

Must God Prove Himself To Us  
Luke 23:14-26

As we who use the internet well know, Social Media in all its many forms, especially YouTube and Podcasts have become a favorite meeting place for the inquiring minds of our day. Both young and old viewers alike are quite adept at finding and following their favored influencers, some of those influencers with good and helpful influence, but others with divisive and hate-filled guidance.

And while I am not as frequent a viewer of the internet media as some folks, I do use it often. And as of these recent few weeks, I have been discovering and listening to some of the programming of the Turning Point USA spokesman, Charlie Kirk.

I had heard his podcasts on a few occasions at earlier times, but since his recent tragic death, I have been listening more. And may I confess that I don't think that I appreciated him then as much as I do now.

Yes, I do have conservative political views, but politics is not one of my strong suits. Yes, as it should, politics does have its place, but politics can never save a person's soul.

But the "Gospel" can. And it is that part of Charlie Kirk's programming that I have come to especially appreciate, the "Gospel" and his manner of presenting it. As I listened to him present the "Gospel", I was able to discern a distinct "Spiritual Gift" from the Lord that was pleasing to my soul.

And that was especially so as he was confronted by people who did not want to believe that the Lord Jesus was who He said He was, who these scriptures proclaim Him to be, the Savior of our souls.

But thanks be to God, Charlie Kirk's response to those people seemed most always to be a simple and convincing one, presenting the gospel directly from the scriptures and often leaving his adversaries speechless.

And that is the challenge for each of us, and the very same challenge that Jesus faced daily as He went about preaching and teaching the people that He encountered. His message was a simple one, that each person was a sinner

who was in need of a Savior. And here, as we'll study in the scripture passage for today, during these very last days of His life, Jesus was declaring Himself to be that Savior, the "Long expected Messiah" from God.

But though the religious leaders did not want to believe Jesus, they knew that there was something odd, something very special about Him. And though they didn't want to hear or accept His answer, they kept asking the question, "who are you"? "Are you the Christ?" Tell us!

In a passage in Luke chapter 22 that we studied recently we read,

<sup>66</sup> At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. <sup>67</sup> "If you are the Christ," they said, "tell us."

Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, <sup>68</sup> and if I asked you, you would not answer. <sup>69</sup> But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God."

<sup>70</sup> They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?"

He replied, "You are right in saying I am."

<sup>71</sup> Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips." (Luke 22:66-71)

Folks, this is the very same question that you and I will have to eventually answer for ourselves. Who is this Man Jesus? Is He God or is He only a man?

Let's pause and read these words of the passage we'll study today here given in Luke chapter 23 beginning in verse 1,

<sup>1</sup> Then the whole assembly (these are the Scribes and the Pharisees and Chief Priests who had arrested Jesus) rose and led him off to Pilate. <sup>2</sup> And they began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king." <sup>3</sup> So Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied.

<sup>4</sup> Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man." <sup>5</sup> But they insisted, "He stirs up the people all

over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here." <sup>6</sup> On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. <sup>7</sup> When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

<sup>8</sup> When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform some miracle. <sup>9</sup> He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. (Luke 23:1-9)

A question immediately occurs to me as I read these scriptures given here today. The question is, “must God always have to prove Himself to Men?” And even more pointedly, “must God have to prove Himself to you and to me, personally?”

All throughout the time that Jesus ministered to the people of His day, He was continually confronted by the established religious authorities with questions and demands such as these, that He tell them clearly who He was.

And as I mentioned a moment ago, we can still hear that same questioning continuing on, even now, during our day, and even all the more. Questions that are often not necessarily full and outright denials, but still questions all the same!

And also, just as it was in Jesus' day, those questions seem often to come not only from ordinary people on the street, the questions also come through those who should know better, from those who are in leadership within our churches.

And they do it in such subtle ways and with such subtle wording that the average listener is unaware that it's taking place, preachers and teachers and other leaders cleverly questioning the validity of basic scriptural truths.

The acceptable trend within our modern culture is to freely examine “old truths” with a critical eye towards change, believing that all matters should be fluid and changeable to meet the needs of a modern and changeable culture.

And that kind of “rethinking” can be clearly seen in the manner that men and women “redefine” God's views and His intents regarding such basics as “love” and “mercy” and “morality”.

And again, this rethinking of established biblical truths is not just coming out from the secular world. It is coming out from the pulpits and others within church leadership.

“Truth” is being cleverly “reframed” to fit within the contemporary expressions of our secular society, words such as “tolerance” and “acceptance” of all people and their lifestyles. Cleverly and purposefully avoiding mentioning that God is a righteous and holy and just God who cannot tolerate sin, even a little bit and even for a moment.

May I pause here briefly and revisit God’s response to that kind of behavior when it takes place within the church and within church leadership! These words given to us in 1 Peter 4:17. Listen!

<sup>17</sup> For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? (1 Peter 4:17)

Such words might at first seem strange to us, especially since we have been taught often from other scriptures that we are not to judge other people, especially fellow believers.

Unfortunately, we do often misunderstand and improperly teach those principles.

And no, we must never judge each other in a careless and miscellaneous way. But yes, we must be diligent to discern the nature and the behaviors of other people, and especially those within the church. And to recognize when otherwise good people are behaving in ways that are not in keeping with the truths of God.

Folks, these scriptures are ever and always valid and “infallible” and they are ever and always “unchangeable”, never to be pliable so as to meet the individual desires of our sinful hearts. Our ordinary human thinking is subject to error, sometimes serious error!

And we really need to always be diligent to seek the discernment of the Holy Spirit as we listen to and learn from one another within the church, and especially from our church leaders.

Giving these Scribes and Pharisees the benefit of the doubt, perhaps they felt that they were properly guarding the basic truths of scripture by rejecting Jesus and His new modern “re-thinking” of their truths. Because yes, Jesus really was

reframing some of their most basic of beliefs, not completely changing truth, but reframing it into its right and righteous understanding.

Listen carefully! In Matthew chapter 5, Jesus said,

<sup>21</sup> "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' <sup>22</sup> But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.  
(Matthew 5:21-22)

Also in Matthew chapter 5 He said,

<sup>27</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup> But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28)

Again, Jesus was not changing the truth, but was simply putting it into its proper righteous context.

So then, where did these perhaps otherwise good religious leaders go astray? Their error began when they first assumed themselves to be right and all others to be wrong, especially about this man Jesus.

Again, as I said a moment ago, had they have been diligent to search the scriptures and to believe those truths, they would have seen Jesus written all through them. But they did not!

While they should have been diligent to always be proving themselves to God, they instead assumed themselves to be right and then demanded that this Jesus, who was God Almighty in the flesh, prove Himself to them.

Listen to all these accounts given to us here in the scriptures. And sadly, even beginning within Jesus' own circle of disciples, and then on out into the established Jewish leadership, each of them, in one way or another demanding of Jesus, "Tell us who You are!" "Show us who You are!" "Prove to us who You are!"

Again, first, there was Judas, one of the disciples, a man who had walked with Jesus for over three years. Surely, Judas helped hand out the bread and the fishes as Jesus fed the 5000. And surely, he witnessed Jesus casting out demons. But yet, and though we don't find where Judas questioned Jesus directly about

who He was, we see by his betrayal that he still questioned that Jesus was the Christ.

Then next, we see the temple guards who were holding Jesus captive, mocking Him and beating Him and demanding that He prove Himself to them. Listen! These words given in Luke chapter 22,

<sup>63</sup> Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. <sup>64</sup> They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" <sup>65</sup> And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him. (Luke 22:63-65)

Then next, we have the chief priest and other religious leaders, the ones most accountable to have searched the scriptures to know who Jesus really was, instead, standing in His face questioning Him and demanding that He prove to them who He was . . . these words from Luke 22:66-70.

<sup>66</sup> When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said, <sup>67</sup> "If you are the Christ, tell us." But he said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, <sup>68</sup> and if I ask you, you will not answer. <sup>69</sup> But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God." <sup>70</sup> So they all said, "Are you the Son of God, then?" (Luke 22:66-70)

Also, in Matthew chapter 26,

<sup>63</sup> . . . The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." (Matthew 26:63)

Then next, we find Pilate asking Jesus who He was. Luke chapter 23,

<sup>3</sup> Then Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" (Luke 23:3)

And then also later as Jesus stood before Herod, we read in Luke chapter 23,

<sup>8</sup> Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. <sup>9</sup> Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. (Luke 23:8-9)

And after being brought back to Pilate again, the Roman soldiers also made more demands on Jesus. Listen! John chapter 19,

<sup>1</sup> Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. <sup>2</sup> And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. <sup>3</sup> They came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. (John 19:1-3)

And then once again, Pilate who seemed genuinely to not want to crucify Jesus asked Him further,

<sup>9</sup> . . . "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. (John 19:9)

Even Pilate's wife had questions about who Jesus might be.

Again, some of these people used direct questions while others made their demands in other ways, mocking and abusing. But all of them were demanding the same answer, "Tell us who you are"? Are You really the Christ"? "Are You really God? If You are God, prove yourself to us!

How sad! How so very sad!

But may I say again that even in our own day, though we don't do it in exactly the same manner as these men did, we still are continually asking the same questions and making the same demands of God! We are constantly saying back to Him, "Prove Yourself to us."

But have you noticed . . . we never seem to hear a response back from God. Much in the same way that Jesus refused to respond to the demands of men, so also, even now, God refuses to answer us with our demands!

Some might hear my words today and say, but I don't really question God, and I don't demand that He prove Himself to me! But oh, my dear friends, we really do. We really do! Each one of us does. It's part of the sinful nature that was born into us.

Ever since that day in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve first questioned the authority of God, all men and women have been doing the exact same thing.

Yes, we might still acknowledge God as being God. But just as with Adam and Eve, we don't really want Him to have any say over who we are and what we do, in essence denying Him as being "Lord" over us.

And with every defiant behavior that takes place within us, the effect is that we are standing up in the face of God and saying to Him, "Watch me! I am in complete control of my own life! And I will keep doing what I am doing until You in some way stop me and prove to me that You are my God."

But folks, God does not usually do that! At least, not yet!

He instead is patient and gracious, saying in essence that He has already given us all the proof we will need for us to know exactly who He is. He tells us to look again, first at all the many scriptures. And if that is not enough, to simply look around us at His magnificent creation, the universe, the sun, the stars, the moon, the earth, the mountains and trees and all living creatures. All of His creation cries out loudly that He is God. Listen! Psalm 19,

<sup>1</sup> The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

<sup>2</sup> Day after day they pour forth speech;  
night after night they display knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> There is no speech or language  
where their voice is not heard.

<sup>4</sup> Their voice goes out into all the earth,  
their words to the ends of the world. (Psalm 19:1-4)

Oh dear friends, can you not hear these words clearly and plainly. God is calling out continually, every moment of every day, declaring Himself. And all you have to do is open your eyes and you will see Him in His wonderful creation? And you will hear His voice in the wind?

Those of us who have His Holy Spirit living in us know Him and can see Him and hear Him. Can you?

Oh dear friends, through the mysterious "unction" of God's Spirit, He says to each one of us, "though I will not prove Myself to you when you demand it, if while examining your heart I see that you earnestly desire to know Me, then I will gladly, gladly reveal myself to you and I will make you to know who I Am, that I AM the Great I AM."



And that, my dear friends, is when, with His “still small voice” God will graciously arouse our senses and we will immediately begin to know who He is . . . that He is God!

My question for all who are listening to my words today is, “Do you truly believe that God is God? And do you truly believe that Jesus is who this Word says that He is?” “Or, do you live with constant questions within your heart, doubting and often denying Him and denying who He is?” “Do you, either by direct questioning or by some other behavior demand that God prove Himself to you?”

May I suggest that because you are listening to the words of this study today, you are quietly declaring that you do not want to continue to doubt in the way that you do, that you really do earnestly want to believe that God truly is God, that Jesus is who He says He is.

And so the question should be, how do we get from where we are to where we need to be?

May I suggest that we begin in the way that God suggests that we begin . . . that we begin by first looking around us at the “natural creation” and asking ourselves how it really got here.

Is it possible, as our scientists suggest, that all of these magnificent natural things somehow “created themselves”. Is that even a remotely sensible consideration?

Then next, let me suggest that you turn to these scriptures and listen to one of the very special promises of God of how He can and will change your whole manner of thinking.

In the Book of Ezekiel chapter 36, God tells us that when we surrender up all of our denials and demands to Him that He will very graciously remove all of our questions and doubts? There in verse 26 God tells us,

<sup>26</sup> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*. (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

It is then at this point that God wants us to respond to His gifts of a new heart and a new spirit by simply "submitting", "surrendering" our new heart and our new spirit to Him. It is then that we will suddenly begin to believe and to know that God is real and that He truly is who He says He is.

May we close with some of my favorite words in these gospels! These words from Matthew chapter 11 where Jesus said,

<sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

<sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

Pray with me.