

# The Story of Jesus' Trial Before Pilate and Herod, and His Crucifixion

*A shortened version of Luke 23 in the New Living Translation created by Rotation.org for Sunday School use. This version is about 25% shorter than the full version and a few words have been modified to help children understand. If you need to shorten this even more for whatever reason, we've indented several sections that you might consider skipping. This won't be the last time they hear the story, so it is okay.*

Luke 23 begins after Jesus has been arrested and accused of blasphemy (insulting God, claiming to be his son) by the Jewish Council known as the Sanhedrin.

## LUKE 23

Then the entire Sanhedrin council took Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor and told him, "This man Jesus has been leading our people astray by telling them not to pay their taxes to the Roman government and by claiming he is the Messiah, our king."

<sup>3</sup> So Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" and Jesus replied, "If you say so."

<sup>4</sup> Pilate turned to the priests and crowd and said, "I find nothing wrong with this man!"

<sup>5</sup> "He is causing riots by his teaching wherever he goes!—from Galilee to Jerusalem!" the priests protested.

<sup>6</sup> "Oh, he is from Galilee?" Pilate said. ("Then let King Herod Antipas judge him for he is the ruler of Galileans and just so happens to be in Jerusalem right now.")

<sup>8</sup> Herod was delighted at the opportunity to see Jesus, because he had heard about him and had been hoping for a long time to see him perform a miracle. <sup>9</sup> He asked Jesus question after question, but Jesus refused to answer. <sup>11</sup> So Herod and his soldiers mocked and ridiculed Jesus. Then they put a royal robe on him and sent him back to Pilate.

<sup>13</sup> Pilate said to the chief priests and leaders, "You brought this man to me, accusing him of leading a revolt. But (King) Herod and I have examined him thoroughly on this point in your presence and find him innocent. <sup>15</sup> Nothing this man has done calls for the death penalty. <sup>16</sup> So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him."

<sup>18</sup> Then a mighty roar rose from the crowd, and with one voice they shouted, "Crucify Jesus, and release Barabbas to us!" <sup>19</sup> (Barabbas was in prison for murder and taking part in a rebellion against the government.) <sup>20</sup> Pilate argued with them, because he wanted to release Jesus. <sup>21</sup> But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" <sup>24</sup> So Pilate sentenced Jesus to die as they demanded.

## The Crucifixion

<sup>32</sup> Two other men, both criminals, were led out to be executed with Jesus. <sup>33</sup> When they came to a hill called Golgotha, which means "Place of The Skull," and they nailed Jesus to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left.

<sup>34</sup> Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.

<sup>35</sup> The crowd watched and the leaders mocked Jesus. "He saved others," they said, "let him save himself if he is really God's Messiah, the Chosen One." <sup>36</sup> The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" <sup>38</sup> A sign was fastened above him with these words: "This is the King of the Jews."

<sup>39</sup> One of the criminals hanging beside Jesus also scoffed, "So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you're at it!"

<sup>40</sup> But the other criminal protested, saying, <sup>41</sup> "We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong." <sup>42</sup> Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom."

<sup>43</sup> And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."

## The Death of Jesus

<sup>44</sup> By this time it was about noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. <sup>45</sup> And suddenly, the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn down the middle. <sup>46</sup> Then Jesus shouted, "Father, into your hands. I give you my spirit!" And with those words he breathed his last.

<sup>47</sup> When the Roman officer saw what had happened, he said, "Surely this man was innocent." <sup>48</sup> And when the crowd saw how Jesus died, they went home in deep sorrow. <sup>49</sup> And Jesus' friends, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching.

## The Burial of Jesus

<sup>50</sup> Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph who was a member of the Jewish high council, <sup>51</sup> but he had not agreed with the decision and actions of the other religious leaders. <sup>52</sup> He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.

<sup>53</sup> Then Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus down from the cross and wrapped it in a long sheet of linen cloth and laid it in a new tomb that had been carved out of rock. <sup>54</sup> This was done late on Friday afternoon, the day of preparation,<sup>u</sup> as the Sabbath was about to begin.

### NOTE:

*This shortened version of Luke 23 was created for use in a children's Sunday School by members of the Rotation.org Content Team. Most of it is the New Living Translation. A few words and sentence structures have been modified to make it more understandable to children. The indented portions should be read but can be skipped if the teacher needs to make the reading even shorter.*

### SUITABLE ILLUSTRATIONS TO SHOW WITH THE STORY

We've identified the following free collections of Trial and Crucifixion images that would be suitable to show children. These can be download and printed for free from [freebibleimages.org](https://freebibleimages.org)

1. Trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin (for children) <https://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gnpi-090-trial-begins/>
2. Jesus before Pilate, Barabbas (for children) <https://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/ac-barabbas/>
3. Crucifixion images (for children) <https://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gnpi-096-jesus-crucifixion/>
4. Jesus' death on the Cross (for children) <https://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/jesus-crucified-dies/>