

**The Gospel of Matthew**  
**Week 31**  
**Matthew 26:69-27:31**

**Day One**

69 Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. 70 But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. 71 Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72 He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!" 73 After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away." 74 Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. 75 Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

vs. 69&70 – The gospels, and the entire Bible for that matter, are a collection of real and credible stories about less-than-perfect people in real-life situations. Here we have the story of Peter, who overestimated his courage and commitment. He was ready to behead a man a few hours earlier and then he was undone by a young servant girl. She recognized him as a disciple, something he vehemently denied on three occasions. Jesus had predicted that this would happen, but Peter denied the possibility. He went on to deny Jesus. **Is there any unsavory truth in your own heart and life that you are ignoring or denying?**

v. 71 – Matthew made the point that a second young girl recognized Peter. Peter was now running scared, wanting to stay close to where Jesus was, but also trying to remain anonymous. Notice how Jesus was known by the vicinity from which He came. One girl identified that Jesus was from Galilee, another was more specific and said Nazareth. It is difficult at times to break away from your past, especially in the minds of other people. Since so many identified Jesus for who He was, they could not see Him for who He had become – His identity as the Christ.

v. 72 – Peter did no better with the second declaration of the truth, this time denying he knew Jesus with an oath. Peter was in a panic now, perhaps concerned that he too would be arrested along with Jesus. This would have been the perfect moment to say, "Yes, I am and you are holding an innocent man. I will testify on His behalf." Instead, Peter tried to remain safe and lied to protect himself.

vs. 73&74 – Now a larger group joined in, urging Peter to acknowledge who he was and that he knew Jesus. His accent did indeed give him away, yet he persisted in his denial. He was so intense and afraid at this point that he began to call down curses on himself to try and establish his innocence in the minds of the people. As he did, a rooster crowed and Peter remembered what Jesus had predicted about the very thing that was taking place. Jesus had "prophesied" this event and the circumstances were falling in place just

as He had predicted. This is the dynamic that those who were slapping Jesus wanted to see when they commanded Him to prophecy, yet He refused to perform on demand. Here we see an example of the prophetic and it was focused on Peter and his painful encounter with the people in the courtyard. God is very “smart.” He knows you and how you will respond in situations yet to come. You would be wise to listen to what He has to say about you and not deny the truth.

v. 75 – When Peter remembered the prophecy, he went outside and wept bitterly. This grown man and tough fisherman was so overcome by his behavior that he went out crying. **When was the last time you wept over the inconsistency of your behavior, the gap between your desired, expected and actual performance?**

### Day Two

27:1 Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. 2 They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor. 3 When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. 4 "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." 5 So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

v. 1 – They were ready to vote and the decision was unanimous; they voted to put Jesus to death. There was not one dissenting vote, which shows the power of what’s known as “group think.” They were all on the same page, so to speak, which made dissent impossible. They had momentum in their arguments and debate and it could not be stopped. *Lord, show me where I may be involved in “group think” and it is impossible for me to be objective and fair.*

v. 2 – The Jews could not put anyone to death. Well, they could have stoned Jesus to death as they eventually did Stephen, but they could not crucify Him, which is the mode of the death they wished to impose. They treated Jesus like a criminal and turned to Rome, whom they hated and resented, to do their dirty work. I heard someone say once that Jesus treatment and execution indicated how God felt and feels about sin. That was the sentence that sin and sinners deserved, but which Jesus took upon Himself.

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:20-21).

**Do you take sin lightly, in your own life or in someone else’s?** What we are about to study is the judgment our sins deserved from God’s perspective.

v. 3 – For some reason, Judas was suddenly remorseful for what he had done in betraying Jesus. He tried to return the money to the priests and elders. This could indicate that

Judas did not think it would go this far – that Jesus would be delivered to the Romans. Once Jesus went to Rome, Judas probably knew that His sentence would be death. **Does this mean that Judas was in the same vicinity as Peter and Jesus, for him to know that quickly what Jesus fate would be?** I'm not sure, but Judas was in touch with the events taking place, while the rest of the disciples had fled into the darkness of night.

v. 4 – Judas confessed that he had sinned, but notice that the leaders had no compassion or offered any help. They had what they needed from Judas and now they were ready to move on, his condition or remorse of no concern to them. **What kind of spiritual leaders were these men?** They were no spiritual leaders at all, just sinful men using people to obtain their own ends. Come to think of it, there are so-called spiritual leaders today who do the same thing. **Are you one of them? Do you submit to one of them?** If you are or do, I would urge you to repent and ask for God's grace to change, asking what it is in you that drives you to use others for your own ends and purposes.

v. 5 – Judas threw the money into the Temple and ran out to kill himself. This was the fate of the one who betrayed Jesus, the sinless One, into the hands of sinners. This isn't exactly the account that we read in Acts (see Acts 1:18-19), for there Judas bought the field and there threw himself headlong, where his insides burst forth. **Is this a contradiction in Scripture?** Absolutely not! There is a good reason why Luke and Matthew would differ, because they were both writing for different reasons to different audiences. It is beyond the scope of this study to look at all the reasons for the varying reports, but they can be reconciled with reasonable accuracy..

### Day Three

6 The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money." 7 So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. 8 That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. 9 Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "They took the thirty silver coins, the price set on him by the people of Israel, 10 and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."

v. 6 – The leaders recognized this as blood money and **then** they were concerned about following God's law. They condemned an innocent man, but were worried about the disposition of 30 silver coins, which they had used to secure Judas' services. This is so indicative of a religious spirit, which can be mean and nasty yet submissive and obedient to regulations that give some semblance of spirituality. It was also against their law to find the innocent guilty, but they could live with that aberration while careful not to replace money with which they bribed a traitor into the Temple treasury. This is another indication of what Jesus referred to here:

You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites (Matthew 23:24-25).

**Are you doing the same thing in any area of your life or walk with the Lord?**

vs. 7&8 – The leaders put the money to “good use” by investing in a burial place for foreigners. Since Jerusalem had visitors from people all over the world, they would then have a place to bury them if they died before returning home. The money Judas returned would be invested in a worthy cause, but the cemetery would take on the name “Field of Blood,” since it was purchased with blood money. Anyone familiar with Jerusalem who was reading Matthew’s gospel would undoubtedly know where it was and would then know the history behind this seemingly noble public work.

vs. 9&10 – Not only would a Jew reading Matthew understand the recent history of the cemetery, they would understand it in terms of prophecy and Scripture since Matthew tied it to the prediction made in Jeremiah. There is only one problem: there is no mention anywhere in Jeremiah of anything close to Judas’ predicament and outcome. There is some mention of 30 pieces of silver in Zechariah 11:12-13, while there is the story of Jeremiah buying a field in Jeremiah 19:1-10. We don’t have time or space to go into all the theories of why Matthew would refer to Jeremiah here, but suffice it say that Matthew saw some connection and we will leave it at that.

The good question would be how much Jeremiah (or Zechariah) knew about what he wrote and spoke. Did he understand that he was referring to the Messiah’s betrayer, some event in Jeremiah’s own lifetime or both? There is an aspect of Old Testament prophecy that says, “Now and not yet.” There could be double or triple fulfillments of a single prophecy, just like some Antichrists have arisen and more are to come. The prediction of an antichrist can have ongoing fulfillments and the same is possibly true for what Jeremiah uttered. I am of the opinion that the Old Testament prophets understood more than we give them credit for knowing when they spoke of things to come, just like it was said of Abraham:

Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds (John 8:56-58).

I think the prophets all saw something of the day of the Lord when they spoke of it. So when New Testament writers put Old Testament quotations in proper context, it provided more light on what those OT writers and speakers had already seen with some measure of certainty. **Does that make sense to you?**

#### Day Four

11 Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. 12 When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. 13 Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" 14 But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor. 15 Now it was the governor's

custom at the Feast to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. 16 At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. 17 So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" 18 For he knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him.

v. 11 – Jesus spoke the truth to Pilate, so Pilate was then accountable for what he heard! Plus Jesus declared that He was the King of the Jews. As I have stated earlier, if Jesus was “only” a prophet and declared that He was the King, then He was deluded and no longer a prophet. My point is that it is impossible to accept Jesus as only a prophet, for He “prophesied” that He was and is the King of kings. I say this because Islam in particular sees Jesus as a prophet, believing the Scriptures were “perverted” to indicate He was anything else. Of course, that is not possible.

The same Spirit who inspired the Scriptures has also preserved the Scriptures in their present form. I have every confidence in God’s ability to do that, therefore I accept what Jesus said as the truth. He is the King; He is God!

v. 12-14 – The governor probably presided over a lot of trials, but Jesus amazed him because He did not respond to His accusers. He made no effort to defend Himself or refute the charges. Jesus knew why He was there, and it wasn’t time to try to escape the cup that He was about to drink. I think Pilate was impressed with the fact that Jesus was innocent, and Pilate had enough experience to know.

v. 15 – The governor had his hands full trying to please Rome and appease the locals, including the priests and elders. The Jews were different than most others in the Roman Empire and Pilate had to collect taxes and maintain the peace, with many Jews opposing and resenting Rome no matter how benevolent or reasonable they were. So the governor had developed a custom to release one prisoner chosen by the people at the Feast of Passover. Pilate hoped he had found a way out of the dilemma of trying innocent Jesus.

vs. 16&17 – There was a notorious prisoner being held at the time of the Feast by the name of Barabbas. He was a rebel and murderer. Pilate offered the crowd a choice: should he release Barabbas or Jesus? To his amazement, the crowd voted for Barabbas. This is an indication of sinful man’s preference; they choose sin and rebellion over a relationship with the Lord. They honor the sinner while reviling the sinless saint. We should not be surprised when our good deeds are not acknowledged or rewarded by sinful men:

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls (1 Peter 2:24-25).

v. 18 – Pilate was a wise man in a sense, for he recognized that they had handed Jesus over to him out of jealousy. They were jealous that He drew the crowds, that He spoke the truth, that He was sinless and full of integrity. **Do you expect all sinners to be dull**

**and saints to be discerning?** That isn't always the case. That is why you can sometimes build alliances and relationships with people of good will who may not necessarily be Christians. **Do you agree with that? Does it make you uncomfortable?**

### Day Five

19 While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him." 20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. 21 "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered. 22 "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!" 23 "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

v. 19 – **I wonder how Matthew knew about the message from Pilate's wife?** He is the only gospel writer to report this story. While Pilate was playing his pre-appointed role, he was given a warning not to be involved. Pilate's wife had a dream and she knew Jesus was innocent, as did Pilate.. Yet Pilate chose the politically expedient way and refused to listen to the Lord as He spoke through his wife or Pilate's own instincts. For that, he is held totally responsible for the role he played in the events around Jesus' death.

It is interesting that it wasn't only the Jews who were impacted and had to make a decision concerning Jesus. He is not just Lord of the Jews, He is Lord of all. There is no other name under heaven by which men can be saved. One can either suffer as one ignores His righteous claims on your life or you can enlist His support in helping you suffer through the cares and trials of life. It seems that either way you will do some suffering.

vs. 20&21 – The leaders manipulated the crowd to ask for Barabbas to be released. If leaders are not content with influence, they will resort to manipulation and control. Even if they use those tactics for righteous ends, it is an unjustifiable abuse of power. The Lord clearly explained that rebellious leadership is the same as witchcraft:

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king (1 Samuel 15:23).

**Are you content with influence or do you want to exert more power over people's decisions than the Lord wants you to have? Are you susceptible to the manipulation of leaders? What is it in you that allows that to take place?** The crowd went along with their leaders' wishes, appearing as if they had made the decision themselves. Of course, this is a crowd that the leaders had assembled for the express purpose of carrying out their wicked plans. **Are you a part of a crowd who carries out the wishes of a leader or the wishes of God?** Don't answer too quickly. Ask the Lord to show you the answer.

v. 22 – When Pilate asked what should be done with Jesus, the crowd responded that He should be crucified. They bought into the wishes of their leaders and now they were responsible for their decision, freely chosen and spoken to Pilate.

v. 23 – Pilate was surprised that the crowd wanted to crucify Jesus because Jesus had committed no crime worthy of death. The people could give no reason, so they simply resorted to repeating the cry to crucify Jesus. Once again we see the effects of “group think” where people gathered together cannot think for themselves. They think like the dominant mindset of whoever is driving the group’s agenda.

### Day Six

24 When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" 25 All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!" 26 Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

v. 24 – Pilate was an astute man who read situations correctly. He lacked courage, however, to stand for the truth and so he gave in to the wishes of the crowd. He washed his hands, indicating that he was finished and innocent of the crowd’s decision, but he really wasn’t innocent. He did not want it reported back to Rome that he could not maintain control in Jerusalem, so he did what was politically expedient. He delivered Jesus over to the wishes of the crowd. Pilate was not a leader; he was a manager and politician. He was not looking to make any reforms or changes; he simply wanted to serve his time in Palestine and move on to another appointment, hopefully one that had more prestige and money involved.

So the elders and priests had their agenda, Pilate had his agenda and Jesus had His agenda. Jesus’ agenda was to do the will of the Father, so He was the one with the moral authority and power in this situation, even though He was bound by chains and the will of the mob. **How about you? Do you see yourself in charge, even if circumstances and sinful people have you boxed in?** God is in control of your affairs, and if you entrust yourself to Him, you will be rewarded and vindicated.

v. 25 – This was a scary declaration by the people. They proclaimed that the penalty for what they were doing should be on them and their children! They were so convinced that what they were doing was God’s will that they were willing to assume full responsibility for the outcome. Forty years later, God would take them up on their proclamation, destroying their country, Temple, religious system and way of life. I do not believe that the curse they called down on themselves is still in effect, for they extended it one generation beyond themselves to their children.

v. 26 – Releasing Barabbas and condemning Jesus was a travesty of justice. As stated earlier, it clearly showed the priorities of sinful man – rebellion over submission to God.

Pilate had Jesus flogged and handed him over the executioner. It is not important, **but I wonder what Barabbas did with his life after his release?** In some sense, Barabbas was the firstfruits of Jesus' ministry, for he was a sinner set free as Jesus took his place and endured the sentence that Barabbas and all sinful men should have endured.

We do not see Jesus resisting, complaining, or trying to use the system to escape His death. He was as a lamb led to the slaughter, as Peter so aptly described:

But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls (1 Peter 4:20-25).

**Are you in a situation where you are suffering?** Then suffer nobly and in the manner that Jesus suffered. Trust God to deliver you.

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God (1 Peter 4:1-2).

### Day Seven

27 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. 28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29 and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. 30 They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. 31 After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

v. 27 – Jesus was then in the hands of the soldiers and they decided to have some “fun” with Him by humiliating Him. Once again, these men were involved in the activities of a group or mob and they all took on the mentality of the mob. *Help me, Lord, to stand alone if need be to do what is right. Show me where I have lost the mind of Christ and surrendered to the mind of the mob. Deliver me from group think, which causes me to surrender my own will to the will of those around me. Grant me the courage and clarity to stand alone if necessary to do the will of my Father. Amen.*

v. 28 – The soldiers stripped Jesus and put a scarlet robe on Him, obviously mocking His claim that He was the King of the Jews. They were Romans and they had no king but Caesar. There are still those who mock Jesus as King, refusing to submit to any heavenly authority, choosing instead the power of an earthly kingdom.

v. 29 – The soldiers took a common vine and wove it into a crown and then drove the thorns on that vine into the head and brain of Jesus. **Have you ever had a splinter or a thorn in your finger or toe? How would you like to have a lot of them driven into your skull?** That is what Jesus had done to Him. He had already lost a night's sleep and had nothing to eat. Now He was being roughed up by a group of military thugs who drove sharp needle-like thorns into His head.

So Jesus had a mock crown and a mock robe with a mock staff and was mocked by the soldiers who knelt in front of Him and said He was a King. They spoke the truth but it did not impact their lives.

v. 30 – Then they took back the mock staff and hit Jesus on the head again and again, driving the thorns even deeper into His head. Dear Lord, help me never to forget the price that You paid for my sins. Help me never to take your sacrifice for granted! I don't know what else to do but pray when I read the account of Jesus' suffering. The penalty for my sin was placed upon Him and this was part of the penalty. Forgive me, Lord, when I have fallen short of the grace that You have given me through the cross of Christ.

Jesus was proved perfect by the ordeal of His crucifixion. If there was any imperfection in Him – and there was not – it would have shown forth at that time. The sacrifices in the Old Testament had to be spotless and without blemish. So did the ultimate sacrifice, the Lamb of God.

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect (1 Peter 1:18-19).

v. 31 – After the soldiers had their way, they decided it was time to carry out the sentence handed down by Pilate. They put Jesus' own clothes back on Him and led Him away to crucify Him. There was no one to help Jesus. He had to go through this alone and He did so willingly. *Thank You, Lord Jesus, for Your great love and commitment to the will and purpose of the Father.*