

# Bible Study 2023-2024

## Class #26

4/30/24

# Synoptics 23 – 24

- Matthew 27

# Matthew 27

- **Matthew 27:1-2** “*When morning came,...and they bound him and led him away and delivered him to Pilate the governor*”
  - Pilate should have been at the Roman seat of government for Israel at *Caesarea*
  - He was temporarily relocated to *Jerusalem* because the political climate there was becoming a thorn in the side of the Romans in that region
  - Almost every night, a Roman soldier disappeared, and turned up stabbed to death the next morning

# Matthew 27 (Cont)

- **Matthew 27:3-5** “*When Judas , his betrayer,...and he went and hanged himself*”
  - The **Book of Acts** depicts Judas’ death as a hanging followed by him falling headlong and his belly bursting open
  - Most likely, this was to remind us of the death of *Antiochus Epiphanies* (**2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees 9:5-9\***), who led a major rebellion against God’s people
  - Judas hanging himself should also remind us of *Ahithophel*, who betrayed David during the rebellion of his son *Absalom* (**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 17:23\***)

# Matthew 27 (Cont)

- He was one of David's advisors until he became an advisor to *Absalom*
- Thus, he became a traitor, and thus we can see the Judas image here
- Father said that the actual manner of Judas' death is in question
- Some, including St. Augustine, combined both accounts saying that he hanged himself, and after some time his belly began to swell, the rope broke, and upon his fall, his belly burst open

# Matthew 27 (Cont)

- **Matthew 27:6-10** “ *But the chief priest,...as the Lord directed me*”
  - Father pointed out that the potter’s field is located in the *Valley of Gehenna*, at a location where potters would gather their clay
  - When Jesus was before the high priest, He gave no answer at first
  - It was not until the high priest adjured him by the living God to say if He was the Messiah
  - Jesus then said that he will see the son of man coming on the clouds (**Daniel 7**), causing the high priest to rent his robes

# Matthew 27 (Cont)

- **Matthew 27:11-14** *“Now Jesus stood before the governor;...so that the governor wondered greatly”*
  - Matthew was presenting a contrast here
  - The question here is: What charge were the Jews actually bring against Jesus?
  - The Jewish leader claimed that Jesus had broken the Torah (But, were they severe enough to warrant death?)
    - He healed people (worked) on the Sabbath
    - He did not keep the traditions of the elders
    - He said He would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days

# Matthew 27 (Cont)

- Father pointed out that people were permitted to pull their donkey out of a ditch on the Sabbath
- Many did not follow the traditions properly (thus, the need for the harassing Pharisees)
- The prophets had predicted the destruction of the temple
- To claim He would rebuild it in three days simply meant that perhaps He was crazy
- None of this would indicate to Pilate that He deserved death

# Matthew 27 (Cont)

- John gives us a bit more insight into what Matthew assumes we know as part of the 1<sup>st</sup> century audience
- John tells us that they were accusing Jesus of making Himself out to be “the Son of God”
- When we first hear that, it sounds like He was saying that He was divine
- But, that is not what they were accusing Him of
- To understand this, turn to **John 19:6-7\***

# John 19

- **John 19:6-7** *“When the chief priest and officers saw him,...because he has made himself the son of God”*
  - The Jews said that according to the Law of Moses, Jesus should die
  - His proclaiming Himself to be the Son of God was very serious
  - Today, when we hear this, we think of Son of the Father as a reference to His divinity (2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Trinity)
  - But, the Jews’ accusation was that He had identified Himself as the Messiah, which they did not believe was true

# John 19 (Cont)

- We can see that this was the issue in Matthew when Jesus responded to the high priest with the phrase, “I am,” or “You have said so for you will see me coming on the clouds”
- This means that Jesus had identified Himself as the great coming Messiah
- We may think that was ok since the Messiah was supposed to be coming
- But father suggested that we look at the statement from the High Priest: “**He has made himself**, the Son of God (Another title for the King)
- A little further on John says:

# John 19 (Cont)

- **John 19:12** *“Upon this Pilate sought to release him,... everyone who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar”*
  - This indicated that Jesus proclaimed to be the great and final Messiah
  - The Jews considered this to be a sin because the only place in the Torah where there is a discussion of a Jewish king is in **Deuteronomy 17:14-20\***

# Deuteronomy 17

- **Deuteronomy 17:14-15** *“When you come into the land which the Lord your God gives you,... the Lord your God will choose”*
  - This means that someone may not make themselves the king
  - The king must be **chosen by God**
  - It is pretty clear that this is the text that John was referencing
  - Furthermore, the next phrase in **Deuteronomy** is: “One from among you brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother” (**Deuteronomy 17:15**)

# John 19 (Cont)

- John's gospel next says "*We have no king but Caesar*"
- Look at the irony here as the Jews are accusing Jesus of breaking the very law that they themselves were breaking
- Once we see what John is showing us, then we can see the differences in Matthew's gospel
- Matthew and John's gospels were very Jewish
- The difference is that John attempts to explain a lot of stuff that Matthew assumes you already know
- Matthew was written very early, and John much later and to a more Hellenized community

# Matthew 27 (Cont)

- **Matthew 27:15-16** *“Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas”*
  - Barabbas – Bar Abba – son of the father
  - This is another example of Matthew using *Aramaic*, the language of the people at this time
  - Bar mitzvah – son of the law is *Aramaic*
  - Synagogue – a meeting place for the Jews is Greek

# Matthew 27 (Cont)

- A baptized Christian has become the modern Jew; the true Israel
- Genetics has nothing to do with it
- Father said that if we deny the relationship we have to ancient Judaism, and that we are the successors of ancient Judaism, the fulfillment of *Abraham*, then we are denying our baptism, and identity with Jesus
- *Barabbas* was some sort of title this man had, and he was a criminal

# Matthew 27 (Cont)

- **Matthew 27:17-21** *“So when they had gathered,...And they said Barabbas”*
  - Father said that this was a play on words, as “the Christ,” was the “son of God”
  - This story in **Matthew** is another example of a local story
  - Matthew gives us a great deal of local flavor as he presents the story of Pilate’s wife’s dream
  - Only the local people of that time would have known about that story
  - We do not get this in **Mark** or **Luke**, as it was not relevant to their audiences

# Matthew 27 (Cont)

- **Matthew 27:22-24** *“Pilate said to them,...See to it yourselves”*
  - John can help us find the subtle thing that Matthew assumes that we know
  - Pilate’s job in Jerusalem was to keep the Roman law
  - As mentioned earlier, he was living in Jerusalem rather than *Caesarea* because the Roman law was not being followed in Jerusalem
  - Roman law said that an innocent man could not be put to death, particularly if He had not broken the Roman law

# Matthew 27 (Cont)

- Even though Pilate turned Jesus over to the Jews, it will be Roman soldiers who scourge and crucify Him at the request of Pilate
- John clarifies that both the Jewish religious authorities and the Gentile governing authorities of Rome had a hand in His crucifixion

# Matthew 27 (Cont)

- **Matthew 27:25-26** *“And all the people answered,...delivered him up to be crucified”*
  - Some say that the Jews killed Jesus, while Pilate simply tried to get rid of Him
  - However, knowing that Jesus was innocent, Pilate allowed Him to be scourged and crucified, showing his culpability
  - He allowed Him to be crucified because he was worried about a possible rebellion among the people
  - He failed in his responsibility to protect an innocent man

# Matthew 27 (Cont)

- **Matthew 27:27-31** *“Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorian,...and led him away to crucify him”*
  - Again, Matthew was pointing out Pilate’s hand in this event
  - The mocking of Jesus and striking him should remind us of the suffering servant **Psalms of Isaiah (Isaiah 50\***, they spat in His face)

# Matthew 27 (Cont)

- **Matthew 27:32-34** *“And they were marching out,...but when he tasted it he would not drink it”*
  - *Cyrene* was a city on the north shore of the northern tip of Africa
  - It was a Greek region with a Jewish population as a part of the *Diaspora*
  - Simon was compelled by the Romans to help Jesus carry His cross to *Golgotha*, which was a piece of high ground at the top of an abandoned rock quarry
  - The second place was a nearby cave tomb
  - The entire area was about ½ the size of a football field

# Matthew 27 (Cont)

- Today there is controversy over their locations:
  - Catholics, from the 4<sup>th</sup> century forward, have established these two locations to be within the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, located inside the modern walls of Jerusalem
  - A Protestant scholar in the late 1800s found a tomb outside the modern walls within a garden (as described in the Bible) and declared it as the burial place of Jesus
  - Father discussed these differences in great detail
- Jesus was offered wine mixed with gall, but refused to drink it (gall was very bitter and believed to be a sort of anesthetic to help reduce pain)