

## Death and Resurrection, Matthew 26-28

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#### Overview

The dominant dynamic throughout the section is the interplay between the purpose of the Lord (to offer up himself) and the Jews (to destroy him). The section opens with two cycles of contrast: the purposes of the two main parties, and the preparations that are being made for each agenda. It also closes with two cycles of contrast: preparations by each party for his burial, and responses to his resurrection. In the center, the Lord moves from the fellowship of his disciples, through the mixed scene in the Garden, to subjection to the Jews.

This section, unlike the previous one, is almost completely narrative, and in narrative, a major structuring technique is the scene, a section of text in which the characters, the location, and the time are all the same. Noting the changes in people, place, or time shows us the natural divisions of the text.

#### 26:1-5, Contrasting Purposes

**26:1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, 2 Ye know that after two days is *the feast of the passover*, and the Son of man is betrayed παραδίδωμι to be crucified.**--This is the last of the four announcements of the Lord's passion to his disciples that Matthew emphasizes to organize the final section of the gospel (Table 1, chart). Comparison with the others is instructive:

- It is no longer necessary to say that they are going up to Jerusalem, because by now they are already there. But the motive for their trip is the Passover, so he mentions that.
- As in the previous two announcements, he mentions his betrayal (παραδίδωμι, Strong 3860). 20:18-19 show that this word can have two meanings: betrayal by Judas, and delivery to the Romans for death. Both meanings develop in this section—Judas in ch. 26, the Gentiles in 27.
- His physical sufferings are focused down to the single word “crucified.”
- Remarkably, this is the only announcement that does not include the resurrection. The previous announcements show that it is coming, but by omitting it here, Matthew raises the suspense, before the report of the event itself in ch. 28.

The repeated announcement shows how deliberately the Lord approaches his sacrifice. But he is not the only one who is planning the event. In the next three verses, the scene changes.

**3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the **palace of the high priest [26:58]**, who was called **Caiaphas**, 4 And consulted [12:14] that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill *him*.**--The scene changes. Instead of the Lord and his disciples, we have the Jewish leaders. Our Lord is still on the Mount of Olives, but the

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16:21-22	17:22-23	20:17-20	26:1-2
21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples,	22 And <b>while they abode in Galilee</b> , Jesus said unto them,	17 And Jesus <b>going up to Jerusalem</b> took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,	1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,
how that he must go unto <b>Jerusalem</b> ,		18 Behold, we go up to <b>Jerusalem</b> ;	2 Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover,
and suffer many things of the <b>elders and chief priests and scribes</b> ,	The Son of man shall be <b>betrayed</b> into the hands of men:	and the Son of man shall be <b>betrayed</b> unto the <b>chief priests and unto the scribes</b> , and they shall condemn him to death, 19 And shall <b>deliver</b> him to the Gentiles	and the Son of man is <b>betrayed</b>
and be <b>killed</b> ,	23 And they shall <b>kill</b> him,	to mock, and to scourge, and to <b>crucify</b> him:	to be <b>crucified</b> .
and be <b>raised</b> again the third day.	and the third day he shall be <b>raised</b> again.	and the third day he shall <b>rise</b> again.	
22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, ...	And they were exceeding sorry.	20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, ...	(Anointing in the house of Simon the Leper)

*Table 1: Prophecies of the Lord's Passion in Matthew*

Jews are gathered in the palace of the high priest.

The two scenes are marked by their contrast with one another. He has repeatedly announced his death, but the Jews' focus is on "subtilty," that is, deception and guile. For him, the Passover is the occasion of his sacrifice, and he turns the elements of the Seder into a memorial of his death. The Jews seek to avoid the feast day.

This planning is the maturation of their earlier instincts. Compare our verse with what happened after the Lord violated the ceremonial laws of the Sabbath by plucking grain and healing a man in ch. 12 (Table 2, chart). In both cases religious leaders meet to plan the destruction of the Lord. But there are important contrasts that mark this latter event as a formal, official decision.

12:14 Then the <b>Pharisees</b>	26:3 Then .. the <b>chief priests</b> , and the <b>scribes</b> , and the <b>elders</b> of the people,
went out [of the <b>synagogue</b> ],	...assembled together ... unto the <b>palace</b> of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,
and <b>held a council</b> against him,	4 And <b>consulted</b>
how they might <b>destroy</b> him.	that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and <b>kill</b> <i>him</i> .

*Table 2: 26:3-4 resumes 12:14*

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The Pharisees were the popular party, often at odds with the Sadducean chief priests, who were the true power base. The opposition of the Pharisees represents a division of opinion among the people concerning the Lord; the opposition of the group named in v. 3 is the official decision of the nation.

Note also the change in place of the meeting. The Pharisees left the synagogue where they challenged the Lord about the man with the withered hand in order to deliberate. This was an informal meeting, not in the regular gathering place of the Jewish people. But the chief priests and their associates meet in the official residence of the high priest, where later (26:58) they will gather to try the Lord.

**5 But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.**--Matthew Henry notes that their fear of men is greater than their fear of God, always a dangerous sign.

These first five verses confront us with two different groups preparing for the same outcome in very different ways. This contrast, bouncing back and forth between the Lord (with his disciples) and the Jewish leaders, is the major organizing feature of these last three chapters. Table 3 (chart) traces this contrast. The section begins with two contrasts, and ends with two more. In each of these contrasts, the two events presented can be viewed as concurrent. We are seeing what is going on in the two camps. In the central section, the time relation between the two camps unfolds sequentially, as the Lord moves from the band of disciples to the control of the establishment. In this central section, both of the senses of “deliver” come into play: Judas

	The Lord's Friends	Transition	The Lord's Enemies
Purpose: Jesus' Death	26:1-2 Fourth Announcement		26:3-5 Planning in the Palace
Preparation for Death	26:6-13 Anointing in Bethany		26:14-16 Contract with <b>Judas</b>
The Lord is betrayed /delivered	26:17-46 Jesus with the Disciples: Last Supper ( <b>Judas</b> ), Gethesemene ( <b>Peter</b> )		
		26:47-56 from the Disciples to the Jews ( <b>Judas</b> )	
			26:57-27:56 <b>Jesus</b> with the Jews: Trials ( <b>Peter, Judas</b> ), Crucifixion ( <b>women</b> )
Preparation for Burial	27:57-61 Joseph of Arimathea		27:62-66 Sealing the Tomb
Responses to Resurrection	28:1-10, 16-20 Spread the gospel		28:11-15 Deny the Resurrection

*Table 3: Contrasting Parties in Matthew 26-28. Red traces people who move sides.*

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delivers him to the Jews, and they deliver him to the Romans for crucifixion.

### 26:6-16, Contrasting Preparations

We have already seen the first contrasting pair: the declaration of the purpose of the Lord and of his enemies. Both are planning for his death, but in very different ways.

The next pair of scenes shows how each group is preparing for the outcome. The Jews are united and organized in their preparation, but the Lord's disciples show a lack of full understanding of what he is pursuing, in spite of his repeated announcements.

**6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,**--The temporal note is important. John records an anointing by Mary at a dinner in Bethany "six days before the Passover" (12:1), before the triumphal entry, and some have suggested the two were different events.<sup>1</sup> But Matthew doesn't use a temporal connective such as "then" that requires temporal sequence (as he does, for example, in vv. 14, 31, and often throughout the gospel).<sup>2</sup> In this case the sequence doesn't matter; the act does.

The Lord is in Bethany, which according to 21:7 is where he found lodging in a city crowded by pilgrims at Passover season. From John we know that this is the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, but Matthew mentions none of those names. Instead, it identifies the household with "Simon the Leper." Simon is not a leper at the time of this meal, otherwise he would not be mentioned as the host. He must have been healed, an exceedingly rare event. In the entire OT, the only instance is Naaman the Syrian by Elisha (Luke 4:27). But our Lord healed lepers as evidence that he is the Messiah (11:5), and Simon is almost certainly one of these. Matthew records one such healing, which is the first miracle in the miracle chapters 8-9 (chart):

Mat 8:1 When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. 2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. 3 And Jesus put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4 And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

I'm inclined to believe that Simon *the* leper is this person, originally from Bethany, and now hosting the Lord during Passover week. He may be the father of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. In 8:2, he is the first Israelite to worship the Lord (the wise men worshipped in 2:11), and now he rejoices to show his gratitude in hospitality to the Lord.

### 7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and

- 1 Meyer mentions Origen, Chrysostom, Jerome, Theophylact, Euthymius Zigabenus, Osiander, Lightfoot, Wolf. I have not verified these references.
- 2 Matthew uses  $\tau\omicron\tau\epsilon$  90x out of its 158 total instances in the NT, far more often than any other book (0.064% of his words; the next most common is Acts at 0.014%). So he pays careful attention to temporal sequence where it occurs, and the use of a non-sequential temporal expression here is important.

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**poured it on his head, as he sat *at meat*.**—We can guess at the identity of the host. Matthew leaves the woman without a name. What matters is her action. She and the otherwise-unknown Simon show love toward the Lord.

**8 But when his disciples saw *it*, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose *is* this waste? 9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.**--In contrast with the woman, the disciples are clueless, as throughout this section. Morris notes (chart),<sup>3</sup>

Here they lack understanding of the beautiful action of anointing; a little later we will read of Judas's treachery (vv. 14–16), of the “Is it I?” questions (vv. 22 and 25), of Peter's boastful self-confidence (v. 33), a confidence shared by them all (v. 35), of the failure to watch in Gethsemane (vv. 40–45), of the flight of the disciples (v. 56), and of Peter's denials (vv. 69–75).

**10 When Jesus understood *it*, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. 11 For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.**--The disciples are preoccupied with the Lord's work; Mary is preoccupied with the Lord. They are eager to serve him; she wants to worship him (the response also shown by the leper, perhaps Simon, in 8:2). The distinction is between loving the Lord and obeying him. Both are important, but they must come in the correct sequence, laid down by Moses in the Shema. First, we must love the Lord (chart):

Deu 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: 5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Then we are to pay attention to his word:

Deu 6:6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Obedience comes last, founded on his word and motivated by our love for him:

Deu 6:13 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

If we seek to serve him without first loving him, we are in the condition of the false disciples in chapter 7,

Mat 7:22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

3 Morris, L. (1992). [\*The Gospel according to Matthew\*](#). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

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And if we seek to obey without knowing his word, we are also liable to err:

Mat 22:29 Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

The disciples want to do a wonderful work for the poor. The woman wants to worship the Lord. Both are important, but the Lord must come first.

Recall that the soils in Matthew 13 reflect the three categories of Deut 6:5, while the seed represents the Word of God. The word is not fruitful where love for the Lord is defective in either the heart (the wayside), or the soul (the rocky soil), or the abundance (the thorny ground). Only where one loves the Lord completely can the Word of God take hold, and produce the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Good works without attention to Scripture are misguided, and knowledge of Scripture without love for the Lord is sterile. The order matters: first love, then Scripture, and then service.

**12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did *it* for my burial.**--Even though this dinner takes place before the triumphal entry, and thus before the announcement of v. 2, the disciples at least have previously heard the Lord's announcements of his death in 16:21; 17:22-23; and 20:18-19. It's very likely that Mary and her family have heard that news, even from the Lord himself while lodging with them during Passover week, and this is her deliberate attempt to honor the Lord in a way that may not be possible later, given his death as a criminal.

**13 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, *there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.***--Matthew and Mark record this promise of the woman's memorial but not her name, while John records her name but says nothing about the Lord's promise of the memorial. Clearly what the Lord wants people to remember is not how wonderful Mary was as an individual, but the priority she gave to worship--"this, that this woman hath done." He wants his disciples to know how precious to him is the devotion of those who truly appreciate his sacrifice.

**14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, 15 And said *unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver παραδίδωμι 3860 him unto you?***--Again, the scene changes. From the house in Bethany we move to some place where the chief priests are gathered, perhaps the palace of v. 3. Instead of the Lord with his disciples, the grateful host, and the woman with ointment, we focus on one disciple, Judas, and the priests. Again, the shift is associated with a contrast in theme. The woman offers the Lord worship. Judas seeks to betray him. Both are preparing for the Lord's death, but with very different attitudes, and leaving very different reputations.

The word "deliver" or "betray" (the same Greek word) that the Lord used in three of his four announcements here appears in its first sense, describing the betrayal by Judas.

**And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.**--The episode recalls some verses from Zechariah (chart):

Zech 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,

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

Zechariah is prominent in the last chapters of Matthew. In 21:5, his entry to Jerusalem on a donkey is based on Zech 9:9, 26:31 quotes 13:7, and this passage is the basis for Judas' burial in the potter's field in 27:9-10.

Both Zechariah 9 and this passage are part of an extended parable in Zechariah that describes two shepherds, a good shepherd and a wicked shepherd, caring for Israel in a time of conflict (Table 5). The passage thus fits very well the overthrow of the Messiah, the good shepherd, by the Jewish establishment, the wicked shepherds who continue the abuse of the flock noted already by Jeremiah (23) and Ezekiel (34).

War & Conquest	9:1-8	9:11-10:1	10:3b-11:2
Good Shepherd	9:9-10 (Mt 21:5)		11:4-7a Thus saith the LORD my God; Feed the flock of the slaughter; ... 11:7b-14 Zechariah acts out the good shepherd → 30 pieces of silver
Wicked Shepherds		10:2-3a	11:3-5 their own shepherds pity them not 11:15-17 And the LORD said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd.

*Table 4: Zechariah's Parable of the Two Shepherds*

In Zechariah, the good shepherd facetiously calls the price of thirty pieces of silver “a goodly price,” and discards it. This disdainful evaluation can be illustrated from two earlier passages in the OT (chart). It is the remuneration due to a master whose servant has been killed by an ox:

Exo 21:32 If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master **thirty shekels of silver**, and the ox shall be stoned.

And in the evaluation of people for vows, it is the value owed for a woman, less than the 50 shekels owed for a man.

Lev 27:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When a man shall make a singular vow, the persons *shall be* for the LORD by thy estimation. 3 And thy estimation shall be of the male from twenty years old even unto sixty years old, even thy estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary. 4 And if it *be* a female, then thy estimation shall be **thirty shekels**.

Philo (Spec. Leg. 2:32-34) applies these values to slaves, suggesting that 30 pieces of silver was minimal. The price would be an insult for an ordinary Israelite. For one whom Matthew has shown to be the Messiah of Israel, it is blasphemously demeaning.

**16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray παραδίδωμι 3860 him.**--It is interesting to trace the people whom we expect to see on the left-hand side of Table 3, among the Lord's friends, in scenes on the right, among his enemies. There are four such cases.

The first is Judas, here (betraying the Lord) and again in 27:3-10 (returning the money and killing himself). He crosses over and never returns.

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The second is Peter, denying the Lord in 26:69-75. But Peter does not kill himself, and the reader will understand him to be back among “the eleven” in 28:16.

The third consists of the women who are watching at the cross in 27:55-56. Unlike Judas and Peter, their presence among the Lord’s enemies is not malicious, but they are unable to overcome the enemies either. They are at the cross as witnesses, and they also are back among his friends in 28:1-10.

The fourth character to move from the circle of friends to encounter the enemies is the Lord himself, which is the main dynamic of the next section. Unlike Judas and Peter, he is not there through moral failing. Unlike the women, he is not impotent. He leaves the circle of friendship and security for the realm of the enemy to provide the sacrifice that can redeem his enemies and make them his friends. Some, like Peter and later Paul, accept his sacrifice; others, like most of the Jews, do not; and yet others, like Judas, though superficially associated with the band of believers, depart never to return.<sup>4</sup>

### 26:17-27:56, The Central Drama

After the first two contrasting pairs of scenes, we enter the central section, which begins with the Lord among his disciples and ends with him in the hands of his enemies.

#### 26:17-46, *Jesus with the Disciples*

We witness his last supper with the disciples, then his prayer in Gethsemene. In each episode he identifies one of the disciples who will fail him.

#### 26:17-30, The Last Supper

##### 26:17-19, *Preparation*

**17 Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?**--There was no question in their mind that he would obey the ordinance of God (chart),

Exo 12:14 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.

Deu 16:16 Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles:

4 We know from Luke 23:50-51 that Joseph of Arimathea, who appears as a friend of the Lord in 27:57, was a dissenting member of the Sanhedrin, and so is a solitary example of someone moving in the other direction, from enemies to friends. But Matthew does not identify him with the Jewish leaders, and does not portray his support here as a movement between the two groups.



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Even facing the burden of Calvary, he still will be faithful to God's law.

**18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man,**--Luke 22:20 tells us that the identification was not by name or address, but by the unusual circumstance of a man (rather than a woman) carrying water from the well. Note his authority over this otherwise unknown man.

Note also the presence of this very supportive follower in the midst of a hostile city. Our Lord will not fall into the doubts of Elijah:

1Ki 19:14 I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

He knows what God promised his prophet:

1 Ki 19:18 Yet I have left *me* seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

**and say unto him, The Master saith,**--The title that the Lord chooses here for himself is "Teacher," διδάσκαλος. Its meaning is seen in the contrast that the Lord gives elsewhere:

Mat 10:24 The disciple is not above *his* master, nor the servant above his lord. 25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.

We think of "master" as synonymous with "lord," but it means "teacher." We still use the word in this sense when we speak of a master and an apprentice. To a master, we are disciples, apprentices. To a lord, we are servants. The appropriate response to a master is to follow his example; the appropriate response to a lord is to obey him.

In Matthew, this term is used almost exclusively of our Lord by the Pharisees and Sadducees when they want to appear friendly: "Master, what would you say about this case?" They would never address him as "Lord," reserving that title for Pilate (27:63). The ones who call him "Lord" are his disciples, or those (like the foolish bridesmaids) who at least think of themselves as his disciples.

Nevertheless, both titles do belong to our Lord Jesus:

Joh 13:13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am.

Here in Matt 26:18 the Lord in fact calls himself "the Master." He is making a request of this person as the master of a disciple, not the lord of a servant. The motive is not, "You are under my authority, so do what I say." Rather it is, "If you would take my yoke upon you and learn of me, do this." We see this in what follows:

**My time is at hand;**--Contrast

Joh 2:4 mine hour is not yet come

We do not know when it is our time. He is in control.

Joh 10:17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my

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Father.

What is the relation of this statement to the following one? While it's not marked explicitly by any grammatical structure, recall that in the previous verse he makes his request, not as the lord of a servant, but as the master of a disciple. The fundamental duty of a disciple is to imitate his master. The Lord has repeatedly announced his coming death. He could be saying to this unknown disciple, "The time of my death is at hand. I am about to make a great sacrifice. In light of that, I call on you to make a sacrifice."

Thus understood, the Lord's words to his host capture a basic principle of our relation to him. Everything he asks us to do for him is against the background of what he has done for us. In the words of the hymn, "I gave my life for thee. What has thou given for me?"

**I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.**--He asks the man for the use of his house for the passover meal. And so it comes to pass. Just as the unnamed woman of Bethany freely gives her ointment to anoint the Lord for burial, so this unnamed citizen of Jerusalem makes his house available for the Lord to dine with his disciples and memorialize his sacrifice.

The Lord's invitation of himself into the house of another reminds us of Zacchaeus (chart):

Luk 19:5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.

It is unusual for a guest to invite himself in. Typically the host invites the guests, as Abraham did with his heavenly visitors (Gen 18:1-5), or Lot the next day with the two angels (Gen 19:1-2).<sup>5</sup> But the Lord takes the initiative with those whom he calls to himself. As he later challenges the carnal believers of Laodicea,

Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

If we would truly be the Lord's disciples, all that we are and have must be at his disposition.

**19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them;**--This is the echo of a common formula in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. To understand its significance, we need to focus on the verb "appointed" (συντασσω, Strong 4929).

The way to study a word in the Bible is to find other instances of it and compare them. We should start with uses by the same author, then in the same kind of literature and close in time, then move to more remote cases. It turns out that this word is very rare in the NT,<sup>6</sup> so we turn to the LXX, the Greek translation of the OT used by Greek-speaking Jews in the first century.

There, we find that the word is almost always a translation for

5 One might think of Gen 24:23 as an exception. There, Eliezer takes the in But his request follows her watering of the camels, in which she has show revealed the family relationship.

6 The only other instance is in the OT quotation in Matt 27:10, a composite

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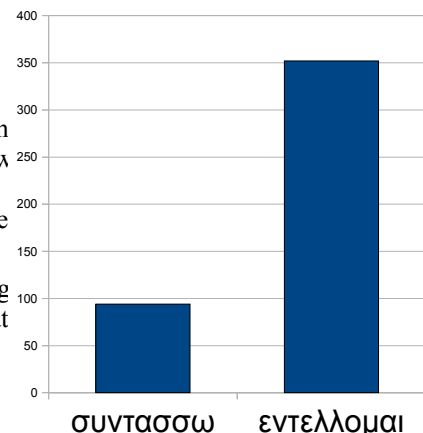


Figure 1: LXX Translations of  
צו "Command"

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the Hebrew word צוה (Strong 6680), which means “command.” But there’s another Greek word that is much more common as a translation for ηεντελλομαι (Strong 1781) (Figure 1, chart). What is the difference between these two translations?

Both words commonly describe God giving commands to people in the OT. εντελλομαι is used of God’s commands to many different people, in many different settings. συντασσω is specialized, in two ways. First, in most cases it describes commands that God is giving to Moses. God also commands Moses with εντελλομαι, but when the LXX uses συντασσω, the commands almost all concern the design, construction, and operation of the tabernacle.

For example (chart),

Exo 36:1 Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, **according to all that the LORD had commanded.**

Lev 8:13 And Moses brought Aaron's sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them; **as the LORD commanded Moses.**

Lev 16:34 And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did **as the LORD commanded Moses.**

So here, “the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them.” By using συντασσω instead of the much more common verb εντελλομαι 1781, Matthew recalls this OT usage. (Matthew’s other name is “Levi.” As a member of the priestly tribe, he is particularly familiar with the laws about the Tabernacle.) He is reminding us that the preparation that the disciples are making is not just obedience to a simple command. It prepares for the worship and fellowship of the people of God. Like Bezaleel and Aholiab, like the sons of Aaron, these disciples are preparing an institution that will become the focal point of the church until the Lord returns.

The LXX uses the formula to describe not only the design and construction of the tabernacle, but also the daily actions of the priests in carrying out its services. The Lord commanded his disciples to repeat the memorial: “This do in remembrance of me” (Lk 22:19). When we gather each week to remember the Lord, we, like the disciples, are doing “as Jesus has appointed us,” offering the worship that God has specially ordained for his church.

**and they made ready the passover.**--This would have entailed procuring the lamb, having it slain in the temple, and arranging for the other required food items.

### ***26:20-25, Announcement of the Betrayal***

**20 Now when the even was come, he sat down<sup>7</sup> with the twelve. 21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.**--He has already warned them that not all among the disciples will truly be his friends. In the Olivet Discourse, he warned that in

7 See notes for the posture.

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time of persecution, “the love of many shall wax cold” (24:12), and each of the last three parables describing the delay in the Lord’s return distinguishes true from false disciples. Judas is an instance of the evil steward, the five foolish bridesmaids, the servant with one talent.

**22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?**--His question prompts them to examine their individual loyalty to him.

**23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth *his* hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. 24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him:**--He probably has in mind (chart)

Psa 41:9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his* heel against me.

**but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.**--The Lord anticipates no restoration for Judas, and Matthew later (27:3-10), alone among the gospels, records his tragic end. The difference between his sin and that of Peter illustrates an important spiritual principle.<sup>8</sup> The Lord instructed Moses to distinguish two classes of sins (Num 15:22-31). For sins of ignorance (15:24-29), specific sacrifices could be offered. But for presumptuous sins (literally sins “with a high hand,” 15:30-31), no sacrifice was available, and the offender was cut off from his people, a principle echoed in Heb 10:26.

Peter did not purpose or plan his failure. In fact, when the Lord announces it, Peter protests vigorously that it will not happen (26:33). He finds himself in a situation beyond his strength, and succumbs in the weakness of the moment, and (John 21) the Lord restores him to fellowship. But Judas sins deliberately, with premeditation and preparation. For him there is no restoration.

**25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master ραββι, is it I?**--Contrast Judas’ response with that of the disciples. They address him as “Lord.” Judas addresses him with the Hebrew title Rabbi. Our version translates the title “master,” that is, “teacher,” and in fact it was a common title for addressing a teacher. But it is not the title the Lord used of himself in v. 18. There, our version’s “master” is a translation of διδασκαλος (Strong 1320). Here, “master” translates ραββι (Strong 4461). In Matthew, this title is associated with Jewish pride:

Mat 23:7 they love ... greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

The disciples are never to use it of one another, and even Christ does not take it to himself:

Mat 23:8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master καθηγητης 2519, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren.

In Matthew, Judas is the only one to use the title of Christ (here and 26:49, “Hail, Master,” with a kiss). He is already thinking about the Lord the way the Jews do, and not as a disciple should.

His question, like that of the other disciples, implies a negative answer: “It’s not I, is it, Lord?”

**He said unto him, Thou hast said.**--Cf. 26:64, the Lord’s answer to the high priest concerning his own identity, “whether thou be the Christ,” and 27:11 (present rather than aorist), his answer

<sup>8</sup> I am indebted to David Nelson for this insight.

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to Pilate’s question, “Art thou the king of the Jews?” It is a qualified affirmative in all three cases--“Yes, but not in the way that you mean.” To Caiaphas and Pilate, the Lord is refusing to accept their political vision of the Messiah, the King of the Jews. Here, the Lord is forcing Judas, in spite of the form of his question, to accept responsibility for what he is about to do.

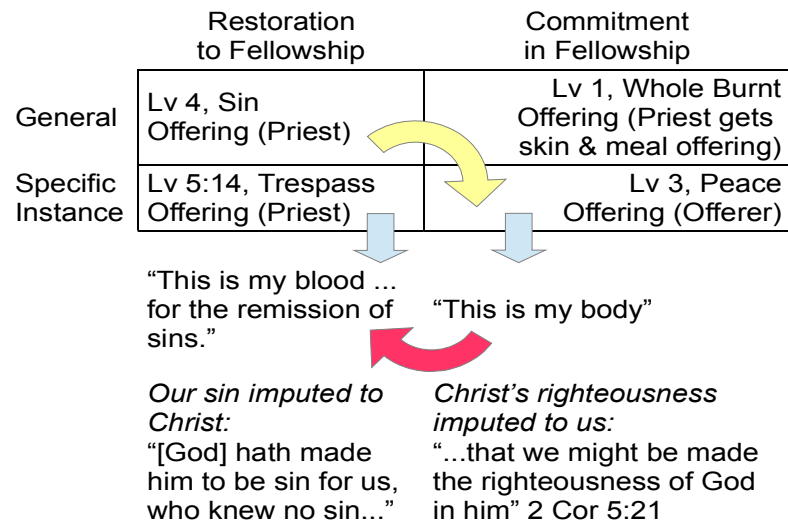
When Paul later summarizes instructions for the church concerning the memorial, he teaches that each believer is to “examine himself,” 1 Cor 11:28. As long as we live in these bodies, we are subject to temptation. Each of us ought to approach the table with the same question that the Lord here stimulates within the disciples: “Lord, is it I? Have I been fully faithful to you this past week? Show me my sin, so that I might confess it and remember you in my daily life as I seek to do now in symbol.” And let us be careful not to ask as Judas does. We must submit to him as Lord, not just as a teacher of forms; not assuming our innocence (“It’s not I, is it Lord?”), but recognizing our weakness, and earnestly desiring to be cleansed of our sin.

### 26:26-30, *The Bread and the Cup*

Matthew’s record of the institution of the memorial is very brief, but the fact that all three synoptics record it, the frequent references to the “breaking of bread” in Acts, and the prominence Paul gives it in 1 Corinthians 11 all show us the importance of this symbol in the early church. As we consider Matthew’s record, it would be well for us to think about the particular symbolism of the elements, as well as the reference to the “new testament” in v. 28.

The Lord’s language is unavoidably sacrificial. He speaks of a body, represented by breaking a loaf, and refers to blood shed for sin. To set these elements in context, we should review the sacrificial system of the OT (Table 5, chart).

There were four main categories of sacrifices in the system God gave to Moses. In the order presented in Leviticus, they are the whole burnt offering (Lev 1), the peace offering (Lev 3), the sin offering (Lev 4-5), and the trespass offering (Lev 5:14ff).<sup>9</sup>



*Table 5: The OT Sacrifices and the Lord's Memorial*

The parenthesis after each offering indicates who ate it in the OT. Nobody ate the whole burnt offering, though the priest got the skin, and ate part of the meal offering that accompanied it. The

<sup>9</sup> The meal offering (misleadingly called “meat offering” in the KJV), Lev 2, was a supplement to the burnt and peace offerings.

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people could only eat of the peace offering.

These four sacrifices embody two contrasts: their *purpose* and *when* they are offered.

In terms of purpose, the sin and trespass offerings restore a sinner *to* fellowship with God, while the burnt and peace offerings symbolize the committed service of a worshipper who is *in* fellowship with God. The sin and trespass offerings focus on the blood as the means of cleansing away sin; the burnt and peace offerings represents the believer's person by the body of the animal that is offered.

In terms of occasion, the sin and burnt offerings are general offerings, part of the ongoing liturgy in the tabernacle and temple. The trespass and peace offerings are offered to deal with specific offenses and to give thanks for specific blessings, respectively.

The passover sacrifice was instituted in Exodus 12, before the children of Israel came under the covenant at Sinai, so it doesn't fit this scheme exactly. But it does share features of them. Like the peace offering, it is eaten by the people. And like the sin offering, at least in the original setting in Exodus 12, the blood is the center of a special ceremony that protects the people from the angel of death, by marking the lintel and posts of the door.

The two elements of the Lord's memorial fit perfectly with this OT system. His body corresponds to the burnt and peace offerings. The offering of his body shows his complete commitment to the Father in obedience and service. His blood corresponds to the sin and trespass offerings, providing the means to take away sin. We sometimes speak of the imputation of our sin to Christ, and the imputation of his righteousness to him, as summarized in 2 Cor 5:21,

2Co 5:21 For he [God] hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

This correspondence shows how the death of our Lord fulfills the OT sacrificial system. He both takes away our sin, and provides us with his own righteousness so that we are "accepted in the beloved" (Eph 1:6). Throughout the OT period, the Mosaic sacrifices enabled God's people to look forward to this twofold transaction on the cross. Now, after the cross, the elements of the remembrance take our minds back to this same twofold transactions.

One further detail requires comment. Throughout the OT, when more than one sacrifice is offered on an occasion, the sin offering always comes first, followed by the whole burnt offering, and that in turn followed by the peace offering, as shown by the yellow arrow in Table 5.<sup>10</sup> For example, in the institution of the sin offering, we read,

Lev 5:7 then he shall bring for his trespass, which he hath committed, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, unto the LORD; one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering. 8 And he shall bring them unto the priest, **who shall offer *that which is for the***

<sup>10</sup> Edersheim, *The Temple*, ch. 6, p. 126. In addition to the passages cited here, see the consecration of the Levites in Num 8:12. When the sacrifices are summarized in a single verse, sometimes the burnt is mentioned first, as in Lev 12:6, 8; 2 Chr 29:24. But in the latter case, and in every case where the order is explicit, the more detailed context (quoted below) makes clear that in fact the sin offering was offered first.

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**sin offering first**, ... 10 And **he shall offer the second *for* a burnt offering**, according to the manner: and the priest shall make an atonement for him for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him.

Or at the day of atonement:

Lev 16:3 Thus shall Aaron come into the holy *place*: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. ... 5 And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. ... 11 And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the **sin offering**, which *is* for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and **shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself**: ... 15 **Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering**, that *is* for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: ... 23 And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy *place*, and shall leave them there: 24 And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and **offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people**, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people.

Or when cleansing someone from leprosy:

Lev 14:19 And the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness; and **afterward** he shall kill the burnt offering:

Or at the rededication of the temple under Hezekiah:

2Ch 29:20 Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD. 21 And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he goats, **for a sin offering** for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah. And **he commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer *them*** on the altar of the LORD. 22 So they killed the bullocks, and the priests received the blood, and sprinkled *it* on the altar: likewise, when they had killed the rams, they sprinkled the blood upon the altar: they killed also the lambs, and they sprinkled the blood upon the altar. 23 And they brought forth the he goats *for* the sin offering before the king and the congregation; and they laid their hands upon them: 24 And the priests killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel: for the king commanded *that* the burnt offering and the sin offering *should be made* for all Israel. ... 27 **And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar**. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began *also* with the trumpets, and with the instruments *ordained* by David king of Israel. 28 And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: *and all this continued* until the burnt offering was finished.

The order makes sense. The sin offering must come before the offerings of worship because we cannot offer ourselves in service to God until we have first dealt with the sin that separates us

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from him.<sup>11</sup> But in every record of the Lord's memorial, he offers the bread before he offers the cup, as shown by the pink arrow. In the OT type, the sin offering came first. Now he starts with the worship offering, and ends with the sin offering.

The change is significance. In the OT, the sacrifices reflected the need of those who brought them. They had to bring the sin offering first, in order for the burnt offering to be accepted. But our Lord had no sin of his own. His whole ministry is based on the fact that he can begin by offering himself in perfect service to God, and then provide a sin offering for those who draw near to God by him.

Against this background, let's now consider the institution as Matthew records it.

**26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.**--For two thousand years, the church has wrestled with the meaning of our Lord's words, "This is my body." The most extreme position is that of the Roman Catholic institution, which insists that when the celebrant blesses the elements, they physically change their substance into the body and blood of Christ, and are once again offered to God as a sacrifice.

Whatever the merit of this view for the ongoing repetition of this ceremony in the church, it certainly doesn't fit the words in this verse. The physical body of the Lord is before them. He has not yet died on the cross. It is unlikely in the extreme that they would understand the bread to be his physical body, or the cup to be his physical blood. The verb "is" must be understood to describe symbolism rather than physical identity, a common usage (chart).<sup>12</sup>

Gen 41:26 The seven good kine *are* seven years; and the seven good ears *are* seven years: [the copula is explicit in the LXX]

Luk 8:11 The seed is the word of God.

Mat 13:38 The field is the world.

The verb "is" in statements like these most naturally means, "represents." "This bread represents my body. This cup represents my blood."

As we have seen, the symbol of his body recalls the whole burnt offering and the peace offering in the law of Moses, offerings that emphasize the worship of the offerer to God. Christ's body was the implement that the Father gave him so that he could offer obedience:

Heb 10:5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body<sup>13</sup> hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for

11 There may also be significance in the relative order of the burnt and peace offerings: it makes no sense to offer thanks to God for specific blessings before we have first committed ourselves him. But this distinction is not reflected in the remembrance.

12 John 10:9, "I am the door," is often cited, but is really a different construction. In the words of institution, and the examples given, the subject of the sentence is the figure, and the reality is the predicate, but in "I am the door," the subject is the literal object. But Bullinger (p. 743) does not distinguish them.

13 MT has "thou hast opened my ears," and so do some mss of the LXX, though A & B all have "body." Ellingworth



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sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

Throughout his life, he lived a life of righteous obedience to God, and his death was the culminating act of his obedience:

Phi 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

If the whole burnt offering symbolizes the worship of the offerer to God, the offering of our Lord's body is the supreme act of worship, his complete obedience to the mission the Father gave him to carry out. And it forms the basis for our standing before God:

Eph 1:6 he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

**27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;--**It's important to note that in Greek, "all" is plural, agreeing with "you," not with "it." The point is that all of the disciples are to partake, not that they are to be sure that the cup is empty.

**28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission αφεσις 859 of sins.**--Just as the bread recalls worship offerings of a believer in fellowship with God, the blood is the focus of the sin offering, described in Lev 4. The great transaction that accomplishes our salvation has two parts: the blood of Christ takes away our sin, and his body earns the positive righteousness by which we are accepted before God.

This verse highlights two great differences between the blood of Christ and the OT sin offering.

First, it is drunk by the people. The Old Covenant absolutely forbade the drinking of blood (chart):

Lev 17:10 And whatsoever man *there be* of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. 11 For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul. 12 Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.

In fact, to avoid unnecessary offense to Jews, the early Christians agreed that believers should not eat blood:

Act 15:19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from

(NIGTC on Hebrews) and Alford have good discussions. Following Delitzsch, I understand this as an LXX paraphrase of MT, rather than an innovation of the author of Hebrews.

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pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood. 21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

The Passover was like a peace offering, in that the people could eat of it. But they had no part in the blood. That belonged to God alone. But now the Lord invites his people not only to eat his flesh, but to drink his blood—to participate fully in the sacrifice, showing the intimate relation with the Father that he has made possible by his sacrifice.

The second difference between the OT sin offering and the blood of Christ is what it accomplishes. In the OT, the effect of the blood is universally described as “atoning” for sin (chart):

Lev 17:11 For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an **atonement** for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an **atonement** for the soul.

The verb “atone” (Strong 3722 כָּפַר ) means “to cover over,”<sup>14</sup> cf.

Gen 6:14 Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt **pitch it** within and without with pitch.

These sacrifices did not remove sin. They simply put them on hold, just as a credit card doesn’t really pay for a purchase, but simply acknowledges the indebtedness. The promise of the new covenant is that God would completely remove the sin:

Jer 31:33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for **I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.**

Thus our Lord describes his blood as “the blood of the new testament, . . . for the **remission** of sins.” In terms of the credit card analogy, he pays off the bill. The NT says as much, twice:

Rom 3:25 Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the **remission** passing over *παρεσις* 3929 of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

The word “remission” here is not the same as in Matt 26:28. At the supper, the Lord used *αφεσις* 859, which means “to put away.” Paul uses *παρεσις* 3929 “to pass over.” In the past, God passed over people’s sin without adequate payment, leaving himself open to a charge of being unrighteous, but now he declares his righteousness by sending his son to pay the charge in full.

14 The currency of this understanding in the first century is documented in J. A. Fitzmyer. The Aramaic Language and the Study of the New Testament. *JBL*, 99(1 (March)):5-21, 1980, in particular pp. 17-18. See my paper on “Atonement in the NT” at <http://www.cyber-chapel.org/AtonementInTheNT.pdf>.

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The writer to the Hebrews makes the same point:

Heb 9:15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, **for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament**, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

The sins committed under the first covenant were not paid for until our Lord came to ratify the new covenant by his blood.

**29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.**--Thus Paul reminds us that in celebrating this memorial, we show forth the Lord's death "till he come" (1 Cor 11:26).

**30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.**--While we cannot be certain that the current Jewish passover liturgy goes back to the first century, it is interesting that it ends with a series of Psalms, Psa 113-118, the "Hallel." Psa 118 in particular is a remarkable psalm, which we studied at Easter in 2015.<sup>15</sup> The Psalm (Figure 2, chart) sets forth a little drama, in which a righteous person, reporting his persecution and the Lord's defense (vv. 5-18), approaches the

gates of the newly restored temple and asks admittance (v. 19). The priests reply (v. 20) that only the righteous may enter, and he claims that right on the basis of God's salvation (v. 21). Then the priests welcome him in.

The Psalm builds on the prophecies of Isaiah, who repeatedly (41:8-13; 42:1-7, 19; 43:10; 43:22-44:5; 44:21-12, 26; 48:20; 49:1-13; 50:4-9, 10; 52:13-53:12)

describes a "servant of the Lord." This character

begins as a personification of the nation Israel, but it quickly becomes clear that Isaiah has in mind a single individual who will do for Israel what she cannot do for herself, and the later

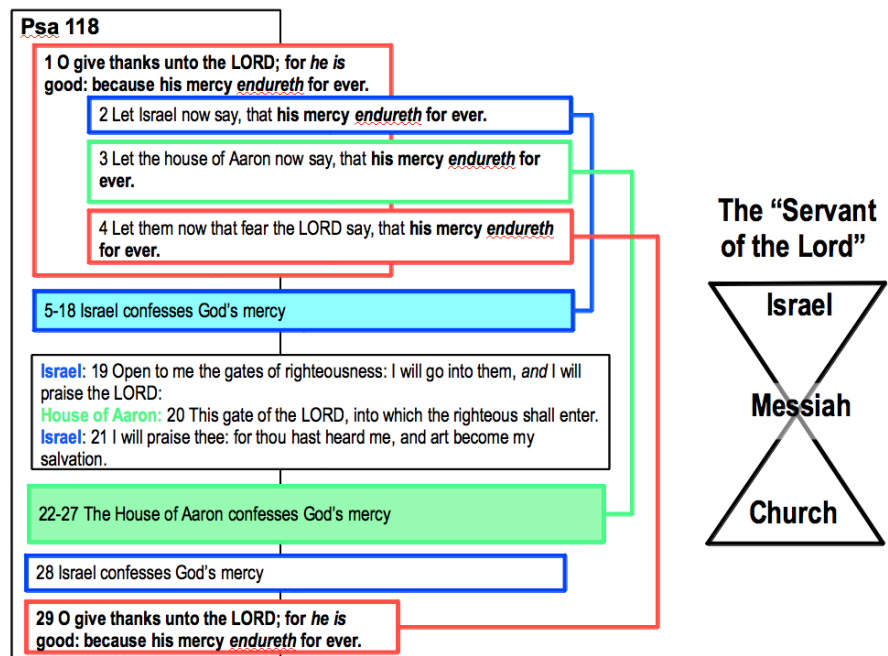


Figure 2: The Structure of Psalm 118

<sup>15</sup> See notes at <http://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/psalms/notes/Psa118.pdf>, and audio at [http://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/psalms/mp3/psa\\_118\\_1.mp3](http://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/psalms/mp3/psa_118_1.mp3) and [http://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/psalms/mp3/psa\\_118\\_19.mp3](http://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/psalms/mp3/psa_118_19.mp3).

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prophecies of the Servant are quoted in the NT to describe the ministry of the church, the body of Christ. Psalm 118 was probably written for the restoration of the temple under Ezra, and the character of “Israel” in this Psalm echoes Isaiah’s messianic “servant.”

This is the Psalm with which the multitudes on Palm Sunday welcomed the Lord into Jerusalem (Psa 118:25-26, Matt 21:9), and it must have been a great encouragement to him as he now sets forth to complete the work the Father has entrusted to him. v. 5 in particular would have urged him to the time of prayer in Gethsemane to which he now leads his disciples:

Psa 118:5 I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, *and set me* in a large place.

### 26:31-46, In the Garden

#### 26:31-35, Prediction of the Disciples’ Failure

**31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended σκανδαλιζω Strong 4624 because of me this night:**--Earlier, he warned them of the possible effect of persecution (chart):

Mat 13:21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is **offended**.

Mat 24:10 And then shall many be **offended**, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

He will show them that at this stage in their growth, they still love their own lives more than they love him. Judas actively opposed him, but **all** of them abandoned him.

The word “offend” is a favorite of Matthew, who accounts for nearly half (14/30) of its uses in the NT. This is not the first time people were offended at him. His countrymen were offended:

Mat 13:54 And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works? 55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things? 57 And they were **offended** in him.

So were the Pharisees:

Mat 15:10 And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: 11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. 12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were **offended**, after they heard this saying?

The disciples have thought themselves spiritually superior to the people of Nazareth who tried to stone him, and to the hypocritical Pharisees. But now the Lord warns them all of their weakness.

## Death and Resurrection, Matthew 26-28

We have already learned of the failure of Judas. But he is a minor figure among the twelve. In this section, the Lord shows that even the most prominent among the disciples will fail him.

**for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.**--The Lord backs up his prediction with a citation from Zechariah (chart):

Zec 13:7 Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man *that is* my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

Matthew has already focused on Zechariah in describing the passion. In 21:5, our Lord's entry to Jerusalem on a donkey is based on Zech 9:9. Zech 11:12 lies behind the 30 pieces of silver in 26:15 and Judas' burial in the potter's field in 27:9-10.

In Zechariah, chapters 9-11 deal with the contrast between the false and the true shepherds, summarized in ch. 11 (Table 4, page 7):

Zec 11:4 Thus saith the LORD my God; Feed the flock of the slaughter [*the assignment of the true shepherd*]; 5 Whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty: and they that sell them say, Blessed *be* the LORD; for I am rich: and their own shepherds pity them not [*the failing of the false shepherds*].

The Lord now identifies himself explicitly with the good shepherd in those chapters. And he is preparing them once more for his coming sacrifice.

**32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.**--Cf. 28:7. The angel tells the women (chart),

Mat 28:7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

And when they encounter the Lord in the garden, he says,

Mat 28:10 Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

We'll talk more about the meeting in Galilee in chapter 28, but it's worthwhile to recall that for Matthew, the Lord's base of operations in Galilee is central to his mission:

Mat 4:13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: 14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; 16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

As Israel's Messiah, he must present himself in Jerusalem. But the ultimate mission is to the nations, and Galilee of the Gentiles is where he will launch the next phase. This announcement thus continues the sequence of references to Gentiles throughout the gospel (the centurion in

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8:10-12, the Canaanite woman in 15:22-28, the warning to the Jews in 21:43), anticipating the great commission to “all nations” in 28:19-20.

**33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all *men* shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.**--Peter is the most prominent of the disciples, but with this position comes temptation. Note the pride in his response. He does not humbly pray that the Lord would protect him in his weakness, but asserts that he is superior to the other disciples.

Consider another example in Scripture where someone was warned of his coming sin and insisted that he would not fail. The example is Hazael, whom Elijah anointed to be king over Syria. Elijah prophesied that he would be cruel to Israel, and Hazael responded (chart),

2Ki 8:13 But what, *is* thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?

Matthew Henry comments that Peter comes off unfavorably compared with Hazael:

This was worse than Hazael's, *What! is thy servant a dog?* For he supposed the thing to be so bad, that no man would do it. But Peter supposes it possible that *some*, nay that *all*, might be offended, and yet he escape better than any.<sup>16</sup>

**34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.**--The Lord shows him how close his failure is, and yet he persists in his proud confidence:

**35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.**--The events of the next few hours show how misplaced their fleshly confidence is. Not only did Peter deny the Lord, but the others forsook him and fled. We might say of them, as Paul said of Israel's sins in the wilderness,

1Co 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Solomon warned,

Pro 16:18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

Let's set Peter in perspective. He is an example of fleshly confidence that crashes and burns. At the other extreme, we have Moses, who was so aware of his weakness that even when the Lord promised to help him, he still was unwilling, and incurred the Lord's anger:

Exo 4:10 And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I *am* slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. 11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? 12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. 13 And he

16 Henry, M. (1994). [\*Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume\*](#) (p. 1756). Peabody: Hendrickson.

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said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand *of him whom* thou wilt send. 14 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, *Is* not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. 15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. 16 And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, *even* he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

Isaiah got it right. He recognized his unworthiness for the burden laid on him, but accepted the Lord's provision.

Isa 6:5 Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. 6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7 And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. 8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me.

### **26:36-46, The Failure of the Three**

Consider the progression of failure accounts (chart).

Judas failed, but he was a minor character. In fact, his description "Iscariot" may mean "man of Kerot," a city of Judah (Josh 15:25). If this is correct, it would make him an exception to most of the other disciples, who were from Galilee.

Judas, the most peripheral of the disciples, has already fallen. The Lord has just predicted that Peter, the foremost of the disciples, will fail. Now, continuing from the top, he exhibits the weakness of the innermost circle among the twelve.

**36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. 37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee,**--These three were the disciples closest to the Lord.

- They were the first called, along with Andrew, in 4:18-21.
- They alone went with him to Jairus' house for the raising of his daughter, Mark 5:37.
- He chose them to accompany him into the mount of transfiguration, Matt 17:1

These were the first three mentioned when the disciples gathered after the ascension:

Act 1:13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* of James.

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When Paul came from Antioch to Jerusalem with Barnabas at the time of the famine (Acts 11:27-30), he mentions the three as pillars of the church:

Gal 2:1 Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with *me* also. 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

Peter was the leader until Herod arrested him in 12:3, after James became the first of the eleven to be martyred in 12:2, and John wrote four books in the NT. Perhaps the Lord spends extra time with them to prepare them for their ministry.

Because they are the closest to him, one expects that they would be most faithful to his instruction. That makes their failure all the more striking. Yet he still dies for them.

**and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. 38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.**--The Lord desires the fellowship of his closest disciples to support him in prayer. If even the Son of God needed this help, how much more do we, when we wrestle with the difficulties of this present life.

**39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.**--We will consider the meaning of the Lord's words in a moment.

**40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep,**--When you are preoccupied with some important issue, it's hard to sleep. Their sleep shows that they do not really understand the crisis that is unfolding around them, and with their Lord.

**and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?**--The Lord has been praying for an extended period of time, but the only words we have are v. 39. We think of prayer as a one-way address to the Lord, but he was also listening to his Father, perhaps meditating on the Psalm they had just sung, and being attentive to the Spirit's guidance. This entire interchange is involved in the attitude that Paul directs us to take, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thes 5:17).

**41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:**--He reminds them of the prayer he taught them to pray together, which we call the Lord's Prayer. One of the petitions is "Lead us not into temptation" (6:13). When we studied that passage, we saw that it means, "Cause that we shall not fall under temptation."

This instruction helps us understand the purpose of his request to them that they "watch with me" (v. 38). The purpose of their watching is not just to uphold him, but to gain strength for their own test. In v. 31, he foretold two things: his own suffering (the smiting of the shepherd), and their offense at him. Now he withdraws with the closest three disciples, to pray in preparation for this coming trial. His own prayer focuses on his coming suffering. He expects them to pray, not just for him, but for the trial that he has warned them they will face, the pressure to be offended at him and to desert him. They need to come before the Father for his help in this struggle. Their sleep shows their lack of emotional engagement with either part of this crisis—the Lord's



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suffering, and their incipient failure.

**the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.**--This is the first verse in the NT to join together these two words, which are so central to Paul's later teaching, for example (chart),

Gal 5:16 *This* I say then, Walk in the **Spirit**, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the **flesh**. 17 For the **flesh** lusteth against the **Spirit**, and the **Spirit** against the **flesh**: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. 18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Paul then goes on to talk about the works of the flesh, and the fruit of the spirit.

The tension goes back to the beginning of the Bible. In resolving to send a flood, God says,

Gen 6:3 My **spirit** shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* **flesh**: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

The verse is notoriously obscure, not the least because the verb translated "strive" appears only here in the OT, and may also mean "remain" (LXX καταμενω, Cassuto) or "shield, protect" (Speiser). But for our purposes it is enough to recognize the contrast that the verse poses between God's spirit, and human flesh.

Throughout the OT, the Spirit came upon individuals for a specific purpose, but the prophets anticipate a day when this tension will be resolved:

Eze 36:27 And I will put my **spirit** within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.

The Lord anticipates this in his words to the disciples in the upper room,

Joh 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth [μενω, a simpler form of the verb in Gen 6:3] with you, and shall be in you.

Though the Spirit has not yet come in power, it is not unreasonable for the Lord to expect the disciples to recognize the inherent struggle between their flesh and God's Spirit. Their failure in the Garden reflects the struggle of the carnal believer to which Paul bears witness in Gal 5:17 and Rom 7, and shows the importance of the process of spiritual growth that the Lord makes possible through the new covenant.

**42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. 43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. 44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.**

What shall we say about the Lord's request? This prayer is sometimes brought up to suggest that the Son and the Father had a difference of opinion about his mission. We should consider three things:

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1. Meaning of “drinking a cup” in the light of the OT
2. Notion of a cup passing from somebody, Isa 51
3. Later commentary on this episode

*The cup is a symbol of God's wrath.* This usage goes back to David:

Psa 11:5 The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth. 6 Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: *this shall be* the portion of their **cup**.

And his contemporary Asaph:

Psa 75:8 For in the hand of the LORD *there is a cup*, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring *them* out, *and drink them*.

Isaiah prophesied that Israel would drink the cup of God's wrath:

Isa 51:17 Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD **the cup of his fury**; thou hast drunken the dregs of **the cup of trembling**, *and wrung them* out.

And 80 years later, the Lord sends Jeremiah with the same cup not only to Jerusalem, but to all nations:

Jer 25:15 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel unto me; Take **the wine cup of this fury** at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. 16 And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them. 17 Then took I the cup at the LORD'S hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the LORD had sent me:

He starts with Jerusalem, but goes on to name a long list, concluding with “all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth” (v. 26), culminating with Babylon. The image is frequent in the OT, and appears in the Revelation,

Rev 14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of **the wine of the wrath of God**, which is poured out without mixture into **the cup of his indignation**;

Against this background, the Lord is not simply facing an unpleasant experience, but recognizes that he is being asked to accept God's judgment on sin. This is not the first time he acknowledges this responsibility. On the last journey to Jerusalem, as the Lord and the disciples began their ascent to Jerusalem from Jericho, he said,

Mat 20:28 the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

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*The cup can be removed.* Isaiah and Jeremiah used the image of the cup to describe God's wrath on the nation at the Babylonian captivity. Isaiah goes on to promise that she will not endure this cup forever (chart):

Isa 51:22 Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God *that* pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, **I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury**; thou shalt no more drink it again:

How should we view the Lord's request? Is he praying that after all, he would not have to drink the cup? Or does he have in mind God's past dealings with Jerusalem, so that he is now asking that, as with Jerusalem, God might withdraw the cup once he has taken it?

*Later commentary:* Just as OT antecedents help us understand the meaning of the cup, later comments in the NT help us understand the nature of the Lord's request. Hebrews tells us that in fact the Father heard his prayer:

Heb 5:7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

This passage urges us to understand the Lord to be asking, not to avoid the cup, but to be delivered from it after he has drunk it. He was never unwilling to take upon himself the judgment for our sin, but he doesn't want to stay dead, cut off forever from the Father.<sup>17</sup> From this we see

- How great our sin is, that he could conceive that he might be forever separated from the Father
- How great his love for us is, that he would accept that destiny if that were the Father's will.

**45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest:--**

The juxtaposition between "sleep on" and "rise" makes it unlikely that the Lord is encouraging their lethargy. The words must be either an ironic command ("Go ahead and sleep, the opportunity for contemplative prayer is over"), or a question, as in Luke's parallel:

Luk 22:46 Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

This would make it parallel with the question in v. 40, as suggested by Nolland, who would translate, 'Have you been sleeping for the rest of the time, and taking your rest?'

**behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.**--Up to now, the only thing that has been "at hand" is the kingdom of God (preached by John the Baptist in 3:2, by the Lord in 4:17, and by the disciples in 10:7). But now two other things are "at hand": the hour, and the betrayer. Note the parallelism, even stronger in Greek than in English (chart):

Behold, the hour is at hand ἰδοὺ, ἤγγικεν ἡ ὥρα

<sup>17</sup> This view has been developed and supported in detail by Craig Blaising, *JETS* 22 (1979) 333-343.

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Behold, he is at hand that doth betray me ἰδοὺ, ἤγγικεν ὁ παραδιδούς με

This parallelism reminds us of an essential duality that runs through God's dealings with us. "The hour" recalls the Father's sovereign decree:

Psa 139:16 (David) Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all of them were written, the days were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them.

Dan 2:21 he changeth the times and the seasons:

Act 1:7 It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

God alone controls this world's appointment book. We cannot know what will happen, or when. The Lord Jesus shows special insight in knowing in John 2:4, "mine hour is not yet come." Now he realizes, "the hour is at hand."

If "the hour" reminds us of God's sovereign control, "he that doth betray me" shows the deliberate wickedness of human opposition. Asaph marveled at how men's sinful actions served God's purposes:

Psa 76:10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee:

Recall the words of Joseph to his brothers:

Gen 50:20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

And in reference to the death of the Lord Jesus, the apostles finally realized this dual dynamic. Peter said on the day of Pentecost,

Act 2:23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

And when Peter and John were released from the Sanhedrin and returned to the assembly of believers, they prayed together,

Act 4:27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

### **26:47-56, Transition from Disciples to the Jews**

**47 And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve,**--This is the last reference to "the twelve" in Matthew. Judas is still considered a part of it. He has not yet taken the final step of delivering the Lord to his enemies. The expression suggests that even at this point, there is still the possibility of repentance, but it is not to be.

**came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and**

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**elders of the people.**--It is interesting to notice how each gospel describes the party that comes to arrest the Lord (chart). John 18:3 mentions a “band” σπειρος Strong 4686, a technical term for a Roman cohort, showing that Rome was involved even here, along with υπηρετης 5257, the temple guard whom he mentions in 7:32, 45. Luke 22:52 mentions also the “captains of the temple” στρατηγος 4755, the leaders of the Jewish temple guard (who with the chief priests made the deal with Judas in 22:4). But Matthew (and Mark, and Luke in 22:47) calls the group only a crowd οχλος 3793, which he uses throughout for the Jewish multitudes.<sup>18</sup> The Lord will repeat the term in v. 55, when he rebukes them for their cowardice. These are the ones that flocked to him at the beginning of his ministry; whom he healed in chapters 8-9, and most notably (16/48 uses of the term) whom he fed in ch. 14-15. They are the ones who welcome him into Jerusalem with the words of Ps 118, when the temple leaders refuse to acknowledge him, and they are the ones whom the establishment fears (21:26, 46) in their plots against the Lord. But the use of the term here is ominous. It suggests that this popular movement, originally supportive of the Lord and yet not committed to discipleship, has begun to turn against him, a move that crystalizes in outright rejection:

Mat 27:20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

The moral of the story is a sober one. True service to the Lord must go beyond outward enthusiasm and populism. Many will call him “Lord, Lord” (7:21-22; 25:11) and yet turn away at the end. True faith in Christ will show itself in obedience and perseverance to the end.

**48 Now he that betrayed him**—The Lord had warned his disciples early on about defections and betrayal from their closest associates (chart):

Mat 10:17 they will deliver you up παραδιωμι to the councils ... Mat 10:21 And the brother shall deliver up παραδιωμι the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death.

**gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. 49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.**--Sadly, this is not the only example in Scripture of a faithless friend. Joab was captain of David’s host, but his cousin Amasa led Absalom’s army. After the rebellion was put down, in an effort to make peace, David offered Amasa a position in his army, but Joab, jealous of his own position, slew his cousin, deceiving him with a kiss:

2Sa 20:9 And Joab said to Amasa, *Art* thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. 10 But Amasa took no heed to the sword that *was* in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth *rib*, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died.

Perhaps that event was the basis for Solomon’s proverb,

18 See Cousland, *The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), ch. 3 for a detailed argument that they are Jewish  
(<http://server2.docfoc.com/uploads/Z2015/11/26/HpOfG2x1r9/976f8714bc430d2b98e9ab407abd4812.pdf>)

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Pro 27:6 Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.

**50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend,**--The title seems anomalous in view of what Judas is doing. Matthew Henry contrasts this statement with 16:23, where the Lord calls Peter, "Satan." Peter was seeking to hinder the Lord's mission, while Judas is actually advancing it.

But this title has a sinister overtone. It is not the usual word translated "friend" in the NT (φίλος 5384), but the word εταῖρος (Strong 2083), which appears in the NT only in Matthew. It describes the children playing in the markets (11:16<sup>19</sup>), and twice in contexts like our verse, as a term of address, in our Lord's parables of the laborers in the vineyard and of the wedding garment. In both cases, the outcome is not good for the person described as "friend":

Mat 20:11 And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the goodman of the house, 12 Saying, These last have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. 13 But he answered one of them, and said, **Friend**, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? 14 Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

Mat 22:11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12 And he saith unto him, **Friend**, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

In Matthew, the vocative "always denotes a mutually binding relation between the speaker and the hearer which the latter has disregarded and scorned."<sup>20</sup>

**wherefore art thou come?**--The Greek is highly elliptical. If we understand it as a question,<sup>21</sup> it is ironic. The Lord knows perfectly well why Judas is there, having predicted his faithlessness. The other possibility is that it is an incomplete command, [do that] for which you have come, and consistent with Joh 13:27, "That thou doest, do quickly." In either case, the words are a harsh rebuke to Judas.

**Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. 51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. 52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place:**--We know from the other gospels that Peter was the swordsman. The Lord rebukes him, consistent with his earlier teaching in the Sermon on the Mount,

Mat 5:38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right

19 Only in the MT

20 Rengstorf, K. H. (1964--). εταῖρος. G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed., Vol. 2, p. 701). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. This characterization is appropriate for the vocative, which appears in the Greek Bible only in Matthew; the OT frequently uses non-vocative cases to mean simply "associate, comrade."

21 Which Alford takes to be impossible, the relative pronoun never being used for the interrogative.

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cheek, turn to him the other also.

He goes on to give three specific reasons not to respond to violence with violence (so Matthew Henry).

The first is that it leads to a never-ending cycle of violence. There is no winner:

**for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.**--This principle is echoed in the Revelation, to encourage saints who suffer under the Antichrist:

Rev 13:10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Notice the last clause. We are to take comfort in the knowledge that those who abuse us will one day face justice.

The second motive for non-violence is that the believer's defense lies not in his own weapons, but in the Father's care, which is more than sufficient.

**53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?**--John describes the group who comes to take the Lord as a "cohort," which in the Roman army is 600 men. A "legion" is ten cohorts, and the Lord claims to have at his disposal more than twelve of them, one for each of the eleven and one for himself, and not just soldiers, but angels, incomparably more powerful.

The attitude he commends to his disciples is the same that Elisha sought to communicate to his servant at Dothan, when they were surrounded by the army of Syria:

2Ki 6:15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that *be* with us *are* more than they that *be* with them. 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

Whenever we are tempted to fear for our safety or take violent steps to defend ourselves, we should remember Elisha at Dothan. The Lord has declared,

Rom 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

It is his place, not ours, to bring physical force to bear, and he will do that when it suits his purposes.

But in this case, it does not suit his purposes, and that is the third reason that the Lord gives for the disciples to abstain from violence:

**54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?**--The prophets had

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declared that the Messiah would be abused, and would take it patiently.

Isa 50:5 The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. 6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

Isa 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

The true disciple never seeks his own comfort or security at the expense of God's purposes.

**55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.**--Indeed, they attempted this at the feast of Tabernacles six months earlier.

Joh 7:28 Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. 29 But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me. 30 Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. 31 And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this *man* hath done? 32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him. . . . 37 In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) 40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. 41 Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? 42 Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? 43 So there was a division among the people because of him. 44 And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him. 45 Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? 46 The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

Perhaps it is because the (Jewish) temple guards had failed in their task, that the priests now send Roman soldiers along.

**56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.**--Matthew here emphasizes<sup>22</sup> the point that the Lord made in v. 54, that the humbling of the Messiah was not an accident, but required by the plan of God as revealed in the OT.

22 Mark 14:49 tells us that the Lord himself refers again to the need for Scripture to be fulfilled, but the form of Matthew's words suggests that this is his comment, not a quotation from the Lord. See notes to the study on Matthew 1 discussing the various fulfillment formulas.



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**Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.**--And the word “disciple” disappears from the narrative until 27:57, where it describes a previously unknown disciple, Joseph of Arimathea!

### **26:57-27:56, Jesus with the Jews**

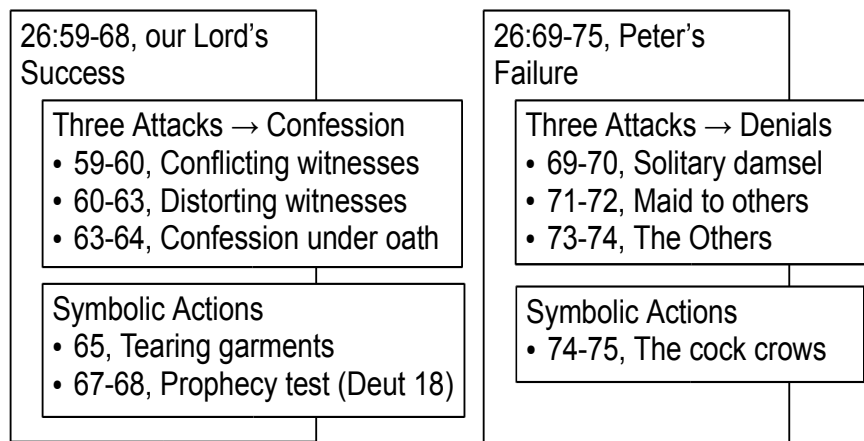
The Lord’s suffering unfolds in three scenes (Table 3, chart). The disciples have fled, but they reappear in each scene, not as disciples, but to heighten the sense of his isolation and suffering:

- Peter, following him to the house of Caiaphas, denies him.
- When he is led to Pilate for the official death verdict, Judas is overcome with remorse and kills himself.
- At the cross, the women stand “afar off,” watching.

### **26:57-75, Trial before the Sanhedrin; Peter’s denial**

**57 And they that had laid hold on Jesus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. 58 But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace [26:3], and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.**

Two of the band enter the house of Caiaphas: the Lord, and Peter, who having fled, now returns to see what is going to happen. One scholar has suggested seeing two trials at the house of Caiaphas,<sup>23</sup> both centered around the confession of the accused, and both ending with a symbolic action, but with very different outcomes (chart, Figure 3). The trial of the Lord before the Jewish leaders leads to his true confession of being the Son of Man of Daniel 7, while the trial of Peter before the household servants leads to his denial of knowing the Lord.



*Figure 3: Two Trials in the House of Caiaphas*

### **26:59-68, The Lord’s Successful Confession**

The trial unfolds with three attacks, culminating with the Lord’s confession of who he is and ending with symbolic actions by his accusers appropriate (in their eyes) to his guilt.

**59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus,**

23 B. Gerhardsson, JSNT 13 (1981) 46-66

## Death and Resurrection, Matthew 26-28

**to put him to death; 60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none.**--The first cycle fails through lack of adequate evidence. To our minds, the record is confusing: if “many false witnesses came,” how can it be that “they found none”? As often, Matthew assumes a deep knowledge of the OT law, which requires that in a capital case, multiple agreeing witnesses must be found (chart):

Deu 17:6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; *but* at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.

Mark, writing for Gentile readers in Rome, adds the key detail that in the case of this first round of witnesses, “their witness agreed not together” (Mark 14:56).

**At the last came two false witnesses, 61 And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.**--The second round of the investigation focuses on two witnesses who agree that the Lord threatened to destroy the temple (though Mark 14:59 points out that their testimony also diverged in detail). As we know from recent events concerning the temple mount in Jerusalem,<sup>24</sup> religious communities can be very sensitive when they perceive a threat to their sanctuaries. We see numerous examples of this in the Bible (chart):

When Gideon destroyed the altar of Baal after being called by the Lord to deliver Israel from Midian, the people of his village threatened his life:

Jdg 6:30 Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that *was* by it.

The Jewish authorities threatened Jeremiah when he predicted the destruction of the temple:

Jer 26:8 Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded *him* to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die. 9 Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

And the charges against Stephen were related directly to rumors about threats to the temple:

Act 6:12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon *him*, and caught him, and brought *him* to the council, 13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: 14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

The witnesses before the Sanhedrin are, as Matthew says, “false.” The Lord never threatened to destroy the temple. But two episodes may lie behind the accusation (chart).

Only a few days earlier, the Lord predicted the destruction of the temple to his disciples:

24 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017\\_Temple\\_Mount\\_crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017_Temple_Mount_crisis)

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Mat 24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

While this was a private setting, so was the Sermon on the Mount (5:1), and yet we know that the multitude followed the little band and listened to the teaching (7:28, “people” = *οχλος* “multitude”). There may have been others listening in to the Olivet Discourse. It’s even possible that Judas reported the discourse, accurately or distorted, to the authorities as part of his betrayal of the Lord. The Lord does not say that he will destroy the temple, but he does say that it would be destroyed, and that was enough to put Jeremiah at risk 600 years earlier.

The rebuilding part of the claim no doubt comes from the Lord’s words early in his ministry, at the first cleansing of the temple, recorded by John:

John 2:18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? 19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

His metaphorical language about his body could easily be twisted into the accusation concerning the physical temple that came before the high priest and his colleagues. Note two critical differences that show how they distorted his words:

- The Lord said that his hearers would destroy “this temple”; they turn this (and perhaps the prophecy he gave on the Mount of Olives) into a threat that he would do the destroying.
- His metaphorical reference to his body is reflected in his choice of the verb “raise up,” *εγειρω* (Strong 1453). While this verb can refer to erecting a building,<sup>25</sup> this usage is not attested anywhere in the canonical Greek Bible, where the verb is the standard expression for resurrection. The accusers say that he claimed he would “build” up the temple, *οικοδομεω* (Strong 3618), a term that refers directly to constructing a building.

The attack here against the Lord shows two errors.

First, they are distorting his words in order to obtain an accusation that they hope will stir up popular opposition against him.

Second, the entire history of the OT shows that it is up to God to avenge insults against his temple, and he needs no help from people. We have seen in our study of Samuel how the Lord punished those who abused his ark, bringing a plague on the Philistines (1 Sam 5), slaying the men of Bethshemesh who looked into it (1 Sam 6:19), and breaking forth on Uzzah when he touched the ark (2 Sam 6:7). Perhaps the most striking statement of this principle is in the case of

25 TDNT meaning c, with references from Josephus, Sirach, and 1 Esr; the only canonical reference offered there is John 2:19f.

## Death and Resurrection, Matthew 26-28

Gideon's destruction of the altar of Baal. In response to the demand of the people that he be slain, Gideon's father replied,

Jdg 6:31 Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst *it is yet* morning: if he *be* a god, let him plead for himself, because *one* hath cast down his altar.

By taking matters into their own hands, the priests are acknowledging their lack of faith in the power of God.

**62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? 63 But Jesus held his peace.**--Misquotations like those of the false witnesses would stimulate most of us to a vigorous defense, but the Lord remains silent. His passive attitude reflects two OT passages, each of which gives us a motive for his silence.

The first is the testimony of David:

Psa 38:12 They also that seek after my life lay snares *for me*: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long. 13 But I, as a deaf *man*, heard not; and *I was* as a dumb man *that* openeth not his mouth. 14 Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth *are* no reproofs. 15 For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.

We do not know the occasion to which the Psalm refers, and it may express a general policy that he applied numerous times during his oppression by Saul and later by Absalom. His motive is in v. 15. His trust is in the Lord, and he will not interfere with the Lord's intervention by seeking to right matters himself.

The second passage is actually a prediction of our Lord's conduct, by Isaiah:

Isa 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

The motive here has to do with the purpose of his suffering. He came to be a sacrificial lamb. His whole purpose requires that he be put to death, and he will not intervene to defend himself.

In the third cycle, the high priest confronts the Lord directly, binding him by an oath to respond.

**And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.**--He unwittingly echoes Peter's words in 16:16. "Adjure" here probably means, as in LXX Gen 24:3, to "cause someone to swear."

Gen 24:2 And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: 3 And I will **make thee swear** by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: 4 But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. ... 9 And the servant

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put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning that matter.

The high priest demands that the Lord declare his identity under oath. The Lord now breaks his silence, because there is a biblical basis for such a demand in a trial (chart):

Lev 5:1 And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and *is* a witness, whether he hath seen or known *of it*; if he do not utter *it*, then he shall bear his iniquity.

**64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said:**--We saw this response previously in 26:25, when Judas asked, "Master, is it I?" It will appear again in 27:11 (present rather than aorist) in his answer to Pilate's question, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" It is a qualified affirmative in all three cases--"Yes, but not in the way that you mean." Here, as with Pilate, the Lord is guarding against any nationalistic or militaristic notions the high priest may associate with the notion of the Messiah.

In particular, in spite of the high priest's demand that he swear an oath, he follows the standard he set for his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount:

Mat 5:34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: 35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. 36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. 37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

**nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.**--The Lord now directly claims to be the one who comes to the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7 to receive authority over all the earth. This is a direct and explicit claim that he is indeed the Christ.

The phrase "ye shall see" is puzzling, for many of the same reasons as the description of the Lord's "coming in the clouds of heaven" in chapter 24:

Matt 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ... 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

How could the Lord say to unbelievers in AD 33 that they would see this event? To make matters more complex, "hereafter"  $\alpha\pi' \alpha\rho\tau\iota$  is not describing a point in the future, but an ongoing process, "from this time on."

Three points are worth making.

First, this is not the only place that the Lord says something like this. To the Pharisees in John 8, he says,

Joh 8:28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye

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know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

Second, Acts tells us that many priests (perhaps including some of those who were in the trial) did come to recognize the Lord as the Son of Man in Daniel 7:

Act 6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Third, the Lord may mean his words not to describe what the high priest will personally recognize, but a statement about how anybody must view him from this point on. It will no longer be possible to view him as an insignificant Galilean pretender. Luz: "the only perspective remaining is the future of the judgment of the world." Carson: "From then on they would not see him as he now stands before them but only in his capacity as undisputed King Messiah and sovereign Judge."

**65 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. 66 What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.**--The action of the high priest is consistent with the practice outlined in the Mishnah<sup>26</sup> (Sanhedrin 7.5), which dates from the second century, for dealing with a blasphemer (chart). It is interesting to consider the passage. Note at the outset that in the strict sense, blasphemy requires uttering the name of God, which at the trial, the high priest did, though the Lord in his response carefully used a euphemism, "Power."

The blasphemer - [he] is not liable until he [explicitly] utters the name [of God].

Next, the instruction deals with the dilemma of how witnesses are to report blasphemy without committing it themselves.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah said, every day the witnesses testify using a substitute name [in place of the actual Divine Name uttered by the blasphemer]: "May Yossi smite Yossi." Once the verdict has been reached, they would not execute [the defendant] [on the basis of testimony] using a substitute name.

For the final determination, though, they must hear an accurate report:

Rather, [the judges] send everyone outside, and inquire of the greatest [witness] among them, saying to him: "State explicitly what you heard," and he states [the blasphemy verbatim]. And the judges stand upon their feet and render [their clothing]. And they may not [ever] mend [the rendered clothing].

**67 Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him;**--Perhaps they are unaware that they are fulfilling a prophecy of Isaiah,

Isa 50:6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

26 [https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah\\_Sanhedrin.7.5](https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Sanhedrin.7.5)

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**and others smote *him* with the palms of their hands, 68 Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?**--Like the high priest in tearing his garments, they are probably behaving not just out of malice, but in direct response to his claim to be Messiah. Mark tells us that they first blindfolded the Lord:

Mar 14:65 And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

So it would require supernatural enabling for him to identify his tormenters. They are invoking the test prescribed by Moses:

Deu 18:17 And the LORD said unto me, They have well *spoken that* which they have spoken. 18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require *it* of him. 20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. 21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? 22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, *but* the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

If he is indeed the prophet like Moses, he should be able to know things that ordinary people cannot know—to “prophecy.”

In reporting our Lord’s trial before Caiaphas, Matthew have in mind a scene in the Old Testament in which a faithful prophet is called to account before corrupt officials.<sup>27</sup> In 1 Kings 22, Jehoshaphat, the righteous<sup>28</sup> king of Judah, visits Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom. He is considering a military alliance with Ahab, Israel’s wicked king, whose wife Jezebel sponsored the worship of Baal. Ahab proposes to recover the transjordanian city of Ramoth in Gilead, a Levitical city in the tribe of Gad, from Syrian domination. Ahab’s sycophant court prophets all predict a stunning victory for the Jewish alliance, but Jehoshaphat, mindful of the theological corruption of the Israelite court, asks for a true prophet of the Lord. As the story unfolds, it shows strong parallels with our Lord’s trial before Caiaphas (Table 6, chart):

27 Dave Nelson noticed this parallel.

28 2Ch 20:32 he walked in the way of Asa his father, and departed not from it, doing *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD.

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Matt 23-27	1 Kings 22
Righteous prophet has previously condemned corrupt official (ch. 23)	8 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.
Official arrests the prophet (26:47-56)	9 Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah.
Prophet's initial responses are not satisfactory (26:63a)	15 And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king.
Official compels the prophet to testify (26:63 εφορκιζω)	16 And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure [LXX ορκιζω] thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the LORD?
Prophet declares a disastrous outcome(26:64)	23 the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.
An associate of the official smites the prophet, and demands a prophecy (26:66-67)	24 But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee?
The prophet is bound in anticipation of his execution (27:2)	26 And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; 27 And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace.

*Table 6: Caiaphas and Ahab*

If Ahab had returned in peace, the next step would have been the execution of Micaiah as a false prophet, as demanded in Deut 18:20.

To someone who knows the OT as thoroughly as does Matthew, these parallels amount to a stunning rebuke to the Jewish establishment. Jerusalem is reduced to the status of rebellious Samaria. The high priest is no better than the half-pagan Ahab, and his associates are compared to the corrupt prophets of the northern kingdom. The Lord Jesus is like righteous Micaiah, whose principle is, “what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak” (1Ki 22:14).

The comparison with Ahab is particularly telling because the Northern Kingdom was based on an explicit rejection of the Davidic monarchy. Listen to the declaration of the northern tribes when Rehoboam refused to listen to the complaints of their representatives:

1Ki 12:16 So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither *have we* inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

In rejecting the house of David, they were rejecting the Messiah whom God had already



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promised would come through that family. Caiaphas, like Ahab, wants nothing to do with the house of David, or its promised Messiah.

Matthew condemns the Jewish establishment by comparing them with a classical villain from Israel's ancient history. We will shortly see him use a contemporary villain for the same purpose.

Matthew's echo of 1 Kings 22 is an example to us of how we are to use the stories in the Bible. Paul lays down this principle against the background of Israel's experiences in the wilderness:

1Co 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

The narratives that the HS has chosen to preserve in Scripture are there as examples, intended to guide us, and when we read them, we should learn from them. The story of Ahab and Micaiah gives Matthew, himself of the tribe of Levi, boldness in condemning the priestly establishment. When we read Bible stories, we should always be asking how we fit into them.

### 26:69-75, Peter's Failed Confession

Like the Lord, Peter faces three cycles of testing, followed by a symbolic action. In each cycle, the pressure becomes more intense, and his response more heated. Notice the audience in each case, and his response.

**69 Now Peter sat without in the palace**--We find him first in the courtyard of the palace. Houses in Israel in the first century<sup>29</sup> consisted of several rooms around an open courtyard, entered from the street by a single gate that could be barred for security (Figure 4, chart). The word translated "palace" (αυλη, Strong 833) literally means "courtyard." He is within the walls of the palace, under the open sky, but adjacent to the room within which the Lord is being interrogated.

**and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with**

**Jesus of Galilee.**--He is confronted by a maidservant, who both by gender and by social status would be insignificant. Such a person poses absolutely no threat to him.

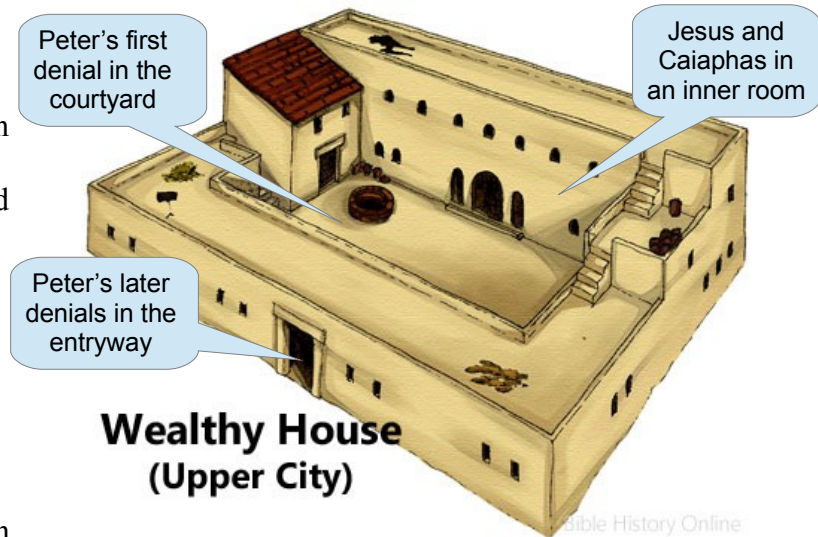


Figure 4: Architecture of a wealthy house in first century Jerusalem (<http://www.bible-history.com/studybible/images/first-century-wealthy-house-color-n-9t.jpg>)

29 <http://www.stjohnlutheran-elyria.org/images/10-21%20House%20Construction%20in%20the%201st%20Century.pdf>; [http://www.jesus-story.net/buildings\\_NT.htm](http://www.jesus-story.net/buildings_NT.htm)

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**70 But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.**--In the hearing of others waiting in the courtyard, he denies knowing anything about this Jesus.

**71 And when he was gone out into the porch,**--To avoid further discussion, he withdraws from the group in the courtyard and moves to the gateway.

**another *maid* saw him, and said unto them that were there, This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth.**--The next challenge is still from a slave-girl, but more threatening, because it is addressed, not to Peter, but to others who are there with him.

**72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.**--This time Peter outright denies knowing the man, reinforcing what he says with an oath. In doing so, he violates the Lord's teaching in 5:34-37, and deviates from the Lord's conduct, who did not swear, even when adjured by the high priest.

**73 And after a while came unto *him* they that stood by, and said to Peter,**--Now the confrontation intensifies. It is no longer a girl, but men; not just one, but several.

**Surely thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.**--Now the claim is based, not on what someone has seen in the past, but on his regional accent. He talks like a Galilean, and so must be associated with Jesus.

**74 Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man.**--He repeats his previous denial, now not only "swearing" (that is, affirming what he says under oath), but also "cursing," calling down God's judgment on somebody.

Whom is he cursing? We might think he's invoking a curse on himself, but that's already implied in taking an oath. Perhaps he is cursing those who are questioning him. More ominous is the suggestion that he directs his malicious speech against the Lord himself. Early in the second century, when it was a crime in the Roman empire to be a Christian, civil authorities would test a suspected believer by asking them to pray to the Roman gods, offer incense and wine to an image of the emperor, and declare a curse on Christ.<sup>30</sup> Roman persecution began under Nero after the great fire of Rome in AD 64, perhaps earlier, and may have exploited such tactics. In addition, even during the life of our Lord, the Jews sought to elicit condemnation of Christ from his followers:

Joh 9:24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

Sadly, it is likely that Peter's cursing was directed at least in part against the Lord whom he had previously promised to defend.

**And immediately the cock crew. 75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said**

30 Pliny, Ep 10:96-97, "Those who denied that they were or had been Christians I thought should be dismissed, if they first invoked the gods in my presence and sacrificed with incense and wine to your image (which I had ordered to be brought forward for this purpose together with the statues of the gods) and moreover cursed Christ, which those who are truly Christians can, it is said, in no way be forced to do." Pliny the Younger was governor of Pontus/Bithynia from 111-113 AD.

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**unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.**--Just as the tearing of garments by the high priest is a symbolic gesture ending the trial of our Lord, so Peter's trial ends with the symbol that the Lord had predicted in 26:34, the crowing of the cock.

**And he went out, and wept bitterly.**--The cock's crowing brings Peter to his senses. He realizes what he has done, how he has failed, and is crushed. He is not named again in Matthew, though the reference to "the eleven disciples" in 28:16 shows that he was restored to the company.

By reporting Peter's failure with a structure that matches the Lord's trial, Matthew shows that there were really two trials going on that night: of the Lord, and of his most prominent disciple. Or perhaps we should say, the Lord was on trial twice. Two people were responsible to declare who he was—the Lord before Caiaphas, and Peter before the members of the high priest's household. The Lord succeeded in his testimony, but Peter failed miserably.

Today, the Lord is no longer stands in the hall of Caiaphas to present his claims over our world. He has left us, his disciples, to represent him. Whenever we have a chance to declare our allegiance to him, we should see ourselves in the position of Peter, and realize that what we say in the courtyard and in the gate affects how our world regards our Lord.

### **27:1-26, Hearing before Pilate; Judas' Regret**

Now the scene shifts from the Jewish Sanhedrin to the judgment seat of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judaea. vv. 1-2 are transitional, describing the decision by the Jews to involve the Romans. Just as Matthew associates the failure of Peter with the trial before the Jews, he associates the final chapter of Judas' history with the trial before Pilate.

#### ***27:1-2, Jewish Decision to Deliver the Lord to the Romans***

**27:1 When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:**--This is the third time the Jews have taken counsel against him. We will see a fourth in v. 7. We might be tempted to fear such deliberate planning by powerful people, but Matthew wants to remind us of the prophecy (chart),

Psa 2:2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed,

Consider the progression in their planning .

After healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath, the Pharisees, the more popular branch of Judaism, resolves that he must be removed somehow.

Mat 12:14 Then the Pharisees went out, and **held a council** against him, how they might destroy him.

Earlier in passover week, before the arrest, the elite leaders take up the project. Now they focus on how they will apprehend him:

## Death and Resurrection, Matthew 26-28

Mat 26:3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4 And **consulted** that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill *him*. 5 But they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar among the people.

In 26:3 the objective was “to take Jesus . . . and kill him.” Now they have taken him, and the remaining question is the means of his death. They could have stirred up a riot leading to his stoning, as they did with Stephen, but that might bring the wrath of Rome on their heads, for they did not officially have the authority to execute someone:

Joh 18:31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:

So they resolve to enlist the help of Rome.

**2 And when they had bound him, they led *him* away, and delivered παραδιδωμι him to Pontius Pilate the governor.**--This section states three times that our Lord was “delivered.”

- v. 3, by Judas to the Jews
- v. 2, by the Jews to Pilate
- v. 26, by Pilate to the soldiers for crucifixion

Up to now, the word, often translated “betrayed,” has emphasized the treachery of Judas. But the fact that the Jewish leaders give their own Messiah to the Romans is equally treacherous. Matthew has already condemned the leaders by comparing them to wicked king Ahab. Now he associates them with Judas, betraying one whom they ought to have revered.

### **27:3-10, Judas Repents**

**3 Then Judas, which had betrayed παραδιδωμι him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself (μεταμελλομαι Strong 3338),**--His response suggests that he had not expected Jesus to be condemned.

Judas is the prototype of the false disciples of whom the Lord taught: the foolish virgins, the evil steward who does not care for the household while the master is away, the slothful servant who buries his talent. So it is surprising to read that he “repented.” Repentance is the starting point of the gospel that the Lord taught his disciples to preach, so we should understand just what is going on here.

The word that Matthew uses to describe Judas’ repentance is not the usual verb “to repent” (μετανοεω 3340), the one we see (for instance) in the call to “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” The word here indicates sorrow for sin, but without any indication that the sorrow leads to an inner change. Paul outlines the complete process to the Corinthians (chart),

2Co 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

“Repentance” here is μετανοια 3341, a noun from the more common word μετανοεω that

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describes a change in one's life. But Paul recognizes that there is a "sorrow of the world" that does not yield this result, and this sorrow is all that Judas experienced.

We need to be clear on the nature of biblical repentance. Sorrow is necessary, but it is only the beginning.<sup>31</sup> True repentance begins with that sorrow, and ends with a changed life. Both Judas and Peter felt deep remorse for what they did. But they sought different remedies. Judas confessed to the priests, but not to the Lord, ignoring David's example,

Psa 32:5 I acknowledged my sin **unto thee**, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions **unto the LORD**; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.

Peter dealt directly with the Lord. The Lord appeared to him before he came to the other disciples on Easter evening:

Luk 24:33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, 34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

1Co 15:5 ... he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

This meeting preceded the conversation between the Lord and Peter recorded in John 21. Peter's sorrow led him to receive the Lord's forgiveness, while Judas abandoned any search for restoration by ending his own life. If he had sought out the Lord instead of a tree and a rope, he would have found redemption, and we would read in 28:16 of "the twelve" instead of "the eleven."

Sin is terrible. But whatever sin entraps you, be like Peter, not Judas. The Lord has said,

Joh 6:37 him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

When you fall, turn to the Lord, not to your own wisdom.

**and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.**--This is the first of three declarations of the Lord's innocence in this section: once by Judas, and twice using δικαιοσ by Romans, Pilate's wife (19) and Pilate himself (24).

Judas' reference to "innocent blood" is the only such reference in the NT, but echoes a common OT expression. In the LXX, this phrase occurs for the first time in the curses that the children of Israel declared from Mount Ebal (chart),

Deu 27:25 Cursed *be* he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person [LXX ψυχην αιματος αθωου "a person of **innocent blood**"]. And all the people shall say, Amen.

This verse directly forbids a commercial transaction such as the one between Judas and the priests, in which an innocent person is slain for financial gain. We'll hear another echo of these curses in Deuteronomy when the people respond to Pilate in v. 25.

31 Trench, *Synonyms*, quotes Jeremy Taylor in defining μεταμελλομαι as "either the beginning of a good, or the whole state of an ineffective, repentance."

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Jonathan uses the phrase to rebuke his father Saul for pursuing David:

1Sa 19:4 And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works *have been* to thee-ward very good: 5 For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest *it*, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou **sin against innocent blood**, to slay David without a cause?

Jonathan's words give a good definition of innocent blood. It is a state that offers no cause for judicial action. The Psalmist uses the expression to describe infant sacrifice:

Psa 106:37 Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, 38 And shed **innocent blood**, *even* the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.

The phrase characterizes the reign of the wicked king Manasseh (2 Ki 21:16; 24:4), who is recorded to have practice infant sacrifice (2 Ki 21:6).

2Ki 21:6 And he **made his son pass through the fire**. . . . 16 Moreover Manasseh shed **innocent blood** very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD.

Judas is doing something right here: he is judging himself based on Scripture. True repentance must start by viewing our sin through God's eyes, and the best way to do that is to focus our mind on what God's word says about our sin. Unfortunately, he does not complete the process.

A related phrase appears in Jeremiah's parable of the broken pot, describing why the Lord is giving Jerusalem up to the Babylonians:

Jer 19:3 And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. 4 Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the **blood of innocents**;

"This place" is not just the city of Jerusalem, but the field outside Jerusalem where Jeremiah is giving this sermon, the valley of the sons of Hinnom, called Tophet (19:6), the location of the idolatrous shrine where infant sacrifice was performed. We will see in a moment that Matthew has this passage in mind, and it may be the words of Judas that suggest it to him.

**And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.**--It is not unreasonable for Judas to ask the priests what to do with his guilty conscience (Lev 4-5), but they refuse. Note their expression, "See thou to that." We might say, "You deal with that."

**5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged**

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**himself.**--As Paul will write in 2 Cor 7, “the sorrow of the world worketh death.” He is distraught over what he has done, but he does not seek forgiveness.

**6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.**--Their hypocrisy is palpable. They have no compunction about hiring Judas to betray an innocent man, but they now consider their own money tainted by how they have used it.

**7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.**--One final time they take counsel, and decide to use the money for a burial ground for people from elsewhere who die in Jerusalem and do not have a family tomb accessible. This might have been the destination of our Lord’s body, if Joseph of Arimathaea had not intervened (27:57).

**8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.**--

Thus they established a memorial to their own sin in purchasing the blood of the Lord.

The location was remembered at the time Matthew wrote his gospel (perhaps as early as AD 44), and a long and consistent tradition links it with the valley of Hinnom, on the south side of Jerusalem (Figure 5, chart). The area was known in antiquity as a source of clay, making it attractive to potters seeking raw material. But its symbolism goes much deeper.

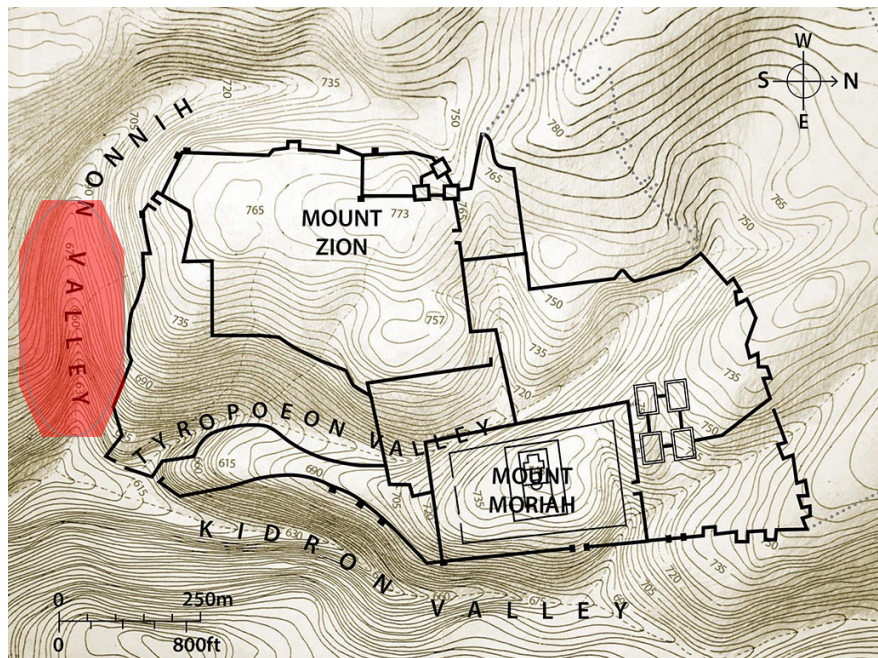


Figure 5: Hinnom Valley and the Field of Blood. Balage Balogh (www.Archaeologyillustrated.com)/FreeBibleimages.org

Recall that the guilt of shedding innocent blood that Judas confessed is linked in the OT to infant sacrifices. The valley of Hinnom was a focus of this pagan ritual during the latter days of the southern kingdom (chart):

Jer 7:30 For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it. 31 And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in **the valley of the son of Hinnom**, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire;

“Tophet” comes from a semitic root meaning “fireplace,” and apparently refers to the altar of the

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god Molech where these sacrifices were performed. As a result, God directed Jeremiah to make the valley the location for his parable of the broken pot, in which he rebukes the nation for this sin. The relation of the site to pottery is obscured in our version; the name of the gate that leads to it from the city is not “east gate” as in the KJV, but “pottery gate.”

Jer 19:1 Thus saith the LORD, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and *take* of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests; 2 And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which *is* by the entry of the ~~east~~ pottery gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee,

Judas' confession of having shed innocent blood already echoes Jeremiah's sermon:

Jer 19:4 ... they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the **blood of innocents**;

Jeremiah goes on to predict that the area would be renamed to reflect death:

Jer 19:6 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter.

And that it would become a place for burial:

Jer 19:11 they shall bury *them* in Tophet, till *there be* no place to bury.

Hebrew has no direct object in this verse. Jeremiah is not predicting a specific burial, but the conversion of the former pagan sanctuary into a graveyard, defiled with corpses. When Josiah led his great reform in 623-622 BC, he defiled this area, making it unfit for cultic activity:<sup>32</sup>

2Ki 23:10 And he defiled Topheth, which *is* in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.

By the time of our Lord, the area was a garbage dump, where refuse was burned, and this led to the place becoming a metaphor for hell. Seven times in Matthew, and five times in the rest of the NT, we read in the Greek text the word γέεννα, which we transliterate as Gehenna. The Greek itself is a transliteration of the Hebrew גֵי הִנּוֹם, “valley of Hinnom,” which our version translates “hell,” a place characterized by unquenchable burning:

Mat 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Perhaps this episode about Judas, which only Matthew records, contributes to his preference for this word as a description for the place of the damned. This field became the final resting place of Judas (Acts 1:18, 19), a metaphor for his eternal destiny.

<sup>32</sup> 2 Kings 23:13, 14 shows one mechanism for doing this, by littering the place with dead men's bones. See also 2 Chr 34:5.



## Death and Resurrection, Matthew 26-28

Though our focus is on Matthew, questions are sometimes raised about its relation to the account of Judas' death in Acts 1. As Peter relates it, (Figure 6, chart)

Act 1:18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. 19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

A view of the topography can help us understand what likely happened. The southern side of the valley is bordered by steep cliffs. He probably hanged himself from a tree overlooking the cliffs, and as his body decomposed, it fell from the tree and burst open as Peter records.



**9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; 10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.--**The closest OT parallel is not in Jeremiah, but in Zechariah (chart):

*Figure 6: Cliffs along south side of Hinnom Valley. Buildings at top left are the Hakl ed-Dam (Aceldama, Field of Blood) orthodox monastery*

Zec 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 prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.

So why does Matthew quote it under the name of Jeremiah? Several theories have been proposed. Two deserve attention:

First, OT books fell into several groups, and sometimes the first book in a group served as a reference to the entire book. We see this in Luke, when the risen Lord explains the OT references to himself to the disciples:

Luk 24:44 And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* **the psalms**, concerning me.

Here "Psalms" refers to the third section of the Hebrew canon, which includes the prophecies of

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Daniel. Certainly the Lord did not intend to leave these out. There is evidence<sup>33</sup> that some traditional lists of the latter prophets began with Jeremiah, so Matthew might simply be referring to the larger portion of Scripture in which Zechariah falls.

The second suggestion recognizes that Zechariah does not mention everything that Matthew does, either in the citation or in the broader history of Judas, and Matthew apparently has Jeremiah 19 in mind as well (Table 7). Zechariah does mention the 30 pieces of silver, the potter, and the casting down of the money in the temple, but Jeremiah 19 includes the potter

**Zechariah**

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**.

**History of Judas**

- **30 pcs of silver**
- **Cast down the silver in the temple**
- **Potter**
- **Repents of innocent blood**
- **Money associated with a specific place**
- **Place renamed to reflect violent death**
- **Place designated as a burial ground**

**Jeremiah**

19:1 Thus saith the LORD, Go and get a **potter's** earthen bottle, and *take* of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests; 2 And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which *is* by the entry of the east **pottery** gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee, 4 ... they ... have filled this place with the **blood of innocents**; 6 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that **this place** shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but **The valley of slaughter**. 11 they shall **bury them** in Tophet, till *there be* no place to bury.

*Table 7: Zechariah and Jeremiah as OT background for Judas*

and also anticipates Judas' reference to innocent blood, the emphasis on a specific place (Zechariah mentions no field), which is renamed to reflect violence, and designated as a burial ground. Zechariah himself likely has Jeremiah 19 in mind in composing his prophecy.<sup>34</sup> In mentioning Jeremiah, Matthew is directing us to the source of Zechariah's reference.

### 27:11-26, Trial before Pilate

The passage falls into three parts, based on the participants in the conversation. In vv. 11-13, Pilate interrogates Jesus. In vv. 14-25, he is dealing with the Jewish leaders and the crowd, who merge into "all the people" in their final statement in v. 25. V. 26 transitions to the crucifixion.

### 27:11-13, Pilate and Jesus

**11 And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews?**--Every time the expression "king of the Jews" appears in Matthew (2:2; 27:11, 29, and 37), it is on the lips of Gentiles.

<sup>33</sup> E.F. Sutcliffe, *JTS*, NS 3:2 (October 1952), pp.227-228

<sup>34</sup> See Hengstenberg on Zech 11:13 and Moo, *The Old Testament in the Gospel Passion Narratives* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983), 195ff, who himself cites Edersheim, *Life and Times* II:595 (p. 576 in Logos edition), for a full development of this dependency.

## Death and Resurrection, Matthew 26-28

We know from the other gospels that the Lord's role as king of the Jews forms the heart of the charge by which the chief priests sought to motivate Pilate to destroy the Lord:

Luk 23:2 And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.

No doubt, Matthew understands this detail, and expects his readers to understand it. But it is interesting that he does not highlight this information. His only previous use of the term is in ch. 2, when wise men from the east came seeking such a king (chart):

Mat 2:1 behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2 Saying, Where is he that is born **King of the Jews**? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Again, both the civil and religious leaders, the "chief priests and scribes," were involved:

Mat 2:3 When **Herod the king** had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all the **chief priests and scribes** of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. 5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

The instances of the title in ch. 2 and in this chapter frame the rest of the gospel. In ch. 2, the political and religious powers (Herod and the priests) are inquiring about the king whom the wise men have announced, but do not succeed in meeting him. Now, after telling us about his teaching and his miracles, Matthew once again brings him to the attention of the political and religious powers. (The political power is now Pilate rather than Herod, because in AD 6, the Herods lost control of Judea and it became a Roman province.)

In ch. 2 the political arm (Herod) was hostile and the priests were open (Figure 7). Now the roles are reversed. Before we are done, Rome will confess his title:

Mat 27:36 And sitting down they watched him there; 37 And set up over his head his accusation written, **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

But the Jews will finally reject it:

Mat 2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2 Saying, **Where is he that is born King of the Jews?** for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. 3 When **Herod the king** had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all the **chief priests and scribes of the people** together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. 5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, 6 And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

**[Roman soldiers]** Mat 27:36 And sitting down they watched him there; 37 And set up over his head his accusation written, **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

Mat 27:41 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.

Figure 7: Attitudes of Political and Religious Leaders to the Messiah

## Death and Resurrection, Matthew 26-28

Mat 27:41 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.

**And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.**--That is, “Yes, but not in the way you mean that expression.” He did not come to stimulate insurrection against Rome or any other earthly government.

The Lord confesses his kingship before Pilate. John records a more detailed testimony, but still on the same subject (chart):

Joh 18:33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, **Art thou the King of the Jews?** 34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? 35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? 36 Jesus answered, **My kingdom** is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is **my kingdom** not from hence. 37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, **Thou sayest that I am a king.** To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Again, Pilate asks if he is a king; again, the Lord confirms, “Thou sayest” (that is, “yes, but not in the way you mean”).

The Lord’s confession of his kingship before Pilate is the basis of a striking admonition that Paul gives Timothy. After describing the ungodly teachers who reject the words of Christ to pursue worldly gain (vv. 3-10), he exhorts Timothy **what** he is to manifest in his ministry (chart).

1Ti 6:11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, **faith**, **love**, patience, **meekness**.

Note the points of agreement with the fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:22-23 (**love**, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, **faith**, **meekness**, temperance). (Patience toward circumstances and longsuffering toward people are closely related, but not the same word; righteousness and godliness in 1 Tim anticipate goodness in Galatians.) Next he summarizes **how** Timothy is to achieve this, by living out his salvation (Figure 8, chart).

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

The two commands in the first half of the verse are parallel, and each presents a paradox about our salvation, the tension between God’s work and our effort, which we see also in Eph 2:8-10 and Titus 3:7-8. We are to fight the fight, but it is our faith (subjective genitive) that actually does the fight. Similarly, we are to lay hold of eternal life, but this is the life that God has already given us.

## Death and Resurrection, Matthew 26-28

In the first command, “Fight the good fight of faith,” the phrase that shows the divine side of the action is simply “of faith.” But in the second, it is a complex relative clause, modifying “eternal life” through the word “whereunto” (a prepositional phrase, “unto which”). Paul says that Timothy has come “unto” this eternal life through two things: God’s sovereign calling, and his own profession at the time of his baptism. Just as his faith leads him to the responsibility of fighting a fight, he must lay hold of the eternal life that he has by God’s call and his response.

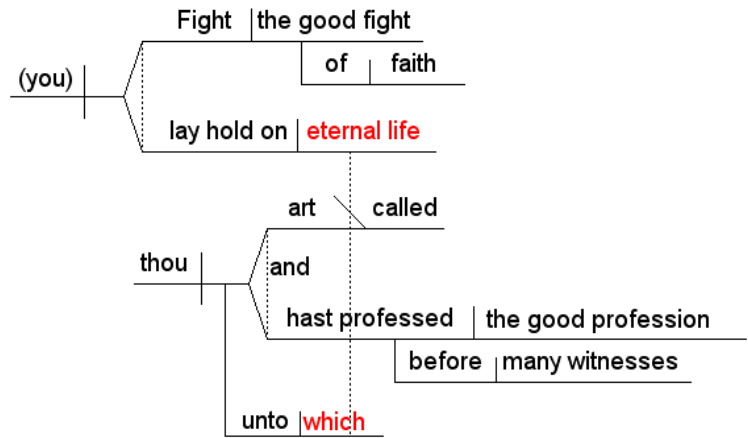


Figure 8: Structure of 1 Tim 6:12

So 6:11 tells **what** he must do, and 6:12 tells **how** his salvation leads to this behavior. Now 6:13-14 tells **why** this behavior is required. Timothy is to follow the example of the Lord Jesus in the passage we are studying:

13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and *before* Christ Jesus, **who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession**; 14 That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

The phrase “good confession” in v. 13 is the same as “good profession” in v. 12.<sup>35</sup> Before Pilate, Christ confessed that he was king. When we receive the Lord Jesus, that’s what we are confessing as well. We are recognizing him as our king, our Lord, our sovereign ruler. Our Lord’s confession provided Pilate with the slender justification he had for putting Christ to death, and led to the sign he placed on the cross over his head. When we confess Christ as king, we are also opening ourselves to opposition and persecution, but we should be encouraged by looking at the example of our Lord as he approaches Calvary.

The confession that saved Timothy was of Christ as king. Many people today emphasize receiving Christ as savior, but treat his lordship as secondary. But Paul identifies Timothy’s baptismal confession with the Lord’s confession to be king, ruling his subjects. Peter four times calls him “Lord and Savior”; never do we read of him as “Savior and Lord.”

**12 And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. 13 Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? 14 And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.**--John 18 tells us that the Lord did respond to Pilate’s own questions about his kingship. But in keeping

<sup>35</sup> Timothy is said to “confess” the good confession, while the Lord “witnesses” it. One bears witness to that of which one has first-hand knowledge, which is the relation in which the Lord stands to his acceptance of the title, “King of the Jews.” He knows this directly. Timothy knows it only by what he has learned from the apostolic teaching, and so “confesses” it, that is, gives his assent and agreement to it.

## Death and Resurrection, Matthew 26-28

with Isa 53:7 and Ps 38:13-14, he will not respond to the legal challenge brought by the Jews.

### 27:15-25, Pilate and the Jews

This conversation centers on Pilate's proposal to release Jesus as an act of clemency.

**15 Now at *that* feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. 16 And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. 17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?**--Barabbas is not just any prisoner. Mark tells us the crime for which he was in prison:

Mar 15:7 And there was *one* named Barabbas, *which lay* bound with them that had made **insurrection** with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

Barabbas and his associates were guilty of the very thing of which the Jews falsely accuse our Lord, of trying to overthrow the Roman government. In addition, his name means "Son of the Father," which may have been a Messianic claim, and there is an ancient textual tradition that his personal name was "Jesus." So the choice with which Pilate presents the Jews is between two claimants to the throne of Israel: one who teaches peace and nonviolence, the other who seeks violent overthrow of society. He no doubt hopes that they will prefer the peaceful Messiah (certainly the one whom he would prefer).

By his reference to Jesus as the one "which is called Christ," Pilate shows his independent knowledge of the man, perhaps through reports of the triumphal entry. The Jews will have accused him of being a rival king. It is unlikely they will have tried to explain the Messianic doctrine to Pilate, since it would not matter to him if Jesus claims this title. Now he is trying to stimulate the support of the multitudes who welcomed the Lord into the city.

Matthew makes clear that Pilate recognizes the Lord's innocence, in two ways.

**18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.**--First, he discerns the true motive behind their opposition. The Lord has broader popular support than they do.

Pilate here shows knowledge of the Lord's prior history, even before the trial. It is the basis for his hope that they will prefer the release of Jesus to Barabbas.

**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.**--The second evidence that Pilate recognizes the Lord's innocence is the report of his wife's dream (only in Matthew). This dream that has persuaded her of Jesus' righteousness, a conclusion that Pilate publicly accepts in v. 24.

She refers to the Lord as "just" (δικαιος, Strong 1342). This term, which Pilate himself picks up in v. 24, describes one who keeps the law, and is a stronger statement than Judas' description of him as "innocent." Again, it shows that Pilate and his household were aware of Jesus, and in this case his acts of mercy, before the trial.

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Her dream recalls other dreams, by which God reveals himself to Gentiles. For example:

- Gen 20:3, God warns Abimelech not to take Sarah as his wife
- Gen 21:24, God warns Laban not to abuse Jacob after the latter has fled
- Gen 41, Pharaoh dreams of the cows and ears of grain
- Dan 2, Dan 4, the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar

Those rulers obeyed what God showed them in dreams. Pilate rejects this revelation.

vv. 18-19 call to mind the OT book of Esther (Table 8, chart).<sup>36</sup> In both cases, a righteous Jew is unjustly persecuted by a vindictive opponent. While the OT does not use “envy” to describe Haman (and indeed, the Greek word φθονος occurs nowhere in the LXX of the canonical

Description	In Esther	In Matthew
Righteous Jew, unjustly persecuted	Mordecai	Jesus
Jealous opponent	Haman	Jewish leaders
Legal authority responsible to condemn the guilty and justify the righteous	King Ahasuerus	Pilate
Wife who interrupts the judge	Esther	Pilate's Wife

*Table 8: The Trial before Pilate and the Book of Esther*

books), the word is not a bad description of his attitude, particularly after Ahasuerus commands him to lead Mordecai in honor through the streets of the city. In both cases, the outcome of the drama hinges on the decision of a pagan authority, whose wife interrupts him to seek mercy for the righteous Jew. But the outcome is very different. Ahasuerus delivers Mordecai and his people, while Pilate condemns the Lord Jesus to death.

Matthew’s technique here is the same as in his use of the history of Ahab, Jehoshaphat, and Micaiah in 1 Kings 22 in shadowing the hearing before Caiaphas. He is condemning the Jewish leaders by identifying them with a reprehensible character from Jewish history (there, Ahab; here, Haman), and in this case, shaming Pilate as well by showing him less attentive to advice from his wife than the Persian king, to whom the Romans no doubt felt highly superior.

**20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.**--Here is the final defection of the multitude, οχλος, that group between the disciples (who are devoted to the Lord) and the leaders (who seek to destroy him). They witness his miracles with excitement, but in the end are swayed to reject him.

The fickleness of the crowd warns us of the dangers associated with the political methods of our day, and highlights the distinctive nature of Christian witness. Conventional wisdom says that if you want to make a political statement, you should have a rally, with lots of people waving brightly colored signs and shouting clever slogans. Such a gathering is supposed to show that there is great popular support for whatever position you are advocating.

If that were true, our Lord would not have been crucified. The crowd enthusiasm that welcomed

<sup>36</sup> Nolland notes a possible parallel with Esther’s interruption of Ahasuerus, but does not develop the parallel.

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him into the city on Palm Sunday did not survive to Good Friday.<sup>37</sup> Crowd enthusiasm doesn't show what the crowd really thinks. In fact, it shows that they are not thinking, but following one another like sheep. The best evidence of a person's true belief is not what he says during a demonstration or rally, but what he says when he stands alone and in jeopardy. Our Savior never instructed his disciples to hold pep rallies. Instead, he warned them to expect persecution and rejection, and exhorted them to bear faithful witness even under opposition.

**21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. 22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?--**Once again, Pilate shows knowledge of the Lord's claims, and seeks to rekindle the enthusiasm of Palm Sunday.

**They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. 23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.--**By this point they refuse to engage in a rational discussion. They all (v. 22), priests and people alike, are simply demanding the death of Jesus.

**24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made,--** Pilate, in turn, is motivated more by a desire to maintain peace than by any concern for justice. His pliability is an important clue to the year of the crucifixion.

Pilate was Prefect over Judaea from AD 26 to AD 36. Earlier in his rule, there are multiple incidents<sup>38</sup> where he dealt with Jewish opposition firmly and with force. One echo of this attitude is in the NT (chart);

Luk 13:1 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

Why should such an authoritarian ruler now acquiesce in the unjust demands of the crowd?

For most of his career, Pilate was the protege of Lucius Aelius Sejanus, a devoted anti-Semite who had by AD 30 climbed to the highest positions of power in Rome. But his political fortunes changed, and in the fall of AD 31 he was condemned and put to death. Pilate as his protege found himself in a precarious position. Any suggestion by the Jews that he was perpetuating the anti-semitic policies of Sejanus would put him at risk. So he must, at all costs, maintain peace and quiet.

**he took water, and washed *his* hands before the multitude,--**The gesture may recall the ceremony Moses prescribed for a city to claim innocence in a case of unattributed murder:

Deu 21:5 And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the LORD thy God

37 France and Morris explain the change in attitude by a difference between the composition of the crowd on Palm Sunday (pilgrims coming to Jerusalem, many from Galilee) and that on Good Friday (residents of Jerusalem, sympathetic to the local zealot Barabbas). But Matthew lumps them all under the term "multitude," which (as Cousland has shown) has a special, distinct meaning as the undecided mass of the Jews.

38 See Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, pp. 106-107 for references and the details about Sejanus.



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hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the LORD; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be *tried*: 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*.

**saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person:**--Other than v. 4, this is the only use of “innocent” αθωος in the NT. Pilate is right that Jesus is just; he is wrong in declaring himself innocent. As the responsible magistrate, he should “justify the righteous [Jesus], and condemn the wicked [Barabbas]” (Deu 25:1), and he does just the opposite.

**see ye to it.**--ουμεις οψεσθε, the plural equivalent of what the priests said to Judas in 27:4, συ οψει. They used this phrase to deflect guilt from themselves to Judas, while Pilate here turns it back on them with their own ritual.

In the hand-washing ritual of Deuteronomy 21, the priests were to supervise the ceremony and sit in judgment on the elders. In Matthew, the situation is reversed. Pilate, who like the elders washes his hands, declares the priests guilty.

**25 Then answered all the people λαος, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.**-- At this point, Matthew stops talking about the crowd οχλος and shifts to λαος “people.” Similarly, at 4:23 he leaves λαος and shifts to οχλος in 4:25 (see Cousland). Λαος is the whole nation, leaders and people together. The crowd emerges out of the people at large to consider the Messiah, but at this point merges back into it. The nation as a whole, not just the leaders, rejects the Messiah.

The formula echoes the peoples’ responses to the curses on Mt Ebal (Cousland), a passage already brought to mind by Judas’ confession to the priests (v. 4):

Deu 27:12 These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin: 13 And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. 14 And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, 15 Cursed *be* the man that maketh *any* graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth *it* in a secret *place*. **And all the people shall answer and say, Amen.**

There is no such response when they utter the blessings from Gerizim in Deut 28. The people are accepting the judgment on themselves. Use of the phrase here makes the people’s rejection of the Lord tantamount to their rejection of the national covenant with God.

### 27:26, The Decision

**26 Then released he Barabbas unto them:**--This is a picture of the larger work of redemption that was underway. Matthew Henry writes,

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if he had not been put in competition with Christ for the favour of the people, it is probable that he had died for his crimes; but that proved the means of his escape; to intimate that Christ was condemned for this purpose, that sinners, even the chief of sinners, might be released;

But it may also have contributed to God's later judgment on Jerusalem. The destruction of the temple in AD 70 was the culmination of the first Jewish-Roman war, which began in AD 66 and was sustained by Jewish nationalists. One can imagine Barabbas returning to encourage his compatriots in standing against the Romans. As someone who had been arrested by the Romans and then released, he would be an example both of the antagonism between the parties, and of the vulnerability of the Romans to popular pressure.

**and when he had scourged Jesus,**--Scourging was a brutal punishment, from which people often died. It was a lashing with a whip in whose thongs were embedded pieces of metal, glass, or stone, that tore the flesh from the body. This particular aspect of the Lord's suffering fulfills what was written of the Servant of the Lord in Isa 53:5, "with his stripes we are healed," and 50:6, "I gave my back to the smiters."<sup>39</sup>

**he delivered παραδίδωμι him to be crucified.**--Pilate becomes the third, after Judas and the Jewish leaders, to "betray" the Lord. Judas violated his obligation to the Lord as a disciple. The leaders violated their obligation as the shepherds of Israel to recognize the Messiah. Pilate violates his obligation as a magistrate to offer true judgment (Deut 25:1). Though he is not a Jew, according to Daniel 4, he holds his office as a trust from God, and is accountable to him for it.

### 27-56, The Humiliation and Recognition of the Messiah

This section has two parts: the humiliation imposed on the Lord, and the honor he receives after his death.

#### 27-49, Humiliation of the Living Messiah<sup>40</sup>

We call this episode the "crucifixion," but the actual act of execution is mentioned only in v. 35, and only as a subordinate clause. The real theme of this section is how the Lord was mocked and put to shame. We can distinguish at least eight episodes in which the Lord is shamed (chart). In some cases, his tormenters are deliberately trying to mock him. In others, actions that they take would have special meaning to him that would depress his spirits. Each case recalls some previous passage of Scripture, either in the OT or in Matthew's record of the Lord's ministry.

**27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.**--This group now becomes the antecedent of "they," which

39 Compare also the complaint of Israel, probably looking back on the Babylonian exile, "The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows" (Psa 129:3).

40 Patte emphasizes the dominance of "mocking" throughout this section. By broadening it to "humiliation," we can integrate a few other pieces that do not fit his model.

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persists throughout the following section. This band is responsible for carrying out the crucifixion, and they set the theme of mockery that others follow.

They begin by mocking his royal title. The Wise Men called him “king of the Jews” because they wanted to worship him. Pilate recognized this title in an effort to extricate himself from a political quagmire. For the soldiers, it is simply an excuse for mockery.

**28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. 29 And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! 30 And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.**--Again, Isa 50:6 comes into focus,

Isa 50:6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and **spitting**.

**31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify *him*. 32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.**--The Lord had previously told his disciples that they would need to take up the cross and follow him:

Mat 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and **take up his cross**, and follow me.

Even at that time, Simon Peter objected to the whole idea of the Lord’s suffering:

Mat 16:22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

But now the disciples have abandoned him, and Simon Peter, the most zealous of them, has denied him to avoid sharing in his suffering. So the soldiers force another Simon to do what they have all refused to do.

The soldiers do not realize how their choice of Simon recalls the Lord’s earlier words, but the incident must have been discouraging to the Lord. It emphasized that those in whom he has invested his life have abandoned him.<sup>41</sup>

**33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, 34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink.**--The drink they offer him is meant to mock him. He has lost much blood through the scourging, and will be ravaged by thirst, so they offer him a drink, but adulterate it with some bitter substance (Mark says it was myrrh) that makes it undrinkable.<sup>42</sup> Their intent is not to relieve his suffering, but to torment him further. In doing so, they are fulfilling a statement made by David concerning his rejection, probably at the hand of Absalom,

41 France

42 Some commentators (e.g., Morris) reference the custom of the women of Jerusalem to give wine mixed with frankincense to condemned criminals to lessen the pain of their execution (Talmud, Sanh. 43a), but myrrh has no such soporific effect, and the ones offering the drink here are soldiers, not women.

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Psa 69:19 Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries *are* all before thee. 20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked *for some* to take pity, but *there was* none; and for comforters, but I found none. 21 **They gave me also gall for my meat;** and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

**35 And they crucified him,**--The reference to the actual crucifixion is almost an afterthought. Matthew records it as a circumstantial (temporal) participle, not even the main clause. A more literal translation is, "When they had crucified him, they parted his garments...." The focus is on the garments, not the crucifixion.

**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 shame associated with the parting of his garments is that he is no longer wearing them, but is exposed naked to passers-by.

Psa 22:16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. ... 18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

**36 And sitting down they watched him there;**--The verb τηρεω (5083) means "keep watch, guard." They are not just beholding (v.55), but guarding against rescuers.

**37 And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**--We know from John that Pilate commanded this title to be posted, as a spiteful action against the Jews. But to the soldiers who had so recently mocked him in vv. 28-31, it was no doubt an occasion for further scorn and laughter.

**38 Then were there two thieves λησται 3027 crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.**--According to John 18:40, Barabbas was a ληστης, and according to Mark, he was an insurrectionist who had been arrested with others:

Mar 15:7 And there was *one* named Barabbas, *which lay* bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

It is likely that the two crucified with the Lord were members of Barabbas' band, and that the Lord himself occupies the cross intended for Barabbas.

"On the right hand ... on the left" describe positions of honor in the royal court. Josephus (Ant. 6:235) describes the layout at Saul's table having Jonathan at his right hand and Abner, captain of the host, at his left. These were the positions of honor that the mother of James and John requested for her sons in the coming kingdom:

Mat 20:20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him. 21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

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Now there is no throne, but a cross, and no disciples to accompany him in glory, but two brigands sharing his agony.

**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.**--Compare the temptation in the wilderness. These are the very words of Satan in 4:3 (turning stones to bread) and 4:6 (cast yourself down).

Mat 4:3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. ... 5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down:

**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.**

Psa 22:7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*, 8 He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

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

**45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. 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?**--Again, a quote from Psa 22,

Psa 22:1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*

But he knew why (chart):

Mat 20:28 the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Mat 26:39 O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.

At this moment, he has been abandoned not only by the soldiers, the passers by, the chief priests, and the thieves, but by God as well.

**47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. 48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.**--Luke tells us that this was part of their mockery (chart):

Lk 23:36 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.

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**49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.**--Here is the ultimate human cruelty, denying him even momentary relief for a desire for a sensational appearance. Again, we hear echoes of Psa 69,

Psa 69:21 They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

### **50-56, Vindication of the Dead Messiah**

**50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.**--With this single event, everything turns around.

First, great and dramatic signs appear. These fall into two parts: those at the death of Christ, and those at his resurrection (chart).

At the time of his death, four things happened, each with spiritual significance.

**51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom;**--The temple veil between the holy place and the holy of holies<sup>43</sup> was a barrier that separated man from God (chart).

Exo 26:31 And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with **cherubims** shall it be made: ... 33 ... and the veil shall divide unto you between the holy *place* and the most holy. 34 And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy *place*.

The veil was embroidered with cherubim,<sup>44</sup> powerful angels. These beings were prominent in the decoration of the tabernacle: they guarded the mercy seat that crowned the ark of the covenant (Exod 25), and adorned the curtains that formed the inner layer of the covering for the entire tabernacle (Ex 26:1). In fact, throughout the Bible, the only place we read of cherubim is in descriptions of the tabernacle or temple, with one exception, and that is the very first reference.

Before Exodus, the only time we read of cherubim is in the history of the sin of Adam and Eve:

Gen 3:23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden **Cherubims**, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

43 There were two notable veils in the temple: one separating the holy place from the courtyard, and another between the holy place and the holy of holies. Commentators vary on which is in view here: the inner veil because of the later emphasis in Hebrews 9-10 on our access to the presence of God, but the outer in view of the public visibility of the other signs. Exod 26:31, 36 do describe two artifacts in these two locations, but in that key passage, only the first, the **תְּכָנִיף**, is called a **καταπετασμα**. The other, the **רָדִיף**, though sometimes translated **καταπετασμα** elsewhere, in this critical passage is denoted by the *hapax επισπαστρον*. In all likelihood, Matthew is thinking of the inner veil. See notes for statistics.

44 In Hebrew, the word “cherubim” is plural; the singular would be “cherub.” Some editions of the KJV add an ‘s’ to make clear that the word is plural; others do not. I follow the latter convention here.

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If you read through the Bible in order, you learn first (from Genesis) that the cherubim separate sinful men from a holy God, and then you learn that they are represented throughout the tabernacle and temple. The very structure of the temple reminded the worshippers that they were separated from God by sin. This structure imposed successive restrictions on access: only Israelites in the outer court, only priests in the holy place, only the high priest, and that only once a year, in the holy of holies—and that access was on the day of atonement, to deal with sin.

The rending of the veil removes this barrier between man and God. With the death of the Messiah, God's wrath against sin has been satisfied, and the way is now open for fellowship.

Usually the opening of the veil is understood as enabling us to come into the presence of God. This is a valid image, developed extensively in Hebrews (e.g., 4:16), but the association with an earthquake suggests another twist to the imagery. The veil was torn, not only to let us *in*, but to show that God was coming *out*.

**and the earth did quake**,--This association calls to mind a passage in the Psalms that envisions God being aroused in wrath by the sufferings of his saint David. Note the reference to God in his temple, and his exit from it.

Ps 18:4 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. 5 The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. 6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: **he heard my voice out of his temple**, and my cry came before him, *even* into his ears. 7 Then **the earth shook and trembled**; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wrath. 8 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. 9 **He bowed the heavens also, and came down**: and **darkness** was under his feet.

Note the conjunction of God coming out of his temple with the earthquake (Matt 27:51) and darkness (27:45). Not only did the torn veil let us come into the presence of God, but perhaps more importantly, it marks God's coming forth in wrath against his enemies. *The first effect* of the death of Christ is to set loose the wrath of God against those who slew him.

**and the rocks rent**;--Only one other passage talks about rocks *πετραί* being torn *σχιζῶ*, and it refers to the rock that the Lord opened in the wilderness to give water to the people of God (chart).

Isa 48:21 And they thirsted not *when* he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.

Paul later identifies the rock with Christ

1Co 10:4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

So *the second effect* of the death of Christ is to make provision for his people. There is a third.

**52 And the graves were opened**—The only other place in the Greek Bible where graves are

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opened is Ezekiel 37:

Eze 37:11 Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. 12 Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will **open your graves**, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. 13 And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have **opened your graves**, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, 14 And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken *it*, and performed *it*, saith the LORD.

*The third effect* of the Lord's death is to pave the way for the final restoration of the nation.

Next, at his resurrection, death was conquered for other saints as well.

**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.**--We know very little about this event, but its function may be to provide the risen Lord with an appropriate entourage.<sup>45</sup> When the Lord returns, he will be accompanied by his saints (Rev 19). When he rose, it would certainly be appropriate for some of the saints to rise with him. We know that David was not among them, for Peter says that he remained in his grave as of the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:29), but perhaps they were recent saints, such as Anna, or Simeon, who welcomed him at his birth.

Second, in response to these great signs, those who led in mocking him now confess his exalted status. Note the reversal from vv. 27-37.

**54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus,**--The verb picks up v. 36, explaining why the detail of soldiers were still there. But this is the same group who in vv. 27-30 mocked him so viciously! (Figure 9, chart)

**saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.**--Compare v. 27. There, the whole detachment charged with the crucifixion is mocking him. Here, they ("and they that were with him") are forced to acknowledge him, granting the very title that was the cause of dispute with the Jewish leaders in 26:63-64. Perhaps sensing the wrath of

- 31, the **soldiers** ... mocked him
- 32, **they** ... found ... Simon
- 34, **they** gave him vinegar
- 35 **they** parted his garments
- 36, **they watched τηρεω 5083** = guarded him
- 37 **they** set up ... his accusation

(then the passers-by, chief priests, thieves, and God himself)

*Figure 9: The Conversion of the Soldiers*

54, the **centurion, and they that were with him, watching τηρεω 5083** Jesus

<sup>45</sup> This suggestion was prompted by a question from Benjamin Peters on 3 Sept 2017.



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God revealed in the earthquake, they are no longer arrogant bullies, but bowed before the Lord's majesty.

What a testimony this is to the power of God in salvation! We see:

- His *grace* in saving those who acted so wickedly
- His *power* in turning them from their haughtiness to submit themselves before him.

This example should be a great encouragement to us in bearing witness for our Lord, even to those who are most antagonistic.

Next, we have the first mention of his followers, other than the disastrous events surrounding Judas and Peter, since the disciples fled in the garden in 26:56.

**55 And many women were there beholding θεωρεω 2334 afar off**--We identified three scenes in this section where the Lord is among his enemies: the trial before the Jews, the trial before Pilate, and the crucifixion. With each, Matthew associates the Lord's followers, but in a way that shows their weakness. First Peter denies the Lord, then Judas repents of his betrayal but does not seek the Lord's forgiveness. Now we have the women at the cross.

Matthew records three things about these witnesses (chart).

1. They are women; the men have fled completely.<sup>46</sup> Women were second-class citizens in Judaism; to this day, in morning prayers, Jewish men daily thank God for not making them gentiles, slaves, or women.<sup>47</sup> But at this point, the Lord's men have failed him completely, and only the women are left. We recall Deborah and Barak in Judges 4, where Deborah's courage filled the gap left by Barak's hesitancy.

Jdg 4:8 And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, *then* I will not go. 9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.

2. They are afar off. The term appears elsewhere in Matthew only in the history of Peter's denial:

Mat 26:58 But Peter followed him **afar off** unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

The women are bolder than the men, but not that bold. They hang back cautiously from the center of the action.

3. They are "beholding." The same word appears in 28:1, where they come "to see the

<sup>46</sup> John 19:25-27 tells us that just before he died, the Lord committed the care of his mother, who was also at the cross, to the care of John. So a) John was there, and b) at some point they were close enough for him to speak to them even in his weakened condition. But our concern here is for how Matthew frames the picture, to emphasize the weakness of the disciples during this time.

<sup>47</sup> See F.F. Bruce on Gal 3:28 for documentation in Jewish literature back to AD 150, and to pre-Christian Greek and Persian sources.

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sepulchre. They also are there when the Lord is put into the tomb (27:61), and they are the first to see the risen Lord (28:9). The central mission of the disciples is to be witnesses of the resurrection:

Act 1:21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained **to be a witness with us of his resurrection.**

Matthew emphasizes that these women, or at least two of them, were the first such witnesses, and in fact the only people to bear witness to every phase of the Lord's passion, from his death through to his resurrection.

**which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:**--To understand this group, consider the description of the Lord's Galilean ministry in Luke 8 (chart),

Luk 8:1 And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve *were* with him, 2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, 3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

A large group of women (both Luke and Matthew call them "many") traveled along with the Lord and the twelve. Some were quite wealthy. They provided material support for the group, and here, far from home, they are the only ones of his friends whom Matthew depicts at the cross. Matthew names three, but a synoptic view of the other gospels (Table 9) shows that others were also bearing witness. In particular, Luke 24:10 tells us that Joanna, whom he names in 8:3, saw the empty sepulchre.

**56 Among which was Mary Magdalene,**--She is called by name only in Luke 8:2, and in the passion scenes, but there is a long tradition<sup>48</sup> that she is to be identified with the sinful woman of Luke 7 and Mary the sister of Martha of Bethany, both of whom anointed the Lord. In this harmonized version of the story, she was "the prodigal daughter," leaving Bethany to trade her virtue for prosperity in the Galilean resort of Magdala. She repented of her sin and devoted her substance to supporting the Lord's ministry. The evangelists may obscure the link to guard the family during the lifetime of Lazarus, who was the object of Jewish antagonism (John 12:10).

**and Mary the mother of James and Joses,**--The Greek father Chrysostom identified this woman with the mother of the Lord, who was at the cross (John 19:25-27). The first two of her other sons were James and Joses:

Mat 13:55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

48 For which the argument is given in detail by John Wenham in his excellent book, *The Easter Enigma*

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	Matt	Mark	Luke	John
At the cross	27:56 Among which was <b>Mary Magdalene</b> , and <b>Mary the mother of James and Joses</b> , and <b>the mother of Zebedee's children</b> .	15:40 among whom was <b>Mary Magdalene</b> , and <b>Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses</b> , and <b>Salome</b> ; 41... and many <b>other women</b> which came up with him unto Jerusalem.	23:49 And all his acquaintance, and <b>the women that followed him from Galilee</b> , stood afar off, beholding these things.	19:25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus <b>his mother</b> , and <b>his mother's sister</b> , <b>Mary the wife of Cleophas</b> , and <b>Mary Magdalene</b> .
Watching the burial	27:61 And there was <b>Mary Magdalene</b> , and <b>the other Mary</b> , sitting over against the sepulchre.	15:47 And <b>Mary Magdalene</b> and <b>Mary the mother of Joses</b> beheld where he was laid.	23:55 And <b>the women also, which came with him from Galilee</b> , followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.	
Coming to the tomb	28:1 ... as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came <b>Mary Magdalene</b> and <b>the other Mary</b> to see the sepulchre.	16:1 And when the sabbath was past, <b>Mary Magdalene</b> , and <b>Mary the mother of James</b> , and <b>Salome</b> , had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.	24:1 Now ... they came unto the sepulchre,... 10 It was <b>Mary Magdalene</b> , and <b>Joanna</b> , and <b>Mary the mother of James</b> , and <b>other women that were with them</b> , which told these things unto the apostles.	Joh 20:1 The first day of the week cometh <b>Mary Magdalene</b> early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.
Meeting Jesus	28:9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail.	16:9 Now when <i>Jesus</i> was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to <b>Mary Magdalene</b> , out of whom he had cast seven devils.		20:16 Jesus saith unto her, <b>Mary</b> . She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

*Table 9: The Witness of the Women*

But as late as Acts 1:14, that Mary is still called “the mother of Jesus.” More likely, as Table 9 suggests, this woman is to be identified with the wife of Cleophas, who is probably the brother of Joseph, foster-father of our Lord.<sup>49</sup>

It may seem strange that Matthew omits the Lord’s mother. But John 19:25 apparently describes a moment earlier in the crucifixion, when Mary and John approached the cross and the Lord committed Mary into John’s care. As the women moved away from the cross to the location where they are mentioned in Matthew, John has probably led Mary away, so that she and he are no longer at Golgotha.

**and the mother of Zebedee's children.**--From Table 9, she appears to be named Salome, and identified as the sister of Mary. We know from 20:20-23 that she was traveling with the group, for she asked a special favor for her sons.

The prominence of the women in these episodes has several important lessons for us. Observe:

1. Their *faithfulness*: They were the most faithful of all the Lord’s followers. The men had fled, at best, and some had even betrayed or denied him. But they stuck with him to the very end.
2. Their *insight*: They were entrusted by the Lord with the most comprehensive overview of all the events included in the core gospel proclamation, as recorded in 1 Cor 15: that

<sup>49</sup> Thus Wenham, who devotes much attention to analyzing the relations among the women.

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Christ *died*, was *buried*, *rose*, and was *seen*. Only the women, in particular Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joses, participated in all four of these.

3. Their *honor*. The testimony of women was despised in the first century, but the Lord entrusted these faithful women to bring the news of his resurrection to the male disciples.

One of the distinctive features of the church as it is described in the NT is the insistence that men hold positions of leadership. The example of the Lord's women disciples shows that this principle does not mean that women are spiritually inferior with no role in the church. In fact, the conduct of these women, like that of Deborah in Judges, shows that they often have greater faith in the Lord and are more steadfast to him. My own experience is that in churches that allow women in leadership roles, the men tend to drop out and leave it all to the women (just as happened at the cross!). Perhaps God has insisted on male leadership to force the men, contrary to their natural laziness, to be involved. Sisters should encourage and support their sons and husbands to do the work God has appointed them, rather than seeking roles in the church that God has reserved for men.

### 27:57-66, Contrasting Preparations

The Lord now returns to his friends (Table 3, chart), and in keeping with the contrast that governs this entire section, two groups now prepare for the Lord's burial—some unexpected friends, and his enemies.

#### 57-61, Joseph of Arimathaea (and Nicodemus)

**57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:--**Luke tells us that he was a “counselor,” that is, a member of the Sanhedrin (chart):

Luk 23:50 And, behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a **counsellor**; *and he was* a good man, and a just: 51 (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;)

The collocation of “rich” and “disciple” recalls the Lord's words on the way to Jerusalem,

Mat 19:23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 25 When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? 26 But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

Joseph illustrates the Lord's last statement.

The Father here provides just the right person to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy,

Isa 53:9 And he made his grave with ~~the~~ wicked [men], and with ~~the~~ [a] rich [man] in his

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death;

When we studied this passage, we suggested that this verse expresses a contrast. The initial “he made” is probably impersonal: “they appointed.” Ordinarily a criminal would have been buried in a common grave. They (the Jews, Pilate) expected that he would be buried with the other two men who were crucified (note the plural in Isa 53:9). But God had other plans, and in fact he was buried with honor, in a rich man’s tomb.

Recall that John’s disciples buried him after Herod killed him:

Mat 14:12 And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

We expect to see the Twelve performing this duty, but they are still cowering in the shadows. But in the words of Matthew Henry: “what work God has to do, he will find out instruments to do it.” And at this moment, two of the most unlikely people show up to honor the Lord: dissenting members of the Sanhedrin, the very group that agitated for his death.

John tells us that he had another notable associate in this work,:

Joh 19:38 And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. 39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*. 40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

According to John 7, Nicodemus was among the “chief priests and Pharisees” who tried unsuccessfully to have Jesus arrested at the feast of Tabernacles the previous fall, and there also he dissented from their opposition to the Lord:

Joh 7:50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, **being one of them**,) 51 Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

These two men were both prominent Jews, both members of the Jewish council, but (unlike the rest of the council) both responsive to the Lord’s teaching. We see this group emerge in Acts (chart):

Act 6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Recall Paul’s testimony before the Sanhedrin:

Act 22:3 I am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. 4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. 5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: ... 19 And I

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said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: 20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. 21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

This minority is an important demonstration of the principle that encouraged Paul in his ministry:

Rom 11:1 I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. 4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of* Baal. 5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

**58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.**--In spite of the shame of being associated with a condemned man, Joseph casts his reputation to the wind and identifies himself to Pilate as a friend of the Lord.

**59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock:**--It had to be a “new tomb,” for Jewish custom forbade burying a criminal in the family tomb (Sanh 6:5).<sup>50</sup>

**and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.**--It was common to secure a tomb with a round stone, to protect it from wild animals. Figure 10 (chart) shows the tomb of the family of Herod the Great in Jerusalem.

**61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.**--They continue there after Joseph has left.

### **62-66, The Lord's Enemies<sup>51</sup>**

**62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto**



Figure 10: Family tomb of Herod the Great in Jerusalem (<https://www.itraveljerusalem.com/ent/herod-family-tomb/>)

<sup>50</sup> [https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah\\_Sanhedrin.6.5?lang=bi](https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Sanhedrin.6.5?lang=bi). Thus Morris, who thinks this stricture would also mean that Joseph could not later use the tomb for himself, making it a very costly gift indeed.

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**Pilate**,--Thus, while our Lord rests on the Sabbath, they violate it with profane business and interaction with Gentiles.

**63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.**--The Pharisees remember the promise of the resurrection better than the disciples did. He told them frequently, and openly enough that even those outside of the circle of disciples knew of the promise, but the disciples were surprised when it happened.

They may recall his teaching from ch. 12 (chart):

Mat 12:38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. 39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: 40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

**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.**--They understand the power of resurrection as evidence for the message that the Lord brought. Their worst fear was fulfilled: it was the message of resurrection that formed the basis of the gospel.

**65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch:**--It is sometimes suggested (France, Carson, see notes) that he is cynically sending them off to use their own temple guard. But the use of a Latin loan word here, the term "soldiers" in 28:12, and the fact that the guard is afraid that Pilate will care what became of the body, all show that these are Romans. We know that the group that arrested the Lord included a Roman cohort (John 18:3) as well as the temple guard (Luke 22:52), and Pilate is likely referring to this previously assigned body of soldiers. "Take the same men I gave you for the arrest."

**go your way, make it as sure as ye can.**--Thus in the Lord's burial, as in his condemnation and death, the Gentile forces of Rome join with the Jewish leaders in rejecting the Lord. Later, the believers interpret this collusion in the light of Psalm 2:

Act 4:24 they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou *art* God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: 25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? 26 The **kings** of the earth stood up, and the **rulers** were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ [Psa 2:2]. 27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

Their prayer makes clear that "the kings ... and the rulers" encompass both the Gentile powers and the Jewish leaders. The two cooperated to kill Jesus, and to try to keep him dead.

51 Most of this section is repeated from our Easter study of 2010.

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The Psalm goes on to record their resolve:

Psa 2:1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*, 3 **Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.**

They view themselves constrained by the Lord and long to break free from that constraint. In the light of that complaint, it is interesting that they think they can constrain the Lord, and bind him by sealing his tomb:

**66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.**--Not only did they post a guard, but they also sealed the stone, probably by passing a rope across it and sealing it to the bedrock on either side, so that anyone who would roll the stone open would have to break the seals. Figure 11 (chart) illustrates how it might have looked. Thus there would be two seals. Perhaps one represented Rome and the other the Sanhedrin, corresponding to the kings and the rulers in Ps 2.

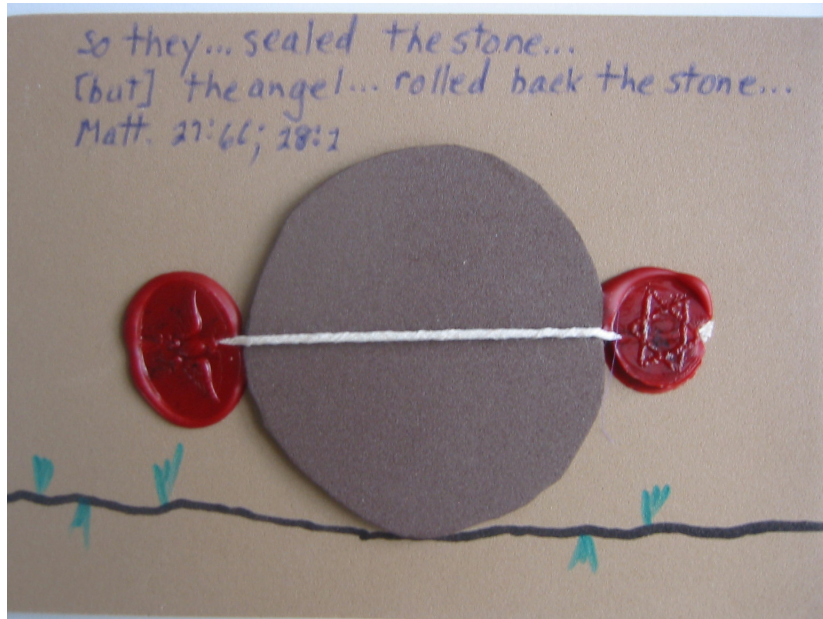


Figure 11: How the stone might have been sealed

Matthew is the only evangelist to mention that the tomb was sealed. This observation leads us to ask what special meaning it had for him.

A seal is a piece of carved stone or metal, used to make a distinctive impression in clay or wax. Seals are often mentioned in the OT.<sup>52</sup> They served a similar role to a signature today, representing the *identity* of the person who applied the seal.<sup>53</sup> If the seal was applied to a document, they showed that the people who sealed it *agreed* with it. This was the meaning when Nehemiah led the nation into a renewal of their covenant with God (chart):

Neh 9:38 And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, **seal** unto it.

52 We studied seals in the Bible extensively in our Easter study in 2010, available at [http://www.cyber-chapel.org/sermons/special/easter/notes/10\\_SealedTomb.pdf](http://www.cyber-chapel.org/sermons/special/easter/notes/10_SealedTomb.pdf), where these examples are discussed further.

53 Gen 38:17-35 illustrates how the seal identifies a person.



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The seals of the nation's leaders were like the signatures on the Declaration of Independence. They are accepting responsibility for the document. In our chapter, the sealers (probably the governor and the Sanhedrin) are accepting responsibility for the death of Christ.

If the signer is a person of authority, the seal shows that the document conveys that *authority*. Kings seal letters to ensure that the recipients recognize their authority. Jezebel secured the death of Nabal with letters sealed with Ahab's seal (1 Ki 21:7-8). The principle is explicit in Esther,

Est 8:8 for the writing which is written in the king's name, and **sealed with the king's ring**, may no man reverse.

So in our text, the seals remind people that anyone who dares to open the tomb is challenging Rome and the Sanhedrin.

In addition, a seal shows that whatever is sealed has not been tampered with. Legal documents were often produced in duplicate. One was kept open for reference, while the other was sealed. If someone suggested that the open copy had been altered, the sealed one could be opened before witnesses and compared. We see this practice in the land transaction recorded in Jer 32:

Jer 32:9 And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that *was* in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, *even* seventeen shekels of silver. 10 And I subscribed the evidence, and **sealed it**, and took witnesses, and weighed *him* the money in the balances. 11 So I took the evidence of the purchase, *both* that which was **sealed according** to the law and custom, and that which was open: 12 And I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's *son*, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison.

The seals on the tomb would guarantee that nobody had interfered with the body during the time it was under guard.

One instance of the seal used for protection in the OT is particularly similar to Matthew's account. Daniel 6 records how Darius the Mede organized his kingdom under 120 princes, with three overseers, of whom Daniel was the chief. Out of jealousy, the other overseers persuaded Darius to forbid prayer to anyone but himself, knowing that Daniel would be faithful to his God. When Daniel was brought to judgment, Darius reluctantly was forced to cast him into the den of lions (Table 10, chart):

Dan 6:16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. 17 And a **stone** was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king **sealed it** with his own **signet**, and with the **signet** of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. . . . 21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. 22 My God hath sent his **angel**, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me:

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Daniel's den of lions is an excellent parallel to our Lord's tomb, and the sealing in Matthew may even be intended to recall Daniel's experience. In both cases, the king has no personal animosity against the man of God, but acts at the instigation of other rulers. In Daniel's case, we are told explicitly of multiple seals, one from the king, and the other from the nobles who had accused Daniel in the first place.

Description	In Daniel	In Matthew
Righteous Jew, unjustly persecuted	Daniel	Jesus
Jealous opponent	Rival bureaucrats	Jewish leaders
Reluctant legal authority	King Darius	Pilate
Sealed confinement	Den of lions	Grave
Delivering angel	Shut lions' mouths	Opened the grave

*Table 10: Parallels between Daniel and our Lord*

Consider how the features of seals in the OT appear here.

- They represent *agreement* of the people identified with the seals in what is going on. Anyone who passed by Daniel's den of lions would know that the king and his lords were responsible. Anyone who passed by the Lord's tomb would know that Pilate (and perhaps the Sanhedrin) were involved.
- They represent the *authority* by which the door is sealed. Anybody who would try to open the den of lions would be punished by the king of Persia. Similarly, anybody who would try to open our Lord's tomb would be punished by the power of Rome.
- They *prevent tampering*. Daniel's friends cannot interfere without being detected; the Lord's disciples cannot steal his body without leaving a mark.

But the seals of Persia and Rome mean nothing to God. Neither the stone nor its seals could keep God's angel out of Daniel's den, or keep the Lord Jesus in the tomb.

This is the fourth time we've seen Matthew highlight the character of the people he describes by allusions to an OT story (Table 11, chart). In each case, he highlights the threefold relation of the Lord Jesus, the Jewish leaders, and the civil authority with a parallel from the OT. In addition, each story records the ultimate downfall of the false accusers, anticipating the destruction of Jerusalem and the priestly institution in AD 70, as our Lord has foretold in ch. 24.

Why does Matthew draw these parallels? No doubt, he seeks to exalt the Lord and criticize the Lord's enemies, by comparing each of them with legendary heroes and villains from Israel's history. But there may be a deeper lesson for us. Though the ministry of our Lord as redeemer is unique, his experience as a righteous man suffering at the hands of the wicked, and the failure of the government to defend him, is nothing new. Moses, Micaiah, Mordecai, and Daniel all experienced situations closely analogous to those faced by the Lord. So we should not be surprised if we face similar opposition. He warned his disciples in his earlier teaching,

Mat 10:17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will

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scourge you in their synagogues; 18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

Mat 24:9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

It has always been the lot of the righteous to suffer unjust accusation and persecution, be abandoned by worldly rulers, and receive their ultimate vindication from the hand of God. Our Lord, as the most righteous man who ever lived, is one more example of this sad history.

	2:1-18 Slaughter of Innocents	26:63-68 Trial before Sanhedrin	27:19 Pilate's Wife	27:62-66 Sealed Tomb
OT Parallel	Exodus 1-2 & Targums	1 Kings 22	Esther	Daniel 6
Salient Feature	Slaughter of Babies	Adjure, slap and demand for prophecy	Woman interrupts husband	Sealed stone door
Righteous Victim ~ Lord Jesus	Moses	Micaiah	Mordecai	Daniel
Accusers ~ Chief Priests	Jannes and Jambres (Targum)	Ahab, Zedekiah	Haman	Jealous colleagues
Fall of Accusers	Plagues	Ahab slain in battle	Haman hanged	Cast into lions' den

*Table 11: OT Parallels of our Lord's Adversaries*

### 28:1-20, Contrasting Responses to the Resurrection

Unlike the earlier contrasts, this one is organized chiasmically, so as not to end focused on the Lord's enemies (Table 3, chart).

#### **28:1-10, Friends: The Women at the Tomb**

**28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.**--These are two of the women mentioned in v. 56; by our reconstruction, Mary of Bethany, and the Lord's aunt through his foster father Joseph, the wife of Cleopas.

**2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.**--The word "for" emphasizes that the angel's action is the cause of the earthquake. This was not a gentle intervention. Heaven set foot on earth, and the earth shook.

The other gospels simply note that the stone was open. Only Matthew says that the angel rolled it away, probably because of the symbolism of the seals. Matthew presents the Lord Jesus as the king, who overrules all earthly authorities, including those whose seals sought in vain to keep

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him in the grave.

We noted earlier that the collusion between Rome and the priesthood corresponded to the opposition of “the kings ... and the rulers ...” to the Lord and his Messiah in Psalm 2, and that the sealing of the Lord Jesus in the tomb was a particularly arrogant expression of the desire of these rulers to cast off the constraints that God placed on them. But that is not the end of Psalm 2 (Table 12, chart). The next verse goes on to say that the Lord will mock their rebellion. God deliberately broke the seals to mock the authority of Rome and the Temple hierarchy. The angel

Ps 2	Matt 27-28
2:1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,	27:62 the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, ... 65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.
3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.	27:66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.
4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.	28:2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

*Table 12: Continuing Psalm 2*

appeared, walked right up to the stone in the presence of the soldiers, and pushed it aside, breaking the seals. Then he sat on it, as much as if to say, “There. What are you guys going to do about that?”

**3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: 4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.**--The soldiers would have killed any human who behaved in this way. But they are powerless before the Lord.

Now the angel speaks to the women, and then they meet the Lord, who also speaks with them. Note the strong parallel between the words of the angel and those of the Lord (Table 13, chart).

We’ll study these two statements in three steps.

1. First note the overall similarity, and the transition through the parallel verses 8 and 9.
2. Then consider each element of the parallel.
3. Finally, pay special attention to unmatched elements, which typically indicate special attention.

**Overall structure.**--There are five parallels:

1. Description of the speaker
2. Reassurance by the speaker not to be afraid
3. Command to the women to go tell the men what’s going on.

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### 4. Instruction to go to Galilee

<p>5 And the angel</p>		<p><b>behold, Jesus</b> met them, saying, All hail.</p>
		And <b>they came and held him</b> by the feet, and worshipped him.
answered and said unto the women, <b>Fear not ye</b> <i>Μὴ φοβεῖσθε ὑμεῖς:</i>	→ 8 And <b>they departed</b>	10 Then said Jesus unto them, <b>Be not afraid</b> <i>Μὴ φοβεῖσθε:</i>
for I know that <b>ye seek Jesus</b> , which was crucified. 6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.	quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run	
7 And <b>go</b> quickly, and <b>tell his disciples</b> that he is risen from the dead; and,	<b>to bring his disciples word.</b>	
behold, he <b>goeth</b> before you <b>into Galilee;</b>	9 And <b>as they went to tell his disciples,</b>	<b>go tell my brethren</b>
<b>there shall ye see him:</b>	→	that they <b>go into Galilee,</b>
<b>lo,</b> I have told you.		and <b>there shall they see me.</b>

*Table 13: Parallel Statements by the Angel and the Lord*

### 5. Promise that he will appear to them there.

Three unmatched elements will merit our attention:

1. In the first pane., the angel’s description of their search for Jesus, and announcement of his resurrection.
2. The angel’s final words, “Lo, I have told you.”
3. The description of their greeting of the Lord in v. 9.

Note also how Matthew joins the two paragraphs, in two ways.

1. The angel ends with a command to “behold” (ἰδοὺ, v. 7), while the Lord’s appearance begins with the same word (9b).
2. Compare vv. 8-9, describing their movement and their purpose to do what the angel has commanded them.

The transition is significant. As they obey the instruction from the angel, they receive an even greater blessing. Paying attention to what the angel says (“Behold, I have told you”) leads them to a personal appearance of the Lord (“Behold, Jesus met them”). This is a general principle in our growth before the Lord: if we obey the light we are given, we will be given more light.

Isa 30:21 And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This *is* the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

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**Matched elements.**--Now consider the elements that match.

*Who appears:* the angel, then Jesus. When one comes before royalty, one always meets first the attendants and doorkeepers.

- Daniel in ch. 8, 9 meets Gabriel before his interview in ch. 10 with the preincarnate Christ.
- The shepherds are first greeted by angels in Luke 2 before coming to Bethlehem to meet the infant Lord.
- John the Baptist introduced the Lord to his first disciples.

*Fear not:* The command is the same in both cases, μή φοβείσθε. It is helpful to distinguish three different feelings, all described by the same word “fear,”<sup>54</sup> but differing in precisely what we fear (chart).

1. All men ought to fear God’s **judgment**. This kind of fear recognizes that we are accountable to God for our actions. Note in each case how the **fear** of God is coupled with **actions**. Neither the angel nor the Lord is discouraging the women from this godly fear. In fact, people usually need to be commanded to fear God in this sense.
  - (a) Joshua exhorted the people, “Now therefore **fear the Lord**, and **serve him** in sincerity and truth” (Jos. 24:14)
  - (b) So Samuel exhorts Israel in bidding them farewell, “Only **fear the LORD**, and **serve him** in truth with all your heart” (1 Sam. 12:24)
  - (c) This is not just an OT concept. Act 9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and **walking** in the **fear of the Lord**, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.
  - (d) The Preacher in Ecclesiastes captures the principle: Ecc 12:13 **Fear God**, and **keep his commandments**: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. 14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.
2. We are **not** to fear **worldly threats**. We are to fear God and obey him because he is all-powerful, and will hold us to account. His complete power has another consequence: he will protect us from other dangers. So the command, “**Fear not**,” is often associated with some human or environmental **threat**. God sometimes tells people not to fear, when the object of their fear is some human threat. This version of the command is particularly common in the OT, where it is often associated with a “for” clause giving the **reason**.<sup>55</sup>
  - (a) When Hagar and Ishmael are about to **perish** in the wilderness, God appears to her: Gen 21:17 And God heard the **voice of the lad**; and the angel of God called to Hagar

<sup>54</sup> See notes for further references on each of these categories.

<sup>55</sup> The prohibition to fear things other than God is rooted in the OT use of the word “fear” for “worship,” cf. Jdg 6:10; 2 Ki 17:34-39. To fear anything other than God is to worship it.

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out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? **fear not**; **for** God hath heard the voice of the lad where he *is*.

- (b) When Jacob learned that Joseph was in Egypt, the prospect of moving to an **alien culture**, one that had threatened his grandfather Abraham, was daunting. God appeared to him: Gen 46:2-3 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here *am* I. 3 And he said, I *am* God, the God of thy father: **fear not** to go down into **Egypt**; **for** I will there make of thee a great nation:
  - (c) This is the sense of the expression in Matt 1:20, where Joseph must weigh the **shame** that might come on him from taking an impure woman as his wife: Mat 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, **fear not to take unto thee Mary** thy wife: **for** that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.
3. Our passage illustrates the **fear of God's presence**, which is different. Unlike the first case, they are told not to fear. But unlike the second case, the fear is stimulated, not by some worldly challenge, but by the appearance of God or an angel directly. The natural response of our **sinful flesh** in the **presence of God's glory** is to **fear**.
- (a) Throughout the Bible, people naturally fall into fear at the very presence of God:
    - i. Gen 3:9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou? 10 And he said, **I heard thy voice in the garden**, and **I was afraid**, **because I was naked**; and I hid myself.
    - ii. Isa 6:5 Then said I, **Woe is me!** for I am undone; because **I am a man of unclean lips**, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: **for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts**.
  - (b) This is why the soldiers fear in v. 4. They are not heeding the call of Joshua or Samuel to fear and obey the Lord. This is the natural reaction of sinful flesh to the Lord's presence. And the angel doesn't tell them to do any differently.
  - (c) But throughout the Bible, and mostly in the NT, when God or his angel appear suddenly to his own people, he assures them, "Fear not." Two of the most illuminating examples are from the OT.
    - i. Jdg 6:22 And when Gideon perceived that he *was* an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because **I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face**. 23 And the LORD said unto him, Peace *be* unto thee; **fear not**: thou shalt not die.
    - ii. In the OT, Daniel is terrified when **he sees "a certain man clothed with linen"** (10:5), who matches the description of the Lord Jesus in Revelation 1. But he is assured: Dan 10:18 Then there came again and touched me *one* like the

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appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, 19 And said, O man greatly beloved, **fear not**: peace *be* unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong.

- (d) The Daniel passage holds the key. Fear in the presence of God's glory is natural, but the Lord offers comfort to those whom he loves. He loves the women, but the soldiers have not yet submitted to him, and are still under his wrath.

*Command to go and tell*: The angel sends the women to "his disciples," while the Lord sends them to "my brethren." The two groups are not the same.

The disciples are the eleven. John 20 records that Mary Magdalene brought Peter and John to the tomb immediately.<sup>56</sup>

"Brethren" is broader than the Eleven.<sup>57</sup> It is all of those who join with him in calling God, "Our Father" (Matt 6:9). Our Lord defines this group in Matthew 12 (chart):

Mat 12:48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? 49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! 50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

It is the broad group of fellow-believers to whom we owe special care according to Matthew 25,

Mat 25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

Matthew is not denying appearances to a few in Emmaus and Jerusalem, as recorded by Luke and John. The women are being sent to the broader circle of disciples, perhaps the 500 mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor 15.

1Co 15:5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once;

*Appointment in Galilee*: This larger meeting is to be in "Galilee of the Gentiles," in preparation for the mission to the Gentiles. Only Matthew, in 4:15, mentions "Galilee of the Gentiles" from Isa 9:1.

Mat 4:13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: 14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, **Galilee of the Gentiles**; 16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

*Promise that they will see him*: Both the angel and the Lord himself commission the women to

56 See Wenham or <https://answersingenesis.org/jesus-christ/resurrection/christs-resurrection-four-accounts-one-reality/> for details. The women separate: Mary Magdalene goes to get Peter and John, who are staying in the city at John's house, while the other women return to Bethany, where most of the disciples were taking refuge.

57 This is Carson's observation.



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assure those to whom they are sent that if they do as they are told (that is, go to Galilee), they will see the Lord. Perhaps this is an example of our ministry to others, encouraging them that though the Lord may seem distant, he is accessible to those who seek him.

Jer 29:12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. 13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

Psa 145:18 The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

**Unmatched elements.**--The high degree of alignment among these five elements naturally draws our attention to three elements that are not matched (chart).

*5b-6, the angel's words to the women:* Description of their true interest, and announcement of the resurrection. This corresponds to 9b, when the Lord himself appears to them. We see their devout interest, which the angel has already described.

*9b, the women's response to the Lord:* While not in the same position as 5b-6, this clearly responds to it.

7, "*lo, I have told you.*" Using "lo" or "behold" to introduce a statement of speech emphasizes that the hearers should pay special attention to what they have heard. Our Lord used this expression in the Olivet discourse (chart):

Mat 24:23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. 25 **Behold, I have told you before.**

That is, "Pay special attention to what I have just told you." We see this construction also in the OT prophets.<sup>58</sup>

Amo 6:11 For, **behold, the LORD commandeth**, and he will smite the great house with breaches, and the little house with clefts.

Amo 9:9 For, **lo, I will command**, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.

Eze 36:6 Prophecy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord GOD; **Behold, I have spoken** in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen:

The emphasis is important at this transitional position between the two meetings, for it is in their obedience to what the angel has said that they are granted the meeting with the Lord himself.

58 France compares the Lord's concluding statements to emphasize his authority: Isa 1:2; 25:8; Joel 3:8; Num 14:35; Ezek 5:15, 17. But he does not observe the distinctive construction of הנה followed by a verb of speech.

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Again, Matthew's arrangement of his material emphasizes the blessings on those who obey the light they are given, without needing to know the end of the story.

Verse 8 is the last of seven references to the Lord's burial place in Matthew. Matthew uses two different Greek words for these references, though unfortunately our version does not distinguish them (chart). One word, *ταφος* (Strong 5028), means simply "grave, tomb," a place for putting a dead body. Matthew is the only Evangelist who uses this word, and in the passion story it appears four times:

Matt. 27:61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the **sepulchre**.

Matt. 27:64 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.

Matt. 27:66 So they went, and made the **sepulchre** sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

Matt. 28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the **sepulchre**.

The other word, *μνημειον* (Strong 3419) has the additional sense of being a monument or memorial of the person who is buried. It is the usual word used elsewhere in the NT to describe the grave of our Lord.<sup>59</sup> Matthew uses it twice:

Mat 27:59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 And laid it in his own new **tomb**, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the **sepulchre**, and departed. [both "tomb" and "sepulchre"]

Mat 28:8 And they departed quickly from the **sepulchre** with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

Why does Matthew make this distinction?

The only instance of *ταφος* in the NT outside of the gospels emphasizes its corruption:<sup>60</sup>

Rom 3:13 Their throat *is* an open **sepulchre**; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips:

At the beginning of the account, we are told that Joseph has made available, not just a tomb, but a memorial—a family monument of great cost and prominence. But when the Lord is put in it, it is sorrowfully called simply a *ταφος*. For Matthew and the other disciples, those three days were a time with no rejoicing. Their Lord is dead and, as far as they know, beginning to decay. But then he rises from the dead. Joseph's cave is empty. It is no longer a *ταφος*, a place of corruption

<sup>59</sup> The other evangelists also use *μνημα* (Strong 3418). All three terms translate קבר in the LXX (*ταφος* 33x, *μνημειον* 11x, *μνημα* 13x). The only reference to the Lord's tomb outside the gospels is Acts 13:29.

<sup>60</sup> Matthew uses both terms in 23:29 in an ascensive parallelism that emphasizes the additional glory of a *μνημειον* over a *ταφος*.

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and death, but it has become a μνημειον, a memorial, not just of Joseph's family, but of the power of the risen Lord. And so throughout the NT, whenever the apostles refer to the burial place of the Lord, they call it a memorial.

### **28:11-15, Enemies: Perpetuating a Lie**

**11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed—** απαγγελω, as in vv. 8, 9, 10 (chart).

Mat 28:8-11 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to **bring** his disciples **word**. 9 And as they went to **tell** his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. 10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go **tell** my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. 11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and **shewed** unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

Everybody, even the guard who was charged with keeping him dead, is reporting the resurrection!

**unto the chief priests all the things that were done.**--They would not have dared report to the governor.

**12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel,**--Last instance of their counsel, (Echo of Ps 2?) Others in Matt. 12:14; 22:15; 27:1; 7; cf. 26:4.

Isa 8:9 Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. 10 Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God *is* with us.

**they gave large money unto the soldiers,**--Compare bribery of Judas in ch 26, the result of the first time in this section they took counsel, 26:4. Their solution to everything is money! Compare the impact of the cleansing of the temple (21:12-17) on their finances. They are a business.

**13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.**--The excuse has two problems.

1. It admits their failure, for this was the very event that the guard was supposed to prevent:

Mat 27:64 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:

2. It also presumes that the guards would know what happened while they were asleep.

**14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. 15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among**

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**the Jews until this day.**--Thus they demonstrate the falseness of their promise at the cross,

Mat 27:41 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.

Even in the face of divine deliverance, they would not believe.

### **28:16-20, Friends: The Gathering in Galilee**

**16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.**--We don't know which mountain, but we do know how mountains have been used previously in the gospel, and each incident suggests the significance of situating this meeting on a mountain (Table 14, chart).

- Satan offered the Lord all the kingdoms of the world in exchange for his worship; now he sends his disciples to declare his kingship through those same nations.
- The message they are to carry is what he told them on the Sermon on the Mount (contrary to the suggestions of some that the Sermon on the Mount is not for believers in this age).
- His claim of “all authority” will remind Peter, James, and John of what they saw at the transfiguration.
- The discourse on the Olivet Discourse outlined difficult times leading up to “the end of the world,” for which he now promises his presence.

Previous Mountain Experience	Great Commission, ch. 28
4:8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him <b>all the kingdoms of the world</b> , and the glory of them; 9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.	19 Go ye therefore, and teach <b>all nations</b> , baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
5:1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: 2 And he opened his mouth, and <b>taught them</b> ,	20a Teaching them to observe <b>all things whatsoever I have commanded you</b> :
17:1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was <b>transfigured</b> before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.	18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, <b>All power [authority] is given unto me</b> in heaven and in earth.
24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what <i>shall be</i> the sign of thy coming, and of <b>the end of the world</b> ?	20b and, lo, I am with you always, <i>even unto the end of the world</i> .

*Table 14: Meetings on Mountains in Matthew*

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By calling them to a mountain for this announcement (perhaps even the mountain of the sermon on the mount or the transfiguration), he reminds them of their earlier experience, and makes his commission to them more vivid. In addition, recall that Matthew emphasizes parallels between Moses and our Lord, the prophet like unto Moses (Deut 18:15-19).

- The infancy narrative echoes the birth of Moses in Exodus 1.
- His forty-day fast in the wilderness reflects Moses' forty-day fasts while receiving the Law.
- The Sermon on the Mount is patterned after the book of Deuteronomy.
- The five great discourses have been compared to the five books of Moses.
- Allison<sup>61</sup> suggests that collecting the ten miracles in ch. 8-9 reflects the ten plagues that Moses brought on Israel.

In light of these similarities, this final meeting on a mountain, discussing the land yet to be possessed, recalls the last scene in the life of Moses (Table 15, chart). There are superficial similarities, but deep differences, showing how much greater our Lord is than Moses.

- Moses views the land from outside; the Lord is on a mountain in Galilee.

Moses, Deuteronomy 34	Our Lord, Matthew
1 And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that <i>is</i> over against Jericho.	28:16 Galilee, ... a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.
And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, 2 And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, 3 And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. 4 And the LORD said unto him, This <i>is</i> the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed:	28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations
I have caused thee to see <i>it</i> with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.	26:64 Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.
5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. 6 And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.	28:20 lo, I am with you <i>always, even</i> unto the end of the world.

*Table 15: Final Mountaintop Scenes of Moses and the Lord Jesus*

61 Dale Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology*. Augsburg, 1993.

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- Moses' vision is limited to the land of Israel; the Lord sends his disciples to "all nations."
- Moses sends Joshua to conquer a kingdom that he himself cannot enter; the Lord sends his disciples to announce a kingdom over which he shall rule personally.
- Moses goes to the mountain to die, leaving his people to go ahead on their own; the risen Lord promises to be with his people. (It is true that "no man knoweth of his sepulchre," but for a very different reason than with Moses.)

**17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted δισταζω.**--The last word in the sentence appears only twice in the Greek Bible, here and in 14:31, where Peter walks to the Lord on the water.

Mat 14:28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, **if it be thou**, bid me come unto thee on the water. 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. 31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou **doubt**?

Two aspects of Peter's doubt may help explain what is going on here, particularly for the mass of the Lord's "brethren," the 500 mentioned in 1 Cor 15, who may not have seen him in Jerusalem after his resurrection.

1. He is uncertain about the Lord's identity: "if it be thou." After the Lord's resurrection, people sometimes had difficulty recognizing him. Recall Mary Magdalene at the tomb,

Joh 20:14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, **and knew not that it was Jesus**. 15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

Or the two on the road to Emmaus,

Luk 24:15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed *together* and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. 16 **But their eyes were holden** that they should not know him.

The next verse in our text says that "Jesus came," suggesting that he approached them from a distance, and some of them may have been uncertain about his identity.

2. The Lord calls him into a new experience, and he is uncertain about what is going on. He knows how to sail a boat on the water, and he knows how to walk on the land, but walking on the water is something entirely new. So in Matthew 28, the events of the crucifixion and resurrection have completely disrupted the rhythm of the past three and a half years. The Lord's followers are confused and uncertain, a condition that he immediately goes on to

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remedy with what he says in vv. 18-20.

The hesitation associated with those to whom the Lord appeared is common throughout the Bible in situations when one person commissions another to carry out a task. One study<sup>62</sup> compares 27 such situations in the OT, including Abraham's sending his servant to get a bride for Isaac (Gen 24), and the commissionings of Moses (Exod 3-4), Isaiah (ch. 6), Jeremiah (ch. 1), and Ezekiel (ch. 1-3). We can think of many instances in the NT as well, including the sending of the disciples to preach in ch. 10, or to get the donkey for the triumphal entry in ch. 21, and the commissions of the women by the angel and the Lord to tell the disciples of the resurrection, earlier in this chapter.

We have noted before that cultures often develop stereotyped patterns of language, or "literary forms," for specific situations.<sup>63</sup> A common

example is the accepted organization of a letter, with return address, inside address, salutation, body, greeting, complimentary close, signature, and possibly a postscript (Figure 12, chart). We have seen numerous such literary forms before in the Bible, including the Covenant, the Rib (Covenant Lawsuit), Paul's Letters, and Jeremiah's Oracles. We will see many more examples in our studies of the Psalms. It turns out that commissionings also have characteristic elements. We discussed this in our study of the sending of the disciples in Matthew 10. Table 16 (chart)

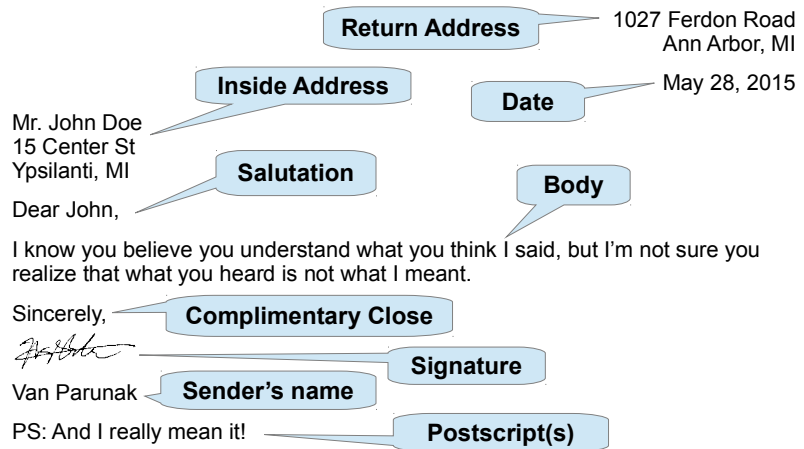


Figure 12: Example of a Literary Form

Section	Jeremiah, Jeremiah 1	The Great Commission, Matt 28
Introduction	1 Jeremiah ... 2 To whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.	16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.
Confrontation	4 the word of the LORD came unto me,	17 And when they saw him,
Reaction	6 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! <b>behold, I cannot speak:</b> for I <i>am</i> a child.	they worshipped him: but <b>some doubted.</b>
Word of Comfort	7 But the <b>LORD said unto me,</b> Say not, I <i>am</i> a child:	18 And <b>Jesus</b> came and <b>spake unto them,</b> saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
Commission	for thou shalt <b>go to all</b> that I shall send thee, and <b>whatsoever I command thee</b> thou shalt speak.	19 <b>Go</b> ye therefore, and teach <b>all nations,</b> ... 20 Teaching them to observe all things <b>whatsoever I have commanded</b> you:
Objection	(cf. Reaction)	(cf. Reaction)
Reassurance	8 Be not afraid of their faces: for <b>I am with thee</b> to deliver thee, saith the LORD.	20b and, lo, <b>I am with you</b> always, <i>even</i> unto the end of the world.
Conclusion	(Book of Jeremiah)	(Book of Acts)

Table 16: The Commissionings of Jeremiah and the Disciples

62 B. Hubbard, *The Matthean Redaction of a Primitive Apostolic Commissioning*. SBL Dissertation Series 19. Missoula, MT, 1974.

63 See, for example, notes on the *Rib* in the study on Isaiah 55-57, and on the commissioning form in the study on Matthew 10.

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compares the elements of the Great Commission with another commissioning, that of Jeremiah.

It may not seem particularly surprising that the Great Commission follows the commissioning form found elsewhere in the Bible. But it does help explain why Matthew felt compelled to mention the uncertainty of some of those who saw the Lord. People being commissioned often react either to the presence of the one sending them (as here) or to the task being given them with doubt and uncertainty. When Abraham sent his servant to get a bride for Isaac, the servant protested, “What if she won’t come with me?” When the Lord called Moses, Moses complained that he couldn’t speak. When he called Isaiah, Isaiah responded, “Woe is me, for I am undone.”

It is natural for us to be uncertain when we find ourselves in the presence of the Lord—just as we saw in our study of “fear not” earlier in this chapter. Particularly when the Lord is sending us to do a job, we may well hesitate. Matthew reminds us that we are not alone, and the history of the early church shows that the Lord was able to overcome these feelings of doubt and uncertainty, and empower his people to turn the world upside down for him.

**18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.**--His words are drawn from Dan 7:14 (Table 17, chart), and show us two things.

Dan 7: 14 And there was **given** him **dominion εξουσια**, and glory, and a kingdom, that **all** people, **nations**, and languages, should serve him: his **dominion εξουσια** is an everlasting **dominion εξουσια**, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.

18 All **power εξουσια** is **given** unto me in heaven and in earth.  
19 Go ye therefore, and teach **all nations**,

*Table 17: Dan 7:14 and Matt 28:18-19*

First, the glorification of the Son of Man promised in Daniel 7 has already taken place. Upon completion of his redemptive work, he has received the promised dominion, and is now waiting the Father’s time to exercise that authority in his earthly rule.

Second, his stand against Satan’s temptation in the wilderness has been vindicated. There, Satan tempted him,

Matt 4:8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him **all the kingdoms of the world**, and the glory of them; 9 And saith unto him, All these things will I **give** thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

At the start of his ministry, he refused to betray his Father to gain “all the kingdoms of the world.” Now, because of his faithfulness, the Father has given him all authority, not only on earth, but in heaven as well.

Error: Reference source not found (chart) shows a sentence diagram of the great commission. Several features will reward our attention.

**19 Go ye therefore,**--Our version translates this as an imperative, a command. The diagram shows that in fact it is a participle, parallel to “baptizing” and the second “teaching,” and you will sometimes hear it said that the Lord is not commanding people to go, but saying that as they

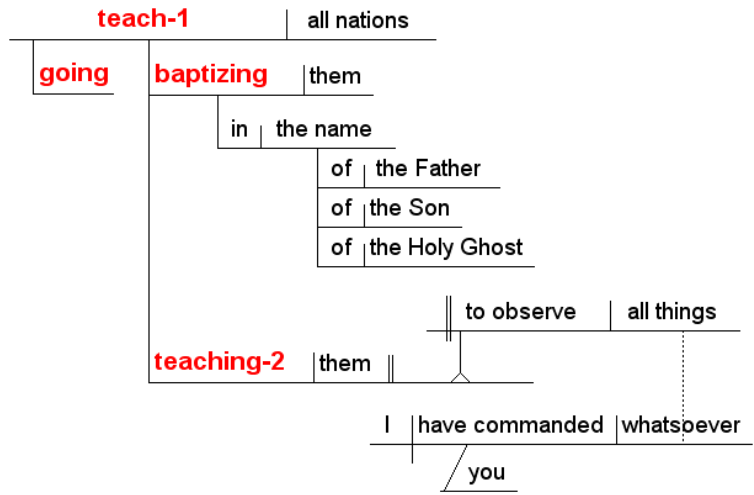


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move around in the course of their daily lives, they should teach and baptize.

But translating “going” as a participle would considerably miss the Lord’s point. The KJV translation is much better. Note two things.

First, the verb “go” appears frequently in commissioning scenes in the Bible. Hubbard’s study of 27 such scenes in the OT finds it in more than half.<sup>64</sup> Against this background, it should be understood as urging the hearers to get on with the job.



*Figure 13: Grammatical Structure of the Great Commission*

Second, when the participle “going” comes first, followed by an imperative, it has the sense of “get up and start doing what I am telling you.”<sup>65</sup> (This is why, in Figure 13, we list it on its own branch rather than in line with “baptizing” and “teaching-2.”) Note the following examples, also in Matthew. Consider the words of Herod to the wise men:

Mat 2:8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, **Go [ptc]** and **search [impv]** diligently for the young child

Herod was not telling the wise men, “Enjoy your tour of the Holy Land, and please keep an eye out for this baby.” He was commissioning them to search actively.

When the disciples of John came to ask the Lord if he were the Messiah, he replied,

Mat 11:4 Jesus answered and said unto them, **Go [ptc]** and **shew [impv]** John again those things which ye do hear and see:

He was not saying, “Go about your business, and if you happen to meet John, please pass on this message.” He was urging them to get back to John right away with the evidence.

Finally, when Peter asked the Lord about the temple tax, the Lord said,

Mat 17:27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, **go [ptc]** thou to the sea, and **cast [impv]** an hook, **and take up [impv]** the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

The instruction is not, “The next time you go fishing, watch out for a fish with something in its

<sup>64</sup> He identifies it in 13, and the Hithpael also appears in Gen 17.

<sup>65</sup> See Wallace, p. 640 (Participle of Attendant Circumstance).

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mouth.” Rather, “Go fishing now, catch a fish, and give them the money.”

So don’t let anybody try to grammar you out of the command in Matt 28:19. “Going” in Matt 28:19 does not mean, “As you go.” It means, “Get busy with the command I’m about to give you.” And this command requires going: if our intended audience is “all nations,” we obviously have to travel to them.

**and teach**—Their first duty that they are to get busy and do is to teach. In fact, the English verb appears twice in these verses, but it represents two different Greek words.

The instance in v. 20, “teaching them to observe . . .,” is closer to our sense of the word teach, that is, to impart instruction, and is by far the most common word for “teach” in the NT. The word in v. 19 (μαθητευω Strong 3100) literally means “make disciples.” It occurs only four times in the Greek Bible, three times in Matthew and once in Acts (chart). We have seen it already twice. The first time is in describing a scribe, but an unusual scribe—not one of the ones so often named as opposing the Lord, but one who has become his follower:

Matt. 13:52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is **instructed** unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

The term is also the one used to describe Joseph of Arimathaea, a member of the Sanhedrin, but unlike the others, loyal to the Lord.

Matt. 27:57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple [had been discipled to Jesus]:

In Acts, it describes the initial result of preaching the gospel:

Acts 14:21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had **taught** many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,

The Lord has not sent us to get people to believe. He has sent us to call people to follow him. Belief is mental assent; the devils can believe (James 2:19), and still be damned. But to be Jesus’ disciple requires a commitment to obey, not just believe:

Luk 14:33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

This is the invitation that he has commissioned us to carry.

It is important for us to note the scope of this commission.

**all nations**,--Because of the grant of Dan 7:14, he no longer restricts his ministry to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” as he did earlier in his ministry:

Mat 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not: 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

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*To the Canaanite woman:* Mat 15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto **the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

He now sends his disciples to “all nations.”

The second part of their mission, after making disciples, is baptizing. Three details here require attention: the objects of the baptism, the meaning of “in the name,” and the triune formula.

**baptizing them**--In Greek, every noun and pronoun has a gender associated with it, marked the same way that male and female people are distinguished. The noun “nations” is grammatically neuter, but the word “them,” the object of the verb “baptize,” is masculine. It’s not the nations that are being baptized, but people within the nations, specifically, those who have become disciples. The linguistic situation parallels an earlier statement by the Lord (chart):

Mat 25:32 before him shall be gathered **all nations [neuter]**: and he shall separate **them [masculine]** one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

The Lord does not mean that he will deal with nations as units, putting some nations on one side and others on the other side.<sup>66</sup> Rather, the people within the nations will be judged, based on whether they are his disciples or not. So here, the Lord does not mean that nations should be baptized *en masse*, but rather, those who become disciples.

**in the name**--Next, we must consider what it means to baptize someone “in the name” of someone. The situation is confounded by the fact that throughout the rest of the NT, we have no record of anybody being baptized in this way. Here is the data:

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and **be baptized** every one of you **in ἐπι the name of Jesus Christ** for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 8:16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were **baptized in εἰς the name of the Lord Jesus.**)

Acts 10:48 And he commanded them to be **baptized in ἐν the name of the Lord.** Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Acts 19:5 When they heard this, they were **baptized in εἰς the name of the Lord Jesus.**

These passages mention only the Lord Jesus, not the Father or the Spirit. As a result, some groups insist that baptism is not valid unless it is solely in the name of Jesus.<sup>67</sup>

These references are not homogeneous. The English word “in” translates three different Greek prepositions: εἰς (the one used in Matt 28:19), ἐν, and ἐπι (the last two once each). These together translate two different Hebrew expressions in the LXX.

<sup>66</sup> The change in gender works against the claim by some dispensational teachers, e.g., the old Scofield Reference Bible, that the objects of the judgment are nations as a whole rather than people as individuals

<sup>67</sup> Some groups insist on baptism “in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,” arguing that these three titles correspond to the Father, Son, and Spirit in Matthew, but this formula is nowhere attested in the NT.

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**Εἰς** (as in 28:19; Acts 8:16; 19:15) is the most common preposition used in the LXX for לְשֵׁם, literally “to the name.” In other places where this preposition appears with “baptize,” it means “with respect to” or “in identification with,” for example,

Acts 19:3 And he said unto them, **Unto εἰς** what then were ye baptized? And they said, **Unto εἰς** John's baptism.

Rom. 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into **εἰς** Jesus Christ were baptized into **εἰς** his death?

1 Cor. 10:2 And were all baptized **unto εἰς** Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

In none of these cases is a baptismal formula in view. The expression describes the *function* of the baptism, not the *liturgy* accompanying it.

**Εν** and **ἐπι** most commonly translate בְּשֵׁם “with the name,” and often describe actions that claim the authority associated with a person. This is the formula used to describe prayer “in **εν** the name of Jesus” in John 14:13 and elsewhere. Consider also two passages in Matthew:

Mat 18:5 And whoso shall receive one such little child **in ἐπι my name** receiveth me.

Mat 24:5 For many shall come **in ἐπι my name**, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

Remember that the “little ones” in ch. 18 are capable of believing, and are given to the disciples as an example of what they are to be. We are all “little ones” before the Lord, and he is enjoining us to receive one another if we claim the name of Christ. Similarly, those who come “in my name” are coming claiming to be Christ. Both these examples and the semantics of בְּשֵׁם suggest that here we are concerned with verbal claims that are made.

So what is going on between Matthew and Acts?

- Verses with **εν** and **ἐπι** (Acts 2:48; 10:48) probably indicate that the name of the Lord was mentioned in the baptismal ceremony.
- Verses with **εἰς** (Matt 28:19; Acts 8:16; 19:15) may not be describing a formula at all, but rather, the purpose of the baptism. It reflects the candidate's identification with the Lord. Compare the promise made by the Lord to the overcomers of Philadelphia in Rev 3:

Rev 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and **I will write upon him the name of my God**, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and **I will write upon him my new name**.

They will be marked with his name, identified with him and with his holy commonwealth.

**The name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:**--Matthew's mention of the name (singular) of the Father, Son, and Spirit is striking. It hints at the mysterious union that lies

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behind the three persons of the godhead, and represents a claim by the Lord himself to equal status with the Father and the Spirit.

The parallel mention of the three names here is probably the basis for later NT references (chart):

1Co 12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same **Spirit**. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same **Lord**. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same **God** which worketh all in all.

2Co 13:14 The grace of **the Lord Jesus Christ**, and the love of **God**, and the communion of the **Holy Ghost**, be with you all.

Eph 4:4 There is one body, and one **Spirit**, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One **Lord**, one faith, one baptism, 6 One **God and Father** of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

We will see, in our review of the book, how frequently Matthew, and our Lord himself, claim divine status for our Savior. This statement here reinforces this claim, and lays the foundation for two further allusions to his deity in v. 20.

By baptism, believers are declaring their unity with God as he has revealed himself in the Father, Son, and Spirit.

So what should we say when we baptize? Quoting this verse is not wrong, as long as we understand that these are not magic words that do something in and of themselves. By uttering them we are declaring our purpose in baptism: to identify the candidate with God as he is revealed in Father, Son, and Spirit.

**20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:**--The third part of their mission is “teaching,” not the word used in v. 19, but the more usual term for teach, διδασκω (Strong 1321), which means to impart instruction. Those who have become disciples of the Lord and have confessed their faith by baptism need instruction, and the object of that instruction is to be the teachings of the Lord Jesus. This was the seed from which the teachings of the apostles grew, and the touchstone by which true teaching was to be distinguished from false (chart):

1Ti 6:3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; ... 5 ... from such withdraw thyself.

This command ought to be enough to caution us about any claims that the earthly teachings of the Lord Jesus (such as the Sermon on the Mount) are not intended for us today. Those were the very teachings that he commanded the disciples to carry out into the world, and the ones by which Paul, toward the end of his life, continued to judge all teaching.

The language that the Lord uses is striking. The LXX frequently says that X is to do all that Y commands,<sup>68</sup> but these are usually in the third person, where the speaker is describing the relation

68 *πας* with *οσος* (or *ο*) and *εντελλομαι*

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of obedience between two other people. Here are the only first-person instances, where one person speaks to another about “all that I have commanded”:

*God to Moses:* Exo 29:35 And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to **all things which I have commanded thee**: seven days shalt thou consecrate them.

*Angel of the Lord to Samson's mother:* Jdg 13:14 She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: **all that I commanded her** let her observe.

*God to Solomon* 1Ki 9:4 And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to **all that I have commanded thee**, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: = 2 Chr 7:17

*God to Solomon:* 2Ch 33:8 Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that [if only; given that] they will take heed to do **all that I have commanded them**, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses. *Recollection of his agreement concerning the temple, recounted in describing Manasseh's sin*

*God to Israel:* Jer 50:21 Go up against the land of Merathaim, even against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod: waste and utterly destroy after them, saith the LORD, and do according to **all that I have commanded thee**.

In every case, the one speaking is either God, or the angel of the Lord, who is recognized as God in the context. The Lord's appropriation of this language is a strong claim to his deity, and is a natural extension of his assumption to himself of a single name together with the Father and the Spirit in v. 19.

**and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.**--“World” here is *αἰών* (Strong 165), the age, about which they were concerned in 24:3. The Lord has characterized this present age as a time of impurity, when wheat and tares grow together and need to be separated (chart):

Mat 13:40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

In response to the disciples' questions on the Mount of Olives, the Lord described this period as one of persecution:

Mat 24:9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. 11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Theologians love to speak about “the age of grace” or “the church age,” but these are not biblical expressions. The only time Paul gives a name to this age is in Gal 1:4, when he calls it, “this

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present evil world [age].”

Given what the Lord has told the disciples to expect, they might be apprehensive. So he closes his commission with this assurance: “Lo, I am with you.” This statement draws its impact from the general commissioning form, and from the beginning of the gospel.

The most common element in the reassurance portion of OT commissionings is the statement, “I will be with you.”<sup>69</sup> But one human never says to another, “I will be with you.” The one whose presence is promised is always God or his angel. Recall God’s call of Isaac,

Gen 26:3 Sojourn in this land, and **I will be with thee**, and will bless thee;

or his commissioning of Joshua,

Jos 1:5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so **I will be with thee**: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. ... 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for **the LORD thy God is with thee** whithersoever thou goest.

By taking this role upon himself, the Lord Jesus is again claiming the place of God.

The promise also draws meaning from a theme with which Matthew began the gospel. Recall from ch. 1 that Joseph was hesitant to go through with his engagement to Mary when he learned she was expecting a baby, but the angel appeared to him and reassured him. Then Matthew interprets the angel’s message in terms of the prophet Isaiah:

Mat 1:22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

The son of the virgin was to be Emmanuel, God with us. We have followed the life and teachings of the man who grew from that child. Repeatedly he has claimed to be more than just a man. He has just told his disciples that a single name embraces him, the Father, and the Spirit. Now he assures them that throughout this present evil age, he will be with them, bringing Isaiah’s promise to its full realization: “God with us.”

**Amen.**--This final word is probably not spoken by Jesus. He does use the word “amen” in Matthew, but always uses at the beginning of a statement, in the formula *αμην λεγω υμιν* “verily I say unto you). At the end of a statement, the term indicates the agreement of others to what has been said. Consider these examples (chart):

Psa 106:48 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, **Amen**.

1Co 14:15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. 16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the

<sup>69</sup> Hubbard finds ten instances, out of 27.

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unlearned say **Amen** at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

1Ki 1:33 The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon: 34 And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon. 35 Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah. 36 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, **Amen**: the LORD God of my lord the king say so *too*.

*After Hananiah's promise that the captivity would end within two years:* Jer 28:5 Then the prophet Jeremiah said unto the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people that stood in the house of the LORD, 6 Even the prophet Jeremiah said, **Amen**: the LORD do so: the LORD perform thy words which thou hast prophesied, to bring again the vessels of the LORD'S house, and all that is carried away captive, from Babylon into this place.

This is Matthew's response to what the Lord has promised. He has reported the Lord's life and ministry. He has passed on to us the Lord's final charge. This commission demands a response. With this final word, Matthew turns from being the writer to responding to what is written, and accepts the charge. In doing so, he challenges us to add our "Amen" as well to our Savior's call.



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### Notes

#### **Similarities between ch. 1-4 and ch. 26-28**

	ch. 1-4	ch. 26-28
God with his people	Emmanuel 1:23	I am with you always 28:20
Recognition by Gentiles	Magi 2:11	Placard 27:37 Centurion 27:54
Question about the king of the jews	Magi 2:11 where is the king of the Jews?	Pilate 27:11 Placard 27:37
Rulers plotting his death	Herod 2:3	Pilate 27:26
Angel of the Lord	Appearing to Joseph 1:20, 24; 2:13, 19	Removing the stone and appearing to woman, 28:2, 5
Fulfillment statements? (Brookes) <sup>70</sup>		
Triple temptation	In the wilderness, speaking to the devil, 4:1-11	In the garden, speaking to his Father, 26:39-44
Prominence of women	Genealogies Birth narrative	At the cross 27:55-56 At the tomb 27:61; 28:1-10

#### **Combrink, “The Macrostructure of the Gospel of Matthew”.**

Neotestamentica 16 (1982), Structure and Meaning in Matthew 14-28, 1-20.

On the one hand the beginning sections of Matthew introduce all the relevant narrative material for what is to follow, but Jesus’ ministry only commences from 4:17 onwards (Gerhardsson 1973:78). On the other hand, the conclusion of Matthew (28:16-20) is the climax of the gospel, corresponding to the beginning (Malina 1970), and drawing together a number of themes pervading the gospel as a whole (cf Brooks 1981).

The most salient and significant correspondence is the enriched usage of Emmanuel (1:23), recurring in Jesus' promise in 28:20: egō meth' humon e imi.<sup>17</sup>

But there are more links: in 2:11 Jesus is worshipped by the Magi as the first representatives of the gentiles - in 27:54 the officer and the soldiers confess him as the Son of God.

In 2:3 Herod is upset about Jesus' birth, leading to his unsuccessful attempt on the life of Jesus (2:16ff). In 27:50 all the plotting and opposition against him at last succeed - or so it appears.

Even the threefold temptation by the devil seems to be repeated in 26:63; 27:40,43, and Jesus

<sup>70</sup> Here's the complete list: Matt. 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:54, 56; 27:9. They are certainly denser in the birth and passion narratives, but not lacking elsewhere (ch. 8, 12, 13, 21).

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also refers to his suffering in Gethsemane as *peirasmós* (26:41). <<weak>>

The angel of the Lord also appears only in these beginning and closing sections.

And the explicit emphasis on Jesus as Son of David, the King (1:6) and the kingdom (*basileia*) in A, is parallelised by the emphasis on *pasa exousía* in Af.

Without deducing too much from it, one may even note the role of the women in the genealogy, and the important role of the women in the resurrection appearances /16/.

...these elements may even be arranged symmetrically in a broad sense: a. Son of David the king, b. women in genealogy, c. angel, d. God with us, e. Magi, f. slaughter of infants, g. temptation in the wilderness, g1. temptation in Gethsemane and on the cross, f1. death, e1. confession by soldiers, c1. angel, b1. women, a1. all authority, d1. I am with you.

### **O.S. Brooks: "Matthew xxvii 16-20 and the design of the first gospel."**

JSNT 10 (1981), 2-18.

The final section of Matthew (xxvi 1-xxviii 20) is like the opening chapters in that there are no formal teaching situations, but rather material of the conspiracy against Jesus ending in his execution. It is also noticed that the passion narrative, similar to the birth stories, includes three fulfillment sentences (xxvi 54, 56; xxvii 9) /26/. Furthermore the one with authority sought by the magi—"Where is he who has been born King of the Jews?" (ii 2)—is rephrased by Pilate—"Are you the King of the Jews?" (xxvii 11)—and is answered by the placard over the cross—"This is Jesus the King of the Jews" (xxvii 37). Thus the issue of Jesus' authority is resolved and declared in this section.

### ***Distribution of "fulfillment" statements in Matthew***

1:22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

2:15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

2:17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

4:14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

8:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.

12:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

13:35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

21:4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

26:54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

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26:56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

27:9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;

### “Disciple” in Matthew (Figure 14)

#### Συντασσω (26:19; 27:10)

Only here in the entire NT (though the critical text has it also as 21:6, in the commandeering of the donkey for the triumphal entry,

Mat 21:6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,

where the MT has προστασσω).

Table 18 Shows the OT background. Both words are dedicated to צוה, as is εντελλομαι, which is the dominant translation.

In the LXX, συντασσω is concentrated in instructions for building the tabernacle and conducting the sacrifices in Exodus-Numbers, in translating the phrase, “as the Lord commanded Moses.” LS cites examples from secular Greek of its use in organizing an army in ranks for battle. The emphasis is on arranging something.

Προστασσω is most common in the apocryphal books of the OT in the simple sense of “command,” though in Jonah it translates the verb in the repeated expression, “God prepared a {fish, gourd, worm, east wind}” (as well as the command to the fish in 2:11).

The parallels from Exodus-Numbers are especially pertinent in view of the institution that the Lord is about to make.

If we follow the MT, συντασσω appears only one other place in the NT, in 27:10, ostensibly as part of a quotation from “Jeremiah” (actually, a combination of Zech 11:12,13 and Jer 19). However, the

In the phrase כאשר צוה יהוה, εντελλομαι appears 23 x: Exod. 7:6, 10, 20; 12:28,50; Lev. 8:21; 29; 9:7, 10; Num. 2:33; 3:42; 27:22; 31:7; Deut. 1:19; 5:32; 34:9; Jos. 10:40; 11:15; 14:2, 5;

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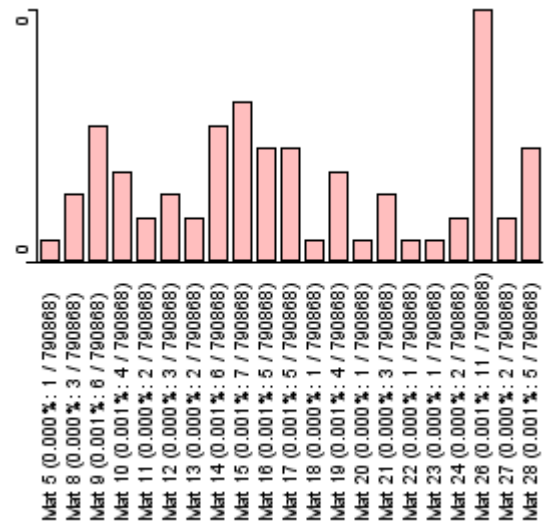


Figure 14: Distribution of "Disciple" in Matthew

	צוה
συντασσω	94
προστασσω	14
εντελλομαι	352

Table 18: LXX and צוה

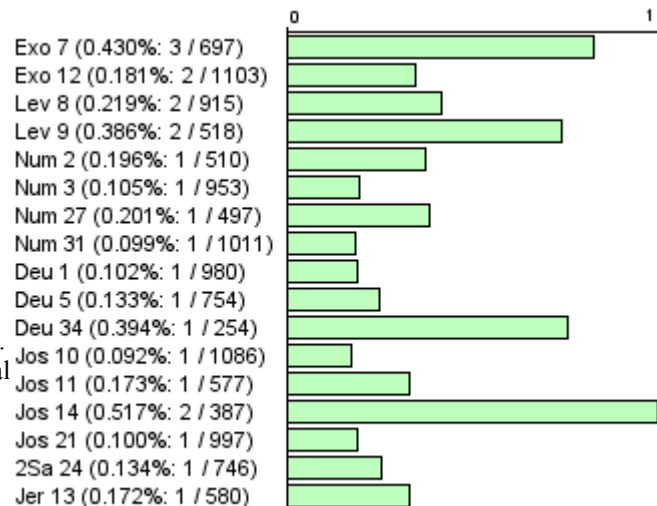


Figure 15: εντελλομαι translates כאשר צוה יהוה

## Death and Resurrection, Matthew 26-28

21:8; 2 Sam. 24:19; Jer. 13:5. Figure 15 shows the distribution across the OT. Note instances in Exod 7 (sending the plagues), 12 (preparing the passover), Lev 8-9 (ordination and inauguration of the priests), Num 2-3 (numbering the people), 27 (appointing Joshua to follow Moses), and 31 (fighting the Midianites).

Figure 16 shows the distribution of the 37 translations by συντασσω: Exod. 16:34; 34:4; 36:8; 39:5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 3, 43; 40:19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 30; Lev. 8:4, 9, 13, 17; 10:15; 16:34; 24:23; Num. 1:19; 3:51; 8:3, 22; 15:36; 17:11; 20:27; 26:4; 27:11; 31:31, 41, 47; 36:10; Jos. 11:15. Note the heavy concentration in passages describing the design (Ex 36) and construction (Ex 40) of the Tabernacle.

The only one not in Exod-Num is Jos 11:15, summarizing the conquest of the land:

Jos 11:15 As the LORD commanded συντασσω Moses his servant, so did Moses command εντελλομαι Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded συντασσω Moses.

This verse uses both translations: συντασσω for the Lord's commands to Moses, and εντελλομαι for Moses' commands to Joshua.

Almost all of these instances deal with the preparation of the tabernacle or the conduct of its services. Some exceptions occur, mostly in Numbers: the numbering of the people 1:19; 3:51; 26:4 (though in 3:51 Aaron receives the redemption money); execution of malefactors (Lev 24:23; Num 15:36; 17:11); It is interesting that this translation is used alongside of ενελλομαι to describe the inauguration (Lev 8:4, 9, 13, 17) and death (Num 20:27) of Aaron. It describes the distribution to the daughters of Zeloophehad (Num 27:11; 36:10), and the distribution of booty by and to the priests (31:31, 41, 47).

Exod 40:29 lacks the command phrase in LXX; Jos 11:20 translates it with λεγω (Jos 11:20 ὃν τρόπον εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν).

It is very rare for the Lord to συντασσω someone other than Moses. Here are all the instances I can find, and those in Jeremiah 26 may be seen as comparing him with Moses.

Jos 4:8 And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake דגיר

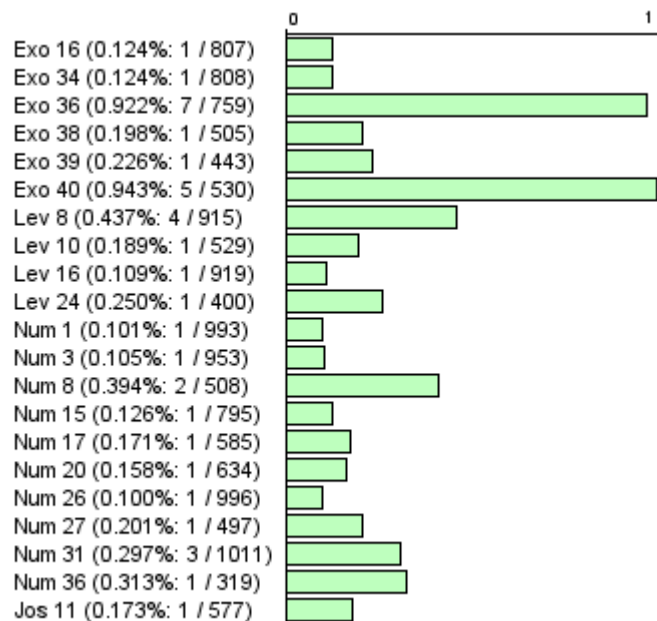


Figure 16: συντασσω translates כאשר צוה יהוה

## Death and Resurrection, Matthew 26-28

unto Joshua,

Jos 8:27 Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according unto the word of the LORD which he **commanded** Joshua.

Job 42:9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite *and* Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD **commanded** them: the LORD also accepted Job.

Jer 26:2 Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD'S house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD'S house, all the words that I **command** thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word: ... 8 Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had **commanded** *him* to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die.

Jer 29:23 Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not **commanded** them; even I know, and *am* a witness, saith the LORD.

Jer 34:22 Behold, I will **command**, saith the LORD, and cause them to return to this city; and they shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire: and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant.

However, it is not at all uncommon for God to command Moses, using *εντελλομαι*: Exod. 4:28; 7:6, 10, 20; 12:28, 50; 34:34; 40:16; Lev. 7:38; 8:5, 21, 29; 9:5, 7, 10; 27:34; Num. 1:54; 2:33; 3:42; 8:20; 27:22; 29:4; 30:16; 31:7; Deut. 1:3; 29:1; 34:9; Jos. 14:5; 17:4; 2 Ki. 18:6; 1 Chr. 22:13.

Bottom line: the idiom with *συντασσω* is not just specialized to Moses, but focuses on issues concerned with the tabernacle.

### ***Sitting vs. Reclining at Supper***

The NT has two verbs for posture at supper: *ανακειμαι* and *αναπιπτω*. But the two are interchangeable:

Joh 6:10 And Jesus said, Make the men sit down *αναπιπτω*. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down *αναπιπτω*, in number about five thousand. 11 And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down *ανακειμαι*; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

Joh 13:12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down *αναπιπτω* again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? ... Joh 13:28 Now no man at the table [lit. of those reclining *ανακειμαι*] knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

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And ανακειμαι clearly refers to a reclining posture, being used to describe Jairus' daughter in Mark 5:40.

### Who is quoting the OT?

Matthew makes In the notes to Ch. 1, I make the case (*pace* Carson) that Matthew uses the distinctive quotation formula τουτο δε ολον γεγονεν to mark a quotation as his own, rather than that of a character whom he has just been quoting. In 26:31, by contrast, the citation is clearly being made by the Lord.

The BW search “/γραφω@vixp\* πληρωω@vs?

p\*” in the gospels clearly shows Matthew’s dominant interest in OT citations (Figure 17).

(Not all of these 49 hits are OT citations. It would be interesting to clean these up and focus just on the citations.)

In general, Matthew uses πληρωω, while others who quote Scripture (the Lord, but also Satan in the wilderness) use γραφω.

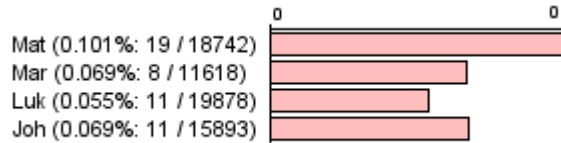


Figure 17: Citation formulas in the gospels

### Witnesses to the Jewish Proceedings

The gospels contain details about the trial of our Lord, and the interactions of Judas with the Jewish leaders. How did these come to Matthew’s attention? While the Lord may have revealed these details directly, the gospels claim to be delivering history based on witnesses. Luke is probably describing Matthew when he writes,

Luk 1:1 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, 2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

He goes on to emphasize his own diligent research, and the mission of the apostles to be “witnesses” (Acts 1:8, 21-22; 4:20; 10:39, etc.) urges us to seek other explanations.

In the case of the trial, John 18:15 tells us that the “other disciple” (likely John) was a witness to the proceedings, and the Lord may have related the details to the disciples after his resurrection.

As for Judas, Acts 6:7 records that “a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith,” and “the elders” who dealt with Judas might have included men like Joseph of Arimathaea (Lk 23:50-51), who became believers. Such witnesses may have conveyed this information to the apostles.

### Innocent αθως Strong 121 (Matt 27:4, 24)

These are the only two instances of this word in the NT; once used by Judas to describe Christ, and again by Pilate to describe himself. Explore the OT usage:

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Used almost exclusively in the LXX with the root נקה. We find נקי occurring 27x, נקה occurring 9x, and נקיין twice.

	נקי	נקה	נקיין	Notes
αθως	17	9	2	
αθωω		13		
καθαρ*	2	10	1	
δικαιος*	6		1	
αναιτιος	4			In LXX, all of blood; in NT only Matt 12:5, 7.
εκδικεω		3		
ατιμωρητος		4		Only 4x in Prov, “unpunished,” always negated: what will not happen to the wicked.

Exo 23:7 Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked. Quoted in Susanna: Sus 1:53 For thou hast pronounced false judgment and hast condemned the innocent and hast let the guilty go free; albeit the Lord saith, The innocent and righteous shalt thou not slay.

Psa 94:21 They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.

Judas called him innocent; Pilate called him righteous.

Good definition of innocent: lack of any basis for blame. “without blemish”

1Sa 19:5 For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest *it*, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?

Usual opposition to δικαιος is ασεβης, OT: צדיק vs. רשע. Greek reflexes:

רשע: ασεβης/ασεβεω 151, αματωλος 71, ανομος 31

צדיק: overwhelmingly δικαιος.

What is πονηρος? Overwhelmingly רעה, רעע, רע.

Deu 25:1 If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that *the judges* may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.

Presumes a controversy. Both are active.

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### ***The veil καταπετασμα of the temple***

Use of the term in the OT:

	תָּרָח	ךָסַח, before the Holy Place	
Καταπετασμα	23	7	
Κεραννομι		4	
Καλυμμα, επι-, κατα-	1 (κατακ.)	6 (2x each)	
Επισπαστρον		1	Ex 26:36, before Holy Place
Κερασμα		1	Isa 65:11 mixture
Κιρναω		1	Ps 101:10 mix
Σκεπη		1	Ps 104:39 cloud over tabernacle
Πυλη		1	Isa 22:8 covering of Judah

While καταπετασμα can translate כָּסַח, used to describe the hanging at the front door of the tabernacle, the Hebrew word has many other uses for a covering in general, and the one time it clearly refers to the front door, it is translated with a different word, επισπαστρον, a *harax* in the Greek Bible. For Matthew with his priestly background, it is difficult to see το καταπετασμα as referring to anything other than the inner veil.

### ***The guard κουστωδια at the tomb***

Is this the Jewish temple guard (as in John 7), or Roman soldiers? The question usually revolves around whether εχετε is to be parsed as indicative or imperative, both of which are consistent with the form. If imperative, it would certainly be a grant of soldiers from Pilate to the Jews: “Take a watch.” The indicative is sometimes understood to be an impatient statement by Pilate: “You have [you own guard]; use that.”

Can we gain any leverage from the vocabulary being used to describe the watch?

The word appears in the Greek Bible only in Mt 27:65, 66; 28:11. The word is a loan from Latin, which would favor a reference to Roman soldiers, though BDAG says it appears in Rabbinic sources as well (no refs.). It is attested as well in a report of the Jewish War under Trajan,

P.Par 68:A.8, ταῦτα ἐγένετο ὅτι τινὰς ἐπὶ κουστωδῖαν ἤρπασαν καὶ τοὺς ἀρπασθέντας ἐτραυματίσαν

These things came to pass, because they seized certain certain of the guards and wounded those who had been seized.



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Without more of the context, we can't tell to which side these guards belonged, though the statement is certainly consistent with describing a terrorist raid by Jews as explanation for "these things," a subsequent retaliation by the Romans.

The guard that comes back from the tomb and is bribed to remain silent is described in 28:12 as *στρατιῶται*, elsewhere used only of Roman soldiers. It is objected (France, Carson) that these would hardly have come to report first of all to the Jewish priests, but they may have desperately been seeking allies to protect them from the inevitable wrath of Pilate; if they were Jewish, why would Pilate have cared at all about what happened to a condemned criminal (Nolland), whom he would ordinarily have left to rot on the cross anyway? Luz also concludes for soldiers.

If the verb is indicative, it may refer to the Roman soldiers already allocated to the Jews for the purpose of arresting Jesus, identified in John 18:3.

### Commands to "Fear Not"

The Hebrew expression *אל-תירא* (inflected appropriately for the addressee) appears 75x in the OT. In the NT we have *μη* with either the present imperative or aorist subjunctive of *φοβέω* 19x and 3x, respectively. The complementary distribution of imperative vs. prohibitive subjunctive (Wallace p. 469) with present vs. aorist suggests that the real distinction is in the tense. One might suggest that the present imperative is a command to stop doing something, while the aorist subjunctive is a command not to do it at all, but the use of the two different forms in Matt 10:28 (present imperative, though he knows the aorist subjunctive, 1:20) and Luke 12:4 (aorist subjunctive, though he uses the present imperative 7x) makes it unwise to see too much in the distinction. Still, it is intriguing why Matthew and Luke deviate once each from their usual use of the present imperative—the aorist subjunctive is less common, and thus the marked form. The only other use of the aorist subjunctive with prohibitive force is 1 Pet 3:14; Rev 15:4 "Who shall not fear thee?" is not volitional.

We need to distinguish "fear not" with reason given, vs. "fear not" as a greeting, when someone appears. Most instances are in the first category, e.g., Gen 21:17, when God appears to Hagar to tell her not to fear for the welfare of her son, or Gen 46:2, when God appears to Jacob to encourage him not to fear in going down into Egypt, or Matt 1:20, when God appears to Joseph to tell him not to fear taking Mary. Compare also Gen 46:2-3; Jos 8:1; Isa 10:24; 41:10, 13, 14; Jer 46:27. In such cases God is appearing, but the fear in question is not at his appearance, but about a circumstance for which he offers reassurance.

Perhaps this category of "fear not" reflects the relation between fear and worship, which we are not to offer to anyone else but God:

Deu 6:13 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. 14 Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you;

Deu 10:12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the

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LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, 13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?

Deu 10:20 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.

Deu 13:2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; 3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.

Jdg 6:10 And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; **fear not the gods of the Amorites**, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

2Ki 17:34 Unto this day they do after the former manners: they **fear not the LORD**, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel; 35 With whom the LORD had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, **Ye shall not fear other gods**, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them: 36 But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, **him shall ye fear**, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice. 37 And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and **ye shall not fear other gods**. 38 And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; **neither shall ye fear other gods**. 39 But **the LORD your God ye shall fear**; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.

In a different category is Dan 10:12, 19, where Daniel is overwhelmed when he beholds the glory of the Son of God:

Dan 10:8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. 9 Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. ... 11 ... And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. 12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel:

Other instances in the OT: Judg 6:22-23 (Gideon); compare Isaiah in ch. 6 and Manoah and his wife in Judg 13:20-23.

This circumstance is more common in the NT:

Mat 14:26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled,

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saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. 27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; **be not afraid**. // Mk 6:50 // Jn 6:20

Mat 17:5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. 6 And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. 7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and **be not afraid**.

Mat 28:4-5 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*. 5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, **Fear not ye**: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. [cf. Mark 16:5-6  $\epsilon\kappa\theta\alpha\mu\beta\epsilon\omega$ , the only other reference to fear at the resurrection]

Luk 1:11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. 13 But the angel said unto him, **Fear not**, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

Luk 1:28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women. 29 And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30 And the angel said unto her, **Fear not**, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

Luk 2:9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, **Fear not**: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Luk 5:8 When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. 9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: 10 And so *was* also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, **Fear not**; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

Rev 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, **Fear not**; I am the first and the last:

The issue is not the healthy fear of God, enjoined often upon us (e.g., Jos. 24:14; 1 Sam. 12:24; Ps. 34:10-11; Prov. 3:7; 24:21; Eccl 5:6; 12:3; Acts 9:31; Rev 15:4), but the natural response of terror when a creature of flesh is confronted by the divine glory. Just as animals naturally fear people and flee from them, the natural response of our sinful flesh in the presence of God's glory is inherited from Adam:

Gen 3:9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself.

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### **Prepositions with βαπτίζω**

See also the notes on εν, εις, επι plus ονομα at the end of ch. 18.

The verb βαπτίζω is related to the name of the Lord with three different prepositions: εν, επι, and εις. For each preposition, we consider first its broader scope of use with the verb, then instances with the name. A similar ambiguity exists with the verb πιστευω, though there εις is most common, επι much less so, and εν appears in the LXX but BDAG question whether it is attested at all in the NT.

Summary: there are five instances of baptism εις the name of the Lord, and one each for εν and επι.

The data below suggests that εις indicates that our baptism *identifies* us with the Lord; we are baptized into the body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 12:13), and thus identified with his name. Consider

Rev 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name.

To be baptized εν the name of the Lord is to be baptized on his authority, because he commanded it. And επι indicates that the candidate comes confessing the name of the Lord, and on that basis is to be admitted to baptism.

In view of the insistence of some groups on a particular formula of baptism, it is interesting that if these observations are correct, none of them describes a baptismal formula, but rather they describe the purpose, authority, and condition of our baptism. But by the second century, according to Didache 7:1, 3 and Hermes Sim. 8.6.4, and perhaps as early as James 2:7, the name was declared over the candidate.

### **ΕΙΣ:**

It describes the **purpose**, or perhaps the **grounds** (cf. Μετανοεω εις, Matt 12:41 = Lk 11:32), of baptism.

Matt. 3:11 I indeed baptize you with εν water unto εις repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with εν the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:

Mk. 1:4 John did baptize in εν the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for εις the remission of sins.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in επι the name of Jesus Christ for εις the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

It describes the **medium** of baptism, emphasizing entering into the water (where εν is much more

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common)

Mk. 1:9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in εἰς Jordan.

**Identification:** Consider a possible close relation between being baptized into a *person* and being baptized into a person's *name*, given the nature of the name as a representation of the person.

Acts 19:3 And he said unto them, Unto εἰς what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto εἰς John's baptism.

Rom. 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into εἰς Jesus Christ were baptized into εἰς his death?

1 Cor. 10:2 And were all baptized unto εἰς Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

1 Cor. 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into εἰς one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Gal. 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into εἰς Christ have put on Christ.

With ονομα:

Matt. 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in εἰς the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Acts 8:16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in εἰς the name of the Lord Jesus.)

Acts 19:5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in εἰς the name of the Lord Jesus.

1 Cor. 1:13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in εἰς the name of Paul?

1 Cor. 1:15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in εἰς mine own name.

Uses of εἰς ονομα other than with βαπτίζω or πιστεύω emphasize “for the sake of, for the purpose of”:

1 Chr. 22:5 And David said, Solomon my son *is* young and tender, and the house *that is* to be builded for the LORD *must be* exceeding magnifical, **of fame** and of glory throughout all countries: I will *therefore* now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death.

Neh. 6:13 Therefore *was* he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and *that* they might have *matter for an evil report*, that they might reproach me.

Isa. 55:13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD **for a name**, for an everlasting sign *that* shall not be cut off.

## Death and Resurrection, Matthew 26-28

Matt. 10:41 He that receiveth a prophet **in the name** of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man **in the name** of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

Matt. 10:42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only **in the name** of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

Matt. 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together **in my name**, there am I in the midst of them.

Heb. 6:10 For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed **toward his name**, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

### EV:

The **medium or instrument** in which one is baptized:

Matt. 3:11 I indeed baptize you with *ev* water unto *εις* repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with *ev* the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:

Mk. 1:8 I indeed have baptized you with *ev* water: but he shall baptize you with *ev* the Holy Ghost.

Lk. 3:16 John answered, saying unto *them* all, I indeed baptize you with *μετα* water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with *ev* the Holy Ghost and with fire: *Note use of μετα where other gospels use ev*

Jn. 1:26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with *ev* water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; Jn. 1:31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with *ev* water.

Jn. 1:33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with *ev* water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with *ev* the Holy Ghost.

Acts 1:5 For John truly baptized with water *simple dative*; but ye shall be baptized with *ev* the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Acts 11:16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with *simple dative* water; but ye shall be baptized with *ev* the Holy Ghost.

1 Cor. 10:2 And were all baptized unto *εις* Moses in *ev* the cloud and in *ev* the sea;

1 Cor. 12:13 For by *ev* one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

## Death and Resurrection, Matthew 26-28

**Place** where the baptism takes place: (cf. John 1:28 for common locative use)

Matt. 3:6 And were baptized of him in ἐν Jordan, confessing their sins.

Mk. 1:4 John did baptize in ἐν the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for εἰς the remission of sins.

Mk. 1:5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in ἐν the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

Mk. 1:9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in ἐν Jordan.

Jn. 3:23 And John also was baptizing in ἐν Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

**In the name:**

Acts 10:48 And he commanded them to be baptized in ἐν the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. *Upon the authority of the Lord*

Uses of ἐν ὀνομα other than with βαπτίζω or πιστεύω is common throughout the OT in the expression “in the name of X” (most often “the Lord,” but also people, 1 Sam 25:9). The latter verse reflects claiming the authority of the name, as in prayer “in the name of Jesus” in John 14:13; 15:16; 16:23, 26, and “in the name of the Lord” can usually be understood that way, but also in an instrumental sense, “expressing the name of the Lord.”

**ΕΤΙ:**

Only one instance, with respect to the name:

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in ἐπι the name of Jesus Christ for εἰς the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. *Mentioning the name of Jesus...cf. Matt 18:5*

Other uses with ὀνομα (and there are more than 60) seem to mean “with the name,” “using the name,” e.g.,

Gen 4:17 And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, **after the name** of his son, Enoch.

Gen 48:6 And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, *and* shall be called **after the name** of their brethren in their inheritance.

1Ki 21:8 So she wrote letters **in Ahab's name**, and sealed *them* with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that *were* in his city, dwelling with Naboth.

Mat 18:5 And whoso shall receive one such little child **in my name** receiveth me. *One who comes bearing my name*

## Death and Resurrection, Matthew 26-28

Mat 24:5 For many shall come **in my name**, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

Act 4:18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach **in the name of Jesus**. *Mentioning him*

### Note on OT Uses

Need to disambiguate כשם, בשם, לשם. Table 19 shows how these are translated in the LXX. εις is only used for לשם. εν and επι predominantly reflect בשם.

	כשם	בשם	לשם
απο		1	
δια			3
εις			5
εν		23	1
επι	1	14	
εξ		2	
κατα	3		
dative		11	14
accusative		7	4
lacking	1	8	2

*Table 19: Hebrew sources for εν, επι, εις in the LXX*