

# ST. MATTHEW

The Gospel according to

13

## INTRODUCTION

A journey through the Gospel of Matthew chapters 26 and 27 reveals the depth of the shame, degradation, pain, and suffering that Jesus had to endure at the hands of his tormentors. The pain of crucifixion alone was inconceivable; from this experience we get the word “excruciating,” meaning “from the cross.”

But the real agony Jesus endured was the agony of soul, as he suffered under God’s wrath. Abandoned by his Father, he suffered hell itself, as he was cut off from the Father’s love and as he bore God’s full fury.

The world’s salvation really was at stake, as Jesus hung on the cross. These really were the “crucial hours.”

## THE CRUCIAL HOURS

**Read Matthew 26:14-30**

Evaluate Judas’ motives. Why did he agree to hand Jesus over?

What shocking announcement did Jesus make at the table? (v. 21)

What was Jesus’ meaning in saying, “It would be better for him if he had not been born”? (v. 24)

What is the name of this evening when Jesus celebrated the Passover with his disciples and instituted Holy Communion? Where does that name come from?

How do we know from Matthew’s Gospel that we receive the true body and blood of Christ whenever we eat and drink the sacrament? (v. 26-28)

**Read Matthew 26:31-46**

What warning did Jesus give to Peter? (v. 34) What would you have said if you were Peter in this situation?

Describe how Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane showed both his desire to avoid suffering and his willingness to endure suffering.

What were the disciples doing while Jesus prayed?

**Read Matthew 26:47-75**

What was the signal Judas had arranged with those who came to arrest Jesus?

How did Peter step up to defend his Master?

Why was it a bad idea for Peter to follow Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest? Do you ever allow yourself to be drawn into dangerous situations this way?

What did Jesus mean when he had previously taught, “I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days?”

Why did Jesus not answer the charges against him? (See **Isaiah 53:7**.)

Why did Peter refuse to acknowledge that he was Jesus' disciple? What did he do when he recognized his sin?

**Read Matthew 27:1-31**

How did Judas react to Jesus' condemnation? What was the difference between Judas' sorrow and Peter's sorrow?

How did Peter get back into Jesus' good graces and find himself restored as an apostle? (See **John 21:15-19**.)

What dilemma did Pilate face in judging Jesus?

Why did Pilate's wife want Jesus released? (v. 19)

Why did Pilate capitulate to the crowd's demands?

How did Pilate try to expunge his guilt before God and the people? (v. 24) Did it work?

How has the people's cry, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!" been fulfilled?

**Read Matthew 27:32-56**

Who was forced to carry Jesus' cross? (v. 32)

Why didn't Jesus drink the wine mixed with gall? (v. 34)

What did Jesus' cry of agony, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" reveal about Jesus' suffering? (v. 46)

What was the significance of the temple curtain being torn in two? (v. 51)

What confession did the Roman centurion make (v. 54) What prompted him to make this confession?

Put yourself in the sandals of all who were watching these events transpire. How would you have felt if you were one of the women or one of the disciples who watched from a distance?

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**VERSE TO REMEMBER**

**Matthew 26:26-28**      *While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."*

**For next time read Matthew chapter 28**