

Rejecting the Chosen One

From the series, *Encountering Jesus: The Gospel of Luke*

Luke 22 & 23

By Dr. David H. McKinley

You have probably either watched or are certainly aware of the absolute amazing phenomenon of the American Christian television series, *The Chosen*. It has received tremendous acclaim and popularity. It is a historical drama that has been created, directed, and co-written by filmmaker Dallas Jenkins—the first multi-season series ever produced on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

The Chosen has experienced a tremendous reception and a very broad audience. In fact, one of the most fascinating features is the fact that so much of its production and so much of its ability to be available is because it has been crowdfunded. Believe it or not, more than 40 million dollars had been given through 2023, the most of any media project ever that was simply invested in and launched. The viewers wanted to be a part of it and help others see and share in it. It has now been launched through an app in 180 different countries of the world and has at present more than 770-million-episode views as a result of its impact. It is a tremendous thing and one in which I am thankful.

The Chosen is not simply a creative work of human ingenuity (apart from the development of some creativity in the individual characterization). The reality is, this story is simply built around the testimony of Scripture in the gospels as it relates to the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.

But one of the more interesting features you may want to know is that earlier this summer, one of Warren's own, Maggie Dillard (who is a national and international journalist), interviewed Dallas Jenkins and did a feature story in *Woman's World Magazine*, including a very interesting back story of what has happened.

Maggie said that in 2017, Dallas Jenkins faced a career-defining setback. He directed a mainstream media film and had a strong budget. But despite this, the film flopped at the box office. Jenkins described the experience as the low point in his life, both personally and professionally. He said he felt his Hollywood career was over, and he soon found himself praying and reevaluating what His purpose was as a producer, writer, and creator. Ultimately, he said he believed God was teaching him a lesson about faith, surrender, and redefining success—not by box office numbers, but by life impact. Maggie concluded the article with this:

"[Dallas Jenkins'] story of redemption and hard work serves as a reminder that the biggest breakthroughs often come after the deepest disappointments." —Maggie Dillard

By the way, Maggie Dillard is the daughter of Leslie and Dave Dillard, one of our pastors on staff.

That's such a true statement: "The biggest breakthroughs often come after the deepest disappointments." That statement is going to be much of our focal point today as we go back and look at the experiences of the disciples and the unfolding events happening in the life of Christ.

Luke's gospel gives us a sense of the devastation and disappointment faced by the disciples as the people of Jerusalem turned on Jesus, ultimately escalating the events surrounding the crucifixion of Christ.

Today in Dr. Luke's gospel (and he was a physician), we come to his description of what happened in that apex moment in the life and ministry of Jesus.

"And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left" (Luke 23:33).

It's interesting to me, Luke the physician did not go into the physical detail of what happened at the crucifixion. He does give us—on both sides of this statement—the events that unfolded with the soldiers, the rejection, and the mocking. But here in Luke 23:33, Luke simply stated the fact that they crucified Jesus instead of going into the gore in detail. But Luke did add this information in verse 35:

"And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!' The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' There was also an inscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews'" (Luke 23:35-38).

Here we have a variety of different titles and descriptions of Jesus, all being used against Him, all being used to mock Him and to ultimately ridicule Him. He's called the *Christ*. He's called the *King of the Jews*. But very importantly here, He is referred to as the *Chosen One*.

I want to spend time this morning walking through some very significant portions of Scripture to help us center our attention upon what it means to say that Jesus is the Chosen One. Although this title was used as an accusation, I want to use it today as the greatest affirmation of who Christ is and what we believe because of what He came to do.

From the very beginning, Luke tells us the purpose of his writing was that we might believe, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that Jesus is the Christ that He is the One, the Chosen One. So I want to go back and walk you through several different texts and Scripture about Jesus as the Chosen One.

1. The Chosen One is Revealed

In Genesis 12, the Bible tells us that after the fall of man and the devastation, destruction, and death that came because of sin, there's a glimmer of light and hope on the horizon. It's all centered around a man by the name of Abraham.

"Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed'" (Genesis 12:1-3).

Who are the descendants of Abraham? The Jews—Israel, the people of Israel, the ones to whom He promised the land, the Jewish people. They were to be a part of God's plan, of God's covenant, of redeeming fallen humanity and ultimately, seeing the power of God to bring deliverance out of sin, darkness, and death.

When God looked at Abraham and said, *"I have chosen you and I have chosen your people,"* God was not, as though it were, affirming favoritism. God was not saying, *"You and your descendants are My favorites."* Instead, God was saying that He had chosen them to be a part of His plan. God's plan was not to exalt Abraham's descendants above all others, but through Abraham's descendants, they were to become the conduit of blessing to everyone in the world. The Chosen One would come through the descendants of Abraham! This was all about God unfolding His providence and purpose in sending the Chosen One.

All the Old Testament speaks to us about the unfolding of what happened with the people of Israel—all the conflicts, crises, failures—and the way in which no one could ultimately live up to Moses and the law. It was always about one thing—the Chosen One. That's not just an opinion your pastor is giving to you; that's what the Bible tells us about the descendants of Abraham.

Let's see how Paul, a Jewish scribe, rabbi, Pharisee, and teacher of the law, came to know Jesus and how Paul described what this was all about.

"Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, 'And to offsprings,' referring to many, but referring to one, 'And to your offspring,' who is Christ" (Galatians 3:16).

Who is the offspring? Who is the Chosen One? Jesus Christ.

"Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe" (Galatians 3:21-22).

Who are "those who believe"? Those who believe on the Chosen One, on the name of Jesus. Those who receive the promise of God to Abraham to be a part of His purpose and His plan of redemption. The Chosen One is revealed, and all the Bible is nothing more and nothing less than the unfolding story of Jesus.

You may have heard it said, "History is nothing more than His story." God's plan and intent was that the Chosen One would come, and that blessing would come through the chosen one, Abraham.

2. The Chosen One was Rejected

Based on what we read a moment ago, even while Jesus was hanging on the cross (nailed and affixed with blood flowing from his hands and his feet), He was being ridiculed as the Chosen One.

In the passage we studied together last week in Luke 20, Jesus Himself related to us that rejection would occur. We studied together about the conflict with the Sanhedrin, scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus told a story, a parable, about a vineyard owner, a man who bought a tract of land, planted vineyards, and hired workers to go into the vineyard to do the work. At the time of harvest, the owner of the vineyard sent a servant to go and collect something from the harvest. But when the servant came, the workers took him, beat him, and threw him out. And so, the owner of the vineyard repeated this a second time and a third time until finally, the owner of the vineyard said, *"I know what I'll do. I'll send my son, the one who has authority, the one who is my heir. I will send him to the vineyard."*

When Jesus told the story, He said, *"When the son came to the vineyard, he was not only rejected and beaten, but he was killed. What will the owner of the vineyard do based upon the fact that they have killed his son?"* Of course, Jesus told this parable, this story, foretelling the suffering and the crucifixion that would come in His own life among the very ones entrusted with the message and the life-giving quality of the vineyard.

As we look through Luke 22 and 23 following Jesus' triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, as we know it, things escalated and collapsed very quickly. Let me just give you a quick overview of Luke 22 and 23 to the cross:

Luke 22 and 23: "Countdown to the Cross"

Betrayal of Judas,	Luke 22:3-6; 23:47-53
Transferral of the Passover	Luke 22:7-23
Denial of Peter	Luke 22:31-34; 23:54-62
Ridicule of the Captors	Luke 22:63-65
Dismissal of Pilate	Luke 23:1-17
Appeal of the Crowd	Luke 23:18-25
Final Breath of the Chosen One	Luke 23:33-35, 46

There was the betrayal of Judas. Then there was the transferral of the Passover (where Jesus met in the upper room with His disciples and talked to them about Passover). Then there was the denial of Peter. Then there was the ridicule of the captors. Then there was the dismissal of Pilate with Pilate saying, *"I can find nothing wrong with this man."* Then there was the appeal of the crowd, saying, *"Release Barabbas. Crucify Jesus! Crucify Him,"* until finally we come to the final death and breath of the Chosen One.

Here in Luke 23:33 and following, Jesus encountered a world of arrogant rebels, just like the wicked tenants who rejected the chosen one. It's fascinating that 700 years before this event occurred in time and history with the Jews and Romans, the word of God prophesied and foretold the rejection of the Chosen One. The prophet, Isaiah, gives us this testimony:

"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:3-6).

The Chosen One was rejected. Talk about a flash forward moment! Talk about beginning with the end in mind! 700 years before Jesus came, we already had the end of the story that His earthly ministry would end in tragedy.

3. The Chosen One Came to Make Us Righteous

No human being can correct the default that is deep within—the stain and shame of sin (the motivational, ambition drive within us to live for ourselves; the willingness to injure anyone or anything that stands in our way; the desire to live a life of indulgence without responsibility; the desire to maybe even try to be a better person, but to realize we can't do it).

The only One who can is the One who makes us righteous, and He is the Chosen One.

It was still Isaiah—the prophet in the same passage we just read—that went on to describe this:

"Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:10-12).

Throughout Scripture, there is the red line of redemption, depicting and declaring the fact that God is going to send One—the only One—who will ultimately be able to take the unrighteousness of humanity and to make us righteous through the offering of Himself as a sin offering, a sin bearer, for every one of us.

Let's look at this in the New Testament:

"What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.' ... For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith... That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations'—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist... That is why his faith was 'counted to him as righteousness.' But the words 'it was counted to him' were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also" (Romans 4:1-3, 13, 16-17, 22-24a).

What does verse 24 say? "But for ours also" (Romans 4:24a).

This wasn't just something about Abraham or the history of Israel. This was for our sake. It will be counted to us who believe in Him who raised from the dead, Jesus, our Lord—who was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised up for our justification.

The Apostle Paul summarized this in 2 Corinthians:

"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

This is the gospel! This is the message of Christianity! This is the core issue! God does not ask us for behavioral change; He gives us complete spiritual transformation where dead people come to life when they believe on the name of Jesus and receive what He did for them on the cross. That's the whole message of the gospel! That's the whole story of the Bible! And that must become a personalized story—a testimony for you and me!

It's not enough just to know facts about Jesus. It's not enough to believe that He was a good teacher. It's not enough to try to follow Jesus. Every one of us must forsake ourselves and give ourselves wholly to the One who alone qualified as the Chosen One of God!

"We cannot see the cross as something that is done for us until we see the cross as something done by us." —John Stott

It's not the Jews. It's not the Romans. It wasn't Pilate or Herod or Judas. No. It is my sin and it is your sin that nailed Jesus to the cross because of His love and because the Father sent Him as the Chosen One—the One who came to redeem, reclaim, and restore us in life. And the beauty of it is this: when by faith, you put your trust in Jesus Christ and what He did on the cross for you, then you begin to discover what it means to be chosen in the Chosen One. You are chosen in Christ! God in His

sovereign grace and magnificent mercy has extended the opportunity for you and me to come to Him because He has chosen His Son. Those who receive Jesus are the chosen ones of God.

In the book of 1 Peter, Peter, who denied Jesus, went on to preach the message of the cross and the resurrection:

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

In the New Testament, we also read:

“For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you” (1 Thessalonians 1:4).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:3-6).

Yes, Jesus is the Chosen One! And to all who are in Christ, you are the chosen of God.

Jesus chose 12 disciples, though one of them denied and betrayed Him. The other 11 were a part of His unfolding plan and purpose for the church. They (being the apostles) would go forward with the message of the cross and of the resurrection, and would even risk their lives and give their lives. These 12 uneducated men would change the course of human history in the face of a mighty Roman government because of the transforming power of Christ.

In the final hours of His earthly life and ministry, Jesus gathered with His disciples and did something deep in the tradition of Judaism. They shared together the meal known as the Passover. It was the Passover season that brought them to Jerusalem in remembrance of their ancestors' release from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. After 400 years of slavery under Pharaoh, God delivered His people. Yet Jesus revealed something very significant through this traditional experience. The Passover lamb was not just the one whose blood was slain and put on the lintel of the two door posts. Jesus was to be the Passover lamb to deliver humanity from the slavery of sin, just as God had delivered the people of Israel from Egypt.

Jesus took some unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine (as it is described in Scripture) and used those elements to teach and to proclaim what He had come to do.

“The whole ordinance was meant to keep fresh in our memory the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and the satisfaction which that sacrifice made for the sin of the world... to be a visible sermon appealing to

the believer's senses and teaching the old foundation truth of the gospel—that Christ's death on the cross is the life of man's soul." —J.C. Ryle

Today, we share and remember the death of Christ, the Chosen One of God, by whom we are chosen and in whom we have the security and the hope of life everlasting.

1 Corinthians tells us that as believers, we are to pause and examine ourselves as we share this moment in the supper. We're never to trivialize or ritualize the death of Jesus, but we are to examine ourselves to see if we are of the faith. This is not just a ceremonial thing we do; it is a testimonial thing that is personal and individual, reminding us of the great price of what the Chosen One paid for us, and to remind us that as the chosen of God, our lives no longer belong to ourselves, but we belong to Him. It is so important for you not to participate in a ritual, but to examine the relationship you have with God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Nothing could be a greater mockery to Christ than to simply participate in a religious ceremony that has no meaning to you. Examine your heart. Be sure you know the Chosen One.

"And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, 'I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer'" (Luke 22:14-15).

The apostles still didn't know what was really going to happen, but Jesus made it clear: *"I've come to share this before I suffer."*

"'For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, 'Take this, and divide it among yourselves'... And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you'" (Luke 22:16-17, 19).

The body of Christ reflects His humanity. You are a human being. You have a human body. And this physical body knows both ability and anguish. It knows strength and weakness. Your body knows pleasure and it knows pain. As we look at the humanity of Jesus—His flesh and bones, His blood and capillaries, His pain receptors, His heartbeat, His respiration, His mental consciousness—Jesus is identifying with us. He says, *"My body, the body like you have, is broken for you. You take and eat of my pain that you may know what I can give to you—the pleasure of the promise that although the body is broken and destroyed by sin will one day, like My body, be resurrected unto life."*

Jesus also took the cup and said,

"This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:14-20).

The blood of Christ represents His deity. The blood that flowed through His veins was royalty. He was a "blue blood." And just as the blue blood of royalty creates authority and identity, so it is that the very blood of Christ was the statement of who He is as the Son of God, the Promised One, the Chosen

of Abraham. Therefore His blood was poured out that through His blood, we might be saved and transformed.

"Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God" (1 Peter 1:18-21).

That's why Jesus said,

"I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29).

All who partake of the death and yes, the purchase of the Son of God through His blood, will forever be in eternity in the kingdom of God in heaven.

Jesus said,

"This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20).

The sacrifice of the Chosen One is a tragedy of human suffering, and yet it is the foundation of divine victory over sin, hell, and the grave. There is a cross in history by which God has provided redemption, salvation, restoration, and eternal hope.

Let's sing it, share it, and testify it together!

*When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.*

*Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the death of Christ, my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them through His blood.*

*See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.*

—Isaac Watts

There's one other element in the story, an element we can't overlook. Jesus was crucified between two thieves, one on His right and one on His left. And the Bible tells us about these thieves. One of them joined in the mocking, scoffing, and ridicule of Jesus. But the other one looked at Him and cried out,

"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Luke 23:42).

One of the most amazing moments in all of history and in the testimony of Scripture is that Jesus simply looked at him and said,

"Today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43b).

What a moment! Just think about it. This thief couldn't get off the cross and go make amends for anything he had done. He was a criminal. He had done the worst of the worst, and he was dying. He was on "death row." He couldn't make amends or try to go live a good life. He couldn't be baptized. He couldn't take the Lord's Supper. None of those things add to salvation. Are they important? Yes. They're a part of our witness and testimony. I love what Adrian Rogers once said:

"God grades on the cross, not on the curve." —Adrian Rogers

Hear me today. Our salvation is holy and exclusively because of who Christ is and what He has done. We don't add one thing to that. We simply believe and are made righteous. Too good to be true? It is, but it's why Jesus came. It's why Jesus died. It's why anyone and everyone who believes on His name will be saved.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" (John 5:24).

Heaven is not a reward you get at the end of a good life. Heaven is a gift you receive now as a guilty sinner, but who, by God's grace become a chosen one who lives a new life. That's the power of the cross!

"Forever let us bless God that our great Redeemer's death is a fact beyond all dispute. The centurion who stood by the cross, the friends who took out the nails and laid the body in the grave, the women who stood by and beheld, the priest who sealed up the grave, the soldiers who guarded the sepulcher—all were witnesses that Jesus actually was dead... The great sacrifice was really offered.

The life of the Lamb was actually taken away. The penalty due to sin has actually been discharged by our divine Substitute. Sinners believing in Jesus may hope and not be afraid. In themselves they are guilty, but Christ has died for the ungodly and their debt is now completely paid.” —J.C. Ryle

Do you know that transaction in your life? Have you received Christ, the Chosen One? There are really only two options: (1) we receive Him or (2) we reject Him. Whoever receives Jesus, He gives the right to become the children of God—yes, the chosen of God—even to those who believe on His name.

Lord, thank You today for the great hope and promise of the Word of God concerning the Chosen One. I pray there would be someone who in this moment (because of the work of Your Spirit and the testimony of the Scripture) would choose today to bow their knee and to confess that Jesus is Lord, and that they would choose to repent of sin and living a self-directed life, a self-righteous effort. May they choose to say, “I can’t, Lord, but You can.” I pray today would be that breakthrough moment of transformation that they might know You have chosen them and that their life would never be the same.

Father, I pray for others who stand in a place of decision today about their relationship to a local church and whether or not You might be leading them here to be at Warren with others who have received You and know they’ve been chosen by You but need to confess publicly through baptism their faith, their testimony, their witness. Let it be today that someone would say, “I need to take that next step of obedience, and today, I choose to honor Jesus.” We know salvation is not by our will, but by Yours. In this moment, we surrender our will to You, and we look to the Chosen One to be the source of blessing needed in our lives today. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

This is an edited version of a message preached from the pulpit of Warren Church, 3203 Washington Road, Augusta, GA 30907 on Sunday, August 31, 2025, by Dr. David H. McKinley.

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