

EPISODE NO. 287

**Matt. 27:1-2,15-18,20-36; Luke 23:34,36-37; Matt. 27:37-44;
Luke 23:39-43**

Early the Next Morning

1 It was now early in the morning. All the most important priests and the Jewish elders of the people made the decision to put Jesus to death! 2 They tied him up. Then they brought him and handed him over to Governor Pilate (who alone had the authority to execute Jesus).

15 Every year at the Passover Feast, the governor always set one prisoner free, whomever the crowd wanted. 16 This time, they had a well-known prisoner named Jesus Barabbas. 17 Therefore, when the people gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to set free? Jesus Barabbas or the Jesus who is called Messiah?” 18 (Pilate knew that they had handed Jesus over to him because of jealousy.)

20 The most important priests and the Jewish elders persuaded the crowds to ask Pilate for Barabbas. They wanted to destroy Jesus. 21 The governor asked them, “Which of the two men do you want me to set free?”

They answered, “Barabbas!”

22 Pilate asked them, “Then what should I do with Jesus, the one who is called Messiah!?”

They all answered, “Nail him to a cross!”

23 But Pilate asked, “Why? What crime has Jesus done!?”

But they continued yelling even more, “Nail him to a cross!”

24 Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere — only more trouble. He took some water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. He said, “I am NOT responsible for this man’s death — YOU are!”

25 All the Jewish people answered, “We accept that responsibility for us and for our children!”

26 Then he set Barabbas free for them. After beating Jesus with whips, Pilate handed him over to be nailed to a cross.

27 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Roman fortress. The whole group gathered around Jesus. 28 They took off his clothes and dressed him with a long, red robe. 29 They used thorny branches to make a crown. Then they put it on his head. They put a stick in his right hand. They knelt down before him and made fun of him, saying, "Hail, O King of the Jews!" 30 They spit on him. They took the stick and began to hit him on the head. 31 When they finished making fun of him, they took off the long robe and dressed him with his own clothes. Then they led him away to nail him to a cross.

Jesus on the Cross

32 As they were going out of Jerusalem, they found a man from the city of Cyrene. His name was Simon. They forced him to carry Jesus' cross. 33 They came to a place called Golgotha. (This means 'The Place of the Skull.') 34 They gave Jesus some wine. (A drug for pain was mixed with it.) When he had tasted it, he refused to drink it. 35a Then they nailed him to a cross. 36 They sat there watching him.

Luke 23:34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive these people. They do NOT realize what they are doing!"

Matt. 27:35b The soldiers gambled to see who would get Jesus' clothes.

Luke 23:36-37 Even the soldiers made fun of him. They came to Jesus and offered him some sour wine. The soldiers said, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!"

Matt. 27:37 At the top of the cross, they wrote the reason for his punishment in these words:

"THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS."

38 Along with Jesus, two criminals were nailed to crosses. One was on his right. The other was on his left.

39 The people who were passing by shook their heads and said terrible things to Jesus. 40 They said, "You are the one who was going to destroy the temple sanctuary and build it again in three days! Since you are the Son of God, save yourself! Come on down from the cross!"

41 In the same way, the most important priests, the teachers of the law, and the Jewish elders made fun of Jesus. They continued to say, 42 “He saved other people, but he cannot save himself! He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now! Then we will believe in him! 43 He trusts in God; let GOD rescue him now, if He wants him. Jesus did say, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ”

44 Even the criminals who were nailed to the other crosses did the same thing — they kept on insulting Jesus.

Luke 23:39-43 One of the criminals who was hanging there began to say awful things to Jesus: “Aren’t you the Messiah!? Then save yourself! And save us, too!”

But the other criminal interrupted him. He said, “You should fear God! All of us are about to die! 41 You and I are guilty; we SHOULD be killed, because we did wrong. But this man Jesus has done nothing wrong!” 42 Then he said to Jesus, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!”

Then Jesus said to him, “I am telling you the truth: Today you will be with me in Paradise!”