who is innocent of this crime, be executed.

NARRATIVE PART #8 – Pilate’s conviction to release Jesus. **23:20**

Deep down in the heart of Pilate, he knew this was all wrong. Had he responded to his conscience and convictions, he would have done what was right.

Pilate wanted to release Jesus. He was fully convinced this was the right thing to do. He should have done that; but instead he listened to the voice of the majority of people.

NARRATIVE PART #9 – People’s cry to crucify Jesus. **23:21**

When Pilate hinted that Jesus should be released, the people began to cry “crucify Him, crucify Him.”

There were many forms of Roman punishment that were options of punishment:

- 1) Imprisonment
- 2) Burning at the stake
- 3) Feeding to wild animals
- 4) Stoning (Jewish method)
- 5) Beheading
- 6) Crucifixion.

Usually when innocent people die in some tragic accident, the majority of people mourn and wish it could have been prevented. Here is one time in history when an innocent person’s death could have been prevented and the majority of people are crying out for His execution by crucifixion.

NARRATIVE PART #10 – Pilate’s conscious conviction to release Jesus. **23:22**

Once again Pilate is convicted that this is wrong. He knew Jesus Christ had not done anything evil and he tries to appease the crowd by saying, “I will punish Him and release Him.”

As near as we may determine there are at least eight times Pilate made a mistake in regard to Jesus Christ. He did this because he is a corrupt politician and frankly he is damned forever (Acts 4:27):

- 1) He should have released Christ in **verse 4**.
- 2) He should have never sent Christ to Herod in **verse 7**.
- 3) He should have released Christ in **verses 14-15**.
- 4) He should not have been willing to beat Christ in **verse 16**.
- 5) He should never have debated releasing Barabbas in **verses 18-19**.
- 6) He should have released Him in **verse 20**.
- 7) He should not have been willing to beat Him in **verse 22**.
- 8) He should have never given into the crowd in **verse 24**.

Pilate had right convictions, but never responded to them.

There are corrupt politicians who will end up burning in hell just like Pilate. Deep down inside they know what is right but they won't do it.

NARRATIVE PART #11 – People's cry to crucify Jesus. 23:23

This was a Satanic, insane, religious lynch mob. According to Matthew 27:25, this crowd was screaming at the top of their lungs that they wanted Christ's blood on them and their children.

This is bizarre. What you have here are a bunch of religious crazies who are screaming to crucify Jesus Christ and that they want to be held accountable for it. Well they will get their wish.

Whenever I hear of some innocent person being killed, I don't ask God why. Who knows how this works in the sovereign plan of God. What if a person is related somehow to one of the people back here yelling hold us and our children accountable.

NARRATIVE PART #12 – Pilate's crime in killing Jesus. 23:24-25

This is so sad. Pilate submitted to the will of the people, knowing the will of the people was wrong. Pilate should have said no way. Pilate should have listened to his own voice and not the voice of the majority.

- 1) Pilate knew Jesus Christ was innocent. Luke 23:4
- 2) Herod knew Jesus Christ was innocent. Luke 23:15
- 3) Pilate's wife knew Jesus Christ was innocent. Matt. 27:19
- 4) Judas knew Jesus Christ was innocent. Matt. 27:3-4
- 5) Thieves knew Jesus Christ was innocent. Luke 23:41
- 6) Soldiers knew Jesus Christ was innocent. Luke 23:47

With so many of these people knowing and testifying that Jesus Christ was innocent, one might ask how in the world He ended up being executed.

The bottom line of all of this is this was God's program and this was God's will (Acts 2:22-23; 4:27-28).

This godless crowd did evil things and they are accountable for the evil they did. But the truth is, this was all part of the sovereign plan of God.

God allowed His Son to suffer and die for us. So the critical question for all today is this—Will you go along with the majority to destruction or the narrow entrance gate of salvation?