

# THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

## Chapter 27:11-38

Thursday Morning Bible Study  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Wauwatosa, WI

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

1

### The Trial Before Pilate – 27:1-31

- 11 – Matthew resumes the story of the trial.
- Pilate was the Roman governor, appointed by the emperor in 26/27 AD, to oversee the province of Judea, answerable to the emperor.
- The Romans placed a high priority on justice. If a person was found guilty, punishment was swift and brutal. But they demanded proof of guilt.
- No one Gospel gives us the whole trial before Pilate.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2

### The Trial Before Pilate – 27:1-31

- We know very little about Pilate before he became governor.
- Don't know his full name: \_\_\_\_\_ Pontius Pilatus. Pontius is his family name. "Pilatus" could mean "skilled with a javelin ("pilum").
- As governor, he appointed the High Priest. Joseph ben Caiaphas held the office for Pilate's entire tenure.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3

### The Trial Before Pilate – 27:1-31

- Pilate offended the Jews by putting up Imperial standards with Caesar's image, and putting golden shields on Herod's palace. He received a reprimand from emperor Tiberius.
- He also offended them when he used money from the temple treasury to pay for a new aqueduct into Jerusalem. A mob formed, but Pilate had them beaten with clubs. Many perished from the blows or from being trampled by horses.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

4

### The Trial Before Pilate – 27:1-31

- V. 11 - "Are you the King of the Jews?" We know from the other Gospels that the Sanhedrin did not accuse Jesus of blasphemy before Pilate, but of treason, claiming to be a king.
- The "King of the Jews" was the term the Wise Men used when seeking the child.
- Jesus' answered with his usual indirect answer: "You said it."
- 12 – When the Jewish leaders accuse Jesus, he gives no response.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

5

### The Trial Before Pilate – 27:1-31

- 13 – Pilate is astonished that Jesus does not attempt to defend himself.
- 14 – Even after Pilate questions Jesus on this, he remains silent. The silence only confirms what Pilate was already believing, that Jesus was not a revolutionary.
- From the Gospels, it seems Pilate tried to do four things to set Jesus free: 1) Declare him innocent; 2) Send him to Herod (Luke 23:7ff); 3) Having him flogged; 4) Choose between Jesus and Barabbas.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

6

### The Trial Before Pilate – 27:1-31

- 15 – Pilate has them choose between Jesus and “Jesus bar Abbas.”
- 17-18 – Pilate deliberately calls Jesus “the Christ” as a way of mocking the Jews, because he knows Jesus is no threat to Rome.
- 19 – Pilate’s wife tells him to “have nothing to do with that innocent man.”
- 20 – So great is their hatred of Jesus that they compel the crowd to ask for Barabbas.

7

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The Trial Before Pilate – 27:1-31

- 23 – “What crime has he committed?” – Pilate finds himself acting as the defense attorney. But the crowd continues to demand his execution.
- 24 – Pilate knows he has lost the battle and surrenders. According to John, it was about here that the chief priests threaten to send a note to the emperor. (John 19:12)
- In an attempt to soothe his own conscience, Pilate symbolically washes his hands. But it doesn’t remove his guilt. He had the power to release Jesus, but refused to exercise it to save his own skin.

8

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The Trial Before Pilate – 27:1-31

- 25 – The Jews, however, see no guilt in the matter at all. They offer to take the guilt completely off the governor’s hands and put it on themselves.
- 26 – Pilate releases Barabbas and had Jesus flogged.
- What happened to Pilate after this? He was recalled in 35/37 after slaughtering a group of Samaritans. No trial is recorded. One tradition is that he committed suicide after being recalled. Another tradition is that he and his wife became Christian. The Ethiopian and Coptic churches venerate him as a martyr and a saint.

9

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The Mockery – 27:27-31

- 28-29 – The mockery by the soldiers with an old scarlet robe and crown of thorns was not a unique event with Jesus. The soldiers played a kind of “king for a day” game with prisoners.
- Jesus was ridiculed for who he really was: the King of kings and Lord of lords.
- 30-31 – They led him away to be crucified. The words of the suffering was yet to come.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

10

### The Crucifixion – 27:32-55

- 32 – “As they went out” – The procession included three men sentenced to be crucified. Each carried their own “cross” – probably just the cross beam.
- Tradition holds that Jesus fell three times under the weight of the cross, but that is not stated in the Gospels.
- They made a man named Simon from the town of Cyrene to carry his cross for him. Mark mentions his sons, Alexander and Rufus, in a way that indicates that his readers knew them. (Rom. 16:13)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

11

### The Crucifixion – 27:32-55

- 33 - The procession comes to “Golgotha” – the “place of the skull.” Latin – “Calvary”.
- Not a hill, necessarily, but the place of execution, outside the city on a well-traveled road.
- Today there are two sights for Calvary: the “Church of the Holy Sepulcher” which would have been just outside of the western gate, and “Gordon’s Calvary”, just outside the Damascus gate on the north side.
- 34 – the “gall” could have been myrrh, given to deaden pain.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

12

### The Crucifixion – 27:32-55

- 35 – The Gospels do not give a detailed description of the crucifixion. It was both horrifyingly painful and degrading.
- Deut. 21:33 – “Anyone who is hung on a tree is under God’s curse.” (Absalom?)
- Nails were driven through the wrists and the heel bones. Legs were broken to hasten death.
- “Dividing up his clothes” – The executioners had the right to claim the possessions of the victim. John mentions the tunic that was not torn, but won by casting lots. (19:22-23)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

13

### The Crucifixion – 27:32-55

- 36 – Once their gruesome task was done, the soldiers simply had to wait and guard against any interference.
- 37 – It was customary to write the charge and post it above the victim where it could be seen by the passers-by. The charge: “This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” (INRI)
- This is the title used by the Wise Men when they were searching for the child.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

14

### The Crucifixion – 27:32-55

- 38 – He was crucified between two robbers. Is. 53:12 – “He was numbered with the transgressors.” Tradition names them “Dysmas” (the one who was saved) and “Gestas.”
- It could have been that Barabbas had been slated to die with these two.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

15