



ATTHEW

PART SIX
**THE VINDICATION
OF THE SON OF GOD**





WELCOME TO MATTHEW

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

MALACHI 4:4-5

The above verse is the last portion of scripture found in the Old Testament. It is a closing of an era, but also a looking to the future. What is fascinating is that in one turn of the page, a reader goes from Malachi in the Old Testament to the first page of the first book of the New Testament, Matthew. What is hidden to many readers is the massive gulf between the page turn—between Matthew and Malachi. In that one turn of the page 400 years transpire.

For 400 years the people of God lived in this silence. In this time, there was much violence and war. Invaders from far off lands, evil tyrants, rulers who have no right to rule, exercised their power. Although at times it seemed as if hope was lost, the faithful clung to promises of old, promises that one day a good King would come to rule over his people. This King would exercise wisdom and implement the will of God. This King would be more than a King... he would be a Messiah.

Matthew tells his story in this context. When hope seems all but lost, when dictators rule, and when the promises of God seem like a long forgotten hope, Matthew introduces us to a man named Jesus of Nazareth. This is his story.





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CASE STUDY OF FAILURE

MATTHEW 26:69–27:10

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you mean." And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." And again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man." After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you." Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately the rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly. ¹

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. ² And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor. ³ Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, ⁴ saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." ⁵ And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself. ⁶ But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money." ⁷ So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. ⁸ Therefore





that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. ⁹ Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him

on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, ¹⁰ and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me."

INTRODUCTION

Two disciples find themselves committing an act of betrayal they least expected. One driven by fear of man and the other by greed. Peter and Judas both find themselves stuck with consequences they later deeply regret. One later will face redemption and healing, the other finds himself hopeless and commits suicide. We will learn that failure is not final, but it does have consequences that must be dealt with and brought to Jesus for healing.

DISCUSSION

- ¹ Think back to your childhood. Do you remember a time you failed at something? How did you feel? How did you deal with it?
- ² Re-read Matthew 26:69-75. Discuss the progression of Peter's response to being accused as a follower of Jesus. Why do you think each response was greater to the accusations of knowing Jesus?

- 3 How did the rooster's crow play a significant part in Peter's heart? How did he respond?
- 4 Read John 21:15-19. How does this restore Peter into the work of ministry and his relationship with Jesus?
- 5 Have you ever felt tempted to deny Jesus in a context where Jesus is not popular?
- 6 Re-read Matthew 27:1-10. Contrast the chief priests and Judas' response to the decision for Jesus to be put to death. How does Judas deal with his grief of sin? How do the religious leaders respond? (Reference: Zechariah 11:13)
- 7 What are you facing in your life today that you fear bringing to Jesus because you feel like you have let him down or sinned against Him?





GOSPEL MOTIVATION

The religious leaders refused to take ownership for their decisions and pretended that nothing was wrong. Judas swung the opposite direction by thinking his future was utterly hopeless because of his actions. He was stricken by such great remorse that he took his own life. Peter found himself in a weak moment that led to his utter denial of Jesus. He wept bitterly over his own hypocrisy, but in his failure, there was something different—he repented. There are repercussions for our decisions, and we have a choice on how we will respond. No matter the situation you have found yourself in, you are not too far out of reach for Jesus’ love and forgiveness to heal your failures and bring you close to Him. The cross paid for it all and he invites you to bow before him.



REAKING UNDER MOB HYSTERIA

MATTHEW 27:11-26

¹¹ Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You have said so." ¹² But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. ¹³ Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?" ¹⁴ But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. ¹⁵ Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. ¹⁶ And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. ¹⁷ So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" ¹⁸ For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. ¹⁹ Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have

suffered much because of him today in a dream." ²⁰ Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. ²¹ The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." ²² Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" ²³ And he said, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!" ²⁴ So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." ²⁵ And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" ²⁶ Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.





INTRODUCTION

The intensity continues to rise as the religious leaders transition from arresting Jesus at night to bringing him before Pilate early in the morning. The Jews have no authority to execute Jesus, so they make false accusations before the Roman governor to see if they can get rid of him. In this section of Scripture, observe Pilate's response to the Jewish leaders and the influence that the crowds have on his leadership. Does he act out of courage or fear?

DISCUSSION

- 1 After reading Matthew 27:11-26, list all the different characters and people involved in the trial before Pilate. What is their motivation? How are they the same? How are they different?
- 2 "Are you the King of the Jews?" Pilate asks Jesus. What are the implications of this question both from a political and theological point of view?
- 3 Read Isaiah 53:7. Observe how Jesus' interaction with Pilate over the Jews' accusations of him were to fulfill the Scriptures. How did Jesus' response impact Pilate?

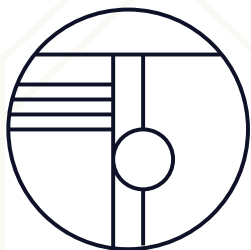
- 4 It was a yearly custom at Passover for Pilate to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. Out of a desire to get Jesus out of this situation, he asks the crowd: "Who do you want me to release? Jesus the Christ or Barabbas?" Why would the people want to release Barabbas? Discuss his story and background and how it contrasts Jesus the Christ.
- 5 In the midst of this trial, Pilate's wife sends a message. What does she say? How does this influence Pilate's view of Jesus? How does this highlight the role of women in the narrative of the Gospel?
- 6 Discuss the role that mob hysteria can have on a group of people to influence a certain outcome. Map out how this led to Jesus' crucifixion. Have you ever witnessed something similar where a "mob" mentality overwhelmed truth and justice?
- 7 Are there any "mob madness" messages or practices that impact you today that lead you away from godly living? Are there common practices that have become acceptable because "those Christians are doing it?"
- 8 After publicly washing his hands (a Jewish practice to signal that he is innocent), Pilate thought he could remove himself with a clear conscience, not responsible for Jesus' death. What emotions and thoughts drove Pilate to do this? Can you relate to him?



GOSPEL MOTIVATION

Although Pilate knew in his heart that Jesus was innocent, his actions did not follow. Keeping the peace in his region and the fear of an uprising kept him from executing justice. Instead, Barabbas goes free, and the perfect Son of God walks silently toward crucifixion, not allowing the pressures and accusations to lead him away from the will of the Father.

Although the current circumstances seem very dark, Jesus' eyes are set on the cross because it is the path to our freedom and salvation. What circumstances do you find yourself in today that feel unjust and dark? Remember that Jesus has already walked that road before you and is ready to lead you into the truth and light.



THE SUFFERING KING

MATTHEW 27:27-44

²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. ²⁸ And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰ And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him. ³² As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. ³³ And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴ they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵ And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by

casting lots. ³⁶ Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. ³⁷ And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." ³⁸ Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. ³⁹ And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." ⁴¹ So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, ⁴² "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴ And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.





INTRODUCTION

The crowds have overtaken Pilate with their plea to crucify Jesus. He is now in the hands of the Roman soldiers to be prepared for crucifixion. Crucifixion in that time was reserved for the worst criminals and slaves. There is irony written throughout this whole narrative. Consider the character and reality of Jesus and then consider him being beaten and mocked. Explore the accusations made against Jesus and how His suffering led to the greatest act of love and salvation for all mankind.

DISCUSSION

- 1 Have you ever been falsely accused? How did it make you feel? How did you deal with it?
- 2 Review the text again. Who are the four groups of people who mock Jesus? What do they accuse Him of?
- 3 *"Hail, King of the Jews,"* the Roman soldiers mocked. Their primary reason for offense was the threat to the rule and kingship of Caesar. How is their treatment of Jesus ironic?

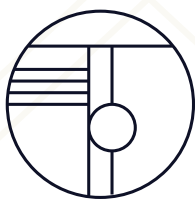
- 4 There is a man named Simon from Cyrene who is ordered to carry the cross of Jesus. Why do you think he was there? What does this imply about Jesus' condition before being nailed on the cross?
- 5 Where did the crucifixion take place? What did the soldiers do with Jesus' garments? Reference John 19:19-24. How did this fulfill the prophecy about the Messiah in Psalm 22:18?
- 6 Re-read the insults hurled at Jesus from the Jewish teachers and people in Matthew 27:39-43. Why did their attacks focus on the temple? On his claim to be God's Son? Do you think Jesus could have saved himself?
- 7 Why is it important that Jesus endured the cross, the shame and suffering?
- 8 Jesus set the example by walking to the cross and obeying the will of the Father despite pressures and temptations. The outcome is forgiveness, redemption, and eternal life for those who believe. Have you made the decision to follow Christ to the cross, denying yourself and receiving his salvation? If so, give some examples of results of this decision.





GOSPEL MOTIVATION

People from all sides—the elite Jewish teachers, Romans and the common man—turned on Jesus, not knowing that their mocking words were actually true. Jesus *is* King. He *is* the Temple. He *is* the Son of God. Instead of saving Himself, He *gave* His life to save those who put Him to death. What a Savior! Spend time thanking the Lord for His great sacrifice and humility to endure the cross. If you have not given your life to Christ yet, consider the next steps you can take by praying a prayer of surrender and forgiveness, and receiving His Spirit and eternal life.



THE VEIL TORN

MATTHEW 27:45-61

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ⁴⁷ And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." ⁴⁸ And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹ But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." ⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. ⁵¹ And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵² The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, ⁵³ and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴ When the centurion

and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!" ⁵⁵ There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, ⁵⁶ among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. ⁵⁷ When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹ And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud ⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.





INTRODUCTION

Jesus has been brutally beaten, mocked and now hangs on the cross, lifting up for air with His pierced arms and feet. As Jesus gives up His spirit, the earth itself testifies of the weight and meaning of Jesus' death. Darkness, earthquakes and more. All the while, a number of loyal women watch and pray as they watch their Lord die and be buried. Dive into the text to discover the great significance of Jesus' death on the cross and his burial in the tomb.

DISCUSSION

- 1 Review Matthew 27:45-61. Four supernatural occurrences took place while Jesus suffered and then died on the cross. What are they? Do you see any Old Testament parallels?
- 2 What does Jesus cry out to the Father? Look at Psalm 22 to compare the text. How does this fulfill prophecies of the coming Messiah?
- 3 Why would people think that Jesus was calling out for Elijah? (2 Kings 2:11-12)

- 4 During Jesus' crucifixion, both Jews and Gentiles observed. Who are the ones to exclaim what is true about Jesus?
- 5 The moment Jesus willingly gave up His spirit, the curtain dividing the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place was torn from top to bottom. Discuss the implications for believers today now that the veil has been torn. (See Hebrews 10:19-25)
- 6 A man named Joseph of Arimathea shows up in the narrative, seeking to give Jesus a proper burial in his very own newly carved tomb. What kind of sacrifice did this require for Joseph (socially and financially)? Would you be willing to be that generous with your resources if you were in his shoes?
- 7 All of the disciples desert Jesus (with the exception of John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, mentioned in John 19:26-27), and yet a faithful group of women never stop following Jesus. Who are they? Why is their role in Jesus' life so important? What does it reveal about their faith?





GOSPEL MOTIVATION

The moment Jesus shouts, "It is finished!" (John 19:30), the relationship between God and man eternally changed. Sin, death and Satan were defeated. The perfect High Priest who is also the perfect sacrificial Lamb drinks the cup of God's wrath that we deserved and made a way for us to be forgiven and redeemed. The curtain has been torn and we are invited into a face to face relationship with God. Unfortunately, many believers live as though that veil is still there. They have forgotten that their sins are paid for and they do not need to get their act together before approaching God.

Remember today that Jesus has already invited you in to direct communion with him. It is His sacrifice that has made you clean and gives you eternal life. There's nothing you can do to work hard or be good enough to make yourself right with God. Only Jesus. Take time to pray about areas you may be trying in your own efforts to walk with God. Confess them and invite Jesus to lead you to the Holy of Holies - the place He has already made ready for you.



E I S R I S E N

MATTHEW 27:62–28:15

⁶² The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate

⁶³ and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.'

⁶⁴ Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

^{28:1} Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

² And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and

came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for

I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." ⁸ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

⁹ And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee,





and there they will see me.” ¹¹ While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. ¹² And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers ¹³ and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came by

night and stole him away while we were asleep.’” ¹⁴ And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” ¹⁵ So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

INTRODUCTION

At sunset on the day before the Sabbath, Joseph and Nicodemus give Jesus a proper burial and lay him in a tomb. Now that Jesus has died, instead of being relieved, the religious leaders are more uptight than ever and go to Pilate for help. They think an official seal and guards will keep Jesus in the grave; instead, God’s power makes their human efforts look pitiful. When the faithful women show up at sunrise the day after Sabbath, they are stunned to see an angel announce the great news that Jesus has risen.

DISCUSSION

- ¹ Who is most concerned about Jesus rising from the dead? What do they do about it?

- 2 Early morning after the Sabbath, the women come to check on Jesus' tomb. An angel appears and gives them great news. What are the four key things the angel tells the women to do?
- 3 Look at Matthew 27:9-10. Take a moment to envision what it would have been like to encounter the resurrected Jesus after watching Him die and be buried. What is the women's response? How do you think they felt? What might your reaction have been?
- 4 The soldiers shake like dead men when the earth quakes and the angel appears. What happens when they report what occurred to the chief priests? Whose similar fate do the guards follow by betraying the truth for money?
- 5 The resurrection of Jesus is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. His death justified us and His resurrection gives us eternal life. Because He overcame death, sin and Satan, in Christ, we can too. Look up 1 Peter 1:3-5. What are the promises and blessings given to those who believe in Christ as a result of the resurrection?
- 6 When did you first believe in the resurrection? Do you still believe? What doubts do you have?
- 7 Spend time praying about your unbelief. Remember this promise from Romans 10:9: *"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."*





GOSPEL MOTIVATION

King Jesus is alive and reigning. His resurrection testifies that everything He taught and promised is true. Because Jesus rose from the dead, not only is Satan, sin and death defeated, but our own eternal resurrection with Him is guaranteed. We are filled with great hope and an inheritance in Christ Jesus. Take time this week to pause throughout the day to praise God for his resurrection and life that He has given you. Marvel in the blessings and inheritance He has given to you in Christ Jesus.



THIS FINAL COMMAND

MATTHEW 28:16–20

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go

therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”





INTRODUCTION

What Jesus had predicted happened and who He claimed to be was proven true. He really is God's Son! In His great love, He submitted Himself to the will of the Father to suffer and die for the sins of all mankind. On the third day, He rose from the dead, having defeated all sin and death, and now reigns as King of kings. Jesus now appears to His disciples in Galilee before ascending into Heaven with some very important instructions.

DISCUSSION

- 1 Where does Jesus meet His disciples? Review Matthew 26:26-32 and discuss the significance of Jesus fulfilling His word to the disciples.
- 2 How did the disciples respond when they saw the resurrected Jesus? (Also look at John 20:24-29)

- 3 What are the three main commands that Jesus gives the disciples? Why can we have total confidence in His instructions? (vs. 18)
- 4 Based on this passage, what is a disciple?
- 5 "Go therefore and make disciples" has the idea in the Greek of "as you are going, make disciples." How does this change how you look at discipleship? How can sharing the good news of Christ be more integrated into your life?
- 6 After Jesus commissions His disciples to go out into the world and share the good news, what is the promise He gives them? How does that comfort you today?
- 7 Who is God calling you to disciple as you go throughout your routine? Who is someone you can pursue to learn how to be more like Christ?





GOSPEL MOTIVATION

Matthew 28:18-20 is a powerful and motivating passage that reminds us of our purpose as Christians. This commandment is not only for the disciples of that time but for all believers today in the modern world. It commands and calls us to share the resurrection and identity of Christ and to bring people into a relationship with God by doing so. It can be daunting to think about the enormity of this task, but we can take comfort in the fact that Jesus promises to be with us always. With His guidance and support, we can boldly step out in faith and fulfill the great commission.



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