



THE GOSPEL OF
Luke

SESSION OBJECTIVE: LUKE 22:63-71

To understand more about Jesus' beating and questioning at the hands of the chief priests and scribes.

Just Like Us

Whenever we read the Gospel accounts of beatings, the mockery, the questioning, and ultimately the murder of Jesus Christ, it's easy to vilify these individuals and describe them as "heinous," or "evil," or "demonic." We think of them as if they belong to an altogether separate category from ourselves. The Bible has an interesting way of describing them: "men" (Lk. 22:63). It was "the men" who held Jesus, who mocked Jesus, and who beat Jesus. Men no different than men who live today. As vile as their crimes were and as unthinkable as their actions might be, it is important for Christians to remember that these were people no different than us. They believed what they were doing was right. They believed they were protecting what they loved. It's important to remember this, not to diminish their depravity, but to realize we are *just as* depraved apart from the lovingkindness of God to transform us into the image of Christ.

Irony

Verses 63 through 65 describe the initial treatment Jesus received at the hands of "the men" who were holding him prior to the gathering of the chief priests and scribes to interrogate Him: "Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him." While blindfolded, the men took turns punching Jesus and then asked Him to identify which one of them had punched Him. They were mocking Him as a prophet by trying to prove that He couldn't even figure out who was hitting Him.

There is a bit of irony, however, in this entire exchange. Unknowingly, they are bringing fulfillment to the prophecies of which Jesus has already spoken thus confirming that Jesus is indeed a prophet. Below is a brief overview of what was being fulfilled.

BETRAYAL

Jesus was betrayed by Judas, which is what ultimately led to His arrest and Him being held by the men who were now beating Him. He spoke of this in Luke 22:21-22: “But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!”

DENIAL

Jesus also predicted that Simon Peter would deny Jesus three times before the rooster crows in Luke 22:34, and this was fulfilled just after Jesus’ arrest (Lk. 22:61-62).

A TRANSGRESSOR

During His confrontation with the chief priests and the officers of the temple, Jesus said to them: “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?” (Lk. 22:52). In other words, Jesus was insinuating that they had categorized Jesus as a transgressor. This is also confirmed in Jesus’ fulfillment of Isaiah 53, a messianic prophecy concerning the *Suffering Servant* who would be “numbered among the transgressors” and yet would “bear the sin of many” (Is. 53:12).

STRENGTHENED

Before telling Peter that he would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed, Jesus warned Peter: “Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail” (Lk. 22:31-32a). He then follows that by telling Peter: “And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers” (Lk. 22:32b). It seemed like a strange thing to say at the time, but we know that after the resurrection, when Peter is filled with the indwelling Holy Spirit at Pentecost, he does in fact strengthen his brothers and acts as a leader among the early church as one of the chief apostles.

THRONES

Jesus told His disciples that they would one day “eat and drink at my table in my kingdom” and “sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Lk. 22:30). This happens after the second coming in the end of the age (Rev. 21:14).

This entire transaction beginning with the arrest and culminating eventually in the crucifixion also fulfills what Jesus said concerning the way Jerusalem treats prophets. Jesus said in Luke 11:47-50: “Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. So you are witnesses and you consent to the deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their tombs. Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, *some of whom they will kill and persecute,*’ so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation.” He said likewise in Luke 13:33-35: “Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.’ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *the city that kills the prophets* and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!” While the men mocked Jesus as a false prophet, they were unaware of the things Jesus had predicted, many of which had already come to pass.

Interrogated

Verses 66 through 71 account for the initial interrogation Jesus experienced at the hands of “the assembly”, a council of men from both the chief priests and the scribes (Lk. 22:66). In verse 67, they ask Him: “If you are the Christ, tell us.” There is nothing initially unusual about Jesus’ response to them: “If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I ask you, you will not answer” (Lk. 22:67b-68a). However, His words here mirror the words of Jeremiah to King Zedekiah in Jeremiah 38:14-16. Jeremiah had formerly given Zedekiah the word from Yahweh to surrender to the king of Babylon, and an enraged Zedekiah imprisoned Jeremiah (Jer. 32:1-5). Now, with the stakes even higher, the king met with Jeremiah in a secret location to once again beg for a word from Yahweh, and Jeremiah responded: “If I tell you, will you not surely put me to death? And if I give you counsel, you will not listen to me” (Jer. 38:15). The point that Jesus is making by responding in this way is not that there is insufficient evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, but that even with all of the evidence, they had already made up their mind to not receive God’s revelation, just like Zedekiah had. Though they were asking Him a question, they had no intention of listening to His response.

Jesus responded further in verse 69: “But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” Beyond the obvious allusion to the “Son of Man” in Daniel 7:13, there is another historical aspect to Jesus’ words that carries significance. Garland notes, “A coin minted in AD 55 depicts the recently deified emperor Claudius, who died in AD 54, sitting at the right hand of the deified emperor Augustus atop a chariot drawn by four elephants. The audience should understand that it is not a deified Caesar who sets next to God, but the crucified Jesus.”¹

One last detail should be mentioned. Their accusation against Jesus is that He is “the Son of God” (Lk. 22:70). Jesus even responds to this charge by saying: “You say that I am” (Lk. 22:70). The Greek *ὁμεις λεγετε* is phrased emphatically. You could think of Jesus’ response as meaning: “You believe that I am.” The irony of this cannot be overstated. Their conviction to bring this charge against Jesus to Pilate is an attempt to have Him condemned, and yet it’s the very conviction necessary for salvation. Their “belief” that He is the Son of God is not a confession, but an accusation. If they had only softened their hearts, they might have actually believed.

What About Now?

The main takeaway is that if Jesus has already fully fulfilled much of what He said, there is good reason to believe He will fulfill the rest of it at the end of His second coming. Jesus’ promises are trustworthy. Beyond that, it’s important to connect with the reality that right belief with wrong motive does not constitute faith. Our minds *and our hearts* must be yielded to Jesus, otherwise we are no different than the men who condemned our Lord to die.

Study Questions

Day One

1. Read Luke 22:63. Who was holding Jesus in custody? What two things were they doing to Him?

¹ David E. Garland, *Luke*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 901.

2. Read Luke 22:64. What else did they do to Him? What were they asking Him?

Day Two

1. Read Luke 22:65. What else did the men do to Jesus?

2. Read Luke 22:66. At what point did the assembly gather? Who was included in the assembly?

Day Three

1. Read Luke 22:67-68. What did they ask Jesus first, and how did Jesus respond? What other biblical response does Jesus' response sound like? (Hint: See above notes)

2. Read Luke 22:69. What OT allusion does Jesus make in this verse? Also, to what historical referent is Jesus likely alluding? (Hint: See above footnote)

Day Four

1. Read Luke 22:70. What did they ask Him in this verse, and how did He respond? What is the irony of Jesus' words to them?

2. Read Luke 22:71. Was this interrogation satisfactory in their opinion?

Week 82 Discussion: Belief

The men "say that" Jesus is the Son of God emphatically, indicating a kind of belief, but clearly not a belief that leads unto salvation. Talk as a group about the importance of believing not only with your head, but also with your heart.

1. Icebreaker: What does it mean to "believe" something?
2. Can you think of an example in your own life wherein you've believed something with your head, but not your heart?
3. What would believing with your heart and not your head look like?
4. Why does salvation require belief with both your heart and mind? (Matt. 22:37)

5. Are there parts of the Bible that you struggle to believe? If so, which parts?
6. How can the church do a better job of helping people believe with their hearts *and* their minds?

Takeaways:

1. Jesus is beaten, mocked, and spit upon by men holding him in custody.
2. Jesus is interrogated by the chief priests and scribes.