

Matthew

Chapter 27

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MATTHEW CHAPTER 27

Jesus is tried, condemned and executed by means of crucifixion.

JESUS BROUGHT TO PILATE (27:1-2)

After His arrest, Jesus is brought to the Roman governor Pontius Pilate.

Matt. 27:1 And when it became early in the morning, all the chief priests and elders of the people formed a plot against Jesus so as to put him to death;

And when it became early in the morning, all the chief priests and elders of the people The religious leaders held some type of brief trial for Jesus the next morning. It was a daytime reenactment of what had happened the night before. The purpose was to follow the letter of the law.

formed a plot against Jesus so as to put him to death; It seems that the Jews did not have the right to execute capital offenders (John 18:31). Only the Romans could do this.

Matt. 27:2 And they bound him, and lead him away, and delivered him over to Pilate, the governor.

Note on a variant reading: Some manuscripts have the word *Pontius* before *Pilate*.

And they bound him, and lead him away, and delivered him over to Pilate, the governor. Early in the morning they brought Jesus to the Roman ruler Pontius Pilate the *procurator* or *prefect* of Judea. The office of *procurator* was established after Herod Archelaus had been deposed in A.D. 6. Pilate held this office from 26-36. His appointment came directly from Rome.

He was to be loyal to Caesar but, at the same time, pacify the Jews so they would not riot. It was not a highly desired job.

THE DEATH OF JUDAS (27:3-10)

The betrayer Judas feels remorse and goes out and hangs himself.

The account of Judas complements the story of Peter. Both were warned about what they would do and both stories had unhappy endings: Peter crying bitterly and Judas hanging himself. However Peter, contrary to Judas experienced genuine repentance.

Matt. 27:3 Then when Judas, the one who betrayed him, saw that he was condemned, he was filled with remorse, and he returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders,

Then when Judas, the one who betrayed him, saw that he was condemned, he was filled with remorse, Like Peter earlier, Judas also has a change of heart. The motives for this change is unknown. He may not have expected his betrayal to lead to Jesus' death. It is possible that he thought Jesus would escape arrest or at least not receive such a harsh sentence. Perhaps he hoped Jesus would now mount some type of revolt against the Romans. Whatever the reason, he was filled with regret.

The word translated "remorse" refers to a "change of feeling" or "regret." It is not the same a full

repentance (as was the case with Peter). In 2 Corinthians 7:8 this remorse precedes repentance while Hebrews 7:21 refers to it as a change of mind and not sorrow for sin.

and he returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, His sorrow causes him to return the money to the elders.

Matt. 27:4 saying, “I have sinned; I have betrayed innocent blood.” And they said, “What is it to us? You yourself see to it.”

Note on a variant reading: Instead of *innocent blood* some manuscripts read *righteous blood*.

saying, “I have sinned; Judas acknowledges that he has done wrong but does not take any corrective action. He confessed to the wrong group of people.

I have betrayed innocent blood.” He testifies that Jesus was innocent.

And they said, “What is it to us? You yourself see to it.” They have no desire to deal with the matter further. Case closed.

Matt. 27:5 And after throwing the money into the temple, he left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

And after throwing the money into the temple, Upset, he throws the money to the floor (probably in the temple treasury room).

he left. Then he went away and hanged himself. Judas then leaves and commits suicide. His action is similar to Ahithophel (2 Samuel 17:23).

We are not to conclude from this episode that suicide automatically sends a person to damnation. People who are believers can lose control of the senses and make the horrible and selfish choice of taking their own life. On the other hand, the Scripture never commends suicide as do certain non-Christians religions (e.g. Islam). Suicide is always a sin and violates the Sixth Commandment, “You will not kill” (Exodus 20:13) even if it can be forgiven.

However in the case of Judas, there is no evidence that he ever was a believer. Hanging, to the Jews, would have confirmed God’s curse upon him (Deuteronomy 21:23). The recording of Judas’ fate by Matthew would serve as a warning to those who would commit apostasy.

Matt. 27:6 But the chief priests took the money and said, “It is not lawful for us to place it into the treasury, since it is blood money.”

But the chief priests took the money and said, “It is not lawful for us to place it into the treasury, It is amazing how the religious leaders are occupied with the letter of the law and not its spirit. Judas’ confession that Jesus was innocent had no effect upon them whatsoever. They were only concerned about the finer points of their traditions—what to do with the blood money.

since it is blood money.” There is a double meaning in this term. To the Jewish leaders it relates to Judas’ betrayal of Jesus, but for Matthew it also refers to Judas’ death.

Matt. 27:7 So they took counsel and bought with it the potter’s field for the burial place of foreigners.

So they took counsel and bought with it the potter's field for the burial place of foreigners. Since the money was ritually impure they could not keep it in the temple, so they used it to buy a field for a cemetery for non-Jews. Therefore the unclean money was used to buy a unclean place for unclean people.

The mention of the potter's field by Matthew seems to indicate a well-known place.

Matt. 27:8 Therefore that field is called the "Field of blood" to this day.

Therefore that field is called the "Field of blood" The field retained the new name.

to this day. At the time of the writing of Matthew's gospel.

Matt. 27:9 Then was fulfilled that which was said through Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him who was priced, whom some of the sons of Israel priced.

Note on a variant reading: Some manuscripts read *Zechariah* instead of *Jeremiah*.

Then was fulfilled Matthew records this story to show the fulfillment of Scripture.

that which was said through Jeremiah the prophet, This reference to Jeremiah has caused much controversy since the quotation seems to be from Zechariah and not Jeremiah (see questions at the end of the chapter).

saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him who was priced, whom some of the sons of Israel priced. This closely resembles Zechariah 11:12-13 with its reference to thirty pieces of silver thrown in the house of the Lord.

Matt. 27:10 And they gave them for the potter's field, just as the Lord directed me."

Note on a variant reading: Some manuscripts read *he gave to them*, rather than *they gave to them*.

And they gave them for the potter's field, just as the Lord directed me." Zechariah also records that the money goes to the potter.

JESUS IS SENTENCED BY PILATE (27:11-16)

Jesus is now brought before Pilate who sentences Him to death.

Matt. 27:11 And Jesus was placed before the governor; and the governor questioned him saying, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And Jesus said, "You yourself are saying it."

And Jesus was placed before the governor; Matthew now picks up the narrative where he left off in verse two.

and the governor questioned him saying, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Pilate has a different question than Caiaphas. His only concern is if Jesus broke Roman law by trying to proclaim Himself king.

And Jesus said, "You yourself are saying it." The reply of Jesus is that these are Pilate's words, not

His. Yes, Jesus is the king of the Jews but not in the way Pilate fears. Jesus kingdom is not of this world system (John 18:36,37). He was not there to usurp the authority of Caesar. He has committed no crime against Rome.

Matthew records another case of Gentile of testifying to Jesus' kingship (although unwittingly).

Matt. 27:12 And when he was being accused by the chief priests and the elders, he answered nothing.

And when he was being accused by the chief priests and the elders, Pilate now listens to the charges of the religious rulers.

he answered nothing. Jesus, unlike other charged, does not defend Himself.

Matt. 27:13 Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear what sort of things they are testifying against you, do you not?"

Then Pilate said to him, "You do hear what sort of things they are testifying against you, do you not?" The way the question is worded in the Greek assumes a positive answer. Pilate, not used to seeing the accused remaining silent, asks Jesus an exasperated question.

Matt. 27:14 And he did not answer him, not even one word, so that the governor was greatly astonished.

And he did not answer him, not even one word, so that the governor was greatly astonished. Jesus still does not answer which leads to the further astonishment of the governor.

Matt. 27:15 Now at the feast, it had been the governor's custom to release one prisoner chosen by the crowd.

Now at the feast, it had been the governor's custom to release one prisoner chosen by the crowd. Pilate realizes that the case against Jesus is not strong. In addition, Jesus was a popular figure with the crowd and hence the jealousy this caused with the religious leaders. His way out of the situation is appealing to a custom to release a popular prisoner at Passover time.

Matt. 27:16 They had then a notorious prisoner called Jesus Barabbas.

Note on a variant reading: Some manuscripts do not have *Jesus* before *Barabbas*.

They had then a notorious prisoner called Jesus Barabbas. Pilate expects the crowd to choose Jesus because the other candidate is a particularly notorious criminal (Mark 15:7 tells us he was a murderer).

There is an interesting parallel between the name of Barabbas and the identity of Jesus. Barabbas means "son of a father," while Jesus was the unique Son of the Heavenly Father. However, with respect to their character, there were no parallels.

Matt. 27:17 Therefore when the crowd had gathered Pilate asked them, "Whom do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus the one called Christ?"

Note on a variant reading: Some manuscripts do not have *Jesus* before *Barabbas*.

Therefore when the crowd had gathered Pilate asked them, “Whom do you want me to release to you: The crowd is now given their choice.

Jesus Barabbas, Which Jesus will they choose? The criminal?

or Jesus, Or the Savior?

the one called Christ?” Pilate obviously thinks Jesus did not deserve this title.

Matt. 27:18 For he knew that they handed him over because of envy.

For he knew that they handed him over because of envy. Matthew reinforces Pilate’s understanding for the reason Jesus had been arrested.

Matt. 27:19 But while he was sitting on the judge’s seat, his wife sent him a message, saying; “Have nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of him.”

But while he was sitting on the judge’s seat, his wife sent him a message, saying; “Have nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of him.” Like the Magi, another Gentile receives a dream about Jesus. Matthew again is stressing the lack of guilt on the Roman side. The true instigators of Jesus’ death were the Jewish authorities.

Matt. 27:20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The insecure Pilate does not heed his wife’s request nor the Roman principles of justice.

Matt. 27:21 And the governor said to them, “Which of these two do you want me to release to you?” They said, “Barabbas.”

And the governor said to them, “Which of these two do you want me to release to you?” They said, “Barabbas.” The choice of Barabbas surprised Pilate.

Matt. 27:22 And Pilate asked them, “What, therefore, shall I do with Jesus, the one called Christ?” They all said, “Let him be crucified.”

And Pilate asked them, “What, therefore, shall I do with Jesus, the one called Christ?” They all said, “Let him be crucified.” Pilate did not expect this answer from the crowd on what to do with this popular figure.

Matt. 27:23 But he said, “What evil has he done?” But all the more they were shouting out saying, “Let him be crucified.”

But he said, “What evil has he done?” Pilate is baffled by their response.

But all the more they were shouting out saying, “Let him be crucified.” How could the crowds change so quickly? A few days earlier on Palm Sunday they were hailing Him as their Messiah, now they were calling for His life?

Part of the answer lies in the fact that the crowd hailing Him on Palm Sunday were Galileans while this crowd was mainly dwellers of Jerusalem. In addition, any Messianic expectations they would have had about Jesus would have been dampened seeing Him in prison and on trial for His life. Also crowd behavior can easily be manipulated by a few clever people. All these factors led to the crowd's irrational behavior.

Matt. 27:24 But when Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere but rather an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this man; you yourselves see to it."

Note on a variant reading: Instead of *the blood of this one*, some manuscripts read *the blood of this righteous one*.

But when Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere but rather an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, Pilate makes a dramatic gesture showing that he has no responsibility in the death of Jesus. Rome has not consented to Jesus' execution but in order to avoid a riot Pilate allows this miscarriage of justice. Matthew again is emphasizing the guilt of the Jewish leaders though he is hardly exonerating Pilate.

"I am innocent of the blood of this man; Pilate's washing of his hands did not absolve him of his guilt in the matter. As the apostles' creed states Jesus was crucified under "Pontius Pilate."

you yourselves see to it." It's your responsibility, not mine Pilate says. Interestingly, Pilate's words are similar to the Jewish leaders' rebuff of Judas (verse 4). Matthew shows that neither the Roman or Jewish leaders behaved responsibly in this incident.

Matt. 27:25 And all the crowd answered and said, "His blood be upon us and upon our children."

And all the crowd answered and said, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." The crowd accepts the responsibility for Jesus' death. The rejection of Jesus by the nation now reaches its climax (12:45: 23:36). The wicked generation that Jesus spoke about now has done their awful deed. The immediate judgment for this crime was in the destruction of their city and temple in the same generation (A.D. 70).

There may be a parallel here between the crowd and the disciples. Just as one of the twelve betrayed innocent blood so also some of the crowd accepts the blame for Jesus' blood.

Unfortunately, this statement has been the rationale for many for the persecution of the Jews. This does not mean that God took serious their request. In a short time Jesus will ask for the Father to forgive them people for what they did and said.

Matt. 27:26 Then he released Barabbas to them, but he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Then he released Barabbas to them, Barabbas is released per the crowd's request.

but he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified. This flogging was fatal to many prisoners. It consisted of a metal tipped whip known as the *flagellum* which would rip into the flesh of the victims back. In recording this, Matthew shows that the Romans shared in the guilt of the treatment of

Jesus.

THE SOLDIERS RIDICULE JESUS (27:27-31)

After Pilate sentences Jesus to die, the Roman soldiers ridicule him.

Matt. 27:27 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him.

Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium This was the official residence of the Roman ruler. The exact location is uncertain (either the Antonia fortress or Herod's palace).

and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. The company consisted of 600 troops about one tenth of a legion.

Matt. 27:28 And after stripping off his clothing, they placed a scarlet robe around him,

Note on a variant reading: Instead of *stripping off His clothing*, some manuscripts read *and putting on His clothing*.

And after stripping off his clothing, they placed a scarlet robe around him, Jesus predicted this moment of ridicule would occur (20:19).

Matt. 27:29 and twisted a crown of thorns, and placed it upon his head, and placed a reed in his right hand. And they kneeled before him and insulted him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews."

Note on a variant reading: Instead of *they insulted Him* some manuscripts read *they were insulting Him*.

and twisted a crown of thorns, and placed it upon his head, and placed a reed in his right hand. And they kneeled before him and insulted him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews." The phrase "king of the Jews" echoed the words of Pilate's question.

Matt. 27:30 and they spat upon on him and took the reed and were continually beating him upon his head.

and they spat upon on him and took the reed and were continually beating him upon his head. The ridicule continues as does the beating.

Matt. 27:31 And when they had ridiculed him, they stripped off his cloak and put on his own clothes, and led him away to crucify him.

And when they had ridiculed him, they stripped off his cloak and put on his own clothes, and led him away to crucify him. Normally criminals were crucified naked but the return of Jesus' clothes was probably a concession of the Roman's to Jewish sensibilities seeing that it was a shame to appear naked in public.

THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS (27:32-44)

Jesus is crucified at Golgotha.

Matt. 27:32 And while they were proceeding out, they found a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and

they compelled this one to carry his cross.

And while they were proceeding out, they found a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they compelled this one to carry his cross. Convicted criminals usually carried their own horizontal beam to the site of the execution. Jesus, however, was too weak from the flogging to do this.

Matt. 27:33 And when they came to the place called Golgotha, which means the “Place of the Skull,”

And when they came to the place called Golgotha, The Latin term for *Golgotha* is *Calvary*. The exact location is unknown. The two competing sites are the church of the Holy Sepulcher and Gordon’s Calvary.

which means the “Place of the Skull,” It is also not known why this place was called the place of the skull. Three suggestions have been made.

1. The hill was in a shape of a skull.
2. Executions were performed there.
3. Skulls of executed criminals were left there.

Matt. 27:34 they gave him wine mixed with gall to drink; and after tasting it, he refused to drink it.

they gave him wine mixed with gall to drink; and after tasting it, he refused to drink it. This is possibly a pain-killing narcotic or it may have been poison. Whatever the case, Jesus refused to drink it. He will not lose consciousness or decrease any of His suffering.

Matt. 27:35 And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothing, by casting lots.

Note on a variant reading: After *casting lots* some manuscripts read *that it might be fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet; they divided my clothing among themselves and for my outer garment they cast a lot.*

And when they had crucified him, Crucifixion was one of the most horrible methods of execution that man has ever invented. Sometimes it took days for the person to die.

they divided his clothing, by casting lots. The soldiers are gambling for His clothing as He is dying.

Matt. 27:36 And they were sitting down observing him there.

And they were sitting down observing him there. It is hard to believe that humanity could sink this low

Matt. 27:37 And they placed over his head the written accusation against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

And they placed over his head the written accusation against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. The title was on a wooden placard nailed to the top of the cross. The title is another irony, giving the appearance that the Romans believed that Jesus was the king of the Jews. Unknown to

them is that the sign did proclaim the truth. In John's gospel (19:20-22) he further explains the irony.

Matt. 27:38 And there were two robbers being crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.

Note on a variant reading: One old Latin manuscript supplies the names of the two robbers crucified with Jesus! *Zoatham* and *Camma* respectively.

And there were two robbers being crucified with him, The word robber probably refers to an insurrectionist or rebel like Barabbas. They were more likely terrorists and murderers than robbers. It is possible that His cross had been prepared for Barabbas.

one on his right and one on his left. Matthew notes the parody of Jesus' kingship by the fact they put one of these murderers on each side of Him. As a king has his advisors on his right and left side, so the crucified king has these criminals placed on each side.

Mark 15:32 says that those who were crucified with Jesus insulted Him while Luke 23:39 says one of the robbers asked for forgiveness. How can this be reconciled?

The answer may be in what is known as the categorical plural where the plural form is actually used for the singular. Greek scholar Daniel Wallace explains:

Rather than *they* meaning *someone*, *they* means *he* (or *she*). . . . It consists in a plural referring in reality to a singular subject. . .

The reason that the plural is used is that it more easily yields itself to a generic notion: the force of the usage, it seems is to focus more on the action than the actor. That is not to say the actor is unimportant; rather the actor is important only in a generic sense: "This is the kind of person who does this." . . .

Recognition of this category opens up the possibility that several texts say something other than what is normally construed. In particular, seeing the categorical plural in certain places seems to harmonize two texts that stand in tension. This does not, of course, mean that such an expedient should be at one's whim; but neither should one assume contradictions in the biblical record when the basis for doing so is the English way of looking at things (Wallace, p. 404).

Applying this to Mark 15:32 and Luke 23:39, Wallace writes: The parallel in Luke 23:39 explicitly says that only one of the thieves railed against Jesus. One explanation for the difference might be that Mark emphasized the generic while Luke focused on the particular. It is as if Mark had said, "It was not even beneath the kind of person crucified with Jesus to revile him" (Wallace, p. 405).

Matt. 27:39 And the ones who were proceeding along were blaspheming him, shaking their heads,

And the ones who were proceeding along were blaspheming him, shaking their heads, Public executions were usually performed on well-traveled roads.

Matt. 27:40 saying, "The one who destroys the temple and rebuilds it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

saying, "**The one who destroys the temple and rebuilds it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.**" Here is the last temptation of Jesus. He could have chosen to come down from the cross. If He had done so He would not have fulfilled the role of the innocent lamb slain on our behalf (John 1:29; Romans 3:21-26; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:26-28). He

remained faithful to the end despite the unspeakable agony.

Matt. 27:41 Likewise also the chief priests, ridiculing Him with the scribes and the elders, were saying,

Likewise also the chief priests, ridiculing him with the scribes and the elders, were saying, Jesus, in His death, illustrates His own principle, “whoever wants to save His life will lose it, and whoever loses His life for Me will find it” (16:25).

Matt. 27:42 He saved others, himself he is not able to save. He is the king of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.

He saved others, himself he is not able to save. He is the king of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. They do not understand that Jesus voluntarily chose to do this—for *them* as well as for the rest of the world!

Matt. 27:43 He trusted in God, let him rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ”

He trusted in God, let him rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ” They continue the sarcasm.

Matt. 27:44 In the same way, the robbers who were crucified together with him, were insulting him.

In the same way, the robbers who were crucified together with him, were insulting him. The criminals join in the ridiculing though Luke (20:40-43) notes that one later repents.

Matt. 27:45 And from the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all that land.

And from the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all that land. The crucifixion of Jesus began sometime in the midmorning. About noon an unusual darkness came over all the land. This miraculous event covered either only the land of Israel or the entire earth.

Matt. 27:46 And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a great voice, saying, “Eli Eli lema sabachthani;” which means, “My God, my God, why did you abandon me?”

And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a great voice, saying, “Eli Eli lema sabachthani;” This is the only words of Christ on the cross that Matthew records. It is probably the fourth chronologically of the seven sayings of Christ on the cross.

which means, “My God, my God, why did you abandon me?” There are all kinds of questions that this statement raises which Matthew does not explain. The main issue is with respect the two natures of Christ—the human and the divine—and how we understand this phrase in light of this. The passage seems to teach that there was some separation between the Father and Son when the penalty for the sins of the world were placed upon Him. There is no truth to the Gnostic view that Jesus’ divine nature departed shortly before His death.

Matt. 27:47 When certain of the ones standing there heard it, they said, “He is calling for Elijah.”

When certain of the ones standing there heard it, they said, “He is calling for Elijah.” We do not

know whether the speech of Jesus was slurred or that His accent was not comprehended by the passers by. Whatever the case, some mistakenly thought that He was calling for Elijah to rescue Him. The prophet Elijah was well known to precede the Day of the Lord (Malachi 4:5).

Matt. 27:48 And immediately one of them ran and took a sponge and filled it with sour wine and placed it upon a reed, and gave it to Him to drink.

And immediately one of them ran and took a sponge and filled it with sour wine and placed it upon a reed, and gave it to him to drink. One unidentified member of the crowd seems to have sensed His deep agony and again offers a pain killer or perhaps just a thirst quencher (see John 19:28-30).

Matt. 27:49 But the rest of them were saying, “Let it be. Let us see if Elijah is coming to save him.”

Note on a variant reading: After this verse some manuscripts read *And another one took a spear and thrust it into his side, and water and blood came out.*

But the rest of them were saying, “Let it be. Let us see if Elijah is coming to save him.” The rest of the crowd tells the man to stop so that they can see if Elijah will indeed appear.

THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF JESUS (27:50-61)

Jesus dies and is buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

Matt. 27:50 But Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and gave up his Spirit.

But Jesus cried out again with a loud voice Jesus cries out loud (Luke 23:46 records His words of trust).

and gave up his Spirit. This is an idiomatic way of saying someone has died for the Jews believed that a person’s spirit departed from his body when he stopped breathing. However there may be more to that here. Jesus in His human nature voluntarily gives up His life.

Matt. 27:51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn into two pieces from top to the bottom. The earth was shaken and the rocks were split.

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn into two pieces from top to the bottom. Two more miraculous events surround Jesus’ death. The curtain of the temple was torn from top to bottom symbolizing God is the one who has done this.

This signifies judgment against the temple. If Matthew had in mind the curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies then it would be referring to direct access to God based upon Jesus’ death (Hebrews 4:16).

The earth was shaken and the rocks were split. The second miracle is the earthquake at the moment of Jesus’ death.

Matt. 27:52 And the tombs were opened, and many bodies of those saints that had died were raised;

And the tombs were opened, and many bodies of those saints that had died were raised; The earthquake supernaturally opened the tombs and many saints were raised from the death.

Matt. 27:53 And after his resurrection they came out of the tombs, and entered into the holy city, and appeared to many.

And after his resurrection they came out of the tombs, and entered into the holy city, and appeared to many. Many unanswered questions come with this episode which is only found in Matthew's gospel. These saints were raised after Jesus resurrection and if they received resurrected bodies, rather than merely being reanimated to life (like Jairus daughter and Lazarus), then they soon went to heaven as did Jesus at His ascension.

It is also interesting to note that Jerusalem is still called the holy city even after this judgment.

Matt. 27:54 But when the centurion, and those who were with him guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that happened, they became very much afraid, and they said, "Truly he was the Son of God."

But when the centurion, and those who were with him guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that happened, they became very much afraid, and they said, "Truly he was the Son of God." We now after another act of faith from Gentiles. They recognize something special about the man who had just died.

Matt. 27:55 Now there were many women there who were watching from a distance, who had followed Jesus from the Galilee providing for him;

Now there were many women there who were watching from a distance, who had followed Jesus from the Galilee providing for him; Another group is introduced who were at the crucifixion scene. This is the first indication that any of Jesus' followers were there at His death. The disciples had all left in fear, though John returned at a later time (John 19:26,27).

Matt. 27:56 among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jacob and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jacob and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. The specific mention of these woman is interesting since Jesus' own mother, Mary, is not mentioned in Matthew as being at the scene. Only John (19:31-37) tells us that she was there.

Matt. 27:57 When it became late, a rich man, named Joseph of Arimathea, who was himself a disciple of Jesus, came;

When it became late, The sun had apparently returned

a rich man, named Joseph of Arimathea, who was himself a disciple of Jesus, came; We are now introduced to a secret disciple of Jesus— Joseph of Arimathea. He does what the other disciples will not do, comes forward to claim the body of Jesus. We know that he belonged to the Sanhedrin (Mark 15:43) and that he had not yet revealed publicly that he was a disciple of Jesus (John 19:38).

Matt. 27:58 This man approached Pilate and requested the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded him to be given.

This man approached Pilate and requested the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded him to be given. Pilate grants his request for the body of Jesus.

Matt. 27:59 Joseph took the body of Jesus, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

Joseph took the body of Jesus, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, John provides more details of Jesus' burial telling us that Nicodemus helped in the burial preparations.

Matt. 27:60 and placed it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And when he had rolled a large stone at the door of the tomb, he went away.

and placed it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. The tomb that Jesus was buried looked like the present Garden Tomb in the city of Jerusalem—which may indeed be the correct site.

And when he had rolled a large stone at the door of the tomb, he went away. The stone was a boulder that was run down a steep incline.

Matt. 27:61 Now Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

And there was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary opposite the tomb. This statement shows they knew which tomb to come back to refuting the theory that somehow they went to the wrong tomb on Easter Sunday.

THE GUARD IS PLACED AT THE TOMB (27:62-66)

The religious leaders ask Pilate for a guard.

Matt. 27:62 And the next day, that is after the Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together with Pilate,

And the next day, This would be Saturday.

that is after the Preparation Day, The preparation day for the Sabbath, not for the Passover.

the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together with Pilate, Pilate now receives another request but this time from the religious leaders.

Matt. 27:63 saying, “Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’

saying, “Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ They remember Jesus claims that He will rise.

Matt. 27:64 Command therefore to secure the tomb until the third day. Otherwise his disciples may come and steal him and say to the people, ‘He has been raised from the dead,’ and the last deception will be worse than the first.”

Command therefore to secure the tomb until the third day. Otherwise his disciples may come

and steal him and say to the people, ‘He has been raised from the dead,’ and the last deception will be worse than the first. They do not believe that He will rise, they merely want to stop the disciples from stealing the body so they won’t make that claim.

Matt. 27:65 Pilate said to them, “Take a guard; go, make it as secure as you know.”

Pilate said to them, “Take a guard; go, make it as secure as you know.” These words of Pilate are open to different interpretation. He could be telling them that they already have a guard in the temple police and so they are to use them. Or he could be commanding the Roman guard to be used temporarily at the tomb of Jesus. The best answer seems to be that he provided the Roman guard.

Matt. 27:66 And they went away and made the tomb secure, having sealed the stone, together with the guard.

And they went away and made the tomb secure, having sealed the stone, together with the guard. The securing of the tomb would have involved placing the imperial stamp of Rome on the tomb tied with a rope or large cord. The seal would speak of the power and authority of Rome. Anyone breaking the seal would be punished. Therefore with the large stone, the presence of the Roman guard, and the imperial seal, all possible grave robbers would seemingly be deterred.

However, there was one thing that had not crossed their mind, that Jesus Himself would be raised from the dead!

SUMMARY TO CHAPTER 27

Though innocent of any crime, nevertheless Jesus is brought before Pontius Pilate. Though guilty of no charge, Pilate delivers Him over to be crucified after the crowd rejects His release in favor of Barabbas.

After being flogged, beaten, and ridiculed by the Roman soldiers, Jesus is led away to crucifixion. He is crucified between two criminals where He is further insulted and taunted by the religious leaders.

Upon His death, Jesus’ body is taken by a secret disciple—Joseph of Arimathea—and placed in his new tomb.

The religious leaders come to Pilate the next day and ask him to secure the tomb, seeing that Jesus had predicted His resurrection. Pilate agrees with their request.

The chapter ends with the tomb guarded by a large stone, the imperial seal of Rome, and the Roman guard. The religious leaders assumed that this would be enough to keep any grave robbers away. There is, however, one thing they did not consider, the possibility that He would rise from the dead!

QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 27

DID MATTHEW WRONGLY ATTRIBUTE A PROPHECY TO JEREMIAH?

One of the passages in Matthew that has caused commentators difficulty concerns the prophecy of Matthew 27. There is a prophecy attributed to Jeremiah that seemingly was made by the prophet Zechariah. Many solutions have been offered:

Solution 1

A Mistake Of Matthew's Memory

This is the view of Augustine and also Alford who wrote: "The citation is not from Jeremiah, and is probably quoted from memory and unprecisely"

Solution 2

Matthew Purposely Wrote The Wrong Name

Matthew purposely put in the wrong name (Jeremiah for Zechariah) in order to teach us that we should not depend upon the prophets who were mere channels of the divine truth rather than the source.

Solution 3

A Transmission Error

The reading "Jeremiah" is believed to be an early error in the transmission of the text and not original with Matthew.

Solution 4

It Was From A Lost Work of Jeremiah

The Church Father Origen argued that the quotation is from a work of Jeremiah which has now been lost.

Solution 5

It Was From A Deleted Passage In Jeremiah

The Church Father Eusebius believed that this passage was in Jeremiah but was taken out by the Jews.

Solution 6

Jeremiah Represented The Latter Prophets

In the Talmud and in some manuscripts the Book of Jeremiah begins the section on the latter prophets. Therefore his name is representative of the whole body of writing and would represent anything written in that section.

Solution 7

Zechariah Had The Spirit Of Jeremiah

Some argue that the mistake arose from Jewish tradition that stated that Zechariah had the spirit of Jeremiah.

Solution 8

Spoken by Jeremiah But Not Written Down

The prophecy was something that Jeremiah said but was not written down. Not every prophecy that was spoken was written down and not every prophecy that was written down was spoken.

Solution 9

He Is Citing Jeremiah

A final possibility is that Matthew is actually citing the passage in Jeremiah and not Zechariah. Therefore there is nothing to harmonize.