

## **Dr. Craig Keener, Matthew, Session 19**

### **Matthew 27-28**

### **Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

#### **1. Abstract of Keener, Matthew, Session 19, Matthew 27-28, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

**Dr. Craig Keener's lecture** analyzes Matthew chapters 27-28, focusing on the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. **Keener examines the historical context** surrounding the crucifixion, including the identity of Simon of Cyrene and the Roman execution practices. **He explores the details** of Jesus' death, such as the mocking by onlookers and the offering of wine, relating these to Old Testament prophecies. **The lecture also discusses** the reactions to Jesus' death, contrasting the women's courageous witness of the resurrection with the guards' implausible report. Finally, **Keener emphasizes** the importance of proclaiming the resurrection, referencing the Great Commission and the early Christian testimonies.

**2. 11 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Keener, Matthews, Session 19 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels – Acts → Matthew).**



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### 3. Briefing Document

**Briefing Doc: Matthew 27-28, Lecture by Dr. Craig Keener**

**Main Themes:**

- **The Suffering and Death of Jesus:** This section explores the brutal details of Jesus' crucifixion, highlighting its shameful and agonizing nature. Keener emphasizes that Jesus willingly embraced this suffering for the sake of humanity.
- **Fulfillment of Scripture:** Keener repeatedly points out how events surrounding Jesus' death align with Old Testament prophecies, particularly from Psalms 22 and 69, solidifying Jesus' identity as the righteous sufferer.
- **The Significance of the Resurrection:** Keener presents a robust defense of the resurrection's historicity, emphasizing the numerous eyewitness accounts, the lack of alternative explanations, and the transformative impact it had on early believers.
- **The Role of Women:** Keener highlights the courage of the women who remained faithful to Jesus even as the male disciples fled. He argues their prominence as the first witnesses to the resurrection, despite cultural biases against women's testimony, strengthens its authenticity.
- **The Call to Discipleship:** This section culminates in the Great Commission, contrasting the faithfulness of the women who spread the news of Jesus' resurrection with the deceitful guards who hid the truth. Keener urges his listeners to follow the women's example and boldly proclaim the gospel.

**Key Ideas/Facts:**

- **Crucifixion as Torture:** Keener paints a vivid picture of the horrors of crucifixion, describing it as "death by slow torture" involving scourging, public humiliation, and ultimately asphyxiation. He notes, "Normally, people were executed naked as a matter of shame."
- **Simon of Cyrene:** Keener analyzes the possible background of Simon, who was forced to carry Jesus' cross. He suggests that Simon may have been Jewish due to his name, presence at Passover, and the potential social dynamics of the region.

- **Jesus' Refusal of Painkillers:** Keener interprets Jesus' refusal of wine mixed with myrrh as a deliberate choice to fully embrace the suffering intended for humanity. "He came to embrace our pain," Keener states, "so he embraced it in full measure."
- **Mockery and Misunderstanding:** Keener examines the taunts directed at Jesus, linking them to Satan's earlier temptations and demonstrating how those who mocked were "condemned by their own words."
- **Joseph of Arimathea's Courage:** Keener highlights the significant risk Joseph took in requesting Jesus' body, potentially facing charges of treason. This act underscores Joseph's faith and foreshadows the disciples' eventual boldness.
- **The Authenticity of the Tomb's Location:** Keener presents compelling arguments for the Holy Sepulchre being the genuine site of Jesus' burial, based on early Christian tradition and archaeological evidence that predates city wall expansions.
- **Debunking Alternative Theories:** Keener systematically dismantles arguments against the resurrection, dismissing claims of stolen bodies, hallucinations, and seasonal myths as implausible.
- **The Power of Eyewitness Testimony:** Keener emphasizes the sheer volume and credibility of those who claimed to have seen the resurrected Jesus, arguing that their willingness to die for this belief speaks volumes. "People don't ordinarily die for something that they know to be a lie," he asserts.
- **The Great Commission as a Choice:** Keener frames the Great Commission as a call to action, urging listeners to choose between the faithful proclamation exemplified by the women and the self-serving denial practiced by the guards.

#### Impactful Quotes:

- "He came to embrace our pain, so he embraced it in full measure."
- "For the very disciples who abandoned him, who denied him, even betrayed him, Jesus offered his life for us. How great is his love for us."
- "They were right in a sense. He couldn't save himself if he were to save others."
- "God chooses the lowly. He chooses the ones that other people despise as his witnesses."
- "We live because he lives."

- "Are we going to follow the example of the women and let people know the saving message that Jesus is risen?"

This lecture provides a detailed and insightful exploration of the events surrounding Jesus' death and resurrection, drawing upon historical context, biblical analysis, and theological reflection. Keener weaves together a powerful narrative that challenges listeners to grapple with the profound implications of these events for their own lives and faith.

## 4. Matthew Study Guide: Session 19, Matthew 27-28

### Matthew 27-28 Study Guide

#### Key Terms Glossary

- **Asphyxiation:** Death caused by lack of oxygen. In crucifixion, this occurred as the victim became too weak to push themselves up to breathe properly.
- **Causa Peni:** Latin for "cause of punishment." This was often included on the titulus (sign) placed on the cross.
- **Contubernium:** A squad of eight Roman soldiers who shared a tent.
- **Criterion of Embarrassment:** In biblical studies, this principle suggests that if an account includes potentially embarrassing details about Jesus or the early Christians, it is likely to be historically accurate.
- **Cyrene:** A city in ancient Libya (North Africa) with a large Jewish population.
- **Gall:** A bitter substance. Wine mixed with gall was offered to Jesus on the cross, possibly as a crude painkiller.
- **Les Majestas:** Latin for "injured majesty," referring to a crime of treason against the Roman emperor.
- **Loincloth:** A garment worn around the hips.
- **Messianic Secret Motif:** A theme in Mark's Gospel where Jesus instructs those he heals and his disciples not to reveal his true identity as the Messiah.
- **Millstone:** A large, heavy stone used for grinding grain. Jesus uses the image of being thrown into the sea with a millstone around the neck as a metaphor for severe punishment.
- **Myrrh:** An aromatic resin with medicinal properties. Wine mixed with myrrh may have been offered to Jesus as a painkiller.
- **Passover:** A major Jewish festival commemorating the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt.
- **Righteous Sufferer:** A figure in the Old Testament, particularly in Psalms like Psalm 22 and 69, who experiences unjust suffering. Jesus is often seen as the ultimate fulfillment of this motif.
- **Scourging:** A brutal form of punishment involving whipping.

- **Soporific:** Causing sleep or drowsiness.
- **Titulus:** The sign placed on the cross, usually stating the crime for which the person was condemned.

### Short Answer Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What was the significance of Simon of Cyrene being chosen to carry Jesus' cross?
2. Why is it unlikely that Jesus would have been crucified wearing a loincloth?
3. How did the mockers' words ironically fulfill scripture?
4. What is the symbolic significance of Jesus refusing the wine mixed with gall?
5. Explain the connection between Jesus' cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" and Psalm 22.
6. What does the presence of women as the first witnesses to the resurrection tell us about the historical reliability of the Gospels?
7. Why was it risky for Joseph of Arimathea to ask for Jesus' body?
8. What evidence supports the claim that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is located near the site of Jesus' crucifixion and burial?
9. How does Jesus' resurrection differ from pagan myths about dying and rising gods?
10. Why were the Sadducees particularly upset about the early Christian preaching about Jesus?

### Short Answer Quiz Answer Key

1. Simon of Cyrene, likely a Jew visiting Jerusalem for Passover, was forced by the Romans to carry the crossbeam. This event highlights the Roman practice of conscription and Jesus' weakened state after his scourging.
2. Crucifixion was intended as a shameful and humiliating form of execution. Victims were typically crucified naked to add to their degradation. The practice of depicting Jesus with a loincloth likely reflects later artistic conventions.

3. The mockers' challenge, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross," echoes the temptations of Satan in Matthew 4. Additionally, their words unintentionally fulfill the prophecy of the wicked in Wisdom of Solomon 2:18, condemning themselves through their own words.
4. Jesus' refusal of the painkiller symbolizes his willingness to embrace suffering fully for the sake of humanity. It underscores his mission to identify with human pain and offer himself as a sacrifice.
5. Jesus' cry is a direct quote from Psalm 22:1, a psalm of lament traditionally associated with the righteous sufferer. This connection emphasizes Jesus' identification with the suffering servant figure and foreshadows his eventual vindication.
6. In ancient society, women's testimony held little legal or social weight. The fact that the Gospels consistently portray women as the first witnesses to the resurrection, despite this cultural bias, strengthens the argument for the accounts' historical authenticity.
7. Requesting Jesus' body could have been perceived as an act of treason against Rome, potentially leading to Joseph's own arrest and execution. This act demonstrates his courage and emerging faith in Jesus.
8. The location of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was outside Jerusalem's city walls in the year 30, fitting with the practice of executing and burying criminals outside city limits. The fact that it is now inside the walls, due to later expansions, suggests the site's authenticity was preserved from a very early date.
9. Pagan myths often focused on seasonal cycles and natural phenomena, depicting gods who died and were reborn as symbols of nature's renewal. Jesus' resurrection, however, is a singular historical event involving a bodily resurrection, offering hope for eternal life to his followers.
10. The Sadducees, unlike the Pharisees, did not believe in a resurrection. The early Christian proclamation of Jesus' resurrection directly challenged their core beliefs, leading to their opposition and attempts to suppress the movement.

## Essay Questions

1. Analyze the significance of Simon of Cyrene carrying Jesus' cross. What theological and symbolic meanings can be drawn from this event?
2. Discuss the various ways in which Matthew's Gospel portrays the fulfillment of Old Testament scripture in the events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion.
3. Explore the role of the women in Matthew's account of the Passion and resurrection. How does their presence challenge the cultural norms of the time, and what theological implications can be derived from their actions?
4. Analyze the reactions of various groups (e.g., the crowds, the disciples, the Roman authorities) to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. How do their responses highlight the central themes of Matthew's Gospel?
5. Explain the significance of the Great Commission in Matthew 28. What implications does it have for the mission of the Church and the lives of individual Christians today?



## **5. FAQs on Keener, Matthew, Session 19, Matthew 27-28, Biblelearning.org (BeL)**

### **FAQ: Matthew 27-28**

#### **1. Who was Simon of Cyrene, and why was he compelled to carry Jesus' cross?**

Simon of Cyrene was likely a Jewish man visiting Jerusalem for Passover. He was coming in from the outskirts of the city when Roman soldiers drafted him to carry the crossbeam for Jesus. This was a common Roman practice, forcing bystanders into temporary service. Jesus, having been severely scourged, was likely too weakened to carry the cross himself.

#### **2. How does Jesus' crucifixion fulfill Old Testament prophecy?**

Matthew highlights several ways Jesus' crucifixion aligns with the suffering servant depicted in Psalms 22 and 69. These include Jesus being offered wine mixed with gall (a bitter drink) and his cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" These echoes of the Psalms emphasize Jesus's identification with the righteous sufferer.

#### **3. Why did Jesus refuse the wine mixed with gall?**

By refusing the painkiller, Jesus chose to fully embrace the pain of crucifixion. This act demonstrates his willingness to suffer for humanity's sake and to experience the full weight of our suffering. It highlights his immense love and sacrifice for his disciples and all people.

#### **4. Who mocked Jesus during the crucifixion, and what was the significance of their words?**

Those present at the crucifixion, including the Roman soldiers and Jewish leaders, mocked Jesus, challenging him to save himself if he truly was the Son of God. Ironically, their taunts unwittingly echoed the words of the wicked in the Wisdom of Solomon, who sought to condemn the righteous. Their words ultimately serve as a condemnation of themselves.

**5. Who were present at Jesus' burial, and why is their presence significant?**

While the male disciples were absent, a group of women, including Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, followed Jesus to the cross and witnessed his burial. Notably, Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy Jewish leader and a secret follower of Jesus, courageously requested Jesus' body from Pilate and laid him in his own tomb. The presence of the women, despite societal limitations on their testimony, and the actions of Joseph underscore the faithfulness of these individuals in contrast to the disciples' fear.

**6. What is the significance of the location of Jesus' tomb?**

Jesus was buried in a tomb outside the city walls, as was Jewish custom. The traditional site of Jesus' tomb, the Holy Sepulcher, was located outside the city walls during Jesus' time but was later enclosed within the expanded city walls. This archaeological detail lends credibility to the tradition that the Holy Sepulcher is the authentic burial site, as no one would invent a story about Jesus being buried inside the city walls when it was well-known that burials took place outside.

**7. How does the resurrection differentiate Jesus from other "dying and rising gods" of the time?**

Unlike the pagan concept of dying and rising gods, which often symbolized seasonal cycles of nature, Jesus' resurrection was a bodily resurrection, a concept rooted in Jewish beliefs. The resurrection of Jesus was a unique historical event that defied pagan notions and established a precedent for the future resurrection of believers. The empty tomb and the numerous eyewitness accounts of the resurrected Jesus further solidify the reality of this event.

**8. What are the three reports given about the resurrection, and what lessons do they offer?**

Matthew presents three distinct reports surrounding the resurrection:

1. **The women's report:** The women, as the first witnesses, faithfully proclaim the news of the resurrection to the disciples.
2. **The guards' report:** The guards, motivated by fear and greed, concoct a false narrative of the disciples stealing the body.
3. **The Great Commission:** Jesus instructs his disciples to spread the good news of his resurrection to all nations.

These contrasting reports challenge readers to decide whom they will emulate: the faithful women who boldly share the truth, the guards who succumb to fear and deceit, or the disciples who are called to proclaim the message of salvation to the world.