

Notes to Accompany Podcasts 22-27

Jesus Suffers, Dies, is Resurrected and Appears

Engaging Lk 22.1-24.35

Luke now brings us to the climax of the gospel. Everything has been leading us to these final chapters.

As in previous sections of the gospel, Luke borrows heavily from Mark's 'passion narrative' but edits it radically. Luke moves from portraying Jesus as a lonely abandoned figure (Mark) to one who is accompanied by his disciples, knows the presence of God and dies prayerfully commending his spirit into God's hands. The final chapter (Lk 24), in which Jesus is resurrected, changes Mark's enigmatic ending (Mk 16.8) into one of joy and hope. The evangelist extends the ending into scenes where the Risen Jesus meets his disciples, allays their fears with a meal (Lk 24.36-43)—Luke's favourite theme throughout the gospel—and prepares them to be his witnesses in Jerusalem and beyond (Lk 24.44-49). Jesus' final words anticipates Luke's second volume, the *Acts of the Apostles* and Pentecost, as he promises to send 'the promise of the Father' upon them, and they are to stay in Jerusalem until they are 'clothed with power from on high' (Lk 24.49).

In the gospel's final scene (Lk 24.50-53), Jesus ascends to God and his disciples return to Jerusalem, and the temple, with joy praising God. This is the gospel's final optimistic and encouraging note.



Pilgrims enter the forecourt to the original side-entrance (on the left, where an original entrance, now blocked off, can be seen) of Constantine's Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, Christianity's holiest church. This 4th century CE church was built over the traditional site of Jesus' death and resurrection. The pilgrims carry a cross that they have borne in procession along the *Via Dolorosa*—a route proposed in Medieval times of Jesus' final journey to his crucifixion. They place the cross against a Crusader-built stepped-entrance to the chapel located over the site of Golgotha.

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The Outline of Lk 22.1-24.35.



The Taking of Christ, Caravaggio, ca 1602.

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Luke's story of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection unfolds in *four* acts:

Act 1—Lk 22.1-53: Luke's introduction to Jesus' Passion.

Act 2—Lk 22.54-23.25: The trials of Peter, first, then Jesus, religious and political.

Act 3—Lk 23.26-56: Jesus' journey to execution, his death and burial.

Act 4—Lk 24.1-53: Easter Day. Jesus is resurrected, appears to and commissions his disciples. The gospel ends on notes of joy and praise with Jesus' ascension to God.

Our approach to this final section of Luke's gospel will follow these four acts.

Act 1—Lk 22.1-53

Luke's Introduction to Jesus' Passion

Luke prepares the auditor for what is about to happen in four parts. This memory shapes the rest of the narrative.

- a) 22.1-6: The plot against Jesus unfolds. This is the work of 'Satan'.
- b) 22.7-13: The preparation for Jesus' final meal
- c) 22.14-38: Jesus shares a final meal with his disciples, but notes of betrayal, disagreement and failure moderate its celebration.
- d) 22.39-53: In Gethsemane: Jesus prays to God, models prayer in the midst of suffering, is betrayed and arrested.



The 1924 Church of all Nations on the Mount of Olives, designed by Antonio Barluzzi, built over an earlier Byzantine church, near the traditional site of Jesus' agony in Gethsemane.

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Our study will focus on two scenes:

1. Jesus' final meal and the changes which Luke makes to Mark (Lk 22.15-38);
2. Luke's scene of Jesus in Gethsemane and the evangelist's redaction of Mark (Lk 22.39-46).

Act 2—Lk 22.54-23.25

The Trials of Peter and Jesus

Two trials, religious and political, occupy this Act. Peter and Jesus are subject to both. Peter fails; Jesus retains his witness. Pilate thrice declares Jesus innocent.



Jesus before Pilate. Detail from 'Scenes of Christ's Passion', Brabant (c. 1470-1490), Leuven Art Museum.

Photo: Michael Trainor, used with permission.

1. The Religious Trials

- a) 22.54-62: First Interrogation. Failure of Peter, the prime disciple.
- b) 22.63-71: First Interrogation of Jesus (before Religious Authorities)

2. The Politico-Imperial Trials

- c) 23.1-5: Second Interrogation of Jesus (before Pilate)

- d) 23.6-12: Third Interrogation of Jesus (before Herod), and is regally clothed
- e) 23.13-25: Fourth Interrogation of Jesus (before Pilate). Pilate declares Jesus innocent and sentences him to death!
- Our study will focus on the way Luke reshapes Mark's equivalent scenes, adding a unique scene with Herod unsuccessfully interrogating Jesus

Act 3—Lk 23.26-56

Jesus' Crucifixion, Death and Burial.

We now arrive at the climax of Luke's gospel. Jesus dies as faithful martyr, prayerfully witnessing compassion and God's fidelity.

The Act unfolds in the following scenes:

- a) 23.26-32: Jesus journeys to the place of Crucifixion
- b) 23.33-43: Jesus is nailed and abused
- c) 23.44-49: Jesus dies in an act of prayer handing his spirit into God's hands
- d) 23.50-56: Jesus is laid in a rock hewn tomb, wrapped in a linen cloth—an echo of his birth scene



Jesus' Crucifixion. Detail from 'Scenes of Christ's Passion', Brabant (c. 1470-1490), Leuven Art Museum. *Photo: Michael Trainor, used with permission.*

The Death of Jesus

<i>Mark 15.33-38</i>	<i>Luke 23.44-47</i>
<p>Mark 15:33 When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.</p> <p>34 At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" 35 When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." 36 And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." 37 Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.</p> <p>38 And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. 39 Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"</p>	<p>Luke 23:44 It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, 45 while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two.</p> <p>46 Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."</p> <p>Having said this, he breathed his last.</p> <p>47 When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent." 48 And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts.</p>

Act IV—Lk 24.1-53

Jesus Resurrection and Appearances—The Day of Easter.

Jesus is resurrected, appears, challenges, comforts and promises ‘power from on high’ to his disciples.

Everything is in readiness for Pentecost and the story in *Acts* of the vibrant Jesus movement into the Greco-Roman world. The final chapter unfolds in four scenes:

- a) 24.1-12: Jesus is resurrected; the women witness to the eleven and ‘to all the others’; Peter runs to check out the tomb
- b) 24.13-35: Jesus appears to two disciples *en route* to Emmaus

c) 24.36-49: Jesus appears to the disciples, eats and commissions them

d) 24.50-53: Jesus ascends to God. The gospel concludes on a note of joy and praise.



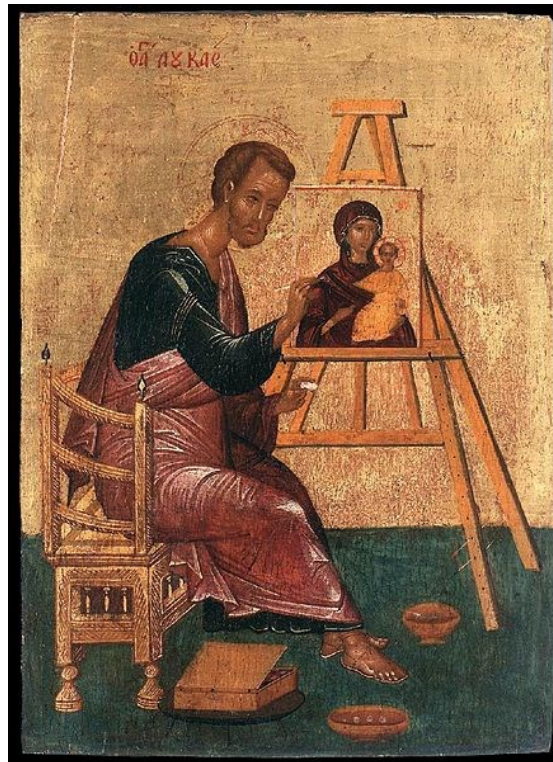
Jesus' Resurrection Appearances. Detail from 'Scenes of Christ's Passion', Brabant (c. 1470-1490), Leuven Art Museum. Brabant combines resurrection scenes from three gospels: appearing to Peter (?) from Luke's gospel, Mary Magdalene (John's gospel), and passing past the two guards (Matthew's gospel). *Photo: Michael Trainor, used with permission.*

Session Summary

From our engagement with Lk 22-24, we see how Luke:

- Significantly alters Mark's passion narrative, offering a different christological perspective: Unlike Mark's isolated, lonely and abandoned figure, Jesus dies as prophet, martyr and mystic in Luke's gospel;
- Changes the trial scenes in terms of order and emphasis. Peter's trial is first to allow the auditor's focus to fall on Jesus. In each trial theological and political themes emerge pertinent for Luke's audience;
- Adds a unique scene of Herod interrogating Jesus. It concludes with Herod dressing Jesus in a luminescent garment to send him back to Pilate. This garment is never removed from Jesus, even on the cross, and has theological-christological significance;

- Presents Jesus as a calm figure, reminiscent of the classical Greek philosopher, who prayerfully undergoes his suffering and death in complete communion with God.



Luke Paints the Icon of the Mother of God Hodegetria.
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