

# Book of Matthew Chapter 27

This chapter of Matthew has really but four main events:

The suicide of Judas The Lord's trial before Pilate The Lord's suffering and death upon the Cross The Lord's burial

Within these four main events we wish to pull out some of the following details :

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## 1. The repentance and subsequent death of Judas – verses 3-10

During the course of the previous night, the Lord has already been on trial three times. After His capture in Gethsemane, He was led bound first of all to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas. He is then taken to Caiaphas, and as dawn begins to break, the whole council of the Sanhedrin meets and condemns Him to death. They in turn now take Him bound to Pilate. This takes us up to verse 2 of Matthew chapter 27.

This is a turning point for Judas Iscariot - "When He saw that He was condemned". Judas seems to have been a complex character. He is a man who would have thrilled us at a testimony meeting, as he could describe his call by the Lord Jesus to be a disciple. We do not read of his call like that of Peter and Andrew, or James and John. but there must have been a day when the Lord stood before Judas and said, "Follow Me." Judas could then describe what this call meant for him. He had given up his job, his home, and his family to go and follow a homeless stranger, someone called Jesus of Nazareth. He had followed Him for three and a half years. Judas could have spent hours thrilling us with accounts of what the Lord said and what the Lord did. And what about Judas himself – would he not be one of those seventy disciples sent out by the Lord in Luke chapter 10, who came back rejoicing at what they had been able to do:

"Lord, even the demons are subject unto us through Thy name"

Would he not also have preached the gospel of the kingdom as he went out with the seventy disciples? Perhaps that is why the Lord makes the following statement in John chapter 13, just before He makes the announcement, "One of you shall betray Me" :

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

It underlines the fact that having spiritual gift is no guarantee of being saved. In a day to come, many shall say to Him, "Have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name done many wonderful works". His reply will be, "Depart from Me: I never knew you".

We would therefore have had no qualms about Judas until we come across a comment by the apostle John, in chapter 12 of his gospel. Mary of Bethany has taken a box of ointment and poured it all out on the feet of the Saviour. Judas protests – "This might have been sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor". Judas has done a quick estimate of what the ointment might have fetched in the market place. His protest might seem to show his concern for the poor, but John adds the comment:

"This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein".

It is only when we come to this verse in John 12, that we learn that Judas was a thief. He had been entrusted by the band of disciples to carry the bag with any gifts received from the people. But all along, Judas had been helping himself to his portion of the gifts. This incident at Bethany seems to have been the final straw for Judas. In John's gospel chapter 13:2, it is after the anointing at Bethany that we read that the devil put it into the heart of Judas to betray Him.

And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

Luke 22:3 goes even further:

Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

I don't believe that the devil has omniscience – that is uniquely a divine characteristic. But he can and does observe our actions. He could not read the mind of Judas but he could observe the pilfering from the bag, and knew that here was a man who loved money above everything else. Hence the moment came for the devil to put it into the heart of Judas to betray the Lord for money – perhaps even the same amount of money that Judas that Judas could have got had he got half the value of Mary's ointment.

But why would Judas do such a thing? Had the past three and a half years meant nothing to him? Matthew 26 gives the answer. In the upper room, the Lord at last announces to His disciples, "One of you shall betray Me". They are all amazed. They look one on another doubting of whom He spoke. Judas was under no more suspicion than any other. Eventually, each one round the table begins to ask the Lord, "Lord, is it I?" At last Judas speaks up, for his silence at this point might have betrayed him. But notice how he asks, not "Lord, is it I?" but "Master", (or rabbi - teacher), is it I?" We discover that Jesus was not the Lord of Judas Iscariot. Judas had not put his faith and trust in the Lord Jesus.

But why then had the Lord chosen Judas? - and choose him He did.

"Have not I chosen you twelve and one of you is a devil?"

The answer must surely be that the Lord wants us to see just how far profession can go. Like Judas, a man can give up ever so much and seem to be giving his all to the Lord, yet without true faith, it is all worthless.

Driven on by his greed and now indwelt by the devil himself, Judas had gone off and covenanted with the chief priests to betray the Lord for thirty pieces of silver. Judas has got his heart's desire. But suddenly, it all goes wrong. They have taken the Lord and condemned Him to death. When Judas hears of this, he "repented himself". He must have thought that he could have got his money and the Lord would have escaped from His enemies just as He had done on previous occasions. Right back in the beginning, the men of Nazareth had taken the Lord to the brow of a hill, intending to throw Him over, to His death. But the Lord had slipped through their midst. Then there had been the storm on the sea when they had feared for their lives, but the Lord rose up, rebuked the wind and

the waves, and the great storm had become a great calm. No wonder even the disciples, who had already witnessed many miracles, asked the question, "What manner of man is this that even the wind and the waves obey Him?" Then in Jerusalem, men had taken up stones to stone Him,, but He had walked away unscathed. No wonder Judas is perplexed to learn that the Lord has been condemned. It shows that while Judas might have had a love for money, it was not out of hatred for the Lord that he had betrayed Him. Events had taken an unexpected turn.

Judas then comes again to the temple with the thirty pieces of silver, to return them to the chief priests. See what is said in verse 4:

I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

The Lord was tried six times on this fateful night. Pilate is the fourth trial, Herod is the fifth, and the people outside the judgment hall is the sixth. But He is acquitted on no less than seven occasions. Amazingly, the first declaration of His innocence is made here by Judas. "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood". But Judas soon learns that the devil is a hard task master. His new-found friends dismiss him with the words, "What is that to us? See thou to that". Satan who was now dwelling in him gave him no comfort either. In Isaiah 14:7 we read this concerning Lucifer :

17 That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?

Matthew 27 verse 5 records the sad end of Judas :

And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Judas of course has a type in Ahithophel, the counsellor of David, who defected to the cause of Absalom. David laments the betrayal of Ahithophel in Psalm 41, verse 9:

Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.

The Lord quotes from this Psalm in John 13, when He first reveals that one of them would betray Him. However, the Lord omits the phrase, "Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted", for He knew from the beginning who should betray Him. It is amazing to think that every day for three and a half years the Lord would look into the face of Judas and see one who was going to betray Him – yet did nothing about it. At the end, in the upper room, the Lord sends Judas off to do his act of betrayal. The disciples had no inkling of Judas and his defection, but the Lord in John's account gives the disciples three clues. He could not say, "Judas shall betray Me". He would never have been allowed to leave the room. But although the disciples were deceived, the Lord had to say enough to prove to His disciples that He was not deceived.

In the narrative that follows in verse 6 of Matthew 27, we learn of what happened to the thirty pieces of silver. These priests who were plotting the death of their Messiah, had a conscience about what to do with the money. Perhaps the first suggestion had been to put it back into the treasury, but these men in their hypocrisy said, "It is not lawful...it is the price of blood". These same men waited outside Pilate's judgment hall lest they should be defiled - that they might eat the Passover.

Perhaps another suggestion had been made, "We have been looking for somewhere to bury strangers in" – presumably gentile dogs, whom they despised. The potter's field was for sale – they could probably get it for thirty pieces of silver. It was probably no more than a slag heap, full of broken pots and spent clay but it would do the job. The deal was done, apparently in a random fashion.

But God had already written some five hundred years previously, regarding how much the betrayer would get and also of what would happen to the money. The AV quotes the prophet Jeremiah, but it is surely the words of Zechariah that are being quoted, perhaps

an example of a copyist error as the scriptures were being passed on by hand. Zechariah wrote in chapter 11:

12 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.

13 And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.

In I Corinthians 15, Paul tells us that "Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures". Here are some of those scriptures being fulfilled by the Lord's enemies.

## **2. The character of Pontius Pilate**

### **2.1. His authority**

It is interesting how that in Matthew 27, Pilate is described as "**the governor**" no less than eight times in chapter 27 and once again in chapter 28. He is not called the "governor" anywhere else in Mark, Luke, or John. One can only assume that in the gospel of the king, Matthew is keen to underline that Pilate had all the power and authority of the Roman empire behind him when he sat down to preside over this trial.

### **2.2. His perception**

The chapter also tells us of the perception of the governor. "He knew that for envy, they had delivered Him". It is interesting to read in one of the gospels that Caiaphas questioned Jesus regarding His disciples and His doctrine. Caiaphas and his fellows would have loved to have had 12 men like the disciples who had forsaken all to follow Him. The priests loved to be called, "Rabbi", and to be acclaimed by the people.

### **2.3. is cruel streak**

Pilate has come across in history as being a weak man, but certain incidents tell us of his **cruelty**. We read of certain men in Galilee whose blood Pilate had mingled with the sacrifices – he was not above a little bit of Roman brutality. We see this cruelty also manifested at the end of this trial. Despite the fact that he three times declared the Lord to be innocent, Pilate personally scourged the Lord Jesus. Chastising had previously been suggested by Pilate as another solution to his dilemma – "I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go". But once the sentence of death had been passed, why continue with the scourging?

### **2.4. His firmness**

It might seem strange to speak of the firmness of Pilate for we think of him as being weak. But in John 19, he writes out a title to be put on the cross of Jesus, "Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews". He is confronted by the chief priests who say, "Write not, the king of the Jews, but that He said, I am the king of the Jews". Pilate however remains determined. "What I have written, I have written".

### **2.5. His prevarication**

During the course of the trial, Pilate comes up with a number of alternative solutions as he sees it. It is quite obvious that he does not want to make a decision regarding this Jesus. He certainly doesn't want to be the man who sentences Him to death. Pilate therefore suggests four alternatives :

### **2.5.1. An alternative judge – Herod**

In Luke's account, when he learns that this man is from Galilee, He sends Him to Herod - no doubt hoping that Herod would deal with the matter and that he would not see this prisoner again. But he does come back

### **2.5.2. An alternative penalty – scourging**

As we have seen above, he offered an alternative penalty – scourging instead of death.

### **2.5.3. An alternative prisoner + Barabbas or Jesus**

It was at the Passover feast that Pilate granted the people the release of a prisoner – whoever they chose would go free. He therefore gave them a choice – Barabbas or Jesus.

There was surely no contest. Barabbas is described as a notable prisoner. He was no common criminal like the two thieves who were with the Lord at Calvary. Certainly, the Bible says of him, "Now Barabbas was a robber". That crime alone would be enough for him to be crucified. But he was also a rebel – he had taken part in a rebellion against the Romans, and that under the very nose of Pilate – in the city of Jerusalem. Thirdly, he had committed murder during this insurrection. He was therefore three times guilty. Surely then the Jews would ask for the release of Jesus, a man in whom Pilate could find no fault. But they asked for the release of Barabbas. It is ironic that when Pilate made one final attempt to release the Lord Jesus, the Jews said, "If you let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend. Instead of releasing the Lord Jesus, Pilate released a man who had led a rebellion against the Romans.

### **2.5.4. An alternative judicial system – the law of the Jews**

Last of all, he says to the Jews, "You take Him, and deal with Him according to your law". The people refuse the offer.

Why was it that Pilate had to make the final decision? If Herod had done it his way, the Lord would have been beheaded like John the Baptist. If the Jewish people had done it their way, the Lord would have been stoned like Stephen. But the OT scriptures had written, "They pierced My hands and My feet". And only death by crucifixion would last long enough for the time required for the Lord to be the Great Sin Bearer. Apart from this, "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures", and scriptures like Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 clearly pointed to crucifixion. "They pierced my hands and my feet". "All my bones are out of joint".

### **2.5. The advice given by Pilate's wife**

Even before the trial began, there had been another option open to Pilate. He could have taken the advice of his wife. Verse 19 of Matthew 27 says:

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.

Here is the Lord's second acquittal, again from the most unexpected source – Pilate's wife. She tells him to have nothing to do with this "just man". Pilate should have and indeed could have simply dismissed the case. In Acts chapter 18, Paul is preaching in Corinth when the Jews bring him before Gallio, the deputy of that region. See how the Roman deputy deals with this situation.

12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,

13 Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were

a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:

15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.

16 And he drave them from the judgment seat.

Pilate could just as easily have done the same thing and dismissed the case, He was "the governor" – it was within his power to do.

## **2.6. Pilate washes his hands**

Verse 24 records:

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.

Pilate eventually gives in to the demands of the people. In order to absolve himself of any blame, he takes water and washes his hands, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person". However Pilate could not so easily cleanse himself from guilt. He had the power to let the Lord go.

I'm The washing of hands was a symbolic gesture known to the Jews. If a man had been found slain in a field and no-one knew who had done the deed, then the elders of the nearest city had to take a heifer, sacrifice it in a rough valley, and wash their hands over the body of the heifer, thus declaring their innocence.

Deuteronomy 21 tells us what the elders of the city had to do:

6 And all the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley:

7 And they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it.

But how prophetic were the words of the people:

His blood be on us, and on our children

How true these words have been for almost two thousand years as the Jews have suffered from one persecution after another.

## **3. The Crucifixion**

### **3.1. Simon the Cyrenian**

Verse 32 tells us:

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

Every Jew would know the scripture, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree".

They looked around for someone to bear the Lord's cross to Calvary. He had been weakened by a whole night of abuse. He had been beaten two or three times by the servants of Caiaphas, by the soldiers of Herod, and by the soldiers of Pilate. The last-mentioned had crowned Him with a crown of thorns. They had given Him a reed for a sceptre – then taken it back off Him to beat Him with. Finally Pilate himself had scourged the Lord Jesus. All this would weaken the Lord Jesus.

But who would help the Lord Jesus to bear His cross? No Jew would volunteer for this task, not did they even consider compelling a Jew to do it. So their eyes rest upon Simon. He is a man from North Africa - described as a stranger coming out of the country. Perhaps he was a gentile – maybe a Jewish proselyte come up for the feast: a man who

happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, as far as he was concerned. He is compelled to bear the Lord's cross. It underlines for us the shame of the cross.

There is however one gospel in which Simon is not mentioned – the gospel by John. John tells us rather, "He bearing His cross went forth". The Lord shows no weakness in the fourth gospel for it is the gospel of the Son of God.

### **3.2. Casting lots for His garments**

Verse 35 tells us the following:

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.

The parting of the Lord's garments by the Roman soldiers was no doubt meant to be the final act of humiliation inflicted upon their victim. This was a perk apparently given to the soldiers for their evil day's work. They stripped their victims and divided their garments amongst themselves. But in the case of the Lord Jesus, this random and heartless act was in fact the fulfilment of the words of David written a thousand years earlier in the twenty second psalm. Matthew does not go into any further details about the garments but John does in chapter 19 of his gospel. The soldiers had a problem. Having divided the Lord's garments, they are left with His inner vesture. They might have simply torn the vesture into four parts but even that was difficult for John tells us that it was without seam. Someone, no doubt, had a better idea. "Let's cast lots for it, whose it shall be". But Psalm 22 goes into that level of detail also :

18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

Thus the act of the soldiers was only to fulfil the words of David so many centuries before.

John indeed goes on to tell us more about what one of the soldiers did. He has been ordered to break the legs of all three victims in order to accelerate their death. So he broke the legs of the first thief, then of the second. But when he came to the Lord Jesus, he saw that He was already dead. He could so easily have laid aside his cudgel and that would have been the end of the matter. Or he could have broken the Lord's legs anyway. Well he does lay aside his cudgel, but instead he takes up a spear and thrusts it into the side of the Lord's dead body. Is this another random and pointless act of cruelty by this soldier? John tells us rather it was because of two OT scriptures. Exodus 12 tells us about the Passover Lamb, "Not a bone of it shall be broken". But then another scripture says, "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced". This is found in Zechariah 12:10. The looking upon Him shall be fulfilled at His glorious appearing but the piercing was fulfilled at Calvary.

What is John in particular trying to tell us? The Romans might seem to have all the power at Calvary, but the reality is that God was in control, and the soldiers did but fulfil the word of God written beforehand.

### **3.3. The first three hours on the cross**

The Lord had suffered already a great injustice when He was judged and condemned by men. But more indignity was to follow. His accusers follow Him to Calvary, and as they surround the cross, they begin to heap their scorn upon Him by their cruel mocking taunts. We don't hear of them abusing the thieves in this way – it was reserved for Him especially. In Matthew chapter 27, the abuse comes from four different sources:

#### **3.3.1. The passers by**

39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,  
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.

### **3.3.2. The chief priests**

41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,  
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.  
43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

### **3.3.3. The thieves**

43 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

### **3.3.4. The soldiers**

In Luke chapter 23, we read that the soldiers also joined in the derision:

36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,  
37 And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

Psalm 22 is the portion of scripture that tries to sum up the feelings of the Lord on the cross in response to what was done to Him. The Psalm contains many references to animals :

12 Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.

16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

21 Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.

The Lord is therefore derided by the ordinary people, by the people, by the priests, by the soldiers, and even by the thieves. The best of men and the worst of men combine to ridicule Him. It tells us that the world in all its different guises had no time for the Lord Jesus. In two thousand years, nothing has changed. The cry from the world has not changed. It is still saying to God, "We will not have this man to reign over us".

There is a major difference made between the first three hours that the Lord spent upon the cross, and the second three hours, as we shall soon see. During the first three hours, men have plenty to say about Him. During the next three hours, the scene is covered in darkness and the voice of man falls silent. So what is the major lesson to learn about the first three hours? It tells us what the world thinks about our beloved Saviour. For the Christian today, the cross is the great dividing line. Whose side are we on? Are we standing with the world of men that derided Him, or are we taking our place with the Lord Jesus and sharing His reproach? When we come to the doctrinal sections of the apostles' writings, we can see how they make a difference between the death of Christ and the Cross of Christ. Our salvation rests upon the death of Christ. "Christ died for our sins" (I Corinthians 15). Romans chapter 5 tells us, "God commendeth His love towards us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us". Christ is also the guarantor of our place in the Rapture. I Thessalonians chapter 5 says of Him, "Who died for us that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him".

But when Paul is warning us about things that would be a hindrance to us in our Christian lives, he tells us to judge them in the light of His cross:

Self Galatians 2:20

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

The old man Romans 6

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.



The flesh Galatians 5

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts

The world Galatians 6

14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. {by whom: or, whereby}

The law of Moses Colossians 2

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

This is the lesson for us regarding the first three hours that the Lord spent on the cross

### **3.3.4. The second three hours upon the Cross**

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?

This is an extraordinary period of time. The activities of men at Calvary had no part to play in the vicarious sufferings of Christ. But this is certainly not the case during the second period of three hours. This was a period of three hours between twelve noon and three pm on an April day in Jerusalem. It should have been the brightest part of the day, instead a supernatural darkness covered the scene. It is now that God takes a dealing with His Son, and He wants to shield His Son from the peering eyes of men.

If we only had the records left by the four gospel writers, we would indeed have been left to wonder about what was happening during the hours of darkness. But when we come to the epistles of Paul, he tells us that "Christ died for our sins", and that "God made Him sin for us, He who knew no sin". Peter also reveals that "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree". The Lord was the great sin bearer on Calvary, and that is why God turned His face away from His own Son on the Cross.

The Lord was bearing on the cross what was due to us as sinners. "The wages of sin is death", and He paid those wages for us. Sins separate us from God and for that reason, God forsook Him as He bore our sins.

But this darkness lasted only for three hours. Was His suffering enough to pay the price for my sins, let alone the sins of millions of others? We are speaking here of the eternal Son of the eternal God, the one who was God's delight in eternity and the source of all His joy on earth. There was never a cloud between the Father and the Son during all His life on earth. The Lord could say, "He that sent Me is with Me. The Father hath not left Me alone, for I do always the things that please Him".

We could never hope to imagine what the Lord passed through on Calvary. The Psalmist tries to express His feelings when he wrote:

I sink in deep mire where there is no standing  
All thy waves and billows are gone over Me  
The waters are come in unto my soul.

### **3.3.5. His final cry**

In verse 42 of Matthew 27, the chief priests had said:

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.

The Lord does not respond to this taunt. He could not come down from the cross for He had a far greater work to do than simply answering the ridicule of men. Yet is there not something within us that cries out, "If only He could have said something or did something at this moment to show that He was indeed the King of Israel". Well something miraculous

did happen, but it didn't happen until He uttered His final cry from the cross.

50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

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;

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

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

Both Mark and Luke record the rending of the veil in the temple but in Matthew the signs following His cry go much further:

The veil of the temple was rent

The earth did quake and the rocks were rent

Graves were opened

The bodies of the saints which slept arose

What is Matthew trying to tell us? To answer this, we go to a verse in Ecclesiastes chapter 8. Verse 4 tells us:

4 Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?

The priests had challenged Him to prove that He was the king of Israel. He didn't respond then, but His final cry proved that He was indeed a king.

Chapter 8 of Ecclesiastes has another interesting verse, number 8:

8 There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.

No man has power over his spirit. When a man dies, his spirit leaves him because of physical weakness. He has no control over the matter, but not so with the Lord Jesus. John 19 tells us **when** He died. He asked for a drink and when He had tasted it, He said "It is finished". Luke also records His words, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit". Here is a man who has power over His spirit – no ordinary man indeed.

Mark centres our attention rather upon the centurion as we read in Mark chapter 15:

39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

This is not the cry of a dying man. This man cries out with all His strength still in Him. No wonder that in both Matthew and Mark, the centurion says, "This was the Son of God".

#### **4. The Lord's burial**

Verses 52 to 60 give us the record of the Lord's burial by Joseph of Arimathea. Joseph and Nicodemus are often criticised for being secret disciples, but God needed these men to be what they were and where they were at this moment of time. Had they declared their faith any earlier, they would surely have been expelled from the Sanhedrim and Joseph would no longer have had the authority to go and beg the body of the Lord Jesus. God also needed two rich men, one to provide the spices, and one to provide the tomb for His burial.

But the Lord's body not only received special attention from Joseph and Nicodemus, it also received special attention from the enemies of the Lord. The Jews went to Pilate after His death and made their case for special treatment as far as the tomb was concerned:

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

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.

The chief priests were determined that the body of Jesus would never be seen again. The two rich men had already played some part in this. Joseph had bought the linen cloth and Nicodemus a hundred pounds of ointment and the body had been wrapped in the cloth with the spices. They had then rolled a great stone over the entrance to secure the tomb. But the Jews were not content with this. Pilate answered their request, and they sealed the stone and set a guard of soldiers outside. Everything seemed to be coming together to make sure that this body was never to be seen again.

But the body did rise showing that the Lord had conquered death, hell, and Satan to become the victor of Calvary. He arose from the grave and went into heaven. He is the guarantor of our salvation. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain. Ye are yet in your sins". But the One who bore our sins now sits in the presence of a holy God, living proof that our sins have gone. He is also our surety that one day we too shall rise from the dead.

I Thessalonians chapter 4 tells us :

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

Paul describes the Lord in this verse as "Jesus", not out of any familiarity, but to remind us that a man called Jesus lived and died and rose again, and that what God has done for this man, He can do for all men who believe in Him.

Matthew 27 is therefore a chapter full of detail regarding the last hours of the Lord Jesus. It gives us an insight into two men – Judas and Pilate. But it also gives us a detailed perspective of the death and burial of the Lord Jesus.