



Study Guide: Matthew – Chapter 27

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Matthew Chapter 27 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Matthew chapter 27 serves as the climactic moment in the Gospel narrative, detailing the trial, crucifixion, death, and burial of Jesus Christ. This chapter transitions the story from Jesus' public ministry and teachings to the fulfillment of His sacrificial mission. Readers should watch for the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, the responses of various characters to Jesus' suffering, and the theological significance of His death as the Messiah. The chapter's vivid portrayal of events invites reflection on the cost of redemption and the sovereignty of God even in apparent tragedy.

Context

Immediately preceding chapter 27, Jesus has been arrested, interrogated, and rejected by both Jewish and Roman authorities. The narrative shifts from Jesus' teachings and miracles to His passion. The historical context is set during the Passover festival in Jerusalem, a time charged with religious and political tension. Key figures include Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor; Judas Iscariot, the betrayer; the chief priests and elders who orchestrate Jesus' condemnation; and the crowds who influence the judicial outcome. This chapter unfolds within the covenantal framework of God's promise to send a suffering servant who would atone for sin, fulfilling messianic prophecies and inaugurating a new covenant through His death.

Outline

The chapter begins with the Jewish leaders delivering Jesus to Pilate and Judas' remorseful suicide, setting the stage for the Roman trial. The narrative then moves into Jesus' interrogation by Pilate, including the crowd's demand for Barabbas and the soldiers' mocking of Jesus as King of the Jews. Following this, the crucifixion is described in detail, highlighting Jesus' suffering, the reactions of bystanders, and the supernatural events surrounding His death. The chapter concludes with Jesus' burial by Joseph of Arimathea.



and the guarding of the tomb, preparing readers for the resurrection account.

Verse-by-Verse Study

Verses 1–3: The chief priests and elders conspire to put Jesus to death, bringing Him before Pilate. Judas, overwhelmed by guilt, returns the thirty pieces of silver and takes his own life, illustrating the tragic consequences of betrayal.

Verses 4–10: The chief priests use Judas’ betrayal money to buy the potter’s field, fulfilling prophecy. Pilate questions Jesus, but finds no guilt, highlighting the innocence of Christ despite the accusations.

Verses 11–14: Jesus remains mostly silent before Pilate, fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy about the suffering servant who does not open His mouth in defense.

Verses 15–26: Pilate offers to release Jesus or Barabbas, but the crowd chooses Barabbas, influenced by the chief priests. Pilate ultimately condemns Jesus to crucifixion, symbolizing the rejection of the true King by the people.

Verses 27–31: Roman soldiers mock Jesus, dressing Him in a scarlet robe and crowning Him with thorns, a cruel parody of kingship that fulfills messianic irony.

Verses 32–44: Jesus is led to Golgotha and crucified between two criminals. Various groups mock Him, but Jesus’ words reveal His innocence and mission. The inscription “King of the Jews” is placed above Him, underscoring the political and spiritual dimensions of His death.

Verses 45–56: Darkness covers the land, and Jesus cries out before dying. The temple veil is torn, symbolizing access to God through Christ’s sacrifice. The centurion and others recognize Jesus as the Son of God, marking a turning point in the narrative.

Verses 57–61: Joseph of Arimathea requests Jesus’ body and lays it in his own new tomb, fulfilling burial customs and prophecy. The chapter notes the presence of women who had followed Jesus, emphasizing faithful witnesses.

Verses 62–66: The chief priests and Pharisees secure the tomb with guards and a seal, attempting to prevent any claim of resurrection. This sets the stage for the subsequent resurrection narrative and highlights the authorities’ fear of Jesus’ influence.

Key Themes



One key theme is the fulfillment of prophecy, as Matthew repeatedly connects events to Old Testament predictions, affirming Jesus as the Messiah. Another theme is the innocence and unjust suffering of Christ, emphasizing His role as the sacrificial Lamb. The theme of rejection by both religious leaders and the people underscores the cost of discipleship and the hardness of human hearts. Additionally, the tearing of the temple veil symbolizes the new access to God made possible through Jesus' death. Finally, the chapter highlights divine sovereignty amid human injustice, showing that God's redemptive plan unfolds even through suffering and apparent defeat.

Cross-References

Isaiah 53 provides a prophetic backdrop for Jesus' suffering and silence during His trial, illuminating His role as the suffering servant. Psalm 22 echoes in Jesus' cries of abandonment on the cross, deepening understanding of His anguish and trust in God. The tearing of the temple veil recalls the Old Testament tabernacle system and the separation between God and humanity, which is removed through Christ's sacrifice (Exodus 26:31-33). The account of Barabbas' release parallels the substitutionary nature of Jesus' death, reminiscent of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12). Lastly, the recognition of Jesus as Son of God by the centurion connects to the divine affirmation found in earlier chapters, confirming His identity (Matthew 3:17).

Application

Matthew 27 challenges modern disciples to embrace the cost of following Christ, recognizing that faith may involve rejection and suffering. Believers are called to trust in God's sovereign plan even when circumstances seem unjust or painful. The chapter encourages reflection on the depth of Jesus' love and sacrifice, inspiring gratitude and commitment. It also invites believers to stand firm in witness, like the women who remained faithful despite danger. The tearing of the temple veil reminds Christians that through Jesus, they have direct access to God, encouraging boldness in prayer and worship. Finally, the chapter warns against the dangers of hypocrisy and betrayal, urging integrity and repentance in the Christian walk.

Summary

Matthew 27 presents the pivotal events of Jesus' trial, crucifixion, and burial, weaving together prophecy fulfillment, human rejection, and divine purpose. The chapter moves from the conspiracy of religious leaders and Judas' despair to Pilate's reluctant judgment



and the soldiers' mockery, culminating in Jesus' sacrificial death and burial. Through supernatural signs and the responses of witnesses, the narrative reveals the cosmic significance of Christ's passion. This chapter sets the foundation for the resurrection, emphasizing that God's redemptive plan triumphs through apparent defeat, inviting readers into a deeper understanding of Jesus as the Messiah and Savior.