Witnesses to the Death of Jesus

Luke 23:44-56
February 16, 2025

The Big Idea: Jesus' death was necessary for our salvation. When He died on the Cross there were dozens of witnesses who were each faced with deciding for themselves who Jesus is. In life and death Jesus showed Himself to God's Son and the Savior of men and women.

Luke 23:44-56 (ESV)

44 It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, 45 while the sun's light failed. And ***the curtain of the temple was torn in two.*** 46 Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this ***he breathed his last***.

47 Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he *praised God*, saying, "*Certainly this man was innocent*!" 48 And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, *returned home beating their breasts*. 49 And all his acquaintances and the women who *had followed him* from Galilee *stood at a distance watching* these things.

50 Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was *a member of the council*, a *good* and *righteous man*, 51 who *had not consented to their decision* and *action*; and he *was looking for the kingdom of God*. 52 This man *went to Pilate* and *asked for the body of Jesus*. 53 Then he *took it down* and *wrapped it* in a linen shroud and *laid him in a tomb* cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. 54 It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. 55 The women who had come with him from Galilee *followed* and *saw the tomb* and *how his body was laid*. 56 Then they *returned* and *prepared spices and ointments*.

On the Sabbath *they rested* according to the commandment.

Lessons We Learn From Jesus

- ◊ He submitted His will to the Father's plan and trusted Him with His entire being.
- ◊ As Jesus "became sin", taking on the sins of the world …
  - There was darkness – physically and spiritually.
  - The Temple curtain was torn in two – Christ provides our access to the Father.

Lessons We Learn From These Witnesses

- + We don't all move at the same pace in deciding what we believe about Jesus.
- + Honest skeptics need to look carefully at who Jesus is, what others said about Him, and what He did.
- + "Secret disciples" need to step out into the light, boldly confess Jesus as Lord, and let others know where they stand.
- + Give the Lord what you can as you serve and worship Him.

Final Words

- + No matter how religious we are and how hard we try we can never save ourselves.
- + The Law of God is a Gift of Grace to sinful people. As a mirror to our soul, it shows us our true condition before a Holy God.
- + Jesus did not come to serve as our "moral example." Only Christ can forgive our sins, reconcile us to God, and make us "a new creation." (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- + Do you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead and will you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord? Then the Bible says, "you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)

"Before we can begin to see the cross as something done for us, we have to see it as something done by us."

— John R.W. Stott