

Just as it is hard to forget the homogenised nativity in our recall of the Christmas story, the Passion has elements from all the Gospels that have been harmonised into the typical movie script version. Luke's Passion is really rather different to the others with its theologically consistent omissions and additions.

Apart from the 'Titulus, which must have been unavoidable, Luke downplays talk of the "King of the Jews". There is no purple cloak nor crown of thorns, merely mocking gorgeous apparel from Herod (23:11). Pilate does ask him if he is King of the Jews (23:3), but in Luke this only occurs after an accusation on tribute to Caesar that we know to be false (20:25). (Brendan Byrne, *The Hospitality of God*, 2000: 179) It is his religious teaching that is concerning the Chief Priests and multitudes (23:5) not anything that could be misinterpreted as a temporal claim.

In Mark (15:29) the people at the Cross mock his claim that he would destroy the Temple. Luke removes any risk of this being taken literally by removing it, and keeps this consistent by his minimalist approach to the Temple affray. Far from being a threat to the city, Jesus in Luke laments the destruction of Jerusalem (19:41-44; 23:28-32).

Jerusalem and the Jews do not forsake Jesus completely either. (Byrne, 380) Only in Luke do the people stand by watching rather than scoff (23:35) and then beat their breasts in remorse (23:48). Luke even has a remorseful thief dying with Jesus, a last opportunity for Jesus to offer hospitality.

God does not forsake Jesus in Luke either. Rather than Jesus feeling forsaken (Mark 15:34), Luke's Jesus submits himself to his Father (23:46). It is this discipleship that moves the Centurion to respond (23:47), rather than excessive signs and wonders (Matt 27:54).

The Centurion's response is not that Jesus was Son of God, rather, that he was innocent. Here the Roman authority figure echoes Pilate's repeated claims of Jesus's innocence (23:4,15,20) (Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 1991: 373) in what is essentially a dispute over religious claims belonging to the Sanhedrin (22:66-71) not Rome. What Pilate does not do in Luke is precipitate the blood libel on the Jews (Matt 27:24-5).

Luke's treatment of the Passion avoids any potential misunderstanding that Jesus was just another Jewish political agitator asking for Roman retribution. He also continues his approach of valuing the broken Jewish heritage by showing that the people who had welcomed him into the city repented of what their leaders had done and are absolved by Jesus who tells them to "weep for themselves" (23:28)