# Lesson 28 Matthew Chapter 27:1-56 Passion of Christ

Life in Christ: When did you feel closest to Our Lord this week?

Jesus Before Pilate.

1. A. When questioned Jesus does not answer except to acknowledge His kingship. He is bound and guarded before all the chief priests and the elders and Pilate the governor, but who is in control of the situation?

Matthew 27:1-2, 11-14

1 When it was morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.

2 They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

11 Now Jesus stood before the governor, and he questioned him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”\* Jesus said, “You say so.”

12 And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer.

13 Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they are testifying against you?”

14 But he did not answer him one word, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

B Note the names in vs 17. Both are named Jesus. Bar means “son of” Abba means father. Identify some of the ironies occurring in this situation.

Matthew 27:15-26

15 Now on the occasion of the feast the governor was accustomed to release to the crowd one prisoner whom they wished.

16 And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called [Jesus] Barabbas.

17 So when they had assembled, Pilate said to them, “Which one do you want me to release to you, [Jesus] Barabbas, or Jesus called Messiah?”

18 For he knew that it was out of envy that they had handed him over.

19 While he was still seated on the bench, his wife sent him a message, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man. I suffered much in a dream today because of him.”

20 The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas but to destroy Jesus.

21 The governor said to them in reply, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” They answered, “Barabbas!”

22 Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus called Messiah?” They all said, “Let him be crucified!”

23 But he said, “Why? What evil has he done?” They only shouted the louder, “Let him be crucified!”

24 When Pilate saw that he was not succeeding at all, but that a riot was breaking out instead, he took water and washed his hands in the sight of the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood. Look to it yourselves.”

25 And the whole people said in reply, “His blood be upon us and upon our children.”

26 Then he released Barabbas to them, but after he had Jesus scourged, he handed him over to be crucified.

C Both Pilate and his wife recognize the innocence of Jesus, vs 19 and 23-24. But, innocence is not his primary concern. What is Pilates main responsibility as governor?

D Vs 25 is sometimes used as a justification for persecution of the Jews. But, who is really responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus?

Catechism 597

597 The historical complexity of Jesus’ trial is apparent in the Gospel accounts. The personal sin of the participants (Judas, the Sanhedrin, Pilate) is known to God alone. Hence we cannot lay responsibility for the trial on the Jews in Jerusalem as a whole, despite the outcry of a manipulated crowd and the global reproaches contained in the apostles’ calls to conversion after Pentecost. Jesus himself, in forgiving them on the cross, and Peter in following suit, both accept “the ignorance” of the Jews of Jerusalem and even of their leaders. Still less can we extend responsibility to other Jews of different times and places, based merely on the crowd’s cry: “His blood be on us and on our children!” a formula for ratifying a judicial sentence. As the Church declared at the Second Vatican Council:

[N]either all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his Passion. [T]he Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy Scripture.

E John’s Gospel adds an additional responsibility to the chief priests when they choose the pagan Roman Caesar, a self-proclaimed god as their king instead of God’s anointed one (the meaning of Messiah), the promised King. How was the people’s demand for a king in the time of Saul a precursor of Jesus’ trial? In both case who is being rejected?

John 19:15

15 They cried out, “Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your king?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.”

2 Samuel 8:4-5, 7-8

4 Therefore all the elders of Israel assembled and went to Samuel at Ramah

5 and said to him, “Now that you are old, and your sons do not follow your example, appoint a king over us, like all the nations, to rule us.”

7 The LORD said: Listen to whatever the people say. You are not the one they are rejecting. They are rejecting me as their king.

8 They are acting toward you just as they have acted from the day I brought them up from Egypt to this very day, deserting me to serve other gods.

Mockery by the Soldiers.

1. The entire procedure of the Roman crucifixion was designed to be as humiliating, painful, and prolonged as possible to serve as visible deterrent to violating Roman Law. The entire cohort (500-800 men) was called out to remove every shred of dignity from the condemned. This was their duty and no kindness should be expected of the Roman soldiers throughout the process. What is the irony taking place that completely escapes the Roman soldiers, but we should recognize?

Matthew 27:27-31

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus inside the praetorium and gathered the whole cohort around him.

28 They stripped off his clothes and threw a scarlet military cloak about him.

29 Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”

30 They spat upon him and took the reed and kept striking him on the head.

31 And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him.

The Crucifixion.

1. In vs37 the tablet placed over the condemned on the cross described his crime. We frequently see on crucifixes a small sign reading INRI. In ancient times the letter “J” was written as an “I” and the Latin word for king is “rex.”What ironies do you see in the further description contained in John 19:20?

John 19:20

19 Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews."

20 Now many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.

The Death of Jesus

1. A. “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani” is the opening line of Psalm 22. Keeping in mind that David was never crucified. Highlight all the lines in Psalm 22 (attached) that describe the crucifixion of Jesus. After completing the highlighting and adding any notes, do you this cry is a cry of despair? Why or why not.

Matthew 27:46-50

46 And about three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

47 Some of the bystanders who heard it said, “This one is calling for Elijah.”

48 Immediately one of them ran to get a sponge; he soaked it in wine, and putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink.

49 But the rest said, “Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to save him.”

50 But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up his spirit.

B It has been argued that when Jesus accepted the sin of mankind, God, who cannot look upon sin, turned His back on Jesus, prompting the cry of abandonment. Given that it was exactly for this purpose that Jesus came into the world, that Jesus Himself is God and could not abandon Himself, and the reaction of God to Adam’s first sin – He sought him, He did not abandon him (Genesis 3:9; do you think Jesus feels abandoned by God?

Genesis 3:9

9 The LORD God then called to the man and asked him, "Where are you?"

1. A At the death of Jesus, the veil of the sanctuary in the Temple that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, the dwelling place of God on earth where only the High Priest was permitted to enter. What does the tearing of the veil symbolize? What was the actual cause of the death of Jesus? See Matthew 27:50.

Matthew 27:50-56

50 But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up his spirit.

51 And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked, rocks were split,

52 tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised.

53 And coming forth from their tombs after his resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many.

54 The centurion and the men with him who were keeping watch over Jesus feared greatly when they saw the earthquake and all that was happening, and they said, “Truly, this was the Son of God!”

55 There were many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him.

56 Among them were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

Exodus 26:33

33 The ark of the commandments you shall bring inside, behind this veil which divides the holy place from the holy of holies.

B. How does the response of the centurion and his men in vs 54 fulfill Isaiah’s prophecy in Isaiah 43:9?

Isaiah 43:9

9 Let all the nations gather together, let the peoples assemble! Who among them could have revealed this, or foretold to us the earlier things? Let them produce witnesses to prove themselves right, that one may hear and say, "It is true!"

Psalm 22

2 My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Why so far from my call for help, from my cries of anguish?

3 My God, I call by day, but you do not answer; by night, but I have no relief.

4 Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the glory of Israel.

5 In you our fathers trusted; they trusted and you rescued them.

6 To you they cried out and they escaped; in you they trusted and were not disappointed.

7 But I am a worm, not a man, scorned by men, despised by the people.

8 All who see me mock me; they curl their lips and jeer; they shake their heads at me:

9 “He relied on the LORD—let him deliver him; if he loves him, let him rescue him.”

10 For you drew me forth from the womb, made me safe at my mother’s breasts.

11 Upon you I was thrust from the womb; since my mother bore me you are my God.

12 Do not stay far from me, for trouble is near, and there is no one to help.

13 Many bulls surround me; fierce bulls of Bashan encircle me.

14 They open their mouths against me, lions that rend and roar.

15 Like water my life drains away; all my bones are disjointed.

My heart has become like wax, it melts away within me.

16 As dry as a potsherd is my throat; my tongue cleaves to my palate;

you lay me in the dust of death.

17 Dogs surround me; a pack of evildoers closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and my feet

18 I can count all my bones. They stare at me and gloat;

19 they divide my garments among them; for my clothing they cast lots.

20 But you, LORD, do not stay far off; my strength, come quickly to help me.

21 Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the grip of the dog.

22 Save me from the lion’s mouth, my poor life from the horns of wild bulls.

23 Then I will proclaim your name to my brethren; in the assembly I will praise you:

24 “You who fear the LORD, give praise!

All descendants of Jacob, give honor; show reverence, all descendants of Israel!

25 For he has not spurned or disdained the misery of this poor wretch,

Did not turn away from me, but heard me when I cried out.

26 I will offer praise in the great assembly; my vows I will fulfill before those who fear him.

27 The poor will eat their fill; those who seek the LORD will offer praise.

May your hearts enjoy life forever!”

28 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD;

All the families of nations will bow low before him.

29 For kingship belongs to the LORD, the ruler over the nations.

30 All who sleep in the earth will bow low before God;

All who have gone down into the dust will kneel in homage.

31 And I will live for the LORD; my descendants will serve you.

32 The generation to come will be told of the Lord,

that they may proclaim to a people yet unborn the deliverance you have brought.