

## Lesson 24: Chapter 27 "the Passion of Christ"

### Servant's preparation:

[http://www.suscopts.org/pdf/presentations/biblestudy/NT/Matthew/Matthew\\_27.pdf](http://www.suscopts.org/pdf/presentations/biblestudy/NT/Matthew/Matthew_27.pdf)

### Brief introduction:

At the beginning of each lesson in the bible study of St. Matthew, please mention this book overview.

- ✓ Who is St. Matthew? He was one of the twelve disciples; he was a tax-collector before Jesus called him to follow Him.
- ✓ Who did he write his gospel to? The Jews, it is designed to prove that Jesus is the Messianic king of Old Testament (OT) prophecy.
- ✓ What is its theme? Jesus is the King of the Heavenly kingdom, Israel's long-awaited Messiah.

### Remember:

Last lesson, Matthew 26, primarily focuses on the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion, including the plot against Him, the Last Supper, Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, His betrayal by Judas, and Peter's denial.

### Memory Verse:

*27:54 " they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"*

### Lesson Opener:

What does it mean for justice to be served? When is justice not served? Which event in the life of Jesus shows the most injustice?

Jesus, though innocent, is condemned to death through the envy of the Jewish leaders. Pilate bowed to the pressure and the crowd turned against Jesus.

Discuss how Jesus's willingness to suffer injustice ultimately paved the way for salvation, highlighting the sacrifice involved in His death.

### Lesson Goal:

St. Matthew emphasizes that Jesus's suffering and death were not random events, but rather the fulfillment of prophecies throughout the Old Testament.

### Lesson Body:

**Jesus Handed Over to Pontius Pilate (27:1-2)**

The religious judgment remained all night long, amid the darkness of envy and hate. The Jewish rulers were asking for the Messiah, the Savior, so He would deliver them from the Roman rule, and He would establish for them the earthly kingdom of the Messiah. Each one coveted to have authority and a prominent position in it. But the Lord has destroyed every materialistic concept for this kingdom and has declared the spiritual one instead.

They therefore resorted to the Roman chiefs themselves to pass judgment over Him, not only from their religious point of view, but also as a national traitor who established a kingdom for Himself. The power to execute death judgment was taken from them or they needed the Roman governor's permission.

They pretended to be defenders to Caesar [who they hated], against the Savior!

### **Judas Hangs Himself (27:3-10)**

Judas assumed, in his greed, he would gain thirty pieces of silver, but as a result he gained disaster and misfortune. So, he went to return the silver pieces in regret, without any repentance, and in bitterness without any hope. He could no longer stand his life, so he went to strangle and hang himself. Peter repented; Judas regretted

The chief priests did not accept the silver to be put in the treasury, since it is the price of blood. They bought a potter's field, a graveyard for stranger, and it has been called he 'field of the blood', as a witness to what mankind did to their Savior.

*In verses 9-10, why did St. Matthew referenced Jeremiah, while the prophecy was mentioned by Zacharias?*

Although the prophecy is attributed to Jeremiah, the specific wording aligns more closely with Zechariah 11:12-13. This discrepancy may be due to the Jewish tradition of attributing a collection of prophetic writings to a major prophet like Jeremiah. The emphasis here is on the divine orchestration of events, showing that Jesus' betrayal was part of God's redemptive plan.

Also in Jeremiah 19:1–13 pictures the prophet purchasing a clay jar from a potter and smashing it in the Valley of Hinnom—later called the Field of Blood (Matthew 27:8) [ same name as the field bought with the 30 pieces of silver.

### **Jesus Faces Pilate (27:11-26)**

It was probably around 7 am when they presented Him to Pilate, hoping for a death penalty without questions but Pilate demanded charges. The Jews accused Jesus of seeking to make Himself King for the Jews.

His answers to Pilate the governor are concise indeed, to the extent in which He reveals the truth and so He would have no excuse. Pilate saw that it was envy that excited the Jewish priests against Him.

Pilate's plan to release a prisoner was an attempt to shift off the responsibility, knowing Jesus was

popular among the people, he wanted to rescue Him from the priests and expected that the people would prefer Him to a hateful robber and murderer, Barabbas. The people were greatly under the influence of the priests. The Lord saved Barabbas with His own death!

It was not only a torturing and painful death, but a very shameful, humiliating, and an accursed one.

They could not answer Pilate's question, what evil has He done? He had done nothing, and they knew He had done nothing, but they shouted, "Crucify Him".

### **The Soldiers Mock Jesus (27:27-31)**

The profane and disrespectful soldiers dress Jesus in a red robe to mock Him for claiming to be the King of Jews, this one who was indeed a true King. Having arrayed Him, in royal robe, crown of thorns, and mock staff, they kneel before Him and ridicule Him. They spit on Him to insult Him.

### **The King on a Cross (27:32-56)**

#### **What does Golgotha mean?**

It is the Aramaic name of the crucifixion site, meaning skull. Kranion (Lk 23:33), the Greek word for "skull". Several writers believe it was called that, from Adam's skull, whom they guess to have been buried there, also some say that it is part of the mountain where Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac on.

On the way to the crucifixion, He fell several times due to the heavy weight of the cross. They therefore called a Cyrene man named Simon, to carry with Him the cross. It is as if he is representing the church of the new covenant that must be committed to carrying the cross with the Lord in His crucifixion.

#### **Why did they offer vinegar?**

This was a custom with the Romans in crucifixion; the vinegar was given, mingled with bitterness, as a way of anesthesia so the crucified one would not feel the weighty suffering as much. But the Lord tasted the sour vinegar, and refused to drink it, so that He would bear the pain in its totality, out of His own self will. They offered wine/vinegar again before He surrendered His life, but He refused.  
Prophecy : Psalm 69:21

#### **What did they do with His garment and robe?**

Concerning His garments divided into four parts, this refers to the church that has Christ's body glued to it. It has spread to the four sides or corners of the universe. It has become in the hands of the Roman soldiers, in the hands of the Gentiles, and they are able to obtain the membership in it.

As for the robe that had no seams to it, all woven from the top, this is not split or divided, this refers to the one church that should have no divisions or splitting. It was a prophecy fulfillment.

He has been crucified with the two robbers, and for their sake, to the extent that one of them wished to be accepted inside Him, a real king, uplifting him to His paradise. The Lord answered him; “Today you will be with Me in paradise.”

### **Who felt the danger of the cross?**

Satan might have felt the danger of the cross, and he got terrified, and was eager that the Lord come down from His cross. But it was too late; he therefore motivated those blasphemers to ask the Lord to come down from the cross. Even the two robbers reviled Him (Matt 27:44) and asked Him to come down if He could.

It was not an ordinary day in which the sun shines as usual from morning till dusk. But from the sixth hour [12pm] there was darkness at midday, till the ninth hour [3 pm]. As it was mentioned by Zechariah and Amos.

*(Amos 8:9) “And it shall come to pass in that day, says the Lord God, that I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight”*. Indeed, the creation lamented itself to God; for the sun darkened, the rocks cracked, and the temple itself was clothed in sorrow, for the veil got torn from top to bottom.

V46: With this His cry, He might have wished to awaken the Jewish thinking from its sleep, to go back to Psalm 22, that has begun with this cry “Eli, Eli”, declaring in detail the crucifixion events. It is as if He wished to confirm that what was happening is only of His divine and Godly provision, previously prophesied by the prophets.



### **Jesus Buried in Joseph’s Tomb secured by Roman guards (27:57-66)**

We have not heard of St. Joseph of Arimathea before, for he was a secret disciple to the Lord for fear of the Jews. Joseph and Nicodemus came up to Pilate bravely and asked for the sanctified body. St. Joseph had hewn a tomb for himself in the rock, but he used it for Jesus.

It became the Sabbath at sundown; therefore, Jesus' body was removed from the Cross prior to sundown in accordance with the Law.

“These matters and events have not been planned haphazardly; the body was placed in a new tomb where no one has been put before so that no one would think that the resurrection has been to someone else placed with Him. This is not only to the disciples alone, but also to the enemies as well, by sealing the grave and appointing soldiers to guard Him as witnesses to His burial”. St. John Chrysostom.

### Takeaways and Lesson Delivery Ideas:

#### **Meditations on the Passion of Christ:**

1. What had our Lord done, that the Jews should hate Him so much? He was no robber, or murderer. He was no blasphemer of their God, or reviler of their prophets. He was one whose life was love. He was one who "went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." He was innocent of any transgression against the law of God or man. And yet the Jews hated Him and killed Him.
2. The catalogue of all the pains endured by our Lord's body is indeed a fearful one. Seldom has such suffering been inflicted on one body in the last few hours of a life. The most savage tribes, in their refinement of cruelty, could not have heaped more agonizing torture on an enemy than were accumulated on the flesh and bones of our beloved Master. Never let it be forgotten that He had a real human body, a body exactly like our own, just as sensitive, just as vulnerable, just as capable of feeling intense pain. And then let us see what that body endured.
3. Our Lord, we must remember, had already passed a night without sleep, and endured excessive fatigue. He had been taken from Gethsemane to the Jewish council, and from the council to Pilate's judgment hall. He had been twice placed on trial, and twice unjustly condemned. He had been already scourged and beaten cruelly with rods.



4. And now, after all this suffering He was delivered up to the Roman soldiers, a body of men no doubt expert in cruelty, and of all people least likely to behave with delicacy or compassion. Then harsh men at once proceeded to work their will. They "gathered together the whole band." They stripped our Lord of His clothing, and put on Him, in mockery, a scarlet robe. They platted a crown of sharp thorns and placed it on His head in derision. They then bowed the knee before Him in mockery, as nothing better than a pretended king. They spit upon Him. They smote Him on the head. And finally, having put His own robe on Him, they led Him out of the city, to a place called Golgotha, and there crucified Him between two thieves.
  
5. But what was a crucifixion? Let us try to realize it and understand its misery. The person crucified was laid on his back on a piece of timber, with a cross-piece nailed to it near one end — or on the trunk of a tree with branching arms, which served the same purpose. His hands were spread out on the cross-piece, and nails driven through each of them, fastening them to the wood. His feet in like manner were nailed to the upright part of the cross. And then, the body having been securely fastened, the cross was raised up and fixed firmly in the ground. And there hung the unhappy sufferer until pain and exhaustion brought him to his end — not dying suddenly, for no vital part of him was injured — but enduring the most excruciating agony from his hands and feet, and unable to move. Such was the death of the cross. Such was the death that Jesus died for us! For six long hours He hung there before a gazing crowd, naked, and bleeding from head to foot — His head pierced with thorns — His back lacerated with scourging — His hands and feet torn with nails — and mocked and reviled by His cruel enemies to the very last.
  
6. Let us meditate frequently on these things. Let us often read over the story of Christ's cross and passion. Let us remember, not least, that all these horrible sufferings were borne without a murmur. No word of impatience crossed our Lord's lips. In His death, no less than in His life, He was perfect. To the very last, Satan found nothing in Him.
  
7. Let us leave the story of our Lord's passion with feelings of deep thankfulness. Our sins are many and great. But a great atonement has been made for them. There was an infinite merit in all Christ's sufferings. They were the sufferings of One who was God as well as man. Surely it is fit, right, and our bounden duty, to praise God daily because Christ has died for us.
  
8. Last, but not least, let us ever learn from the story of passion, to hate sin with great hatred. Sin was the cause of all our Savior's suffering. Our sins platted the crown of thorns. Our sins drove the nails into His hands and feet. Because of our sins, His blood was shed. Surely the thought of Christ crucified should make us loathe all sin.

**“All Clear” game:**



- ❖ Fill three clear plastic cups with 8 to 10 ounces of water. Add a small amount of liquid bleach to one of them. You'll also need red and blue food coloring and a clear pitcher or jar to hold the water from all three cups.
- ❖ *Drop four drops of blue food coloring into one cup of plain water.*
- ❖ Say: **When Jesus came into our world, He had to leave His home in heaven [blue skies]**
- ❖ Say: **When Jesus grew up, He suffered and died on a cross.**
- ❖ *Drop four drops of red coloring into the second cup of plain water.*
- ❖ Say: **Red reminds us of the blood Jesus bled and how much he hurt. Pour the two cup at once into the large pitcher or jar.**
- ❖ Washing Our Sins Away
- ❖ Say: **Purple reminds us that Jesus had to leave heaven, come to our world, and become a person like us so He could shed His blood to take away our sins. When Jesus died on the cross, He had done not anything wrong. He was clear and clean just like our last cup.**
- ❖ Pour the bleached water solution into the purple water. Say: **Jesus never sinned. Jesus died on the cross because He loves each of us so much. Keep your eyes on our blue/purple water. It'll become clear.**