

## *A note from Kathy*

*This is the saddest chapter in the Bible. Jesus our Savior, God in flesh, was treated with unthinkable cruelty. He is the One who loved the world so much, yet endured the pain of rejection unlike anyone ever before or since. Do not miss the gravity of this chapter.*

## *Observation*

1. Jesus had been up all night. He had been standing before the Sanhedrin, being taunted and questioned. They had rendered their own verdict that he was guilty of blasphemy, but they did not have the power to execute anyone. We see in verse 1, “early in the morning” they came to a consensus that Jesus must be put to death. Where did they take him?
2. No doubt Judas had remained close enough to have watched Jesus’ mock trial before the Sanhedrin. What does the scripture say about Judas when he heard their decision? What did he try to do? Did it work?
3. What became of the money that Judas had received for betraying Jesus?
4. Jesus was now taken to stand trial before Pilate. What was Pilate’s question for Jesus? What was Jesus’ answer?
5. Jesus answered Pilate, but what happened when he was accused by the Jewish leaders?
6. Because it was a time of Feast, it was Pilate’s custom to release a prisoner. What choice did Pilate give the crowd?
7. Pilate’s wife sent him a message while Jesus was standing trial. What was her message?
8. Once again Pilate gave the crowd a choice; who did they choose? What did they want done to Jesus?
9. Did Pilate agree with their decision? What did he do that symbolically separated him from this terrible crime?

10. Write out his foolish statement from verse 24. Now write out the even more foolish statement made by the crowd that day.
11. What were Pilate's orders to his soldiers?
12. List the events from verses 27-31. What happened to Jesus after he was flogged, before he was led away to be crucified?

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13. Condemned prisoners were ordered to carry their own cross for the execution, but here we get a glimpse of physical suffering and pain that he had endured up to this point. Mark 15:21 tells us he began the long walk bearing the cross himself, but somewhere along the way out of the city, the guards ordered another man from the crowd to carry it; who was ordered to carry Jesus' cross?
14. When they arrived at Golgatha, Pilate had ordered a sign attached to the cross. What did the sign say? Read John 19:19-22 to see the reaction of the Jews to this sign.
15. There were two robbers who were also crucified that day; one was on Jesus right and the other on his left. What were the crowds doing as Jesus hung on the cross?
16. Darkness fell all over the land from noon to 3pm, as Jesus hung on the cross. Jesus was in extreme agony; he spoke very few words. There were actually seven recorded statements that Jesus made while on the cross. What statement did Matthew record in verse 46? What happened next?
17. Make a list of the events that followed Jesus' death in verses 51-52. How were these events instrumental in the salvation of those guarding Jesus that day?
18. As evening approached, a man came to Pilate requesting the body of Jesus so that he could be buried. Look up Mark 15:43 and John 19:38 to get more information on this man. Read John 19:39-42; was this man alone when he went to Pilate?
19. An evil heart makes a person suspicious of everyone else's motives. What did the Pharisees fear would happen? What did they do that they thought would insure no more problems?

## *Application*

1. Have you ever been caught up in the frenzy of a crowd? There was no changing the mind of these religious leaders that day. Jesus came to earth knowing he would die for the sins of mankind. But what about us today? When the crowd is ready to kick God out of the classroom or the office, or our state capital, is there anything we can do?
2. Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver; he loved money. He was the one who carried the little amount of money that Jesus and his disciples had as they ministered. When it became obvious that Jesus was going to be put to death, Judas tried to return the money, but they would not listen. He was “seized with remorse” the scripture said. He was filled with anguish and feelings of regret. How sad that he chose to hang himself. Guilt is not repentance. What could Judas have done that would have ensured forgiveness and salvation? What could you share with a friend who is filled with guilt over their sin?
3. The Sanhedrin brought Jesus to Pilate so that he could give them what they wanted, a death sentence for Jesus. From what you saw in Matthew 27:11-24, do you believe Pilate wanted to crucify Jesus? At the end he washed his hands; did that nullify the part he played? When we go along with something we feel is wrong simply because the majority is insisting, are we innocent? Nothing could have changed Jesus’ destiny, but do you believe those who played a part would be held accountable? Do we have a part in the crucifixion of Jesus?
4. Barabbas went free, and Jesus was ordered to be flogged and then crucified. We will never suffer to the magnitude that Jesus did, but are there times when we suffer and the wicked are allowed to go free? How are believers to handle an injustice like this?
5. Have there been times when you thought you were suffering so much more than other people? Things happen and we wonder, “Where are you God?” “Don’t you see what is going on?” “Don’t you understand what I am going through?” Isaiah 53:3, “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” The word translated “acquainted” is the Hebrew word “*yada*.” It means to know something by experience. Jesus may not have experienced every detail of your trial and temptation in the exact same way, but he knows what it is to be lonely, tired, hungry, misunderstood, ridiculed, hated, forsaken, betrayed, and the list could go on and on. The thing that kept him going was knowing that it was all being used for God’s good purpose and glory. Why not look for the purpose in your situation and give God the glory for his care?

6. When Jesus arrived at the place of execution, he was offered wine mixed with gall. Mark 15:23 tells us this was myrrh, which might have deadened his pain, but Jesus refused. Had he drank it and deadened his pain, he might not have been awake for his last divine appointment. Who do we see him ministering to while he hung on the cross dying? Are you more concerned about easing your suffering, or seeing and doing the will of God?
7. No one likes to be misunderstood. Jesus came to bring salvation once for all. Even as he hung on that cross, there were those who ridiculed and mocked him. I cannot imagine the self-control it took for him not to do something. But Jesus had a lifetime of practicing this fruit of the Spirit. His flesh was not his master. When was the last time you were able to practice self-control so that God would be glorified by your actions and words?
8. As the chapter closed, we saw a most interesting man, Joseph of Arimathea. He was a Jewish man; Luke's gospel tells us he was a prominent member of the Council, good and upright. He went to Pilate to request the body of Jesus so he could have a proper burial. He even gave up the tomb he had carved out for himself. Are you thoughtful and generous with others like this? He risked his position by doing a kind deed for one so hated by the other council members. He gave something that was of great value because he saw a need. He did not send someone to do this important task; he went and attended to it himself. Does any of this sound like something you would do? If not, why not? This is what love looks like. It is giving of oneself.
9. Please try to find an opportunity to share a treasure from this chapter with someone else this week.