

Matthew Chapter 27

Verses 1-2:

See also Mark 15:1-15; Luke 23:1-25; John 18:28 – 19:16.

“Pontius Pilate the governor:”

Pontius Pilate was the Roman procurator of Judea from 26 to 37 A.D., holding his office under the prefect of Syria.

His usual place of residence was Caesarea, but he was in Jerusalem during the feast to deal with any insurrection or trouble.

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:"

“When the morning was come”:

The Sanhedrin waited until daybreak to render their official verdict (26:66), possibly a token nod to the rule against criminal trials at night.

Matthew 27:2 "And when they had bound him, they led [him] away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor."

“Delivered him to Pontius Pilate”:

Jesus had two trials, one Jewish and religious, the other Roman and secular.

Rome reserved the right of execution in capital cases, so Jesus had to be handed over to the Roman authorities for execution of the death sentence.

Pilate’s headquarters were in Caesarea, on the Mediterranean coast, but he was in Jerusalem for the Passover celebrations, so he oversaw the trial.

Christ was brought before Pilate (verses 2-14), then was sent to Herod for yet another hearing (Luke 23:6-12), then returned to Pilate for the final hearing and pronouncing of sentence (verses 15-26).

Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea and Samaria during Christ’s ministry.

Emperor Tiberius appointed him as the fifth procurator of Judea (A.D. 26-36).

As procurator, he controlled the Judean province, having an army of from three thousand to five thousand Roman soldiers.

Usually he would govern from Caesarea, but during the Jewish feasts he and his troops would be garrisoned in Jerusalem just outside the temple area at the fortress of Antonia.

Pilate was an insensitive, cruel leader who needlessly infuriated the Jews and Samaritans (Luke 13:1).

This evidently led to his recall to Rome.

Both Jewish and Roman historians make reference to Pilate, and in 1961 an inscription found at Caesarea, provide the first archaeological evidence of his rule.

They had already decided to kill Jesus.

This is not just one person, but the general council.

This was the beginning of Friday, the fourteenth day of Nisan.

We call it good Friday.

This was Passover and Jesus was the Passover Lamb, so He must be killed today so as to fulfill the Scriptures.

By now they had made their decision, so now they had bound Him and led Him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

Verses 3-8:

“When he saw that he was condemned,” which would be evident from seeing Jesus being taken to Pilate (a move Judas may not have anticipated), he “repented himself” (Greek *metamelomai*, “to regret”).

This word is different from the term for repentance to salvation (Greek *metanoia*).

His admission: “I have sinned,” is not necessarily a true confession of faith.

Judas then threw the money “in the temple” (Greek *naos*, “sanctuary”), and “hanged himself.”

His “falling headlong” (Acts 1:18-19), is generally supposed to have happened while he was attempting to do this.

Perhaps, hanging himself over the ledge, he then fell into the valley below.

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,"

“Repented”:

Judas felt the sting of his own guilt, but this was not genuine repentance.

There is a godly sorrow that leads to repentance, but Judas’s remorse was of a different kind, as demonstrated by his suicide (verse 5; 2 Cor. 7:10).

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]."

Suddenly, Judas felt remorse when he saw that they had condemned Jesus to die.

His greed for money had caused him to do this terrible thing, but he had never dreamed that they would kill Him.

He probably did not even consider what they would do to Jesus.

Here, we see someone who had done a terrible sin and was feeling guilty.

Matthew 27:5 "And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself."

“And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple”:

Upon the ground, in the temple where they were sitting; in their council chamber.

“The paved chamber”, where the Sanhedrim used to meet, for it seems they would not take the money of him; and he was determined not to carry it back with him, and therefore threw it down before them and left it.

He departed; from the Sanhedrim and went out of the temple.

Not to God, nor to the throne of his grace, nor to his master, to ask pardon of him, but to some secret solitary place, to cherish his grief and black despair, and hanged himself.

“And went and hanged himself”:

The word used in the original here, has given rise to much discussion, whether it means that he was suffocated or strangled by his great grief, or whether he took his life by suspending himself.

It is acknowledged on all hands however, that the latter is its most usual meaning, and it is certainly the most obvious meaning.

Peter says, in giving an account of the death of Jesus (Acts 1:18), that Judas, "falling headlong, burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out."

There has been supposed to be some difficulty in reconciling these two accounts, but there is really no necessary difference.

Both accounts are true.

Matthew records the mode in which Judas attempted his death by hanging.

Peter speaks of the result.

Judas probably passed out of the temple in great haste and perturbation of mind.

He sought a place where he might perpetrate this crime.

He would not, probably, be very careful about the fitness or the means he used.

In his anguish, his haste, his desire to die, he seized upon a rope and suspended himself.

And it is not at all remarkable or unusual, that the rope might prove too weak and break.

Falling headlong, that is, on his face, he burst asunder, and in awful horrors died.

A double death, with double pains and double horrors, the reward of his aggravated guilt.

We read in the Bible (in Galatians 3:13), "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree."

Here, we see Judas, who hangeth on a tree.

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":

It was forbidden (Deuteronomy 23:18), 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.

"The treasury" was kept in the court of the women.

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 rendered here as "treasury" contains the notion of an "offering to God."

What was given there was considered as an offering made to him.

"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" man, and crucifying him who had given full evidence that he was the Messiah.

People are often very scrupulous in "small" matters, who stop at nothing at great crimes.

This one statement should tell us something about not accepting every offering in the church.

If the church knows for sure that it is an ill-gotten gain, they should not accept the offering.

Matthew 27:7 "And they took counsel, and bought with them the Potter's field, to bury strangers in."

"And they took counsel":

They consulted among themselves about the proper way to dispose of this money.

"And bought with them" (meaning the 30 pieces of silver).

In (Acts 1:18), it is said of Judas that "he purchased a field with the reward of his 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 occasion of another's doing (see Acts 2:23; John 19:1; Matthew 27:59-60).

Matthew 27:8 "Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day."

“The field of blood”:

In vain do the wicked attempt to conceal themselves; God makes them instrumental in discovering their own wickedness.

Judas, by returning the money, and the priests, by laying it out, they raise to themselves an eternal monument.

The one of his treachery, the others of their betrayal, and both of the innocence of Jesus Christ.

As, long as the Jewish government continued, it might be said, "This is the field that was bought from the potter with the money which Judas got from the high priests for betraying his Master.

Which he, in deep moral guilt of spirit, brought back to them, and they bought this ground for a burial place for strangers: for as it was the price of the blood of an innocent man.

They did not think proper to let it lay in the treasury of the temple where the traitor had thrown it, who afterwards in despair, went and hanged himself.

What a standing proof must this have been of the innocence of Christ, and of their treachery.

Matthew 27:9 "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah 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;"

“Spoken by Jeremiah the prophet”:

Actually, the statement paraphrases (Zech. 11:12-13).

But the Hebrew canon was divided into 3 sections, Law, Writings and Prophets (Luke 24:44).

Jeremiah came first in the order of prophetic books, so the Prophets were sometimes collectively referred to by his name.

Zechariah 11:13 “And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty [pieces] of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.”

Matthew 27:10 "And gave them for the Potter's field, as the Lord appointed me."

“And gave them”:

In Zechariah, it is, "I gave them".

Here it is represented as being given by the priests.

The meaning is not different; it is that this price "was given" for the potter's field.

"As the Lord appointed me":

That is, "commanded" me.

The meaning of the place in Zechariah is this: He was directed to go to the Jews as a prophet, a pastor of the people.

They treated him, as they had done others, with great contempt.

He asks them to give him "his price".

That is, the price which they thought he and his pastoral labors were worth, or to show their estimate of his office.

If they thought it of value, they were to pay him accordingly; if not, they were to "forbear", that is, to give nothing.

To show their "great contempt" of him and his office, and of God who had sent him, they gave him thirty pieces of silver "the price of a slave."

This God commanded or "appointed him" to give to the potter, or to throw into the pottery to throw away.

So in the time of Jesus the same thing was substantially repeated.

Jesus came as the Messiah.

They hated and rejected him.

To show their contempt of him and his cause, they valued him "at the price of a slave."

This was thrown down in the temple, taken by the priests, and appropriated to the purchase of a field owned by a "potter", worn-out land of little or no value.

All showing at how low a price, through the whole transaction, the Son of God was estimated.

Though the words quoted here are not precisely like those in Zechariah, yet the sense and general structure are the same.

This detail of the betrayal is very important.

It shows the "men of God" had no problem convicting Jesus, with no evidence, and condemning Him to death.

However, they were sticking to the letter of the law.

They would not use blood money to purchase anything for the church.

Jesus had rightly accused them when He said they swallow a camel and strain at a gnat, ye hypocrites.

Verses 11-31:

“Barabbas ” means "The Father's Son" in Aramaic and must be seen in contrast with Jesus, the Father's Son.

Pilate’s question “Why, what evil hath he done?”

This comes late in the trial and represents a personal, though unofficial, acknowledgment of Jesus’ innocence.

Pilate thus attempts to shift the blame for Jesus’ death to the Jews themselves.

The dramatic answer “His blood be on us” eventually brought the wrath of God upon His very own people.

Encouraged by their willingness to take responsibility for His death, Pilate then “scourged Jesus” in hope that a bloody beating would appease them (John 19:1-6).

The scourging was a whipping with a leather whip with sharp pieces of bone and metal embedded in its thongs.

The statement that Pilate “delivered him” means he officially turned Him over to his soldiers for His execution.

They took Him “into the common hall” (Greek praitorion from Latin praetorium) or governor’s quarters, probably in the Fortress of Antonia.

They mocked His claim to be king by clothing Him with a “scarlet robe” (Greek chlamus).

It was a military robe, usually fastened at the shoulder.

The “crown of thorns” and the “reed” for a scepter added to their mockery.

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."

“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 fuller account is found (in John 18:28-40).

“And the governor asked him”:

This question was asked because the "charge" which the Jews brought against Jesus, "of perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar" (Luke 23:2).

It was on this charge that, after consultation, they had agreed to arraign him before Pilate.

"They" had condemned him for "blasphemy," but they well knew that Pilate would altogether disregard an accusation of that kind.

They therefore attempted to substitute a totally different accusation from that on which they had professed to find him guilty.

To excite the jealousy of the Roman governor, and to procure his death on a charge of treason against the Roman emperor if he didn't find Jesus guilty.

And Jesus said unto him; “thou sayest” which is the same as if he had said, "I am" (see Matthew 26:25 compared with Mark 14:62), and that this was the sense of his answer is clear from (see John 18:36).

Though, at the same time, he let him know that his kingdom was not of this world.

That he was not a temporal king, nor did he lay any claim to any earthly dominions; and therefore, neither he nor his master Caesar, had anything to fear from him.

He was only a king in a spiritual sense, over the Israel of God; such as received him, as the Messiah, and believed in his name.

I do not believe that Pontius Pilate meant this in a way that would trap Jesus.

I believe he truly wanted to know if Jesus truly was the king of the Jews.

Jesus, here again, did not give him an answer that would settle the matter. So he just said, you say I am.

Matthew 27:12 "And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing."

“When he was accused”: To wit, of perverting the nation, and of forbidding to give tribute to Caesar (Luke 23:2, Luke 23:5).

Probably this was done in a tumultuous manner and in every variety of form.

“He answered nothing”:

He was conscious of his innocence.

He knew that they could not prove these charges.

They offered no testimony to prove them, and, in conscious innocence, he was silent.

Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

Matthew 27:13 "Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?"

“Then saith Pilate unto him”:

Observing he made no reply to the accusations of the chief priests and elders, and in order to draw something out of him, he said “Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?”

Are thou deaf or do you not understand?

Dost thou not consider the nature of these charges?

How many, and of what kind the depositions are now made by persons of such rank and figure?

Art thou under no concern to make answer to them?

Matthew 27:14 "And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marveled greatly."

“To never a word”:

That is, not at all.

He said nothing.

There was no need of his replying.

He was innocent, and they offered no proof of guilt.

Besides, his appearance was full evidence in his favor.

He was poor, unarmed, without powerful friends, and alone.

His life had been public, and his sentiments were well known, and the charge had on the face of it the aspect of absurdity.

It deserved therefore, no answer.

“Marveled greatly”:

Wondered exceedingly, or was much surprised.

He was probably more surprised that Jesus bore this so meekly, and did not return railing for railing, than that he did not set up a defense.

The latter was unnecessary, the former was unusual.

The governor was not accustomed to see it, and was therefore greatly amazed.

Jesus would not defend Himself.

Just one word from Jesus and all of this would stop, but He was determined to carry it through.

Criminals who were brought before the governor, and knew their terrible fate would be a cruel death on the cross, would be begging for mercy about now; but Jesus never said a word.

No wonder Pilate marveled.

Matthew 27:15 "Now at [that] feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would."

See also the parallel places (in Mark 15:6-14; Luke 23:17-23; John 18:39-40).

“At that feast”:

The feast of the Passover, the governor's custom or practice was to release one prisoner.

From where this custom arose, or by whom it was introduced, is not known.

It was probably adopted to secure popularity among the Jews, and to render the government of the Romans less unpleasant.

Any little indulgence granted to the Jews during the heavy oppression by the Romans would serve to conciliate their favor, and to keep the nation from sedition.

It might happen often that when persons were arraigned before the Romans on charge of sedition, some special favorite of the people, or some leader, might be among the number.

It is evident that if they had the privilege of recovering such a person, it would serve much to allay their feelings, and make tolerable the yoke under which they groaned.

Matthew 27:16 "And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas."

"Barabbas" was the criminal whom the Jewish crowd chose instead of Jesus when Pilate offered the release of one.

Barabbas is referred to (in each of the Gospels and in Acts 3:14).

He is described as a well-known prisoner (verse 16), a robber (John 18:40), and as one who had committed murder during an uprising (Mark 15:7).

Jesus' only political crime was to acknowledge Himself as King, which the Jews pronounce as treason against Rome, but which Pilate discounted.

Since Barabbas was guilty of far more treasonous acts, Pilate had hoped to free Jesus by offering the release of one of them.

Nothing is known of Barabbas after his release.

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?"

"Therefore when they were gathered together":

Meaning not the chief priests and elders; for these were together before, but the common people.

For it was to them that the release of a prisoner was to be made, and so the proposal of one; and it was at their option, who should be the person, or it was "whom they would" as (in Matt. 27:15)

"Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I should release unto you?

Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?"

He puts it to them, whom they would choose to have released, Barabbas the thief and robber, the seditious person and murderer, or Jesus, whom some called the Christ, the Messiah, the king of the Jews.

Pilate on purpose proposed such an infamous person along with him, not doubting but they would have preferred Christ, whatever were their prejudices against him, before such a scandalous person as Barabbas.

And whatever good will they might secretly have to put Jesus to death, and release Barabbas.

He thought they could not, for shame, speak out their sense, and desire Barabbas and not Jesus.

His view was not to reproach Christ, by joining him with so wicked a man, but to save him.

Matthew 27:18 "For he knew that for envy they had delivered him."

“For he knew that for envy”:

He drew away the people from them.

This Pilate understood, probably from his knowledge of the pride and ambition of the rulers, and from the fact that no danger could arise from a person that appeared like Jesus.

If Pilate knew this, he was bound to release him himself.

As a governor and judge, he was under obligation to protect the innocent, and should, despite all the opposition of the Jews, at once should have set him free.

Pilate saw in their countenances, and by their charges against him, and by the whole of their conduct, that it was not out of any regard to Caesar, or to the peace and tranquility of the civil government, or to strict justice.

But from envy, at his popularity, at his fame and credit, the honor, glory, and applause he had among the people, because his doctrine, and miracles, that they had delivered him into his hands.

Therefore, Pilate hoped to succeed in this scheme of his to release him.

By proposing him with so notorious a person to the people, when the one, as he might reasonably judge, was abhorred by them, the other had got great credit and esteem among many of them.

The Persian version here adds the people's answer; "they answered, release Barabbas, but deliver Jesus to us".

It appears very clear to me that Pilate wanted to release Jesus.

Pilate could not understand why his people would want to kill this innocent man.

Since it was a custom to release a prisoner at Passover, what better prisoner than Jesus?

Pilate even reminded the people that Jesus was called Christ (the Anointed One).

Barabbas on the other hand, fully deserved to be in prison.

His crimes were many and terrible.

He was a menace to society.

I believe Pilate's reason for choosing Barabbas was because he was so bad, and Pilate just knew the people would not want him released.

Therefore, Pilate would get his wish and release Jesus.

Jealousy and envy had driven these so called "religious" men to seek the death of Jesus.

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."

“When he was set down on the judgment seat”:

This message was probably received when he had resumed his place on the judgment seat, after Jesus had been sent to Herod.

“His wife sent unto him”:

The reason why she sent to him is immediately stated that she had a dream respecting him.

We know nothing more of her.

We do not know whether she had ever seen the Savior herself, but it would seem that she was apprised of what was taking place, and probably anticipated that the affair would involve her husband in trouble.

“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.

“That just man”:

The word "just," here, has the sense of "innocent," or not guilty.

She might have been satisfied of his innocence from other sources as well as from the dream.

“I have suffered many things”:

Dreams were 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 was probably agitated with the subject.

She was satisfied of the innocence of Jesus; and, knowing that the Jews would make every effort to secure his condemnation, it was not unnatural that her mind should be excited during 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.

God speaks to us many times in dreams.

Not every dream has a message for us in it, but many times dreams are a warning to us of impending danger.

Sometimes dreams are to encourage us.

We certainly should heed messages that we get from God in dreams.

Here we see that God speaks to women, as well as men.

She sent a message to her husband to warn him.

Some women would have been afraid that he would laugh at them, and therefore would not have sent the message.

This woman had done what God intended her to do.

Now, her husband had to heed the message.

Matthew 27:20 "But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus."

"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 those who but a little before, had cried Hosanna, to cry crucify him.

These chief priests were so determined to kill Jesus, that they would go to any lengths to see this done, even to release this terrible criminal.

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”:

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 unjust epithet which a certain statesman gave to the people at large was, in its utmost latitude, applicable to these Jews.

They were an insensitive Multitude.

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."

“Pilate saith unto them”:

As one astonished at their choice: he could not have thought they would have asked the life of so vile a person that had been guilty of such capital crimes, crimes to be abhorred by all men.

“What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ?”:

Surely you would not have me put him to death, and that for no other reason but this, because he is called either by himself or others, Christ, or the Messiah, or the king of the Jews!

They all say unto him, let him be crucified; which was a Roman punishment, inflicted on the meanest and worst of men; as wicked servants, thieves, robbers, and cut-throats.

And so was not only a torturing and painful death, but a very shameful and ignominious one, an accursed one.

“In this they all agreed” being instigated to it by the chief priests and elders.

Pilate had reminded them again, that Jesus was Christ.

They chose this criminal over the Savior of the world.

Pilate still wanted to release Jesus; but these men, who were supposed to be pillars of the church, said crucify Him.

Matthew 27:23 "And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified."

“And the governor said, Why?”:

Luke informs us that Pilate put this question to them "three times," as he was so anxious 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 along 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.

“Let him be crucified”:

Luke says they were instant with loud voices demanding this.

They urged it.

They demanded it with a popular clamor.

(Acts 13:28), though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed.

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]."

“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 undiscovered murder, the elders of that city which was nearest to the place where the dead body was found, were required by the law (Deut. 21:1-10).

And 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.

These religious people were still completely determined to kill Jesus.

Pilate wanted no part of any of this and washed his hands of the whole matter.

Pilate said publicly that Jesus was a just man, guilty of no crime.

He said he would have nothing to do with this murder of an innocent man.

Matthew 27:25 "Then answered all the people, and said, His blood [be] on us, and on our children."

“His blood be on us”:

The Jews accepted the blame for the execution of Jesus and did not hold the Romans responsible (see 21:38-39).

These people (scribes, high priest, and multitude), spoke a terrible curse on their descendants, when they said, "His blood be on us, and on our children".

Matthew 27:26 "Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered [him] to be crucified."

“Scourged”:

The whip used for scourging consisted of several strands of leather attached to a wooden handle.

Each strand had a bit of metal or bone attached to the end.

The victim was bound to a post by the wrists, high over his head, so that the flesh of the back would be taut.

An expert at wielding the scourge could literally tear the flesh from the back, lacerating muscles and sometimes even exposing the kidneys or other internal organs.

Scourging alone was fatal in some cases.

Pilate released Barabbas and turned Jesus over to the soldiers to Crucify Him.

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”: Pilate’s residence in Jerusalem.

It was probably located in the Antonia Fortress, adjacent to the northwest corner of the temple.

“The soldiers of the governor”:

Were part of a “cohort”, about 600 soldiers, assigned to serve the governor (Pilate), during his stay in Jerusalem.

Matthew 27:28 "And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe."

“Scarlet robe” (Mark 15:17 and John 19:2), say “purple,” suggesting that the robe may have been something between royal purple and scarlet,” the closest thing they could find to the traditional garb of royalty.

The word for “robe” refers to a military cloak undoubtedly belonging to one of the soldiers.

Little did the soldiers know that even in the color of the robe, they had proclaimed Him as King.

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!"

“A reed in his right hand”:

To imitate a scepter they purposely chose something flimsy looking.

These people were not truly worshipping Jesus.

They were ridiculing Him.

It was as if they were saying, "So you say you think you are the King of the Jews."

Matthew 27:30 "And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head."

"They spit upon him":

"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" (Isaiah 50:6).

"Smote him on the head":

A reed long enough to make a mock scepter would be firm enough to be extremely painful, about like a broom handle.

In John 19:3 it says they hit Him with their fists as well.

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]."

"To crucify him":

Crucifixion was a form of punishment that had been passed down to the Romans from the Persians, Phoenicians and Carthaginians.

Roman crucifixion was a lingering doom, by design.

Roman executioners had perfected the art of slow torture while keeping the victim alive.

Some victims even lingered until they were eaten alive by birds of prey or wild beasts.

Most hung on the cross for days before dying of exhaustion, dehydration, traumatic fever or, most likely, suffocation.

When the legs would no longer support the weight of the body, the diaphragm was constricted in a way that made breathing impossible.

That is why breaking the legs would hasten death (John 19:31-33), but this was unnecessary in Jesus' case.

The hands were usually nailed through the wrists, and the feet through the instep or the Achilles tendon (sometimes using one nail for both feet).

None of these wounds would be fatal, but their pain would become unbearable as the hours dragged on.

The most notable feature of crucifixion was the stigma of disgrace that was attached to it (Gal. 3:13; 5:11; Heb. 12:2).

One indignity was the humiliation of carrying one's own cross, which might weigh as much as 200 pounds.

Normally a quaternion (which were 4 soldiers), would escort the prisoner through the crowds to the place of crucifixion.

A placard bearing the indictment would be hung around the person's neck.

It was bad enough to kill Him, but to humiliate Him is unthinkable.

Matthew Chapter 27 Questions

1. At what time did the chief priests and scribes take council to kill Him?
2. Who did they deliver Him to?
3. What day and month was this?
4. What celebration day was this?
5. Why did Jesus have to be killed this specific day?
6. Who was Pilate?
7. What did Judas do with the 30 pieces of silver?
8. What did Judas say when he repented?
9. How did Judas kill himself?
10. Why could the chief priest not put this money in the treasure?
11. What did they decide to do with it?
12. What proved so well that these "men of God" were hypocrites to the core?
13. What did the governor ask Jesus?

14. What did Jesus answer?
15. Why did Pilate marvel at Him?
16. At the feast of the Passover, it was a custom for the governor to do what?
17. What was the wicked prisoner's name?
18. Pilate knew that for _____, they had delivered Him.
19. Who had a terrible dream the night before?
20. What two things should we take note of about the dream?
21. Who persuaded the multitude to choose Barabbas?
22. Who decided the punishment of Jesus?
23. Who said, "Let His blood be on us and our children".
24. Name five things the soldiers did to Jesus?