

**Matthew 27:1 ¶ When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:**

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

*Luke 22:66–23:1 “And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth. And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.”*

I included the scripture from Luke that provides a bit more information. Point is made that this is after dawn and takes place in the presence of the official gathering of the Sanhedrin or Council—the Supreme Court of the Jewish people. This time there is no searching for false witnesses. Based on Jesus’ testimony of the previous evening, they immediately ask Him—this time in a legal setting—if He is the Christ, the promised Messiah. Jesus replied that they would not believe Him if He said that He was, neither would they admit that they had already prejudged Him. Matthew notes specifically that the whole purpose of the gathering was to pronounce a guilty verdict that called for His death. Obviously, if they were to admit that He was the Messiah, they would have to let Him go.

Once again Jesus declared that they would one day see Him sitting at the right hand of the power of God. So they asked Him pointedly if He was the Son of God. Jesus basically said, “That is what you are saying I am.” The NIV words it differently: “You are right in saying I am.” And that actually makes more sense to me. He was in a lose-lose situation. He is being condemned for telling the truth; what they claimed was blasphemy was actually the truth. In their mind, this called for a guilty verdict that required His death.

They then bound Jesus and took him to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. David Stern in his Complete Jewish Bible adds the following information: “Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea from 26 to 36 C.E. and therefore the judge in the trial of Yeshua. An inscription with his name on it has been found in Caesarea, on the coast between Tel Aviv and Haifa. Philo and Josephus characterize him as vile, cruel and cagey....”

**Matthew 27:3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,**

**Matthew 27:4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What *is that* to us? see thou *to that*.**

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

Matthew is the only gospel account that tells us what happened to Judas. Luke

does, however, include a report in the book of Acts.

*Acts 1:16–19 “Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus....Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.”*

We know from the words of Jesus at the last supper that Judas was doomed to eternal condemnation.

*Matthew 26:24 “The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.”*

He at least recognized that his actions constituted sin and would result in the death of an innocent man; and he went back to the priests to say just that. His confession did not lessen their resolve, and their response to him was basically to say, “Do you think we care? That’s your problem.” I liked Coffman’s observation: “They were not above hiring perjured witnesses, bribery, plotting to murder the Son of God, or doing any other evil thing that might have seemed expedient; but to take back their own money from repentant Judas, THAT was unlawful!”

So Judas threw the money down at the feet of the priest and then went and committed suicide. My conclusion is that Judas repented for doing wrong, but not due to turning to faith in Jesus as the Messiah—only because he knew Jesus was innocent of any wrongdoing.

**Matthew 27:6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.**

**Matthew 27:7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in.**

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

**Matthew 27:9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;**

**Matthew 27:10 And gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord appointed me.**

The chief priests took the money and decided that they could not put it back into the treasury because it was blood money—money paid to murder someone. They were basically confessing their own culpability.

They decided to use the money to buy the potter’s field, the place where the potter threw away marred or broken pottery, and use it to provide burial ground for strangers. Research indicates that Matthew was written thirty years (give or take a few years) after the death and resurrection of Jesus, and Matthew notes that the field was still known as “the field of blood” at that time.

I think we have to note the discrepancy between Luke's account in Acts and Matthew's account regarding the purchase of the field. I think it is reasonable to understand that Judas' money was used to buy the field even though the transaction was actually made by the priests.

Once again Matthew notes that these events too were a fulfillment of prophecy. This, however, presents another difficulty. You can't find this quote in Jeremiah. The closest connection seems to be in Zechariah.

*Zechariah 11:12–13 “And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.”*

Adam Clark offers the following explanation: “It was an ancient custom among the Jews, says Dr. Lightfoot, to divide the Old Testament into three parts: the first beginning with the law was called The Law; the second beginning with the Psalms was called The Psalms; the third beginning with the prophet in question was called Jeremiah: thus, then, the writings of Zechariah and the other prophets being included in that division that began with Jeremiah, all quotations from it would go under the name of this prophet.”

**Matthew 27:11 ¶ And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.**

Luke and John both tell us a bit more.

*Luke 23:1–2 “And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.”*

*John 18:29–31 “Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death....”*

Taking all the gospels into account, it seems that when they took Jesus to Pilate, he came out to meet them and asked what the accusation was against Jesus. John points out that they declared him to be a criminal. Pilate's response—So take him away and judge him according to your law. The Jews then pointed out that his crime called for the death penalty and the law did not allow them to carry out that penalty.

Luke goes on to add that they got more specific with their accusation. They told Pilate that Jesus was stirring up insurrection among the people and telling them not to pay taxes to Caesar. He, in fact, was declaring that He was Christ the King. The mob was probably expecting a pretty quick decision in favor of their request

considering Pilate's reputation as noted previously.

Pilate turned to Jesus and asked Him point blank if He was "the King of the Jews." The NIV Commentary provides some historical insight: "In Roman trials the magistrate normally heard the charges first, questioned the defendant and listened to his defense, sometimes permitted several such exchanges, and then retired with his advisors to decide on a verdict, which was then promptly carried out. The first step led to this particular formulation of Pilate's question to Jesus."

John tells us that the conversation between Pilate and Jesus was a bit more involved.

*John 18:33–38 "Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all."*

When Pilate asked Jesus if He was the King of the Jews, Jesus responded with a question of His own—my paraphrase: "Did you come up with this question on your own, or are you asking Me because others told you that about me?" Pilate basically said, "I'm not a Jew; it's your own people and the chief priests that have accused you. What have you done to make them so angry?"

Jesus then tells Pilate that He is a king, but that His kingdom is not of this world. If His kingdom were of this world, His servants would fight; and He would not be standing accused before Pilate.

I'm sure Pilate was a bit bewildered at this answer. So he asked Jesus to verify His answer by asking Him once again: "Are you a king?"

Jesus again answers in the affirmative and declares that this was the reason that He was born. He came into the world to declare the truth. Everyone that believes truth will believe me (again my paraphrase).

Then Pilate posits his famous question, "What is truth?" Pilate returned to address the Jews and told them that he could find no fault in Jesus.

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

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

**Matthew 27:14 And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the**

**governor marvelled greatly.**

I'm not sure how these two sections from Matthew and Luke go together. We know that Pilate at some point questioned Jesus again, but got no further response from Him. His determination not to defend himself really puzzled the governor.

*Luke 23:5–11 “And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.”*

The crowd became more belligerent with their accusation that Jesus promoted insurrection all the way from Galilee to Jerusalem. Pilate seized on that comment and wanted to know if Jesus were a Galilaean since that was Herod’s jurisdiction. Upon confirmation of that fact, he sent Jesus to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. This actually pleased Herod because he had heard a lot about Jesus and hoped to see Him perform a miracle. Though Herod asked Him many questions, Jesus refused to answer.

The crowd had evidently followed Jesus and continued to strongly press their accusations. Herod and his soldiers evidently decided to play to the crowd by mocking Jesus and dressing Him in a robe befitting a king; then he sent Him back to Pilate.

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

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

**Matthew 27:17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?**

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

Pilate decided to try another tactic. It had evidently become custom for the governor to release a prisoner chosen by the people at the time of Passover. At that time there was in custody a notorious person known as Barabbas who was guilty of insurrection and murder.

*Mark 15:7 “And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.”*

Pilate offered the crowd a choice to release either Barabbas or Jesus, probably thinking that they would surely choose Jesus. He knew that at the root of the

accusations against Jesus was the envy of the religious leaders.

**Matthew 27:19** When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

Matthew also tells us a bit more behind the extra effort Pilate made towards releasing Jesus. His wife had warned him against doing anything that would cause harm to Jesus, "that just man," because she had suffered much in a dream concerning him.

This is another interesting aspect of scripture. It is clear throughout the scripture that God did speak to people through dreams and visions—both the godly (e.g., Abraham, Jacob, and Daniel)...

*Genesis 12:7 "And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him."*

*Genesis 28:12–13 "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed...."*

*Daniel 7:15–16 "I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things."*

...and the ungodly (Abimelech King of Gerar, Pharoah, and Nebuchadnezzar).

*Genesis 20:3 "But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife."*

*Genesis 41:25 "And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do."*

*Daniel 2:26–28 "The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said....But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these...."*

It does not surprise me to be hearing that in these last days there are more and more testimonies of the Lord using dreams and visions once again to bring people to saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. It seems that most of these testimonies are coming from the Muslim world.

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

**Matthew 27:21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.**

The chief priests and elders weren't about to see their plan thwarted. They incited the multitudes to ask for the release of Barabbas and the destruction of Jesus—and their will carried the day.

Adam Clarke made a pertinent observation: "We see here how dangerous wicked priests are in the Church of Christ; when pastors are corrupt, they are capable of inducing their flock to prefer Barabbas to Jesus, the world to God, and the pleasures of sense to the salvation of their souls."

Once again, we get a bit more information from Luke.

*Luke 23:13–20 "And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.) Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them."*

So it wasn't as cut and dried as one would think from reading Matthew's account. Pilate explained to the crowd that though they had brought Jesus to him accusing him of promoting insurrection, he did not believe the evidence supported their accusation; and Herod agreed with him. He had determined, therefore, to punish Jesus and release him. The crowd vehemently cried out that he should release Barabbas and not Jesus. So Pilate tried one more time to get them to release Jesus and failed.

**Matthew 27:22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.**

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

Seeing that he was getting nowhere with the people, Pilate asked what they wanted him to do with Jesus. They immediately cried out for him to be crucified. Once again Pilate tried to get them to declare what evil Jesus had done. The crowd just ignored his question and cried out all the louder for Jesus to be crucified.

**Matthew 27:24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye *to it*.**

**Matthew 27:25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood *be* on us, and**

**on our children.**

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

*Mark 15:15 “And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.”*

Pilate finally realized that he was fighting a losing battle and the only way he could satisfy the crowd was to release Barabbas and deliver Jesus over to be crucified; so he did. However, in order to try and absolve himself of any guilt about the matter, he made a show of washing his hands before the crowd and declaring publicly, “I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye *to it*.” We know, of course, that in no way absolved him of anything; it was in his authority to convict or set free, and he chose to appease the crowd.

Spurgeon spoke wisdom regarding Pilate’s actions: “Oh, the daring of Pilate thus in the sight of God to commit murder and disclaim it. There is a strange mingling of cowardliness and courage about many men; they are afraid of a man, but not afraid of the eternal God who can destroy both body and soul in hell.”

The crowd immediately responded by boldly declaring that the blood of Jesus could be credited to their account and that of their children. Sadly, there have been many Jews persecuted and killed throughout church history for that very reason.

Then Pilate delivered Jesus to the authorities to be scourged and crucified. Research indicates that it was common to scourge someone before crucifixion. David Guzik explains it as follows: “The blows came from a whip with many leather strands, each having sharp pieces of bone or metal at the ends. It reduced the back to raw flesh, and it was not unusual for a criminal to die from a scourging, even before crucifixion.”

**Matthew 27:27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.**

A whole band of Pilate’s soldiers took Jesus to “the common hall,” known as the Praetorium. Coffman offers the following insight: “The place of the mockery was the Praetorium, so named from the barracks of the emperor’s personal guard in Rome, being presumably, therefore, the common hall where the soldiers held their drill and other exercises, adjacent to the governor’s residence and perhaps a part of it.”

Matthew also notes that they took the “whole band” or cohort of soldiers—far more than the quaternion or group of four soldiers required to carry out a crucifixion according to Guzik. I would assume that they gathered the soldiers together to enjoy the entertainment of mocking Jesus.

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

**Matthew 27:29 And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon**

**his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!**

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

**Matthew 27:31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.**

First, they stripped Jesus and put a scarlet robe around Him, placed a crown of thorns on his head and a reed in His right hand. They then bowed on their knees before Him and mocked Him as if praising a king. Then they spit on Him and took the reed from Him to hit Him on the head. After having their fun they took away the robe and dressed Him once again in His own clothes. Then they led Him away to be crucified.

Once again there is a difference in John's account; it seems to be further information that was left out of the other gospel accounts.

*John 19:4–15 “Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.”*

The reason I think it is additional is because John indicates that it happened after the scourging and mocking. He relates that Pilate brought Jesus before the crowd once again while wearing the purple robe and the crown of thorns. I think he was hoping that the sight of Jesus would change their minds. I am reminded of the words of Isaiah.

*Isaiah 52:14 “As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men....”*

In fact, I don't know how anyone witnessing (or reading about) all that happened to Jesus could not make the connection with the words of Isaiah.

*Isaiah 53:3–9 “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not....He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.”*

Instead of pity, the chief priests and officers continued to call for Jesus' crucifixion. Pilate gave up and commanded that they take Him and crucify Him declaring once again that he could find no fault in Jesus. The Jews tried to explain that according to their law, Jesus deserved to die because He claimed to be the Son of God. This frightened Pilate, and he went back in to the judgment hall to talk with Jesus once again; but Jesus refused to talk to him. Pilate then reminded Jesus that he held the power of life and death over Him. Then Jesus answered him. He told Pilate that he only had power over Him as granted from above (implying God the Father in heaven). He also declared that those that had handed Him over to Pilate had the greater sin.

Once again Pilate tried to get the crowd to agree to release Jesus, so they turned on Pilate and threatened him. They declared that if he let Jesus go, he was no friend of Caesar's, since anyone claiming to be a king was against Caesar.

John notes that Pilate finally gave in. He sat down in the judgment seat called Gabbatha and once more presented Jesus as their king. Once more the mob demanded Jesus be crucified while declaring they had no king but Caesar. So Pilate delivered Jesus over to be crucified.

John also notes that it was the sixth hour (noon) on the day of preparation for the Passover feast.

**Matthew 27:32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.**

John notes that Jesus was unable to carry His cross (the crosspiece for the hands) the whole way, and all the gospels note that Simon of Cyrene (located in what is today northeastern Libya) was commandeered to carry the cross for Him the rest of the way.

Once again, Luke gives us more information.

*Luke 23:27–31 “And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green*

*tree, what shall be done in the dry?"*

As they led Jesus out to be crucified, a "great company of people, and of women" followed Him. The women were obviously followers of Jesus that were grieving and mourning all that He was enduring. This did not escape His notice. In spite of His obvious pain and weakness, He turned and spoke to them urging them not to weep for Him, but for themselves and their children. He warned them that times were coming in which it would be better to be barren. It would be a time of such fear and sorrow that men would call out for the hills and mountains to fall on them.

"if they do these things in a green tree...dry" – I liked Adam Clarke's explanation: "This seems to be a proverbial expression, the sense of which is: If they spare not a tree which, by the beauty of its foliage, abundance and excellence of its fruits, deserves to be preserved, then the tree which is dry and withered will surely be cut down. If an innocent man be put to death in the very face of justice, in opposition to all its dictates and decisions, by a people who profess to be governed and directed by Divine laws, what desolation, injustice, and oppression may not be expected, when anarchy and confusion sit in the place where judgment and justice formerly presided?"

Luke also tells us that two other criminals sentenced to death were also part of the procession.

*Luke 23:32 "And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death."*

**Matthew 27:33 ¶ And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,**

Matthew notes that they took Jesus to a particular place to be crucified—Golgotha, the place of a skull. We know from John and the writer to the Hebrews that this was outside the city gates.

*John 19:20 "This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city...." "nigh" = near*

*Hebrews 13:11–12 "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, **suffered without the gate.**" "without" = outside*

I was blessed to get to take a trip to the Holy Land in 1978, and the site we visited that was identified as Calvary was one of the places that I believe was authentic. Even then I could still see the skull in the rocks.

**Matthew 27:34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink.**

Most commentators note that this was an act of mercy meant to dull the pain of

what was to come. A few think that this was just an act of continued cruel treatment at the hands of the Roman soldiers because it was a bitter tasting potion.

Luke informs us that it was after this that Jesus spoke His first words from the cross.

*Luke 23:34 "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."*

Mark notes that it was the third hour or 9:00 a.m. when Jesus was crucified.

*Mark 15:25 "And it was the third hour, and they crucified him."*

This seems to be another discrepancy with John, who, as noted earlier, fixed the time as the sixth hour. I found the following explanation at [www.apologeticspress.org](http://www.apologeticspress.org): "A careful study of the biblical text reveals the fact that John (who wrote near the end of the first century, several years after the writings of the synoptic writers, away from Palestine, and addressing an eclectic, Hellenistic audience) based his calculations on **Roman civil time**. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, on the other hand, computed their allusions to days and hours according to **Jewish time**."

**I found the following information explaining a reference to the blocks of the day at [www.workmenforchrist.org](http://www.workmenforchrist.org):**

Third hour--6am-9am

Sixth hour--9am-12pm

Ninth hour--12pm-3pm

Twelfth hour--3pm-6pm

First Watch--6pm-9pm

Second Watch--9pm-12am

Third Watch--12am-3am

Fourth Watch--3am-6am

If that were the accepted form of reference (and research seems to support it) that would automatically reconcile both accounts.

**The discrepancy could just be as simple as a copyists error in one of the accounts.**

**Matthew 27:35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.**

They crucified Jesus. Three simple words that say so much, especially to the early readers of Matthew's gospel that were very familiar with the cruelty and suffering endured by the condemned. David Guzik describes it as follows: "Beyond the severe pain, the major effect of crucifixion inhibited normal breathing. The weight of the body, pulling down on the arms and shoulders, tended to lock the respiratory muscles in an inhalation state, thus hindering exhalation. The lack of adequate respiration resulted in severe muscle cramps,

which hindered breathing even further. To get a good breath, one had to push against the feet and flex the elbows, pulling from the shoulders. Putting the weight of the body on the feet produced more pain, and flexing the elbows twisted the hands hanging on the nails. Lifting the body for a breath also painfully scraped the back against the rough wooden post. Each effort to get a proper breath was agonizing, exhausting, and led to a sooner death.”

The soldiers parted His garments, casting lots to see who would get them. Matthew once again notes that this was a fulfillment of prophecy.

*Psalms 22:18 “They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.”*

At this point John tells us of the words from Jesus that were directed to His mother Mary and John.

*John 19:25–27 “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.”*

**Matthew 27:36 And sitting down they watched him there;**

**Matthew 27:37 And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

Once Jesus was on the cross, they sat down to watch and wait for the victims to die. Once again John provides more information.

*John 19:19–22 “And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.”*

I think it significant to note that Pilate commanded that this sign be made and mounted. His instructions were specific that it was to say that Jesus was King of the Jews, and to declare it in the three main languages—Hebrew, Greek and Latin. I think it was done intentionally, partly as an insult to the priests for forcing his hand. They tried to get him to change the wording to reflect that Jesus said that he was King of the Jews—but he would not.

**Matthew 27:38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.**

Matthew chooses this point to tell us about the two thieves that were crucified with Jesus—one on His right and one on His left. Mark notes that this was also a fulfillment of prophecy as foretold by Isaiah.

*Mark 15:28 "And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors."*

*Isaiah 53:12 "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."*

**Matthew 27:39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, Matthew 27:40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Matthew 27:41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said, Matthew 27:42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. Matthew 27:43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.**

Travelers on the road nearby shouted insults to our Lord. They mocked and taunted Him. He had declared He had the power to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, so they figured He should be able to save Himself. They challenged Him to come down from the cross if He really was the Son of God. The chief priests, scribes and elders joined the mocking and taunting. They declared that He had saved others, but he could not save Himself. If He was truly the King of Israel, He should come down from the cross; and they would believe Him. He had declared His faith in God, so He should be able to ask Him to deliver Him now—especially if He was the true Son of God.

**Matthew 27:44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.**

Finally, Matthew notes that even the thieves that were crucified with Him joined in the mocking and taunting. Luke informs us that one of the thieves repented of his actions. He rebuked the other thief with words revealing that He believed Jesus to be the Messiah, the King of the Jews.

*Luke 23:39–43 "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."*

By asking the Lord to remember him when he established His kingdom, the thief was in essence asking forgiveness of his sins and declaring his faith in Jesus. Jesus promptly told the repentant man that he would join Jesus in paradise that very day.

Paradise is also known as Abraham's bosom and was the place where the spirits

of the faithful followers of God resided until Jesus rose victorious from the cross and took them to heaven.

**Matthew 27:45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.**

Matthew, Mark and Luke all detail that darkness covered the land from the sixth hour (noon) until the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.), the last three hours that Jesus was on the cross. Coffman offers the following insight: "This could not have been an eclipse, because: (1) it came at Passover, always held at the time of the full moon when an eclipse is impossible, and (2) it was too long in duration, lasting three hours, as contrasted with the very longest of eclipses which last less than an hour, and usually only a very few minutes."

Coffman also notes that Pontius Pilate sent a report to Tiberius, the emperor of Rome, and confirmed this phenomena that said: "And when he had been crucified, there was darkness over the whole earth, the sun having been completely hidden, and the heaven appearing dark, so that the stars appeared, but had at the same time their brightness darkened, as I suppose your reverence is not ignorant of, because in all the world they lighted lamps from the sixth hour until evening. And the moon, being like blood, did not shine the whole night, and yet she happened to be at the full."

**Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**

**Matthew 27:47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias.**

Towards the end of that final hour, Jesus cried out in His agony to the Father—"My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" Some that heard Him thought that He was crying out to Elijah.

That cry, I believe, revealed the great agony that prompted Jesus' prayer in the garden before His arrest. He had never ever been separated from the Father or experienced broken fellowship with Him in any way. It was this separation, caused when Jesus became my sin and yours, that caused Jesus the greatest agony.

*2 Corinthians 5:21 "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*

**Matthew 27:48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.**

**Matthew 27:49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.**

John tells us that Jesus also said He was thirsty.

*John 19:28 "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst."*

Upon hearing this, someone ran to soak sponge with vinegar and raised it to Jesus to drink.

The NIV Commentary notes that verse 49 was in reference to a tradition that Elijah "would come and rescue the righteous in their distress." Other commentators believe this was yet another mocking reference to the fact that Malachi had declared Elijah would come before the Messiah was recognized, so where was he?

**Matthew 27:50 ¶ Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.**

Once again, Luke and John tell us a bit more.

*Luke 23:46 "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."*

*John 19:30 "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."*

The main point is that Jesus was even in control of the moment of His death. It was no accident that it occurred at the same time they were sacrificing the Passover lambs. Josephus tells us that these lambs were sacrificed between 3:00-5:00 p.m. on the day of preparation.

Note also that the phrase "It is finished" is one word in the Greek that means to discharge a debt and to make an end. Jesus paid the debt for my / our sin and brought an end to the sting of death.

*Hebrews 2:9 "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.... Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."*

*1 Corinthians 15:55-57 "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

**Matthew 27:51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;**

**Matthew 27:52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,**

**Matthew 27:53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.**

When Jesus died, the veil of the temple that marked the entrance to the holy of holies in the temple was torn from the top to the bottom, and there was an earthquake. The tearing of the veil signified that the presence of God could now be accessed through faith in Jesus, our eternal High Priest, as noted by the writer to the Hebrews.

*Hebrews 10:19–22 “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith....”*

Matthew is the only gospel writer that tells us about saints resurrecting from the grave and appearing to many in Jerusalem after the resurrection of Jesus. Why he includes that note at this point is a puzzle to me. JFB posits that the graves were probably opened by the earthquake in preparation for the resurrection of the saints immediately following the resurrection of Jesus.

**Matthew 27:54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.**

At least one of the Roman soldiers glorified God by declaring that Jesus was surely an innocent man, and at least some of the people smote their breast in recognition of that same truth—some even admitting that He must have been the Son of God.

**Matthew 27:55 And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:**

**Matthew 27:56 Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children.**

Matthew also notes that though all Jesus’ disciples deserted Him except John, many of the women that followed Him and ministered to Him stayed with Him to the bitter end. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children—James and John. Mark also identifies Salome; and John includes Mary the mother of Jesus, her sister (which seems to be Salome), and Mary wife of Cleopas as well as Mary Magdalene. (See journal for John 1:9).

At this point John provides further detail.

*John 19:31–34 “The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.”*

John notes that the Jews begged Pilate to have the soldiers break the legs of the men to speed up their death so that burial could be accomplished before the beginning of the Passover Sabbath. When they came to Jesus, however, they saw that He was already dead and did not break His legs; but they pierced His side to confirm it. Blood and water came out when He was pierced giving evidence of a ruptured heart.

**Matthew 27:57 ¶ When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:**

**Matthew 27:58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.**

**Matthew 27:59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,**

**Matthew 27:60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.**

Evening was approaching and all the gospel writers tell us that Joseph of Arimathea begged Pilate to let him handle the burial of Jesus. Matthew notes that Joseph was a rich man, and Mark tells us that he was a member of the Council or Sanhedrin.

*Mark 15:43 "Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God...."*

*"counselor" = a councillor or member of the Jewish Sanhedrin*

He took Jesus' body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb and rolled a great stone to close the entrance to the tomb. Once again John tells us a bit more. We learn that Nicodemus helped Joseph and brought "an hundred pound weight" of myrrh and aloes that they wound around Jesus with the linen cloths in accordance with Jewish custom. John also notes that the tomb was near the garden and the place of crucifixion.

*John 19:39-40 "And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand."*

Once again I am reminded of the words of Isaiah.

*Isaiah 53:9 "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death...."*

**Matthew 27:61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.**

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses (per Mark) kept watch to see

where Jesus was buried.

**Matthew 27:62** Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

**Matthew 27:63** Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

**Matthew 27:64** Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

**Matthew 27:65** Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make *it* as sure as ye can.

**Matthew 27:66** So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

The next day the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate and asked him to secure the tomb. They explained that Jesus had declared that he would arise from the grave after three days, and they didn't want His disciples to come and steal His body and tell the people that Jesus had risen from the dead. If they were to do that, it would make things worse than before He was executed. Pilate gave them the authority to make the tomb secure. He noted that they had already been assigned a "watch" of soldiers, and they could be assigned to guard the tomb. They also sealed the tomb as further surety against tampering. David Guzik adds the following insight.

"The seal was a rope, overlapping the width of the stone covering the entrance to the tomb. On either side of the doorway, there was a glob of wax securing the rope over the stone. You could not move the rock without breaking the seal. It was important that the guards witness the sealing, because they were responsible for whatever was being sealed. These Roman guards would watch carefully as the stone was sealed, because they knew their careers, and perhaps their lives, were on the line. The Roman seal carried legal authority. It was more than yellow tape barricading a modern crime scene; to break a Roman seal was to defy Roman authority. That stone was secured by the authority of the Roman Empire."