



Chapter 27

The Crucifixion

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Theme: Events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus; Sanhedrin delivers Jesus to Pilate; repentance of Judas; trial before Pilate; release of Barabbas; crucifixion, death, and burial of Jesus; the tomb sealed and a watch set.

This whole trial was not only illegal by Jewish law, but in some sense, of no practical value because they were attempting to try Him for blasphemy, the punishment for which was a capital crime. The person who was guilty for blasphemy was to be put to death and they did not have the power to put anyone to death. They were a Province of Judea under the rulership of Rome. Rome put in a puppet king, an Idumaeen, a non-Jew, by the name of Herod. The Jewish authorities lost the power of capital punishment many years before.

McGee Introduction: We have come to the central fact of the gospel message: the crucifixion of Christ. When Paul defined the gospel to the Corinthians, he said, “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ *died* for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3, italics mine). We have now come to the record of that tremendous event.

We will see that Matthew does not give a record of the actual crucifixion. In fact, no gospel writer does that. They merely tell what went on around the cross. I know that there are men who depict in graphic terms how the nails were driven into the quivering flesh and how the blood spurted out, but that is not in the Bible. In the inspired record it is as if God placed the mantle of darkness over the last three hours of the life of Jesus on the cross and said, “This is something you cannot look at. It is beyond human comprehension. The suffering cannot be fathomed.” It was a transaction between the Father in heaven and the Son on the cross. The cross became an altar upon which the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, was offered.

The simple statement of Matthew is, “And they crucified him.”

This chapter begins with the morning after Jesus had been arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, after He had been brought before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, after false witnesses had testified against Him, after He had been beaten and ridiculed, and after Peter had denied Him.¹

Matthew 27:1

When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:

They wanted to put Jesus to death, but had no legal authority to do so. They had to politic their way to get Jesus put to death. In Lev 24 the punishment for blasphemy is death, but they still have a problem. In Gen 49:10, means that their authority (the scepter) would not be relinquished until the Messiah came (Shiloh). There was a time when they lost their authority for capital punishment, and they mourned believing that the Messiah had not

¹McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:144). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

yet come as the verse had indicated. ²However, at that time, Jesus was growing up in Nazareth.

[morning was come] Daylight, probably on Wednesday morning.

[When the morning was come] As soon as it was light—took counsel against Jesus. They had begun this counsel the preceding evening, see Matthew 26:59. But as it was contrary to all forms of law to proceed against a person's life by night, they seem to have separated for a few hours, and then, at the break of day, came together again, pretending to conduct the business according to the forms of law.

[To put him to death] They had already determined his death, and pronounced the sentence of death on him; Matthew 26:66. And now they assemble under the pretense of reconsidering the evidence, and deliberating on it, to give the greater appearance of justice to their conduct. They wished to make it appear that “they had taken ample time to consider of it, and, from the fullest conviction, by the most satisfactory and conclusive evidence, they had now delivered him into the hands of the Romans, to meet that death to which they had adjudged him.”³

JNTC: Pilate the governor. Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea from 26 to 36 C.E. and therefore the judge in the trial of Yeshua. An inscription with his name on it has been found in Caesarea, on the coast between Tel Aviv and Haifa. Philo and Josephus characterize him as vile, cruel and cagey; his weak character and lack of concern for truth and justice are clear from the New Testament descriptions of his behavior (see vv. 16–24N).

They **put him in chains**. Literally, “binding him.” The *Akedat-Yitzchak* (“Binding of Isaac”) plays a prominent role in Judaism; see MJ 11:17–19N and Ya 2:21–23. In the present verse we see that Yeshua literally underwent an *akedah*.⁴

BKC: 27:1-2 (Mark 15:1). Jesus' first Jewish trials occurred under the cover of darkness. Since Jewish law required trials to be conducted during the day, the chief priests and the elders of the people realized an official trial was necessary. The brief trial recorded in Matthew 27:1 was simply for the court to reaffirm what had taken place earlier. The court decided that **Jesus** must die, but they did not have the power to put that decision into action (John 18:31). To get a death sentence, they needed to take the case **to Pilate, the governor**, the procurator of Judea and Samaria, A.D. 26-36 (cf. Luke 3:1). Jesus was therefore **bound** and brought by the Jews to Pilate. Pilate's home was in Caesarea, but at this festival time, he was in his Jerusalem palace.⁵

² Chuck Missler Notes on Matthew, khouse.org

³ Adam Clarke's Commentary

⁴ Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 27:2). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.
cf. *confer*, compare

⁵ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:86). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Matthew 27:2

And when they had bound him, they led *him* away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

[**Pontius Pilate**] was the direct Roman authority for the area.

[**bound him**] Bound Him as if He were the worst kind of criminal, not realizing that He had willingly submitted to them after demonstrating His power that they were helpless to hurt Him without His consent (John 18:6).

Barnes: And when they had bound him. He was *bound* when they took him in the garden, John 18:12. Probably when he was tried before the Sanhedrim, in the palace of Caiaphas, he had been loosed from his bonds—being there surrounded by multitudes, and supposed to be safe. As they were about to lead him to another part of the city now, they again bound him. The binding consisted, probably, in nothing more than tying his hands.

Barnes: Pontius Pilate the governor. The governor, appointed by the Romans, over Judea. The governor commonly resided at Caesarea; but he came up to Jerusalem usually at the great feasts, when most of the Jews were assembled, to administer justice, and to suppress tumults, if any should arise. The *title* which Pilate received was that of *governor*, or *procurator*. The duties of the office were chiefly to collect the revenues due to the Roman emperor, and, in certain cases, to administer justice. Pilate was appointed governor of Judea by Tiberius, then emperor of Rome. John says John 18:28 that they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the hall of judgment—that is, to the part of the *praetorium*, or governor's palace, where justice was administered. The Jews did not, however, enter in themselves, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover. In Numbers 19:22, it is said, that whosoever touched an unclean thing should be unclean, For this reason they would not enter into the house of a *heathen*, lest they should contract some defilement that would render them unfit to keep the passover.

Clarke: They—delivered him to Pontius Pilate—The Sanhedrin had the power of life and death in their own hands in everything that concerned religion; but as they had not evidence to put Christ to death because of false doctrine, they wished to give countenance to their conduct by bringing in the civil power, and therefore they delivered him up to Pilate as one who aspired to regal dignities, and whom he must put to death, if he professed to be Caesar's friend. Pontius Pilate governed Judea ten years under the Emperor Tiberius; but, having exercised great cruelties against the Samaritans, they complained of him to the emperor, in consequence of which he was deposed, and sent in exile to Vienna, in Dauphiny, where he killed himself two years after.

1-2 The religious leaders had to persuade the Roman government to sentence Jesus to death because they did not have the authority to do it themselves. The Romans had taken away the religious leaders' authority to inflict capital punishment. Politically, it looked better for the religious leaders anyway if someone else was responsible for killing Jesus. They wanted the death to appear Roman-sponsored so the crowds couldn't blame them. The Jewish leaders had arrested Jesus on theological grounds—blasphemy; but because

this charge would be thrown out of a Roman court, they had to come up with a political reason for Jesus' death. Their strategy was to show Jesus as a rebel who claimed to be a king and thus a threat to Caesar.⁶

Pilate was the Roman governor for the regions of Samaria and Judea from A.D. 26-36. Jerusalem was located in Judea. Pilate took special pleasure in demonstrating his authority over the Jews; for example, he impounded money from the temple treasuries to build an aqueduct. Pilate was not popular, but the religious leaders had no other way to get rid of Jesus than to go to him. Ironically, when Jesus, a Jew, came before him for trial, Pilate found him innocent. He could not find a single fault in Jesus, nor could he contrive one.

ESV: delivered him over to Pilate. The governor of Judea and Roman prefect under Emperor Tiberius. To maintain ultimate control, the Romans kept the death penalty under their own jurisdiction and reserved the right to intervene in any case. The Roman historian Tacitus records Christ's execution "in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus" (*Annals* 15.44, published a.d. 115–120; cf.

Matthew 27:3

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

[saw that he was condemned] He was brought to his senses, like Peter in Matthew 26:75, yet unlike Peter he did not repent to God but only to man. He did not go back to the apostolic band or seek forgiveness. He was morose and left to himself he became a helpless victim of Satan who kept him from turning to God and urged him to destroy himself because of his cowardly deed in selling and betraying his best and only true friend.

[repented] Greek: *metamellomai* (GSN-3338), to regret; to have deep remorse at the consequence of sin rather than a deep regret at the cause of it. It is never used of genuine repentance to God (Matthew 4:17). Who knows but what Judas thought secretly that Christ would escape as He had done many times before? He would then have money and Jesus would not be harmed. When he saw that it did not happen that way he had regrets for his act.

"Judas repented": This is not the normal sense of the word meaning a change of attitude or change of mind. The word here really means remorseful. He was sorry he did it.

[thirty pieces of silver] \$75 at \$2.50 each—about 115 days' wages of a common laborer at 65 cents a day.

⁶ Life Application Notes

Clarke: Judas—when he saw that he was condemned, repented—There is much of the wisdom and goodness of God to be seen in this part of Judas’s conduct. Had our Lord been condemned to death on the evidence of one of his own disciples, it would have furnished infidels with a strong argument against Christ and the Christian religion. “One of his own disciples, knowing the whole imposture, declared it to the Jewish rulers, in consequence of which he was put to death as an impostor and deceiver.” But the traitor, being stung with remorse, came and acknowledged his crime, and solemnly declared the innocence of his Master, threw back the money which they gave him to induce him to do this villainous act; and, to establish the evidence which he now gave against them and himself, in behalf of the innocence of Christ, hanged himself, or died through excessive grief and contrition. Thus the character of Christ was rescued from all reproach; infidelity deprived of the power to cry “imposture!” and the Jewish rulers overwhelmed with eternal infamy. If it should ever be said, “One who knew him best delivered him up as an impostor,”—to this it may be immediately answered, “The same person, struck with remorse, came and declared his own guilt, and Christ’s innocence; accused and convicted the Jewish rulers, in the open council, of having hired him to do this iniquitous action, threw them back the bribe they had given him, and then hanged himself through distress and despair, concluding his iniquity in this business was too great to be forgiven.” Let him who chooses, after this plenary evidence to the innocence of Christ, continue the objection, and cry out imposture! take heed that he go not and do LIKEWISE. Caiaphas, Pilate, and Judas have done so already, and I have known several, who have called Christ an impostor, who have cut their own throats, shot, drowned, or hanged themselves. God is a jealous God, and highly resents every thing that is done and said against that eternal truth that came to man through Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit. Indeed, there is one class of Deists, viz. those who are vicious in their lives, and virulent in their opposition to Christianity, who generally bring themselves to an untimely end.

Barnes: Then Judas-when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself. This shows that Judas did not suppose that the affair would have results in this calamitous manner. He probably expected that Jesus would have worked a miracle to deliver himself, and not have suffered this condemnation to come upon him. When he saw him taken, bound, tried, and condemned; when he saw that all probability that he would deliver himself was taken away, he was overwhelmed with disappointment, sorrow, and remorse of conscience. The word rendered *repented himself*, it has been observed, does not of necessity denote a change *for the better*, but *any* change of views and feelings. Here it evidently means no other change than that produced by the horrors of a guilty conscience, and by deep remorse, for crime at its unexpected results. It was not saving repentance; that leads to a holy life: this led to an increase of crime in his own death. True repentance leads the sinner to the Saviour: this led *away* from the Saviour to the gallows. Judas, if he had been a true penitent, would have come then to Jesus, confessed his crime at his feet, and sought for pardon there. But, overwhelmed with remorse, and the conviction of vast guilt, he was not willing to come into his presence, and added to the crime of a *traitor* that of *self-murder*. Assuredly, such a man could not be a true penitent.

and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders—A remarkable illustration of the power of an awakened conscience. A short time before, the promise of this sordid pelf was temptation enough to his covetous heart to outweigh the most overwhelming obligations of duty and love; now, the possession of it so lashes him that he cannot use it, cannot even keep it!⁷

You see, the Lord Jesus was there when Judas came. As the chief priests and elders were leading Him through that hall to take Him to Pilate, here comes Judas. Why doesn't Judas turn to the Lord Jesus and ask forgiveness? Instead of doing that, he addressed the religious rulers—

Spurgeon: Perhaps Judas expected that Jesus would miraculously deliver himself from his captors; and when he saw that he was condemned, remorse seized him, and he carried back to his fellow criminals the reward of his infamy. There was one good result of his despairing confession: "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." Judas had been with our Lord in public and in private; and if he could have found a flaw in Christ's character, this would have been the time to mention it; but even the traitor, in his dying speech, declared that Jesus was "innocent." The chief priests and elders had no more pity for Judas than they had for Jesus; no remorse troubled them, they had secured the Savior, and they cared nothing for any of the consequences of their action. As for the traitor, he had made his bargain, and he must abide by it.

Matthew 27:4

Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

[I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood] Many go this far in regret, but they never get forgiveness because they do not go to God and renounce sin.

[innocent blood] Six witnesses affirmed His innocence:

1. Judas (Matthew 27:4)
2. Pilate's wife (Matthew 27:19)
3. Pilate (Matthew 27:24)
4. Herod (Luke 23:15)
5. Criminal (Luke 23:41)
6. Centurian (Luke 23:47)

Clarke: Innocent blood—Αἷμα ἀθώου, a Hebraism, for an innocent man. But instead of ἀθώου, innocent, two ancient MSS., Syriac, Vulgate, Sahidic, Armenian, and all the Itala; Origen, Cyprian, Lucifer, Ambrose, Leo, read δικαίου, righteous, or just.

⁷Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 27:3). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Clarke: What is that to us?—What is it?—A great deal. You should immediately go and reverse the sentence you have pronounced, and liberate the innocent person. But this would have been justice, and that would have been a stranger at their tribunal.

Barnes: In that I have betrayed the innocent blood. That is, in betraying an innocent being to death. *Blood* is put here for *life*, or for the *man*. The meaning is, that he knew and felt that Jesus was innocent. This confession is a remarkable proof that Jesus *was* innocent. Judas had been with him three years, he had seen him in public and private; he had heard his public teaching and his private views; he had seen him in all circumstances; and if he *had* done anything evil, or advanced anything against the Roman emperor, Judas was competent to testify it. Had he *known* any such thing, he would have stated it. He would have appeared to vindicate himself. *His* testimony, being a disciple of Jesus, would have been, to the chief priests, far more-valuable than that of any other man; and he might not only have escaped the horrors of a troubled conscience, and an awful death, but have looked for an ample reward. That he did not make such a charge—that he fully and frankly confessed that Jesus was innocent—and that he gave up the ill-gotten price of *treason*—is full proof that, in the belief of Judas, the Saviour was free from crime, and even the *suspicion of crime*.

Barnes: What is that to us? This form of speaking denoted that they had nothing to do with his remorse of conscience, and his belief that Jesus was innocent. *They* had secured what they wanted, the person of Jesus, and they cared little now for the feelings of the traitor, So all wicked men, who make use of the agency of others for the accomplishment of crime, or the gratification of passion, will care little for the effect on the instrument. They will soon cast him off and despise him; and, in thousands of instances, them instruments of villainy, and the panders to the pleasures of others, are abandoned to remorse, wretchedness, crime, and death.

3-4 Jesus' formal accuser (see Matthew 26:48 note) wanted to drop his charges, but the religious leaders refused to halt the trial. When he betrayed Jesus, perhaps Judas was trying to force Jesus' hand to get him to lead a revolt against Rome. This did not work, of course. Whatever his reason, Judas changed his mind, but it was too late. Many of the plans we set into motion cannot be reversed. It is best to think of the potential consequences before we launch into an action we may later regret.

The priests' job was to teach people about God and act as intercessors for them, helping administer the sacrifices to cover their sins. Judas returned to the priests, exclaiming that he had sinned. Rather than helping him find forgiveness, however, the priests said, "That's your responsibility." Not only had they rejected the Messiah, they had rejected their role as priests.

And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that—“Guilty or innocent is nothing to us: We have Him now—begone!” Was ever speech more hellish uttered?⁸

Judas's feelings of remorse and his attempt to return the blood money are recorded only by Matthew. **changed his mind** (Gk. *metamelomai*). Judas experienced feelings of regret and remorse, but this is less than “repentance” (Gk. *metanoia*), which means a change of heart.

Matthew 27:5

And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

[cast down the pieces of silver in the temple] They did not look so tempting when Satan was through with him.

[hanged himself] The earthly end of one of the first of the Lord's original apostles. He could have spent a lifetime of service for God, winning souls and healing multitudes. He could have inherited eternal life and a throne over a tribe in Israel and all the other glories of the redeemed, but he would not pay the price of going back to the ones he had failed. He hanged himself and then fell headlong in the valley below where his bowels gushed out (Acts 1:18). Lightfoot says that the devil caught up Judas and then threw him down dashing him to pieces on the ground.⁹

Clarke: In the temple—Ναός signifies, properly, the temple itself, into which none but the priests were permitted to enter; therefore ἐν τῷ ναῷ must signify, near the temple, by the temple door, where the boxes stood to receive the free-will offerings of the people, for the support and repairs of the sacred edifice.

Barnes: And he cast down, This was an evidence of his remorse of conscience for his crime. His ill-gotten gain now did him no good. It would not produce relief to his agonized mind. He *attempted*, therefore, to obtain relief by throwing back the price of treason. But he attempted it in vain. The consciousness of guilt was fastened to his soul; and Judas found, as all will find, that to cast away or abandon ill-gotten wealth will not alleviate the guilty conscience.

in the temple—the temple proper, commonly called “the sanctuary,” or “the holy place,” into which only the priests might enter. How is this to be explained? Perhaps he flung the money in after them. But thus were fulfilled the words of the prophet—“I cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord” (Zec 11:13).¹⁰

⁸Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 27:4). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁹Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

¹⁰Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 27:5). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Matthew 27:6

And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

[It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood]

Putting blood money into the treasury was unlawful, but shedding that same betrayed and innocent blood was lawful in the sight of these hypocrites.

Clarke: Because it is the price of blood—“What hypocrites, as one justly exclaims, to adjudge an innocent man to death, and break the eternal laws of justice and mercy without scruple, and to be, at the same time, so very nice in their attention to a ceremonial direction of the law of Moses! Thus it is that the devil often deludes many, even among the priests, by a false and superstitious tenderness or conscience in things indifferent, while calumny, envy, oppression of the innocent, and a conformity to the world, give them no manner of trouble or disturbance.”

Barnes: It is not lawful, It was forbidden Deuteronomy 18:18 to take what was esteemed as an abomination, and to offer it to God. The price of blood—that is, of the life of a man—they justly considered as an improper and unlawful offering.

Barnes: The treasury. The *treasury* was kept in the court of the women. See plan of the temple, Matthew 21:12. It was composed of a number of small *chests* placed in different parts of the courts to receive the voluntary offerings of the people, as well as the half-shekel required of every Jew. The original word, here rendered *treasury*, contains the notion of *an offering to God*. What was given there was considered as an offering made to Him.

Barnes: The price of blood. The life is in the blood. The word *blood*, here, means the same as *life*. The price of blood, means the price by which the life of a man has been purchased. This was an acknowledgment that in their view Jesus was innocent. They had bought him, not condemned him justly. It is remarkable that they were so scrupulous now about so small a matter comparatively as putting this money in the treasury, when they had no remorse about murdering an innocent being, and crucifying him who had given full evidence that he was the Messiah. Men are often very scrupulous in *small matters*, who stick not at great crimes.

These chief priests felt no guilt in giving Judas money to betray an innocent man, but when Judas returned the money, the priests couldn't accept it because it was wrong to accept blood money—payment for murder! Their hatred for Jesus had caused them to lose all sense of justice.

Matthew 27:7

And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

They could not use blood money for the Temple treasury. However, they could prepay some expenses. Whenever someone came to Jerusalem and died, they would have to pay for the burial. Thus, they bought the potter's field for this use.

Cf. Zech 11:12-13 which predicts that Jesus would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver and that the transaction would occur in the House of God, and that the money would end up in the hands of the potter. All prophesied around 800 years earlier!

(Zechariah 11:12-13) ¹²*And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.* ¹³*And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.*

Clarke: To bury strangers in—Τοις ξένοις, the strangers, probably meaning, as some learned men conjecture, the Jewish strangers who might have come to Jerusalem, either to worship, or on some other business, and died there during their stay. See here, the very money for which the blessed Jesus was sold becomes subservient to the purpose of mercy and kindness! The bodies of strangers have a place of rest in the field purchased by the price at which his life was valued, and the souls of strangers and foreigners have a place of rest and refuge in his blood which was shed as a ransom price for the salvation of the whole world.

Barnes: And bought with them. In Acts 1:18, it is said of Judas that *he* "purchased a field with the reward of iniquity." By the passage in the Acts is meant no more than that *he furnished the means*, or was the occasion of purchasing the field. It is not of necessity implied that Judas actually made the contract, and paid down the money to buy a field to bury strangers in—a thing which would be in itself very improbable; but that it was by his means that the field was purchased. It is very frequent in the Scriptures, as well as in other writings, to represent a man as doing that which he is only the cause or occasion of another's doing. See Acts 2:23, John 19:1, Matthew 27:59,60.

Barnes: The potter's field. Probably this was some, field well known by that name, which was used for the purpose of making earthen vessels. The price paid for a field so near Jerusalem may appear to be very small; but it is not improbable that it had been worked till the clay was exhausted, and was neither fit for that business nor for tillage, and was therefore considered as of little value.

Barnes: To bury strangers in. Jews, who came up from other parts of the world to attend the great feasts at Jerusalem. The high priests, who regarded the Gentiles as abominable, would not be inclined to provide a burial-place for them.

Matthew 27:8

Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

Sin, Responsibility—A person must accept responsibility for personal sin and turn away from it in repentance. Peter faced his sin with bitter tears of repentance (26:75) and then turned back to Christ for a new commission (Jn 21:15-19; Ac 2). Judas did not repent (Greek *metanoeo*). He was seized with remorse (Greek *metamelomai*). He looked back at his action, saw he had done wrong, and tried to undo it through his own actions. We cannot accept responsibility for sin by trusting our own skills and powers to get rid of it and its results. As with any sinful act, Judas could not stop its destructive results. The proper reaction to sin is to look to God and accept His forgiveness. Judas committed suicide, seeking to escape his responsibility. We cannot escape responsibility. God holds us eternally responsible until we let Christ's blood cover our sins. See 26:14-16, 23-25, 47-49, note, 26:69-75, note.¹¹

Matthew 27:9

Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;

Missler: Many problems arise from this verse, because the prophecy that is there is not in Jeremiah, it is in Zechariah 11:12-13. Many scholars will say that the scrolls of the Hebrew prophets were in such an order, that Zechariah was included in the scroll that included Jeremiah, so it was an idiom of library usage. The scroll of Jeremiah where that prophecy was found, was not in the writings of Jeremiah, but Zechariah, but it was included in the scroll of Jeremiah.

Another view, note that the verse says "spoken by Jeremiah" it does not say written by Jeremiah. Perhaps, the prophecy was indeed spoken by Jeremiah, and was recorded by Zechariah.

Another possibility, in Jeremiah (ch 17,18,19), he talks about the potter. In speaking of the potter, he then prophecies against the city of Jerusalem, predicting all these horrible things that would happen. Almost as if Jeremiah is looking through this reference and prophesying against Jerusalem for some of the burdens they are going to bear as a result of what is happening.

[Jeremy] Some MSS and versions read "Zechariah" and others do not have either name. Jeremiah could have been added by a copyist (cp. Zech. 11:13).

[And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value] The 21st Old Testament prophecy fulfilled in Matthew (Matthew 27:9-10; Zech. 11:12-13).

¹¹ Disciple's Study Bible

JNTC: Yirmiyahu the prophet. Although a passing allusion to Jeremiah 32:6–9 may be implied, the reference is to Zechariah 11:12–13, cited loosely or from memory. Why would Mattityahu ascribe the words to Jeremiah? One suggestion is supported by Talmudic references: the scroll of the Prophets may have originally begun with Jeremiah (the longest book, by word count), not Isaiah; if so, Mattityahu by naming Jeremiah is referring to the Prophets as a group, not naming the particular prophet quoted.¹²

Yashanet.com: Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet
This verse presents a problem as Zechariah is the actual source of this prophecy and not Jeremiah. There are several possible explanations for this:

1. As seen earlier in Matthew, this could be a case of subsequent scribal error. The *Shem-Tob Hebrew Matthew* has Zechariah as the prophet in this verse. As this shows a clear difference between translations, we view this as the most likely explanation over the next two.
2. It could also be that Jeremiah is referred to as the "source," as in ancient times the scrolls of the "minor" prophets (i.e. Zechariah) were bound together with those of the "major" prophets (i.e., Jeremiah), and that the book of Jeremiah was indeed the "head" of the grouping. Although this is possible, it would be the only use of this method in the gospels, making it somewhat unlikely.
3. It could be that Matthew is combining two prophecies, that contain elements of the other. Although this device is used (at the Midrashic level of Hebrew Bible commentary), there doesn't seem to be a strong reason for it here.

Spurgeon: Even the disposal of the thirty pieces of silver fulfilled an ancient prophecy. The dark sayings of the prophets as well as their brighter utterances shall all be proved to be true as, one by one, they come to maturity. The fate of Judas should be a solemn warning to all professing Christians, and especially to all ministers. He was one of the twelve apostles, yet he was a son of perdition, and in the end he went to his own place. Each of us has his own place, heaven or hell; which is it?

Matthew 27:10

And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

9-10 This prophecy is found specifically in Zech. 11:12-13, but may also have been taken from Jeremiah 17:2-3; Jeremiah 18:1-4; Jeremiah 19:1-11; or Jeremiah 32:6-15. In Old Testament times, Jeremiah was considered the collector of some of the prophets' writings, so perhaps his name is cited rather than Zechariah.

BKC: 3-10. When Judas Iscariot realized the outcome of the deliberations, **he was filled with remorse and** went back to the officials. He had not envisioned this as the outcome of his betrayal, but what he had hoped to accomplish is not mentioned in the biblical text. He knew he had **betrayed innocent blood** for he admitted Jesus was not

¹²Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 27:9). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

worthy of death. The religious leaders were unsympathetic, pointing out that that was his problem, not theirs. **Judas** decided he had to get rid of **the money** he had received for betraying the Lord. The money was apparently a continual reminder of his action and convicted him of his sin. He went to the temple and **threw the money into the temple** (*naos*, the holy place itself, not the temple precincts). Unlike Peter, however, Judas' remorse did not include repentance, for **he went** from the temple **and hanged himself**. (More details of his action were given by Luke, Acts 1:18-19.)

Judas' act of throwing the betrayal money into the temple caused the religious leaders some problems. They did not feel the money should be **put** into the temple coffers **since it was blood money**, money paid to bring about a man's death. Yet they had had no scruples about giving it out in the first place (Matt. 26:15). **They decided to take the money and buy** a parcel of land (apparently in Judas' name, Acts 1:18) in which to bury **foreigners**. The parcel, which was a **potter's field**, a place where potters dug for clay, became known as **the Field of Blood** (Matt. 27:8), or *Akeldama* in Aramaic (Acts 1:19).

Matthew viewed these events as the fulfillment of a prophecy of **Jeremiah**. But the prophecy Matthew quoted was primarily from Zechariah, not Jeremiah. There is a close resemblance between Matthew 27:9-10 and Zechariah 11:12-13. But there are also similarities between Matthew's words and the ideas in Jeremiah 19:1, 4, 6, 11. Why then did Matthew refer only to Jeremiah? The solution to this problem is probably that Matthew had both prophets in mind but only mentioned the "major" prophet by name. (A similar situation is found in Mark 1:2-3, where Mark mentioned the Prophet Isaiah but quoted directly from both Isaiah and Malachi.) In addition, another explanation is that Jeremiah, in the Babylonian Talmud (*Baba Bathra* 14b), was placed first among the prophets, and his book represented all the other prophetic books.¹³

McGee: You will find this prophecy alluded to in Jeremiah 18:1-4 and evidently quoted from Zechariah 11:12-13. It is credited to Jeremiah simply because in Jesus' day Jeremiah was the first of the books of the prophets, and that section was identified by the name of the first book.

The significant thing is that Jesus was present when Judas returned with his thirty pieces of silver. In fact, Jesus was on His way to die—even for Judas. Our Lord had given him an opportunity to come back to Him there in the Garden of Gethsemane, and He had said, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" And even at this eleventh hour, Judas could have turned to the Lord Jesus and would have been forgiven.¹⁴

¹³Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:86). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁴McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:145). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Matthew 27:11

And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, **Thou sayest.**

Can't help but think that Pilate's question is sarcastic as here he is as the seated authority of the world empire responsible for this territory. Here Jesus answers Pilate (unlike the last trial).

[stood before the governor] It was the custom for the judge to sit and the accused to stand before him (Acts 26:6).

Barnes: And Jesus stood before the governor. Many things are omitted by Matthew in the account of this trial, which are recorded by the other evangelists. A much more full account is found in John 18:28-40.

Barnes: Thou sayest. That is, thou sayest right, or thou sayest the truth. We may wonder why the Jews, if they heard this confession, did not press it upon the attention of Pilate as a full confession of his guilt. It was what they had accused him of. But it might be doubtful whether, in the confusion, they heard the confession; or, if they did, Jesus took away all occasion of triumph by *explaining* to Pilate the *nature* of his kingdom, John 18:36. Though he acknowledged that he was a king, yet he stated fully that *his kingdom was not of this world*, and that therefore it could not be alleged against him as treason against the Roman emperor. This was done *in the palace*, apart from the Jews; and fully satisfied Pilate of his innocence, John 18:38.

McGee: You see, the religious rulers wanted to get rid of Jesus because of what they considered blasphemy. You remember that when the high priest put Him on oath and asked Him if He was the Christ, the Son of God, Jesus said that He was. And further He said, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26:64). To the religious rulers that was blasphemy, and they would have stoned Him on that charge, but Rome did not allow the Jews to carry out the death penalty. So they had to deliver Jesus to Pilate with a charge that would stick in a Roman court. Treason would be one that would stick, and so Jesus was charged with claiming to be the King of the Jews.

The answer of Jesus to the charge was, "Thou sayest"—or, "It is as you say."¹⁵

Matthew 27:12

And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

[answered nothing] Second and third times He did not answer because the questions concerned accusations which were so obviously false they answered themselves

¹⁵McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:145). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

(Matthew 26:62; Matthew 27:12,14). You also wonder what He could have said in His defense because he was standing in our shoes, standing in our place.

Spurgeon: This was the time for Jesus to be dumb, "like a sheep before her shearers." His silence astonished Pilate, as his speech had before overawed the officers sent to arrest him (Joh 7:45,46). Jesus answered nothing, for he was there as his people's representative; and though he had not sinned, they were guilty of all that was falsely laid to his charge. He might have cleared himself of every accusation that was brought against him, but that would have left the load of guilt upon those whose place he came to take; so he answered never a word. Such silence was sublime.

Matthew 27:13

Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?

Barnes: **They witness against thee.** This means, rather, that they *accused* him. They were not *witnesses*, but accusers. These accusations were repeated and pressed. They charged him with exciting the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem, and exciting them to sedition, Luke 23:6.

Standing before Pilate, the religious leaders accused Jesus of a different crime than the ones for which they had arrested him. They arrested him for blasphemy (claiming to be God), but that charge would mean nothing to the Romans. So the religious leaders had to accuse Jesus of crimes that would have concerned the Roman government, such as encouraging the people not to pay taxes, claiming to be a king, and causing riots. These accusations were not true, but the religious leaders were determined to kill Jesus, and they broke several commandments in order to do so.

Matthew 27:14

And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

Jesus did not defend Himself. He did acknowledge who He was just as He did under oath before the Sanhedrin. Cf. Isa 53:7. Pilate is amazed at His silence.

(Isaiah 53:7) *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

Jesus' silence fulfilled the words of the prophet (Isaiah 53:7). Pilate was amazed that Jesus didn't try to defend himself. He recognized the obvious plot against Jesus and wanted to let him go, but Pilate was already under pressure from Rome to keep peace in his territory. The last thing he needed was a rebellion over this quiet and seemingly insignificant man.

BKC: 11-14 (Mark 15:2-5; Luke 23:1-5; John 18:28-38). Compared with the other Gospels, Matthew's record of Jesus' trial before Pilate is rather brief. Luke even mentioned that Pilate sent Jesus to Herod when he learned Jesus was a Galilean (Luke 23:6-12). That gesture brought about a friendship between Pilate and Herod that had not existed before. Matthew mentioned only one trial before Pilate and the one "accusation" that **Jesus** is the King of the Jews. The kingship of Jesus of course was Matthew's main theme. When Pilate asked Jesus, **Are You the King of the Jews?** the answer came in the affirmative. But as John recorded, Jesus' kingdom at that time was not a political kingdom to rival Rome (John 18:33-37). Jesus was no threat to Roman rule. Pilate realized that and sought to release Jesus.

While other accusations were presented by **the chief priests and the elders**, Jesus did not **answer** them, and **Pilate** was greatly surprised (*thaumazein*, "to be amazed"). Jesus need not answer those charges, for He was not being tried for those accusations. Instead He was on trial because they said He claimed to be the King of the Jews, the Messiah (Matt. 26:63-64). Since Pilate had also declared Jesus' innocence (John 18:38), there was no reason for Him to answer the accusations.¹⁶

Matthew 27:15

Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.

The Romans were unwelcome, they were the oppressors, the conquerors. They put in power Herod, who tried to win popularity through building projects. At these feast, there were three which required that every able-bodied male attend in Jerusalem. Pilate is nervous about an insurrection. So one gimmick to win popularity was an amnesty, they would let the people pick one prisoner which they would release.

[release unto the people a prisoner] It is not known when such a custom started or from what source or by whom.

[whom they would] Christ knew they would not release Him. The governor did not realize the extent of religious prejudice involved.

Clarke: The governor was wont to release—Whence this custom originated among the Jews is not known,—probably it was introduced by the Romans themselves, or by Pilate, merely to oblige the Jews, by showing them this public token of respect; but if it originated with him, he must have had the authority of Augustus; for the Roman laws never gave such discretionary power to any governor.

¹⁶Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:87). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Matthew 27:16

And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.

[**Barabbas**] Some of the older manuscripts indicate his name was Jesus Barabbas. “Bar” (Son of) “Abba” (The Father). Satanic pun involved?

15-16 Barabbas had taken part in a rebellion against the Roman government (Mark 15:7). Although an enemy to Rome, he may have been a hero to the Jews. Ironically, Barabbas was guilty of the crime for which Jesus was accused. *Barabbas* means “son of the father,” which was actually Jesus’ position with God.

(Mark 15:7) *And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.*

Clarke: A notable prisoner—Barabbas—This person had, a short time before, raised an insurrection in Jerusalem, in which it appears, from Mark 15:7, some lives were lost. In some MSS., and in the Armenian and Syriac Hieros., this man has the surname of Jesus. Professor Birch has discovered this reading in a Vatican MS., written in 949, and numbered 354, in which is a marginal note which has been attributed to Anastasius, bishop of Antioch, and to Chrysostom, which asserts that in the most ancient MSS. the passage was as follows:— Which of the two do ye wish me to release unto you, Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? As Jesus, or Joshua, was a very common name among the Jews, and as the name of the father was often joined to that of the son, as Simon Barjonah, Simon, son of Jonah; so it is probable it was the case here, Jesus Barabba, Jesus, son of Abba, or Abbiah. If this name were originally written as above, which I am inclined to believe, the general omission of JESUS in the MSS. may be accounted for from the over zealous scrupulosity of Christian copyists, who were unwilling that a murderer should, in the same verse, be honored with the name of the Redeemer of the world.

JNTC: 16–24 The translation of Aramaic **Bar-Abba**, known to English-speakers as Barabbas, is “son of father” (see Mk 14:36N). Thus two **Yeshuas**: one the son of a human father, the other the Son of God the Father.

It was not out of compassion that Pilate favored releasing Yeshua. Rather, he perceived that Bar-Abba would be a far more dangerous criminal to have on the loose. Pilate was a brutal man (v. 2N, Lk 13:1&N) and a calculating man. He did not escape his share of the responsibility for Yeshua’s death (Ac 4:27–28) by merely washing his hands (v. 24).¹⁷

¹⁷Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 27:16). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

Matthew 27:17

Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

This was Pilate's big hope. Here is a guy who is a known felon, and another guy who is up due to some religious argument by the envious chief Priests.

[**called Christ**] Showing that His claim to Messiahship was well known to all.

Matthew 27:18

For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

[**For he knew that for envy they had delivered him**] What testimony of Jewish religion to a pagan and a stranger! What a testimony of a pagan to Christ!

Clarke: For envy— $\Delta\iota\alpha\ \phi\theta\omicron\nu\nu\omicron\nu$, through malice. Then it was his business, as an upright judge, to have dispersed this mob, and immediately released Jesus. Seeing malice is capable of putting even Christ himself to death, how careful should we be not to let the least spark of it harbor in our breast. Let it be remembered that malice as often originates from envy as it does from anger.

Matthew 27:19

When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

Claudia Procula - tradition and legends hold that she was actually a Jewish gal who converts to be a Christian. We have no evidence of these being correct. The Romans were also very superstitious.¹⁸

[**his wife**] Her name was Claudia Procula, a striking proof of the veracity of Matthew. It was only in the reign of Tiberias that wives of governors were permitted to accompany their husbands.¹⁹

[**Have thou nothing to do with that just man**] Good advice, but unheeded.

Clarke: I have suffered many things—in a dream—There is no doubt that God had appeared unto this woman, testifying the innocence of Christ, and showing the evils which should pursue Pilate if this innocent blood should be shed by his authority.

¹⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Matthew, khouse.org

¹⁹ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

Eight Just People

There are many just people in Scripture, but eight are specifically mentioned as being "just":

1. Noah (Genesis 6:9)
2. Joseph (Matthew 1:19)
3. Jesus (Matthew 27:19; Acts 22:14)
4. John the Baptist (Mark 6:20)
5. Simeon (Luke 2:25)
6. Joseph of Arimathaea (Luke 23:50-51)
7. Cornelius (Acts 10:22)
8. Lot (2 Peter 2:7)

Barnes: Have thou nothing to do, That is, do not condemn him. Perhaps she was afraid that the vengeance of heaven would follow her husband and family, if he condemned the innocent.

Barnes: I have suffered many things, Dreams were occasionally considered as indications of the Divine will; and, among the Romans and Greeks, as well as the Jews, great reliance was placed on them. Her mind- probably agitated with the subject; satisfied of the innocence of Jesus; and knowing that the Jews would make every effort to secure his condemnation-was also excited during her sleep, perhaps with a frightful prospect of the judgments that would descend on the family of Pilate if Jesus was condemned. She therefore sent to him to secure if possible his release.

For a leader who was supposed to administer justice, Pilate proved to be more concerned about political expediency than about doing what was right. He had several opportunities to make the right decision. His conscience told him Jesus was innocent; Roman law said an innocent man should not be put to death; and his wife had a troubling dream. Pilate had no good excuse to condemn Jesus, but he was afraid of the crowd.

Matthew 27:20

But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

[persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus] It is to the shame of human beings that they can be swayed into sin by leaders.

Clarke: Ask Barabbas—Who had raised an insurrection and committed murder—and to destroy Jesus, whose voice was never heard in their streets, and who had, during the space of three years and a half, gone about unweariedly, from village to village, instructing the ignorant, healing the diseased, and raising the dead.

Barnes: Persuaded the multitude. The release of a prisoner was to be to the *people*, not to the *rulers*. The rulers therefore, in order to secure the condemnation of Jesus, urged on the people to demand Barabbas. The people were greatly under the influence of the

priests. Galileans among the citizens of Jerusalem were held in contempt. The priests turned the pretensions of Jesus into ridicule. Hence in a popular tumult, among a flexible and changing multitude, they easily excited them, who but a little before had cried hosanna, to cry crucify him.

Matthew 27:21

The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

[**They said, Barabbas**] A few days earlier they had hailed Him as the son of David and Messiah; now they preferred a murderer to Him.

Clarke: They said, Barabbas—What a fickle crowd! A little before they all hailed him as the Son of David, and acknowledged him as a gift from God; now they prefer a murderer to him! But this it appears they did at the instigation of the chief priests. We see here how dangerous wicked priests are in the Church of Christ; when pastors are corrupt, they are capable of inducing their flock to prefer Barabbas to Jesus, the world to God, and the pleasures of sense to the salvation of their souls. The invidious epithet which a certain statesman gave to the people at large was, in its utmost latitude, applicable to these Jews,—they were a SWINISH MULTITUDE.

Crowds are fickle. They loved Jesus on Sunday because they thought he was going to inaugurate his kingdom. Then they hated him on Friday when his power appeared broken. In the face of the mass uprising against Jesus, his friends were afraid to speak up.

Faced with a clear choice, the people chose Barabbas, a revolutionary and murderer, over the Son of God. Faced with the same choice today, people are still choosing “Barabbas.” They would rather have the tangible force of human power than the salvation offered by the Son of God.

Matthew 27:22

Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.

“crucify”: This is a very strange request on the part of the Jewish crowd. They must have been bribed to do that. If they were seeking a religious execution they would plead for Him to be stoned. The form of capital punishment throughout the Old Testament and throughout Israel’s history has been stoning. When someone was guilty of blasphemy, they stoned him or her. There is a bitter hatred between the Jews and the Romans. Normally, when they see someone crucified, it is one of them, the Jews, which the Romans are trying to shame.

[**What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?**] The greatest question of human life. How we answer it determines our destiny.

McGee: Imagine a Roman judge asking a crowd what he should do with a prisoner! Pilate was the judge, and he should make the decision. The Gospel of John tells us that Pilate repeatedly called Jesus inside the judgment hall and questioned Him privately. His thought seemed to be, “Jesus, if You will cooperate with me, I can get You out of this, and it will get me off this hot seat I’m on!” But the Lord Jesus would not defend Himself. When we analyze this mock trial, we come to the conclusion that Pilate was the one on trial and, actually, that Jesus was the Judge.

Pilate had to make a decision relative to Him; so he asked the crowd, “What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?” The answer came back to him—it was flung in his face—“Let him be crucified!”²⁰

Matthew 27:23

And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

[Why, what evil hath he done?] This question has never been answered and never will be, for He was sinless (1 Peter 2:22). Pilate plainly saw that there was nothing laid to his charge for which, consistently with the Roman laws, he could condemn him.

A mob never has a reason.

But they cried out the more—What strange fury and injustice! They could not answer Pilate’s question, What evil hath he done? He had done none, and they knew he had done none; but they are determined on his death.

Barnes: **And the governor said, Why?** Luke informs us that Pilate put this question to them *three times*, so anxious was he to release him. He affirmed that he had found no cause of death in him. He said, therefore, that he would chastise him, and let him go. He expected probably, by causing him to be publicly whipped, to excite their compassion, to satisfy *them*, and thus to evade the demands of the priests, and to set him at liberty with the consent of the people. So weak and irresolute was this Roman governor! Satisfied of his innocence, he should at once have preferred justice to popularity, and acted as became a magistrate in acquitting the innocent.

BKC: 15-23 (Mark 15:6-14; Luke 23:13-24; John 18:39-40). Pilate had been warned by **his wife** to be careful how he dealt with this prisoner, for He was an **innocent Man** (Matt. 27:19). She had **suffered a great deal** through **a dream** concerning Jesus and shared her experience with her husband. To speculate beyond the words of the text on the content of her dream would be useless. Since **Pilate** believed Jesus was innocent, he tried to have Him released. It was a **custom** of the governor **to release a prisoner** each year at the Passover in order to gain acceptance with the Jews. His plan to bring about the **release** of **Jesus** involved a notorious prisoner named **Barabbas**, an

²⁰McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:146). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

insurrectionist (John 18:40) and murderer (Mark 15:7). **Pilate** thought that surely the people of the nation loved Jesus, their King, and that only the leaders were envious of Him and of the people's acclaim of Him (Matt. 27:18). He reasoned that if the people had a choice they surely would release **Jesus**, not the notorious **Barabbas**.

However, **Pilate** failed to grasp the determination of the religious leaders to do away with Jesus, for they **persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed**. When Pilate asked the crowd **what he should do . . . with Jesus who is called Christ . . . they all answered, Crucify Him!** The Greek text shows their cry was one word, "Crucify" (staurōthētō). One can almost picture this scene, somewhat like a football stadium in which the crowd shouts "Defense!" Their cheer was "Crucify, crucify!" When Pilate sought further information from the crowd as to Jesus' crimes, the crowd simply **shouted . . . louder, Crucify!**²¹

Spurgeon: A blind, unreasoning hate had taken possession of the people. They gave no answer to Pilate's wondering enquiry, "Why, what evil hath he done?" for he had done nothing amiss; they only repeated the brutal demand, "Let him be crucified."

The world's hatred of Christ is shown in similar fashion today. He has done no evil, no one has suffered harm at his hands, all unite to pronounce him innocent; and yet they practically cry, "Away with him! Crucify him!"

Matthew 27:24

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye *to it*.

Ceremonially showing "washing his hands" to resolve himself from the responsibility. This is a Jewish procedure, not a Roman procedure (Cf. Deut 21; 2 Sam 3; Ps 26). The pride of Rome was that you were under the protection of Rome. What made the Romans so strong was their regard for discipline and law. Pilate had concluded and announced that Jesus was innocent. Therefore, Pilate was responsible to protect Him. By Roman standards, Pilate blew it! Why did he do it? He's frightened of an insurrection.²²

Pilate was of a mind to let Him go, but the pressure was too great for his weak character.

[washed his hands before the multitude] This was a custom to show innocence in any particular matter (Deut. 21:1-9; Psalm 26:6). Pilate had the armed men to prevent His death but he did not use them, so he was inexcusable.

Clarke: Pilate—took water, and washed his hands—Thus signifying his innocence. It was a custom among the Hebrews, Greeks, and Latins, to wash the hands in token of innocence, and to show that they were pure from any imputed guilt. In case of an

²¹Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:87). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

²²Chuck Missler, Notes on Matthew, khouse.org

undiscovered murder, the elders of that city which was nearest to the place where the dead body was found, were required by the law, Deuteronomy 21:1-10, to wash their hands over the victim which was offered to expiate the crime, and thus make public protestation of their own innocence. David says, I will wash my hands in innocence, so shall I compass thine altar, Psalm 26:6. As Pilate knew Christ was innocent, he should have prevented his death: he had the armed force at his command, and should have dispersed this infamous mob. Had he been charged with countenancing a seditious person, he could have easily cleared himself, had the matter been brought before the emperor. He, therefore, was inexcusable.

(Psalm 26:6) *I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord:*

Barnes: He took water, The Jews were accustomed to wash their hands when they wished to show that they were innocent of a crime committed by others. See Deuteronomy 21:6, Psalms 26:6. They often used *signs* to represent their meaning. Pilate, in doing this, meant to denote that they were guilty of his death, but that he was innocent. But the mere washing of his hands did not free him from guilt, he was *bound* as a magistrate to free an innocent man; and whatever might be the clamour of the Jews, *he* was guilty at the bar of God for suffering the holy Saviour to be led to execution, to gratify the malice of enraged priests, and the clamours of a tumultuous populace.

At first Pilate hesitated to give the religious leaders permission to crucify Jesus. He thought they were simply jealous of a teacher who was more popular with the people than they were. But when the Jews threatened to report Pilate to Caesar (John 19:12), Pilate became afraid. Historical records indicate that the Jews had already threatened to lodge a formal complaint against Pilate for his stubborn flouting of their traditions—and such a complaint would most likely have led to his recall by Rome. His job was in jeopardy. The Roman government could not afford to put large numbers of troops in all the regions under their control, so one of Pilate’s main duties was to do whatever was necessary to maintain peace.

(John 19:12) *And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.*

In making no decision, Pilate made the decision to let the crowds crucify Jesus. Although he washed his hands, the guilt remained. Washing your hands of a tough situation doesn’t cancel your guilt. It merely gives you a false sense of peace. Don’t make excuses—take responsibility for the decisions you make.

Although Pilate washed his hands, the bitter irony of it is that in the oldest creed of the church stand these words: “... crucified under Pontius Pilate.” The blood of Jesus was on his hands no matter how much he washed them.

Matthew 27:25

Then answered all the people, and said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children.

Dake: [**His blood be on us, and on our children**] The Jews quickly assumed full responsibility for His death: We accept the punishment for such a crime; let it be upon us and upon our children. They were visited with the same kind of punishment and worse, for the Romans crucified them in such numbers that there were no more crosses or place for them (Luke 21:20-24). As many as 500 a day were scourged and crucified. Their children for ages have gone through untold sufferings in all lands. They are yet to suffer the greatest time of tribulation that has ever been on earth or ever will be (Matthew 24:15-22; Rev. 6:1-19:21; Daniel 11:40-45; Daniel 12:1; Jeremiah 30:3-9; Ezekiel 20:33-38; Zech. 13:9; Zech. 14:1-5).

Clarke: **His blood be on us and on our children**—If this man be innocent, and we put him to death as a guilty person, may the punishment due to such a crime be visited upon us, and upon our children after us! What a dreadful imprecation! and how literally fulfilled! The notes on chap. 24, will show how they fell victims to their own imprecation, being visited with a series of calamities unexampled in the history of the world. They were visited with the same kind of punishment; for the Romans crucified them in such numbers when Jerusalem was taken, that there was found a deficiency of crosses for the condemned, and of places for the crosses. Their children or descendants have had the same curse entailed upon them, and continue to this day a proof of the innocence of Christ, the truth of his religion, and of the justice of God.

Barnes: **His blood be on us**, That is, let the guilt of putting him to death, if there be any, be on us and our children. We will be answerable for it, and will consent to bear the punishment for it. It is remarked by writers, that among the Athenians, if any one accused another of a capital crime, he devoted himself and children to the same punishment, if the accused was afterwards found innocent. So in all countries the conduct of the parent involves also the children in the consequences of his conduct, The Jews had no *right* to call down this vengeance on their children, but in the righteous judgment of God it has come upon them. In less than forty years their city and temple were overthrown and destroyed. More than a million of people perished in the siege. Thousands died by famine; thousands by disease; thousands by the sword; and their blood ran down the streets like water, so that, Josephus says, it extinguished things that were burning in the city, Thousands were *crucified*- suffering the same punishment that they had inflicted on the Messiah. So great was the number of those who were crucified, that, Josephus says, they were obliged to cease from it, "room being wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the men." To this day, also, the curse has remained. They have been a nation scattered and peeled; persecuted almost everywhere, and a hissing and a by-word among men. No single nation probably has suffered so much; and yet they have been preserved. All classes of men; all the governments of the earth, have conspired to overwhelm them with calamity, and yet they still live as monuments of the justice of God, and as proofs, going down from age to age, that the Christian religion is true- standing demonstrations of the crime of their fathers in putting the Messiah to death, and in calling down vengeance on their heads.

JNTC: His blood is on us and on our children. Or: “His blood be on us” See Ac 18:6&N. This verse has been used to justify persecution of Jews through the centuries by Christians who presumed that the Jewish people had invoked a curse on themselves and on their posterity, and willingly accepted responsibility for “deicide.” But a mob cannot speak in an official capacity for anyone, let alone for a people. Nor, in the light of Ezekiel 18, can anyone invoke a curse on unborn generations. Moreover, even were the curse effectual, Yeshua prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).

Besides, if the Jews were the only ones who killed him, then he didn’t die for anyone else. But he died for all, not just for Jews: the righteous Messiah died for everyone who is unrighteous, which is to say, for everyone. Everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, is a sinner. By sinning, everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, killed him. Therefore everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, is guilty of Yeshua’s death. See Yn 3:16; Ro 3:23, 5:7–8; 1 Yn 2:1.²³

Matthew 27:26

Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *him* to be crucified.

“scourging”: A whip with multiple lashes with pieces of bone which would tear the flesh when the person was whipped.

[**scourged Jesus**] A scourge was a Roman implement for severe physical punishment. It consisted of a handle with about a dozen leather cords with jagged pieces of bone or metal at each end to make the blow more painful and effective. The victim was tied to a post and the blows were applied to the bare back and loins and sometimes to the face and bowels. The flesh was cut in several places by each blow. So hideous was the punishment that the victim often fainted and some died under it. It was designed to get confessions and secrets from victims, but what could they get from an innocent sinless one (Acts 22:24-25)? Flogging was permitted by the law up to 40 stripes (Deut. 25:3). Jews reduced this to 39 stripes (2 Cor. 11:23-25). If the scourge used on Jesus had 12 thongs and He was hit even 39 times this would make 468 stripes. If some struck in the same place and cut deeper each time one can see how His body, because of the intense hatred back of each blow, was marred more than any other man's (Isaiah 52:14).

Barnes: And when he had scourged Jesus. Matthew 10:17. Among the Romans, it was customary to scourge, or whip, a slave before he was crucified. This was done to inflict a greater suffering than crucifixion would be alone; and to add to the horrors of the punishment. Our Lord, being about to be put to death, after the manner of a *slave*, was also treated as a slave; as one of the lowest and most despised of mankind,

He delivered him, Not merely he gave him up to *them* to crucify him, as if *they* only were answerable, but he gave him up as a *judge* when he ought to have saved his life, and

²³Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 27:25). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

might have done it. Crucifixion was a Roman punishment; it was performed by Roman soldiers; Pilate pronounced the sentence from the tribunal, and Pilate affixed the title to the cross. Pilate, therefore, as well as the Jews, was answerable to God for the death of the Saviour of the world.

scourged. Roman flogging was a horrifically cruel punishment. Those condemned to it were tied to a post and beaten with a leather whip that was interwoven with pieces of bone and metal, which tore through skin and tissue, often exposing bones and intestines. In many cases, the flogging itself was fatal. The Romans scourged Jesus nearly to death so that he would not remain alive on the cross after sundown.

(BKC [NT] p. 88)

HARMONY OF EVENTS AT JESUS' CRUCIFIXION

1. Jesus arrived at Golgotha (Matt. 27:33; Mark 15:22; Luke 23:33; John 19:17).
2. He refused the offer of wine mixed with myrrh (Matt. 27:34; Mark 15:23).
3. He was nailed to the cross between the two thieves (Matt. 27:35-38; Mark 15:24-28; Luke 23:33-38; John 19:18).
4. He gave His first cry from the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).
5. The soldiers took Jesus' garments, leaving Him naked on the cross (Matt. 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:23).
6. The Jews mocked Jesus (Matt. 27:39-43; Mark 15:29-32; Luke 23:35-37).
7. He conversed with the two thieves (Luke 23:39-43).
8. He gave His second cry from the cross, "I tell you the truth; today you will be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).
9. He spoke the third time, "Woman, here is your son" (John 19:26-27).
10. Darkness came from noon to 3 P.M. (Matt. 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44).
11. He gave His fourth cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46-47; Mark 15:34-36).
12. His fifth cry was, "I am thirsty" (John 19:28).
13. He drank "wine vinegar" (John 19:29).
14. His sixth cry was, "It is finished" (John 19:30).
15. He drank wine vinegar from a sponge (Matt. 27:48; Mark 15:36).
16. He cried a seventh time, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46).
17. He dismissed His spirit by an act of His own will (Matt. 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30).
18. The temple curtain was torn in two (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45).
19. Roman soldiers admitted, "Surely He was the Son of God" (Matt. 27:54; Mark 15:39).

BKC: 24-26 (Mark 15:15; Luke 23:25; John 19:6-16). Pilate realized he was **getting nowhere** with the crowd, and their threats to report him to Caesar (John 19:12) concerned him. His record with Caesar was not good, and he did not want word of a rival king to reach Caesar's ears, especially if Pilate had released that king. **He** therefore **took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd**, symbolizing his desire to absolve himself from being involved in putting an innocent man to death (Deut. 21:6-9). But his words, **I am innocent of this Man's blood**, did not make him innocent (Acts 4:27). Such an act did not remove Pilate's guilt from this travesty of justice.

When Pilate turned the **responsibility** over to the Jews (Matt. 27:24), however, they readily accepted it. They said, **Let His blood be on us and on our children!** Their words sadly came to pass as the judgment of God came on many of them and their children in A.D. 70 when the Romans destroyed the nation and the temple. In spite of Pilate's four declarations of Jesus' innocence (Luke 23:14, 20, 22; John 19:4), he fulfilled his commitment to the Jews by releasing **Barabbas** and turning **Jesus** over for crucifixion after He had been **flogged**.²⁴

Matthew 27:27

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.

[**common hall**] The Praetorium, the open courtyard or judgment hall (John 18:28,33; John 19:9; Mark 15:16). This was Pilate's house and the camp headquarters of the Roman guard of the governor. It was Herod's palace, a most magnificent building on the highest part of Mt. Zion.

Clarke: The common hall—Or, *praetorium*. Called so from the *praetor*, a principal magistrate among the Romans, whose business it was to administer justice in the absence of the consul. This place might be termed in English the court house, or common hall.

Matthew 27:28

And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

[**scarlet robe**] Perhaps a Roman outer garment or military cloak, used here for mockery of His claim to royalty.

Barnes: A scarlet robe. Mark says they clothed him in purple. The scarlet colour was obtained from a species of fruit; *purple* from shell-fish. The ancients gave the name purple to any colour that had a mixture of red in it, and consequently these different colours might be some- times called by the same name. The robe here used was the kind worn by Roman generals, and other distinguished officers of the Roman army, and also by the Roman governors. It was made so as to be placed on the shoulders, and was bound around the body so as to leave the right arm at liberty. As we cannot suppose that Pilate would array him in a new and splendid robe, we must suppose that this was one which had been worn and cast off as useless, and was now used to array the Son of God as an object of ridicule and scorn!

²⁴Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:87). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Matthew 27:29

And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

[Had platted] The word *platted* here means *woven together*, or having made a *wreath* of a thorn-bush.

[crown of thorns] Meant to inflict pain and to make a mock symbol of authority. In a symbolic Biblical sense, when God curses the earth in Genesis 3, the symbol of that curse is thorns. Thus, that curse is symbolically carried on the head of our Savior. The crowns that start in Genesis, find their climax here at the crucifixion. Indeed, He bore the curse that was put on creation because of sin.

[crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand] For cruelty and mockery, fulfilling His own prophecy (Matthew 20:17-19).

[thorns] Greek: *akantha* (GSN-173), a thorn (Matthew 7:16; Matthew 13:22; Matthew 27:29; Mark 4:7; Mark 4:18; Luke 6:44; Luke 8:14; John 19:2; Hebrews 6:8). It is impossible to tell which species was used, but any of them would be bad enough to wear on the head. See also Judges 8:7,16; Proverbs 15:19; Psalm 58:9; Eccles. 7:6; Isaiah 7:23-25; Hosea 2:6; Hosea 9:6; Hosea 10:8; Micah 7:4.

[reed] A mock scepter.

Barnes: And they bowed the knee. This was done for mockery. It was an act of pretended homage. It was to ridicule his saying that he was a king. The common mode of showing respect or homage for kings was by kneeling or prostration. It shows amazing forbearance on the part of Jesus, that he thus consented to be ridiculed, and set at naught. No mere *human* being would have borne it. None but Him who loved us unto death, and who saw the grand results that would come from this scene of sufferings, could have endured such cruel mockery.

Barnes: Hail, king of the Jews! The term *hail* was a common mode of salutation to a king, or even to a friend. It implies, commonly, the highest respect for office, as well as the person, and is an invocation of blessings on the person. Here it was used to carry on what they thought to be the *farce* of his being a king; to ridicule in every possible way the pretensions of a poor, unattended, unarmed man of Nazareth, as if he had been a weak impostor, or had been deranged.

People often make fun of Christians for their faith, but believers can take courage from the fact that Jesus himself was mocked as greatly as anyone. Taunting may hurt our feelings, but we should never let it change our faith (see Matthew 5:11-12).

Matthew 27:30

And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

Not described here in the New Testament, but found in Isaiah 50 is that they tore off His beard! Cf. Isa 50:6

(Isaiah 50:6) I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

[spit in his face] Spitting in the face was considered the greatest insult to a person (Numbers 12:14; Deut. 25:9; Job 30:10). See Matthew 27:30; Mark 15:19; John 19:3.

McGee: The soldiers took this opportunity to have their fun with Him before He was crucified. Since He was going to die anyway, they could mutilate Him and do anything they wished with Him. They played a cruel Roman game known as “hot-hand” with their prisoners. All the soldiers would show the prisoner their fists. Then they would blindfold the prisoner, and all but one would hit him as hard as they could. Then they would remove the blindfold, and if the prisoner was still conscious, he was to guess which soldier did not hit him. Obviously, the prisoner could never guess the right one. They would continue this until they had beaten the prisoner to a pulp. I believe that the Lord Jesus was so mutilated that you would not have recognized Him. “As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men” (Isa. 52:14).²⁵

Matthew 27:31

And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.

[crucify him] Death by crucifixion was one of the most cruel and shameful deaths that could be devised. It is supposed to have been invented by Semiramis, queen of Nimrod, who founded the Babylonian system of mysteries. See Rev. 17:5. It was a Roman practice inflicted only upon slaves and the worst criminals. The person was nailed to the cross, each hand extended to the utmost stretch. The feet were nailed together, and then the cross was lifted and dropped into the hole with a violent thud which disjoined the whole body. The weight of the body hung on nails through the hands and feet. A victim was left on the cross until he died of pain and untold sufferings.

Barnes: Him they compelled to bear his cross. John says, John 19:17 that Jesus went forth "bearing his cross." Luke says, Luke 23:26, that they laid the cross on Simon, that he might bear it after Jesus. There is no contradiction in these accounts. It was a part of the usual punishment of those who were crucified, that they should bear their own cross to the place of execution. It was accordingly laid at first on Jesus, and he went forth, as

²⁵McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:147). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

John says, bearing it. Weak, however, and exhausted by suffering and watchfulness, he probably sunk under, the heavy burden, and they laid hold of Simon that he might bear *one end* of the cross, as Luke says, *after Jesus*. The cross was composed of two pieces of wood, one of which was placed upright in the earth, and the other crossed it, after the form of the figure t. The upright part was commonly so high that the feet of the person crucified were two or three feet from the ground. On the middle of that upright part there was a projection, or seat, on which the person crucified sat, or, as it were, *rode*. This was necessary, as the hands were not alone strong enough to bear the weight of the body; as the body was left exposed often many days, and not unfrequently suffered to remain till the flesh had been devoured by vultures, or putrefied in the sun. The feet were fastened to this upright piece, either by nailing them with large spikes driven through the tender part, or by being lashed by cords. To the cross-piece at the top, the hands, being extended, were also fastened, either by spikes or by cords, or perhaps in some cases by both. The hands and feet of our Saviour were both fastened by spikes. Crosses were also sometimes made in the form of the letter X, the limbs of the person crucified being extended to the four parts, and he suffered to die a lingering death in this cruel manner. The cross used in the crucifixion of Christ appears to have been the former. The mention of the cross often occurs in the New Testament. It was the instrument on which the Saviour made atonement for the sins of the world. The whole of the Christian's hope of heaven, and all his peace and consolation in trial and in death, depend on the sacrifice there made for sin, and on just views and feelings in regard to the fact and the design of the Redeemer's death.

BKC: 27-31 (Mark 15:16-20; John 19:1-5). Jesus was brought **into the Praetorium**, the common meeting courtyard crowded with Roman **soldiers**. The Praetorium may have been at Pilate's residence, the Castle of Antonia, though others suggest Herod's palace. The Praetorium was a large area, for 600 soldiers were there ("company of soldiers" is lit., "cohort," one-tenth of a legion).

There **they** removed His clothing and mocked Him by (a) putting **on Him a scarlet robe**, clothing for a king, (b) placing **a crown of thorns . . . on His head**, and (c) giving Him **a staff** for a "scepter." They **knelt** before **Him and mocked Him** by saying, **Hail, King of the Jews!** What a tragic figure Jesus presented at that moment. They degraded Him further by spitting **on Him**, and striking **Him on the head again and again** with **the staff**. Unknown to them, their actions fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy concerning the Savior's marring (Isa. 52:14). Because of the known cruelty of Roman soldiers, Jesus was probably beaten to the point where few would have recognized Him. Yet He silently bore the unjust treatment, submitting to the will of His Father (cf. 1 Peter 2:23). With their sport completed, the soldiers again dressed Jesus in **His own clothes** and **led Him away to be crucified**.²⁶

lit. literal, literally
cf. *confer*, compare

²⁶Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:88). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Spurgeon: It was divinely overruled that Jesus should go forth with his own raiment on him, that nobody might say that another person had been substituted for the Savior. As they led him away, robed in that well-known seamless garment, woven from the top throughout, all who looked upon him would say, "It is the Nazarene going forth to execution; we recognize his dress as well as his person."

Matthew 27:32

And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

Cf. Mark 15:21 mentions his two sons. Church tradition that his two sons were saved.

[**Cyrene**] Cyrene was the capital of the province of Libya in North Africa. It was situated approximately 11 miles south of the Mediterranean sea.

Clarke: A man of Cyrene—him they compelled to bear his cross—In John, John 19:16, 17, we are told Christ himself bore the cross, and this, it is likely, he did for a part of the way; but, being exhausted with the scourging and other cruel usage which he had received, he was found incapable of bearing it alone; therefore they obliged Simon, not, I think, to bear it entirely, but to assist Christ, by bearing a part of it. It was a constant practice among the Romans, to oblige criminal to bear their cross to the place of execution: insomuch that Plutarch makes use of it as an illustration of the misery of vice. "Every kind of wickedness produces its own particular torment, just as every malefactor, when he is brought forth to execution, carries his own cross." See Lardner's Credib. vol. i. p. 160.

Condemned prisoners had to carry their own crosses to the execution site. Jesus, weakened from the beatings he had received, was physically unable to carry his cross any farther. Thus a bystander, Simon, was forced to do so. Simon was from Cyrene, in northern Africa, and was probably one of the thousands of Jews visiting Jerusalem for the Passover.

Matthew 27:33

And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

[**Golgotha**] is the Hebrew. The Latin phrase is "Calvary."

[**Golgotha**] The skull: called calvaria, a skull (Luke 23:33), a place outside Jerusalem (Hebrews 13:12). Origen (185-253 A.D.) refers to a tradition that Christ was crucified where Adam was buried and where his skull was found.

Barnes: Golgotha. This is the Hebrew word signifying the place of a skull, This is the word which in Luke is called *Calvary*. In the original, there also, it is *a skull*. The word

calvary is a Latin word meaning *skull*, or *place of skulls*. It is not known certainly why this name was given to this place. Some have supposed that it was because the mount resembled in shape a human skull. The most probable opinion, however, is that it was a place of execution; that malefactors were beheaded there, or otherwise put to death, and that their bones remained unburied or unburned. Mount Calvary was a small eminence, usually supposed to have been on the northwest of Jerusalem, without the walls of the city, but at a short distance. Jesus was put to death out of the city, because capital punishments were not allowed within the walls. See Numbers 15:35,36, 1 Kings 21:13. This was a law among the Romans, as well as the Jews. He also died there, because the bodies of the beasts slain in sacrifice, as typical of him, were burned without the camp. He also, as the antitype, suffered without the gate, Hebrews 13:11,12. The place which is shown as Calvary now is within the city, and must also have been within the ancient walls; and there is no reason to suppose that it is the place where the Saviour was put to death.

Some scholars say Golgotha ("skull") derives its name from its appearance. Golgotha may have been a regular place of execution in a prominent public place outside the city. Executions held there would serve as a deterrent to criminals.

Matthew 27:34

They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

He declined the vinegar because it would numb Him (Cf. Ps 69:21).

(Psalm 69:21) They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

[They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink] The 22nd Old Testament prophecy fulfilled in Matthew (Matthew 27:34; Psalm 69:21). It was customary to give a stupefying potion to intoxicate and help alleviate sufferings (Proverbs 31:6), but Christ refused it so as to suffer the full penalty for sin, sober and in His right mind.

Barnes: **They gave him vinegar,** Mark says that "*they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh.*" The two evangelists mean the same thing. Vinegar was made of light wine rendered acid, and was the common drink of the Roman soldiers; and this might be called either vinegar or wine, in common language. *Myrrh* is a bitter substance, produced in Arabia, but is used often to denote anything bitter. The meaning of the name is *bitterness*. Matthew 2:11. *Galatians* is, properly, a bitter secretion from the liver; but the word is also used to denote anything exceedingly *bitter*, as wormwood, etc. The drink, therefore, was vinegar or wine, rendered *bitter* by the infusion of wormwood, or some other very bitter substance. The effect of this, it is said, was to stupify the senses. It was often given to those crucified, to render them insensible to the pains of death. Our Lord knowing this, when he had tasted it, refused to drink, he was unwilling to blunt the pains of dying. The

cup which his Father gave him he rather chose to drink, He came to suffer. His sorrows were necessary for the work of the atonement; and he gave himself up to the unmitigated sufferings of the cross. This was presented to him in the early part of his sufferings, or when he was about to be suspended on the cross. *Afterward*, when he was on the cross, and just before his death, vinegar was offered to him without the myrrh -the vinegar which the soldiers usually drank-and of this he received. See Matthew 27:49, John 19:28-30. Where Matthew and Mark say that he "would not drink," they refer to a different thing and a different time from John, and there is no contradiction.

Wine mixed with gall was offered to Jesus to help reduce his pain, but Jesus refused to drink it. Gall is generally understood to be a narcotic that was used to deaden pain. Jesus would suffer fully conscious and with a clear mind.

JNTC: Wine mixed with bitter gall. According to the Talmud, "When a person is led out to be executed he is given a glass of wine containing a grain of frankincense, in order to numb his senses, as it is written, 'Give strong drink unto him who is perishing, wine to those bitter of soul' [Proverbs 31:6]." (Sanhedrin 43a)²⁷

Matthew 27:35

And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

[by the prophet] Quoting from David, and calling him a prophet.

Barnes: And parted his garments. It was customary to crucify a person naked. The clothes of the sufferer belonged to those who were executioners. John says John 19:23 that they divided his garments into four parts, to each soldier a part; but for his coat they cast lots. John 19:23. When Matthew says, therefore, that they parted his garments, casting lots, it is to be understood that they *divided* one part of them, and for the other part of them they cast lots.

Barnes: That it might be fulfilled, The words here quoted are found in Psalms 22:18. The whole psalm is usually referred to Christ, and is a most striking description of his sufferings and death.

(Psalm 22:18) *They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*

²⁷ Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 27:34). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

Matthew 27:36

And sitting down they watched him there;

“watch” as in to guard.

The whole concept of crucifixion was a slow painful, agonizing death. It was invented by the Romans, specifically to be demeaning. It was physically very visible, it was elevated on a post so that lots could see, and it would serve as an example to the crowd. It was not quick, rather it was very extended.

The arms are pinned and the physical weight on the arms is enormous. What happens is that it puts so much strain on the chest cavity that ultimately the person dies of suffocation (or any of several other physiological things that can occur.) The way to get a breath is to relieve the pressure on your arms by pushing up with your feet.

Because it is such a slow and agonizing process, it becomes necessary from time to time, to get on with it, for whatever administrative reasons might prevail. One of the ways to speed up the process was to break the legs of the person being crucified because then they could not relieve the pressure on his chest cavity and he would suffocate more quickly.

Thus, since it is getting on towards evening, and as an accommodation to the Jews, they do not want the bodies on the cross at sunset because the Passover is about to start. So to make sure that they are all dead by sundown, they start to go through and break the legs of the ones that are still alive. We find that they do this to the others on the cross, but when they come to the Lord they find that He is already dead. But to make absolutely sure, the soldier throws a spear up in the Lord’s side and blood and water come out. However, it is fascinating that the Roman did not break the legs like all the rest, whether dead or alive. The fulfillment of Exodus 34, because the Passover lamb was not to have a bone broken.

Cf. Ps 22. The real issue to Jesus was not the pain, but that God had forsaken Him!
Colossians tells us that Jesus was made sin for us.

[they watched him there] The military guard—the executioners whose duty it was to watch the person crucified lest his friends should rescue him.

Clarke: Two thieves—Ἀηϋα, robbers, or cutthroats: men who had committed robbery and murder; for it does not appear that persons were crucified for robbery only. Thus was our Lord numbered (his name enrolled, placed as it were in the death warrant) with transgressors, according to the prophetic declaration, Isaiah 53:12; and the Jews placed him between these two, perhaps to intimate that he was the worst felon of the three.

(Isaiah 53:12) Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Matthew 27:37

And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Superscription on the Cross

Read the parallel passages: Mark 15, Luke 23, and John 19.

Much controversy has raged over the differences of what was written on the cross, as all four gospels have different wording. Mark and Matthew mention "the accusation" which might be different from the "title" of John 19:19. The accusation in Matthew and Mark is identical except Mark omits "This is Jesus." He only gives part of it while Matthew gives the whole. They do not say the writing was in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, as in Luke 23:38; John 19:20. Different wording could be in these three languages and this could explain the difference.

Barnes: This is Jesus the King of the Jews. The evangelists differ in the account of this title. Mark Mark 15:26 says it was "the King of the Jews." Luke says, Luke 23:38 this is the King of the Jews." John, John 19:19, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews." But the difficulty may be easily removed. John says, that the title was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. It is not at all improbable that the inscription varied in these languages. One evangelist may have translated it from the Hebrew; another from the Greek; a third from the Latin; and a fourth have translated one of the inscriptions a little differently from another. Besides, the evangelists all agree, in the main point of the inscription, viz., that he was the King of the Jews.

(John 19:19-22) And Pilate wrote a title, and put [it] on the cross. And the writing was, Jesus Of Nazareth The King Of The Jews. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, [and] Greek, [and] Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

Pilate refused to revise the epitaph he had composed. This may have more significance than is apparent in our English translations. What we don't notice in the English translation is that the acrostic made up of the first letter of each word spells out Yahweh (YHWH)! If Pilate had rewritten it the manner that they had requested him to, it would not have spelled out the Name of God. Did Pilate realize this? Was it deliberate? Did he do it just to upset the Jewish leadership, which he realized delivered Him up for envy? Or was he beginning to suspect that there was more going on here than he previously realized?

Jesus' Epitaph

HaYehudim	v Melech	HaNazarei	Yeshua
הַיְהוּדִים	וּמֶלֶךְ	הַנַּצְרִי	יֵשׁוּעַ
ה	ו	ה	י
H	W	H	Y

Yeshua HaNazarei v Melech HaYehudim:
Jesus the Nazarei and King of the Jews.

The acrostic formed is YHVH or Yahweh, or Jehovah, or God.

When they requested a special guard for the tomb, he also responded with an enigmatic remark, "Make it as sure as you can." What did he mean by that? Did he begin to suspect that Jesus really was who said He was? Was Pilate really surprised when Jesus was resurrected after three days? One wonders.

Matthew 27:38

Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

One of these thieves is saved. Cf. Luke 23:39-43.

[two thieves crucified with him] There is some evidence that two malefactors were led with Him to be crucified with Him (Luke 23:32). Then later two thieves were brought and were crucified (Matthew 27:38). No scripture says that only two men were crucified with Him. It is said that both robbers reviled Him (Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:32), while only one of the malefactors railed on Him (Luke 23:39-40).

JNTC: Ya'akov and Yochanan wanted to be "one on his right and one on his left" (20:21–23). But who got that privilege? **Two robbers**, in fulfillment of Isaiah 53:12, "He was numbered with the transgressors."²⁸

²⁸Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 27:38). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

(Isaiah 53:12) Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

BKC: 32-38 (Mark 15:21-28; Luke 23:26-34; John 19:17-27). Matthew recorded only a few of the events that occurred when Jesus was taken to the place of crucifixion. **Simon of Cyrene**, a city in North Africa populated with many Jews, was **forced . . . to carry the cross** (actually the crossbeam) when Jesus could no longer carry it Himself, being weak from the beatings. Eventually the procession **came to a place** known as **Golgotha**, which in Aramaic **means the Place of the Skull**. This was not a place of skulls, a cemetery, or place of execution, but a hill that in some way resembled a skull. This was located either at the site of the present Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which was then outside Jerusalem's walls, or at Gordon's Calvary.

Jesus was then **offered . . . wine . . . mixed with gall**, a **drink** given to dull the senses and make the pain of crucifixion somewhat easier to bear. Jesus **refused to drink** the mixture, for He wanted to be in complete control of His senses even while hanging on the cross. The actual crucifixion was briefly noted by Matthew. He made no reference to the nails being driven into the Lord's hands and feet, but he did record the dividing of **His clothes (by casting lots)** by those crucifying Him. A few Greek manuscripts add to Matthew 27:35 that this action fulfilled Psalm 22:18. Though this probably was not part of Matthew's original account, John pointed out that same prophecy (John 19:24).

Over the **head** of a person being **crucified** was **written** an inscription containing the **charge** that brought him there. Over Jesus' head, was written **THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS**, for that truly was the charge for which Jesus was dying. Though each Gospel account presents a slight variation in the wording, the sign probably included a combination of all the accounts. Thus it would have read, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." John noted that Pilate had the charge written there in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek (John 19:20). The words "the King of the Jews" offended the chief priests, but Pilate refused to change what he had written (John 19:21-22). Jesus was **crucified** between **two robbers** (Matt. 27:38), whom Luke called "criminals" (Luke 23:33).²⁹

Matthew 27:39

And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

²⁹Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:88). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Matthew 27:40

And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

[Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself] A perversion of the words of Jesus (John 2:19-21).

This accusation was used against Jesus in his trial by the Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:61). It is ironic that Jesus was in the very process of fulfilling his own prophecy. Because Jesus is the Son of God, who always obeys the will of the Father, he did not come down from the cross.

Matthew 27:41

Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said,

[chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders] Imagine religious leaders coming to mock a dying man! How far in depravity can men get and yet claim their religion is the only true one and they are the only representatives of God?

Matthew 27:42

He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

[himself he cannot save] If He had saved Himself He could not have saved others (Matthew 16:25). If He had saved Himself His purpose of coming into the world would have been defeated (Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24; Col. 1:20; Col. 2:14-17; John 3:14-16). God never satisfies unreasonable demands of unbelief at the expense of defeating His own plan for man.

[let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him] This was Satan's last attempt to keep Christ from dying on the cross to defeat him and redeem man. If God had permitted Himself to be moved by such deceitful, idle words He would have been defeated (Galatians 3:13; Col. 2:14-17).

Clarke: He saved others; himself he cannot save—Or, Cannot he save himself? Several MSS. read this with the mark of interrogation as above; and this makes the sarcasm still more keen. A high priest who designs to destroy the temple of God: a Savior who saves not himself; and the Son of God crucified: these are the contradictions which give offense to Jews and libertines. But a high priest who dispels the types and shadows, only that he may disclose the substance of religion, and become the minister of a heavenly sanctuary; a Savior who dies only to be the victim of salvation; and the Son of God who confines his power within the bounds of the cross to establish the righteousness of faith: this is what a Christian adores; this is the foundation of his hope, and the fountain of his present comfort and final blessedness.

Matthew 27:43

He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

Two Great Testimonies From Enemies:

1. He saved others (Matthew 27:42; Acts 10:38).
2. He trusted in God (Matthew 27:43; Psalm 22:8).

If this could be said of all Christians we would have better churches.

Matthew 27:44

The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

Barnes: The thieves also. The robbers, or highwaymen. Luke says Luke 23:39 that one of them aid it, and that the other reprov'd him and was penitent. The account in Luke may, however, easily be reconciled with that in Matthew, by supposing that, *at first, both* of them reviled the Saviour, and that it is of this fact that Matthew speaks. Afterwards one of them relented, and became penitent- perhaps from witnessing the patient sufferings of Christ. It is of this particularly that Luke speaks. Or it may be, that what is true of one of the malefactors, is by Matthew attributed to both. The evangelists, when for the sake of brevity they avoid particularizing, often attribute to many what is said or done by single persons, meaning no more than that it was done by some one or more of them, without specifying the one. Compare Mark 7:17, with Matthew 15:15; Mark 5:31, with Luke 8:45; Luke 9:13, with John 6:8,9.

Cast the same in his teeth. This is not a very good translation. It means in the original, simply, they upbraided him, or reproached him in the same manner.

Later one of these robbers repented. Jesus promised that the repentant robber would join him in paradise (Luke 23:39-43).

BKC: 39-44 (Mark 15:29-32; Luke 23:35-43). While Jesus was hanging on the cross, He was subject to continual verbal abuse by **those passing by**. In mockery, they recalled what Jesus had said earlier about destroying **the temple** and raising **it up three days** later (John 2:19; cf. Matt. 26:61). Surely He must be a false leader, they thought, because His alleged ability **to destroy** the temple was now gone! If He were **the Son of God**, then He ought to be able to perform a miracle and **come down from the cross**. His inability to do that proved, they reasoned, that His claim was false. He had previously **saved others . . . but** now **He** could not **save Himself**; in this way too He was disqualified, they alleged. They said that if He came **down . . . from the cross**, they would **believe in Him**. One wonders, however, if even such an act as this would have prompted them to believe. They claimed if He were really **the Son of God . . . God** would **rescue Him**.

cf. *confer*, compare

Besides the passersby (27:39-40) and the religious leaders (vv. 41-43), **the robbers . . . crucified with Him also insulted Him** (v. 44). Luke, however, recorded that a change of heart took place in one of the robbers (Luke 23:39-43). The irony of this scene was that Jesus could have done the things the crowd was shouting for Him to do. He could have come down from the cross and physically saved Himself. He did not lack the power to accomplish His deliverance. But it was not in the Father's will to do that. It was necessary that the Son of God die for others. He therefore patiently bore their insults.³⁰

Matthew 27:45

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

Dark from noon till three!

Barnes: There was darkness. This could not have been an eclipse of the sun, for the passover was celebrated at the time of the full moon, when the moon is opposite to the sun. Luke says, Luke 23:45, that "the sun was darkened;" but it was not by an eclipse, but, perhaps, by the vapours and clouds that preceded the earthquake. The only cause of this was the interposing power of God-furnishing testimony to the dignity of the Sufferer, and causing the elements to sympathize with the pains of his dying Son. It was also peculiarly proper to furnish this testimony when the *Sun of Righteousness* was withdrawing his beams for a time, and the Redeemer of men was expiring. A dark, thick cloud, shutting out the light of day, and clothing every object with the darkness of midnight, was the appropriate drapery with which the world should be clad when the Son of God expired. This darkness was noticed by one at least of the pagan writers. *Phlegon*, a Roman astronomer, speaking of the fourteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, which is supposed to be that in which our Saviour died, says, that "the greatest eclipse of the sun that was ever known happened then, for the day was so turned into night that the stars appeared."

Over all the land, That is, probably over the whole land of Judea, and perhaps some of the adjacent countries. The extent of the darkness is not known.

Amos 8:9 speaks of the Lord's causing the sun to go down at noon.

(Amos 8:9) *And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day:*

Spurgeon: Some have thought that this darkness covered the whole world, and so caused even a heathen to exclaim, "Either the world is about to expire, or the God who made the world is in anguish." This darkness was supernatural; it was not an eclipse. The

vv. verses

v. verse

³⁰Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:89). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

sun could no longer look upon his Maker surrounded by those who mocked him. He covered his face, and traveled on in tenfold night, in very shame that the great Sun of righteousness should himself be in such terrible darkness.

Matthew 27:46

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* that is to say, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

“Eli” = “Eloi” = dual word: “My God, My God,” yet implies two.
Cf. Ps 22.

Jesus in His dying hour quoted prophecy, expressed faith in it, and fulfilled it.

Jesus was not questioning God; he was quoting the first line of Psalm 22—a deep expression of the anguish he felt when he took on the sins of the world, which caused him to be separated from his Father. *This* was what Jesus dreaded as he prayed to God in the garden to take the cup from him (Matthew 26:39). The physical agony was horrible, but even worse was the period of spiritual separation from God. Jesus suffered this double death so that we would never have to experience eternal separation from God.

CHART: THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF JESUS ON THE CROSS

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Luke 23:34

“I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.” Luke 23:43

Speaking to John and Mary, “Dear woman, here is your son....Here is your mother.” John 19:26-27

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Matt. 27:46;
Mark 15:34

“I am thirsty.” John 19:28

“It is finished.” John 19:30

“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” Luke 23:46

The statements that Jesus made from the cross have been treasured by all who have followed him as Lord. They demonstrate both his humanity and his divinity. They also capture the last moments of all that Jesus went through to gain our forgiveness.

JNTC: In Judaism, when a Bible verse is cited its entire context is implied, if appropriate. Thus Yeshua refers all of Psalm 22 to himself; other of its verses are cited at 27:35, 27:39, Yn 19:28 and MJ 2:12.³¹

Matthew 27:47

Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, *This man calleth for Elias.*

The bystanders misinterpreted Jesus' words and thought he was calling for Elijah. Because Elijah ascended into heaven without dying (2 Kings 2:11), they thought he would return again to rescue them from great trouble (Malachi 4:5). At their annual Passover feast, each family set an extra place for Elijah in expectation of his return.

Matthew 27:48

And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink.

Clarke: Took a sponge—This being the most convenient way to reach a liquid to his mouth; tied it on a reed, that they might be able to reach his lips with it. This reed, as we learn from St. John, was a stalk of hyssop, which, in that country, must have grown to a considerable magnitude. This appears also to have been done in mercy, to alleviate his sufferings.

Barnes: And put it on a reed. John says, it was put upon *hyssop*. The hyssop was a shrub, growing so large sometimes as to be called a tree, 1 Kings 4:33. The *stalk* of this was what Matthew calls a *reed*. The sponge fastened to this could easily be *extended* to reach the mouth of Jesus. This vinegar Jesus drank, for it was not intended to stupify him, or blunt his sense of pain like the *wine and myrrh*.

Matthew 27:49

The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

Matthew 27:50

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

Yielded up his spirit. Or: "breathed his last."

³¹Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 27:46). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

Who killed Him? Nobody could if they tried. The only way was if He voluntarily yielded His life, which is what He did for you and I. Part of the Everlasting Covenant between Jesus and the Father.

“It is finished”: Final words of Jesus (see other Gospels). In that day if you were imprisoned, you had a certificate, which would be signed, and your debt marked off. When finished with your sentence, they would write *Tetelestai*, meaning “paid in full.” This is what Jesus said on the cross—*Tetelestai*—meaning “paid in full” (and can be translated “It is finished”).

[again with a loud voice] Seven sayings on the cross:

1. My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me? (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34; Psalm 22:1)
2. Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34).
3. Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise (Luke 23:43).
4. Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit (Luke 23:46).
5. Woman, behold thy son! ... Behold thy mother! (John 19:26-27)
6. I thirst (John 19:28).
7. It is finished (John 19:30).

[loud voice] Showing normal strength to the end, proving He voluntarily laid down His life (John 10:18).

[yielded up the ghost] He dismissed His soul and spirit (James 2:26; Luke 23:46; John 10:18; John 19:30).

Clarke: Yielded up the ghost—Αφηκε το πνευμα, He dismissed the spirit. He himself willingly gave up that life which it was impossible for man to take away. It is not said that he hung on the cross till he died through pain and agony; nor is it said that his bones were broken, the sooner to put him out of pain, and to hasten his death; but that himself dismissed the soul, that he might thus become, not a forced sacrifice, but a free-will offering for sin.

BKC: 45-50 (Mark 15:33-37; Luke 23:44-46; John 19:28-30). Matthew made no reference to the time when the crucifixion began. But Mark indicated that it began at the “third hour” (Mark 15:25), around 9 A.M. Matthew noted specifically that **from the sixth hour, noon, until the ninth hour, 3 P.M., darkness came over all the land.** In this period of darkness Jesus became the Sin-offering for the world (John 1:29; Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18) and as such was forsaken by the Father. Near the end of this period of time, **Jesus** could bear the separation no longer and **cried out in a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?** These Aramaic words mean, **My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?** (a quotation of Ps. 22:1) Jesus sensed a separation from the Father He had never known, for in becoming sin the Father had to turn judicially from His Son (Rom. 3:25-26).

Some of those standing near the cross misunderstood Jesus’ words. They **heard** “Eloi,” but thought Jesus was trying to call for **Elijah** (Matt. 27:47). In Greek the word

“Elijah” sounds more like “Eloi” than it does in English. Thinking His lips and throat had become dry, someone thought a **drink of wine vinegar** would moisten His vocal cords so He could speak plainly. Others, however, **said to leave Jesus alone and see if Elijah** would come and deliver **Him**. Their jeers were obviously still being directed against Jesus.

With one last cry **Jesus . . . gave up His spirit**, committing it into the hands of His Father (Luke 23:46). Jesus was in complete control of His life and died at the precise moment He determined by dismissing His spirit. No man took Jesus’ life from Him, as He had said (John 10:11, 15, 17-18). He laid His life down in keeping with God’s plan and He was involved in taking it back up again in His resurrection.³²

Matthew 27:51

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

[veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom] There were two veils: one at the entrance of the Holy Place and the other between this and the Holy of Holies into which the high priest alone went once a year to atone for the sins of the people (Hebrews 9:2-9). They were 60 feet high from the ceiling to the floor. The rending of the veil signified that the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles was broken down (Ephes. 2:14-18) and that each believer now could have personal access to God (Hebrews 9:8; Hebrews 10:19-23; Ephes. 2:14-18).

Clarke: The veil of the temple was rent—That is, the veil which separated the holy place, where the priests ministered, from the holy of holies, into which the high priest only entered, and that once a year, to make a general expiation for the sins of the people. This rending of the veil was emblematical, and pointed out that the separation between Jews and Gentiles was now abolished, and that the privilege of the high priest was now communicated to all mankind: ALL might henceforth have access to the throne of grace, through the one great atonement and mediator, the Lord Jesus. See this beautifully illustrated in Hebrews 10:19-22.

The temple had three main parts—the courts, the Holy Place (where only the priests could enter), and the Most Holy Place (where only the high priest could enter, and only once a year, to atone for the sins of the nation—Leviticus 16:1-35). The curtain separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place was torn in two at Christ’s death, symbolizing that the barrier between God and humanity was removed. Now all people are free to approach God because of Christ’s sacrifice for our sins (see Hebrews 9:1-14; Hebrews 10:19-22).

³²Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:89). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom— This was the thick and gorgeously wrought veil which was hung between the “holy place” and the “holiest of all,” shutting out all access to the presence of God as manifested “from above the mercy seat and from between the cherubim”—“the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was *not yet* made manifest” (Heb 9:8). Into this holiest of all none might enter, not even the high priest, save once a year, on the great day of atonement, and then only with the blood of atonement in his hands, which he sprinkled “upon and before the mercy seat seven times” (Le 16:14)—to signify that *access for sinners to a holy God is only through atoning blood*. But as they had only the blood of bulls and of goats, which could not take away sins (Heb 10:4), during all the long ages that preceded the death of Christ the thick veil remained; the blood of bulls and of goats continued to be shed and sprinkled; and once a year access to God through an atoning sacrifice was vouchsafed—in a picture, or rather, was *dramatically represented*, in those symbolical actions—nothing more. But *now*, the one atoning Sacrifice being provided in the precious blood of Christ, access to this holy God could no longer be denied; and so the moment the Victim expired on the altar, that thick veil which for so many ages had been the dread symbol of *separation between God and guilty men* was, without a hand touching it, mysteriously “rent in twain from top to bottom”—“the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was NOW made manifest!” How emphatic the statement, *from top to bottom*; as if to say, Come boldly now to the Throne of Grace; *the veil is clean gone*; the mercy seat stands open to the gaze of sinners, and the way to it is sprinkled with the blood of Him—“who through the eternal Spirit hath offered Himself without spot to God!” Before, it was death *to go in*, now it is *death to stay out*. See more on this glorious subject on Heb 10:19–22.³³

JNTC: The parokhet in the Temple. Exodus 26:31–35 describes this curtain as it existed in the desert Tabernacle. It separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. Only the *cohen hagadol* was allowed to pass through it into the Holy of Holies; and that he could do only once a year, on *Yom-Kippur*, to make an atonement sacrifice for his sins and for the sins of the Jewish people. When it was **ripped in two from top to bottom** it symbolized the fact that God was giving everyone access to the most holy place of all in heaven, as taught explicitly at MJ 9:3–9, 10:19–22.

The Talmud bears an amazing witness to the work of Yeshua in altering the system of atonement. The background is that on *Yom-Kippur*, when the *cohen hagadol* sacrificed a bull (Leviticus 16), a piece of scarlet cloth was tied between its horns. If it later turned white, it meant that God had forgiven Israel’s sin in accordance with Isaiah 1:18, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they will be white as snow.”

“Our Rabbis taught that throughout the forty years that Shim’on the *Tzaddik* served, ... the scarlet cloth would become white. From then on it would sometimes become white and sometimes not ... Throughout the last forty years before the Temple was destroyed ... the scarlet cloth never turned white.” (Yoma 39a-39b)

Thus in the days of Shim’on *HaTzaddik* the sacrificial system established by God in the *Tanakh* was observed, and it was effective. But afterwards Israel’s spirituality

³³Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 27:51). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

declined, so that the sacrificial system was effective only sometimes. Finally, after Yeshua's death, forty years before the destruction of the Temple, it was never effective. The Talmud does not say it, but what had become effective for forgiving Israel's sin was the sacrificial death of Yeshua the Messiah.³⁴

Notice that the veil was torn, not from the bottom to the top but from top to bottom. It was rent by God, not by man. The veil symbolizes the body of Jesus. When His body was rent upon the cross—when He had paid the penalty for your sin and my sin in His own body—then the way was opened into the presence of God. Therefore, you and I don't have to have a priest or a preacher go into the presence of God for us; we can go directly to the throne of God *through Christ*. Let's emphasize that the *only* way to the Father is through His Son. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

ESV: curtain of the temple. The curtain between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place was an elaborately woven fabric of 72 twisted plaits of 24 threads each. It was 60 feet (18 m) high and 30 feet (9.1 m) wide. No one was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place behind the curtain except the high priest, and he only once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Heb. 9:2–7). **Torn in two** signifies the removal of the separation between God and the people. An extended commentary on this event, and the heavenly reality that it symbolized, is found in Heb. 9:11–10:22; see especially Heb. 9:12, 24; 10:19–20. **earth shook.** Palestine sits on a major seismic rift, so earthquakes were not uncommon, but the splitting of rocks and opening of tombs (Matt. 27:52) make this a major testimony to the meaning of Jesus' resurrection.

Matthew 27:52

And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

[many bodies of the saints which slept arose] These bodies made part of the multitude of captives Christ captured from Satan in the underworld of departed spirits and which He took captive with Him when He ascended on high (Ephes. 4:8-10; Hebrews 2:14-15). Now when Christians die they no longer go into the lower parts of the earth held captive by the devil against their will, but go to heaven to await the resurrection of the body (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21-24; Rev. 6:9-11; Hebrews 12:22). The wicked continue to go to hell to await their resurrection (Luke 16:19-31; Rev. 20:11-15).

Which slept. Which had died. The death of saints is often called *sleep*, Daniel 12:2, 1 Corinthians 15:18, 1 Thessalonians 4:15.

And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose— These sleeping saints (see on 1Th 4:14) were Old Testament believers, who—according to the usual punctuation in our version—were quickened into resurrection life at the

³⁴Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 27:51). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

moment of their Lord's death, but lay in their graves till His resurrection, when they came forth. But it is far more natural, as we think, and consonant with other Scriptures, to understand that only the graves were opened, probably by the earthquake, at our Lord's death, and this only in preparation for the subsequent exit of those who slept in them, when the Spirit of life should enter into them from their risen Lord, and along with Him they should come forth, trophies of His victory over the grave. Thus, in the opening of the graves at the moment of the Redeemer's expiring, there was a glorious symbolical proclamation that the death which had just taken place had "swallowed up death in victory"; and whereas the saints that slept in them were awakened only by their risen Lord, to accompany Him out of the tomb, it was fitting that "the Prince of Life ... should be *the First* that should rise from the dead" (Ac 26:23; 1Co 15:20, 23; Col 1:18; Rev 1:5).³⁵

and appeared unto many—that there might be undeniable evidence of their own resurrection first, and through it of their Lord's. Thus, while it was not deemed fitting that He Himself should appear again in Jerusalem, save to the disciples, provision was made that the fact of His resurrection should be left in no doubt. It must be observed, however, that the resurrection of these sleeping saints was not like those of the widow of Nain's son, of Jairus' daughter, of Lazarus, and of the man who "revived and stood upon his feet," on his dead body touching the bones of Elisha (2Ki 13:21)—which were mere temporary recallings of the departed spirit to the *mortal* body, to be followed by a final departure of it "till the trumpet shall sound." But this was a resurrection *once for all, to life everlasting*; and so there is no room to doubt that they went to glory with their Lord, as bright trophies of His victory over death.³⁶

Matthew 27:53

And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

This verse occurs only in Matthew, and we know very little about it. We know that there are two resurrections. But don't presume that the **first resurrection** happened at one time. Jesus was part of the first resurrection along with these saints, the first resurrection is a category not a moment in time. The first resurrection will be completed when the Millennium starts because there is 1000 years before the **second resurrection**.

They could not have come out before for Christ was to be resurrected first and enter into immortality in a human body (1 Cor. 15:20-23; Rev. 1:5; Luke 24:39).

³⁵Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 27:52). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

³⁶Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 27:52). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Christ's death was accompanied by at least four miraculous events: darkness, the tearing in two of the curtain in the temple, an earthquake, and dead people rising from their tombs. Jesus' death, therefore, could not have gone unnoticed. Everyone knew something significant had happened.

BKC: 51-53 (Mark 15:38; Luke 23:44-45). At the time of Jesus' death, three momentous events occurred. First, **the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.** This curtain separated the holy place from the holy of holies in the temple (Heb. 9:2-3). The fact that this occurred from top to bottom signified that God is the One who ripped the thick curtain. It was not torn from the bottom by men ripping it. God was showing that the way of access into His presence was now available for everyone, not simply the Old Testament high priest (Heb. 4:14-16; 10:19-22).

Second, at Christ's death a strong earthquake occurred, splitting **rocks** (Matt. 27:51). Truly the death of Christ was a powerful, earthshaking event with repercussions affecting even the creation. A third event mentioned was recorded only by Matthew. **The tombs of many holy** (righteous) **people** (v. 52) were opened, probably at a Jerusalem cemetery. The NIV suggests that these saints were resurrected when Jesus died and then went into Jerusalem **after Jesus' resurrection.** A number of commentators agree with this view. Many others, however, say that since Christ is the firstfruits of the dead (1 Cor. 15:23), their resurrection did not occur till He was raised. In this view, the phrase "after Jesus' resurrection" goes with the words **were raised to life and came out of the tombs.** This is possible in the Greek, and is suggested in the KJV and the NASB. The tombs, then, **broke open** at Christ's death, probably by the earthquake, thus heralding Christ's triumph in death over sin, but the bodies were not raised till Christ was raised.

These people returned to Jerusalem, (**the Holy City**) where they were recognized by friends and family. Like Lazarus (John 11:43-44), Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:52-56), and the widow of Nain's son (Luke 7:13-15), they too passed through physical death again. Or some say they may have been raised with glorified bodies like the Lord's. Walvoord suggests this event was "a fulfillment of the Feast of the Firstfruits of harvest mentioned in Leviticus 23:10-14. On that occasion, as a token of the coming harvest, the people would bring a handful of grain to the priest. The resurrection of these saints, occurring after Jesus Himself was raised, is a token of the coming harvest when all the saints will be raised" (Walvoord, *Matthew: Thy Kingdom Come*, p. 236).³⁷

ESV: saints who had fallen asleep. Probably pious OT figures and godly intertestamental Jews, reembodyed to witness to the new order of things that was now in the process of dawning. This shows that the resurrection of people who died looking forward to the Messiah depends on Christ's actual death and resurrection, just as does the future resurrection of Jesus' disciples today. **coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city.** Matthew apparently jumps ahead here

v. verse

NIV New International Version

KJV King James Version

NASB New American Standard Bible

p. page

³⁷Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:90). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

(treating materials topically, as he often does) and begins to speak of events that would happen after the resurrection. The wording suggests that these saints were not merely brought back to life (like Lazarus; John 11:44) but were “raised” (Matt. 27:52) with new, resurrection bodies, a foretaste of what would happen to all believers at Christ's return. No other historical information about this event has been found, but it is natural to suppose that if they had resurrection bodies, they would not have died again. They may have been taken up to heaven at or after Jesus' ascension (Acts 1:1–11).

Matthew 27:54

Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

[**the Son of God**] Not "a" but "THE Son of God" in a sense no other man ever was or ever will be—the only begotten Son (John 1:14,18; John 3:16,18; Col. 1:15-18). He was actually begotten; we are adopted (Romans 8:14-16; Galatians 4:5; Ephes. 1:5).

Matthew 27:55

And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:

[**many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him**] To their honor, these women showed more courage and affectionate concern for their Lord, than the men who had promised to die with Him. They ministered to Him of their substance (Luke 8:3).

Clarke: Many women—To their everlasting honor, these women evidenced more courage, and affectionate attachment to their Lord and Master, than the disciples did, who had promised to die with him rather than forsake him.

Clarke: Beholding afar off—At a distance—*απο μακροθεν*. Though this expression may be understood to refer, rather to the distance from which they came, (*viz.* from Galilee), than the distance they stood from the cross; yet, as all malefactors were crucified naked, perhaps this may account for the distance at which these modest women stood.

Matthew 27:56

Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

Clarke: Mary Magdalene—She probably had her name from Magdala, a village or district in Lower Galilee. See Matthew 15:39. Some think she was called Magdalene *magdala*, which signifies a plaiter of hair. See Lightfoot.

Clarke: Mary the mother of James—She was mother of him called James the lesser, or junior, who was son of Alpheus or Cleopas—see Matthew 10:3; Mark 15:40; John 19:25; and she was sister to the holy virgin. Thus it appears that there were four remarkable Marys mentioned in the Gospels.

1. MARY the Virgin, wife of JOSEPH.
2. MARY SALOME, her sister, wife of Cleopas, John 19:25.
3. MARY MAGDALENE, or MARY of Magdala; and,
4. MARY, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, John 11:1.

Though Baronius asserts, and Lightfoot is of the same opinion, that Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, was one and the same person. It is difficult to ascertain and distinguish these women where their names occur in the Gospels, so many being called by the name of Mary.

BKC: 54-56 (Mark 15:39-41; Luke 23:47-49). A Roman **centurion** (cf. Matt. 8:5; see Luke 7:2 for comments on centurions) and other Roman guards were impressed and **terrified** with the unusual circumstances surrounding the death of this Man, for such accompanying signs had never been observed in previous crucifixions. Their response was, **Surely He was the Son of God!** The momentous events of the day struck fear into the soldiers' hearts.

Also some **women were there**, observing **from a distance** the Lord's death. These women **had followed Jesus from Galilee** and had been caring **for His needs**. **Among** this group **were Mary Magdalene** (cf. Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:9; John 20:18), **Mary the mother of James and Joseph** (perhaps the same as "Mary the wife of Clopas," John 19:25), **and the mother of Zebedee's sons**, James and John (Matt. 4:21; 10:2). John mentioned that Mary, Jesus' mother, and Mary's sister were also present at the foot of the cross (John 19:25-27). While Matthew made no reference to what the women may have said or how they felt, their hearts must have been broken as they observed the death of their Lord, whom they loved and had served. With the approach of night, they apparently returned to the city and lodged there, for in a few days they were seeking to assist in the preparation of Jesus' body for burial (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1-3; Luke 24:1).³⁸

Matthew 27:57

When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:

Joseph of Arimathea, must have had clout, as he just went to Pilate and begged for the body of Jesus.

[rich man] Fulfilling Isaiah 53:9.

[Arimathaea] See Matthew 2:18; 1 Samuel 1:1,19; Mark 15:43; Luke 23:51; John 19:38.

cf. *confer*, compare

³⁸Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:90). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

[Joseph] Joseph and Nicodemus, two secret disciples, buried Him (John 19:38-39; Mark 15:43; Luke 23:50-53).

(Isaiah 53:9) *And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*

Barnes: A rich man of Arimathea. It is uncertain where Arimathea was. There were several cities of that name in Judea. It is commonly supposed to be the same as Rama. Matthew 2:18. Luke says that this was a "city of the Jews;" and it is probable, therefore, that it was in the tribe of Benjamin, and but a short distance from Jerusalem. This man sustained a high character. He was an "honourable counsellor," *Mark 15:43*; he "waited for the kingdom of God;" he was "a good man, and a just;" he had nobly set himself against the wicked purposes of the sanhedrim, Luke 23:51; he was a disciple of Jesus, though he was not openly his follower, because he feared the Jews, John 19:38.

JNTC: This **Yosef from Ramatayim** (Joseph of Arimathea) was a member of the *Sanhedrin* (Mk 15:43) who had not voted for Yeshua's death (Lk 23:51) because he was secretly his *talmid* (Yn 19:38).³⁹

Matthew 27:58

He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

57-58 Joseph of Arimathea was a secret disciple of Jesus. He was a religious leader, an honored member of the Sanhedrin (Mark 15:43). In the past, Joseph had been afraid to speak against the religious leaders who opposed Jesus; now he was bold, courageously asking to take Jesus' body from the cross and to bury it. The disciples who publicly followed Jesus had fled, but this Jewish leader, who followed Jesus in secret, came forward and did what was right.

Matthew 27:59

And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

Barnes: He wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. John adds, that this was done with spices, John 19:40. The Jews were accustomed to use myrrh, aloes, and other aromatics, in large quantities, when they buried their dead. When they were not regularly embalmed, which was a long and tedious process, they enclosed the spices in the folds of the linen, or wrapped the body in it. Spices were sometimes used in such quantities as to form a heap or bed, on which the dead body was laid. Thus it is said of Asa, (2 Chronicles 16:14,) they "laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and spices," etc. There not

³⁹Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 27:57). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

being time properly to embalm the body of Jesus, he was buried in this manner. The women who attended him, either not being aware of this or desirous of showing a farther regard for him, returned from the sepulchre on the first day of the week, and prepared other spices with which to embalm him, Luke 23:56, 24:1.

Matthew 27:60

And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

“stone” used to seal up the grave, from robbers.

Barnes: his own new tomb. John says, (John 19:41), that this was in a garden that was in or near the place where he was crucified. This tomb Joseph had prepared for himself, as was not uncommon among the Jews. In this tomb Luke and John inform us that no man had been laid. This was so ordered in the providence of God, doubtless, that there might be no suspicion about his identity when he rose; that it might not be alleged that another person had risen; or that he was raised by touching the bones of some prophet, as happened to the corpse that touched the bones of Elisha, 2 Kings 13:21. Farther, by being buried here, an important prophecy was remarkably fulfilled, (Isaiah 53:9) "he made his grave-with the rich in his death." The fulfillment of this is the more remarkable, because during his life he associated with the poor, and was himself poor.

(Isaiah 53:9) And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Barnes: Which he had hewn out in the rock. This was a common way of constructing tombs in Judea. Matthew 8:28. Being cut out of a rock, there was no way by which the disciples could have access to it but by the entrance, at which the guard was placed, and consequently it was impossible for them to steal him away. The sepulchre, thus secure, was rendered more so by rolling a great stone at its entrance; all possible precautions thus being used, in the providence of God, against imposition and deceit.

Matthew 27:61

And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

Clarke: Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary—The mother of James and Joses, Matthew 27:56. The mother of our Lord had probably, by this time, been taken home to the house of John. See John 19:26, 27.

Clarke: Sitting over against the sepulchre—These holy women, filled with that love to their Lord which death cannot destroy, cleaved to him in life, and in death were not

divided. They came to the grave to see the end, and overwhelmed with sorrow and anguish, sat down to mourn.

BKC: 57-61 (Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42). No known preparation had been made for Jesus' burial; normally the body of a crucified criminal would simply have been discarded without ceremony. However, **a rich man from Arimathea** (a town east of Joppa), **named Joseph**, asked **Pilate . . . for Jesus' body**. Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrin, had not agreed with the council's decision to crucify Jesus (Luke 23:51). Instead he was one who had been looking for the kingdom of God and was a believer in Jesus. **Pilate** granted his request, surprised that Jesus was already dead (Mark 15:44-45). Another account reported Joseph was assisted in the burial by Nicodemus (John 19:39; cf. John 3:1-21). These two men **took the body** of Jesus and following burial customs of the time, **wrapped** the body in **linen** with a mixture of myrrh and aloes, spices used in burial (John 19:40; cf. Matt. 2:11). This procedure was done rapidly in order to be completed before the Sabbath began at nightfall. Joseph **placed** the wrapped body **in his own new tomb . . . cut out of the rock** near the place of crucifixion. Why Joseph of Arimathea would own a tomb in Jerusalem cannot be determined. Possibly Jesus had made arrangements ahead of time with him and he had purchased the tomb especially for this occasion. Joseph and Nicodemus **rolled a big stone** across the tomb's **entrance**.

Matthew noted that **Mary Magdalene and the other Mary** sat **across from the tomb** (27:61), no doubt in mourning. Interestingly these women accompanied Jesus' body right up to the minute it was buried, whereas Jesus' disciples had all abandoned Him (26:56).⁴⁰

Matthew 27:62

Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

Barnes: Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation. The first day of the feast of the passover was called the day of preparation, because all things were on that day got in readiness for the observances of the paschal week. The Jewish day closed at sunset, and the sabbath at that time commenced. The *next day* mentioned here does not mean the following day in our acceptation of the word, or the following morning, but the next day in the Jewish way of speaking; that is, after the next day had commenced, or after sundown. To suppose them to have waited till the next morning would be absurd; as the disciples would be as likely to steal him away the first night as the second.

cf. *confer*, compare

⁴⁰Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:91). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Matthew 27:63

Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

Jesus' enemies remembered what the disciples forgot! His enemies worried that His body would not be there on the third day!

Clarke: Sir, we remember, etc.—While these wicked men are fulfilling their own vicious counsels, they are subserving the great cause of Christianity. Every thing depended on the resurrection of Christ; if it did not appear that he rose from the dead, then the whole system was false, and no atonement was made. It was necessary therefore that the chief priests, etc., should make use of every precaution to prevent an imposture, that the resurrection of Christ might have the fullest evidence to support it. The word Κυριε is here very properly translated sir, which, in many other places, is as improperly translated Lord. When a Roman is the speaker, or the person addressed, Κυριε should always be translated sir; when strangers address our Lord, the word is a title of civil respect, and should, in general, be translated in the same way.

Matthew 27:64

Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

“the last error shall be worse than the first”: They must realize that they messed up. We don't know their thoughts but it appears that by now they apparently have come to the conclusion that they blew it. They had made a martyr out of Him.

The religious leaders took Jesus' resurrection claims more seriously than the disciples did. The disciples didn't remember Jesus' teaching about his resurrection (Matthew 20:17-19); but the religious leaders did. Because of his claims, they were almost as afraid of Jesus after his death as when he was alive. They tried to take every precaution that his body would remain in the tomb.

Matthew 27:65

Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make *it* as sure as ye can.

Pilate's cynical remark, “as sure as ye can...”

[watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can] A guard of four soldiers, which were changed every three hours (Acts 12:4).

Barnes: Ye have a watch. The Jews had a guard or watch of Roman soldiers, who kept watch in the tower of Antonia, on the north-west of the temple. Pilate either referred to these, or to the watch that attended the crucifixion: the whole *band* that had been

appointed for that. As the torments of crucifixion sometimes lasted many days, the band had been probably granted to them during that time, and they were, therefore, still at the direction of the chief priests.

go your way, make it as sure as ye can—as ye know how, or in the way ye deem securest. Though there may be no irony in this speech, it evidently insinuated that *if* the event should be contrary to their wish, it would not be for want of sufficient human appliances to prevent it.⁴¹

Matthew 27:66

So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

[made the sepulchre sure] Man's security means nothing when God moves.

[sealing the stone, and setting a watch] A cord was stretched across the stone and an official seal with clay was fastened at each end so it could be detected if the grave was opened.

Barnes: Sealing the stone. The sepulchre was made sure, by affixing the large stone to the entrance in such a way that it could not be removed without detection. It was sealed. In what way this was done cannot now be certainly told. The cave in which Daniel was cast was fastened in the same manner, and sealed with the king's signet, (Daniel 6:17) perhaps by fastening the stone in its place with cords, and bringing them together and uniting them with wax, and impressing on that the seal of the king. In this way letters and books were anciently sealed. Possibly on the sepulchre of Jesus was impressed in this manner the seal of Pilate—the seal of office—making it doubly sure. Or it may be, that the stone was fitted into the tomb with clay or cement, and on that was impressed the seal of Pilate.

Setting a watch. That is, as large a number of soldiers as they judged necessary to secure the tomb.

The Pharisees were so afraid of Jesus' predictions about his resurrection that they made sure the tomb was thoroughly sealed and guarded. Because the tomb was hewn out of rock in the side of a hill, there was only one entrance. The tomb was sealed by stringing a cord across the stone that was rolled over the entrance. The cord was sealed at each end with clay. But the religious leaders took a further precaution, asking that guards be placed at the tomb's entrance. With such precautions, the only way the tomb could be empty would be for Jesus to rise from the dead. The Pharisees failed to understand that no rock, seal, guard, or army could prevent the Son of God from rising again.

⁴¹Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 27:65). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

We cannot but be struck with the wisdom of God, in ordering the circumstances of the Saviour's burial in such a manner as to avoid the possibility of deception. Had all this been done by his *friends*, it might have been said that they only pretended to secure the tomb, and only pretended that he was dead. But he was adjudged to be dead *by the Jews themselves*; Pilate was satisfied that that was the fact they had their own way about his burial; he was buried alone; the place of his sepulchre was made sure-*expressly to prevent his being removed*; and they placed around him a guard, in their own judgment, large enough to prevent his being taken away by force or strength. His very enemies, therefore, took every possible precaution to place his resurrection beyond the possibility of suspicion of fraud and imposture, and were the very means of furnishing the most striking proof that his death, burial, and resurrection were not impositions, but most affecting, awful, and yet cheering realities.

BKC: 62-66. It is a little surprising that a group of unbelievers would remember Jesus' prediction that He would **rise again** on the third day, while the believing disciples seemingly forgot. **The very next day** after His death, that is, on the Sabbath, **the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate** and informed him of Jesus' words. While they did not believe in Jesus (whom they blasphemously called **that deceiver**), they feared **His disciples might come . . . steal the body, and** attempt to fabricate a resurrection lie. If this were to happen, the **deception would be worse than** anything Jesus had accomplished in His life. The Resurrection was the one thing these leaders feared, so they suggested **the tomb . . . be made secure until the third day.**

Pilate agreed with their suggestion and ordered that **a guard** be sent to **the tomb** to **make it as secure as possible.** The Roman guard not only sealed the tomb (presumably with the official Roman **seal** and with a cord and wax, which if tampered with, could be detected) but also continued to keep a **guard** at the scene. Their presence made stealing the body impossible.⁴²

⁴²Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:92). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Prophecies Concerning the Death of Jesus

Prophecies	Fulfillment
1. Genesis 3:15	John 19:18 (Seed of woman being bruised)
2. Psalm 22:1	Matthew 27:46 ("My God, my God")
3. Psalm 22:2	Matthew 27:45 (darkness on earth)
4. Psalm 22:6	Matthew 27:39-44 (despised by people)
5. Psalm 22:7, 8, 13	Matthew 27:39-44 (surrounded by enemies)
6. Psalm 22:14, 16	John 19:34, 37 (pierced hands and feet)
7. Psalm 22:17 (Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20)	John 19:36 (no broken bones)
8. Psalm 22:17	Matthew 27:36 (look at Him)
9. Psalm 22:18	Matthew 27:35 (cast lots)
10. Psalm 22:18	John 19:24 (did not tear garment)
11. Psalm 22:21; 31:5	John 19:30 (Luke 23:46; John 10:18) (gave up spirit)
12. Psalm 35:11	Mark 14:56 (false witness)
13. Psalm 38:11	Luke 23:49 (friends stood far off)
14. Psalm 41:9	Mark 14:10 (John 13:18, 19) (Judas's betrayal)
15. Psalm 69:3	John 19:28 ("I am thirsty")
16. Psalm 69:19	Matthew 27:28, 29 (shame, reproach)
17. Psalm 69:21	John 19:29 (sour wine and vinegar to drink)
18. Psalm 109:25	Matthew 27:39, 40 (when they looked, they shook their heads)
19. Daniel 9:26	John 11:50-52 (exact time of death)
20. Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 27:26, 30 (beating, spitting)
21. Isaiah 52:14	Matthew 27:27-30 (disfigured by cruelty)
22. Isaiah 53:1-3	Mark 15:29-32 (despised and rejected of men)
23. Isaiah 53:4-6	Mark 15:25 (Peter 2:24) (crucified for our sins)
24. Isaiah 53:5-6	John 19:16 (Romans 4:25; 2 Corinthians 5:21) (an offering for sin)
25. Isaiah 53:7	Matthew 27:13-14 (opened not His mouth)
26. Isaiah 53:7	John 1:29 (the Lamb of God)
27. Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:56-60 (grave with the rich)
28. Isaiah 53:12	Luke 23:34 (made intercession for transgressors)

29. Isaiah 53:12	Mark 15:27-28 (numbered with transgressors)
30. Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 26:15 (thirty pieces of silver)
31. Zechariah 11:13	Matthew 27:3-7 (potter)
32. Zechariah 12:10	Luke 23:27 (lamented and mourned)
33. Zechariah 13:7	Mark 14:27, 50 (disciples scattered)
34. Zechariah 13:7	Matthew 26:31 (God to strike the shepherd)