



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew

Chapter 27

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Introduction



Chapter Outlines:

- The events leading to the crucifixion
- The cruelty and insult Jesus suffered prior to His actual death



An Overview

- Prevented by law from carrying out execution, the religious leaders sent Jesus to Pilate who condemned Him to be crucified (1-2,10-31)
- Meanwhile, Judas returned the betrayal money and hanged himself (3-9)
- Crucified along with two thieves, Jesus *yielded up His spirit* after six hours (32-56)
- His body was buried in Joseph's tomb, secured by Roman guards (57-66)

Jesus Handed Over to Pontius Pilate (27:1-2)



- The chief priests, with the elders and scribes took counsel how they might persuade the governor to put Him to death
- Caiphas, in the morning, called a full council of the Sanhedrim
- They again put the question to Jesus, and commanded Him to tell them if he were *the Christ*, and *the Son of God*? He said He was (Lk 22:70)
- The purpose was to confirm the previous decision, and probably to determine on the next step to be taken

Jesus Handed Over to Pontius Pilate (27:1-2)



- It ended, as the next verse shows, in sending our Lord to Pilate, and leaving to him the responsibility of punishing
- The power of death being taken from them, they did not dare to exercise it, at least, without permission from the Roman governor
- It was a festival day, they feared an uproar among the people
- They wanted Him die a more infamous death on the cross; otherwise they might perhaps have stoned Him to death, as they afterwards did St. Stephen

Jesus Handed Over to Pontius Pilate (27:1-2)



- They did not want to turn Him into a martyr
- They needed the Roman Empire to condemn Him as a common criminal and execute Him to discredit Him with the people
- All attend to repress by their authority the people, to engage Pilate to pronounce sooner the sentence, when he saw that He was condemned by the unanimous voice of the Sanhedrim, and to hinder any one from rising in His defense
- In the council Jesus was free; but now all the council rising up, as appears from St. Luke, and binding him, as one certainly guilty of death, they conduct Him to Pilate

Jesus Handed Over to Pontius Pilate (27:1-2)



- Pontius Pilate was a member of the Roman equestrian class and had ruled Judea as the Roman Prefect since 26 A.D.
- He was both military and civil commander, usually dwelt at Caesarea, but came up to Jerusalem at the Passover feasts to preserve order
- He was to become the second longest ruling governor of the province, being relieved of his duties in 36 A.D.

Judas Hangs Himself (27:3-10)



- Suddenly Judas seems to regret his actions and is concerned about the consequences of what he has done in condemning an innocent man and how it might affect his own life
- He tries to return the money, but he does not plead for Jesus' life
- How tragic that he does not understand that the remedy for his sin is confession and penance
- He needed to have faith in Christ, as God, as a redeemer, as the sole justifier from sin
- He did not have hopes of pardon or forgiveness

Judas Hangs Himself (27:3-10)



- The word used in the Greek did not mean repent as the word used for repent in Acts 2:38 and elsewhere
- But one that means, rather, remorse
- The first, metanoeo, means to change the mind or purpose; the other, metamellomai, to carry a burden of sorrow over the past
- One promises a change in the future; the other is born of despair
- Peter repented; Judas regretted

Judas Hangs Himself (27:3-10)



- Both Judas and Peter have betrayed Christ, but Peter will return to Jesus and will be strengthened by his experience
- At the end of his life, Peter will die for Christ just as he promised Jesus he would the night of the Last Supper (Mk 14:31)
- Judas, however, hung himself in his despair (Mt 27:5) and later his rotting body fell and burst open (Acts 1:18-19)
- If the unhappy man had sought true repentance, and observed due moderation in it, (by avoiding both extremes, presumption and despair) he might have heard a forgiving Master speaking to him these consoling words: *I will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may be converted and still live.* (Origen)

Judas Hangs Himself (27:3-10)



- The Jewish rulers concerned themselves not in the slightest concerning the innocence or guilt of Christ; they cared only to secure His death
- These men who have Jesus blood on their hands are worried about putting the money into the Temple treasury and purchase some land from a potter as a grave yard for foreigners who die in Jerusalem

Judas Hangs Himself (27:3-10)



- *Bury strangers*, The Pharisees wanted to show their charity to strangers
- However, their intention, according to St. Jerome, was to disgrace Jesus; thus to keep alive in the minds of the people, that He was sold by one of His own disciples, and delivered up to a disgraceful death
- In vain do the wicked attempt to hide themselves
- God makes them instrumental in discovering their own wickedness

Judas Hangs Himself (27:3-10)



- Judas, by returning the money, and the priests, by laying it out, raise to themselves an eternal monument - the one of his deceit, the others of their lying, and both of the innocence of Jesus Christ
- The very money for which the blessed Jesus was sold becomes submissive to the purpose of mercy and kindness!
- The bodies of strangers have a place of rest in the field purchased by the price at which His life was valued, and the souls of strangers and foreigners have a place of rest and refuge in His blood which was shed as a ransom price for the salvation of the whole world

Judas Hangs Himself (27:3-10)



- This is the last of the ten "fulfillment statements" in St. Matthew's Gospel:
 1. Jesus childhood: 1:23; 2:15, 17-18, 23
 2. Galilean ministry: 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35
 3. Jesus' last week in Jerusalem: 21:4-5; 27:9-10
- It is difficult to know which Old Testament passage St. Matthew is referring to in verses 9-10

Judas Hangs Himself (27:3-10)



- It may be that his reference is to two Old Testament passages, Zechariah 11:12-13 and Jeremiah 19:11
- Some judge it to have been in some writing of Jeremiah, now lost; as St. Jerome says he found it in a writing of Jeremiah, which was not canonical
- Others assume, that Zacharias had also the name of Jeremiah

Judas Hangs Himself (27:3-10)



- Others, that St. Matthew neither put Jeremiah nor Zacharias, but only *of the prophet*: and that the name of Jeremiah had crept into the text
- The evangelist cites not the words, but the sense of the prophet, who was ordered to cast the pieces into the house of the Lord, and to *cast them to the potter*, which became true by the fact of Judas, who cast them into the temple: and with them was purchased *the potter's field*. *The price of him that was prized*

Jesus Faces Pilate (27:11-14)



- Many things are omitted by St. Matthew, in the account of this trial, which are recorded by the other evangelists
- A much more full account is found in John 18:28-40
- It was probably about seven a.m. that they presented themselves to Pilate, hoping that he would order their condemned prisoner to death without inquiry, but on his demand for charges they accuse Jesus of seeking to make himself King of the Jews



Jesus Faces Pilate (27:11-14)

- The Accusations Against Jesus in His Trial before Pilate
The chief priests accused him of many things, Mark 15:3
 1. He claims to be King of the Jews Matthew 27:11; Luke 23:2; John 18:33
 2. He is misleading the people by opposing the payment of taxes to Caesar Luke 23:2
 3. He claims to be the Jewish Messiah Luke 23:2
 4. He claims to be the Son of God and according to Jewish law He ought to die John 19:7
 5. He is inciting the people to rebel with His teaching Luke 23:5,14
 6. He opposes Caesar John 19:12



Jesus Faces Pilate (27:11-14)

- The charge of claiming to be King of the Jews Matthew 27:11; Luke 23:2; John 18:33 causes Pilate to ask: *Are You the King of the Jews?*
- Jesus did not attempt to defend Himself, again a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:7
- Jesus responds "You say so" as He also responded in 26:25 to Judas and in verse 64 to Caiaphas



Jesus Faces Pilate (27:11-14)

- *The governor marveled greatly* at Jesus' patience and silence
- His impressive silence moved Pilate deeply
- Pilate saw very well that it was *envy* that excited the Jewish priests against Him
- Why? Apparently at first glance he saw that the man before him was not likely to be a pretender to royalty in any sense that he need trouble himself about

Taking the Place of Barabbas (27:15-26)



- It is not known when the practice of releasing a prisoner at the Passover began, nor whether it was primarily a Jewish or a Roman one
- In John 18:40 we are told that Barabbas is a revolutionary and Mark says he was both a revolutionary and a murderer (Mk 15:7)
- Barabbas, The word means son of a father
- Some have made him a type of the guilty human race which is released from punishment by the substitution of the innocent Christ

Taking the Place of Barabbas (27:15-26)



- Pilate expected to release one to the people
- This was his last attempt to shift off from himself the dreaded burden of responsibility
- He knew that Jesus, though condemned by the chief priests, was yet popular among the people
- He therefore attempted in this manner to rescue Him from the hands of the priests, and expected that the people would prefer Him to an hateful and infamous robber and murderer
- Pilate found their real motive in “envy”—fear of the loss of influence and power, if the work of the new Teacher was to continue

Taking the Place of Barabbas (27:15-26)



- The chair of judgment was placed upon a Mosaic foundation, and was necessary to the official action of any regional ruler
- Dreams were considered as indications of the divine will, and among the Romans and Greeks, as well as the Jews, great reliance was placed on them
- This dream was sent by God that there might be a public testimony from the Gentiles woman, of the justice and innocence of Christ
- On this sad day the voice of a Gentile woman was the only one that interceded for Christ

Taking the Place of Barabbas (27:15-26)



- *Ask for Barabbas*, Who had raised an revolution and committed murder
- *and destroy Jesus*, whose voice was never heard in their streets, and who had, during the space of three years and a half, gone about tireless, from village to village, instructing the ignorant, healing the diseased, and raising the dead
- The people were greatly under the influence of the priests
- Pilate wishing on this occasion to show the Jews the enormity of their crime, again puts the question, *which of the two do you want me to release to you?*

Taking the Place of Barabbas (27:15-26)



- *They said, Barabbas,* A little before they all hailed Him as the Son of David, and acknowledged Him as a gift from God; now they prefer a murderer to Him
- The Jewish nation had not only rejected its Messiah, but chosen a robber instead

Taking the Place of Barabbas (27:15-26)



- It was really Pilate's wish to release Christ
- He plainly saw that there was nothing laid to His charge for which, consistently with the Roman laws, he could condemn Him
- *Let Him be crucified*, which was a Roman punishment, inflicted on the meanest and worst of men; as wicked servants, thieves, robbers, and murderers
- It was not only a torturing and painful death, but a very shameful, humiliating, and an accursed one
- They could not answer Pilate's question, *What evil has He done?*

Taking the Place of Barabbas (27:15-26)



- He had done nothing, and they knew He had done nothing; but they are determined on His death
- St. Luke informs us that Pilate put this question to them "three times," so anxious was he to release Him
- He had, however, lost his power when he began to negotiate with a mob
- They, utterly unreasonable, only demand the move fervently that Jesus be crucified

Taking the Place of Barabbas (27:15-26)



- The more they saw Pilate inclined to favor Him, and pleaded for Him, and attested His innocence; the more loud, outrageous, and urgent they were to have Him crucified
- It was a Roman officials' duty to keep order in the Provinces and bring in the taxes that kept the empire alive
- As an act of self preservation, Pilate submits to the verdict of the crowd but in a symbolic act he washes his hands as a sign that he does not acknowledge that Jesus deserves to die

Taking the Place of Barabbas (27:15-26)



- The Jews clearly understood Pilate's symbolic act in protesting Jesus' innocence (Deut 21:6-9; Ps 26:6-11; Isa 1:15-17)
- *Washed his hands*, Pilate probably chose it, partly as a relief to his own conscience, partly to satisfy his wife, partly as a last appeal of the most intense and dramatic kind to the feelings of the priests and people

Taking the Place of Barabbas (27:15-26)



- *His blood be on us and on our children*, No more fearful prayer is recorded in the history of mankind; and a natural feeling has led men to see its fulfillment in the subsequent shame and misery that were for centuries the portion of the Jewish people
- Pilate was a subject of the Roman empire; and by the Roman law it was ordained, that whoever was condemned to the cross, should previously suffer the punishment of scourging
- He wished also by this apparent severity to soften the minds of the Jews, content their rigid hostility, and hoping that they would in the end consent to the liberation of Jesus

The Soldiers Mock Jesus (27:27-31)



- The trial of Jesus had taken place outside of the palace
- The Jews would not enter John 18:28
- A Roman, *garrison*, cohort properly consisted of 600 men
- St. Matthew may not intend to suggest 600 men gathered around Jesus but rather that all those men of a particular cohort who were present in the hall gathered around Jesus to torment Him
- Jesus, being condemned, was led by the soldiers away from the Jews "within" the palace
- Previous to the scourging all His clothes had been pulled off

The Soldiers Mock Jesus (27:27-31)



- They accordingly put on His under garments again, and instead of the upper robes they arrayed Him in a red robe, the ordinary military cloak like a king since He was charged with rebellion against the empire by claiming to be "King of the Jews" (Mt 27:29,37)
- John and Mark mention a purple robe
- These profane and disrespectful soldiers dress Jesus in this array to make an additional mockery of Him, this one who was indeed a true King

The Soldiers Mock Jesus (27:27-31)



- In carrying out their mockery, the soldiers next supply a regal crown
- Palestine was a country thickly set with brambles and thorn-growing bushes
- They would have no difficulty in finding plants to suit their cruel purpose
- Having thus arrayed him, in royal robe, crown of thorns, and mock staff, they kneel before Him and ridicule Him

The Soldiers Mock Jesus (27:27-31)



- *They spit upon Him*, This was a token of the deepest disrespect and insult
- They tore the mock staff from His hands, and one after the other, as they passed, struck Him with it on the head, at every blow driving the thorns deeper into His flesh
- St Luke has several particulars of what happened on the way to Golgotha, omitted in the other Gospels i.e., the great company of people and of women who followed Him; the touching address of Jesus to the women; the last warning of the coming sorrows; the leading of two malefactors with Him (Lk 23:27-32)

The Soldiers Mock Jesus (27:27-31)



- St. John gives the account of Pilate's last attempt to rescue the "just Man" whom he had unjustly condemned (Jn 19:4-5)
- He showed the silent Sufferer in the mock symbol of royalty, as if asking them, Is not this enough?
- The cries of "Crucify Him!" were but redoubled, and once again the cowardly judge took his place in the official chair, and passed the final sentence
- Isaiah 53:1-12 is the prophecy of God's suffering and it describes Christ's Passion

The King on a Cross (27:32-44)



- It was the custom for men condemned to die by crucifixion to carry their cross, which Jesus did through the city
- Cyrene was a city of Libya, in Africa, lying west of Egypt
- There were many Jews there, and they were in the habit, like others, of going frequently to Jerusalem
- *They compelled*, The act implied that our Lord was sinking beneath the burden, and that the soldiers began to fear that He might die before they reached the place of execution
- St. Luke seems to show that Simon only bore the after part of the cross, the lighter end, which had been dragging on the ground (Lk 23:26)

The King on a Cross (27:32-44)



- Golgotha is the Aramaic name of the crucifixion site, which was called gulgults meaning skull, wrote in Greek letters
- The identification of the crucifixion site as Golgotha is found in Matthew 27:33, Mark 15:22 and John 19:17
- St. Luke gives the name of the site as *Kranion* (Lk 23:33), the Greek word for "skull"
- From its Latin equivalent, calvaria, comes the English word Calvary, which occurs in the English New Testament only in Luke, where it should be translated a skull (Lk 23:33)
- Matthew 27:32 and Mark 15:21 explicitly state the site lies outside the city; the Gospel of John says it is near the city (Jn 19:20)

The King on a Cross (27:32-44)



- Several writers believe it was called that, from Adam's skull, whom they guess to have been buried there
- Some also say that a part of this mountain was called *Moria*, the place where Abraham was ready to have sacrificed his son Isaac
- Some Greek copies, translate *vinegar*; but other Greek copies have *wine*
- In St. Mark all copies, without exception, have *wine mixed with myrrh*
- Perhaps *myrrh*, from its bitterness, is here called *gall*

The King on a Cross (27:32-44)



- Gall is a bitter discharge from the liver or the gall bladder, but it can also refer to any bitter substance
- Wine mixed with myrrh was prepared to reduce the pain of those that were to die a violent death (Mk 15:23)
- The Roman soldiers continued their abuse of Jesus by mixing gall into the treated wine
- St. Matthew includes this information may be an allusion to the fulfillment of Psalms 69:21
- Jesus will be given cheap wine/vinegar to drink just before He surrenders His life (Mt 27:48; Jn 19:28-30)

The King on a Cross (27:32-44)



- Our Savior tasted it, but would not drink it
- He refused not to taste the bitterness, but would not take what might lessen His suffering
- The purpose to drink the cup which His Father had given Him to the last drop and chose to tread the winepress alone

The King on a Cross (27:32-44)



- To "*crucify*" means the act of nailing or tying to a cross
- Crucifying was the most dreadful, terrible and shameful death known
- For the Jews to demand this of the Romans shows the intensity of their hate to Jesus
- *divided His garments*, This was considered the greatest shame

The King on a Cross (27:32-44)



- It was never done with any but the most vile and worthless wretches
- This they did to our blessed Savior; a punishment they did not think the two thieves deserving of. (St. Chrysostom)
- Jesus' tunic was seamlessly woven from one piece of cloth
- As it would have been spoiled by dividing it, the soldiers decided to cast lots for it, thus fulfilling another prophecy (Ps 22:18)

The King on a Cross (27:32-44)



- It was the soldiers duty to remain by the cross until the execution was ended by death
- *Sitting down*, A strange picture; and a strange thing to think of, how they were so close to the great event in the world's history, and had to stare at it for three or four hours, and never saw anything!
- It was a common Roman practice to post the crime for which a person was being executed and the name of the condemned man
- Pilate himself ordered the wording of the sign, much to the displeasure of the chief priests

The King on a Cross (27:32-44)



- The title was written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek and could be easily read by the crowds, Luke 23:38
- This title was nailed over the head of our Redeemer, by divine Providence:
 - a. that the Jews might still be convinced
 - b. that with all their opposition, they must acknowledge Him for their King, whom they had condemned to so cruel a death
 - c. and that so far from lessening His empire and regal power, they rather increased it

The King on a Cross (27:32-44)



- All four Gospels agree that Jesus was crucified between two criminals (Mk 15:27; Lk 23:33; Jn 19:18)
- Our Lord was numbered among transgressors, according to the prophetic declaration, Isaiah 53:12
- Jesus was in the middle of the two criminals as if He had been the greatest malefactor of the three



The King on a Cross (27:32-44)

- *Those who passed by*, The people going in and out of the city, on the thoroughfare near the place of crucifixion
- They spoke all manner of evil of Him they could think of to which He answered not a word
- *wagging their heads*; in mockery of Him, and as rejoicing in His misery, Isaiah 37:22
- These actions by Jesus' tormentors are also described in Psalm 22:8-9

The King on a Cross (27:32-44)



- *You who destroy the temple*, is very remarkable that now, while this was receiving its real fulfillment, it should be made more public and more impressive by the insulting proclamation of His enemies
- Hence the importance attached to it after the resurrection (Jn 2:22)
- As Satan before them, they put an "if" upon the Sonship of Christ
- But His Sonship was not to be declared by His coming down from the cross, which He could have easily achieved, but by a much greater instance of power, by His resurrection from the dead



The King on a Cross (27:32-44)

- *He saved others*, This may be ironical, but if Christ had saved Himself He could not have saved others
- Pilate having written on the inscription set upon the cross, that Christ was the king of Israel, the Jews tried to persuade him to remove or alter it; but Pilate gave them for answer, according to St. John, "*what I have written, I have written.*"



The King on a Cross (27:32-44)

- The Jews, therefore, wishing to show that He was not their king, said with insulting scorn, *If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him*
- Falsehood and deceit are stamped upon these words of the Jewish priests
- He rose again, and they did not believe

The King on a Cross (27:32-44)



- It seems hardly conceivable that priests and scribes could thus have quoted the very words of Psalm 22:8
- These words are a wonderful confirmation of the truth of that Psalm and prophecy belonging to Him
- *Even the robbers*, only one of them, the other believed in Jesus
Luke 23:39
- His profession of faith in Jesus is rewarded by Jesus' promise of eternal salvation

The King on a Cross (27:32-44)



- The account in Luke may, however, easily be reconciled with that in Matthew by supposing that "at first both" of them reviled the Savior, and that it is of this fact that Matthew speaks
- Afterward one of them relented and became penitent perhaps from witnessing the patient sufferings of Christ
- It is of this one particularly that Luke speaks
- St. Luke records that Jesus prayed for His persecutors from the Cross, Luke 23:34
- This is the first of seven statements Jesus will make from the altar of the Cross
- Two of His statements are quotations from the Psalms of David

Jesus Dies on the Cross (27:45-56)



- Some believe that here was a darkness in Jerusalem, and over all Judea; and probably over all the people among whom Christ had for more than three years preached the everlasting Gospel
- But many suppose the darkness was over the whole world, and think there is sufficient evidence of this in ancient authors
- This darkness was supernatural and the evident from this is that it happened during the Passover, which was celebrated only at the full moon, a time in which it was impossible for the sun to be eclipsed

Jesus Dies on the Cross (27:45-56)



- This miraculous darkness should have caused the enemies of Christ to understand that He was the light of the world, and that because they did not walk in it, it was now taken away from them
- *And about the ninth hour, Or three o'clock in the afternoon,* which was about the time of the slaying and offering of the daily sacrifice, which was an eminent type of Christ

Jesus Dies on the Cross (27:45-56)



- *My God! My God! why have You forsaken me*, These words are quoted by our Lord from Psalm 22:1
- It is Jesus' fourth statement from the Cross
- These words are recorded by the first two Gospels only
- St. Matthew records Jesus' statement in Hebrew so it may draw His Jewish audience to the passage in the Hebrew Scriptures of Psalm 22:1
- St. Mark records Jesus' statement in the Aramaic that Jesus' would have spoken aloud (Mk 15:34)

Jesus Dies on the Cross (27:45-56)



- Jesus' quote from this Psalm is not as some have wrongly interpreted a cry of utter despair and hopelessness; far from it
- If one reads the entire Psalm 22, David's cry of distress ends in a shout of joy and his confidence that God has heard his prayer, will rescue him from his enemies, and future generations will be told of his deliverance
- He quote the words in order to direct the thoughts of men to the great Messianic prophecy which the Psalm contained
- How was it possible for the Son of Man to feel for one moment that sense of abandonment?

Jesus Dies on the Cross (27:45-56)



- Some suppose that the divinity had now departed from Christ
- But this is by no means to be admitted, as it would deprive His sacrifice of its infinite merit, and consequently leave the sin of the world without an atonement
- These words can only express the idea that He was treading the wine-press alone
- Our Lord as man was to taste death in all its bitterness for every man Hebrew 2:9
- He could not have tasted it had His soul been throughout in full undisturbed enjoyment of the presence of the Father

Jesus Dies on the Cross (27:45-56)



- As he hung on the cross, made sin for us (2 Cor 5:21), He was left to struggle without a sense of His Father's presence
- These words were uttered with an entire confidence, and an assurance in the presence and assistance of God, appears by what He presently added, recommending His spirit into the hands of His Father

Jesus Dies on the Cross (27:45-56)



- The crowd mistook the words *Eloi, my God*, for the name of the prophet Elijah
- Elijah was daily expected to appear as the forerunner of the Messiah, whose arrival was generally supposed to be at hand
Malachi 4:5; Matthew 2:2-4; 17:10-12
- The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and John record that Jesus was given a final drink of wine
- However, only the Gospel of John records that it is at this time that Jesus utters the words *I thirst* John 19:28

Jesus Dies on the Cross (27:45-56)



- *Sour wine*, This was the sour wine used by the soldiers; not mixed with myrrh, as in the case of the drink Jesus had refused before crucifixion
- This appears also to have been done in mercy, to alleviate his sufferings, Matthew 27:34

Jesus Dies on the Cross (27:45-56)



- *Let Him alone*, may mean do not assist Him; do not give the drink to Him
- let us see whether Elias will come to save Him
- *cried out again with a loud voice, "It is finished,"* John 19:30
- In this our Redeemer confirms what He had said to Pilate; *I have the power to lay down my life, and I have the power to take it up again*: for His shout at the very hour of the evening sacrifice demonstrates that by the force of His will He gave up His Spirit

Jesus Dies on the Cross (27:45-56)



- Jesus' self-sacrificial death and willingness to give up His Spirit wasn't a defeat - it was a victory
- It is not said that He hung on the cross till He died through pain and agony
- Nor is it said that his bones were broken, the sooner to put him out of pain, and to hasten His death
- But that He Himself dismissed the soul, that He might thus become, not a forced sacrifice, but a free-will offering for sin

Jesus Dies on the Cross (27:45-56)



- As there were in the temple two parts of the sanctuary, so there were two veils, or partition walls
- The first sanctuary, called the *holy*, was separated by a veil from that part of the temple called *the court of the Israelites*
- Into this outward sanctuary, called the *holy*, entered every day the priests that were in office
- The second interior sanctuary, called *the holy of holies*, was also separated from the outward sanctuary by another veil

Jesus Dies on the Cross (27:45-56)



- And into this holy of holies, no one was to enter except the high priest once a-year
- The Holy of Holies was where God's presence resided in the midst of His people and a sacred space in which the heavenly and earthly Sanctuaries were linked (Ex 25:8,40; 26:31-35; 35:12; 39:34; Lev 24:3; 2 Chron 3:14)
- The inner veil, though made of the richest and strongest tapestry, was rent in two from the top to the bottom

Jesus Dies on the Cross (27:45-56)



- It was to signify, that the ceremonies of the ancient law were to be abolished by the law of Christ
- All might henceforth have access to the throne of grace, through the one great atonement and mediator, the Lord Jesus
Hebrew 10:19-20
- *the earth quaked*, Not an ordinary earthquake, but a supernatural phenomenon, as was that of the darkness in Matthew 27:45

Jesus Dies on the Cross (27:45-56)



- Some of the tombs were shattered and laid open by the earthquake
- Only Matthew records the appearance of saints in association with Jesus' resurrection
- The stones broke apart, and the graves opened themselves to show by this act that death was overcome
- This event is the first expression of faith in the liberation of the dead by Christ's descent into Hades, 1 Peter 3:19-20
- The saints signified must be those who in life had looked for the hope of Israel
- Their rising was a testimony that the death of Christ is life to the saints

Jesus Dies on the Cross (27:45-56)



- *they feared greatly*, convinced of the presence of a Divine Hand
- They are the first Gentiles to proclaim Jesus "the Son of God."
- They may not have completely understood what they were saying, but it will be a declaration that will be carried into the Gentile nations of the earth
- The devoted women were still faithful, courageous, and loving
- They had followed the procession to Calvary, and at a distance watched the woeful proceedings there when the disciples had fled
- Of the apostles we only know that John was near

Jesus Dies on the Cross (27:45-56)



- *Many women*, These are mentioned as witnesses of all these events which the apostles are not recorded to have seen
- *Mary Magdalene*, Mentioned first here, also in Luke 8:2, before the resurrection and she had been healed by the Lord
- *Mary the mother of James and Joses*, She was the wife of Clopas or Alphaeus (Jn 19:25)
- *The mother of Zebedee's sons*, Salome
- St. John mentions Jesus' mother's sister (Jn 19:25), but does not name Salome, his own mother
- Salome was the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus
- Mary, the mother of Jesus, was also at the cross

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb (27:57-61)



- The Roman laws forbade burial to be given to criminals, without an express permission from the judges
- On the burial, compare Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42
- St. Mark includes the information that Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin and that the day Jesus died was Preparation Day (Friday) for the coming Sabbath
- *disciple of Jesus*, But secretly for fear of the Jews John 19:38
- He now acted a more honorable part than all the disciples of our Lord

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb (27:57-61)



- He was of Arimathea, or Rama, in the tribe of Benjamin, Matthew 2:18, but lived ordinarily in Jerusalem, as being a member of the great council
- It became the Sabbath at sundown; therefore, Jesus' body was removed from the Cross prior to sundown in accordance with the Law, Deuteronomy 21:22-23
- Placing Jesus' body in this rich man's tomb was a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:9
- Pilate consented *the body to be given* probably anxious for respect for the body of Him whom he vainly sought to save from death

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb (27:57-61)



- Behold with admiration the courage and constancy of this disciple of Christ, who, through love for his crucified Savior, willingly exposed himself not only to the enmity of his countrymen, but even to the danger of death, and dared in the presence of all to beg the body of Jesus, and to give it public interment. (St. Chrysostom, hom. lxxxix.)
- From John 19:39-40, we learn that a mixture of myrrh and aloes of one hundred pounds' weight had been applied to the body of Jesus when he was buried

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb (27:57-61)



- The body of Christ must have had the same burial-place with those of the two robbers
- As He was numbered with the transgressors, and suffered with them
- He was a sacrifice, bearing the sin of the world in His own body on the cross but now the sacrifice is offered, the atonement made and accepted, He is no longer to be enrolled with the transgressors

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb (27:57-61)



- Had our Lord been buried in the common burial-ground of the criminals, His resurrection could not have been so distinctly remarked
- The chief priests would never have thought of sealing the stone there, or setting a watch; but now that the body is got into the hands of a friend, they judge it necessary to make use of these precautions, in order, as they said, to prevent deception; and from this very circumstance the resurrection of Christ had its fullest evidence, and was put beyond the power of successful contradiction
- These holy women came to the grave to see the end, and overwhelmed with sorrow and anguish, sat down to mourn



Pilate Sets a Guard (27:62-66)

- *The next day*, This was the seventh, or Saturday, and might be what we should term the evening of the sixth, or Friday, because the Jews always ended their day when the sun set, and then began the next
- The first day of the feast of the Passover was called the day of "preparation," because all things were on that day got in readiness for the observances of the paschal week



Pilate Sets a Guard (27:62-66)

- *That deceiver*, One of the charges against him was that he deceived the people, John 7:12
- The chief priests and Pharisees had not forgotten the predictions of Christ that He would rise on the third day, even if His own disciples had
- The presence of the guards and the officially sealed tomb, which Jesus' disciples would have observed, only served as more proof that Jesus' Resurrection was a supernatural event



Pilate Sets a Guard (27:62-66)

- *Command that the tomb be made secure, by a Roman guard*
- *until the third day, after which, if He still lay in the grave, the imposture of His claims would be manifest to all*
- *and say to the people, He has risen from the dead, Did they really fear this?*
- *the last deception will be worse than the first, That is, the last "deception," or the taking Him from the tomb, pretending that He rose, will have a wider influence among the people than the first, or His pretending to be the Messiah*



Pilate Sets a Guard (27:62-66)

- *Make it as secure*, supposed to be a company of Roman soldiers, or, may take a guard destined for the guard of the temple
- They did, sealing the stone, and placing guards at the monument
- A cord was stretched across the stone door and sealed at each end with wax
- The seal would have to be broken to remove the stone
- Providence ordered this, to make Christ's resurrection more certain and evident



Pilate Sets a Guard (27:62-66)

- The tomb was guarded, there was an impossibility of any deceit on the part of the disciples
- Now, if the least deceit was utterly impossible, then indeed Christ our Lord was infallibly risen; and to remove every and the least possibility of deceit
- The high priests made the tomb secure, sealing the stone at the entrance with the public seal, proof against all fraud, either of corrupt guards or of his followers



Conclusion

- How many times does St. Peter deny his Lord in his refusal to acknowledge his connection to Jesus and where does each denial take place?
- Why did they take Jesus to the Roman governor to be condemned to death?
- What do the chief priests do with *the thirty pieces of silver*?
- Why have the Jewish leaders brought Jesus to Pilate in the first place instead of stoning Him themselves?
- Who was released instead of Jesus?



Conclusion

- Who helped bear Jesus' cross?
- Where was Jesus crucified?
- Why, besides the obvious reference to His own suffering in the opening lines, does Jesus quote Psalm 22 from the cross?
- Why did Jesus shout out this quote from Psalm 31 in His last words from the Cross?
- What is the significance of the rending of the Temple veil?