

Dr. David Turner, Matthew

Lecture 12A – Matthew 27: Jesus' Passion II: Roman Hearing, Crucifixion, and Death

NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Briefing Document, 3) Study Guide, 4) FAQs

1) Abstract

This academic lecture explores **Matthew chapter 27**, focusing on Jesus's Roman hearing, crucifixion, and death. It begins by examining **Judas's suicide** and contrasting his remorse with Peter's denial, emphasizing that Judas's actions did not lead to genuine repentance. The lecture then addresses **Jesus's trial before Pilate**, discussing the dynamics between Pilate, the crowd, and Jewish leaders, while also refuting interpretations of Matthew as anti-Semitic. Furthermore, it details the **crucifixion narrative**, highlighting its Old Testament allusions and the irony of the mockers, before providing historical and theological perspectives on this gruesome method of execution. Finally, the lecture covers **Jesus's death and burial**, emphasizing the miraculous signs that accompanied his passing and the Jewish leaders' attempts to prevent claims of resurrection.

2) Briefing Document:

Here's a detailed briefing document based on the provided sources, reviewing the main themes and most important ideas or facts:

Briefing Document: Matthew Chapter 27 - Jesus' Roman Hearing, Crucifixion, and Death

Source: Excerpts from "Turner_Matthew_Lect12A_English.pdf" by Dr. David Turner.

This document reviews Dr. David Turner's lecture on Matthew Chapter 27, covering Jesus' hearing before Roman authorities, His crucifixion, and His death. The lecture interweaves the main narrative of Jesus' suffering with stories of supporting characters and their roles.

I. The Pathetic Story of Judas (Matthew 27:1-10)

- **Judas's Suicide and Fulfillment of Prophecy:** The narrative begins with Judas's tragic end, his suicide in Matthew 27:3-8, which Matthew views as a fulfillment of prophecy, specifically from Zechariah 11:7 and 11:13. Matthew interprets the "shepherd doomed to slaughter" as Jesus and the "30 pieces of silver thrown to the potter" as the money Judas threw down in the temple.
- **Quote:** "Matthew apparently understands the shepherd doomed to slaughter in Zechariah 11:7 as corresponding to Jesus, and the 30 pieces of silver thrown to the potter in the Lord's house in Zechariah 11:13 as corresponding to the money Judas threw down in the temple being used by the potter's field by the chief priests."
- **Note:** Matthew does not fabricate the story but finds patterns in the Old Testament that anticipate events in Jesus' life.
- **Judas's Remorse vs. Peter's Repentance:** A significant comparison is drawn between Judas's remorse and Peter's denial. While both acts were "despicable," Peter's "pales in comparison with Judas'."
- **Peter's Restoration:** Peter's remorse leads to genuine repentance and restoration to his "special office in the church" (Matthew 28:18-20, John 21:15ff).
- **Judas's Despair:** Judas's remorse, though involving acknowledgment of sin and returning the "blood money," does not equate to "genuine repentance unto salvation." His suicide is presented as an "indication of hopeless despair, not repentance."
- **Quote:** "Granted, Judas did acknowledge his sin and he did return his blood money. But Judas never attempts to seek Jesus' forgiveness or rejoin the disciples. His suicide is an indication of hopeless despair, not repentance."
- **Theological Implications:** Judas is remembered for his suicide, a violation of the sixth commandment. Passages like Matthew 26:24 and John 6:70, 17:12 suggest Judas was "lost," serving as a warning.

- **Clarification on Anti-Semitism and Judas:** Dr. Turner explicitly refutes the notion that Judas represents the Jewish people as a whole or implies a "grave mistake, typical of the Jewish people."
- **Quote:** "Judas must not be viewed as typical of the Jewish people in his own time or in any other day. Jesus called twelve disciples, and all of them were Jews. Only one of them betrayed Jesus and was lost." The other eleven were restored to ministry.
- **Gentile Roots of Faith:** The lecture emphasizes that Gentile believers must "never forget the Jewish roots of their faith," acknowledging the church's predominantly Gentile nature as a "mystery of divine wisdom and sovereignty."

II. Jesus' Hearing Before Pilate (Matthew 27:11-26)

- **Narrative Structure:** The trial before Pilate involves two cycles of interrogation, explanation of the customary Passover prisoner release (Barabbas), two cycles of Pilate asking the crowd for their preference, and two protests of Jesus' innocence by Pilate, culminating in Jesus' delivery for crucifixion.
- **Key Characters and Influences:**
 - **Pilate:** Portrayed "not... in a positive way, but in a pathetic way." He is "insecure and unjust," knowing Jesus is innocent but complicit due to a desire to avoid "hassles with the Jewish leaders." His "symbolic hand-washing is pathetically inadequate and hypocritical," showing him as a "cowardly ruler who abdicates his responsibility."
 - **Quote:** "Pilate knows that Jesus is innocent, but he does not intervene to stop the miscarriage of justice. He knows that Jesus should be released instead of Barabbas, but he accedes to the wishes of the crowd because it's expedient to do so."
 - **Pilate's Wife:** Acts in favor of Jesus (27:19).
 - **Leading Priests and Elders:** Actively against Jesus (27:12) and influential in swaying the crowd.
 - **The Crowd:** Influenced by the Jewish leaders to choose Barabbas over Jesus.

- **The "Blood Libel" and Anti-Semitism (Matthew 27:25):** This passage, where the crowd accepts responsibility for Jesus' blood "upon them and upon their descendants," is critically analyzed.
- **Refutation of Anti-Semitic Interpretation:** Dr. Turner strongly rejects the historical interpretation that this text means "the Jews as a nation are to be viewed as despicable Christ-killers."
- **Quote:** "This interpretation is patently false on its surface, since all the founders of the church were Jewish and many Jews have believed in Jesus throughout the church's history."
- **Contextual Limitation:** The comment is limited to "those present before Pilate and their children," made "in the heat of the moment, not as a carefully reasoned theological proposition." There is "no guarantee that a God of grace would hold the crowd to its rash statement."
- **Blame on Leaders:** The lecture asserts that the "leading priests and elders who persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas" are primarily "to blame for the crowd's unfortunate statement."
- **Universal Responsibility:** Ultimately, "all humans, Jews and Gentiles alike, are responsible for Jesus pouring out his blood to forgive sins and inaugurate the new covenant." It is "those who do not believe in Jesus, Jews and Gentiles alike, who will be held responsible for his blood."

III. The Crucifixion (Matthew 27:27-44)

- **Gruesome Process and Mockery:** The narrative describes the soldiers' mockery, Simon carrying the cross, arrival at Golgotha, offering wine, the crucifixion itself, gambling for garments, and a sign detailing Jesus' identity. A key theme is the repeated mockery by bystanders, Jewish leaders, and revolutionaries.
- **Irony of Mockery:** The mockery, particularly concerning Jesus' sonship and kingship, is deeply ironic. Each point of ridicule—that he is unable to save himself, is not the king of Israel, does not trust God, will not come down from the cross—is "in fact, eventually shown to be true" through his resurrection and exaltation.

- **Quote:** "Thus, in a very strange way, the mockers are unwitting evangelists."
- **Soldiers' Cruel Jest as Prophecy:** The soldiers dressing Jesus as a king and pretending homage "is prophetic of what will really happen someday" after his crucifixion, when "Jesus will be exalted as the glorious Son of Man and given all authority."
- **Anti-Semitism Re-addressed:** The lecture highlights that some of "the most vicious mockers of Jesus in the crucifixion narrative are the Gentiles in 27:27-31."
- **Quote:** "This calls into question the simplistic identification of the Jews with rejection of Jesus and of the Gentiles with reception of Jesus, which is found in some mistaken treatments of Matthew's theology." Not all mockers are Jews, and not all Jews reject Jesus.
- **Historical Perspective on Crucifixion:**
- **Cruelty and Roman Purpose:** Crucifixion was an "unusual punishment," used by Romans for "slaves, notorious criminals, and insurrectionists to make a political statement." It asserted "the dominion of Rome over conquered peoples."
- **Medical Cause of Death:** Commonly thought to be asphyxia (lack of breath), though dehydration and blood loss are also theories. Legs were sometimes broken to hasten death, but not for Jesus (John 19:31-33).
- **Theological Perspective on Crucifixion:**
- **Culmination of Rejection:** The crucifixion narrative is the "culmination of the story of Jesus' rejection," with various parties taunting him as an "impotent pretender."
- **Messianic Values:** Jesus is not the expected military messiah; He demands "individual Jewish repentance, not war against Rome." His kingdom is built "not by the sword... but by one repentant disciple at a time."
- **Redemption and Atonement:** The crucifixion accomplishes "the redemption needed." Jesus "saves his people from their sins" (1:21) by "giving his life as a ransom for them" (20:28), "sacrificial pouring out of his blood so that their sins may be forgiven" (26:28).

- **Vicarious Sacrifice:** Drawing on Deuteronomy 21:22-23 and Isaiah 53:3-6, Jesus "bore the curse and penalty for the sins of his people so that they would not have to bear that curse themselves."
- **Pauline Theology:** Paul develops this further, teaching "the believer in Jesus has himself or herself become vitally identified with Jesus in death to the old life of sin... and resurrection to a new life." This new life "is lived in community with all who believe in Jesus, whether Jew or Gentile."

IV. The Death of Jesus (Matthew 27:45-56)

- **Climax of Matthew's Narrative:** Jesus' death is presented as the "event toward which all of Matthew's narrative points" and the "centerpiece of the passion narrative."
- **Supernatural Phenomena:** Attended by "darkness and results in a rock-splitting earthquake." "Nature itself thus testifies to the ominous epochal significance of the event."
- **Cry of Dereliction (Matthew 27:46):** Jesus' "desolate cry" of being forsaken by God is "one of the most impenetrable mysteries." It is not a loss of faith but "the expression of the deepest imaginable pain at being abandoned by his Father." This abandonment is temporary, with vindication soon to come.
- **Misunderstanding:** Onlookers misunderstand this cry, thinking he is calling for Elijah, a "more subtle form of mockery."
- **Temple Veil and Opened Tombs (Matthew 27:51ff):** The tearing of the temple veil "vindicates Jesus, demonstrating he was indeed one greater than the temple." The "splitting of the rocks and resulting opening of tombs is evidently a preview of the final resurrection guaranteed by the soon resurrection of Jesus."
- **Sympathetic Witnesses: Roman Soldiers:** "Transformed into believers of a sort" by witnessing Jesus' death and its results. Their confession that Jesus is the "Son of God" contrasts sharply with the taunts of others.
- **Women:** A "largely unsung group" who watched, later becoming "the first to learn of the resurrection of Jesus and then to meet the resurrected Jesus himself, and finally to tell the disciples about it." Their "preeminence"

highlights a warning against "chauvinism in the community of Jesus' disciples."

V. The Burial of Jesus (Matthew 27:57-66)

- **Joseph of Arimathea:** Joseph provides a "decent burial," sparing Jesus the "ignominy of having his body hang on a cross after sundown." This is presented as "the kindest treatment Jesus has received since the unnamed woman anointed him for his burial."
- **Fear of Jewish Leaders:** The Jewish leaders' request to Pilate to guard the tomb, fearing the disciples would "steal Jesus' body and make deceptive claims of his resurrection," is seen as "irrational, even bordering on paranoia."
- **Underestimation of Disciples, Underestimation of Jesus:** They "think too highly of disciples who were scattered, afraid" and "think too little of Jesus," ruling out the possibility of his resurrection.
- **Conspiracy Theory:** This fear sets up the "stolen body theory" of the resurrection, which is refuted by the post-resurrection appearances and demonstrates "the lengths to which unbelief will go in order to sustain its pretended autonomy."

VI. Summary and Transition (Matthew 27 as a Low Point and Vindication)

- **Low Point for Followers:** Matthew 27 marks the "low point of the gospel for followers of Jesus the Messiah," where Jesus is condemned, crucified, and dies.
- **Contrasting Themes:**
- **Jewish Leaders' Obstinacy:** They continue their "hard-hearted, cruel, mocking treatment of Jesus and admit their absolute responsibility for his execution."
- **Jesus' Repeated Vindication:** Despite the mockery, Jesus is repeatedly vindicated:
- Judas admits Jesus is innocent.
- Pilate and his wife regard Jesus as innocent.

- Providential meteorological phenomena (darkness, earthquake) occur.
- Roman soldiers confess Jesus as the Son of God, contrasting with the taunts. This paves the way for the Great Commission to all nations.
- **Temporary Victory:** The "seeming victory of Jesus' enemies is only temporary," setting the stage for the resurrection in Matthew 28, where the Jewish leaders' attempts to nullify Jesus' predicted resurrection will be reversed.

3) Study Guide: Study Guide: Matthew 27 – Jesus' Passion II: Roman Hearing, Crucifixion, and Death

Quiz: Short Answer Questions

1. Compare and contrast Judas's remorse with Peter's denial. What key difference in their responses indicates genuine repentance?
2. How does Matthew's narrative interweave stories of supporting characters with the main story of Jesus's passion? Provide an example from the text.
3. Explain Matthew's understanding of Old Testament prophecy fulfillment as demonstrated in the account of Judas's suicide.
4. Describe Pilate's portrayal in Matthew 27:11-26. Is he presented in a positive or negative light, and what evidence supports this?
5. Address the "blood libel" text in Matthew 27:25. How has this passage been misinterpreted historically, and what is its correct interpretation according to the lecture?
6. Discuss the irony present in the crucifixion narrative, particularly concerning the mockers of Jesus. How do their words and actions inadvertently highlight Jesus's true identity?
7. What theological significance does the crucifixion hold beyond being a historical event? Explain at least two key aspects mentioned in the lecture.
8. How does the tearing of the temple veil at Jesus's death relate to his identity and significance?

9. Who were the sympathetic witnesses to Jesus's death, and what is the significance of their presence compared to the disciples?
10. Explain the Jewish leaders' fear regarding Jesus's body after his burial. How does this fear set up the events of Matthew 28?

Answer Key

1. Both Judas's betrayal and Peter's denial were despicable acts. However, Peter's remorse led to his restoration to ministry and a life of following Jesus, indicating genuine repentance (metanoia). Judas's remorse (metamelomai) led to hopeless despair and suicide, as he never sought Jesus's forgiveness or rejoined the disciples, showing a lack of true repentance (metanoia, which produces "fruit").
2. Matthew consistently interweaves stories about supporting characters and issues into the main narrative of Jesus's sufferings. For instance, the main trial narrative (26:57-68) is suspended by Peter's denials (26:69-75) and then picks up again in 27:1-2, before shifting focus to Judas's suicide (27:3-10). This technique keeps the focus on Jesus while adding depth.
3. Matthew understands Old Testament prophecy fulfillment as finding patterns where an Old Testament person or event anticipates something in Jesus's life. In Judas's case, Matthew views the 30 pieces of silver and the potter's field as corresponding to Zechariah 11:7 and 11:13, where a shepherd doomed to slaughter and money thrown to a potter are mentioned.
4. Pilate is presented in a pathetic and negative light. He is shown as insecure and unjust, knowing Jesus is innocent but acceding to the crowd's wishes for expediency. His hand-washing is a "pathetically inadequate and hypocritical" symbolic gesture, demonstrating his cowardice and abdication of responsibility rather than his innocence.
5. Historically, Matthew 27:25 ("His blood be on us and on our children!") has been misinterpreted as a "blood libel" text, teaching that Jews as a nation are perpetually despicable "Christ-killers." The correct interpretation is that the comment was made in the heat of the moment by those present, not a reasoned theological proposition for all Jews, and a God of grace would not necessarily hold them to it, nor pardon Pilate.

6. The irony is pronounced as the mockers, including soldiers, bystanders, Jewish leaders, and revolutionaries, unwittingly highlight Jesus's true identity. They ridicule him for not coming down from the cross, yet he saves others. They dress him as a king in cruel jest, which is prophetic of his future exaltation as the glorious Son of Man, showing that "things are exactly the opposite of what they seem."
7. The crucifixion holds several key theological significances. It is the culmination of Jesus's rejection, but also the means by which he saves his people from their sins, giving his life as a ransom (Matthew 20:28). It entails the sacrificial pouring out of his blood for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28) and, as developed by other New Testament authors, Jesus vicariously bore the curse and penalty for sin (Galatians 3:13).
8. The tearing of the temple veil at Jesus's death (Matthew 27:51) vindicates Jesus, demonstrating that he was indeed "one greater than the temple" (Matthew 12:6). It signifies that the barrier between God and humanity, previously symbolized by the veil separating the Holy of Holies, has been removed through Jesus's sacrifice, allowing direct access to God.
9. The sympathetic witnesses were the Roman soldiers and a group of women mentioned in Matthew 27:55-56. The soldiers, witnessing Jesus's manner of death and its results (darkness, earthquake), confessed him as "the Son of God." The women, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, remained faithful despite the disciples' shameful absence and later became the first to learn of and tell others about the resurrection.
10. The Jewish leaders feared that Jesus's disciples would steal his body and make false claims of his resurrection, which they believed would be a "worse deception" than his initial ministry. This fear leads them to request a guard for the tomb, which ironically serves to further confirm the resurrection when the guards flee and the tomb is found empty in Matthew 28.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the distinct portrayals of Pilate and the Jewish leaders in Matthew 27 regarding their roles and responsibilities in Jesus's condemnation and

crucifixion. Discuss how Matthew's narrative challenges simplistic interpretations of blame.

2. Discuss the various ways Matthew employs irony and Old Testament allusions throughout the crucifixion narrative (Matthew 27:27-56). How do these literary devices contribute to Matthew's theological message about Jesus's identity and mission?
3. Examine the concept of "repentance" as presented in the study material, particularly in the comparison of Judas and Peter. What does Matthew's gospel emphasize as the true "fruit" of repentance, and how does this contrast with superficial remorse?
4. The lecture argues against interpreting Matthew 27 as unqualifiedly anti-Semitic. Based on the provided text, critically evaluate Matthew's perspective on the Jewish people and Gentiles, considering both sympathetic and hostile characters and their actions.
5. Beyond the historical event, explain the profound theological significance of Jesus's death as the "culmination" of Matthew's narrative. Discuss how it accomplishes redemption, fulfills messianic values, and inaugurates new life for believers, drawing on both Matthew's immediate context and broader New Testament theology as discussed.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Anti-Semitism:** Hostility to, prejudice toward, or discrimination against Jews. The lecture discusses how Matthew 27:20-25 has been mistakenly cited as overtly anti-Semitic.
- **Asphyxia:** The state or process of being deprived of oxygen, which can result in unconsciousness or death; commonly thought to be the cause of death in crucifixion.
- **Blood Libel Text:** Refers to Matthew 27:25, where the crowd says, "His blood be on us and on our children!" This phrase has historically been misinterpreted to demonize the Jewish people as a whole for Jesus's death.

- **Chauvinism:** Excessive or prejudiced loyalty or support for one's own kind, group, or gender. The preeminence of women at Jesus's death and resurrection is presented as a warning against chauvinism in the church.
- **Crucifixion:** A method of capital punishment in which the victim is tied or nailed to a large wooden beam or cross and left to hang until dead, often by asphyxiation; considered a cruel and unusual punishment, used by Romans for slaves, notorious criminals, and insurrectionists.
- **Exculpate:** To clear from alleged fault or guilt. Some mistakenly believe Matthew's portrayal of Pilate attempts to exculpate the Romans.
- **Fulfillment Formula:** Matthew's characteristic expression (e.g., "This happened to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet...") used to show how Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus.
- **Inclusio:** A literary device in which a passage or section of a text is framed by the repetition of a word, phrase, or theme at its beginning and end.
- **Inculpate:** To accuse or incriminate; to show that someone is guilty of something. Some mistakenly believe Matthew's portrayal attempts to inculpate the Jews.
- **Metamelomai:** A Greek word meaning regret or remorse, often referring to a change of feeling, but not necessarily a change of mind or heart leading to genuine repentance. Used to describe Judas's remorse.
- **Metanoia:** A Greek word meaning repentance, signifying a transformative change of mind, heart, and life, often producing "fruit" or works that demonstrate its genuineness. Contrasted with metamelomai.
- **Pax Romana:** Latin for "Roman Peace," a period of relative peace and stability experienced by the Roman Empire, enforced through military might and severe punishments like crucifixion for those who disturbed it.
- **Potter's Field:** A burial ground for strangers or the poor, purchased with the 30 pieces of silver Judas returned, fulfilling Old Testament prophecy (Zechariah 11:13, as understood by Matthew).

- **Ransom:** A sum of money or other payment demanded or paid for the release of a prisoner. The lecture explains Jesus gave his life as a "ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28), signifying his sacrificial death to free humanity from sin.
- **Son of God:** A significant title for Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, affirming his unique divine identity and relationship with God the Father. Confessed by the Roman soldiers at Jesus's death.
- **Son of Man:** A title Jesus frequently used for himself, emphasizing both his humanity and his messianic authority, particularly in his future exaltation and judgment.
- **Temple Veil:** The curtain separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place in the Jewish Temple, symbolizing the barrier between humanity and God's immediate presence. Its tearing at Jesus's death signifies direct access to God through him.
- **Vicarious Sacrifice:** The theological concept that Jesus, through his death on the cross, took the place of humanity and bore the penalty for their sins, thereby achieving their forgiveness and redemption.

4) FAQs

Q1: What was the significance of Judas's suicide and how did his remorse compare to Peter's denial?

Judas's suicide, detailed in Matthew 27:1-10, concludes his act of ultimate treachery against Jesus. Matthew views this event as a fulfillment of prophecy, specifically alluding to Zechariah 11:7 and 11:13. While Judas did acknowledge his sin and returned the "blood money," his remorse, described by the Greek word "metamelomai," did not lead to genuine repentance ("metanoia"). He never sought Jesus's forgiveness or attempted to rejoin the disciples, with his suicide indicating hopeless despair rather than a desire for salvation.

In contrast, Peter's denial, though despicable, was a "temporary lapse." Peter's subsequent remorse led to genuine repentance, and he was later restored to his

special office in the church (Matthew 28:18-20, John 21:15ff). The text highlights that true repentance, as seen in Matthew, is evidenced by "works portrayed as fruit," which Judas failed to demonstrate.

Q2: How is Pilate portrayed in the narrative of Jesus's trial, and what is the significance of his hand-washing?

Pilate is portrayed in a "pathetic" way, not as a positive figure. He is depicted as insecure and unjust, willing to be complicit in a known injustice merely to avoid "hassles with the Jewish leaders." Despite recognizing Jesus's innocence and the ulterior motives of the Jewish leaders, Pilate succumbs to the crowd's wishes for expediency.

His symbolic hand-washing in Matthew 27:24 is presented as "pathetically inadequate and hypocritical." It is meant to show that Pilate does not consent to the crowd's wish, but the source argues that a governor should not permit what he does not consent to. Pilate ultimately appears as a "cowardly ruler who abdicates his responsibility," sharing the guilt for Jesus's crucifixion.

Q3: What is the "blood libel" passage in Matthew 27:25, and how should it be interpreted in light of accusations of anti-Semitism?

Matthew 27:25, often called the "blood libel" text, states that the crowd accepts responsibility for Jesus's blood upon themselves and their descendants. This passage has historically been misinterpreted to imply that the Jews as a nation are "despicable Christ-killers," leading to anti-Semitism.

However, this interpretation is deemed "patently false." The text is limited to "those present before Pilate and their children," not the entire Jewish nation at that time or any other. It's described as a statement made "in the heat of the moment," without any divine guarantee that God would hold the crowd to such a rash declaration. The source emphasizes that Matthew, a Jew writing to Christian Jews, would not condemn his own people. Furthermore, the passage notes that it was the "leading priests and elders who persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas," shifting blame to corrupt leadership rather than the entire Jewish people. Ultimately, the text asserts that "all humans, Jews and Gentiles alike," are responsible for Jesus's blood in the "most profound sense"—that his blood was shed for the forgiveness of sins.

Q4: How does the narrative of Jesus's crucifixion address the question of anti-Semitism?

The crucifixion narrative challenges a "simplistic identification of the Jews with rejection of Jesus and of the Gentiles with reception of Jesus." While Jewish leaders are prominent among the mockers, the text explicitly states that "the most vicious mockers of Jesus in the crucifixion narrative are the Gentiles" (Matthew 27:27-31). This demonstrates that "not all of the mockers in the crucifixion narrative are Jews," and "not all the Jews are mockers" (Matthew 27:55-57). Therefore, Matthew's gospel should not be seen as presenting an "unqualifiedly negative view of the Jews" or an "unqualified positive view of the Gentiles."

Q5: What was the purpose and nature of crucifixion in Roman times, and what were the typical medical causes of death?

Crucifixion was a "gruesome mode of execution" used by the Romans as "cruel and unusual punishment." It was reserved for slaves, notorious criminals, and insurrectionists, serving as a political statement to assert Rome's dominion and deter any challenge to the "Pax Romana." The practice typically involved driving long nails through the victim's ankles into the vertical post and through their outstretched hands or wrists into the horizontal beam.

The precise medical cause of death is not definitively clear, but it is "commonly thought that victims would die of asphyxia, lack of breath." This occurred as victims, unable to support their weight with their legs, would struggle to breathe while hanging by their arms. This process could take days, and sometimes the executors would break the victims' legs to hasten death. Other theories suggest that dehydration and blood loss from pre-crucifixion flogging and nail wounds also contributed to death.

Q6: What is the theological significance of Jesus's crucifixion according to the provided text?

Theologically, Jesus's crucifixion is the culmination of his rejection, highlighting how various parties mocked him as an "impotent pretender." However, it also underscores Jesus's true messianic values, which prioritize "individual Jewish repentance" and "humble service" over military prowess, contrasting with the expected military messiah.

Crucially, the crucifixion "accomplishes the redemption needed" for these kingdom values to be practiced. Jesus "saves his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21) by offering "his life as a ransom for them" (Matthew 20:28), pouring out his blood for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28). Furthermore, the crucifixion fulfills the curse pronounced in Deuteronomy 21:22-23 on anyone hung on a tree. Jesus "bore the curse and penalty for the sins of his people," providing "vicarious sacrifice" and achieving their forgiveness and redemption. The text also explains how the theology of crucifixion leads to the understanding that believers are "vitaly identified with Jesus in death to the old life of sin" and "resurrection to a new life."

Q7: What extraordinary events accompanied Jesus's death, and what was their symbolic meaning?

Jesus's death was attended by significant supernatural events: "darkness" covering the land (Matthew 27:45), and a "rock-splitting earthquake" (Matthew 27:51). Nature itself "testifies to the ominous epochal significance of the event."

The earthquake also caused the "temple veil" to rip and "tombs" to open, leading to people being "raised from the dead." The tearing of the veil vindicates Jesus, demonstrating he was "one greater than the temple." The splitting rocks and opening tombs are seen as a "preview of the final resurrection guaranteed by the soon resurrection of Jesus," with his own resurrection being the "firstfruits" (1 Corinthians 15:20-23, Revelation 1:5). Even the Roman soldiers witnessing these phenomena are transformed into believers, confessing Jesus as the "Son of God" (Matthew 27:54), a stark contrast to the earlier mockery.

Q8: What was the Jewish leaders' primary fear regarding Jesus's body after his death, and how does this set up the events of Matthew 28?

The Jewish leaders' primary fear, as described in Matthew 27:62-66, was that Jesus's disciples would "steal Jesus' body and make deceptive claims of his resurrection." They requested Pilate to guard the tomb and seal the stone, indicating their "irrational, even bordering on paranoia" fear that the disciples would fabricate a resurrection.

This section effectively "sets up Matthew 28" by demonstrating how the efforts to secure Jesus's burial are "reversed by the resurrection and the flight of the guards." The Jewish leaders "totally rule out any possibility that God would make good on

Jesus' promised resurrection." However, the "post-resurrection appearances refute the stolen body theory of the resurrection," and the subsequent conspiracy to explain away the resurrection shows the "lengths to which unbelief will go." The text concludes that Jesus's resurrection, which they tried to prevent, turned out "better" than their "first deception."