

# THE GOSPEL PROJECT – CHRONOLOGICAL

## JESUS SAVES

### JESUS THE SAVIOR

### *The Savior is Crucified*

The lyrics to a Sandi Patty song say, “It should've been my hands where the nails were –It should've been my feet where the nails were –It should've been my side that was opened – My heart that was broken.” The crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus the Christ – the Son of the Living God are the heart of the gospel message. Without the crucifixion and the resurrection there is no gospel message. Even though it is difficult to look intently into the crucifixion of our Lord, that is what we are doing today – but remember – next week, we will experience the joy of our Lord’s resurrection!

In the dark of night, the religious leaders’ determined among themselves that Jesus was a blasphemer and they wanted Him dead and gone. However, Rome did not allow Jews to carry out the death penalty. In the light of day they needed more significant charges against Jesus. That came to Pilate with these complaints: **Luke 23:2 (ESV)** <sup>2</sup> *And they began to accuse him, saying, “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king.”* Pilate focused on the third charge—that Jesus claimed to be a king—because that would have been a definite threat to Rome. Unknown to all involved, this focus opened the way for Jesus to become the perfect sacrifice for our sin during the time of Passover.

**Read Matthew 27:11-14 (ESV)** <sup>11</sup> *Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You have said so.”* <sup>12</sup> *But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer.* <sup>13</sup> *Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?”* <sup>14</sup> *But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.*

There was a conversation between Pilate and Jesus. The Apostle John records what Jesus told Pilate concerning His kingship. **John 18:36 (ESV)** <sup>36</sup> *Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”* Jesus had no armies. His followers were not fighters. His kingdom was a reign of truth. This conversation actually convinced Pilate that Jesus was not a dangerous revolutionary.

**Read Matthew 27:15-20 (ESV)** <sup>15</sup> *Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted.* <sup>16</sup> *And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas.* <sup>17</sup> *So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?”* <sup>18</sup> *For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up.* <sup>19</sup> *Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.”* <sup>20</sup> *Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.*

Matthew does not record how Pilate tried to pass the problem of Jesus over to the authority of Herod Antipas who ruled over Galilee and Perea. Herod is the one who had John the Baptist beheaded. Luke records that Herod could not find anything in the charges against Jesus that deserved death; so he sent Jesus back to Pilate for a final decision. And that is when Pilate came up with what he believed to be a 'brilliant' idea of giving the crowd the choice of releasing Jesus or Barabbas. Some skeptics like to dispute that there was such custom. However, all four gospel writers say there was. That is sufficient. They all lived in area the and knew the customs. Pilate selected a notorious prisoner for the possibility of release probably thinking no one in their right mind would choose Barabbas over Jesus.

Pilate's wife is only mentioned by Matthew and not by name. Her story only is found in one single verse. *Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.* We do not know if she became a follower of the risen Lord. Vernon McGee thinks her interest in Jesus was just superstitious. I prefer to think she grew to have a heart for Jesus but she is one of those people whose life choices will not be revealed until we get to heaven ourselves.

**Read Matthew 27:21-26 (ESV)** <sup>21</sup> *The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas."* <sup>22</sup> *Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!"* <sup>23</sup> *And he said, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"* <sup>24</sup> *So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."* <sup>25</sup> *And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!"* <sup>26</sup> *Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.*

Pilate thought that the crowd would reject Barabbas and choose Jesus. **Mark 15:7 (ESV)** <sup>7</sup> *And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas.* Some think Barabbas' crimes as an insurrectionist occurred because he was a freedom fighter. Most picture Barabbas just as an extremely evil man. Either way, when we hear the story of Barabbas' release and Jesus' condemnation, it is easy to be disgusted with the people's choice of Barabbas over Jesus. But, when a believer looks closely at the picture of Barabbas' release and Jesus dying in his place, we see the biblical portrait of our own condemnation for sin and Jesus dying in our place. Hallelujah! I am accepted because you were condemned!

When I think of Pilate washing his hands as if to clean himself from the crime of crucifying Jesus, the line from an old hymn springs to my mind: What can wash away my sin – nothing but the blood of Jesus.

It might be easier to sympathize with Pilate's predicament with the people if he had not personally chosen to have Jesus, who was already condemned to die, scourged. Scourging was a cruel punishment. Jewish law forbid scourging more than 40 stripes. The Romans did not use a bull whip like we might imagine. They made it even crueler by using a whip with a handle with at least three leather cords attached. These cords were weighted with pieces of metal or bone to make the whip more effective in cutting the flesh. And my heart cries out, why, why Pilate did you feel it necessary to scourge my Jesus when you had already condemned Him to die? And scripture echoes back the answer. One Messianic psalm says: **Psalm 129:3 (ESV)** <sup>3</sup> *The plowers plowed upon my back; they made long their furrows.* But, even in the wounding, we find victory. **Isaiah 53:5**

*(ESV)* <sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. Jesus the crucified King.

**Read Matthew 27:27-31 (ESV)** <sup>27</sup> Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. <sup>28</sup> And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, <sup>29</sup> and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" <sup>30</sup> And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. <sup>31</sup> And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.

There might have as many as 600 or even more men there on that fateful day. They stripped our Lord naked in front of the crowd. From the time that the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened to sin, nakedness has been a shame – a humiliation. Next, they dressed him in a scarlet robe. One commentator suggests that it might have been the faded red of a castoff army cape. Whatever the scarlet robe literally was, figuratively it pictures our sins of scarlet which were placed upon Him. **Isaiah 1:18 (ESV)** <sup>18</sup> "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. They mashed into His brow a crown of thorns. Think back to the curse for sin in Genesis. Thorns literally came into existence because of our iniquities. Speaking of the earth, we read in **Genesis 3:18 (ESV)** <sup>18</sup> thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.

They placed a reed in his hand. Isaiah had foretold of Jesus by saying in **Isaiah 42:3 (ESV)** <sup>3</sup> a bruised reed he will not break... The soldiers placed a reed in the hand of our Lord making light of the scepter of God's throne.

He was crucified on Golgotha with His hands and His feet being nailed to a wooden cross, and then reared it up, with Him hanging on it – suspended in the air. The words of Jesus Himself spoke prior to His own crucifixion ring in our ears. **John 12:32 (ESV)** <sup>32</sup> And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

**Read Matthew 27:37-43 (ESV)** <sup>37</sup> And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews..." <sup>39</sup> And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads <sup>40</sup> and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." <sup>41</sup> So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, <sup>42</sup> "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. <sup>43</sup> He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

Pilate meant for the accusation of Jesus to be a public sneer against the Jews. Luke and John reveal that the inscription, "This is the King of the Jews" was written in three languages, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. In that time, Greek was the language of culture. Latin was the language of government. Hebrew was the language of the Jewish religion. Culture, government, and religion came together on Calvary. Greek culture scorned Jesus. Latin government crucified Him. Hebrew religion rejected Him.

Oblivious to the real meaning of His death these priests and elders challenged Him, bidding Him come down from the cross if He was indeed the King of Israel. They declared they would believe Him in that case. Of course, we know they still did not believe even when He rose from the dead. If Jesus saved Himself, then nobody else could be saved! He did not come to save His life. He came to be a ransom for sinners.

**Read Matthew 27:45-50 (ESV)** <sup>45</sup> *Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.* <sup>46</sup> *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* <sup>47</sup> ... <sup>48</sup> ... <sup>49</sup> ... <sup>50</sup> *And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.*

In His last words from the cross, we find Jesus quoting scripture. **Psalm 22:1 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?...* In His earthly life Jesus had said in **John 16:32 (ESV)** <sup>32</sup> *Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.* And yet He cried out from the cross that the Lord had forsaken Him. When He spoke these words, He had been engaged in a mysterious transaction with the Father, dying for the sins of the world. **1 John 2:2 (ESV)** <sup>2</sup> *He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.* The Apostle Paul would later explain in **2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)** <sup>21</sup> *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* In some unexplainable way Jesus experienced what condemned lost sinners experience. **2 Thessalonians 1:9 (ESV)** <sup>9</sup> *They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.* Wiersbe writes, "Note that both David and Jesus called Him "my God," making it clear that they still knew and trusted the Father."

By today's clock, Jesus was crucified around 9 a.m. and sometime between 3 and 4 p.m. He died. Christ died at just the time of the traditional offering of the evening sacrifice – the time when the Passover lamb was killed, Christ our Passover Lamb – the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world was sacrificed for us. He willingly offered Himself as a sweet smelling sacrifice to God the Father. Notice that Jesus yielded or gave up His Spirit. Jesus freely gave His Spirit. Always remember that His Spirit was not taken from Him by evil men.

Some people wonder in moments of despair, what has God ever done for me? The answer echoes across the centuries from the cross: **Romans 5:8 (ESV)** <sup>8</sup> *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Jesus was forsaken so that we can be forgiven!