

## THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

### Lesson 93, Chapter 27

Matthew chapter 26 concluded with a mixed group of Jewish religious leadership, representing both the Temple and the Synagogue authorities, gathering at night in an official capacity at the High Priest Caiaphas's home with one purpose in mind: to find false allegations against Yeshua so that they could produce an air of legitimacy to convicting and executing Him. To their relief, after several aborted attempts to find cause for their predetermined outcome, the frustrated High Priest bellowed at Christ: ***“By the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God”***. Jesus, after having remained silent at a series of false charges levied against Him by lying witnesses who couldn't even get their stories straight, affirmed what the High Priest just stated. But He went even further in pronouncing an eschatological prophecy (that is, a prophecy about the End Times) concerning Himself. He said: ***“...one day you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of The Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven”***. “Blasphemy” says the High Priest; the other members of the Sanhedrin agreed, and collectively pronounce the death sentence.

What we need to know to help us understand why chapter 27 begins as it does (by the Sanhedrin taking Yeshua to the Roman governor Pilate), is that while they could ***pronounce*** the death penalty for a Jew committing a religious offense within the Jewish Law system, they could not carry it out. This was reserved only for the Roman government to decide and to do.

Yeshua's fate was sealed, God's will was advancing rapidly, and at the same time His disciples had all deserted Him and renounced their faith in Him. To emphasize the earnestness at which they, and especially Peter, had fallen away in their trust Peter denied even knowing who Yeshua was and did so in an

escalating level of conviction. From a simple denial, to swearing an oath that he had no association with Him, to finally pronouncing a curse upon himself if he was not sincere about not knowing Christ. It was Jewish custom that to claim or state something 3 times was to make it the strongest possible degree of denial or affirmation. The point being that this was not an issue of 11 frightened disciples hiding the truth from the authorities because they were scared, but secretly retaining their loyalty; rather it was exactly as Jesus prophesied in chapter 26 verse 31:

<sup>CJB</sup> **Matthew 26:31** *Yeshua then said to them, "Tonight you will all lose faith in me, as the Tanakh says, 'I will strike the shepherd dead, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'*

The 12 disciples to the last man had all reverted to their former spiritual state, just as they were before they ever met Yeshua up in the Galilee. To put it in Western Christian jargon, they had lost their salvation by denying they're Savior. Let's move on to Matthew chapter 27.

### **READ MATTHEW CHAPTER 27 all**

Chapter 27 could be said to be a chapter of ironies. The first irony we should note is that the great End Times Judge, Yeshua, has been judged by the very people He is going to judge sometime in the future.

The opening words of this chapter "early in the morning" are tied to the final words of chapter 26 that say: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown Me 3 times..." That is, the rooster crowing is Yeshua saying WHEN (at what time of day) Peter will disown Him. It will be just as daylight is breaking, and so this connects to the first words of chapter 27, "early in the morning..." Much is happening in a very short time span.

Many Bible scholars explain that what we are reading about is a 2<sup>nd</sup> trial, or perhaps Christ's actual trial (with what we saw happen in chapter 26 as only a sort of pre-trial hearing). While we probably ought not to insert more meaning than is actually intended, it's probably best to view this not as a matter of a second trial but rather it is a 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting that now includes the entire Sanhedrin, whereas the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting had only some of its members. So, this 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting was not about determining Yeshua's guilt or what His sentence should be, but rather it was working out the details of just how to be certain that He would be put to

death at the hands of the Romans, at the same time they could appear to have been following both Jewish and Roman legal procedure. By putting Jesus in chains and handing Him over to Pontius Pilate, this fulfilled Christ's prophecy of Matthew 20:18 – 19. In it, Yeshua said to His disciples:

**CJB Matthew 20:18-19 <sup>18</sup> "We are now going up to Yerushalayim, where the Son of Man will be handed over to the head cohanim and Torah-teachers. They will sentence him to death <sup>19</sup> and turn him over to the Goyim (the gentiles), who will jeer at him, beat him and execute him on a stake as a criminal. But on the third day, he will be raised."**

Pontius Pilate is a man known in history outside the Bible; he was at different points the prefect over the Roman provinces of Judea, Idumea and Samaria. He ruled from 26 to 36 A.D. so we have a 10-year window during which time Jesus was executed. No matter all the attempts over the centuries at trying to pin down the exact year of His death, we'll probably never know for certain. Pilate was known to be a cruel man who hated the Jews. Against the wishes of the Emperor, Pilate would find ways to aggravate and rile up the Jewish people so he would have cause to punish them. He forcibly took money from the Temple to build an aqueduct for Jerusalem. He brought the standards and shields of the Roman legion into Jerusalem that bore the image of the emperor knowing how passionate the Jews were against images of men especially when hailed as gods. He is even said to have murdered Galileans on the Temple grounds at the same time they were slaughtering their animals for holy sacrifices on the Temple altar. The Jewish historian Philo says Pilate was "naturally inflexible, a blend of self-will and relentlessness". He ordered the execution of countless Jews without the benefit of trial, and nearly always by crucifixion, because it was the most horrible and humiliating way to die known to him.

In verse 3 Matthew takes a short detour to deal, again, with Judas. It seems that, similar to Peter, Judas suddenly had a bout of regret and guilt once he heard that Yeshua had been condemned to death. He tried to return the 30 pieces of silver he had received to the senior priest that had given it to him saying that he had betrayed an innocent man; as though this outcome was a surprise to Judas. The callous priest and his fellow senior priests replied that they had no interest in his remorse or the money, and that whatever he did didn't concern them in the least; his guilt was his problem. Judas threw the silver coins at them and went off and hanged himself. Interestingly, Matthew is the only Gospel that records Judas's death. The only other New Testament mention of Judas dying is found in the

Book of Acts.

**CJB Acts 1:15-19** <sup>15</sup> *During this period, when the group of believers numbered about 120, Kefa stood up and addressed his fellow-believers:* <sup>16</sup> *"Brothers, the Ruach HaKodesh spoke in advance through David about Y'hudah, and these words of the Tanakh had to be fulfilled. He was guide for those who arrested Yeshua-* <sup>17</sup> *he was one of us and had been assigned a part in our work."* <sup>18</sup> *(With the money Y'hudah received for his evil deed, he bought a field; and there he fell to his death. His body swelled up and burst open, and all his insides spilled out.* <sup>19</sup> *This became known to everyone in Yerushalayim, so they called that field Hakal-D'ma- which in their language means "Field of Blood").*

While both accounts speak of Judas's death clearly there's differences in the circumstances, although it may have more to do with aspects of the aftermath of his death than with the manner. That is, Matthew is straightforward in that Judas committed suicide by hanging, while Luke (in Acts) says Judas's body swelled up and burst open. While I don't wish to get gruesome or graphic, the reality is that after a few days of hanging dead from a noose, indeed his body would have swelled up from the gases of decay building up in his body cavity and when cut down, as he hit the ground, it could have resulted in his body splitting open. Either way, it was known that Judas died and his death was undignified to say the least.

Different branches of Christianity have different takes on Judas's mindset, and even his state of salvation, when he died. Note how Luke makes it clear that Judas was as much part of the original 12 disciples as any other by saying "he was one of us". And, that Judas, too, had an assignment to be part of the work of the disciples. Thus, for a time, Judas was a follower of Jesus; there is no hint, even in the hindsight of the New Testament authors, of Judas not being sincere in his faith. Matthew speaks of Judas's regret for what he did (lying and helping to condemn an innocent man), but regret is in no way repentance. Yet we find that some Christian institutions profess a regaining of salvation by means of such regret. Once again this seems to be more a way to spin a pre-existing denominational doctrine and tradition than in accurately reporting what is painfully obvious in the Bible. Yeshua Himself pronounces in advance the damnation of Judas for what he will do back in verse 24 of chapter 26:

**CJB Matthew 26:24** *... but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is*

***betrayed! It would have been better for him had he never been born!"***

This as opposed to how Yeshua does NOT damn the remaining 11 disciples, but even says He will meet up with them again, after His resurrection, in the Galilee. This seems to be a prophecy of regained faith and thus reclaimed salvation, which history confirms. I will repeat something I've said on numerous occasions because it is pivotal to our understanding as regards maintaining our salvation. Nothing is more dangerous to our eternal future with God than the "once saved always saved" doctrine of the mostly evangelical Church denominations. While sounding lovely, it is biblically, factually and spiritually incorrect. Nothing could be more opposite of what Christ teaches, what other New Testament writers warn against, or what we're reading about here in the Book of Matthew. The "once saved always saved" doctrine implies that once someone has approached God and said the sinner's prayer and determined at that moment to be a Christ follower, then no change of heart or lack of obedience to God, or lack of good fruit in his or her life has any bearing on their salvation. Even publicly disowning Christ (as did Peter) will not be taken seriously in Heaven. The doctrinal rebuttal to my position on this matter is always that anyone that would pray to receive Messiah Yeshua, and then later (whether weeks or years) completely fall away from Him, was never a Believer in the first place; he or she was something else...something we also don't find in the Bible... someone called a pretender.

Not only is this idea illogical, it defies the plain Scriptural teachings of several of the New Testament writers. Judas went to His eternal death, judged by Christ. Had the other 11 disciples for some reason died after firmly renouncing Jesus an hour or so after the Last Supper event, and prior to the regaining of their faith not long after His resurrection, they, too, would have been eternally damned. The good news in all this is that should you (or any of us) fall completely away from the faith, you can with proper repentance and sincerity, be accepted back into the Kingdom by God.

<sup>CJB</sup> **Ezekiel 18:21 <sup>21</sup> "However, if the wicked person repents of all the sins he committed, keeps my laws and does what is lawful and right; then he will certainly live, he will not die.**

Our feelings of guilt and regret are not good enough. Repentance means to turn; it means to chart a different course... a righteous course... in your mind and in your behavior. It has to be the right kind... the Godly kind; not any kind that seems right to you or to the present world order. Jesus outlined in several of His parables and

illustrations about the Kingdom of Heaven and who the members (those who are saved) will be, and what is expected of those who hope to be members. It amounts to more than the mouthing of words or temporary sincerity. If you are wondering if you are destined for the Kingdom or alternatively for the Lake of Fire, I urge you to look again at those parables we studied together to help you find out.

Following the recounting of Judas's suicide there is a paragraph on exactly what the priests did with the money Judas gave back to them. They rightly say they can't put it in the Temple treasury because it is "blood money". What is "blood money"? On one level, it is money paid that purposely leads to the death of someone. On another level (the more usual level) it means money paid to bribe someone to cause the death of an innocent person. I think that's how it is meant here. When Judas tries to return the "blood money", and says that he betrayed an innocent man to death... and the priests say "not our problem" ... I think they fully expected Judas to end his own life. In the Torah, should a liar's testimony lead to the conviction of the innocent the liar is to receive the same penalty that the falsely accused did. Judas, the liar and betrayer, was subject to death for his despicable act.

**CJB Deuteronomy 27:25** *"A curse on anyone who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person.' All the people are to say, 'Amen!'"*

The senior priest (not the High Priest) took the coins Judas returned and bought a field where they could bury foreign visitors to Jerusalem. The Greek word that is usually translated to foreigners or strangers is **xenos**; it has a wide range of meanings from strangers to guests. Some suggest that it means Jewish visitors to Jerusalem; I am doubtful of that. It was known that thousands of gentiles flocked to Jerusalem to see the incredible Temple that Herod had rebuilt at enormous expense. I suspect that due to the wicked source of the money... and that it was acknowledged as blood money... that the field purchased as a cemetery was probably not used for Jews. It is because of the unclean blood money that the cemetery came to be known as the Field of Blood. This act, too, was done to fulfill prophecy. What is a bit odd is Matthew says that it was a prophecy of Jeremiah; that doesn't seem to hold true. Rather we find a highly paraphrased verse from Zechariah.

**CJB Zechariah 11:11-15** <sup>11</sup> *On that day when it was broken, the most miserable of the sheep who paid attention to me knew that this was indeed*

***a message from ADONAI. <sup>12</sup> I said to them, "If it seems good to you, give me my wages; if not, don't." So they weighed out my wages, thirty silver [shekels, that is, twelve ounces]. <sup>13</sup> Concerning that "princely sum" at which they valued me, ADONAI said, "Throw it into the treasury!" So I took the thirty silver [shekels] and threw them into the treasury in the house of ADONAI. <sup>14</sup> Then I snapped in two my other staff Hovalim [bound together], in order to break up the brotherhood between Y'hudah and Isra'el. <sup>15</sup> ADONAI said to me, "This time, take the equipment of a worthless shepherd.***

There's been much academic head scratching about Matthew 26:9. Even when we look to Zechariah, it's difficult to connect it to Judas. That said, as we look at the original Hebrew of Zechariah, we need to know that the Hebrew name Y'hudah is most properly translated into English as Judah. Judas is a kind of twisted secondary translation of Y'hudah. There is no known Jewish name of Judas and so I doubt the original language of Matthew's Gospel that was Hebrew had it that way. All translation by definition is an editing of the original.

To sum it up, it's a stretch to make Zechariah 11 explain what happened with Judas, and there are numerous scholarly speculations as to why Jeremiah is said to have been the prophet and not Zechariah. It's not worth our time to wrestle with what can't be known. There is a scientific proverb used in such conundrums that would do us all good to remember; it is called Occam's Razor. The proverb is that in the end, the simplest solution to any problem is usually the best one. The problem of Jeremiah being mentioned instead of Zechariah is most likely a scribal error that came later.

After Matthew's detour to include what happened to Judas, verse 11 brings us back to Yeshua's march to the cross. Jesus is taken to Pilate and Pilate asks Him if He is King of the Jews. Notice that Pilate's concern has nothing to do with the Sanhedrin's accusation of blasphemy. However, I have little doubt that the politically astute Caiaphas and his close associates knew that telling Pilate that Jesus claimed to be the King of the Jews versus telling him that Jesus had committed blasphemy would stand a far better chance of getting Christ executed. Pilate was all too aware of the Jewish belief that a Messiah would come in the mold of King David and lead a successful rebellion against Rome. Thus, for the High Priest to tell Pilate that Yeshua claimed to be King of the Jews wasn't really a lie, because for the High Priest that's exactly what Yeshua's admission as being the Jewish Messiah meant to him. And if it hasn't occurred to you yet, it's

time to notice that the High Priest, the Senior priests, and the highest officials of the Synagogue didn't really want a Messiah; especially not one in the mold of long held Jewish thought. These men had lucrative positions of power and wealth and lived very comfortable lives; a rebellion against Rome would have been counter-productive for them. This is the entire reason they wanted Jesus (or any would-be Messiah) eliminated. It was only the common Jews that wanted a Messiah.

Jesus affirms Pilate's question if He is the King of the Jews. Pilate needs to hear nothing more. In the Roman Empire there can be only 1 king: Caesar. So, for Pilate this is sedition, plain and simple. The same crowd of wicked Jewish leadership were there with Christ and Pilate, and so started peppering Yeshua with more accusations (needlessly I would argue), to which He won't respond. Pilate is taken aback; Jesus won't defend Himself. On the one hand He is refusing to dignify nonsense; on the other He has determined to submit Himself to the will of His Father and that will is for Yeshua to die on the cross.

Verse 15 explains that during Pilate's tenure as prefect, at the time when Jerusalem was overrun with Jews for Passover, he would set 1 prisoner free, apparently as chosen by the crowd on a voice vote. Here we encounter another and little noticed irony. There was apparently a notorious revolutionary in custody (likely a ***Sicarii***) that Mark also identifies as a murderer; a rebel whom our Bibles call Barabbas. Pilate asked the crowd who they would rather he pardon and release; Barabbas or Yeshua.

Before we proceed, let's spend a few moments about a topic that I'll call "what's in a name?" The Bible is positively crowded with names, and the first name/last name nomenclature so common to us in the West didn't exist in ancient times. Rather it was usually a name and then some kind of designation that might connect the named person to a particular family or family industry, or more likely to just the name of that person's father (Simon son of Jacob, for example). Just as in almost any culture, among the Jews there were favored names that got chosen far more often than others. ***Shim'on*** (Simon), ***Yaacov*** (Jacob), and ***Yeshua*** (Jesus) to name a few were the 3 most popular around Yeshua's era. In fact, according to Rabbi Joseph Shulam and others, Yeshua was the 2<sup>nd</sup> most popular male name in the 1<sup>st</sup> century among Jews. It was no different for women, with ***Miriam*** (Mary) and ***Elisheva*** (Elizabeth) particularly popular.



So, let's take a look at the name Barabbas. It becomes much easier to identify if we simply remove the "s" at the end of the name (a letter that doesn't belong there, but had to have been added in Christian Bibles at some unknown point). Bar-abba, then, is really two words in Hebrew: Bar and Abba. Bar is actually Aramaic and means son or son of. Abba means father. So, this man's name as we have it is literally "son of the father". Was that his real name? I doubt it. First because there is no attestation to the name Bar Abba anywhere in Jewish literature at any time in the ancient past, and second because no Hebrew man would have held the formal name of "Abba". Abba (father) was used occasionally as a title; but never as a name.

Interestingly in some of the oldest scriptural Greek fragments of Matthew that have been found and attested to by the early Church Fathers Origen and Chrysostom (among others) Bar-Abba is further identified with the name Yeshua. That is, just as we correctly find it in the CJB in verse 16, Matthew calls this notorious prisoner Yeshua Bar Abba (Jesus, son of the father). Can we not also view Christ as Yeshua Bar Abba (Jesus, son of the Father... the Holy Father... God the Father?) So, we essentially have 2 Yeshua Bar Abbases before us: the one is a rebel and murderer, the other is divine, without sin, and is going to meekly die on the cross to save those Jews standing before Him who currently are clamoring for His death. The irony is thick and unfortunately once again translation (and perhaps a hint of something intentional) hides this rather surprising part of the account from view. As the preeminent New Testament Scholar Bruce Metzger notes, there is little doubt that the more ancient fragments with Barabbas' name written as Yeshua Bar Abba is correct; later gentile Christian editors would have had far more motive to erase the name Jesus from Barabbas's name than to add it.

Verse 18 explains that Pilate was fully aware that Yeshua in reality was no threat; that He was only being thrown to the wolves because the Temple and Synagogue authorities were jealous of Him (jealous in the political sense of fearing Christ's growing popularity). Then something awfully strange occurs. Pilate's wife comes to him during this so-called trial and warns him of something she's just dreamt. She advises her husband to leave this innocent man alone because she suffered so terribly in the dream (in other words, it was a nightmare). No details are given. Another irony. The Jewish religious leadership want Yeshua to be guilty, but the gentile woman knows He is innocent. How does she know? A dream.

Biblically, God intervening, warning, or simply passing along information in a dream, has happened all throughout Hebrew history. But more interesting is how many times the dream method of divine communication occurred with a pagan gentile who then brought the contents of the dream to a Hebrew to interpret. That is, God at times spoke to gentiles and did so here with Pilate's wife. Although there are also other instances, Pharaoh and Joseph come to mind as does Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel. We can even think of the gentile Magi who were warned in a dream not to return to Herod with news of the location of the Christ child. I like the way Daniel J. Harrington puts it in his commentary on Matthew:

***“The gentile woman’s insight contrasts with the spiritual obtuseness of the chief priests and elders”***. And so, yet another irony unfolds as verse 20 finds the chief or senior priest leading a rally among the crowd to free Barabbas and to have Jesus crucified. We must notice the issue of choice: a choice to choose the divine or the worldly. The evil or the righteous. Who is the crowd? It can only be Jews. Likely the bulk of them were the Jews of Judea, although some Jews from Galilee and other regions no doubt were present as well. It is here that we are forced to deal with a touchy subject: are the Jews really the Christ killers as they have regularly been cast within Christianity for century after century? Or as some Christians (and today, Messianics) that fight against that notion will claim... no, it was really the gentile Romans who killed Christ? I would argue that Matthew shows us that both divisions of the world’s population...gentiles and Hebrews... are equally responsible if one chooses to look at it that way. But even then only to a point.

It is long past time to leave such a disingenuous debate in the smelly dumpster of religious history. Should any modern gentile Christian feel responsible for what Pontius Pilate did in condemning Jesus to the execution stake over 2000 years ago? Should any modern Jew feel responsible for how the illegitimate High Priest Caiaphas and several other Jewish men connived to get rid of Jesus, back in the early part of the 1<sup>st</sup> century? Even more, notice how Matthew always focuses (rightly so) on the leadership. It was with the Jewish leaders that Yeshua always had a bone to pick, and He blamed them for the common Jews’ lack of Scripture knowledge and right doctrine, and therefore for the precarious spiritual condition it put them in. It was only the gentile Roman prefect of Judea that condemned Christ to the cross; even the gentile Roman soldiers who were tasked with carrying it out were but following orders from the Roman leadership. It was not entirely of their own accord that the crowd of Jews cried for Christ’s death instead of Barabbas’s; they were deceived and egged on by the Jewish religious

leadership that had brought Jesus to Pilate in the first place.

None of us should look to people groups, nations or tribes, in ancient times or in the future, to place blame for Christ's death. From the moment of Adam and Eve's rebellious sin in the Garden the day of Christ's death became necessary and a certainty. If we want to face facts, in a certain sense all of us have had a part in His death because all of us have sinned and must have a Redeemer if we are to have any hope. And the only way that redemption works is for sins to be paid for with blood.

To highlight the lack of understanding of the now frenzied Jewish crowd standing before Pilate, in verse 23 Pilate asks the crowd a question: "Why" should Yeshua be executed, asks Pilate; "What crime has He committed?" The response was not to answer his question but rather for them to simply double-down on wanting Jesus dead. They want Him dead because their leaders want Him dead; they need no more information than that. End of the trial. Pilate could care less whether this 1 Jew lived or died. Pilate symbolically rinses his hands in a bowl of water and says his hands are clean from the death of Jesus. Likely he did this because he understood that in Jewish culture to wash one's hands in water is to ritually cleanse them; to make them pure. It amounted to a declaration of ritual innocence. This was not a Roman custom. Pilate has just given in to the Jewish mob; there is no semblance of justice. He bears personal responsibility for what comes next that no amount of hand washing will alleviate.

Pilate announces to the crowd that this man's blood (His death) is on them. They enthusiastically respond that they accept the responsibility for the death of Yeshua, extending it so far as to include what amounts to a curse on their children because of being complicit in the death of an innocent man; this indeed has reciprocal spiritual and earthly consequences. It is here that the early institutional gentile-controlled Christian Church took their cue, deciding that Jews are the true Christ Killers. So, a doctrine was contrived that said that as a consequence God shifted His love and the blessings of His Covenants from Israel to the gentile Church. While I don't want to get too far into the matter of curses and the Jewish people, I cannot hide the elephant in the room. Just as the individual Jews in that crowd were responsible for their own personal responses to the choice put before them by Pontius Pilate they are not somehow representative of all the Jews alive in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. Yet there is no escaping how a curse affects future generations. It is not necessarily that God enforces a curse upon children, grandchildren and future descendants who had no hand in

breaking a vow, or in committing a crime against God; in fact, Scripture speaks against such a concept.

**CJB Ezekiel 18:4, 20 <sup>4</sup> Look, all lives belong to me- both the parent's life and the child's life are equally mine- so it is the person who sins, himself, who must die.....<sup>20</sup> The person who sins is the one that will die- a son is not to bear his father's guilt with him, nor is the father to bear his son's guilt with him; but the righteousness of the righteous will be his own, and the wickedness of the wicked will be his own.**

The offspring doesn't bear the sins of their parents. Rather it is that circumstances can be set into motion by parents that will necessarily and inevitably affect their offspring and descendants in a negative way, generally along the lines of something that I think can be seen as natural or unavoidable consequences. For instance, none of us committed a sin in the Garden of Eden; Adam and Eve did that. Nonetheless, the natural consequence of what humanity's common parents did is that we all suffer from physical death, and face the possibility of eternal death if we don't accept God's redemptive mercy. Children from drug or alcohol addicted parents are far more likely to themselves become drug or alcohol addicted, and then pass it along to their children, and so on. It is equally known that violently abusive parents, or parents who wind up in gangs or go to prison, are more likely to produce children that do the same. I cannot tell you how that works, or how much (if any) is genetic, or if it more comes down to the environment and family system the children are raised into.

In ancient times those sorts of things were often explained in terms like "generational curses". We moderns don't like to deal in things like curses (it sounds too primitive), so we give these sometimes-inexplicable realities other names and assign them psychological terms. The point is this: these sorts of decisions and choices by parents especially as concerns a relationship with God... choices like we read about from the Jewish crowd on that fateful Passover morning... will have far reaching effects that they'll never realize and probably won't live to see. And, their children and even later generations may not understand where that heavy ball of oppression that seems to follow them around was first given its push. We'd probably all like to firewall off one generation from the next, like turning the page to a new chapter in a book or changing a channel on TV. But the Bible, and merely living long enough to observe it, provides sufficient proof that this is not how life works in this present age.

How much better it would have been for the many future generations of Jews had the Jewish crowds yelling for Yeshua's death refused to accept the phony verdicts of their own Jewish religious leaders as well as that of their Roman prefect, Pontius Pilate, in order to kill an innocent man, and instead have recognized Him for who He was. How much better it would have been had their ears and minds listened, obeyed, and been more open to the truth of God's Word and to the presence and saving power of God's Son, than to the comfortable human attraction of manmade tradition, the narcotic of custom, and the naïve certainty that their religious leaders must be the objective holders of divine truth and righteousness. The curse that crowd put upon itself for the blood of their Messiah has most definitely affected millions of Jews that would come later. Not because those who would come later are also cursed of God for something they didn't do and are not responsible for, but because sin is infectious, and because what people are wrongly taught by the previous generations has a ripple effect across time, like throwing a stone onto the waters of a pond and watching how it disrupts the calmness of it, the waves rebounding off the edges and colliding yet again to continue the effects.

Parents, the curse you place upon yourselves for refusing to accept your Savior, to not live righteously, and thus to withhold from your children a truth you could have known but chose not to, is more apt than not to carry over to your children and grandchildren and beyond. They may well be cursed by your curse, even though that's not what you intend.

We'll continue in chapter 27 next time.