

THE PASSION

A 4-WEEK STUDY OF MATTHEW 26–28



Welcome to BSF's four-week study of The Passion! We hope God speaks to you through His Word and your group discussion.

Here's how the Bible study works:

- Read and answer the questions for the assigned passage each day.
- Discuss your answers with your small group at the end of the week.
- Listen to a podcast teaching on the week's passage.
- Read the notes with the passage's historical background and life application.
- Repeat!

We hope you enjoy using this four-fold approach to exploring God's Word in community with others.

Thanks for choosing to study with Bible Study Fellowship!

The Evening Before the Cross

MATTHEW 26:1-46



Focus Verse

“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured
out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

Matthew 26:28



The Evening Before the Cross

Matthew 26:1-46

Day 1

1. Use this space to record how you have seen God's activity during the week. How has He provided, answered, comforted, restored, guided, etc.?

Day 2: Matthew 26:1-16

Jesus was anointed at Bethany and betrayed by Judas.

2. How are you challenged or inspired by the love and faith of this woman?
3.
 - a. What do you learn from the resentment of the disciples?
 - b. What do you learn from Jesus' response?
 - c. What have you offered to the Lord that was costly or even misunderstood by others?
4. Why is the amount Judas was paid for His betrayal significant? (See Exodus 21:32; Zechariah 11:12-13.)

Day 3: Matthew 26:17-30

Jesus celebrated Passover with His disciples.

5. Read Exodus 12:1-16 and 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 with Jesus' life and upcoming death on the cross in mind.
 - a. What Jewish feast did Jesus and His disciples prepare to celebrate, and what did that feast commemorate?
 - b. List ways Jesus fulfilled the symbolism of this important event in Israel's history.





The Evening Before the Cross

Matthew 26:1-46

6. a. In celebrating this feast with His disciples, Jesus established the Lord's Supper, or Communion, as a practice for His people. How do the following verses help you understand the symbolism of that celebration?

Luke 22:19-20

John 6:51-58

1 Peter 1:19

1 Peter 2:24

1 John 1:7

- b. Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. How does this Christian celebration relate to Jesus' return?

- c. How could these verses deepen your worship?

Day 4: Matthew 26:31-35

Jesus predicted Peter's betrayal.

7. What surprising news did Jesus reveal to His disciples?

8. a. How did Peter respond to Jesus' announcement?

- b. What lessons can you learn from the response of Peter and the other disciples?

- c. In what ways might you overestimate your own strength, even as you desire to obey the Lord?





The Evening Before the Cross

Matthew 26:1-46

Day 5: Matthew 26:36-46

Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.

9. Consider Jesus' deep sorrow as He faced the "cup" He was about to drink – His death on the cross.
 - a. What contributed to Jesus' intense sorrow?
 - b. What and how did Jesus pray?
 - c. How did He respond when His closest human companions fell asleep?
10. In what ways does Jesus' struggle in the garden reveal both His humanity and His deity?
11.
 - a. What do you learn from the way Jesus embraced His Father's will?
 - b. Write a sentence that expresses your gratitude to Jesus for His unswerving commitment to go to the cross.

Day 6: Matthew 26:1-46

Jesus faithfully embraced the cross to redeem the unfaithful.

12. What attribute of Jesus in this week's study most amazes or encourages you?





The Evening Before the Cross

Matthew 26:1-46



Matthew 26:1–46

Focus Verse

“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” – Matthew 26:28

- The Preparation for the Cross – Matthew 26:1-16
- The Solemn Celebration of Passover – Matthew 26:17-35
- The Fervent Prayer of a Faithful Savior – Matthew 26:36-46

Engage

What does it mean to be “faithful”? Dictionary definitions include words such as true, loyal, and steadfast. We often equate faithfulness with keeping promises, staying committed, and living a life of integrity. However, everyday experiences reveal that in our humanity, remaining faithful is not only difficult but impossible. **Only God is unwaveringly faithful.** When this world disappoints us, God provides comfort, security, and peace. Despite our waywardness, God faithfully loves us. He keeps every single one of His promises. He remains committed to His purpose and sovereign plans. Throughout Scripture and our lives, God demonstrates His perfect integrity in all He is and does. His multiplied perfections call His people to worship Him in all His glory.

Jesus set His course toward the cross with unswerving commitment to fulfill His Father’s mission – the redemption of sinners. Matthew reveals the painful realities Jesus embraced as He moved steadfastly toward the cross. His faithful preparation for His death stands in stark contrast to the unfaithfulness of the people He came to redeem. The unsteady devotion of His own disciples and the outright evil of those who sought His death highlight humanity’s need for a Savior. **Jesus faithfully embraced the cross to redeem the unfaithful.** He embraced the mission God sent Him to accomplish on earth.





The Preparation for the Cross – Matthew 26:1-16

Prepared by God's Design – 26:1-5

God's Sovereign Plan – 26:1-2

After explaining the events surrounding His return, Jesus clearly foretold His death for the fourth and last time recorded in the book of Matthew. **Jesus specifically informed His disciples that He would be crucified during Passover, only two days away.** Even though Jesus spoke directly, the disciples did not fully understand what Jesus was saying.

Man's Subversive Plot – 26:3-5

God's sovereign plan and man's evil plot converged in a mysterious union on God's timetable. The chief priests and elders coldly calculated a secret scheme to arrest and kill Jesus, but not during Passover. They feared the people's opposition. **However, God determined that Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, would die during Passover as the ultimate fulfillment of His redemptive plan.**¹ Wicked men plotted, but God was in full control. What the chief priests

and elders meant for evil, God meant for the greatest good: the redemption of all humanity.

Prepared by Costly Worship – 26:6-13

A Woman's Costly Worship – 26:6-7

Simon the Leper hosted a dinner in Jesus' honor at his home in Bethany. In that day, a leper was considered unclean and could never have entertained guests or lived in his own home. This event and his nickname indicate that he had been healed from leprosy. Most likely, Jesus had healed him.

While Jesus reclined at the table, a woman poured a flask of fragrant and costly perfume on His head. The entire house must have been filled with the powerful aroma of the precious perfume. Her act of unrestrained worship demonstrated that she valued Jesus more than her most prized possession. Without regard for what others would think, she offered Jesus her greatest treasure.

1: Jesus, the Lamb of God: Exodus 12:11-13; Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18-21





The Evening Before the Cross

Matthew 26:1-46

The Disciples' Criticism – 26:8-9

Jesus' own disciples criticized the woman's extravagant display of love for Jesus. They pointed out that the perfume could have been sold for a large sum and shared with the poor. Mark 14:5 indicates that the price of the perfume was more than three hundred denarii, a year's wage for a common worker.

Jesus' Correction – 26:10-13

Jesus was aware of this discussion and quickly jumped to the woman's defense. He declared that she had done "a beautiful thing" and asked why His disciples were bothering her. While the poor would always be with them, He would not. Jesus was not dismissing responsibility to care for the poor, as His comment connects to an Old Testament text about caring for them.² To Jesus, this anointing was a preparation for His burial. The woman's actions brought comfort to His heavy heart.

This woman, unidentified by Matthew, simply expressed her love for Jesus in the best way she knew how. God multiplied the impact of her heartfelt worship and sacrificial surrender to His Son. **Her devotion and passion still speak to us today.** Jesus promised that her expression of lavish love would be remembered "wherever this gospel is preached." Centuries later, we remain inspired by this display of unabashed generosity and devotion. Every single offering presented in love and worship to Jesus is used by God and never wasted.

Prepared by Wicked Betrayal – 26:14-16

"Then ..." – Matthew's wording of this section suggests that Judas' decision to betray Jesus resulted from Jesus' response to the woman's love offering. Judas had been around Jesus for three years but still did not truly know or care for Him. Disillusioned and greedy, Judas went to the chief priests and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?"

What price could possibly measure the worth of the Savior of the world? The conspirators willingly agreed to pay Judas the sum of 30 pieces of silver. This was not a king's ransom, but the price of a slave.³ By comparison, Joseph's brothers received 20 shekels of silver when they sold him into slavery in Egypt.⁴ The costly offering the woman sacrificially poured out stands in stark contrast to the price of betrayal paid out to Judas. The majority of people failed to grasp the immeasurable worth of heaven's King. Jesus willingly laid aside the glory due Him to associate Himself with unworthy sinners. He came to make sin's slaves His own beloved children. Even as He was betrayed, Jesus showed Himself to be Immanuel – God with us.⁵

At every step, Judas chose to reject repentance. He slipped back to the disciples and watched for the best place and time to betray his "friend" and hand Jesus over. The plans of God triumph over the plots of men. Jesus laid down His life by His own will and at the time He determined.⁶

2: Care for the poor: Deuteronomy 15:7-11

3: Slave's price: Exodus 21:32; Zechariah 11:12-13

4: Joseph: Genesis 37:28

5: Immanuel: Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23

6: Jesus' authority over His death: John 10:18





The Solemn Celebration of Passover – Matthew 26:17-35

Jesus instructed His disciples regarding preparations for their Passover celebration. We refer to the meal eaten that night as the “Last Supper” but most accurately, it is the “Last Passover,” as Jesus fulfilled and completed all that the Passover symbolized.

The Passover Prepared – 26:17-19

The Significance of Passover in Israel’s History

The book of Exodus tells us how God paved the way for the Israelites’ exodus from 400 years of slavery in Egypt. After God had unleashed nine devastating plagues on Egypt, He prepared His people and protected them from the tenth and final plague – the death of the firstborn.⁷ **On the first Passover in Egypt, each family chose and sacrificed an unblemished lamb before sundown.** The head of each family

brushed the lamb’s blood on the top and sides of the doorframe of their home. The lamb was roasted and eaten, giving the Israelites needed nourishment for their flight from Egypt.

That same night, God justly punished all in Egypt by killing the firstborn son in every household.⁸ The Lord passed over the houses with the blood of the slain lamb on the doorframes, sparing those inside from death. **Those who followed God’s commands demonstrated lifesaving faith in God’s promised way of deliverance.**

As a nation, Israel celebrated Passover annually. Each family chose a lamb on the 10th day of the month of Nisan (late March to mid-April). They kept the lamb until the 14th day of the month. **The blood of the lamb spilled at Passover provided deliverance from God’s just judgment, and the lamb’s flesh supplied strength for living.**

7: Passover in Egypt: Exodus 12

8: Firstborn: Exodus 12:12-13





The Evening Before the Cross

Matthew 26:1-46

The Significance of This Passover in Jesus' Presence

For Jesus' Disciples

God often uses ceremonies, symbolism, and life experiences to teach deeper truth. **He designed Passover to help His people understand how He saves sinners.**⁹ The Passover lamb pointed to Jesus, the ultimate Lamb, who provided spiritual rescue for all who believe in Him. Jesus prepared His disciples as the end of His time with them drew near. He revealed more of Himself and His purpose during the celebration of this annual observance.

For All Believers

The spilled blood of many lambs awaited the faultless and final sacrifice of Jesus Himself. The full punishment for multiplied sins against a holy God had not yet been offered. **The perfect Lamb of God would bear the weight and consequence of every single one of those sins.** In Romans 3:25, Paul declared: "God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood – to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished"

At the very first Passover, God lovingly protected those who demonstrated their faith in His justice and mercy. Today, the precious blood of Jesus Christ covers all those who trust in His power to save. **Through Jesus Christ's shed blood, God's rightful judgment passes over us, covering us with His sweet mercy instead.** This is something to celebrate!

The Traitor Announced – 26:20-25

Jesus gave a startling declaration as He and His disciples reclined around the table that evening. **He said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me."** With sadness and disbelief, each disciple asked, "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?" The other disciples did not suspect Judas was a traitor. Jesus replied that His betrayer had "dipped his hand into

the bowl with me" and expressed that it would have been better if this person had never been born.

At this point Judas asked, "Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?" Jesus affirmed to Judas that he was indeed His betrayer. He said this indirectly and none of the other disciples understood it.¹⁰

Jesus' Sacrifice Proclaimed – 26:26-30

Jesus' words and actions just hours before His brutal crucifixion were offered in full knowledge of the betrayal, beatings, rejection, mocking, and death awaiting Him. Jesus gave thanks, picked up bread, broke it, and shared it with His disciples. He took a cup of wine and gave it to them. **God's people regularly celebrate the observance Jesus instituted here.** "Holy Communion," "Breaking of Bread," or "The Lord's Supper" provides believers an opportunity to remember what Jesus has done for them and to anticipate His return. This profound celebration becomes even more meaningful when we deliberately remember these things:

- **The bread pictures Jesus' body, which was broken for us. Jesus said, "Take and eat; this is my body."**¹¹ This points to a deliberate choice to receive Jesus as the source of strength for every area of life. He supplies all we need to leave our old ways and live a new life of faith.
- **The wine pictures Christ's blood, which was poured out for us.** "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Those who take and drink affirm that they believe and receive God's forgiveness of their sins through the death of His Son. He is indeed "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"¹² Jesus' sacrifice established the new covenant, which provides the forgiveness of sin for those who put their faith in Christ.¹³

9: **Blood sacrifice:** Genesis 3:21; Leviticus 17:11; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 9:22

10: **Disciples did not understand:** John 13:28

11: **In remembrance:** Matthew 26:26; Luke 22:19

12: **Lamb of God:** John 1:29

13: **New covenant:** Jeremiah 31:31-34; Luke 22:20





The Evening Before the Cross

Matthew 26:1-46



Every time followers of Jesus celebrate this sacrament, eager anticipation for His return should grow. God intends more for us than merely going through the outward motions of this observance. This meaningful celebration helps us realize that we personally live with Jesus now and for eternity.¹⁴ This was the last Passover that would be celebrated without the fulfillment of Christ's sacrifice. One day, Jesus will eat and drink again with those who belong to Him at the great "wedding supper of the Lamb."¹⁵

Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn, lifting their voices in praise and worship to God. After this, the Lamb of God walked from Bethany to the Mount of Olives with His disciples. **On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus gave thanks and sang, resolutely moving forward.**

The Disciples' Unfaithfulness Predicted – 26:31-35

Their Scattering Foretold – 26:31-32

With tender compassion and awareness of their weakness, Jesus warned His disciples that they would be unable to stand firm through the dark moments ahead. He told them that on that very night, they would all "fall away." Quoting Zechariah 13:7, Jesus predicted their temporary failure that would do nothing to change His love for them. **Jesus comforted His disciples with the promise that He would rise again.** He assured them that He would go ahead of them into Galilee after His resurrection.

14: Together with Him: 1 Thessalonians 5:10

15: Wedding supper: Revelation 19:9





Purchased with Jesus' Precious Blood

The Doctrine of Redemption

Jesus willingly embraced His mission to go to the cross. He came to earth as a baby and lived a perfect life as a man. But ultimately, Jesus' purpose in taking on human flesh was to pay the price of mankind's sin with His own blood. To redeem means to offer payment to gain something back. Borrowed from the world of commerce, the term "redemption" was often associated with buying and selling slaves. Everyone born in this world is enslaved to sin and owes a debt they cannot pay.¹⁶ **In love, compassion, and obedience to His Father, Jesus offered Himself to pay sin's debt and set His people free.**

Only when we understand the magnitude of our debt of sin does the costliness of our redemption make sense. If we dismiss human sinfulness or underestimate our own guilt before God, we do not grasp how desperately we need to be redeemed and how unable we are to redeem ourselves. Sin kills and enslaves. Only Jesus can set us free.

The extravagant love and extreme costliness of our redemption should lead us to unspeakable gratitude and humble worship of our Redeemer and Lord, Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:18-19 says, "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect." Those who put their faith in Christ's death in their place are redeemed from sin's slavery – freed to live the life God intends them to live.¹⁷ We desperately need a Redeemer. Our Redeemer is faithful, and He will accomplish everything He has promised for His redeemed children. God sent Jesus to bring His joyful presence into our daily lives and to lead us to unrestrained pleasure for all eternity. We will forever sing the glories of our Redeemer!

Peter's Foolish Boast – 26:33

Peter responded with a passionate reply that demonstrated both his loyalty to Jesus and his overestimation of his own strength. Peter declared that he would never leave Jesus even if everyone else did. He was ready to die with his leader. **But depending on his own strength and courage, he would indeed fail.**

Peter's Denial Foretold – 26:34-35

Jesus replied: "Truly I tell you ... this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." Peter would falter in a moment of human weakness, but his genuine faith in Christ held

firm. Jesus faithfully prayed for Peter and always intercedes for those who believe in Him.¹⁸

God would prove Himself greater than Peter's devastating failure. As Church history attests, God transformed Peter, who became bold by God's Spirit.¹⁹ Jesus is able to save completely all who come to God through Him. **Standing firm for Jesus depends on God's sustaining power, never human strength.**

16: Slaves to sin: John 8:34; Romans 6:6

17: Redemption in Christ: Romans 6:22-23; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 1:7

18: Jesus' intercession: Luke 22:32; Hebrews 7:25

19: Peter's transformation: John 1:42; Acts 2-4; 10-11; 15; 1 and 2 Peter



The Fervent Prayer of a Faithful Savior – Matthew 26:36-46

Jesus walked through the dark streets of Jerusalem with His disciples. They left the city and walked uphill to a place called Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. Jesus left most of His disciples to rest. **Jesus, however, faced a spiritual battle for the sake of the people He came to redeem.** He kept Peter, James, and John with Him as He went to pray.

Extreme Sorrow – 26:36-38

Jesus knew the brutality and savage suffering that awaited Him. He “began to be sorrowful and troubled.” Jesus shared His heart and sought the support of His three friends – “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” **He turned to His Father, who was the only One who would not fail Him; God alone had the strength to carry Him through these dark hours.** Jesus suffered the most intense loneliness ever

experienced so that His children would never be alone. Believers can enjoy unbroken fellowship with Him forever.

Passionate Prayer and Sleeping Disciples – 26:39-44a

Jesus moved a short distance from His disciples. **He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.”** Jesus was not asking His Father merely to take away the physical suffering He would face. Soon, He would fully bear God’s righteous wrath against the sin of a rebellious world. Though He had never known sin, guilt, or shame, He would soon pay the price for all sin – past, present, and future. The purest of all would “be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”²⁰ He bore the crushing guilt and shame of all humanity throughout all time.

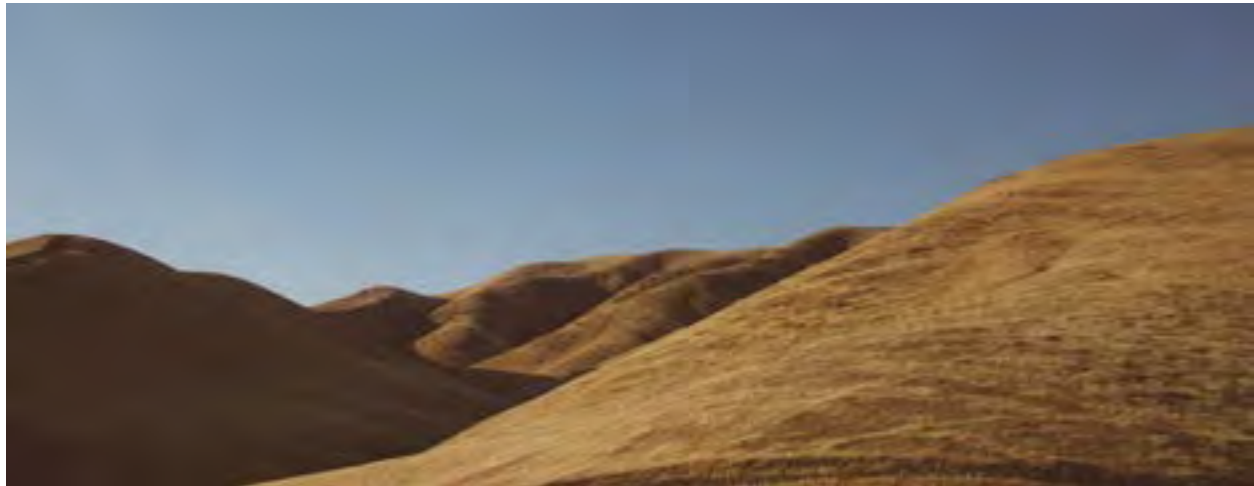
20: Jesus became sin for us: 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24





The Evening Before the Cross

Matthew 26:1-46



From eternity past, Jesus had enjoyed uninterrupted communion with His heavenly Father. Jesus knew that He would be separated from and forsaken by His Father while He bore the weight of mankind's sin on the cross. Luke records the physical trauma Jesus suffered as His sweat fell to the ground "like drops of blood."²¹ We cannot even imagine the agony endured by Jesus, the beloved Son of a gracious Heavenly Father. This wrenching scene in Gethsemane reveals the painful price Jesus paid to do His Father's will.²² **Jesus was determined to obey His Father no matter the cost.**

Jesus returned to His friends and found them sleeping. He asked a question in love, not judgment – "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" Peter believed he would gladly die for Jesus but could not even stay awake to pray. Jesus' words expressed care for His disciples, not for Himself: "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation." **God provides strength for trials through prayer.**

Deliberate Surrender – 26:44b-46

Three times, Jesus fervently poured out His cares and concerns to His Father. Three times, He

found His friends sleeping – tired and exhausted in the middle of His great crisis. The third time **Jesus rose from prayer; He was ready for what lay ahead.** As the perfect sacrifice for humanity, Jesus fully experienced temptation and suffering. Jesus Christ, the very Author and Creator of our salvation, perfectly accomplished our redemption through human suffering. Therefore, He is fully able to help us in our sufferings now.²³

Jesus suffered the long hours of the cross, experiencing the fullness of physical, emotional, and spiritual agony. He did not merely endure the suffering but faithfully finished the work set before Him in glorious triumph.²⁴

Jesus faithfully embraced the cross to redeem the unfaithful. The writer of Hebrews later penned, "During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him."²⁵ Hallelujah, what a Savior!

21: Jesus' physical struggle: Luke 22:40-45

22: The Father's will: John 6:38

23: Perfect through suffering: Hebrews 2:10

24: Faithful finish: John 18:11; Hebrews 12:2

25: Redeeming submission: Hebrews 5:7-9





Take to Heart

Hold Fast

We have studied a holy, hallowed account that is not casual reading. **The loving determination of Jesus, the Messiah, to redeem His people is evident.** Fully God and fully human, Jesus knowingly embraced the physical and spiritual suffering of the cross. He prepared to die even as wicked men plotted His arrest.

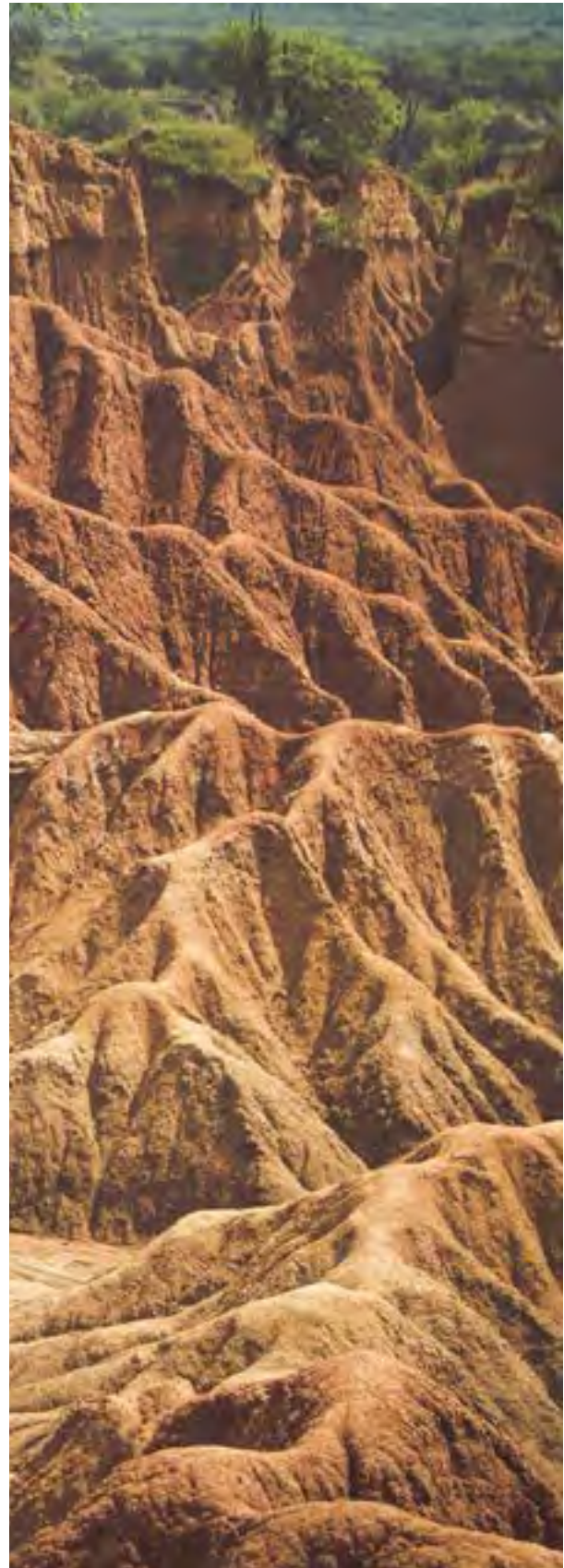
Matthew contrasted Judas and the religious leaders who plotted Jesus' death with a faithful woman who lovingly anointed Jesus for His death and burial. The disciples criticized the woman's lavish love, then fell asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus faithfully instituted the Lord's Supper in preparation for His coming death, revealing the amazing truth that the Passover feast symbolized. He remained faithful as He prayed in the garden, despite the intense suffering ahead of Him. **Jesus' passionate commitment to redeem fallen humanity would press forward until He cried in victory, "It is finished."**²⁶

Apply It

How can you know how deeply you love Jesus?

As frail, weak humans, we often fail to follow through on our most passionate declarations of commitment to Christ. How does this faithful woman's example challenge you? Do you hold back what you should pour out? Do you fear others' criticism or the cost of extravagant worship? Like Peter, do you boast great things only to find out that you are weaker than you imagined? There is good news. Jesus knows the truth and compassionately calls you forward to deeper love and unhindered obedience. The believer's focus is not on trying harder to love Jesus better. Instead, becoming consumed with the Lord causes everything else to fade in value. Have you

²⁶: "It is finished." John 19:30





The Evening Before the Cross

Matthew 26:1-46

experienced freedom from condemnation and security in God's love for you? If not, turn to Jesus right now. His arms are ready to receive you.

Stop and ponder the things that faithful Jesus did in the days leading up to His crucifixion: He fellowshiped with friends. He gave thanks. He ate. He sang. He prayed. What can you learn from Jesus' actions through this challenging time? None of us will ever experience the emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual suffering that Jesus endured on our behalf. **With reverence and humility, we can learn from Jesus how to approach difficult times and costly obedience.** Do you trust that God's plans and timing prevail? Do you believe that God will transform for your good what the enemy plans for evil? Do you joyfully embrace God's higher purposes that will be accomplished through the pain? Do you find support from fellow believers but ultimately draw strength from God alone? Honestly pour out your heart in prayer and surrender your will to

God. The goodness of God undergirds the path He marks out for His children.

Jesus displayed unswerving commitment to redeem mankind, honor His Father, and faithfully finish the work He was sent to earth to accomplish. He fulfilled the symbolism of Passover as the perfect sacrifice, not just for one family, but for the entire sinful human race. Do you think about what Jesus did as you celebrate Communion with God's people? Jesus did this not only to deliver us from sin and provide a joyful eternity, but also to lead us to a joyful and obedient life now. How is Jesus' faithfulness personal to you? In what ways does His lavish outpouring of love overflow in you and through you by the power of His Spirit? **The Faithful One is calling the naturally unfaithful to faithfulness – not in human strength, but in His power.** He makes His faithfulness our own as He calls us to follow His humble example.²⁷

27: Faithful in Christ: Philippians 2:1-11



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Jesus' Arrest, Hearings, and Trial

MATTHEW 26:47–27:31



Focus Verse

“But this has all taken place that the writings of
the prophets might be fulfilled.”

Matthew 26:56a



Jesus' Arrest, Hearings, and Trial

Matthew 26:47–27:31

Day 1

1. Use this space to record how you have seen God's activity during the week. How has He provided, answered, comforted, restored, guided, etc.?

Day 2: Matthew 26:47-56

Jesus was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane.

Note: Though the other Gospels include more details, we will concentrate on Matthew's unique focus.

2. Describe the various actions and responses during Jesus' arrest.
 - a. Judas:
 - b. The Roman soldiers:
 - c. Jesus' disciples:
 - d. Jesus:
3. What stands out to you regarding Jesus' character and God's plan for His Son?
4. What can you learn about facing difficulties in your life?

Day 3: Matthew 26:57-68

Jesus appeared before the Jewish religious leaders.

5. Where was Jesus taken, and who was present?





Jesus' Arrest, Hearings, and Trial

Matthew 26:47–27:31

6.
 - a. Describe the process of finding witnesses to testify against Jesus.
 - b. How did Jesus respond to the first question of the high priest? What do you learn from His response?
7.
 - a. What did the high priest ask Jesus in verse 63? Why is this question so important?
 - b. What do you learn from Jesus' reply to Caiaphas? (See Psalm 110:1; Daniel 7:13-14; and Revelation 1:7.)
 - c. How did the religious leaders respond to Jesus' answer?
8. What does Jesus' revelation of Himself mean to you and your life today?

Day 4: Matthew 26:69–27:10

Peter denied Jesus, and Judas suffered remorse.

9.
 - a. Describe the three times Peter denied Jesus.
 - b. What did Peter know that He ignored or forgot?
10.
 - a. What did Judas realize, and how did he respond?





Jesus' Arrest, Hearings, and Trial

Matthew 26:47–27:31

- b. How did the reaction of the chief priests to Judas' admission reveal their hearts?
- c. Read Acts 2:23. Why does God hold people responsible for events He plans, like Jesus' death?

11. a. Compare the attitudes, actions, and responses of Peter and Judas.

- b. How have you experienced the Holy Spirit's purifying work when you have sinned?

Day 5: Matthew 27:11-31

Jesus appeared before Pilate.

- 12. a. What did Pilate ask Jesus and how did Jesus respond?
 - b. Give the warnings Pilate received and the pressures he faced regarding Jesus.
 - c. What steps did Pilate take to avoid condemning Jesus? What does this reveal about Pilate?
13. What lessons do you learn from Pilate and his response to Jesus?

Day 6: Matthew 26:47–27:31

God's sovereign plans prevail over all opposition and determine all outcomes.

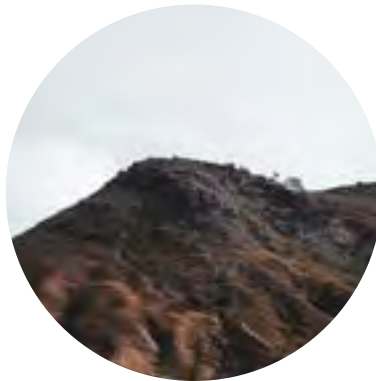
- 14. What attributes of God shine forth in Jesus' arrest and trials? How do they apply to your life today?





Jesus' Arrest, Hearings, and Trial

Matthew 26:47–27:31



Matthew 26:47–27:31

Focus Verse

“But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.” – Matthew 26:56a

- Jesus' Arrest – 26:47-56
- Jesus' Jewish Hearings – 26:57–27:10
- Jesus' Roman Trial – 27:11-31

Engage

Have you ever been falsely accused or had your actions or motives misjudged by others? The pain of being misrepresented or misunderstood is real. Self-defense comes naturally, especially when there is a side to the story that we feel needs to be told. Following Jesus' arrest, He displayed amazing dignity before His accusers. A series of unjust hearings and false accusations also exposed the heart of His enemies. **Mere mortals distorted truth and relied on outright lies to condemn the sinless Son of God to death.** While their evil actions astound us, Jesus astonishes us even more as He surrenders willingly to God's sovereign plan.

Humanity's ultimate Judge stood before people who pridefully and mistakenly thought they judged Him. God's eternal plan of redemption and the plot of wicked men converged as Jesus courageously embraced the cross. Jesus the King willingly offered Himself as the sacrifice for sinners. He submitted Himself to a perversion of truth and justice so He could accept the death sentence that, though given to Him, was actually due to us. Jesus' hearings before the Jewish and political leaders revealed the cost and wonder of our salvation. **God's sovereign plans prevail over all opposition and determine all outcomes.** Jesus' surrender to His Father's plan calls us to humble submission to Him. He is worthy.





Jesus' Arrest, Hearings, and Trial

Matthew 26:47–27:31

Jesus' Arrest – Matthew 26:47-56

In Gethsemane, Jesus returned to His sleeping disciples following anguishing hours of prayer. He quickly woke them and warned that an armed crowd sent from the chief priests and elders drew near. These leaders' previous attempts to seize Jesus had failed.¹ God, not men, determined the timing of Jesus' arrest. While assuming they controlled the circumstances, the chief priests wanted to ensure Jesus would not escape arrest this time.

Betrayed by Judas – 26:47-50

A Show of Human Force – 26:47

Judas arrived with a large crowd while Jesus was speaking with His disciples. Storming the garden with weapons and torches, these men

sought to forward their evil plan with a show of power. The religious leaders had determined not to pursue Jesus during the Passover. **However, God overruled their plans; Jesus would be arrested the very time that God foreordained – during Passover.** His beloved Son was to be sacrificed during Passover. Each year the Israelites commemorated the first Passover, when God delivered the Israelites from the tenth plague that fell on Egypt – the death of the firstborn. In faith and obedience, Israelite families killed a lamb and spread its blood over the doorposts of their home. The death angel passed over the homes covered by the blood of the Passover lamb.² Jesus fulfilled everything that Passover symbolized. Jesus is the perfect Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.³

1: Attempted arrest: Matthew 12:9-10; 21:45-46; 26:3-5

2: Passover in Egypt: Exodus 12

3: Lamb of God: John 1:29





Jesus' Arrest, Hearings, and Trial

Matthew 26:47–27:31

The Kiss of a Traitor – 26:48-50

Judas stepped forward and greeted Jesus. Judas kissed Him, a signal he had arranged ahead of time as a sign of his betrayal. Calling Judas “friend,” Jesus then told Judas to do what he came to do.

Even at this moment Judas could have turned to Jesus in faith but instead turned away.

Seized by Soldiers – 26:51-56

The Human Response to a Spiritual Battle – 26:51

Immediately one of Jesus’ companions, unnamed by Matthew, drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant. Luke records that Jesus healed the man’s ear, but Matthew does not mention this.⁴ **Jesus faced His mission without resistance or reliance on human force.** He willingly fulfilled God’s plan.

The Surrender of the Savior – 26:52-54

Jesus insisted that His friend put down his sword. He stated that He could call upon His Father and have 12 legions of angels at His disposal at once. Each Roman legion had 6,000 soldiers. Jesus had a vast army of angels at His command. Yet He humbly laid down His power and refused rescue. Jesus asked, “But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?”

Jesus demonstrated sacrificial love for His people and full surrender to His Father’s sovereign plan.

The Fulfillment of God’s Plan – 26:55-56a

Jesus questioned His captors’ actions. He asked why they came forcefully to capture Him – with swords and clubs. He had not been arrested while He taught openly in the temple courts. Jesus said that everything that happened fulfilled the writings of the prophets. God, not the crowd nor the religious leaders, controlled these events. **Human schemes neither determine nor deter**

God’s sovereign plans. Jesus perfectly fulfilled every prophecy concerning His death.⁵

The fact that God’s own Son could be bound and arrested by mere mortals vibrantly demonstrated Jesus’ willing surrender. The only chains that truly bound Jesus were chains of love for His Father and sinful humanity. The One who holds all power and authority surrendered to the evil plans of wicked men to fulfill the very purpose for which He came into the world. **Jesus’ life was not taken from Him; He laid it down.**

The Flight of Jesus’ Disciples – 26:56b

Watching these events unfold caused Jesus’ disciples to flee in fear. **Though His prediction of their desertion had seemed unimaginable, one by one, Jesus’ disciples deserted Him.**

4: Ear healed: Luke 22:51

5: Fulfillment of prophecy: Matthew 5:17





Jesus' Arrest, Hearings, and Trial

Matthew 26:47–27:31

Jesus' Jewish Hearings – Matthew 26:57–27:10

Following His arrest, Jesus was taken to the home of the high priest. A series of hearings continued throughout the night. The Jewish leaders were gathering evidence to present to Pilate, the Roman governor. **They wanted Pilate to render a death sentence since they were not granted authority to practice capital punishment.** They hurried their process along, as Pilate was in town briefly for Passover, and they would not have wanted to hold Jesus for a long time.

The Appearance before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin – 26:57-58

While the other three Gospels include more details about Jesus' hearings before the Jewish leaders, Matthew's account begins as Jesus was taken to the palace of Caiaphas, the current high priest. While many have pointed to potential illegalities committed by the Jewish leaders as they examined Jesus, the proceedings were more

like a grand jury examination than a legal trial. Their goal was to surface evidence and support charges that would lead the Roman officials to carry out Jesus' execution. **At the very least, their motives were evil and their process unjust.**

The Search for False Witnesses – 26:59-61

The search for false evidence against Jesus commenced immediately, but none was found. Although Jewish law upheld the value of human life created in God's image, these leaders sought proof to put Jesus to death without a cause. Many witnesses offered testimonies that were deemed false. Giving false witness was punishable by death. The leaders violated their own rules to accomplish their murderous purposes. They could not risk Rome letting Jesus go, so they presented their charges with utmost care.





Jesus' Arrest, Hearings, and Trial

Matthew 26:47–27:31

Under the cover of night, Jesus was repeatedly accused as they sought evidence against Him. Finally, two witnesses, the minimum required by Jewish law, declared, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.’” Jesus never said He would destroy the temple; He just predicted its destruction.⁶ Even Jesus’ disciples had not understood these words. John’s Gospel explains that Jesus’ promise to raise the destroyed temple in three days referred to His body and predicted His resurrection.⁷

The Dignity of Jesus Before the High Priest – 26:62-64

Caiaphas asked Jesus to respond to the testimony of the two witnesses. With this desperate attempt, he hoped to trap Jesus. **Jesus met Caiaphas’ questions with powerful and dignified silence.**

Caiaphas demanded that Jesus confirm if He was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus spoke the truth as He responded, “You have said so.” He went on to clearly reveal His majesty as He quoted the prophet Daniel. “But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”⁸ **Jesus powerfully spoke words that revealed His true glory and deity.** He claimed that God would vindicate Him. He will share authority with His Father and sit at His right hand in heaven. The religious leaders recognized the boldness of Jesus’ claim but did not believe Him. Despite the religious leaders’ desperate attempts to find false testimony, Jesus’ own declaration of truth sent Him to the cross.

The Sentence of Death – 26:65-68

Caiaphas tore his garments in a dramatic display as he accused Jesus of blasphemy. He shouted as those watching declared Jesus worthy of death. **Jesus, the ultimate expression of God’s mercy,**

stood before all present and received the pronouncement that He was worthy of death.

The members of the Sanhedrin exploded into a vicious and violent demonstration against Jesus. They spit in His face, slapped His flesh, and mocked Him. They called on Jesus to prophesy and declare who had hit Him. **Jesus endured hateful derision without resistance.**

Peter and Judas – 26:69–27:10

Peter’s Denial – 26:69-75

Peter’s Three Moments of Panic – 26:69-74

Peter followed Jesus into the courtyard from a distance. Peter longed to be with his Lord even though he was flooded with grief, fear, and uncertainty. In his stricken state, Peter was vulnerable.

A servant girl approached Peter and stated that he had been with Jesus in Galilee, which Peter denied. He left the courtyard and walked to the gateway. Another servant girl spoke to the people, “This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.” **Peter replied with an oath, “I don’t know the man!”**

The people who were gathered heard Peter’s accent, which they said gave him away as one of Jesus’ followers. At this, Peter cursed and swore that he did not know Jesus – a declaration that put him under oath. **Peter denied Jesus a third time, and immediately the rooster crowed.**

Peter’s Sorrow – 26:75

At the moment of Peter’s final oath and the rooster’s crow, Peter remembered the words of his Lord, and his heart broke. **Devastated by his denial of his beloved Jesus, Peter wept bitterly.** His tears of grief and conviction would precede healing and restoration. His failure was not final.

6: Temple destruction: Matthew 24:2; John 2:19

7: Raised in three days: John 2:19-22

8: Daniel’s prophecy: Daniel 7:13-14





Jesus' Arrest, Hearings, and Trial

Matthew 26:47–27:31



Judas' Remorse – 27:1-10

Judas was filled with remorse when he saw that Jesus was condemned to death. He returned the 30 coins he received for betraying Jesus and said, “I have sinned ... for I have betrayed innocent blood.” **Sadly, Judas confessed his sin to the leaders instead of to Jesus.** The leaders’ heartless reply revealed the proud status of their hate-filled hearts as they engaged in blame-shifting⁹ and tried to place responsibility solely on Judas. He threw the coins into the temple and left. Then Judas hanged himself.

God’s sovereign plan did not force Judas to betray Jesus. God plans events but also holds every

human responsible for their sinful deeds. Judas had walked with Jesus alongside the other 11 disciples. He witnessed every miracle and listened as Jesus taught. He heard Peter’s proclamation of faith. Yet Judas’ choice was different from the others. He returned Jesus’ love with betrayal. **Most devastating of all, Judas chose remorse instead of repentance.** At every crossroad Judas faced, Jesus offered him life. Yet tragically, Judas chose death as his betrayal of Jesus revealed the truth about his heart. The difference between Peter and Judas was critical. Peter had a failure of nerve while Judas had a failure of heart.

9: Guilt for Jesus’ death: Acts 2:23



Jesus' Roman Trial – Matthew 27:11-31

The Jewish leaders sent Jesus to Pilate, seeking Roman authorization for a death sentence. The Jews could not legally execute Jesus. Pilate was the Roman governor assigned to the Jews and had the power to invoke crucifixion. The religious leaders sought to turn their religious charge of blasphemy into a political one that would interest the Romans and was worthy of death. Caesar and the Roman government strongly defended their authority and Pilate would have been charged to keep a tight rein on that control. If Jesus could be proved to be a threat to Rome either as a competing king or by disturbing law and order, the charges against Him would be deemed serious.

Jesus Before Pilate – 27:11-26

Pilate professed neutrality, honesty, and impartiality. Yet his indifference to justice in an effort to preserve his social position revealed the true state of his heart. **Pilate's self-serving actions throughout his encounter with Jesus reveal that he valued self-preservation more than truth.** In the end, he followed the advice of the one he appointed each year to help with Jewish affairs – the high priest and those with him.

The Dilemma Pilate Faced – 27:11-23

Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?” Jesus answered Pilate, “You have said so.” Pilate reminded Jesus of the charges against Him, “Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?” Jesus remained silent. **Pilate was amazed.**

Pilate sought a way to avoid condemning Jesus. Custom allowed a governor to release a prisoner during the Passover festival. Pilate held a well-known and notorious prisoner named Barabbas. He offered the crowd a choice: free either Barabbas or Jesus. **Pilate knew Jesus had been brought before him to satisfy the self-interest of the Jewish leaders.** Yet he refused to take a stand for Jesus.

Pilate’s dilemma became even more complicated when his wife sent him a message, “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.” **Though warned, Pilate’s cowardice grew as he ignored both his internal warnings and those of his wife.**





Jesus' Arrest, Hearings, and Trial

Matthew 26:47–27:31



The chief priests and elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas to be released and Jesus to be crucified. **Pilate asked what he should do with Jesus, the Messiah.** The crowd only shouted louder, “Crucify him!” The plea of the bloodthirsty crowd carried out God’s sovereign plan for Jesus to face the cross.

The Responsibility Pilate Tried to Avoid – 27:24-26

Pilate realized an uproar was rising in the crowd and that the people could not be dissuaded. **In a futile attempt to absolve himself of guilt, Pilate washed his hands and declared himself innocent of Jesus’ blood.** He laid the responsibility on the crowd. The chilling response of the people, “His blood is on us and on our children!” communicated more than they realized. This was an idiom, expressing their willingness to take responsibility. These ominous words were fulfilled in A.D. 70 when Jerusalem fell and the temple was destroyed.

Pilate tried unsuccessfully to avoid responsibility. His desire to please the crowd and maintain his position made him complicit in Jesus’ death. He could not rid himself of the responsibility for his sinful choice by washing his hands. **Only Jesus’ blood cleanses sinners.** Pilate tried hard to appear strong. Tragically, Pilate went down in history as the weak-willed, people-pleasing man who handed Jesus over for crucifixion.

Pilate also demonstrated his cruel and vicious heart. As he released Barabbas, Pilate handed Jesus over to be flogged. This punishment was standard practice for criminals sentenced to Roman crucifixion. This method of execution was so horrific that Roman citizens were protected by law from experiencing it. The gruesome public display of the criminals suffering was meant to serve as a deterrent for rebellion against Rome. The whip used would be made of leather with bone chips woven into it to cause excessive bleeding. The prisoner’s flesh was ripped through this severe beating, often comprised of 40 lashes, and was so intense that some awaiting crucifixion did not survive it.





Jesus' Arrest, Hearings, and Trial

Matthew 26:47–27:31

Jesus Took Our Place The Doctrine of Substitution

Jesus, the sinless Son of God, stood with quiet dignity in the courts of evil men. His accusers judged Him worthy of death and dealt Him a sentence He had not earned. **Jesus' posture as He was accused and condemned revealed that He willingly died for the sake of sinners.** The people who thought they judged Jesus failed to recognize that the One they accused and condemned was actually their Judge. Jesus' deliberate offering of Himself is evident at every point in His trials. He was not a victim but surrendered Himself willingly to endure a death He did not deserve.¹⁰

The scene in those ancient courtrooms helps us recognize a life-altering truth. What Jesus accomplished for the people who turn to Him for salvation is beyond amazing. The perfect Son of God was judged guilty, although He was innocent. **Every human stands justly declared guilty in God's courtroom.** But because Jesus took their place, every believer stands before God, and though guilty, is declared innocent.

How can this be? **Jesus chose to stand as our substitute; He did this because He loves us.** The death sentence that Jesus accepted that day in Jerusalem was really ours.¹¹ In an astonishing exchange, Jesus took our punishment and gave us His righteousness in its place.¹²

People who do not recognize God's just declaration of their guilt and fail to turn to Jesus as their substitute must bear the weight of their own judgment. Our pitiful attempts to earn God's favor cannot substitute for the debt of sin we owe. There are only two ways that sin's deserved penalty can be paid. Either you will pay it yourself or believe that Jesus paid that price for you as your substitute. Jesus is the only acceptable sacrifice for sin.

The wonder that the guilty can stand perfectly forgiven and clothed "in Christ" will be celebrated throughout eternity. Jesus did not die merely for a faceless world of countless people. Jesus did this for you. Every believer can live life confidently, knowing that Jesus took the judgment they deserve. **The innocent was declared guilty so that the guilty can be declared forgiven.** 1 Peter 2:24 says, "He himself bore our sins' in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; 'by his wounds you have been healed.'"

Jesus Delivered to be Crucified – 27:27-31

Pilate's soldiers took Jesus into the praetorium where He suffered mocking and physical torment. They stripped Jesus and put a scarlet robe on His torn and bloody back. They tied together a crown of thorns and placed it upon the head of the King of Kings. A mock scepter was placed in His right hand. They knelt in mockery saying, "Hail, king of the Jews." They spit on Jesus.

Then, they took the staff from His right hand and struck His head repeatedly.

This gruesome scene presents far more than the wicked work of evil men. Jesus willingly endured vile hatred as He suffered on behalf of all sinners to accomplish God's eternal plan of redemption. **God's sovereign plans prevail over all opposition and determine all outcomes.** Jesus offered Himself as a willing substitute for the sin of mankind.

10: Jesus' willing sacrifice: Isaiah 53:6-7; John 1:29; 10:17-18; Hebrews 10:1-18

11: Jesus died for others: Hebrews 2:9

12: Salvation for sinners: 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; 1 Peter 3:18





Jesus' Arrest, Hearings, and Trial

Matthew 26:47–27:31

Take to Heart

Hold Fast

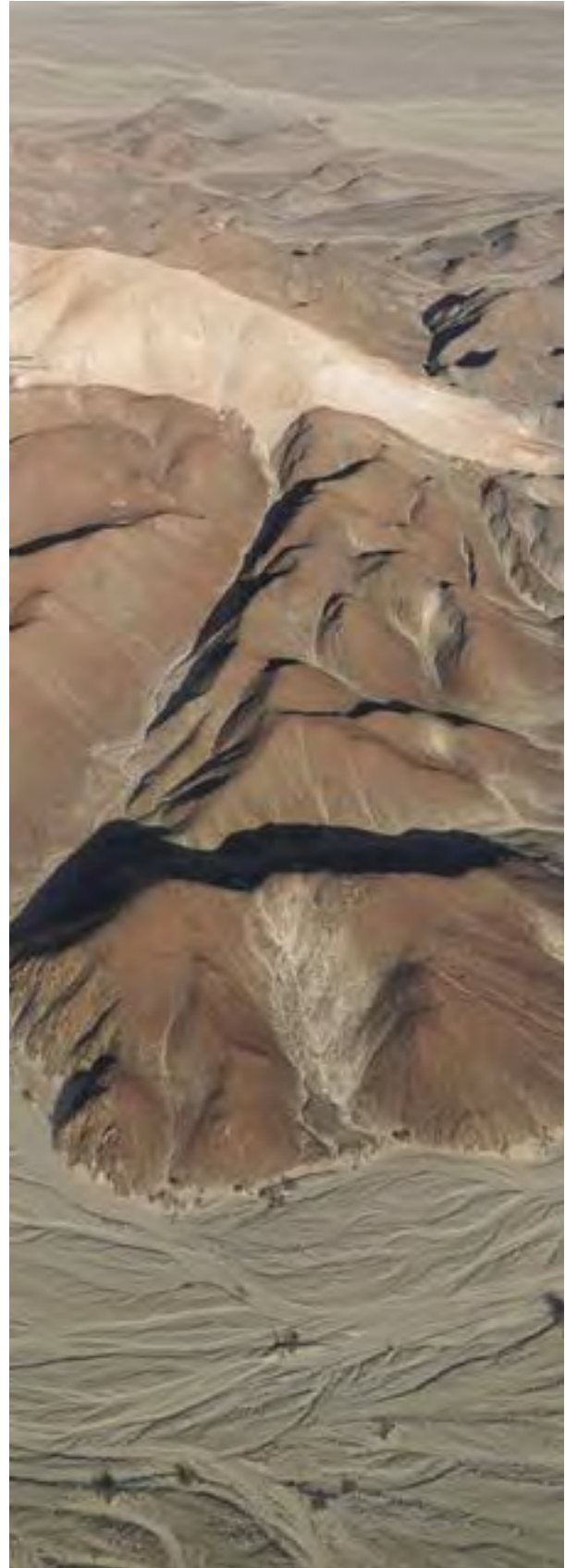
Jesus was betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, and deserted by His own disciples. The religious leaders whom God charged to oversee the faith of His people did not recognize the Messiah and opposed Him. Pilate believed Jesus was innocent yet turned Him over for crucifixion. There was no one – not even one – who stood on the side of truth. For these people and for all of humanity – including you – Jesus endured arrest, false accusations, unjust proceedings, and severe beatings. **For friend, foe, disciple, and accuser, Jesus willingly suffered humiliation with quiet dignity.**

Man's evil intent and wicked schemes will forever be overruled by God's sovereign plan. God overturns the impossible, unimaginable, and unexpected situations of life to enfold them into His good plan. **Human schemes neither determine nor deter God's sovereign plan.** No dishonest government, bureaucracy, or ruler ever rises without the sovereign hand of God accomplishing His plan.

Pilate stood on the cusp of history and faith. He knew that Jesus was innocent and that the religious leaders leveled false charges against Him. He faced the intensifying uproar of the crowd incited by the leaders. Pressure from his wife, his conscience, the religious leaders, and the crowd closed in on him. **Though Pilate tried to avoid a decision regarding Jesus, his indecision revealed his ultimate choice.** In the end, Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified. No one can remain neutral regarding Jesus. A choice must be made. You are either for Him or against Him. This choice bears eternal consequences.

Apply It

Peter followed Jesus at a distance. He was confused, fearful, grieved, and utterly in anguish over the loss of his beloved Master. **Peter's**





Jesus' Arrest, Hearings, and Trial

Matthew 26:47–27:31

denial, failure, and bitter tears reveal human vulnerability in a real and raw way. Peter recklessly ignored Jesus' warnings, fell asleep rather than to his knees in prayer, and denied Jesus three times. He wept bitter tears. Striving in his own strength, Peter failed miserably. The same is true for us today. We can never be strong enough to overcome life's challenges by trying harder. Only when we come to the end of ourselves and turn to Jesus can we persevere. What difficulties do you face? In what ways are you trying to power through in your own strength? How has God exposed your weakness and allowed failure to draw you to Himself? Will you fall on your knees in fervent prayer to the One who hears your cries for help?

Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. He greeted Jesus with a kiss in the garden and called Him "Rabbi" instead of Lord. **Judas did not find peace because he refused to seek Jesus.** His life ended in tragic suicide. In what situation are you struggling to find peace? Will you seek the Lord and trust Him with what you cannot understand? His peace passes all understanding and gives us hope in the midst of uncertainty. What decision will you make today regarding Jesus? He stands close and calls you "friend." Will you look to Him or turn away?

The Jewish leaders declared their own version of Messiah and Jesus did not measure up. They steadfastly believed they were right as they pursued Jesus' arrest, hearings, and death. They elevated their opinions and view of themselves and refused to examine and yield to the truth.

They failed to recognize Jesus' wisdom and all He had done that revealed He had come from God. In a similar way, pride and self-focus lead us down a dangerous path. Weaponizing the opinions we judge right is acceptable in today's world. People who think they are right draw bold lines on social media, in news broadcasts, and even within churches. Even Christians who desire to hold up God's truth can do so in an unloving and unkind way. **The only way to truly be right is to pursue the One who is fully righteous: Jesus.** Is there an area of your life in which you insist upon being right? How might God judge your heart as you relate to others? How will you give up human "rightness" to pursue righteousness in Jesus?

Jesus set an amazing example as He stood before His enemies. He willingly surrendered His right to defend Himself, even against outright lies. Jesus' quiet dignity was not weakness but surrendered strength. He did not veer off God's course for Him to find an easier path. What do you do when obeying the Lord becomes difficult? Do you question God's goodness? Do you compromise or complain? How can you trust God for the strength you need to obey Him in a difficult place? God's sovereign plan took Jesus to the cross. **God's sovereign plan for your life can be trusted.**

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Jesus' Crucifixion and Burial

MATTHEW 27:32-66



Focus Verse

“And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice,
he gave up his spirit.”

Matthew 27:50



Jesus' Crucifixion and Burial

Matthew 27:32-66

Day 1

1. Use this space to record how you have seen God's activity during the week. How has He provided, answered, comforted, restored, guided, etc.?

Day 2: Matthew 27:32-37

Jesus proceeded to Golgotha, where He was crucified.

2.
 - a. Try to imagine what Simon of Cyrene saw, heard, and thought as He carried Jesus' cross.
 - b. Why is it significant that Jesus was led outside the city to die? (See Leviticus 4:12, 21; Hebrews 13:11-13.)
3. Why would Jesus have refused the drink offered to Him? (See Psalm 69:19-21.)
4.
 - a. How do the following verses help you understand what Jesus' crucifixion means for us?
Romans 5:6-8
2 Corinthians 5:21
1 Peter 1:18-19
1 Peter 2:24
1 John 4:10-11
 - b. Which of these thoughts comforted or challenged you?

Day 3: Matthew 27:38-44

Jesus was taunted by onlookers as He hung on the cross.

5.
 - a. What groups of people mocked Jesus while He hung on the cross? What did each group say?





Jesus' Crucifixion and Burial

Matthew 27:32-66

- b. How did this public scorn add to Jesus' suffering? In what ways did Satan tempt Jesus through their words? (See Matthew 4:1-11.)
-
- 6. a. Read Psalm 22. Pick three verses that help you appreciate Jesus' suffering on the cross.

 - b. What is your foremost thought as you ponder Jesus' sacrifice?

Day 4: Matthew 27:45-56

God demonstrated His power as Jesus yielded to death.

- 7. What did the darkness that covered the earth signify? (See Isaiah 13:9-10 and Acts 2:20.)

- 8. Describe the painful reality expressed by Jesus' cry in verse 46.

- 9. a. What additional supernatural events occurred when Jesus gave up His spirit to death?

- b. What is the spiritual significance of each miracle?

- 10. a. What might have led the centurion to speak as he did?

- b. Who else was present at Jesus' death, and what might their presence indicate?





Jesus' Crucifixion and Burial

Matthew 27:32-66

11. What does Jesus' death on the cross say to you about the seriousness of sin and the costliness of redemption?

Day 5: Matthew 27:57-66

Jesus was buried by friends.

12. What stands out to you about Jesus' burial? (See also John 19:38-42.)
13. a. Why did Jesus' enemies seek to have His tomb guarded?
- b. Why is the guarding of Jesus' tomb significant?
14. Jesus' dead body lay in a sealed and guarded tomb. What situation do you face that appears hopeless and awaits victory only God can give?

Day 6: Matthew 27:32-66

Jesus' atoning sacrifice upheld God's perfect justice and met mankind's greatest need.

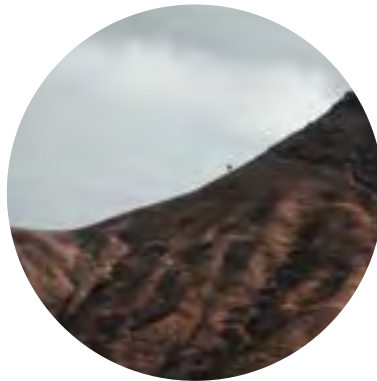
15. What has your study of Jesus' death and burial revealed to you this week?





Jesus' Crucifixion and Burial

Matthew 27:32-66



Matthew 27:32-66

Focus Verse

“And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.” – Matthew 27:50

- Jesus' Crucifixion – 27:32-56
- Jesus' Burial – 27:57-66

Engage

We are treading on holy ground. How do you *study* a passage of Scripture that records the brutal and undeserved death of the Lord Jesus Christ? The cross of Christ is simultaneously terrible and beautiful. Wicked men callously murdered God's sinless Son. God's wrath was poured out on Jesus without restraint. Only the sacrifice of God's perfect Son could allow sinful people to be forgiven without compromising the Father's perfect justice. This passage is both too heavy to talk about and too beautiful not to. **The extreme pain Jesus experienced and the incredible love He demonstrated defy human understanding.**

Jesus, the Messiah – fully man and fully God – came to earth to fulfill the Father's plan to redeem mankind. The plots of evil men and the plan of eternal God converged at the cross. Jesus offered His life and bore sin's curse not merely for a faceless humanity, but for the specific people who own their sin and turn to Him in faith for rescue. Because Jesus paid sin's dreadful penalty on their behalf, believers are delivered from eternal punishment and a wasted life. How should this impact you personally? We gaze at this sacred passage to believe the unbelievable. **Jesus' atoning sacrifice upheld God's perfect justice and met mankind's greatest need.** Because of what Jesus did, believers can live a new life and anticipate a glorious future.





Jesus' Crucifixion – Matthew 27:32-56

After Jesus received a death sentence, Roman soldiers led Him outside Jerusalem. Both Jewish and Roman customs dictated that executions take place outside the city. **Jesus was rejected by the people He longed to save.**¹ His crucifixion outside the city contains rich symbolism. Israel's annual Day of Atonement required two goats be offered to atone for the nation's sin.² One goat was killed and its blood sprinkled in the Holy of Holies within the temple.³ The high priest then laid his hands on the head of the second goat and confessed the nation's sins. This "scapegoat" carried the nation's sins and was sent into the wilderness to die.⁴ The carcass of the first goat, the sin offering, was burned outside the camp.⁵ Jesus was the Lamb of God, sent by the Father to bear the curse of sin for the world.⁶ Jesus was both the sin offering and the scapegoat that God prepared to bear the sin of all who put their trust in Him.

Soldiers mocked, beat, and spit upon the Savior of mankind. Stripped of His own garments, Jesus was scornfully proclaimed "king of the Jews." He was clothed with a mock robe and a crown made of thorns, the result of sin's curse on the earth.⁷ They struck Him on the head "again and again." **Jesus' path to the cross included physical torment and public humiliation.**

Jesus' Road to the Cross – 27:32-33

Simon of Cyrene – 27:32

Jesus would have been physically traumatized by blood loss and pain from His severe beating, making it difficult for Him to carry His cross.

Along the way, a man in the crowd named Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry Jesus' cross for Him. Cyrene was a city in northern Africa in the area of modern-day Libya. Simon had likely traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.

1: Jesus' heart for Jerusalem: Matthew 23:37-39

2: Two goats: Leviticus 16:7

3: Goat sacrificed: Leviticus 16:15

4: Scapegoat: Leviticus 16:21-22

5: Carcass burned: Leviticus 16:27

6: Lamb of God: John 1:29

7: Thorns: Genesis 3:18





Jesus' Crucifixion and Burial

Matthew 27:32-66

Golgotha – 27:33

The procession led to a rocky hill outside Jerusalem called Golgotha, or the “place of the skull,” where Jesus was crucified. **Jesus, mankind’s Savior, died in a formidable and despised location dedicated to the execution of criminals.**

Jesus’ Torment on the Cross – 27:34-44

The Refusal of a Sedative – 27:34

Jesus was offered a sedative drink of wine mixed with gall. Gall likely refers to a bitter-tasting substance, which is identified as myrrh in Mark’s gospel.⁸ After tasting it, Jesus refused to drink. He chose instead to drink every drop from the cup of His suffering to its bitter dregs. **Jesus’ mind was not dulled, nor His senses protected as He endured the undeserved pain of every nail and every taunt.** He willingly experienced the full force of God’s wrath against mankind’s sin because of His obedience to the Father and His love for the sinners He came to rescue.

The Agony of Crucifixion – 27:35a

Matthew spared his readers many details of Jesus’ painful death. He simply wrote, “When they had crucified him ...” and explained other things that happened that day. **Crucifixion intentionally imposed a slow death of extreme torment on its victims.** The strained body position restricted blood flow to the heart and lungs and brought unbearable pain when moving or breathing. Dehydration caused intolerable fever and thirst. The raw flesh torn by nails left wounds that drew stinging insects. Death eventually came through suffocation.

Rugged nails pierced the hands that tenderly held children and healed suffering people. Jesus, the source of living water, experienced extreme thirst. Our Savior – the source of life – struggled to draw breath as He hung on the cross. **The intensity**

of Jesus’ suffering reveals the costliness of sin. Though the world scorns the thought of the brutal death of a suffering Savior, the realities of Jesus’ death speak deeply to the believer.

The Shame of Public Exposure – 27:35b-36

The soldiers around Jesus’ cross gambled for His clothing by casting lots. **Jesus was stripped of everything but the crown of thorns as the humiliation of nakedness was added to His suffering.** Treated as a criminal with no right to personal privacy, He suffered personal indignity and disgrace. Soldiers kept watch over Jesus as He hung exposed and bleeding on the cross. This scene offers rich symbolism. Jesus laid aside the glories of His deity to bear sin’s curse. Because He did, believers can be clothed with His robes of righteousness.⁹

The Charges Against Heaven’s King – 27:37

A sign announcing the charges against Jesus was placed above His head: “THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.” Though offered in mockery, the truth was clearly announced for all to see. The long-awaited Messiah was killed by the people He came to rescue.

The Company of Criminals – 27:38

Jesus was crucified between two rebels – one on His right and one on His left. Each of these two men had committed a serious crime worthy of execution. **Jesus took His place among sinners as He died for them.**

The Verbal Abuse of Onlookers – 27:39-44

Jesus experienced desertion by His friends, the silence of His Father, and verbal abuse from those who watched Him suffer. The taunts He heard surely added to His anguish.

8: Myrrh: Mark 15:23

9: Clothes of righteousness: Isaiah 61:10; Matthew 22:11-12; Revelation 19:7-8





Jesus' Crucifixion and Burial

Matthew 27:32-66



The People Passing By – 27:39-40

The people walking by hurled insults at Jesus and shook their heads in disdain. They challenged Jesus to save Himself based on His claim that He would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. They essentially said, “If you are the Son of God – if all your claims about yourself are not lies – come down from the cross.” Who were these people? Had some of them hailed Jesus with palm branches when He entered Jerusalem?¹⁰ Had they been disillusioned when Jesus failed to rise up as the political deliverer they desired? Regardless of their motivation, Satan’s taunt to mankind’s Savior rang in their words. Jesus had previously resisted Satan when he tempted Jesus to claim His crown without the cross.¹¹

How did their words impact Jesus? What kept Him on the cross when He was encouraged to come down? Jesus remained steadfastly committed to His redemptive commission. **Jesus stayed on the cross to absorb God’s wrath for sinners, break the curse of sin, and defeat Satan.** He would rise from the grave to claim victory for all who trust in Him.

The Religious Leaders – 27:41-43

The religious crowd flung mocking words at Jesus. They attacked His power to save: “He saved others ... but he can’t save himself!” They claimed that God would have rescued Him if He was truly God’s Son. However, if Jesus had spared Himself, He could not have saved others. In fact, His staying power proved His deity.

God the Father did not rescue Jesus because His love compelled Him to rescue us. Isaiah 53:10-11 explains, “Yet it was the LORD’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.”

The Rebels Crucified With Him – 27:44

Even the two criminals surrounding Jesus “heaped insults on him.” **Jesus died for the very people who were beating, mocking, and killing Him.**

10: Triumphant entry: Matthew 21:8-11

11: Jesus’ temptation: Matthew 4:8-11





Jesus' Crucifixion and Burial

Matthew 27:32-66

Jesus' Death on the Cross – 27:45-50

God was not entirely silent while Jesus hung on the cross. **As Jesus died, God punctuated the scene with supernatural responses to this destiny-changing event.**

Supernatural Darkness Over the Land – 27:45

Darkness is a powerful symbol in Scripture. People who come to Christ for salvation are rescued from walking in spiritual darkness.¹² One of God's plagues on Egypt was thick darkness.¹³ God's light shattered the darkness at creation.¹⁴ At the last great judgment day, the sun will be darkened.¹⁵ **God spoke through darkness on the day Jesus died.**

At the time of day when the sun normally stood high in the sky, God cloaked the earth in darkness. Creation cried out and begged people to listen. **The sun did not shine from noon until three in the afternoon.** This darkness expressed the painful breach between Holy God and His own Son. From eternity past, Jesus had lived in intimate fellowship with His Father. Jesus had walked on earth as a man, in constant prayer and communion with His Father. Now Jesus, the light of the world, was subjected to the darkness of sin.

Severed Fellowship With His Father – 27:46

About three in the afternoon, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Jesus' words lamented the profound separation the darkness had conveyed. Jesus quoted words from Psalm 22:1. As humans, we cannot fully understand the excruciating spiritual suffering Jesus endured on our behalf. **The cross fractured the divine union that had existed in perfection and uninterrupted harmony up to this point.** The pain of this moment cannot be overstated.

Jesus was separated from and forsaken by His Father so that believers will never have to be.

Paul expressed it well in Romans 8:38-39, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Believers rejoice in this glorious declaration, but also recognize the cost Jesus paid to win that joyous security for His people.

Sovereign Release Unto Death – 27:47-50

Those watching Jesus misunderstood His anguished cry and thought He was calling for Elijah. Someone offered Him a sponge filled with wine vinegar. Other bystanders continued to mock Jesus saying, "Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

Jesus again cried out in a loud voice before He surrendered to death. Matthew did not record Jesus' words, but the other Gospels offer more details. John's Gospel records Jesus' victory cry that rang through earth, heaven, and even hell: "It is finished."¹⁶ These words reflect the closing burst of praise in Psalm 22, "He has done it."¹⁷ **Jesus finished what God sent Him to do; He pressed forward until He had fully borne the curse of mankind's sin.**

Matthew records that Jesus "gave up his spirit." Luke adds that Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."¹⁸ By His sovereign will and divine power, Jesus deliberately yielded Himself to death. No human can die by merely willing their own death. **Jesus' surrender to death demonstrated His absolute authority, love for sinners, and complete obedience to His Father's will.** John 10:17-18 clearly states that Jesus died and rose again as an expression of His divine will: "The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life – only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I

12: Walking in darkness: Psalm 82:5; Isaiah 9:2; 59:9; John 8:12; 1 John 1:6; 2:11

13: Plague in Egypt: Exodus 10:21

14: Gift of light: Genesis 1:3

15: Darkened sun: Isaiah 13:9-10; Matthew 24:29; Acts 2:20

16: It is finished: John 19:30

17: Victory cry: Psalm 22:31

18: Jesus surrendered His life: Psalm 31:5; Luke 23:46





Delivered From Death and Condemnation

The Doctrine of Salvation From the Penalty of Sin

Sin has exacted a costly price from humankind. Adam and Eve's first sin corrupted every individual after them. We are born into this world spiritually dead. We commit acts of sin that prove sin's inborn, internal damage to our minds, motives, and character. Romans 6:23 clearly states "the wages of sin is death." Sin's dreadful curse promises not only certain physical death, but also spiritual death – a continued state of permanent separation from God and everything good forever. Our sin deserves this just penalty.

Our loving God did not leave us hopelessly stuck in our sinful state. He sent His own Son to earth to die the death we deserve. There is good news for everyone who turns to Jesus Christ for salvation. Romans 6:23 adds a life-giving beacon of light to the dreadful reality about our sin. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." **Because Jesus paid sin's price on their behalf, believers are released from the just penalty their sins deserve.**¹⁹ Though we will all die physically, believers are saved from eternal death and saved to enjoy unbroken fellowship with God now and forever.²⁰

No one can fall and deny the force of gravity. In the same way, the punishment you have earned cannot be dismissed. **The penalty for your sins – those specific actions and attitudes that dishonor God – must be paid.** If you do not believe that Jesus paid your debt of sin, you will pay that price yourself. The costliness of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross clearly reveals the seriousness of sin.

Anyone who turns to Christ for salvation is granted access to God's presence, now and forever. What is it like to wake up every morning knowing that Jesus has absorbed the weight of God's wrath hanging over your head? **This undeserved rescue by the sinless Jesus should change the way you think and live.** You no longer carry a burden that you cannot bear. You are a debtor relieved of an immeasurable debt that you could not pay. Because we are forgiven a great debt, we are to be forgiving people.²¹

Believers long to love and serve God, not to earn His favor, but because of it. In the words of hymn writer Elvina Hall, "Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe; Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow."²² **Worship and wonder flow freely from people who realize what Jesus has done for them.**

lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

Jesus yielded His spirit to His Father's keeping as He awaited resurrection. His Father would not abandon Him to the grave. God would not let His "faithful one see decay."²² Divine vindication was three days away.

God's Affirmation of the Cross – 27:51-53

The Torn Veil of the Temple – 27:51a

God accentuated the magnitude of Jesus' death. **At the very moment Jesus died, the thick veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom.**

19: Saved from sin's penalty: Psalm 103:11-12; Isaiah 38:17; Jeremiah 31:34

20: Alive in Christ: Romans 6:8-10; Colossians 1:13-14

21: The forgiven forgive: Matthew 18:23-35; No decay: Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27

22: No decay: Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27

^a Public domain: written in 1865 by Elvina Hall / Music by John Grape



Jesus' Crucifixion and Burial

Matthew 27:32-66

This lavishly woven, thick curtain protected the Most Holy Place and represented the barrier between sinful people and holy God.²³

Before Christ, God used ceremonies and symbols to teach His people. Entrance into the Most Holy Place was forbidden except on the annual Day of Atonement when only the high priest entered. First, he sacrificed a bull for his own sins. Only then could he safely enter the Holy of Holies with the blood of a sacrificed goat to atone for the sins of the nation.²⁴ **The tearing of the veil signified that Jesus broke down the barrier between God and sinners.**²⁵

The Earthquake and Resurrection of Dead Saints– 27:51b-53

The earth convulsed as God's judgment fell on sin. In Scripture, earthquakes often represent God's judgment.²⁶ **Many holy people were raised to life as the shaking earth opened tombs around Jerusalem.** This mysterious event foreshadows the

resurrection of God's people in a future day. We do not know specifically who was raised to life, what their bodies were like, or who saw them. After Jesus rose, these believers entered Jerusalem and appeared to many people.

People's Response to the Cross – 27:54-56

The watching centurion and those with him expressed awe over what they had witnessed. Rattled by the earthquake and standing in the darkness, they confessed, "Surely he was the Son of God!" The centurion, likely accustomed to watching people die, recognized Jesus' dignity in death and God's clarifying evidence of His deity.

Many loyal women watched the cross from a distance. They could not ease Jesus' suffering, but they expressed their devotion by staying near to Him. Matthew named Mary Magdalene;²⁷ Mary the mother of James and Joseph;²⁸ and the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee.²⁹

23: The curtain: Exodus 26:31-33

24: Atonement: Leviticus 16:32-34

25: Jesus secured our hope: Hebrews 6:19-20

26: Earthquakes: Isaiah 29:6; Haggai 2:6; Zechariah 14:5; Matthew 24:7; 28:2; Revelation 6:12-16

27: Mary Magdalene: Luke 8:2

28: Mother of James and Joseph: Mark 15:40; John 19:25

29: Mother of James and John: Matthew 20:20-22





Jesus' Burial – Matthew 27:57-66

Jesus suffered a criminal's death at the hands of wicked men. However, He was buried in a rich man's tomb and cared for by friends.

The Care of Jesus' Friends – 27:57-61

Jesus' mistreatment and unjust death led **Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy and high-ranking man, to emerge from the shadows and provide for Jesus' burial in his own unused tomb.** Matthew tells us that Joseph had become a disciple of Jesus. At great risk to his status and reputation, he went to Pilate and requested Jesus' body. Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrin, had not consented to Jesus' death.³⁰ This emerging disciple touched Jesus' dead body, making him ceremonially unclean before the important Passover celebration. Because sundown and the start of Passover drew near, these actions likely took place rather hurriedly.

Joseph wrapped Jesus' body according to Jewish burial customs with strips of linen and placed Him in the tomb. We can only imagine the scene as Joseph laid Jesus to rest. He rolled a heavy stone to the front of the tomb before he left. Jesus' burial fulfilled the prophecy recorded in Isaiah 53:9, "He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth."

Matthew records the diligent support of the loyal women who again stayed close, sitting opposite the tomb. There was not much they could do, but they wanted to be near.

The Caution of Jesus' Enemies – 27:62-66

Jesus' enemies requested that His tomb be secured. While Jesus' disciples did not expect Jesus to rise, the Jewish leaders remembered Jesus'



promise to rise again. They feared that Jesus' disciples would steal His body and claim that He had risen from the dead. Pilate complied, posting a guard and putting a seal on the tomb. God used the fears of those who had murdered His Son to validate the upcoming resurrection.

Jesus' agonizing death at the hands of wicked men and His amazing burial in a rich man's tomb fulfilled God's eternal plan. The dramatic story of Jesus' crucifixion might look like the most sorrowful day in human history. However, what Jesus accomplished at the cross is much more than a sad story. God's greatest victory for humankind required the death of His Son. **Jesus' atoning sacrifice upheld God's perfect justice and met mankind's greatest need.**

30: Joseph's dissent: Luke 23:50-51



Jesus' Crucifixion and Burial

Matthew 27:32-66

Take to Heart

Hold Fast

Matthew recorded Jesus' road to the cross. The unplanned help of a bystander, public humiliation by the fickle crowd, the actions of the calloused soldiers, and many other details carry deep significance. **Jesus allowed Himself to be tormented and murdered by the very people He loved and came to save.** He suffered physical pain and excruciating separation from His beloved Father. The severity of this scene only makes sense when we realize the costly price of sin that Jesus consented to pay. His death was both intensely horrible and amazingly beautiful. The love that sent Jesus to the cross, the obedience that kept Him there, and the victory that He would deliver should amaze us.

Our lesson ends with Jesus' dead body sealed in a borrowed grave. Jesus' story does not end here! Though this might look like defeat, sin and death do not have the last word. **The sealed tomb and watchful guards merely set the scene for the victory soon to come.** Prepare to marvel at the power of God!

Apply It

What is the right response to a close look at Jesus' crucifixion? Sadness may fill our hearts as we think about His shame and suffering. Perhaps we feel anger toward the people who mistreated Jesus and scorned His love. Sometimes, the weight of grief can overwhelm us, particularly when we realize our part in putting Jesus on that cross. It is not enough to merely learn about Jesus' agony. Personal gratitude should grow within us every time we ponder Jesus' atoning sacrifice. **A fresh look at Jesus' suffering should bring fresh amazement at how Jesus has loved us.** How have you responded to this passage this week?





Jesus' Crucifixion and Burial

Matthew 27:32-66

Jesus did not deserve to die; He willingly offered Himself for undeserving sinners. Jesus wore the crown of thorns we deserved so that His children can wear His crown of righteousness.³¹ Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." How is your daily life changed by this truth? **The humble Savior is worthy of our wholehearted trust and commitment.**

We usually struggle to figure out what God is doing because He does things so differently than we would. The cross and the tomb looked like utter defeat. The Son of God was murdered by mere mortals. His dead body remained incarcerated in a dark tomb – sealed with a heavy stone and guarded by Roman soldiers. His friends scattered, and it seemed like His enemies won. Does your life ever feel like that? Do you face circumstances that seem impossible? Do you look at the world and wonder if God has lost and Satan has won? Hold on. **God's work cannot be**

measured by how things appear. Jesus had to die for sin so He could rise and offer us new life. The sealed tomb would soon be the empty tomb. Will you choose to believe what is unchangeably true, despite the story your circumstances tell you? Will you trust that God is doing more than meets the eye? God has triumphed and will triumph. That remains sure.

The cross of Christ offered the only way possible to satisfy God's righteous wrath without compromising His perfect justice. Jesus accomplished the most wonderful thing imaginable for us. Jesus' torn flesh and the temple's ripped veil delivered a marvelous victory for God's children. Do you think about what it cost for you to walk and talk with God every day? **God's former enemies become His friends through faith in Christ.** Will you bask in that wonder as you live in God's presence?

31: Crown of righteousness: 2 Timothy 4:8



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The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

MATTHEW 28



Focus Verse

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20



The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Matthew 28

Day 1

1. Use this space to record how you have seen God's activity during the week. How has He provided, answered, comforted, restored, guided, etc.?

Day 2: Matthew 28:1-10

Loyal women encountered the angel and the risen Christ.

2.
 - a. Describe the scene and the experiences of those at Jesus' tomb. (See also Mark 16:1-8 and Luke 24:1-8.)
 - b. In what ways do these facts validate Jesus' bodily resurrection?
3.
 - a. What did the angel say to the women?
 - b. How did the women respond to the angel?
 - c. How did they respond to the risen Jesus?
4. Describe a time when Jesus' presence brought you joy even in the midst of a fearful situation.

Day 3: Matthew 28:11-15

Jesus' enemies spread lies about His resurrection.

5. How did the following groups respond to the facts about Jesus' resurrection:
The guards
The Jewish leaders
The Jewish people





6. What lessons can you learn from the opposition Jesus faced from His enemies?

Day 4: Matthew 28:1-15 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-19

8. What points from 1 Corinthians 15:1-19 stand out to you about Jesus' resurrection?

John 10:17-18

Acts 2:31 with Psalm 16:10

Acts 17:30-31

Romans 6:4

Ephesians 1:18-23

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

1 Peter 1:3-6

10. a. What truth about Jesus' resurrection has impacted you the most this week? Why?

b. What difference does this make in your life?



The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

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Day 5: Matthew 28:16-20

Jesus commissioned His disciples with His authority to make disciples of all nations.

11. Identify Jesus' important words in these verses.

a. His claim:

b. His command:

c. His promise:

12. What does “authority” mean? Why is it important to recognize the nature and breadth of Jesus' authority?

b. List the specific points of emphasis and action involved in fulfilling Jesus' call to “make disciples”?

c. Why does Jesus' authority and presence encourage you in light of His command?

d. How has God called you to act on this truth in your present situation?

Day 6: Matthew 28:1-20

The risen Christ empowers believers to reach the world with the good news of salvation.

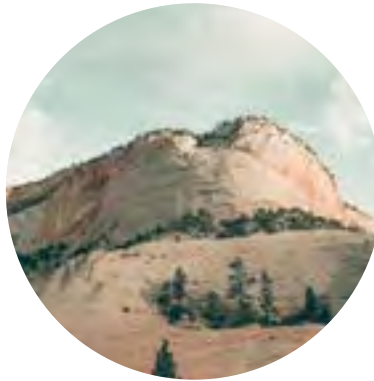
13. What difference has the study of the resurrection made in your life this week? How have you been challenged?





The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Matthew 28



Matthew 28

Focus Verse

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” – Matthew 28:19-20

- The Reality of the Resurrection – 28:1-15
- The Result of the Resurrection – 28:16-20

Engage

Jesus died. Jesus was buried. Jesus rose from the dead. We cannot fully grasp the significance of Jesus' resurrection. The empty tomb offers far more than a happy ending to a sad story. Jesus rose in a glorious proclamation of absolute victory. God vindicated His Son, verifying that He was who He claimed to be. The risen Christ conquered the curse of sin and death that held mankind captive. A defeated Satan now awaits final judgment. By God's grace and to His glory, Jesus' story does not end with a silent grave and grief-stricken followers. **Jesus' death beautifully displayed His sacrificial love for His children; His resurrection powerfully demonstrated His victory on behalf of His children.** Will you ask God to open your mind and heart to reckon what this truth means to you as God's child?

People who put their faith in Jesus' atoning sacrifice and resurrection participate in His victory. Jesus' resurrection power abides within His children as the Holy Spirit enables them to live a redeemed life. Jesus gives believers His authority to share the gospel and act on His promises. **The risen Christ empowers believers to reach the world with the good news of salvation.** Jesus is not dead – He is alive and at work among and through His children.





The Reality of the Resurrection – Matthew 28:1-15

The fact that Jesus' resurrection was completely unexpected offers convincing proof that He rose in bodily form. Even though Jesus told His disciples He would rise again, they did not anticipate His resurrection. The Jewish leaders remembered His words but did not think Jesus' dead body would be raised to life by God's power. They merely wanted to keep Jesus' disciples from stealing His body and claiming that He had risen. God used the fears of Jesus' enemies to provide official witnesses of His resurrection.

The four Gospels combine to present many details about Jesus' resurrection. **Matthew wrote his account of this momentous event with dignified simplicity.** Matthew's account does not include every detail, but it sufficiently calls us to revel in the wonder that Jesus rose from the dead.

Between the final verses of Matthew 27 and the opening verses of Matthew 28, the scene at the tomb changed dramatically. The Roman guards who secured Jesus' tomb and the women who approached His grave all encountered something utterly unexpected.

Loyal Women Discovered the Truth – 28:1-10

The Arrival at the Tomb – 28:1

After dawn on the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary"¹ came to Jesus' tomb.

Mark 16:1-2 tells us that they came to anoint Jesus' body with spices and wondered who would roll the heavy stone away from the tomb. Like the disciples, they did not expect Jesus to rise from the dead.

The Angel at the Tomb – 28:2-8

Brilliant Radiance – 28:2-4

A violent earthquake shook the ground as an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled back the stone, and sat on it. Dressed in dazzling white, the angel gleamed like lightning. The ground shook and the guards trembled. They were paralyzed by fear.

1: The other Mary: Matthew 27:61; Mark 15:40, 47





Glorious Life That Overcomes Death

The Doctrine of Resurrection

Many details verify the fact that Jesus was dead. The soldiers attested to it,² and Jesus' friends prepared His lifeless body for burial.³ Roman guards secured His silent tomb.⁴ However, death could not hold God's Son. **Jesus' resurrection proved the victory He won over Satan, sin, and death.**⁵ The resurrection gloriously declares God's vote on who Jesus is.

Jesus' resurrection lays the cornerstone for all the doctrines of salvation. The believer's present hope and glorious future rest on the fact that Jesus overcame death and rose from the grave.⁶ He is alive forevermore. Death has been swallowed up in victory.⁷

Jesus' resurrection matters to believers. Jesus rose as the firstfruits of those who have died – the first installment of those God raises to eternal life.⁸ Like Jesus, believers' physical bodies will be raised from death, transformed, and glorified.⁹ Jesus' resurrection infuses believers with resurrection power to live a transformed life on earth.¹⁰ We live because Jesus lives.

To deny Jesus' bodily resurrection is to deny who He is and His power to save. If Jesus was not raised from the dead, we are hopelessly stuck in our sins and the perpetual fear of death. If Jesus came to the earth but died like any other human, Christianity has nothing to offer this world.

However, Jesus did rise from the dead. Our Savior conquered what conquers us. He defeated death and crushed Satan. **The Son of God has authority over death and everything else in this world.** He sits at God's side ready, willing, and able to bring us into fellowship with God. In Him, we find the only source of true hope. Do you recognize the importance of Jesus' resurrection? The angel announced it, "He is not here; he has risen, just as he said." Many people witnessed the risen Christ.¹¹ And one day, every believer will see Him face-to-face. In the words of Job, "I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes – I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"¹²

Bold Reassurance – 28:5-8

The angel spoke comforting words to calm their fears and call them forward in faith. "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay." The angel did not reprimand them for unbelief or for not expecting Jesus to have risen. Instead, the women were invited into the empty tomb to see proof of Jesus' resurrection with their own eyes. The first announcement of Jesus' resurrection came to loyal women who loved Jesus deeply even though they did not comprehend everything that had happened. Jesus had told the Jewish leaders that He would be vindicated and

sit at God's right hand. His resurrection fulfills that prediction.¹³

God understands how to stimulate our faith. He called these devoted women to grasp the visible reality before them. **They were also given an assignment – to go and quickly tell Jesus'**

2: Soldiers verify Jesus' death: John 19:33-34

3: Jesus' burial: Matthew 27:57-61

4: Guards: Matthew 27:65-66

5: Power over death: Acts 2:24; Hebrews 2:14-15

6: Significance of Jesus' resurrection: Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 14

7: Victory: 1 Corinthians 15:54-57

8: Jesus, the firstfruits: 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

9: Transformed bodies: Philippians 3:20-21

10: New life: Romans 6:4; 8:11

11: Witnesses of Jesus' resurrection: Mark 16:14; Luke 24:30-38; John 20:19-20;

12: Job's declaration: Job 19:25-27

13: Jesus at God's right hand: Matthew 26:64



The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Matthew 28



disciples that He had risen from the dead and would meet them in Galilee. We can only imagine their racing hearts and minds as they ran to do just that. Matthew vividly described their emotional state as “afraid yet filled with joy.” The Lord takes His people to new horizons of faith, which can be equally amazing and terrifying.

The Appearance of the Risen Christ – 28:9-10

The Unexpected Greeting – 28:9a

As the women ran to deliver their astounding news, Jesus suddenly appeared to them. Though His presence was anything but ordinary, He greeted the scurrying women in a very normal way. What would you expect the risen Christ to say? The resurrected Savior offered a simple word in His familiar voice to His astonished friends: “Greetings.” Though His appearance was supernatural, Jesus interacted with everyday people in ordinary ways.

The Humble Worship – 28:9b

The surprised women immediately recognized that this was an extraordinary moment and that Jesus was no ordinary man. They fell at His feet in worship. Their reaction revealed their growing understanding of who Jesus was. **Worship is the proper response to the Lord Jesus Christ.** Bowing before Him communicated surrender before the One they recognized as great and worthy of honor.

The Repeated Instructions – 28:10

Jesus spoke a message to the women that was almost identical to the angel’s instructions. He repeated the encouragement, “Do not be afraid.” This often-repeated admonition in Scripture speaks to the reality of the human experience.¹⁴ As people, we are prone to fear. This world presents many valid reasons to feel afraid. The risen Christ can legitimately call His people to hope that overcomes every reason for fear.

¹⁴: Do not be afraid: Genesis 15:1; 21:17; Exodus 14:13; Deuteronomy 1:21; Psalm 118:6; Matthew 10:26; Acts 18:9; Hebrews 13:6; Revelation 2:10





The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Matthew 28

Like the angel, Jesus also told the women to go tell His disciples to wait for Him in Galilee. The repetition of these straightforward instructions was likely needed, given the initial shock of these electrically charged moments. Jesus Himself commissioned these women to deliver this important message. They arrived at Jesus' tomb saddened by death, but they left encouraged by a message of life.

Wicked Men Cover Up the Truth – 28:11-15

Truth carries its own weight and validity. Ignoring or rejecting the facts does not change what is true. Therefore, the only way to combat truth is either to distort and deny reality or to promote a lie. Jesus rose from the dead, and undeniable evidence validated that truth. **Because Jesus' enemies could not change the facts, they resorted to outright lies in their futile attempt to suppress this world-changing, life-altering truth.** Jesus' resurrection delivered a head-crushing blow to Satan and death.¹⁵ It is no surprise that the forces of evil attempted to cover up the truth about Jesus' resurrection.

The Guards' Report – 28:11

The guards at Jesus' tomb witnessed the truth. They had physically trembled as the earth quaked, and they shook in fear when heaven's herald arrived and rolled away the heavy stone from

Jesus' grave. **As the women were deployed to tell the good news to Jesus' friends, some of the guards went to tell the Jewish religious leaders everything that had happened.**

Israel's chief priests and elders faced a dilemma. Their deliberate attempts to prevent reports of Jesus' resurrection failed. A sealed tomb and armed guards did not stop God's eternal plan for His Son. Now, their very own employees were eyewitnesses of facts they could not deny.

Jesus' bodily resurrection has consistently been attacked and refuted by people who attempt to suppress the truth. Many feeble theories exist. Did Jesus merely "swoon" only to be revived in the coolness of the tomb? Did Jesus' followers so want Him to come back to life that they hallucinated or imagined it happened? Did someone impersonate Him? Did someone steal His body? Perhaps the multiplication of these weak explanations actually confirms the truth that people try so hard to deny.

Many verified facts support the truth of Jesus' resurrection. Jesus' followers did not expect Him to rise again and therefore would not have falsely claimed that He had risen.¹⁶ The fact that Jesus actually died was verified by irrefutable evidence.¹⁷ His tomb was sealed and guarded by the very

15: Satan's head crushed: Genesis 3:15

16: Unexpected resurrection: Mark 16:14; Luke 24:30-43; John 20:9, 19-20

17: Evidence that Jesus died: John 19:33-35

The Importance of Jesus' Bodily Resurrection

Jesus' resurrection:

- proves He is the Son of God (John 10:17-18).
- validates the truth of Old Testament prophecy (Acts 2:29-31 with Psalm 16:10).
- makes eternal life possible for those who believe (Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 2:6-7).
- assures believers of our future resurrection and inheritance (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14; 1 Peter 1:3-5).
- offers proof of future judgment (Acts 17:30-31).
- lays the foundation for Christ's heavenly priesthood (Hebrews 7:23-28).
- gives power for the Christian life (Romans 6:4-14; Ephesians 1:18-20).





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people who later claimed His body had been stolen.¹⁸ No one who made up this story would have given women a key role as the first witnesses of the risen Christ. This unusual account unfolded in unexpected ways. Both individuals and groups of people saw and interacted with the risen Christ, providing convincing proof.¹⁹

The Religious Leaders' Bribe – 28:12-15

The chief priests and elders devised a plan. **They bribed the soldiers with a large sum of money to tell an outright lie.** The soldiers were to circulate the report that while they were sleeping during the night, Jesus' disciples stole His body. These soldiers took the money and perpetuated

this widely circulated lie. If this had actually happened, their punishment for falling asleep on duty would have been severe, possibly even death.

The audacity and sheer evil of this bold rejection of truth is shocking. Satan's deception and evil agenda certainly stands behind the supposed solution planned by men who deemed themselves so powerful. Jesus' resurrection crippled and destroyed Satan's power. Death's sting was removed by the victory Jesus won when He stepped out of that tomb.²⁰ Satan, the father of lies, masterfully blinds people to truth by overt and subtle deception.²¹ Truth is not altered by lies. No matter how much money changed hands or how many lies have been told, the truth of Jesus' resurrection cannot be denied.

18: Guarded grave: Matthew 27:62-66

19: Encounters with the risen Christ: Luke 24:34; John 20:26-29; Acts 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

20: Death's sting defeated: 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

21: Father of lies: John 8:44





The Result of the Resurrection – Matthew 28:16-20

The facts of Jesus' resurrection stand firm, but the impact of His resurrection continues to unfold today and for all eternity.

Jesus' Gathered Disciples – 28:16-17

Waiting – 28:16

Jesus' remaining 11 disciples complied with Jesus' instructions and went to Galilee.²²

They gathered on the mountain where Jesus told them to wait. When Jesus died, these men had fled and scattered, as Jesus had predicted.²³ Bewildered and confused by what they could not fully understand, Jesus' disciples simply obeyed what they knew for certain. Obedience does not require complete understanding, but rather rises from expectant faith and humble surrender.

Worshipping – 28:17

"When they saw him" – Matthew's understated words leave us to imagine the exploding thoughts and soaring emotions of Jesus' disciples as He stood in their midst. Like the women, they worshiped Him. **Their worship revealed growing understanding that Jesus was truly God in the flesh and worthy of worship.**

Matthew's honest account revealed the warring tensions within human hearts as he added, "but some doubted." He does not identify who doubted or define the specific struggle some faced to embrace full faith in Christ. Perhaps this transparent statement describes the very real struggle many of us face between rising faith and the clouds of unbelief. In Mark 9:17-29, a desperate father sought Jesus' healing for his

suffering son. He honestly declared, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" God is not shocked or turned away by our feeble and flawed faith. In grace and mercy, God beckons His children to grow in faith.

Jesus' Empowered Commission – 28:18-20a

Matthew ended his Gospel with Jesus' power-packed challenge that set up His disciples and all believers to carry on His mission until He returns. Jesus spoke empowering truth, issued a call to action, and gave a stabilizing promise.

Jesus' Authority – 28:18

The heavenly Father has delegated all authority in the heavenly realms and on earth to His Son. Jesus' unlimited authority backs up His commission to His followers. Jesus' earthly ministry had revealed His divine authority through teaching²⁴ and miracles. He demonstrated power over nature, disease, and death.²⁵ He exercised authority to forgive sin, which offered absolute proof of His deity.²⁶ Jesus' resurrection confirmed even more authority, as He inaugurated the kingdom of God and the new covenant. Jesus is the first to enter the state of glorified humanity.²⁷

Because Jesus holds all authority, He has the right to delegate authority as He wills.²⁸ **Jesus' supreme authority means that He will supply believers with everything required to navigate life in a fallen world, share the gospel, and anticipate eternity.** Sadly, the majority of humanity ignores or rejects Jesus' unwavering and absolute authority.

22: Instructions to wait in Galilee: Matthew 26:32; 28:7, 10

23: Scattered disciples: Matthew 26:31, 56

24: Authority in teaching: Matthew 7:29

25: Authority through miracles: Matthew 8:1-17, 23-34; John 11:38-44

26: Authority to forgive sin: Matthew 9:1-8

27: Jesus' resurrection authority: Romans 1:3-4

28: Delegated authority: Matthew 10:1; 21:23-27; Acts 9:15-16



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Jesus' Assignment – 28:19-20a

On the basis of His unlimited authority, Jesus called His followers to a grand mission. Jesus' command is often called the Great Commission – “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

Going

The spiritual blessings lavished on believers should propel them out of their comfort zone

and beyond themselves. The benefits of salvation are wonderful, but the commission of salvation shares those blessings rather than hoarding them. Someone has said, “To lie at Jesus' feet is blessed. To stay there is to miss the point of the resurrection.” The command to “go” could be translated “as you are going.” This implies intentional outward-focused action. Thus, God's people are called from our homes and churches to go into our neighborhoods, our cities, our countries, and to the world. In the midst of busy lives, God's people intentionally set their gaze and direct their steps toward people who need Jesus.





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Making disciples

Disciples are learners. The key command for Jesus' disciples is to make disciples. This is done by going, baptizing, and teaching. The idea is to share the gospel and build into others so that they love and follow Christ. Our mission should extend around the entire globe. Believers are to seek people from all nations to come to Christ. A Christian's goal is not to merely survive life in this world until called to heaven. Instead, we are to invest our years on this earth to influence more people to turn to Jesus for salvation and walk faithfully with Him. **The lifelong pursuit God intends for His children is to pour into others and point them to Christ.**

Baptizing them

Baptism is an outward expression of an inward experience of God's work. Scripture describes the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the inward experience whereby the Holy Spirit regenerates a dead heart and indwells that person with life-giving power.²⁹ This is the new birth – as a believer is delivered from spiritual death to eternal life.³⁰ Like an official seal on a legal document, the Holy Spirit seals God's children forever with His own name.³¹ Water baptism is an external sign that publicly identifies a person with Jesus Christ. This outward expression points to the internal reality accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

Salvation involves the unified work of the triune God. **Believers are baptized “in the name of the Father,” on the basis of the finished work of the Son, and through the power of the Holy Spirit.** The disciples did not understand the fuller work of the three persons of God until after Pentecost. In a mysterious yet amazing way, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit unite to accomplish the supernatural work of saving a sinner.

Teaching them

The Church has one key mission: to make disciples. Believers are called to spread the gospel (evangelism) and to nurture believers (discipleship). Believers must be taught. Just as a baby must be fed and trained to grow and mature, new believers require investment beyond just sharing the gospel. Jesus' command is not fulfilled if we simply evangelize. Even mature believers continue to learn and grow throughout life. God's truth is so deep and vast that we cannot exhaust its teaching, even over a lifetime.

Jesus' Comforting Presence – 28:20b

The great commission is daunting. How can earthbound believers tackle such an overwhelming mandate? We cannot do this through only strategic plans and human resources.

The very presence of Jesus goes with His children as they obey His commission. He has delegated His authority and promised His presence to every believer. Matthew ends His gospel with amazing words. “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Jesus Himself remains with His children – *always*. He will never leave us. Our failures, weaknesses, and neediness do not drive Him away, but rather draw Him near. He is with us “until the end of the age.” Jesus promised that the evil in this world would go from bad to worse before He returns.³² In spite of this, believers have undaunted hope because of Christ's victory on their behalf. **The risen Christ empowers believers to reach the world with the good news of salvation.** Our Savior conquered death and claimed the victory that no one can take from us. We serve a risen Savior. Hallelujah!

29: Baptism of the Holy Spirit: Matthew 3:11; Acts 2:38; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13

30: New birth: John 3:3-5

31: Sealed: 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:13

32: Rising evil: 2 Timothy 3:12-13





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Take to Heart

Hold Fast

Dashed hopes and a sealed tomb erupted into the joyous celebration of an empty grave and a risen Savior. With a thundering earthquake and a gleaming angel, the glorious truth that death could not hold God's Son reached the ears of Jesus' bewildered followers. Loyal women carried the news. Evil rulers buried the news. Waiting disciples received the news. That glorious announcement continues to ring true through the centuries, "He is not here; he has risen, just as he said."

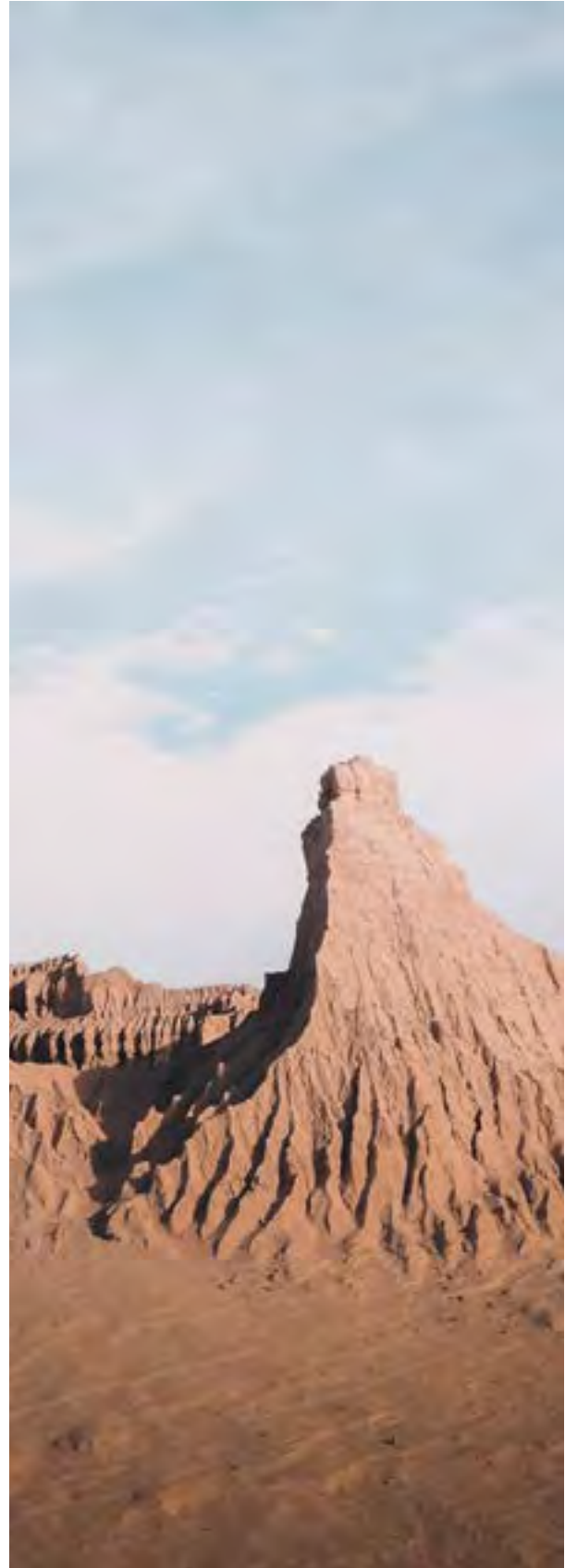
This event is far more than a verified historical fact and a happy ending to a book we have come to love. Jesus' resurrection demonstrates and delegates power in a way that surpasses our wildest dreams. First of all, it shows who God declares Jesus to be. He is at the center of everything God does. The stranglehold of sin and death is broken. Jesus empowers His children to live the life He died to give them. The indwelling Holy Spirit makes dead places within us come alive. A believer may die physically but will be resurrected to an eternal state in a glorified body that death and sin cannot touch.³³ Jesus has commissioned every believer with His divine authority as His ambassador. Romans 8:11 says, "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you."

Jesus' resurrection power transforms the present and the future of every believer.

Apply It

We often have a weak grip on what Jesus' resurrection means for us as God's children. In what ways do you fail to access the spiritual power Jesus won for you? **Defeated by sin**

33: Glorified bodies: Philippians 3:21





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and discouraged by the world, Christians can experience far less than God intends for them. The risen Christ declared that all power and authority was His. He sends His children to the far reaches of planet Earth with a gospel empowered by the same Spirit that raised Him from the dead.³⁴ In what way are you settling for a tame Christianity that fails to “go” where God has sent you? Are you trusting the paid professionals at your church to carry the gospel to the world or are you doing your part? How has the power of the risen Christ challenged you this week?

Christ’s resurrection promises that our dead bodies will rise again. But resurrection life also means that new life will overcome the spiritual deadness within us. While the glorious future awaiting believers brings hope, the infusion of God’s transformative power into daily life should excite us. How has God awakened a desire in you to please Him? How do you find that God’s truth comes alive as you study His Word? What sin has the Spirit revealed, so that by God’s power you can walk in a new way? Resurrection power is not limited to a tomb near Jerusalem. **God delivers His people from death to life quite regularly.** Habits of sin give way to steps of obedience. Trembling lips share the gospel, and people come to Christ. Former hurts and scars are transformed and used for God’s glory. Have you experienced Christ’s new birth and new life in practical ways?

Jesus never leaves His children alone. Jesus goes with us into the darkest places in the world and the hardest seasons of life. He speaks through

us when we do not have the words we need. When we are weak, He gives us His strength. People come to faith in Christ not because we speak eloquently, but because He clothes our little words with His power. Do you ever feel alone? If you are in Christ, you are never alone. He is our Immanuel, God with us.³⁵ If Jesus is for you, no one can truly stand against you.³⁶ How would your day and your week be different if you constantly remembered that Jesus is “with you always, to the very end of the age”? Jesus never leaves His children alone. What a wonder! What a comfort! What a gift!

Our study of the book of Matthew is complete, but our experience with Jesus is anything but over. The unexpected King entered our world fulfilling His role as the promised Messiah and the Savior mankind so desperately needed. He was born as a baby and walked on earth. He taught powerfully and worked miraculously. He suffered brutally and died willingly. He rose victoriously and loved lavishly. May the story we have studied and the wonders we have pondered continue to transform the way we think and live. May our love for Jesus grow as we long to see Him face-to-face. **May Jesus’ glories shine ever brighter into our lives and our world.** In the words of an old but beautiful hymn, “Praise the Savior, ye who know Him! Who can tell how much we owe Him? Gladly let us render to him all we are and have.”^a

34: Christ’s power: Ephesians 1:15–2:10

35: Immanuel: Matthew 1:23

36: God for us: Romans 8:31–39

a: Kelly, Thomas (1776–1855). “Praise the Savior, ye who know Him.” Sung to a traditional German melody.





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