

## Last Sunday of Church Year

OLD TESTAMENT – Malachi 3:13-18

<sup>13</sup>“You have spoken arrogantly against me,” says the LORD. “Yet you ask, ‘What have we said against you?’ <sup>14</sup>“You have said, ‘It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty?’ <sup>15</sup> But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it.” <sup>16</sup> Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name. <sup>17</sup> “On the day when I act,” says the LORD Almighty, “they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him. <sup>18</sup> And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

**3:13 SAID HARSH THINGS** – Harsh, critical. Examples of their hard words are found in 1:2; 2:17; and 3:14–15. On the whole, the children of Jacob continued to resist the Lord’s Word. (TLSB)

**YET YOU ASK** – People have said harsh things to their God, and they have the impudence to ask, “How have we done it? What have we said?” (PBC)

**3:14** *It is futile to serve God.* Because the redemption they longed for had not yet been realized. (CSB)

The people said that serving God did no good and offered no benefits. (TLSB)

The complaint that God’s people of any age are tempted to issue is that God is not fair. How in fact, could a righteous God allow evil men to triumph over his Son and bludgeon him to a cross? It happened and the fairness was not evident. But God’s ways continue to not be our ways and his thoughts not our thoughts. We may not see the fairness...there may not be fairness. Sin is never fair. It always goes against God justice. The miracle is that through the unfairness is a way, and his ways are always right. (PBC)

**WHAT DID WE GAIN** – Rhetorical question implying that there was no gain for them in following the requirements of God’s Law. Cf Ps 73:1–12. (TLSB)

The Lord’s promise to all of his children is, “In the world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). (PBC)

*like mourners.* In sackcloth and ashes. (CSB)

Participating in rituals of repentance. (TLSB)

With all indications of deep sorrow and mourning over their sins. Their complaint was that it was poor business, that it did not pay. (Kretzmann)

**3:15** *arrogant*. Evildoers—those who challenge God (see note on Ps 10:11). (CSB)

The Psalmist Asaph complained with Malachi's people, "They (the wicked) have no struggles: their bodies are healthy and strong." (Psalm 73) In comparing Asaph's words above with Malachi we see that the complaint was really the same. And the complaint surfaces still today. (PBC)

Those who do evil and despise the Lord seem to have His blessing (2:17). (TLSB)

*blessed*. In their unbelief, the Jews call blessed those whom the godly know to be cursed (see Ps 119:21)—but it is they who will be called blessed if they repent (v. 12). (CSB)

They had actually reached the stage when they praised the wicked, with their apparent happiness in matters of this world. (Kretzmann)

*Evil doers prosper ... escape*. Note the psalmist's struggle with the prosperity of the wicked in Ps 73:3, 9–12. (CSB)

Some notorious evildoers took up God's challenge by putting Him to the test, and they prospered. Though sinful, they escaped punishment. This dilemma is addressed in the next section. (TLSB)

They have no misfortune, they have everything that their heart desires. This is ever the accusation which the backsliders try to bring against the Lord. (Kretzmann)

By human standards good and evil seem to be rewarded in inverse proportion. What often forget that the real reward is spiritual and comes to those who trust in God even in difficult times.

**3:6–15** Jeremiah's complaint, "Why does the way of the wicked prosper?" (Jer 12:1), resounds in Malachi's day. Many of Jacob's children think nothing of robbing God by withholding their full tithes because it seems to them that evildoers prosper. It is true that the wicked often prosper in this life. Though God does promise that His people may enjoy worldly blessings, He also warns that they can expect suffering too. Because of Christ's death and resurrection, we can be certain of His eternal blessings (Eph 1:3, 11–14). "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rm 6:23). • Lord of heaven and earth, move my heart to honor You with my earthly offerings while keeping my eyes firmly fixed on Your eternal blessings. Amen. (TLSB)

**3:16** The sixth part of the Book begins. (TLSB)

The answer to this whole unfair discussion – on unfairness! – is simply, "The Lord is fair! Judgment Day will be the grand final show of God's fairness. No one will be able to contest the outcome of that day. (PBC)

*those who feared the LORD*. Those who had not given way to doubts and cynicism. (CSB)

*talked with each other.* In the face of the widespread complaining against God (vv. 14–15), they sought mutual encouragement in fellowship. (CSB)

**LISTENED AND HEARD** – The Lord was not pleased with many of the hard words spoken against Him (3:13), but He responded positively to the words of these believers. (TLSB)

*scroll of remembrance.* Analogous to the records of notable deeds kept by earthly rulers (see Est 6:1–3; Isa 4:3; Da 7:10; 12:1). (CSB)

This is comparable to the Book of Life (Rv 21:27). God will remember and deliver those who fear Him. (TLSB)

*honored his name.* Contrast the priests (1:12) and many among the people (vv. 14–15; 2:17). (CSB)

In contrast to the priests, who despised God’s name. (TLSB)

**3:17** *my treasured possession.* See note on Ex 19:5. (CSB)

Those whom God will protect and preserve eternally. (TLSB)

*compassion.* The word here for “compassion” is the same word used in Hebrew to describe Pharaoh’s daughter’s feelings as she peered into the little ark and saw crying baby Moses. How comforting to have a God of compassion! “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses...” (Hebrews 4:14). The sympathy comes because God is our Father. He feels for us because we are his. Isaiah 49:15 points to the strongest kind of love we know: “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you.” (PBC)

*spare them.* In the day of judgment (see 4:1–2). (CSB)

The Lord rebuked those scoffers who claimed that “it is vain to serve God” (3:14). (TLSB)

*who serves him.* Cf. 1:6. (CSB)

**3:18** *you will again see.* As they apparently do not now see; hence their cynicism. (CSB)

These distinctions had been denied by some in the community (2:17; 3:14–15). God makes His justice clear. (TLSB)

*the righteous and the wicked.* See 2:17 and note. (CSB)

**3:16–18** The Lord assures those who fear Him that their service has not been in vain and that they will be spared on the Day of Judgment. God-fearing people know they are guilty according to God’s Law, but they also know God’s forgiveness leads them to love and trust Him all the

more (Ps 130:4). • My soul magnifies You, O Lord, for showing mercy to those who fear You. Amen. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – Colossians 1:13-20

**<sup>13</sup> For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. <sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. <sup>19</sup> For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.**

Believers are no longer separated from God, who is light (Jn 8:12). (TLSB)

**1:13 RESCUED** – The past tense points us back to Baptism, which incorporated us into Christ’s saving work (2:6–15). (TLSB)

DOMAIN OF DARKNESS – Human nature has been delivered into slavery and is held captive by the devil” (Ap II 47). The NT often uses light/darkness for the contrast between God/Satan, salvation/sin (Ac 26:18). Biblical usage differs from that of some later Gnostics and Manichaeans, who used this comparison as though God and Satan were equal forces. God’s power to save from the darkness of sin applies for all people. (TLSB)

*kingdom.* † Does not here refer to a territory but to the authority, rule or power of a king. Here it means that the Christian is no longer under the dominion of evil (darkness) but under the benevolent rule of God’s Son. (CSB)

Jesus taught that God’s kingdom was the rule of His grace, which began with His ministry (Mt 4:17). The beginning of God’s kingdom is the forgiveness of sins (v 14). (TLSB)

**1:14 redemption.** Deliverance and freedom from the penalty of sin by the payment of a ransom—the substitutionary death of Christ. (CSB)

Paul puts these (redemption and forgiveness) teachings together. This may have been in contrast to the idea that forgiveness was a preliminary step of salvation, a teaching held by later Gnostics. “No one is baptized in order that he may become a prince, but, as the words say, that he ‘be saved.’ We know that to be saved is nothing other than to be delivered from sin, death, and the devil” (LC IV 24–25). (TLSB)

**1:3–14** Paul cares very much for these new Christians, and he knows that God cares for them even more. Unfortunately, false teachings that lead people to look to themselves instead of looking to God compete for the Colossians’ attention. We have all been tempted to look to other things instead of Jesus for our salvation. God is the only one who can overcome this evil. In the

background, Paul is praying fervently for them. In the foreground, Paul is boldly proclaiming the truth of salvation in Jesus. • Thank You, O God, for Your patience and persistence to save us through Your beloved Son. Amen. (TLSB)

**1:15–20** Perhaps an early Christian hymn (see note on 3:16) on the supremacy of Christ—used here by Paul to counteract the false teaching at Colosse. It is divided into two parts: (1) Christ’s supremacy in creation (vv. 15–17); (2) Christ’s supremacy in redemption (vv. 18–20). (CSB)

**1:15–20** Paul introduces his refutation of the Colossian heresy with a hymn, which summarizes early Christian Christology and likely predates Paul’s writing to the Colossians. In two parts, the hymn presents Jesus as Creator (vv 15–18a) and Redeemer (vv 18b–20). (TLSB)

**1:15** *image*. Christ is called the “image of God” here and in 2Co 4:4. In Heb 1:3 he is described as the “radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being.” This figure of the image suggests two truths: (1) God is invisible (“no one has ever seen God,” Jn 1:18); (2) Christ, who is the eternal Son of God and who became the God-man, reflects and reveals him (see also Jn 1:18; 14:9). (CSB)

Gk *eikon*, something that resembles the original. Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God. Adam lost the image of God, but in Christ, the Second Adam, God’s image is restored (AC II 1–2; LC II 65). (TLSB)

*firstborn over all creation*. Just as the firstborn son had certain privileges and rights in the Biblical world, so also Christ has certain rights in relation to all creation—priority, preeminence and sovereignty (vv. 16–18). (CSB)

Arius (a fourth-century heretic) misunderstood this to mean “the first of many creatures,” as if Jesus were part of the creation. But elsewhere it means “one who is privileged” (e.g., Ex 4:22). St Athanasius also pointed out that the context clearly shows this “firstborn” is not a part of the creation but the cause of it (v 17; *NPNF* 2 4:383). (TLSB)

**1:16** *by him all things were created*. See Jn 1:3. Seven times in six verses Paul mentions “all creation,” “all things” and “everything,” thus stressing that Christ is supreme over all. (CSB)

As Creator of “all things,” Jesus is supreme over all (Jn 1:3). (TLSB)

ἐκτίσθη—“Created” is in the aorist tense, referring to the act of creation. (CC)

*invisible*. The Colossians were particularly interested in angels. However, Paul asserts Jesus’ supremacy over the invisible angels. (TLSB)

*thrones or powers or rulers or authorities*. Angels. An angelic hierarchy figured prominently in the Colossian heresy (see Introduction: The Colossian Heresy). (CSB)

Names common to Judaism and the NT of angelic or demonic powers that were thought to control the universe. The false teachers apparently assigned to them power independent of Christ (2:8) and held them to be objects of worship (2:18). (TLSB)

*through Him and for Him.* The goal of creation is the redemption that Christ accomplishes (Rm 8:19–22). (TLSB)

**1:17** *He is before all things.* Referring to time, as in Jn 1:1–2; 8:58. (CSB)

“His beloved Son” (v 13) existed before the creation (Jn 1:1–2; 3:16).

*in Him all things hold together.* Contradicts the heretical teaching that the creation is inherently evil. Jesus still cares very much about this created world, continues to sustain it, and will renew it. (TLSB)

**1:18** *beginning.* Of the new creation. (CSB)

*firstborn.* Christ was the first to rise from the dead with a resurrection body. Elsewhere Paul calls him the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1Co 15:20). Others who were raised from the dead (2Ki 4:35; Lk 7:15; Jn 11:44; Ac 9:36–41; 20:7–11) were raised only to die again. (CSB)

“The pope is not, according to divine law or God’s Word, the head of all Christendom. This name belongs to One only, whose name is Jesus Christ” (SA II IV 1). (TLSB)

*body.* Indicates the intimate relationship between the Redeemer and the redeemed, similar to the “in Christ” terminology (v 22). This relationship is created in Baptism (2:11–13) and sustained in the Lord’s Supper (1Co 10:16–17). (TLSB)

*firstborn from the dead.* Just as Jesus is the “firstborn of all creation” (v 15) and thus the cause of creation, so Jesus is also the cause of the resurrection. (TLSB)

**1:19** *fullness.* Part of the technical vocabulary of some Gnostic philosophies. In these systems it meant the sum of the supernatural forces controlling the fate of people. For Paul “fullness” meant the totality of God with all his powers and attributes (2:9). (CSB)

The totality of God with all His divine attributes began to dwell in Christ at the moment of His conception by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary (cf 2:9). (TLSB)

**1:20** *reconcile to himself all things.* † Does not mean that all people will be saved. Scripture speaks of an eternal hell and makes clear that only believers are saved. When Adam and Eve sinned, not only was the harmony between God and man destroyed, but disorder also came into creation (Ro 8:19–22). So when Christ died on the cross, he made peace between God and man, and he restored in principle the harmony in the physical world, though the full realization of the latter will come only when Christ returns (Ro 8:21). (CSB)

Sin alienated the creation from the Creator. Christ reconciles all things, i.e., He brings everything back to its proper order. (TLSB)

*making peace.* Jesus' death makes peace possible by faith, but it is also His victory over all who continue to oppose Him. Cf. Eph 2:14–16. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – LUKE 23:27-43

<sup>27</sup> A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. <sup>28</sup> Jesus turned and said to them, **“Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. <sup>29</sup> For the time will come when you will say, ‘Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ <sup>30</sup> Then ”“they will say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!”” <sup>31</sup> For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?” <sup>32</sup> Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. <sup>33</sup> When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. <sup>34</sup> Jesus said, **“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”** And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. <sup>35</sup> The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, **“He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One.”** <sup>36</sup> The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar <sup>37</sup> and said, **“If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”** <sup>38</sup> There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. <sup>39</sup> One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: **“Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!”** <sup>40</sup> But the other criminal rebuked him. **“Don’t you fear God,”** he said, **“since you are under the same sentence? <sup>41</sup> We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”** <sup>42</sup> Then he said, **“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”** <sup>43</sup> Jesus answered him, **“I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”****

**23:26** *they.* Soldiers in charge of the crucifixion. (TLSB)

LED HIM AWAY – ἀπήγαγον—The subject is not stated, but since Pilate has sentenced Jesus to death, it would be Romans under Pilate's authority who would carry out the sentence. In 23:36 (Roman) soldiers will be identified as participants in the mocking of Jesus. However, immediately preceding “they” in 23:26 is “their will” (23:25), referring to the will of the Jewish leadership and people: “the chief priests and the rulers and the people” (23:13). J. Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1496, argues that the Jewish leaders are the implied subject of the verb. J. Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1136, entertains that possibility too but finally opts for the Roman soldiers. By leaving the subject ambiguous in 23:26, Luke perhaps is suggesting that both the Jews and the Romans are responsible. Jesus is going to die at the hands of—and on behalf of—both Jews and Gentiles. Jesus dies for the sin of the whole world. Cf. comments on 23:13–25. (CC p. 914)

Luke's introduction describes the movement from the Fortress Antonia, where Pilate delivered Jesus over to the hands of his enemies, to the Via Dolorosa, where Simon the Cyrenian carries Jesus's cross. Luke does not state who is leading Jesus away (see textual note on 23:26). Is it the Jews who called for his crucifixion or Roman soldiers carrying out Pilate's cowardly submission to the people's will? Pilate's Roman soldiers no doubt were the ones who *physically* hauled him away, but Jesus has now been delivered *to the will* (23:25) of the Jewish religious establishment and the people. (CC p. 916)

*Simon*. His sons, Rufus and Alexander (Mk 15:21), must have been known in Christian circles at a later time, and perhaps were associated with the church at Rome (Ro 16:13). (CSB)

*Cyrene*. A leading city of Libya, west of Egypt. (CSB)

Modern Libya had a large Jewish population in Jesus' day. Simon likely came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. (TLSB)

*in from the country*. Perhaps camping outside the city as did Jesus and His disciples (21:37). (TLSB)

*put the cross on him*. See note on Mk 15:21. (CSB)

The crossbeam; the upright beam typically stood at the place of execution. Because of Jesus' weakening condition, Simon was drafted for this task. (TLSB)

Who is this "Simon, a Cyrenian"? (Cyrene is in North Africa, present-day Libya.) It was customary for the condemned man to carry his own cross. It was unusual for someone to carry the cross on behalf of another. Luke gives no explanation for this conscription of Simon, although it is likely that Jesus' deteriorated physical condition necessitated this action. Luke's language might suggest that Simon the Cyrenian is a disciple of sorts, fulfilling *literally* what Jesus prophesied when he said that a disciple must take up his (own) cross and follow him (9:23; 14:27). Mark (15:21) states that Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus, and the name of one Rufus (along with his mother) appears in a list of Christians in Rom 16:13. It is possible that Simon the Cyrenian became acquainted with Jesus when he was conscripted to carry Jesus' cross and that Simon became a believer and subsequently passed on the faith to his son Rufus. If so, then it may be said that on these final steps of the journey, Jesus is followed by a catechumen who bears the burden of his cross, even though it may be unwillingly. (CC pp. 916-917)

**23:27** LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE – Crowds following from sympathy and curiosity. (TLSB)

FOLLOWED HIM – ἠκολούθει—As noted in comments on 5:11, Luke consistently uses this word for discipleship in his gospel. Its use here suggests that the people as a



whole now are penitent as they mourn for Jesus. See comments on λαός in 23:13. (CC p. 914)

Although here Luke does not use the same journey terminology common throughout the travel narrative (e.g., πορεύομαι, “to travel, journey,” or ὁδός, “way, road”), the hearer knows that this is the end of Jesus’ journey that began in Galilee, a catechetical journey that has created a new people of God through his eschatological teaching and table fellowship. And as Jesus is about to reach his goal, he is not traveling alone. Luke reports that “a great multitude of the people” (πολὺ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ) and “women who were striking themselves and mourning for him” (23:27) followed him. These seem to be two distinct groups. “The people” generally were favorable toward Jesus earlier in the gospel, but this is the same term used for those who just called for Jesus’ crucifixion (see comments on 23:13, 21, 23). Now that Jesus’ end is near, they follow him. Since they are grouped with the mourning women, they may have already begun to turn again toward Jesus in repentance, as becomes clearer later on at the cross (23:48). (These descriptions of “the people” naturally would not pertain to every single individual; only some, perhaps representing the sentiments of the majority, called for his crucifixion [23:21], and only some of the people will turn to him in faith.) These followers observe that Jesus’ final catechetical lesson on the journey to the cross is a lesson in suffering. (CC p. 917)

WOMEN – Pious women customarily lamented one condemned to die. (TLSB)

MOURNED AND WAILED – ἐκόπτοντο—To “strike oneself” as a sign of mourning is typical in the Mediterranean world even today. Cf. the middle of κόπτω also in 8:52 and τύπτω with στήθος in 18:13; 23:48. (CC p. 914)

Jesus does not directly speak to the multitude (πλῆθος, neuter [23:27]) or to the people (λαός, masculine [23:27]). Rather, he addresses the women (αὐτάς, feminine plural [23:28]). In the OT “daughter(s) of Zion” represent or personify faithful Israel. So also here the “daughters of Jerusalem” represent the people of Jerusalem. There may be an allusion here to the motif of Jesus as the bridegroom and the church as his bride, as in Jesus’ self-description in 5:34–35; 12:36. (CC p. 917)

The lamenting and mourning indicate that these women are in a state of deep sorrow over Jesus’ fate. They strike themselves, in a gesture similar to that of the people who will beat their chests after Jesus dies (23:48). Jesus addresses these women who mourn because these women represent those within the congregation of Israel, whose center of worship is Jerusalem, who have already begun to regret their rejection of Jesus. He turns to them as he turned to Peter (22:61), and, as with Peter, *his words are meant to bring them from remorse to full repentance and faith*. Jesus’ final words to the general populace before he is crucified are four calls addressed to all of Jerusalem as personified in the women. *All of Jerusalem—indeed all Israel, all humankind—is guilty of rejecting the Messiah who must suffer. Jesus now calls all to repent and believe* as he warns them of what will happen if they do not. (CC pp. 917-918)

**23:28 TURNED** – στραφεις δε προς αυτας—This is the same action as when Jesus turned toward Peter after Peter’s three denials (22:61). As Peter wept in remorse (22:62), the fickle crowd (see comments on 23:13) now mourns. (CC p. 914)

**DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM** – θυγατρες Ιερουσαλημ—The “daughters of Jerusalem” represent Jerusalem. Jesus used the affectionate familial term θυγατηρ, “daughter,” for a woman of faith in 8:48. Cf. also the new kinship in 8:19–21. For “daughter(s) of Jerusalem,” see 2 Ki 19:21; Song 1:5; 2:7; 3:5, 10; 5:8, 16; 8:4; Is 37:22; Lam 2:13, 15; Micah 4:8; Zeph 3:14; Zech 9:9. (The daughter of Zion as representative of all Israel is part of the background of the annunciation to Mary; see comments at 1:26–38.) (CC pp. 914-915)

These words are a call to repentance in the face of impending judgment.

J. Neyrey, *The Passion according to Luke*, 111, again has the opposite interpretation: “Jesus’ turning in 23:28, then, is not necessarily a call to repentance, but may be an act of judgment.” Likewise R. Stein, *Luke*, 586, says: “It is a pronouncement of judgment and doom, not a call to repentance.” But doesn’t such a warning of judgment call people to repentance? Just as with the woes following the beatitudes (6:24–26), the lament over Jerusalem (13:31–35), and the warnings about the destruction of Jerusalem and the whole world (21:5–36), Jesus’ ultimate purpose is not simply to terrify people, nor is it to gloat over the eventual punishment of his enemies. Rather, Jesus epitomizes the beatitudes by loving his enemies and seeking their deliverance from “the wrath about to come” (3:7, as did John the Baptist). God takes no delight in the death of the wicked but seeks to turn them in repentance so they will believe and live (Ezek 18:23). God sent prophets—and Jesus, the Prophet—for that purpose. (CC p. 918)

Within this series of four, the first and last warnings focus on Jesus and Jerusalem (23:28, 31) and the middle two warnings on the inhabitants of Jerusalem (23:29–30). Jesus’ first warning is an imperative to the women not to weep for him, but for themselves and for their children. With chiasmic order, Jesus contrasts himself to Jerusalem and shows that the tears of the daughters of Jerusalem should not be for him but for Jerusalem and her inhabitants.

Once again, Luke provides another inclusio. He began his account of Jesus’ ministry in Jerusalem with Jesus’ tears over Jerusalem because she did not know the things that made for peace (19:41–42). He now closes it with the tears of Jerusalem’s daughters over the Peacemaker (23:28). In both places Jesus speaks about Jerusalem’s imminent destruction, and the passages are also linked by Jesus’ eschatological time reference “the days will come” (19:43; 23:29). (CC p. 918)

Just before he entered Jerusalem, Jesus had warned her inhabitants in specific language about the destruction about to take place “because you did not know the appointed time of your visitation” (ἐπισκοπή; 19:43–44). That visitation is *now*, as Jesus faces death by crucifixion. God has visited (ἐπισκέπτομαι) his people with redemption

(λύτρωσις; 1:68) through the one to be crucified. But there should be no tears for him, since he is simply going to the goal placed before him by the Father and that goal will end in resurrection. There should be no tears for the rejected one; rather, tears should be shed for those who continue to reject him, since they will not share in his redemption. (CC pp. 918-919)

The beatitudes' theme of the Great Reversal is in view here: Jesus, the condemned righteous man, will be vindicated, while those who condemn him will themselves be condemned. Those who smugly laugh at Jesus now will weep, but those who now weep tears of repentance will have their mourning turned into joy (6:21, 25). Normally, weeping is associated with death. Jesus directs those who would follow him to weep for themselves because they too must bear a cross (9:23; 14:27). They must die to self and to sin. Relevant here is the Lukan theme of baptism, since those baptized into Christ must die with him if they are to participate in his resurrection. (CC p. 919)

*weep for yourselves and for your children.* Because of the terrible suffering to befall Jerusalem some 40 years later when the Romans would besiege the city and utterly destroy the temple. (CSB)

Weeping marked both Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem (19:41) and His exit. *weep for yourselves.* Jesus acknowledges their sympathy but expresses pity for Jerusalem's residents. *yourselves ... children.* Women and children are more vulnerable than men in times of distress. Cf Lm 2:11–12. (TLSB)

**23:29** TIME WILL COME – Destruction of Jerusalem (19:41–44; 21:5–24). (TLSB)

ρχονται ἡμέραι—J. Neyrey, *The Passion according to Luke*, 112, notes: “In Luke ‘the coming days’ are carefully distinguished from the day of the Son of Man and from the final day of judgment. In passages unique to Luke, ‘the coming days’ refer specifically to the destruction of Jerusalem.” But as this commentary has argued, Jerusalem's destruction is an event of eschatological significance. It portends the return of the Son of Man and the end of the world. See comments at 5:35 and 17:22 (cf. also 19:43; 21:6). (CC p. 915)

*Blessed are the barren.* It would be better not to have children than to have them experience such suffering. Cf. Jer 16:1–4; 1Co 7:25–35. (CSB)

Ordinarily, childlessness was a shame in Israel (Gn 30:23; Lk 1:24–25), but is preferred to the coming suffering. (TLSB)

In both the OT and the NT generally, to be without child was to be considered cursed and was a reason for shame (cf. 1:25). On the other hand, for a woman's barrenness to be reversed was like resurrection from the dead (1 Sam 2:6 in the context of 1 Samuel

1–2). But here Jesus describes the barren as among the blessed. Normally, rejoicing accompanied marriage and childbirth. But one of the beatitudes in Jesus’ Sermon on the Plain was for those “crying now” (6:21). Here Jesus tells the daughters of Jerusalem to cry for themselves and their children and says the barren will be called blessed! The reason for this is that when the destruction of Jerusalem comes, parents will have the added trauma of witnessing the destruction of their own children, which is even worse than their own suffering. It is in this vein that end-time prophets such as Jeremiah, who witnessed Jerusalem’s destruction in 587 B.C., and St. Paul did not marry or father children. (CC p. 919)

Jeremiah said,

The word of Yahweh came to me: “You must not take for yourself a wife and there shall not be for you sons or daughters *in this place* [Jerusalem].” For this is what Yahweh says about the sons and about the daughters born in this place and about their mothers who bear them and about their fathers who caused them to be born in this land: “They will die, killed by diseases. ... They will perish by the sword and the famine” (Jer 16:1–4). In 1 Corinthians 7 (especially vv 26, 29–32), St. Paul speaks of the desirability of remaining single in the end times, adding, “those who weep [should live] as if they are not weeping, and those who are rejoicing as if not rejoicing” (1 Cor 7:30). (CC p. 919)

Nevertheless, the fact that Jesus here pronounces a *beatitude* introduces a note of Gospel hope, just as in the beatitude that those who weep now will one day rejoice (6:21; cf. 23:28). Those who weep and are childless have hope because God creates *ex nihilo*, out of nothing. Where there is only death, God can grant new life. Jesus has demonstrated his ability to raise the dead and change weeping to joy (e.g., 8:49–56). According to the new kinship (8:19–21), those in Christ, even if barren and bereft of blood relatives, are part of the new family of God. In this way, then, the prophecy may come true: “Sing, O barren woman, you who has not given birth; burst into song and shout, you who has not been in labor, for more numerous are the children of the desolate woman than the children of the married woman” (Is 54:1). (CC p. 920)

**23:30** THEY WILL SAY – λέγειν ... —The quote is of Hos 10:8, which is also quoted in Rev 6:16. See comments below. (CC p. 915)

*Fall on us!* People would seek escape through destruction in death rather than endure continuing suffering and judgment (cf. Hos 10:8; Rev 6:16). (CSB)

An appeal to be killed quickly. (TLSB)

The third warning is Jesus’ quotation of Hos 10:8, which refers to the judgment of God on Israel for her apostasy.

Hos 10:8 is also quoted in Rev 6:16: “They say to the mountains and to the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one sitting on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.’” I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 864–65, notes: “Most commentators interpret the saying as a wish for an earthquake or similar

convulsion to put people out of their misery ... but it could also be a desire simply to be hidden from the impending catastrophe, as in Rev. 6:15f.” See J. Neyrey, *The Passion according to Luke*, 113, for a comparison of Lk 23:30; Hos 10:8; and Rev 6:16. (CC p. 920)

Jesus warns that it will be so horrible in that day that people would prefer to be crushed under the mountains than to face the wrath of God. In harmony with the flow of Lk 21:5–36, which portrays Jerusalem’s destruction as a miniature model of the coming destruction of the whole world, Rev 6:16–17 puts this despairing cry in the mouths of those who face the wrath of the Lamb on Judgment Day at the end of the world. Be certain of this: the Great Reversal will come and “the kings of the earth,” like Herod and Pilate, and those who are “wealthy and strong,” like the Sanhedrin, will cower helplessly when the one they have despised returns as their judge (Rev 6:15). Only those who remain alert in faith will be able “to stand” (Lk 21:36; Rev 6:17). (CC p. 920)

**23:31** *tree is green ... dry*. If they treat the Messiah this way when the “tree” is well-watered and green, what will their plight be when he is withdrawn from them and they suffer for their rejection in the dry period? (CSB)

The fourth and final warning balances the first one, since in both Jesus is contrasted with Jerusalem. In a proverbial saying, Jesus summarizes what he just said about the horror of the impending judgment that will come upon unbelieving Jerusalem, and indeed the whole world: “if to the moist wood they do these things, to the dry what will happen?” (23:31). To understand this mysterious proverb one must recognize that implied here in the eschatological context are the *fire* of God’s wrath and a present/future contrast. Now—the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry and the church age—is the time of green wood, when God is patient and merciful, allowing time for growth and the fruit of repentance. But just as the rainy season gives way to the dry season, the time will come when God’s patience will expire and his fire will blaze over all the earth. The time available for yielding the fruit of repentance will be over—the wood will be dry, and the fruitless vine will be burned (Ezekiel 15). Moist wood burns with difficulty, whereas dry wood will burn hot and fast. Thus, it is better to be moist wood *now* than dry wood *then*, when the fire of destruction comes. (CC pp. 920-921)

J. Neyrey offers the following three explanations of this saying. The first two come from A. Plummer, the third from F. Danker. In each of these interpretations, the moist wood refers to Jesus and the dry wood to those who reject Jesus:

- (1) If the *Romans* treat Me, whom they admit to be innocent, in this manner, how will they treat those who are rebellious and guilty?
- (2) If the *Jews* deal thus with One who has come to save them, what treatment shall they receive themselves for destroying Him? ...
- (3) If *God* permits this to happen to one who is innocent, what will be the fate of the guilty?

In addition to these possibilities, all of which have some merit, the green wood may point to the recurring remnant theme in the OT. Unfaithful Israel, like a tree, would be cut down, but from the stump God would cause a faithful remnant to sprout (e.g., Is 6:13). The stump and root of Jesse would remain alive until the Messiah came; he is the branch or sprout (Is 11:1; 53:2; Jer 23:5; cf. Ezekiel 17). Even though Jesus himself will now be “cut off from the land of the living” (Is 53:8), those connected to him by faith know that God will still preserve his remnant of people by grace. But those separated from Jesus have no such hope; they are dry wood. (CC p. 921)

The green wood may also suggest the theme of resurrection. To express the idea of a new life after death, Job 14:7–14 uses the figure of a tree cut down, but with water (Job 14:9), it sprouts again. If Jesus himself is the green wood, even if he is cut down, he will live again, and those in Christ likewise have hope for new life after the conflagration has passed. (CC p. 921)

Luke’s baptismal theme too is relevant here. Beginning at Jesus’ baptism, the fire of God’s eschatological wrath is poured out on him. Jesus is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (Lk 3:16–17, 21–22; 12:49–50). While Jesus himself is consumed in death as a holocaust, for those baptized into him, this baptismal fire of the Spirit does not destroy but purifies and renews. (CC pp. 921-922)

Each of these possibilities ends up with a similar meaning. Jesus’ first and fourth warnings may be juxtaposed and paraphrased: “Do not weep for me, the suffering, righteous Messiah upon whom God *must* pour his fiery wrath. Rather, weep for yourselves and for your children. This eschatological wrath will be kindled against the chaff—those who reject God’s Messiah. But those whom I will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire will be spared from the eternal flames; and though they be cut down, they too will sprout again with me to eternal life.” (CC p. 922)

**23-31** If the Romans do this to one they pronounce innocent, what will they do to a rebellious city? Or perhaps, if God has not spared His innocent Son, how much worse will it be when the Romans inflict His judgment on the city? (TLSB)

**23:32** CRIMINALS – Reflects the prophecy (Is 53:12) and Jesus’ own prediction (22:37). (TLSB)

κακοῦργοι—These criminals are literally “evildoers,” often translated as “malefactors,” the equivalent from Latin. The same term describes them in 23:33, 39. Matthew ([27:38] and Mark [15:27] use the term ληστής, “robber, bandit, revolutionary,” for them, while John [19:18] simply calls them “two others.”) The Greek word order here emphasizes that these evildoers are “with him [Jesus].” Jesus’ quotation of Is 53:12 in Lk 22:37 is being fulfilled: Jesus is being reckoned with transgressors. (CC p. 915)

Jesus’ journey ends as Luke reports that two evildoers with Jesus are led away to be executed. Jesus’ final warnings are framed by references to the movement from the Fortress Antonia (23:26) to Golgotha (23:32). Only Luke mentions these criminals

before the crucifixion itself, showing once again within the passion narrative how Jesus' prophecy after the Last Supper is coming to fulfillment: "And with transgressors he was reckoned" (Lk 22:37, quoting Is 53:12). All is proceeding according to the divine plan. (CC p. 922)

**23:33** *the Skull*. Latin *Calvaria*, hence the name "Calvary" (see note on Mk 15:22 – It may have been a small hill (though the Gospels say nothing of a hill) that looked like a skull, or it may have been so named because of the many executions that took place there.) (CSB)

Jesus was crucified at the place called The Skull. The Aramaic word for skull is "gulfulta" (Golgotha); the Greek is our word cranium which was translated into Latin as "calvaria" (Calvary) (PBC)

"The place called Skull" is where the crucifixion takes place. This area is thought to have been a rock quarry that appeared from a distance to resemble a skull. Another explanation for its name is that it was regularly used for crucifixions and so was named after the dead bodies suspended there. It was outside the city, and, according to tradition, is marked today by the Church of Holy Sepulchre, which is built on the Constantinian foundations that covered both the Place of the Skull and Jesus' tomb. (CC p. 930)

*crucified*. See note on Mk 15:24 (A Roman means of execution in which the victim was nailed to a cross. Heavy, wrought-iron nails were driven through the wrists and the heel bones. If the life of the victim lingered too long, death was hastened by breaking his legs (see Jn 19:33). Archaeologists have discovered the bones of a crucified man, near Jerusalem, dating between A.D. 7 and 66, which shed light on the position of the victim when nailed to the cross. Only slaves, the basest of criminals, and offenders who were not Roman citizens were executed in this manner. First-century authors vividly describe the agony and disgrace of being crucified.). (CSB)

Luke's introduction to the crucifixion and death of Jesus is brief but provides the narrative framework of persons and place. (Since time is a theme within the narrative, Luke does not include that information in the introduction.) The subject of the two verbs "they came" (ἦλθον) and "they crucified" (ἔσταύρωσαν) is not stated but is implied to be the same as those who did the bidding of Pilate and the Jewish leaders by leading Jesus away to execution (23:26). These probably were Roman soldiers, and they will be present throughout the narrative and will be named among the mockers of Jesus (23:36). One of them, a Roman centurion, will be featured at the end of the episode. The other participants at this point are Jesus and the two evildoers crucified with him. The mention of the two "evildoers" once again emphasizes Jesus' prophecy that he would be reckoned with transgressors (Lk 22:37; Is 53:12). The other participants in this account will be introduced later: "the people," who watch passively (Lk 23:35a) and who probably are among "the crowds" who will return home beating their chests (23:48); "the rulers" who mock Jesus (23:35); and "all who were known to him," including women who observe what happens from a distance (23:49). (CC pp. 928 & 930)

Luke describes the actual crucifixion of Jesus with a single, simple aorist verb and pronoun: “they crucified him.” It is so brief the hearer could almost miss it. There is no detail in any of the synoptic gospels about the mechanics of Jesus’ crucifixion, although in John’s *resurrection* account Jesus shows the disciples the nail marks in his hands (Jn 20:20, 27). The simplicity of Luke’s report of the crucifixion parallels the way he captured Jesus’ birth: “And she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him up with cloth bands and laid him in a manger, because there was for them no place in the inn” (2:7). Luke highlights these two great events in Jesus’ life—his birth and his death—by the very austerity of his account. (CC p. 931)

From the great mass of evidence that has been collected we gather that the cross was first of all planted firmly in the ground. Only under very exceptional circumstances were the crosses high. That of Jesus raised His feet no more than a yard above the ground, for the short stalk of hyssop which was 18 inches long was able to reach Jesus; mouth. A block or a heavy peg was fastened to the beam, and the victim sat on this. He either mounted it himself and was perhaps assisted by the executioners, or they lifted him up to the seat and then fastened his body, arms and legs with ropes. Then the great nails, of which the ancient writers speak especially, were driven through the hands and the feet. (Lenski)

The agony of crucifixion needs no description. We mention only the hot sun, the raging thirst, the slow approach of death which sometimes delayed for four days. It was a great relief to the malefactor to learn that he was to die on the very day he was crucified. (Lenski)

All the evangelists state that Jesus was placed between the two malefactors, probably by the order of Pilate, although the soldiers, too, would naturally have arranged the crosses in this manner, Jesus being the one important victim. (Lenski)

The Jewish historian Josephus spoke of crucifixion as “the most pitiable of deaths.” The Roman politician and author Cicero described it as “the worst extreme of torture inflicted on slaves. (PBC)

Crucifixion was preceded by scourging with thongs, to which were sometimes added nails, pieces of bone, etc., to heighten the pain, often so intense as to cause death. In our Lord’s case, however, this infliction seems neither to have been the legal scourging after sentence nor yet the examination by torture (Acts 22:24), but rather a scourging before the sentence to excite pity and procure immunity from further punishment (Luke 23:22; John 19:1). (Unger’s Bible Dictionary)

Before the nailing or binding took place a medicated cup given out of kindness to confuse the senses and deaden the pangs of the sufferer (Prov. 31:6), usually of “wine mingled with myrrh,” because myrrh was soporific. Our Lord refused it that His senses might be clear (Matt 27:34; Mark 15:23) (Unger’s Bible Dictionary)



The crucifixion was a very barbaric and painful manner of inflicting the death penalty, which the Romans had adopted from the Phoenicians, Persians, Assyrians, and other Oriental peoples, and which they employed in the case of slaves and hardened criminals in the provinces, under no circumstance against a Roman citizen. (Ylvisaker)

ONE...OTHER – μὲν ... δέ—This construction accents Jesus' central position between the two evildoers. This seems to be a clear allusion to Jesus as the one who fulfills Is 53:9 and 53:12. Is 53:12 was quoted by Jesus in Lk 22:37. The words of the penitent evildoer in 23:41, "this man did nothing out of place," reflect "he did no violence" in Is 53:9. Explicit quotes from Psalms 22; 31; and 69 appear in Lk 23:34–36, 46. (CC pp. 923-924)

**23:34 FATHER FORGIVE THEM FOR THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING** – Jesus prayed for all those blind to their actions (Ac 13:27; 1Co 2:8). Jesus' prayer reflects His teaching (Lk 11:4) and is repeated by Stephen (Ac 7:60). Hus: "When he himself was stripped, beaten and blasphemed by the soldiers, scribes, Pharisees, officers, and priests, not even then did he pronounce any malediction, but he prayed" (*The Church*, p 285). (TLSB)

ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἔλεγεν· Πάτερ, ἄφες αὐτοῖς, οὐ γὰρ οἴδασιν τί ποιοῦσιν—The imperfect ἔλεγεν (also in 23:42) suggests that Jesus' prayer for forgiveness for his executioners was ongoing for a period of time, rather than punctiliar (cf. BDF §§ 318 [1]; 324 [B]; 327). Nestle-Aland<sup>27</sup> and UBS<sup>4</sup> place this prayer in brackets because many significant early manuscripts omit it (P<sup>75</sup> **Κ**<sup>1</sup> B D\* W Θ). B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 180, doubts that it was part of the original and concludes that it was added by scribes "early in the transmission of the Third Gospel" (e.g., **Κ**<sup>\*.2</sup> A C D<sup>2</sup> f<sup>1.13</sup> Koine text tradition). However, it would be unlikely that early scribes would have put these words in Jesus' mouth unless there was a reliable, authentic tradition that Jesus did speak them. Others who support the authenticity of this first saying of Jesus are cited in I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 868, and L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 376. (CC p. 924)

These words do not have unanimous support in the manuscript witnesses (see textual note). Nonetheless, they are consistent with Luke's development of theological themes, and within the larger Lukan context it is most appropriate that these would be Jesus' first words from the cross. There are several reasons for this. (CC p. 931)

First, God's forgiveness in Jesus is one of Luke's most prominent themes, beginning in the infancy narrative in the Benedictus (1:77), continuing with John's baptism (3:3), Jesus' sermon in Nazareth (4:18), the forgiveness of the paralytic (5:20–21, 23–24) and the sinful woman (7:47), and the Lord's Prayer (11:4). The gospel records a series of absolutions by Jesus, in which forgiveness is expressed by means of his miracles of release (see especially comments on 4:18) and his table fellowship with sinners. After Luke establishes that Jesus, the bearer of forgiveness, is the foundation of the church (Luke 1–4), he narrates Jesus' selection of a cornerstone in Peter, who receives absolution from Jesus when he is called to be his disciple (5:1–11). Jesus' final words in Luke include the scriptural mandate to preach to all nations repentance to the *forgiveness of sins* (24:47). Therefore, it is entirely in keeping with Luke's portrait of

Jesus that Jesus should ask the Father to forgive those responsible for his crucifixion: not just the soldiers, but also Pilate, Herod, the Sanhedrin, the chief priests, the rulers, and indeed all people (see, e.g., 22:66; 23:1, 13 and the textual note on αὐτοῖς, “them,” in 23:34). The hearer of the gospel knows that this absolution flows from the full and complete atonement Jesus is accomplishing for the sins of the whole world *as he speaks these very words*. Forgiveness flows from the cross, so how fitting it is that Jesus’ first word from the cross is a word of universal forgiveness. (CC p. 931 & 933)

Second, “they do not know what they are doing” points to another prominent Lukan motif. The ignorance of those who crucified Jesus (including the Jewish leaders) is a Lukan theme emphasized in the preaching in Acts (e.g., 3:17; 13:27; cf. 7:25). In his gospel, Luke also repeatedly emphasizes the ignorance even of Jesus’ followers, none of whom truly understood the identity of their Lord until after his resurrection, and all of whom acquiesced to his crucifixion by deserting him at his arrest. Jesus’ death by crucifixion is the culmination of the inexorable plan of God that was carried out through human agents at the instigation of Satan (22:3, 31) and “the power of darkness” (22:53). The human agents are responsible even though they acted in ignorance. But the miraculous comfort of the gospel is that Jesus invokes forgiveness for those who “do not know what they are doing.” (CC p. 933)

Third, the thrust of Jesus’ first words from the cross conforms to Luke’s Christology, in which Jesus is the incarnation of God’s love, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness for all, including God’s enemies. This is a leading theme in the Sermon on the Plain (6:27, 35) and the Lord’s Prayer (11:4), and it is the essence of Jesus’ teaching and miracles throughout the gospel. (CC p. 933)

Fourth, this absolution in prayer form balances Jesus’ absolution of the penitent evildoer—the absolution implicit in Jesus’ assurance of paradise. These two absolutions, taken together, show the *now/not yet* character of Luke’s eschatology. Forgiveness comes *now* through Jesus’ prayer, while paradise is *not yet*—though *not yet* will become *now* for Jesus and the penitent evildoer later that very same day. (Stephen too will voice a similar absolution when he is about to enter paradise [Acts 7:60]). By praying for the forgiveness of all those responsible for his crucifixion, Jesus anticipates in his words what is about to happen with his death: atonement for the sins of the entire world, alienated from and hostile to God. He also anticipates his absolution of one sinner (23:43) based on that atonement. (CC p. 933)

Finally, with these words included, in Luke’s gospel Jesus speaks three words from the cross. The first (23:34) and last (23:46) words are addressed to the Father. Immediately following his crucifixion, Jesus asks the Father to forgive the people (23:34); at the moment of his death Jesus commits his spirit to the Father because atonement is complete and the forgiveness of sins is based on his death. (CC pp. 933-934)

FATHER – Πάτερ—Jesus addresses the Father at the beginning of this section when he is crucified (23:34) and at the end when he dies (23:46). See comments at

10:1–24 (10:21) and 11:2. This address is also used by Jesus in prayer at 22:42. (CC p. 924)

THEM – αὐτοῖς—An important question is this: Who are the referents of this pronoun? Whom is the Father to forgive according to Jesus' prayer? The nearest appropriate antecedents are the unspecified subjects of ἐσταύρωσαν in 23:33, "*they* crucified him." But the persons who actually crucified Jesus are not identified. "They do not know what they are doing" certainly applies to the soldiers who were unknowingly crucifying the Christ, the Son of God. Yet until Jesus' resurrection, no human participants in the gospel will truly know who Jesus is (see comments at, e.g., 8:28; 9:20). The disciples too displayed their ignorance by fearfully deserting their Lord at his arrest, and Peter in particular by his outright denial of Jesus. Therefore, this descriptive phrase does not narrow down the possible referents but actually multiplies them. It pertains to all humanity, since all, in ignorance and unbelief, have rejected Jesus. (CC p. 924)

As discussed in the textual note on 23:26, Luke has shown in his narrative of the four trials of Jesus that ultimately *all people* are responsible for Jesus' sentence to death. Jews and Gentiles are both indispensably involved in his condemnation and sentencing. But even more important is the fact that all this is a part of God's preordained plan for the salvation of the whole world, as shown by Jesus' three passion predictions: 9:22 names Jewish groups as responsible, while 9:44 has "men" in general, and 18:32 attributes Jesus' suffering and death to "the Gentiles." Therefore, when Jesus prays here (23:34) for the Father to forgive "them," in the wider Lukan context this ultimately includes the entire human race, since all are responsible for his death. (A similar theme emerges in Luke's genealogy of Jesus in 3:23–38, since his lineage is traced back to Adam, making Jesus the substitute and Savior of all who are descended from Adam.) In the commentary below, "all people" will be supplied after "them" when clarity calls for the referents to be specified. (CC p. 924)

This simple prayer is astounding; all interpretation will leave much to be added. The climax of suffering is now being reached, but the heart of Jesus is not submerged by this rising tide – He thinks of His enemies and of all those who have brought this flood of suffering upon Him. In this connection one should dwell on the whole Passion history and on the fact that it meant agony for Jesus. He might have prayed for justice and just retribution; but His love rises above His suffering, He prays for pardon for His enemies. Such love exceeds comprehension and yet reveals the source whence our redemption and our pardon flow. "Father," Jesus addressed God and even now spoke as the Son, as one who accepted filially all that His Father is permitting to come upon Him. His Father is with Him and hears His Son say, "Father," and what this Son now utters will meet a full response in the Father's heart, for He so loved the world that He sent His own Son to die for the world, and this dying is now at hand. (Lenski)

"Forgive" is not expressive enough: "remit," "dismiss," "send away" render the true sense. This is not a case of brushing away a few feathers. This is also true with regard to the ignorance. What they were doing is defined in 1 Cor 2:8, namely this that they

were crucifying the Lord of Glory, or Acts 13:27, that they were fulfilling the prophets, or Acts 3:15-17, that they were killing the Prince of Life. (Lenski)

*divided up his clothes.* Any possessions an executed person had with him were taken by the executioners. Unwittingly the soldiers (cf. Jn 19:23–24) were fulfilling the words of Ps 22:18 (CSB)

Executioners received a victim's clothing. Casting lots involves chance, yet God foresaw the outcome. (TLSB)

Psalm 22:18, "They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing."

#### Introduction to Ps 22

Note on Introduction (The anguished prayer of David as a godly sufferer victimized by the vicious and prolonged attacks of enemies whom he has not provoked and from whom the Lord has not (yet) delivered him. It has many similarities with Ps 69, but contains no calls for redress (see note on 5:10) such as are found in 69:22–28. No other psalm pointed beyond itself so fully to the circumstances of Jesus at his crucifixion. Hence on the cross he took it to his lips (see Mt 27:46 and parallels), and the Gospel writers, especially Matthew and John, frequently alluded to it (as they did to Ps 69) in their accounts of Christ's passion (Mt 27:35, 39, 43; Jn 19:23–24, 28). They proclaim the passion of Jesus as the fulfillment of this cry of the righteous sufferer. The author of Hebrews placed the words of v. 22 on Jesus' lips (see Heb 2:12 and note). No psalm is quoted more frequently in the NT.)

Notes on Ps 22:17, 20–21. 22:17 Note (*I can count all my bones.* Perhaps better, "I must display all my bones." The figure may be of one attacked by highway robbers or enemy soldiers, who strip him of his garments.)

22:20-21 Note (The psalmist's prayer recalls in reverse order the four figures by which he portrayed his attackers in vv. 12–13, 16–18: "sword," "dogs," "lions," "wild oxen." Here "sword" may evoke the scene described in vv. 16b–18, and thus many interpret it as an attack by robbers or enemy soldiers, though "sword" is often used figuratively of any violent death.)

John 19:23, 24 describes the division of the garments in detail. Luke states only that it was made, and in this case by casting lots. (Lots were usually made out of small stones or pieces of wood. Sometimes arrows were used.) A common way was to place lots in a helmet and shake them until one flew out; another way was to reach in and to draw out lot by lot. If the former was used, one man was designated, and the first lot that flew out was his, the lot being marked for a certain portion of the four that had been arranged; John tells us that there were four. In case of the valuable tunic of Jesus three lots would be blank, the other would win. The clothes of the victim were the perquisites of the executioners, the victim being treated as one that was already dead. The soldiers

were great gambler. It was nothing exceptional for them to gamble for the clothes of Jesus. The clothes of the malefactors were probably divided in the same way. (Lenski)

The juxtaposition of Jesus' remarkable absolution and his nakedness on the cross would accent this Great Reversal theme of the gospel. According to the theology of the cross, the gracious power of God to save is hidden in the suffering and weakness of the Christ on the cross. Things are not what they appear to be. Throughout Luke's gospel Jesus has shown mercy to all, including God's enemies. Now he hangs naked on the cross accused and condemned as a criminal and an enemy of God (according to the Sanhedrin)—the grossest kind of humiliation possible. The degradation of Jesus' nakedness is a significant part of the scandal of the cross. The gambling over his clothes accents his nakedness and the utter contempt shown toward him by those who carried out his death. (CC pp. 934-935)

CASTING LOTS – Ironically, Scripture is fulfilled here by gambling. Gambling relies on chance or “fate,” while Luke's gospel has carefully shown that nothing in Jesus' long journey to the cross is a result of chance or “fate”; all is part of God's inexorable plan, as shown by the quotations and allusions to Psalms 22; 31; and 69. But the soldiers seem ignorant of prophecy; “they do not know what they are doing.” They show callous disregard for the public display of nakedness and Jesus' humiliation, and by their actions add to it. (CC p. 935)

**23:35** THE PEOPLE STOOD – εἰστήκει—The pluperfect (also in 23:49) has the nuance of “stand still, stop” (cf. BAGD s.v. ἵστημι, II 2 a) in order to give full attention to the sight. (CC p. 924)

RULERS – Members of the Jewish High Council. (TLSB)

SNEERED (exemutasizon) – ἐξεμυκτήριζον—This same word describes the attitude of the Pharisees against Jesus after he tells the parable of the unjust steward (16:14). (CC p. 925)

Even here in public they throw their dignity to the winds, forget who they are, and like the common herd, give way to their basest passions. What they are capable of we saw in 22:63-65. They cannot now spit on Jesus, but they certainly stab Him as deep as possible with their cowardly and vicious tongues. They go on turning up their noses at Jesus, a gesture of insulting disdain (Ps 22:7), the imperfect tense is descriptive of what they did for some time. (Lenski)

Luke's chiasmic structure makes the mocking of Jesus a distinct unit. This mocking includes the impenitent evildoer's taunts. The mocking of Jesus *on the cross* is the climax of Luke's theme of Jesus as the rejected prophet. Those who mock Jesus here are (in chiasmic order) the Jewish rulers of Israel, the (Gentile) soldiers, the inscription (supplied by the Gentile Pilate [Jn 19:19]), and the unbelieving evildoer (a Jewish revolutionary?). (“Evildoer” could be applied aptly to every sinner—that is, every person.) At the foot of the cross all of humanity is represented. Adam's race now lashes

out against God’s Son with unbelievable malice. But the irony of this mocking is that it speaks the true words of the Gospel. Jesus is mocked for being “the Christ,” the one who “saved others,” and the King of the Jews—and *that is exactly who he is!* (CC pp. 935-936)

SAVED OTHERS...SAVE HIMSELF – ἄλλους ἔσωσεν—Earlier references in the gospel to Jesus “saving” others are 7:50; 8:36, 48, 50; 17:19; 18:42. Apparently the rulers had heard reports of Jesus’ saving activity but refused to believe this evidence that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. See comments on 22:67, 70. σώζω occurs four times in the section on Jesus’ mocking (23:35 [twice], 37, 39). On σώζω and its derivatives, see comments at 1:47. (On salvation in Luke, see A. A. Just Jr., *The Ongoing Feast*, 191–93.) (CC p. 925)

They admit He saved and raised others, but reason that if He will not rescue Himself, He is clearly not the Messiah. (TLSB)

The denial that He really ever saved anybody is based on His inability to save Himself. For this is a sneer. It is plainer in Matthew where they go on: “King of Israel is He!” and mean that He is anything but that. All His miracles are derided – they must be spurious or He would help Himself. (Lenski)

Repeated phrases within this mocking scene reinforce another important Lukan theme: salvation. The mocking begins with the rulers saying, “He saved others [ἄλλους ἔσωσεν]; let him save himself [σωσάτω ἑαυτόν]” (23:35b). It then proceeds to the soldiers, who mock him with the words “save yourself [σῶσον σεαυτόν]” (23:37), and ends with the evildoer who blasphemes Jesus by saying, “Save yourself and us [σῶσον σεαυτόν καὶ ἡμᾶς]” (23:39). Ironically, *those who mock Jesus proclaim that he is the Savior.* (CC p. 936)

CHRIST OF GOD – ὁ χριστὸς τοῦ θεοῦ—This is the same phrase used of Jesus by Peter in his Galilean confession (9:20). See also the comments on 22:67, where the Sanhedrin demanded that Jesus tell them whether he was “the Christ.” (CC p. 925)

*the Chosen One.* See note on 9:35 (Related to a Palestinian Jewish title found in Dead Sea Scrolls literature, and possibly echoing Is 42:1.) (CSB)

Isaiah 42:1, ““Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.”

ὁ ἐκλεκτός—This title stands in apposition to “the Christ of God.” The perfect participle of the related verb (ἐκλελεγμένος, from ἐκλέγομαι) is used at the transfiguration at the end of Jesus’ Galilean ministry (9:35). Similar too is the Father’s affirmation at Jesus’ baptism (3:22). The combination “Christ of God” and “the chosen/elect one” may recall the language of the evangelist in Jesus’ first journey to the temple where he is referred to as “Lord’s Christ” (2:26), i.e., he is the Father’s Christ. What is therefore combined

here in “Christ of God” and “chosen/elect one” is the voice of Father at Jesus’ transfiguration, which anticipates Jesus’ entrance into glory through his “exodus” (9:31) on the cross to fulfill the Father’s plan. (CC p. 925)

Peter in his Pentecost sermon uses the word “accredited” (Acts 2:22). This is language with which we are familiar because it is used in schools and other settings. It tells us that a certain standard of acceptance has been reached. In Acts it means “to demonstrate or exhibit” (Strong’s). To be approved by a higher power. The fact that the Father accepted the price that Jesus paid for our sins, means that we owe nothing and are debt free.

**23:36 SOLDIERS** – First explicit mention of the Roman soldiers in Lk. (TLSB)

*wine vinegar.* A sour drink carried by the soldiers for the day. Jesus refused a sedative drink (Mt 27:34; Mk 15:23) but later was given the vinegar drink when he cried out in thirst (Jn 19:28–30). Luke shows that it was offered in mockery. (CSB)

Cheap wine drunk by soldiers. This offer was mockery and a joke. (TLSB)

The soldiers do not confine their mockery to words. This was the common cheap sour wine that was provided for the soldiers, with which they refreshed themselves during their long wait. It was their ordinary drink, and no other was available here. Coming up to the cross of Jesus, the soldiers offer Him a drink, hold out their wine to Him, and tell Him just to step down and to reach out and to take it. It was a cruel way to mock the sufferer who had had nothing touch his lips since the night before. (Lanski)

This mockery on the part of the soldiers is recorded by Luke alone. It took place before the darkness fell at noon. It has nothing to do with Matt 27:46-49; Mark 15:34-36; John 19:28-30, which occurred after the darkness, just before Jesus died. (Lanski)

**23:37-38** The taunt refers to the title above the cross and presumes that kings save themselves, not their people. (TLSB)

**23:38** *written notice.* Indicated the crime for which a person was dying. This was Pilate’s way of mocking the Jewish leaders as well as announcing what Jesus had been accused of. (CSB)

The victim’s crime was usually posted, but Pilate stated Jesus’ title as a fact to mock the Jews. (TLSB)

It is quite certain that the inscription was placed on the cross over the head of Jesus at the time of His crucifixion, and there is only a bare possibility that the inscription was an afterthought on the part of Pilate. Inscriptions that stated why a man was crucified were common. These were also carried and displayed on the way out to the place of execution. We read nothing about inscriptions in the case of the malefactors – the mind of Pilate seems to have been taken up chiefly with Jesus. (Lanski)

It was written in three languages, which fact explains the slight variation of the wording as this is recorded by the four evangelists. (Lenski)

*KING OF THE JEWS.* See note on Mk 15:26 (The wording of the charge differs slightly in the Gospels, but all agree that Jesus was crucified for claiming to be the king of the Jews.). (CSB)

ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων οὗτος—The Greek word order in Luke emphasizes Jesus' title as King. Mark (15:26) has the same title but without οὗτος at the end. Matthew (27:37) has οὗτός ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων. John (19:19) has the fullest record of the title: Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων. Ironically, it was intended as the charge against Jesus, but opened eyes of faith recognize it as a description of who he really is. (CC p. 925)

Forced to crucify Jesus by these vicious Jews, Pilate will do so, but only as “the King of the Jew” as they have charged. This is Pilates revenge. He writes their own charge over the head of Jesus. (Lenski)

**23:39** *One of the criminals.* See note on Mk 15:32. (CSB)

HURLED INSULTS – The third taunt. (TLSB)

τῶν κρεμασθέντων—κρεμάννυμι is a synonym of σταυρόω, the more common verb for “crucify,” which is used in 23:21, 33. κρεμάννυμι refers to impalement or display of the dead body in LXX Deut 21:22. (CC p. 925)

In Luke's narrative, after the impenitent evildoer participates in the mocking, the penitent one is isolated and highlighted. Just as Luke followed Jesus' prayer for forgiveness with descriptions of the reactions of the soldiers and the people (23:34b–35a), so now he describes a response to the mocking of Jesus. The sharp demarcation between the two evildoers—one a mocker, the other a confessor—is yet another fulfillment of the prophecy that Jesus will divide Israel: he will cause “the fall and resurrection of many in Israel” (2:34). The divided evildoers also contrast with the rulers and soldiers, who mock Jesus in unison. This penitent evildoer represents all those within Israel who will turn to Jesus in repentance and faith. By rebuking the unbelieving evildoer, the penitent one rebukes all those who have rejected and will reject Jesus. (CC p. 937)

**23:40** THE OTHER – ὁ ἕτερος—In the apocryphal Acts of Pilate 10:2, this faithful evildoer is called Dysmas. (CC p. 925)

FEAR GOD – Have the proper attitude toward God (1:50; 12:4–5; 18:4). (TLSB)

His confession of sin and of faith shows the proper response to Jesus' absolution in 23:34. He is the first to enter the fullness of the kingdom that Jesus is now preparing and inheriting. The process of initiation begins with instruction about Jesus—



catechesis—and ends with participation in Christ (see comments at the annunciation [1:26–38]). This man’s catechesis came through watching the passion of Jesus, the simple words of absolution that Jesus spoke over his enemies, and the cruel mocking of the suffering, righteous Messiah. This evildoer on the brink of death and hell is the first to be converted by Jesus’ announcement that sin is forgiven by virtue of the cross. *He is the first to embrace Jesus as the one who saves others, the Christ, and the King of the Jews.* (CC p. 937)

**SAME SENTENCE** – Facing death, this is the time to seek mercy. (TLSB)

**23:41 WE ARE GETTING** – The criminal also bears witness to Jesus’ innocence, recognizing His majesty and grace. (TLSB)

ἄξια γὰρ ὧν ἐπράξαμεν ἀπολαμβάνομεν—This repentant evildoer recognizes the justice of his own punishment, and, in contrast, Jesus’ complete innocence. (CC p. 925)

**GETTING WHAT OUR DEEDS DESERVE** – ἄτοπον—Literally “out of place,” this word means “improper, wrong, evil.” In light of Jesus’ quote of Is 53:12 in Lk 22:37, Is 53:9b may well be in the background here. (CC p. 925)

This evildoer first expresses his repentance by confessing his sin. He fears God (unlike the other evildoer), and he recognizes that his tortuous death is just punishment for the sins he has committed. He stands under the judgment of God’s wrath, and he confesses that his guilt merits such punishment. (CC p. 938)

**DONE NOTHING WRONG** – But combined with his confession of sin is his confession of faith: he announces that Jesus is the suffering, innocent Messiah. His protest that “this man did nothing out of place” is the fifth pronouncement of Jesus’ innocence since the trials began (the earlier four are in 23:4, 14, 15, 22). Jesus’ innocence has been a primary theme throughout Luke’s passion narrative, *but this is the first time Jesus’ innocence has been announced by a believer.*

R. Stein, *Luke*, 593, notes that the evildoer’s entrance into paradise is part of Luke’s reversal motif: “Once again the last had become first. The ‘first’ mocked and sought Jesus’ death; this condemned criminal, surely the ‘last,’ sought the Lord’s mercy and amazingly found salvation.” He goes on to say (p. 594): “The supreme irony is that the criminal rightfully being executed for his crime(s) was infinitely better off” than those who continued to reject Jesus and were eternally damned. (CC p. 938)

As in 23:47, to declare Jesus innocent or righteous is tantamount to declaring that God’s plan of salvation in his righteous Son is just—and that righteousness—justification—comes through that plan (see comments on 7:29, 35). Such a confession glorifies God (23:47) and recognizes his righteousness (7:29, 35). (CC p. 938)

**23:42 REMEMBER ME** – An appeal to act on his behalf. (TLSB)

μνήσθητί μου—See comments on “remember” in the Magnificat (1:54) and the Benedictus (1:72). This word is a critical part of Luke’s hermeneutic in the final chapter (24:6, 8; cf. 24:44). See also the comments on ἀνάμνησις, “remembrance,” in 22:19 regarding the Lord’s Supper. (CC p. 925)

COME INTO YOUR KINGDOM – Statement of true faith. He alone sees Jesus’ messianic kingship, which welcomes sinners. (TLSB)

ἐλθῆς εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν σου—On the coming of the kingdom, see comments at 11:2 and textual note and commentary on 22:16, 18. Some manuscripts have ἐν instead of εἰς (e.g., *NAW f*<sup>1.13</sup> Koine text tradition). ἐν, “in,” implies that Jesus is already in his kingdom but has yet to come (back). εἰς, “into,” implies that Jesus has not yet entered *into* his kingdom. There is strong manuscript evidence in support of εἰς (e.g., P<sup>75</sup> B L). B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 181, notes that this seems to be consistent with other statements in Luke, e.g., Jesus’ words to the Emmaus disciples: “Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and *enter into* [εἰσελθεῖν εἰς] his glory?” (24:26). Jesus enters his kingdom through his “exodus” (9:31) or his “being taken up” (9:51). Both terms encompass his entire movement from death to resurrection to ascension. (CC pp. 925-926)

For the penitent evildoer, 23:40–41 constitutes a confession of faith in the suffering, innocent Messiah. But he goes on to voice an even stronger confession: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (23:42). Perhaps the inscription on the cross and the taunts of the soldiers, both of which designate Jesus as *King*, informed this man’s request regarding Jesus’ entrance into his *kingdom*. In any event, the king/kingdom motif and the theme of remembrance reverberate throughout Luke’s gospel and come together in a strikingly similar way in the Lord’s Supper dialog (22:16, 18–19), where Jesus speaks of the future advent of the kingdom. The man’s request reveals a remarkable understanding of the now/not yet tension in the eschatology of God’s kingdom. *Now*, on the cross, Jesus is King, and *now* his word (23:34) bestows forgiveness. *Not yet* has Jesus entered into his kingdom—of glory—yet Jesus’ word of forgiveness *now* opens the door for this dying evildoer to enter the *not yet* kingdom too when it comes. And it will come that same day! (CC p. 938)

**23:43** TRULY – ἀμὴν σοὶ λέγω—See comments at 4:24 and 21:32. Lk 23:43 is the only place this expression is used to address someone in the singular (σοὶ instead of ὑμῖν). (CC p. 926)

The catechesis of the penitent evildoer was brief, and his initiation into the life of Christ came quickly. The dying “King of the Jews” (23:37–38) who “saved others” (23:35) says, “Truly to you I say, today with me you will be in paradise” (23:43). This is Jesus’ second word from the cross in Luke, and it continues the theme of his first word: Jesus, crucified, is the source of forgiveness for all—even the worst, the least, and the last. With these words, Jesus invites the man to participate in this forgiveness forever. *Jesus’ words serve to incorporate the man into the body of believers in Christ and to invite him*

*to the ongoing feast of heaven.* The penitent catechumen is grafted into Jesus' passion, which Jesus is experiencing at that very moment. Here the Pauline language of *Baptism* is most powerfully illustrated: this sinner is truly united with Jesus in a death like his, and according to Jesus' promise, he shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his when he with him will be in paradise (Rom 6:5). This penitent evildoer is the first to receive the baptism of fire that John promised would come with Jesus (Lk 3:16). That baptism of fire has to do with judgment, and the evildoer admits the justice of his own condemnation to death with Jesus. (CC pp. 938-939)

TODAY – Recalls Eden's garden and God's presence with Adam and Eve. Christ restores to their descendants what they had lost, and more. Whereas the criminal had spoken an indefinite "when," Jesus responds with a definite "today." Bern: "If God justifies, who is he that condemns?... He was content to pass by the cross as by a short bridge from the religion of death unto the land of the living, and from this foul mire into the paradise of joy" (*SLSB*, p 29. (TLSB)

σήμερον—See comments at 2:1–20. This is a significant word throughout Luke's gospel. (I.e., Lk 4:21; 5:26; 12:28; 13:32, 33; 19:5, 9; 22:34, 61) (See A. A. Just Jr., *The Ongoing Feast*, 189–90, on σήμερον in Luke's gospel.) (CC p. 926)

By prefacing his pronouncement with "Truly ... I say," Jesus alerts the hearer that what he is about to say has great significance. The announcement that "today" paradise belongs to the penitent thief sums up Luke's use of σήμερον, "today," emphasizing the present reality of future eschatological blessings. This inheritance of paradise comes through the crucified flesh of Jesus. That is why Jesus uses incarnational, *real presence* language with the penitent evildoer: "*With me* [μετ' ἐμοῶ] you will be in paradise." This is the same language of divine presence first spoken by the angel to Mary. The angel announced to the woman receiving abundant grace, "the Lord is with you" (1:28). The Lord who was with her became incarnate in her womb. That same Lord is now with the penitent evildoer and will remain with him forever in paradise. (CC p. 939)

WITH ME – μετ' ἐμοῶ—In 23:32, the two evildoers were led "with [σύν] him" to be executed. Now, one of them will be "with" (μετά) Jesus in paradise. (CC p. 926)

*paradise.* In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT) the word designated a garden (Ge 2:8–10) or forest (Ne 2:8), but in the NT (used only here and in 2Co 12:4; Rev 2:7) it refers to the place of bliss and rest between death and resurrection (cf. Lk 16:22; 2Co 12:2). (CSB)

παραδείσω—R. Karris, *Luke: Artist and Theologian*, 102, comments on 23:43: The key to an analysis of 23:43 lies in the word "paradise," for in that word the themes of food, New Adam, and righteous ones are contained. J. Jeremias summarizes the food aspect of the image of paradise in this way: "Its (the reopened paradise) most important gifts are the fruits of the tree of life, the water and bread of life, the banquet of [the time of] salvation, and fellowship with God" [TDNT 5:767]. What had been lost by Adam and Eve has now been restored to men and women. The symbols ... all come together via the symbol of paradise. Through his death Jesus gives repentant men and women life, represented by "the fruits of the tree of life." They live by the fruits which come from the

new tree of life, the cross of Jesus. The bread, which Jesus shared so often with others as he nurtured them, now comes from his cross. The messianic banquet, imaged by Jesus in his joyful table fellowship with tax collectors and sinners, is reality through his death. (CC p. 926)

Comment on Matthew 9:11 – I can offer four suggestions. The first is that there were those flagrant sinners (such as Matthew) who, from the moment of Jesus' authoritative call to faith and discipleship, had begun to be transformed. To such people Jesus offered an instantaneous and full acceptance and fellowship. There was no trial period, no probationary activities during which Matthew or another like him would prove himself worthy of full and free acceptance by Jesus. (We cannot know for certain whether the traditions of Pharisaic theology and piety required a probationary period during which a person would have to prove himself before being regarded as a full-fledged participant. Our sources do not reveal that much about the organization of the Pharisees. One possible indication that such a period existed is Josephus' own brief description of how, as a teenager, he set out to examine each of the major sects in Judaism. By his own account, this process took three years, and when it was over, at age nineteen he began to live in accordance with the rules of the Pharisees (*Life*, 9–12). Reicke, *New Testament Era*, 159, suggests that in this era the school of Hillel required a month-long trial period, while the Shammaites expected up to a year. We do know that the Essenes practiced a kind of "novitiate" that a candidate had to go through before being a full member of the community. According to Charlesworth, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Historical Jesus," 28, one of the distinct differences between the Essenes and Jesus was that he required no trial period:

For Jesus "initiation" was not prolonged; rapidly one could leave all behind and "follow him," by repenting and perhaps by being baptized. To join the *haberim* [here referring to members of the Pharisaic community] required at least one month (t.Dem [Tosefta, *Demai*] 2.10–12); but to join the Essene group took at least two years of preparation and examination, after which all personal items were irretrievably given to the community (1QS 6.13–23).

Even as Jesus' miracles of healing were instantaneous and effective, so is his call to those who are "sick" in spirit (9:12) and in need of a spiritual physician. Only those who refuse to see themselves as needing such a physician will have no place at Jesus' table fellowship, for, he says, "I did not come to call righteous people, but sinners" (9:13).

Much has been written about what "paradise" might mean, particularly in light of its OT background. But the key to its significance is the divine presence: "with me," where Jesus dwells. *To be with him is to be in paradise*. Certainly, this idea includes the return to the righteous condition of Adam and Eve before the fall, as in Eden, where they could fully dwell in the presence of God without sin. And for those who confess Jesus as the innocent King such life in paradise begins *now*: (CC p. 939)

Hades continues to embody all the dark and unpleasant features associated with the Hebrew Sheol, while Paradise sparkles with the brilliance of the Garden planted by God (Gen. 2 and 3; 13:10; Ezek. 28:13; 31:8; 36:35; cf. Is. 51:3; Joel 2:3). It contains the tree

of life and enjoys the living water and is the place where the righteous will feast at the banquet of salvation on living bread in fellowship with God. (CC pp. 939-940)

In response to the penitent, giving more than he asked, Jesus solemnly declared, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise." The evildoer did not have to wait any more than the tax collector had to wait to go down to his house justified ([Lk] 18:14) or any more than Zacchaeus had to wait for salvation; it came to his house in his fellowship with Jesus "today" (19:9). By means of the repeated utterance of "today" in his gospel (2:11; 3:22 [variant reading]; 4:21; 13:31–33; 19:5, 9; Acts 13:32–33) Luke does not intend to describe the words so qualified as belonging to past history. Luke is rather addressing his readers and saying to them that they "today" stand confronted with the same affirmations and offers by means of the word of his testimony. (CC p. 940)

**23:26–43** Jesus was crucified that we may be spared the coming judgment, hear His word of absolution, and enter into paradise with Him. He not only saved others, but is also the messianic King who saves us. We all justly deserve God's judgment because of our sinful deeds. Yet, because Jesus sacrificed Himself for us all, we have His word of absolution and the promise of being with Him in paradise. • Grant, dear Jesus, that we may see the day when we will be with You in paradise. Amen. (TLSB)