

A&P Bible Church | Weekly Study
Matthew 27:15-44

BOOK SUMMARY:

The Gospel of Matthew clearly shows the influence of its writer's background, and his effort to reach a specific audience. Matthew was one of Jesus' twelve disciples, a Jewish man, and a former tax collector. This profession would have required literacy, and Matthew may have transcribed some of Jesus' words as they were spoken. This book is filled with references to the Old Testament, demonstrating to Israel that Jesus is the Promised One. Matthew also includes many references to coins, likely due to his former profession. Matthew records extensive accounts of Jesus' teaching, more than the other three Gospels.

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Throughout the week continue to look through the scriptures, think through the questions, and apply the Word to your life. Email any questions during the week to Brandon & Travis at ap.brandongarcia@gmail.com & ap.travisjohnson@gmail.com.

MONDAY***Trial Before Pilate, 27:11-26***

After Jesus was pronounced innocent, the chief priests and scribes renewed their vehement accusations, in reply to which Jesus was completely silent. As Lenski points out, this is the second important silence of Christ, the first being in Matthew 26:63 and the third in John 19:9. Pilate marveled that Christ could keep silent under the circumstances. The fact is that after Pilate pronounced Him innocent, Jesus was under no obligation to answer the Jews further; and, if more investigation was required, it was up to Pilate to reverse his former judgment and continue the examination. It was in the course of further accusation by the chief priests and the scribes that Pilate learned that Jesus was from Galilee and used this as an occasion to refer the whole matter to Herod.

When Jesus was later sent by Herod back to Pilate, a plan occurred to Pilate to get out of his problem. According to Matthew 27:15, it had been the custom for many years to release a prisoner whom the people would choose on the occasion of the feast. Pilate picked the worst possible prisoner, Barabbas, who, according to Mark 15:7, was guilty of insurrection and murder. (There is an interesting play on words here, as *Barabbas* means “son of the father.” Barabbas was released instead of Jesus who was the true Son of the Father.) Pilate, assured that Jesus was popular with the people and that the plot against Him was connived by the Jewish leaders, thought the people would choose Jesus rather than Barabbas and thus relieve him of the problem of making a final judgment. Matthew 27:18 notes that Pilate knew that the chief priests had delivered Jesus to him because of envy.

While in the process of discussing this, the wife of Pilate sent him a message which said, “Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him” (v. 19). There has been much speculation as to who Pilate’s wife was and what the background of this incident could have been. The simplest explanation is that she had such a dramatic dream that she felt compelled to share it with her husband, with whom, no doubt, she had discussed Jesus on previous occasions. As Tasker points out, Pilate’s wife was concerned at the possibility of an innocent man of prophetic character being killed unjustly.

Meanwhile, however, the chief priests and elders had been busy persuading the people to ask for Barabbas and to request that Jesus be killed. To Pilate’s amazement, when the question was posed to the people, they asked for Barabbas to be released. In his astonishment, he asked, “What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?” He hoped for a punishment short of death. They replied, “Let him be crucified” (v. 22).

Pilate was now occupied not only with the justice in the case but how he could reasonably sentence a man who had not been convicted of any real crime. Accordingly, he asked again,

“Why, what evil hath he done?” But the people cried all the more, “Let him be crucified.” Unquestionably, they were influenced by the chief priests and elders.

Pilate, then, under great pressure lest there be an insurrection against him which would be damaging to his reputation, publicly took water and washed his hands before the multitude saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.” Remarkably, in the same chapter, Jesus is pronounced innocent both by Judas and by Pilate (vv. 4, 24). The people recklessly responded, “His blood be on us, and on our children.” How tragically these words seem to have been fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem and the slaughter of several hundred thousand Israelites on that occasion.

Having reversed his earlier judgment that Jesus was innocent, Pilate now released Barabbas, scourged Jesus, and delivered Him to be crucified.

(Source: <https://bible.org/seriespage/chapter-27-crucifixion-jesus>)

TUESDAY**Matthew 27:15-26 Breakdown**

15During the feast the governor was accustomed to release one prisoner to the crowd, whomever they wanted. 16At that time they had in custody a notorious prisoner named Jesus Barabbas.

Notice that there were two men on trial named Jesus. One is innocent and the other is a murderer.

17So after they had assembled, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Christ?"

Rome was known for its justice and law. The blindfolded woman holding the two scales was a symbol of Rome's law and justice. Pilate was a cheap politician. Instead of taking the reasonability of judgment upon himself, he allowed the crowd to make the decision. He was willing to sentence an innocent man to the cross in order to keep his political power.

18 For he knew that they had handed him over because of envy.

The religious leaders were jealous that all of their followers were flocking to Jesus instead of them. Pilate knew their motives and still condemned the God of the universe to the cross.

19As he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent a message to him: "Have nothing to do with that innocent man; I have suffered greatly as a result of a dream about him today."

Pilate's wife was a superstitious pagan. Satan did not want Jesus crucified on Passover, because it would be a fulfillment of prophecy.

20But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed.

The leaders of Israel persuaded the crowds to kill their own Messiah.

21The governor asked them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas!"

This was not official Roman Law protocol. If Jesus was innocent, then He should have been released.

22Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?" They all said, "Crucify him!"

The Jewish people had been waiting for the Messiah for centuries. Now that He had finally arrived they wanted Him crucified.

23He asked, "Why? What wrong has he done?" But they shouted more insistently, "Crucify him!"

Pilate could find nothing wrong that Jesus had done. He was caught in a political situation into which there was no escape. If he released Jesus, then possible riots could threaten his career. Rome did not tolerate weak leaders who could not control their province.

Jesus is Condemned and Mocked 24When Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but that instead a riot was starting, he took some water, washed his hands before the crowd and said, "I am innocent of this man's blood. You take care of it yourselves!"

This was a superstitious pagan ritual. Pilate washing his hands would not clear him of sentencing an innocent man to death, especially when it was the god-man of the universe.

25In reply all the people said, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!"

The Jews demanded in mob action that the guilt of murdering their own Messiah be laid upon them and their children. They and their children will be destroyed in the Temple destruction of 70 A.D.

26Then he released Barabbas for them. But after he had Jesus flogged, he handed him over to be crucified.

Barabbas is Aramaic, meaning "Son of the Father." This murderer was released while the true Son of the Father died in his place.

WEDNESDAY

Jesus Mocked and Scourged, 27:27-32

According to Matthew and Mark, Jesus was taken by the soldiers into the common hall, the praetorium, which was thronged with Roman soldiers. There, they stripped Him and mocked Him by putting on Him a purple robe and a crown of thorns. The indignities included being spit upon and being repeatedly beaten on the head. A parallel account is given in Mark 15:16-20, but Luke says only that Pilate delivered Jesus “to their will” (Lk 23:25). The fullest account is found in John 19:1-16, where the actual order of events which took place is given.

Putting the accounts together, it seems that Pilate himself observed and supervised this abuse of Jesus. His motivation was to degrade Him and to make His claim as a King of the Jews to be ridiculous. It is probable that Pilate hoped by this means to get off without actually having to order the crucifixion of Jesus. While Matthew introduces this idea of crucifixion in 27:26, John 19:16 makes clear that the order for crucifixion came at the end of the mockery rather than at the beginning. Matthew is simply recording the facts without necessarily giving the order of events.

That Jesus was submissive to this entire procedure is the measure of His total submission to the will of God. Here, the Lord of glory, capable of destroying anyone who put a hand upon Him, allowed Himself to be abused in this painful and humiliating way. Although the Scriptures are graphic, even they state only the essentials. The prophet Isaiah anticipated this when he stated in Isaiah 52:14, “His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.” Jesus was beaten about the head and the body until He was almost unrecognizable.

Few incidents in history more clearly illustrate the brutality in the desperately wicked heart of man than that which was inflicted on Jesus the Son of God. The mockery of the crown of thorns, painful as well as humiliating, His being stripped naked in front of the large crowd; the mockery of the purple robe, intended to represent a kingly garment; His being spit upon and beaten over the head repeatedly as well as the mocking worship testified to the unbelief and sordidness of the actors in this situation. It was only after enduring all of this in complete silence, except for the conversation between Christ and Pilate recorded in John 19:8-11, that Jesus was finally led away to the crucifixion.

As the custom was, the accused had to bear His own cross. Luke 23:26-32 records some of the incidents that occurred on the way to Golgotha. Because of Christ’s suffering, He was too weak to carry the cross Himself; and Simon of Cyrene, who is identified in Mark 15:21 as the father of Alexander and Rufus, was forced to carry the cross for Jesus. Some believe he

was black, not of Jewish background. The hour had come for the Lamb of God to die for the sins of the whole world.

(Source: <https://bible.org/seriespage/chapter-27-crucifixion-jesus>)

The Mistreatment of the King (Matthew 27:26-32)

Beginning in Matthew 27:26 and continuing through verse 44, the teacher and students can make a list of all the things that were maliciously done to Christ, either physically or verbally.

The Roman scourge is mentioned in verse 26. This consisted of a short wooden handle to which several thongs were attached, the ends equipped with pieces of lead or brass and with sharply pointed bits of bone or other sharp objects. The stripes were laid especially (not always exclusively) on the victim's back, bared and bent. So hideous and severe was this punishment that sometimes the victims would die before ever getting to the cross. The body was at times torn and lacerated to such an extent that deep-seated veins and arteries—sometimes even entrails and inner organs—were exposed. Those who were Roman citizens were not allowed to be scourged. Roman law laid no limits on the number of blows to be administered (the Jews were limited by their law to 40 blows, and to be safe they stopped at 39--see 2 Cor. 11:24). The Lord's weakened condition following scourging may help to explain why He was unable to bear His cross all the way to Calvary.

The treatment of Christ by the Roman soldiers is given in verses 27-31 and may be summarized as follows:

They robbed Him (v. 28) with a scarlet-purple robe. Throwing this around the scourged Saviour must have been uncomfortable indeed.

They crowned Him (v. 29) with a crown of thorns, pressing it upon His head. They sceptered Him (v. 29) by placing a sturdy reed in His hand, for a King must have a scepter.

They adored Him (v. 29) in cruel mockery. A soldier would drop to his knees and say, "Hail, King of the Jews", then another would take his turn and still another until all had shared in this "fun."

They spit upon Him (v. 30), a truly vulgar and despicable form of ridicule.

They hit Him (v. 30). Before any of these mockers vacates his position in front of Jesus, he removes the stick from the hand of the victim and strikes Him on the head with it, as if to say, “What kind of a king you are! One that gets hit over the head with his own scepter!”

It is sobering to remember that these soldiers will have another day to stand before the King, even at the Great White Throne Judgment. There will be no mocking then. There will be no spitting then. Hell is at the end of a Christmocking, Christ-rejecting life.

Simon was forced to carry the cross (v. 32 “compelled”). The Lord Jesus also carried the cross as we learn in John 19:16,17, but not for long. Sheer physical exhaustion made it impossible for Him to carry it very far.

(Source: https://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/matthew/mat27_28.pdf)

THURSDAY

Jesus Crucified, 27:33-44

The account of Matthew and the parallel accounts in the other gospels (Mk 15:22-32; Lk 23:33-43; Jn 19:17-24) need to be combined to give the full account of the incidents that occurred at the crucifixion leading up to His death. The order of events seems to be as follows:

1. The arrival at Golgotha (Mt 27:33; Mk 15:22; Lk 23:33; Jn 19:17)
2. The offer of the wine mingled with gall (Mt 27:34; Mk 15:23)
3. The act of crucifixion between the two thieves (Mt 27:35-38; Mk 15:24-28; Lk 23:33-38; 19:18)
4. The first cry from the cross, "Father, forgive them" (Lk 23:34)
5. The soldiers taking the garments of Jesus, leaving Him naked on the cross (Mt 27:35; Mk 15:24; Lk 23:34; Jn 19:23)
6. The Jews mocking Jesus (Mt 27:39-43; Mk 15:29-32; Lk 23:35-37)
7. The conversation with the thieves (Mt 27:44; Mk 15:32; Lk 23:39-43)
8. The second cry from the cross with the words, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Lk 23:43)
9. The third cry, "Woman, behold thy son!" (Jn 19:26-27)
10. The darkness which overtakes the scene on Calvary (Mt 27:45; Mk 15:33; Lk 23:44)
11. The fourth cry, beginning, "My God, my God" (Mt 27:46-47; Mk 15:34-36)
12. The fifth cry, "I thirst" (Jn 19:28)
13. The sixth cry, "It is finished" (Jn 19:30)
14. The seventh cry, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46)
15. The Lord dismissing His spirit by an act of His own will (Mt 27:50; Mk 15:37; Lk 23:46; Jn 19:30)

Matthew notes that Golgotha is "a place of a skull," which is what *Golgotha* means, apparently from the idea that the hill Calvary looked something like a human skull. The hill above the garden tomb discovered by Gordon has a skull-like appearance from the side. The top of the hill is now a Muslim cemetery, and there is a convenient tomb which is identified as the tomb of Jesus at the foot of the hill in the garden. Positive identification of this site, of course, is impossible today.

Matthew records Christ's refusal to drink the sour wine mingled with a drug, which would have tended to dull His senses and make the cross easier to bear. Matthew simply records His crucifixion 'without going into details, as the crude spikes were driven through His hands and His feet, and the entire cross was set up by being placed in a hole in the ground.

The soldiers took His garments, tearing them in four pieces so that each soldier could have a part, but they cast lots for the coat, which was a woven garment, as John 19:23-24 explains. Matthew regards this as a fulfillment of the prophecy of Psalm 22:18. Textual evidence seems to indicate that this was added to Matthew's gospel, but that in John 19:24, it is properly included. In any case, the prophecy was fulfilled.

The event of His crucifixion, as stated in Mark 15:25, reckoned according to Jewish time, was the third hour, or 9:00 a.m., or, as mentioned in John 19:14, the sixth hour, according to Roman time, actually meaning after 6:00 a.m., or early in the morning.

According to John 19:19, Pilate himself had ordered that the accusation made against Jesus should be nailed to His cross; and Matthew records this as, "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (27:37). The wording in each gospel varies, and the title itself was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (Jn 19:20). Putting the accounts together, the full inscription was, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." All the accounts contain the phrase, "The King of the Jews," which was the substance of the accusation. Pilate intended this as a rebuke to the Jews, but at the same time it was a testimony to the person of Christ.

Mention is also made of the two thieves who were crucified on either side of Jesus. Only Luke 23:39-43 describes the conversion of one of the thieves. Matthew records the mocking of the crowd and the chief priests and scribes and elders, as they challenged Christ to come down from the cross, if He were indeed the Son of God who had said that He could destroy the temple and build it in three days.

How tragically true it was, as recorded in Matthew 27:42, "He saved others; himself he cannot save." It was not that He lacked power; it was because it was the will of the Father that He should die. The mockery accurately fulfilled the anticipation of Psalm 22:6-13. Tasker notes there were three classes of mockers: (1) "Ignorant sinners"; (2) "religious sinners"; (3) "condemned sinners." The tragedy was not that one was dying on the cross, but that the people beheld Him in hardness of heart and wickedness of unbelief.

(Source: <https://walvoord.com/article/221>)

Matthew 27:33-44 Breakdown

*33They came to a place called Golgotha (which means "Place of the Skull")
Golgotha was a hill which was located outside of the city of Jerusalem.*

34and offered Jesus wine mixed with gall to drink. But after tasting it, he would not drink it.

This was a fulfillment of Psalm 69:21. The wine was a painkiller to alleviate some of the pain from the crucifixion. Jesus refused it, because He wanted to be fully alert as He was dying for the sins of the earth.

35When they had crucified him, they divided his clothes by throwing dice.

This is a fulfillment of Psalm 22:18. The Roman soldiers would divide all of the property of the condemned. The only valuable article that Jesus possessed was the robe, which was given to Him at Pilate's house during His mocking.

36Then they sat down and kept guard over him there.

Psalm 22 predicted that Gentile dogs would gleefully watch the crucifixion of Jesus. Gentile dogs was a metaphor for sodomites. The Roman soldiers sat down to watch Jesus suffer on the cross. This is similar to people going to a violent R-rated movie for entertainment.

37Above his head they put the charge against him, which read: "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews."

The crime of the individual was written on a sign over the cross. The sign said, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." According to official Roman Law, the crime of Jesus was that He was the King of the Jews.

38Then two outlaws were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.

Two other criminals were crucified on each side of Jesus.

39Those who passed by defamed him, shaking their heads 40and saying, "You who can destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are God's Son, come down from the cross!"

Satan did not want Jesus to die on Passover, because this would be a fulfillment of prophecy. He attempted to kill Jesus before Passover, but he was not able to do so. These taunters could not persuade Jesus to come down from the cross and avenge Himself. This was a fulfillment of Psalm 22.

41In the same way even the chief priests – together with the experts in the law and elders – were mocking him:

This was the spiritual condition of the religious leadership of God's chosen people.

42"He saved others, but he cannot save himself! He is the king of Israel! If he comes down now from the cross, we will believe in him!"

Even the taunts of the religious leaders would not cause Jesus to come off of the cross and execute vengeance upon those who were mocking Him. This is an example of divine patience and divine love.

43He trusts in God – let God, if he wants to, deliver him now because he said, 'I am God's Son!'"

This was the result of man's totally depraved and evil mind. Jesus died for their sins, but their reaction was ridicule.

44The robbers who were crucified with him also spoke abusively to him.

Notice that both robbers spoke abusively to Jesus. The other gospels report that one of the robbers had a change of attitude and actually believed in Jesus.

FRIDAY

The Death of the King—The First Three Hours (Matthew 27:33–44)

Golgotha (verse 33) means “place of the skull” (the term “Calvary” means the same thing), possibly so named because the rock formations on this hill may have resembled a human skull. A skull speaks of death and certainly “Calvary” was the place of death. Three men—one innocent, two guilty—would die on this day.

Just before the crucifixion a drink was offered to Jesus (verse 34). This was vinegar (wine) mixed with gall (a bitter substance identified in Mark 15:23 as myrrh). Thus this was a “drugged” drink, and apparently the purpose of this drug was to deaden pain and alleviate suffering. When Jesus tasted it and realized what it was He refused to drink it. He did this no doubt because He wanted to endure with full consciousness all the pain that was in store for Him, in order to be our perfect Substitute and Saviour. [Our Lord’s response to this drug provides a wonderful lesson as to what the believer’s response should be to drugs which wrongly affect the mind and rob us of our full mental faculties. It also shows us how the Lord always faced His problems and never sought to escape from them, as many do today by their drug trips, drinking times, etc.] *Note: We recognize that physician recommended pain killers used by modern medicine can be very helpful in managing a person’s pain. We are simply pointing out that our blessed Lord did not seek an escape from the pain and suffering which faced Him at Calvary’s cross.*

The crucifixion itself is mentioned in the briefest of terms. It simply says, “They crucified Him” (verse 35). The gospel writers did not go into all the gory details because the essence of what took place on the cross involves not what the Romans did to Jesus (by driving nails through His hands and feet) but what God the Father did to Christ by judging Him for our sins. Many men have suffered and died by crucifixion, and many suffered on crosses much longer than Christ did. The awfulness of the cross cannot be appreciated unless one understands that “the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of of all” (Isaiah 53:6) and that “it pleased the LORD to bruise Him” (Isaiah 53:10). His suffering primarily involved our sins (1 Pet. 3:18), not the nails.

Verse 35 gives a remarkable example of fulfilled prophecy. This prediction was given in Psalm 22:18, penned by David a thousand years before the event took place (and centuries before death by Roman crucifixion was even known). The Roman soldiers fulfilled this prophecy to the smallest detail, and certainly these men were unfamiliar with the Hebrew Scriptures and were totally unaware that their actions were fulfilling God’s prophetic Word.

It was a custom to write the crime above the criminal so that all would know the reason he was dying. See verse 37 for what was written over the Lord’s head. He died because He was

the rejected King of the Jews. He occupied the center cross surrounded on each side by criminals (verse 38). This was the fulfillment of Isaiah 53:12 (“numbered with the transgressors”).

Those who passed by were very vocal in their mocking (verses 39-43). If Christ had saved Himself and come down from the cross, as these mockers suggested, what would that have meant? If He had saved Himself (compare verse 42), then would He have been able to save others? It was God’s love for the sinner that kept Him on the cross.

Verse 44 tells us about the robbers who died with Christ. Notice what both of these men were doing. This is in sharp contrast with Luke 23:39-43 where we only find one robber mocking Christ. This is a fine example of the wonders of true repentance. One of the criminals stopped his mocking and repented. These two robbers are representative of all people. Every person resembles one of these robbers. Every person is a guilty sinner who either rejects Christ or receives Christ by faith. All men are drawn to that center cross (John 12:32) and they each must decide what they will do with the Crucified One.

The Lord Jesus was on the cross for approximately six hours, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

(Source: https://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/matthew/mat27_28.pdf)