

The Church of the Servant King
Survey of the Bible Series – Matthew

SB_MT27A_Judas' Betrayal and Jesus' Crucifixion

Jesus is Delivered to Pontius Pilate (27:1-2)

Jesus' first Jewish trials had occurred in the night time as we have studied in our review of the six trials of Jesus (SB_MT26C). Also, as we noted, Jewish law required that trials be conducted during the day. Therefore, the religious leaders of Israel knew that an official trial was necessary since they did not have the power to execute Jesus (John 18:31). Pilate was the governor or procurator of Judea and Samaria from A.D. 26-36. Judea was a senatorial province and the procurator was responsible for administering the region and collecting taxes for Rome. Pilate's home was in Caesarea (to the north and on the coast), but at this time of the Passover, he was in his Jerusalem palace. Isn't it interesting that the Roman empire took note of the significance of the Passover holiday. No doubt even Rome knew the story of Israel's departure from Egyptian bondage, the significance of the lamb's blood on the doorposts, the Law's sacrifice and ordinance requirements associated with Passover, the leadership of Moses, and the conquering history of Israel over the Canaanites under the leadership of Joshua. The Gentile nations were not without witness to the one true God – Yahweh. The most notable example of belief in Yahweh within the Roman empire was the centurion of Matthew 8:5-13. Another example is Cornelius in Acts 10.

We obtain a little more insight into the religious leaders activities on this occasion through the writing of the apostle John. John 18:28 informs us that the religious leaders did not go into the Praetorium (the governor's residence) lest they be defiled for entering the house of a Gentile. They feared not being able to eat the Passover. Evidently Jesus' last supper the night before was not the Passover meal. It is also interesting to note the hypocrisy of religion. In the name of religion, none more innocent than Jesus Himself have been murdered while the murderers hid behind the laws and rules of their religion. (See Unger's description of Pilate on page 1010 of *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*)

Judas' Final Hours (27:3-10)

Whatever Judas had hoped to accomplish with his betrayal of Jesus is not explicitly stated in Scripture. However, it is possible that Judas thought that by betraying Jesus, it might force Jesus to take action against His enemies and inaugurate His kingdom. When he realized the consequences of His actions, i.e. Jesus' death, he felt remorse and guilt that he had played a role in an innocent man's death. The money would serve as a continual reminder to him of his betrayal. He had to rid himself of it. While the religious leaders had no problem giving the money in the first place to pay for the death of an innocent man, they were perplexed as to what to do with it when it returned since it was blood money (verse 6). Once again, we see the hypocrisy of religion. In the end, they decided to use it to buy a field in which to bury foreigners, the potter's field where potters dug for clay. This field became known as the "Field of Blood" (verse 8).

Matthew viewed these events as the fulfillment of a prophecy of Jeremiah (verse 9). However, Matthew quoted primarily from Zechariah, not Jeremiah. Matthew 27:9-10 closely resembles Zechariah 11:12-13, but there are some similarities to the ideas in Jeremiah 19:1, 4, 6, and 11. There are two acceptable explanations. First, Matthew had both prophets in mind but only mentioned the "major" prophet by name. Mark does the same thing in Mark 1:2-3 where Mark mentions the prophet Isaiah but quotes directly from both Isaiah and Malachi. Second, in the Babylonian Talmud (a collection of ancient Rabbinic writings that form the basis for interpretation and tradition in Judaism), Jeremiah was placed first among the prophets, and Jeremiah's book represented all the other prophetic books.

Jesus Faces Pilate and Fulfills Prophecy (27:11-14)

Matthew only mentions one appearance before Pilate. However, we know from Luke's account (Luke 23:6-12) that Pilate sent Jesus to Herod when he learned that Jesus was a Galilean. Matthew also only mentions one accusation, i.e. that Jesus was the king of the Jews. Of course, this is consistent with Matthew's main theme and purpose. As John records in John 18:33-37, Jesus' kingdom would not come through worldly means, i.e. force. Pilate realized this and desired to release Jesus. Jesus did not open His mouth. This was in fulfillment of Isaiah 53:7.

Jesus Takes the Place of Barabbas (27:15-26)

Pilate had assumed that the Jews would certainly choose a well-known insurrectionist and murderer (John 18:40 and Mark 15:7) for death instead of one who had only done good. Perhaps Pilate thought that only the religious leaders were jealous of Jesus and the rest of the Jews would love Him. The crowd only threatened to report him to Caesar (John 19:12) and that only spelled great trouble for Pilate since his record with Caesar was not good. (See Unger).

Only Matthew records the dream of Pilate's wife. It is most likely that Pilate's wife was an unbeliever. Therefore, the source of this dream was most likely Satan. If this is correct, it is my opinion that this was Satan's last attempt to keep Jesus from going to the Cross. Satan knew what was a issue on the Cross.