

CAPITOL STUDIES

MARCH 25, 2026 • WEEK 11



LUKE FOR LEGISLATORS SECOND SESSION

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Theme Verse

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to **seek** and to **save** that which was **lost**.



What Convinced the Centurion?



PASTOR DAVID THOMPSON notes that “As soon as Christ willed His own death, His work to save people immediately began. As soon as Christ died, the magnet of the cross instantly began drawing people to God. Likely, the first convert to be drawn to the cross was a Gentile pagan, ruling Roman soldier. He was a centurion, an authoritative high-ranked Roman military leader. He would have been the one in charge of Christ’s execution. He was the one in charge of the other soldiers. This was not some moral, religious Jewish leader or priest. This was not some legalistic, religious Pharisee or Scribe; this was a worldly, godless, corrupt, Roman heathen sinner.... This heathen soldier came to the cross and acknowledged Jesus Christ was the innocent, righteous Son of God, and he believed on Him. History says his name was Longinus. Tradition says he became a believer that day and lived the rest of his life for Jesus Christ, glorifying God.”¹

Arin Hess

Pastor Arin Hess
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I. WAS IT CHRIST'S COMPOSURE?

Luke 23:32-33

Two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with Him. ³³When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.²

The Bible tells us that Jesus went to the cross to suffer and die as the Lamb of God. “The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). “Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Scripture also relates that He went to the cross as meek as a lamb goes to be slaughtered: “He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth” (Isaiah 53:7).

II. WAS IT CHRIST'S CROSS?

Luke 23:33

When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.

Maybe this soldier had knowledge of all they had put Jesus through before the cross: scourging, beating, spitting, several trials, even the whole band of soldiers (some 400–600) played their games with Him. As a centurion, this man had probably seen many others put to death. However, the Bible would lead us to believe that Jesus may have suffered more than others: “Just as many were astonished at you, My people, so His appearance was marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of men” (Isaiah 52:14).

Luke describes Jesus' treatment this way: “Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him and beating Him, and they blindfolded Him and were asking Him, saying, ‘Prophecy, who is the one who hit you?’ And they were saying many other things against Him, blaspheming” (Luke 22:63-65). John adds that “Pilate then took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and put a purple robe on Him; and they began to come up to Him and say, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ and to give Him slaps in the face” (John 19:1-3).

Maybe it was the sign that hung over His cross: “Now there was also an inscription above Him, ‘THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS’” (Luke 23:38). To be the Jews' King inferred that He was the Messiah. Perhaps the Holy Spirit used this to pierce the heart of the centurion.



III. WAS IT CHRIST'S COMPASSION?

A. He Showed Compassion to the Crowds

There were those who ridiculed and tormented Him, but He did not rebuke or condemn them. Instead, He prayed for them. What grace!

Luke 23:34

But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."

There were those who mourned Him and needed care. One of those was His mother. As her Son, He thought of her needs instead of His own and found someone to care for her: "But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold, your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!' From that hour the disciple took her into his own household" (John 19:25b-27).

B. He Showed Compassion to the Criminal

Luke 23:39-43

One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!"⁴⁰ But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"⁴¹ And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."⁴² And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"⁴³ And [Jesus] said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

Though moments earlier this man had joined the other thief in mocking Jesus, he now asked for Jesus' help. Instead of scorning the man, Jesus reached out with compassion, grace, and love. **He promised the repentant "sinner" salvation.** "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (John 3:14-17). Does the cross move you?

IV. WAS IT CHRIST'S CRIES?

The Gospel writers record for us that on seven occasions Jesus opened His mouth and spoke while He was on the cross. Three of them are recorded by Luke. Even though Luke doesn't record them all, the centurion heard them all!





A. The Cry of Love

Luke 23:34

But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."

B. The Cry of Forgiveness

Luke 23:43

And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

C. The Cry of Abandonment

Matthew 27:46

About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

D. The Cry of Tenderness

John 19:26-27

When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own household.

E. The Cry of Agony

John 19:28

After this, Jesus knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, "I am thirsty."

F. The Cry of Victory

John 19:30

Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

G. The Cry of Completion

Luke 23:46

And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." Having said this, He breathed His last.

Surely as he heard the words of the dying Christ, the centurion's heart was stirred, and he realized that this was more than a man dying here. Perhaps that is why he proclaimed the fact that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.

V. WAS IT CHRIST'S CREATION?

Luke 23:44

It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two.



Matthew also records for us that “...the *earth shook* and the *rocks were split*. The *tombs were opened*, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened...” (Matthew 27:51b-54).

CONCLUSION

Luke 23:47

Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, “Certainly this man was innocent.”

Mark also records this: “When the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, ‘Truly this man was the Son of God!’” (Mark 15:39). “The Greek is written in such a way that the meaning is ‘This, the man, was actually truly and really the righteous One.’ This centurion realized that Jesus Christ was perfectly righteous and had never violated any standard of God.”³

What convinced the centurion? We don’t know for sure. It very likely was a combination of things. “The verb tenses indicate that all of these things were happening about the same time. In other words, having watched Jesus Christ and listened to Jesus Christ and having seen the darkness, this soldier came to realize that Jesus Christ was an innocent Man.... He came to terms with the reality that Jesus died for sinners, and that prompted him to praise God.”⁴ Jesus had died for him.

“The crucifixion death of Jesus Christ was like no other death in all of history. The impact His death has made proves this reality. The death of Jesus Christ gives life. The death of Jesus Christ saves sinners. The death of Jesus Christ makes people as white as snow. No other death has been so impacting.”⁵

Has there been a moment in my life when I was confronted with and convinced of the truth of Who Jesus Christ is? When that moment came, did I place trust in Him? This centurion was saved because he trusted! Have you trusted in Jesus? If not, you can today!

Chaplain Arin Hess

FOOTNOTES

1, 3, 4, 5. David Thompson, “Luke Message #122 Luke 23:44-49,” *Sermon Audio*, 2021, <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermons/514212025101360>.

2. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.



