

**Notes on the Greek New Testament**  
**Day 43 – February 12<sup>th</sup> – Matthew 27:15-31**

**Works frequently referenced in these notes on Matthew**

- Hagner, Donald A      *Word Biblical Commentary Vols.33a & 33b: Matthew 1-13 & Matthew 14-28*, Word Books, Dallas, 1993 & 1995
- Morris, Leon            *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1992

**Verses 15-23**

Cf. Mark 15:6-14; Luke 23:17-23; John 18:39-40.

**Verse 15**

Κατὰ δὲ ἑορτὴν εἰώθει ὁ ἡγεμὼν ἀπολύειν ἓνα τῶ ὄχλῳ δέσμιον ὃν ᾔθελον.

ἑορτή, ης f festival, feast

κατὰ δὲ ἑορτὴν "might mean 'at every feast,' but despite the absence of the article, we should probably understand it to mean 'at this feast,' that is, at Passover time, which John says was the case (John 18:39)." Morris.

εἰώθα (pf. with pres. meaning) be

accustomed to

ἀπολυω release, set free

ὄχλος, ου m crowd, multitude

δεσμιος, ου m prisoner

θελω wish, will

The custom was to release one whom *the crowd* or the people chose, not one whom the governor chose.

**Verse 16**

εἶχον δὲ τότε δέσμιον ἐπίσημον λεγόμενον Ἰησοῦν Βαραββᾶν.

ἐπίσημος, ου well known, notorious

In Mark we read that he was associated with insurrection and murder (Mark 15:7; cf. Luke 23:19; John 18:40).

**Textual Variants in vv.16,17**

The reading Ἰησοῦν Βαραββᾶν in both verses 16 and 17 appears in Θ, f1, 700\*, syr<sup>s</sup> and has patristic and versional support, though Ἰησοῦν is omitted in the majority of MSS.

Metzger says of this reading that "it was known to Origen, who declares in his commentary on the passage, 'In many copies it is not stated that Barabbas was also called *Jesus*, and perhaps [the omission] is right.' (Origen discloses in what follows his reasons for disapproving of the reading *Jesus Barabbas*; it cannot be right, he implies, because 'in the whole range of the Scriptures we know that no one who is a sinner [is called] *Jesus*').".

"In the tenth century uncial manuscript S and in about twenty minuscule MSS a marginal comment states: 'In many ancient copies which I have met with I found Barabbas himself likewise called 'Jesus'; that is, the question of Pilate stood there as follows, *Τίνα θελετε ἀπο τῶν δυο ἀπολυσω ὑμῖν, Ἰησοῦν τὸν Βαραββᾶν ἢ Ἰησοῦν τὸν λεγόμενον Χριστὸν*; for apparently the paternal name of the robber was 'Barabbas' which is interpreted 'Son of the teacher.' This scholium, which is usually assigned in the manuscripts either to Anastasius bishop of Antioch (perhaps in the latter part of the sixth century), or to Chrysostom, is in one manuscript attributed to Origen, who may indeed be its ultimate source."

A majority of the Committee behind United Bible Societies' Third Edition of Greek NT (edited by Kurt Aland, Bruce Metzger and others) believed that Ἰησοῦν was original in both verses.

Morris states, "This presents us with an interesting textual problem. If the reading 'Jesus Barabbas' was original, the reason for its absence in most MSS would be that reverence for the name of the Saviour caused many scribes to shrink from including it as the name of a criminal. If it was not original, why did some MSS include it? If we are impressed by the consensus of the MSS we will omit it, but if we give the deciding vote to what the scribes were likely to have done we will include it."

**Verse 17**

συνηγμένων ὃν αὐτῶν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Πιλάτος· Τίνα θέλετε ἀπολύσω ὑμῖν, Ἰησοῦν τὸν Βαραββᾶν ἢ Ἰησοῦν τὸν λεγόμενον χριστόν;

συνηγμένων Verb, perf pass ptc, gen pl  
συναγω gather, gather together,  
assemble

"The way Matthew puts it, *when therefore the crowd had gathered*, it appears that not many people were about when the members of the Sanhedrin brought their prisoner to Pilate. But in due course the Jerusalem mob made its appearance. Pilate saw this as his opportunity... [But] ... It is possible that the reason why the crowd was there was that supporters of Barabbas had come together to ask for Barabbas to be the man released at the customary amnesty at Passover... perhaps he [Pilate] did not give sufficient consideration to the fact that a Jerusalem crowd was unlikely to call for a Galilean to be released when some of their own people were in custody." Morris.

ἢ ἢ

**Verse 18**

ἤδει γὰρ ὅτι διὰ φθόνον παρέδωκαν αὐτόν.

ἤδει Verb, pluperf act indic, 3 s οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning)  
know, understand

φθονος, ου m envy, jealousy, spite  
παρέδωκαν see v.2

"Pilate had established to his own satisfaction that Jesus had been brought to him not because he was a genuine threat or really the promised Jewish Messiah but because of the Jewish leaders' envy of his influence among the people... Pilate was therefore willing, indeed even perhaps inclined, to release Jesus." Hagner.

**Verse 19**

Καθημένου δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς αὐτόν ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ λέγουσα· Μηδὲν σοὶ καὶ τῷ δικαίῳ ἐκείνῳ, πολλὰ γὰρ ἔπαθον σήμερον κατ' ὄναρ δι' αὐτόν.

καθημαι sit, sit down, live  
βημα, τος n judicial bench, place of judgement, court

Of βημα Hagner writes that it "was the official tribunal from which legal judgments were made, located in the open air (cf. Acts 18:12, 16-17; 25:17)."

ἀπέστειλεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s  
ἀποστελλω send, send out  
γυνη, αικος f woman, wife  
μηδεις, μηδεμα, μηδεν no one, nothing  
δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that

μηδεν σοι καὶ τῷ δικαίῳ ἐκείνῳ An idiomatic way of saying that he should have nothing to do with (condemning) this righteous (innocent) man. For this idiom, cf. 6:29; Mark 1:24; John 2:4.

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου  
much, many  
ἔπαθον Verb, aor act indic, 1 s & 3 pl πασχω  
suffer  
σημερον today  
ὄναρ n dream

"The dream serves as a divine vindication of Jesus." Hagner.

**Verse 20**

Οἱ δὲ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἔπεισαν τοὺς ὄχλους ἵνα αἰτήσωνται τὸν Βαραββᾶν τὸν δὲ Ἰησοῦν ἀπολέσωσιν.

ἔπεισαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πειθω  
persuade, convince, win over  
ὄχλος, ου m crowd, multitude  
αἰτήσωνται Verb, aor midd subj, 3 pl αἰτεω  
ask, request, demand  
ἀπολέσωσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3  
pl ἀπολλυμι destroy, kill

I.e. that they might have Jesus put to death at the hands of the Roman authorities.

**Verse 21**

ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ ἡγεμὼν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Τίνα θέλετε ἀπὸ τῶν δύο ἀπολύσω ὑμῖν; οἱ δὲ εἶπαν· Τὸν Βαραββᾶν.

ἀποκριθεὶς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s  
ἀποκρινομαι answer, reply, say  
ἡγεμων, ονος m see v.2  
θελω see v.15  
δουο gen & acc δουο dat δυσιν two  
ἀπολυω see v.15

"They preferred the man of violence to the man of love" Barclay.

**Verse 22**

λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Πιλάτος· Τί οὖν ποιήσω Ἰησοῦν τὸν λεγόμενον χριστόν; λέγουσιν πάντες· Σταυρωθήτω.

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας  
σταυρωθήτω Verb, aor pass imperat, 3 s  
σταυρωω crucify

**Verse 23**

ὁ δὲ ἔφη· Τί γὰρ κακὸν ἐποίησεν; οἱ δὲ περισσῶς ἔκραζον λέγοντες· Σταυρωθήτω.

ἔφη Verb, imperf act ind, 3s φημι say

"It is not easy to bring out the force of the γαρ in a translation, but the conjunction means 'for' and looks for a reason for the foregoing. Pilate could see none, and he asked for one now." Morris.

κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm  
περισσως all the more, even more; even louder  
κραζω cry out, call out

"The crowd at this point, however, is not strong on reasons. Their corporate response is simply to shout (ἔκραζον, 'they cried out') their demand louder: 'Let him be crucified' (cf. v. 22)." Hagner.

Pilate "did not reckon sufficiently with the facts that the crowd now before the praetorium were the Jerusalem mob, not the Galilean pilgrims who shouted for Jesus, and that the mob's sympathies were with the freedom fighters, not with a religious figure like Jesus. So Pilate's well-meant attempts to have the people clamour for Jesus' release misfired and he was left with the mob's demand that the Galilean be crucified." Morris.

#### Verse 24

Ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Πιλάτος ὅτι οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖ ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον θόρυβος γίνεται λαβὼν ὕδωρ ἀπενίψατο τὰς χεῖρας ἀπέναντι τοῦ ὄχλου λέγων· Ἀθῶός εἰμι ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τούτου· ὑμεῖς ὄψεσθε.

Verses 24-25 are unique to Matthew.

ἰδων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ὄρω see  
οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing  
ὠφελω gain, profit, achieve  
μαλλον adv more; rather, instead  
θορυβος, ου m disturbance, riot  
λαβων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s λαμβανω  
ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water  
ἀπενίψατο Verb, aor midd indic, 3 s  
ἀπονιπτω wash  
χειρ, χειρος f hand, power  
ἀπέναντι prep with gen opposite, before, in full view of  
ὄχλος, ου m crowd, multitude  
ἀθως, ον see v.4

There are echoes here of the priests' words to Judas in verse 4.

Many MSS (κ L W J<sup>1,13</sup> TR lat sy<sup>p,h</sup> sa<sup>mss</sup> mae bo) have του δικαίου τούτου (so too A Δ but with slightly different word order), "an accretion intended to accentuate Pilate's protestation of Jesus' innocence" (Metzger). cf. the similar variant in v. 4.

ὄψεσθε Verb, fut act indic, 2 pl ὄρω see

"The possibility of riot in an overcrowded Jerusalem was always present. In such circumstances the governor might all the more readily bow to the demands of the crowd. From his point of view the death of one man was a lesser evil." Anchor Bible.

#### Verse 25

καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς πᾶς ὁ λαὸς εἶπεν· Τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα ἡμῶν.

ἀποκριθεὶς see v.21

λαος, ου m people

τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

For this idiom cf. 2 Sam 1:16; Jer 26:15; 51:35; Acts 5:28; 18:6.

"This can mean only that they did not take seriously any suggestion that Jesus was an innocent man. Nobody calls down on his children the responsibility for the unjust killing of a righteous person. It would seem that the mob had been completely taken in by the propaganda of the high priests." Morris. Contrast Acts 2:39, 'to you and your children.' As Hagner remarks, "the blood of Christ means not condemnation but salvation."

#### Verse 26

τότε ἀπέλυσεν αὐτοῖς τὸν Βαραββᾶν, τὸν δὲ Ἰησοῦν φραγελλώσας παρέδωκεν ἵνα σταυρωθῇ.

Cf. Mark 15:15; Luke 23:24-25; John 19:16a.

φραγελλω beat with a whip

παραδιδωμι hand over, deliver up

σταυρωθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s σταυρωω

"Scourging was the normal preliminary to crucifixion, and it was a horrible punishment in itself. It was inflicted with multi-thonged whips, each thong being laced with pieces of metal or bone... Men sometimes died under scourging, and it is not difficult to understand why. Matthew devotes to this horror no more than one word, and he will later do the same with crucifixion. None of the biblical writers dwells on the terrible sufferings Jesus endured. Popular piety in modern times, both Catholic and Protestant, often does... But the biblical writers are much more interested in the meaning of Jesus' death than in enlarging on the sufferings he endured.

"Not as much is known about crucifixion as we might have expected. Indeed, the Gospel narratives appear to be the fullest accounts we have from antiquity of this shameful method of execution. Ancient writers regarded it as the most shameful of deaths, and they refused to dwell on it... It is not known what caused death. The body would have been weakened by the scourging, and further by prolonged exposure, and both the respiration and the circulation would have been affected. One suggestion is that the combination of all of this brought on heart failure; another, that the brain would be damaged through the reduced supply of blood that reached it. Whatever the reason, death was sure, and it might take a long time." Morris.

### Verses 27-31

Cf. Mark 15:16-20; John 19:2-3.

### Verse 27

Τότε οἱ στρατιῶται τοῦ ἡγεμόνος παραλαβόντες τὸν Ἰησοῦν εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον συνήγαγον ἐπ' αὐτὸν ὅλην τὴν σπεῖραν.

στρατιωτης, ου m soldier  
 παραλαβόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl  
 παραλαμβάνω take  
 πραιτώριον, ου n headquarters or  
 residence (of an army or governor)

"The praetorium was the governor's official residence, probably the old palace of Herod the Great in the western part of the city but possibly the fortress Antonia just northwest of the temple." Hagner.

συνήγαγον Verb, aor act indic, 1 s & 3 pl  
 συναγω gather, gather together  
 σπειρα, ης f cohort (tenth part of a Roman legion having about 600 men), band of soldiers

"The statement that ὅλην τὴν σπεῖραν, 'the whole cohort,' gathered together around Jesus is probably hyperbolic. Technically a 'cohort' consisted of 600 soldiers, although the number varied. It was, however, apparently a fairly large number of rough men who mocked Jesus with their crass humour." Hagner. Perhaps it was all of the cohort on duty at the time.

### Verse 28

καὶ ἐκδύσαντες αὐτὸν χλαμύδα κοκκίνην περιέθηκάν αὐτῷ,  
 ἐκδύω strip, take off

Some MSS (κ<sup>2</sup> B D it sy<sup>s</sup>) have ἐνδύσαντες, 'they clothed him,' probably a correction, given the nudity presupposed in the flogging referred to in v. 26 (cf. the sequence unclothed-clothed in v. 31). cf. Mark 15:17. A few witnesses (064 33 sy<sup>hmg</sup> sa<sup>ms</sup> mae bo<sup>ms</sup>) add τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ, 'his clothes,' which is also added to this translation as the object of the verb.

χλαμυς, υδος f cloak (as worn by Roman soldiers)

κοκκινος, η, ον scarlet, red

"Since this kind of cloak was used by military officers, there would have been no great difficulty in getting one, perhaps an old one, discarded by an officer. The point of it was apparently that the colour was somewhat near purple, the colour of royalty. By getting a cloak of a colour not quite that of royalty the soldiers were mocking Jesus' claim to be a king." Morris.

περιτιθημι put around, put on, clothe in

### Verse 29

καὶ πλέξαντες στέφανον ἐξ ἀκανθῶν ἐπέθηκαν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ κάλαμον ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ, καὶ γονυπετήσαντες ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ ἐνέπαιζαν αὐτῷ λέγοντες· Χαῖρε, βασιλεῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων,

πλεκω weave, twist together  
 στεφανος, ου m wreath, crown  
 ἀκανθα, ης f thorn-plant  
 ἐπέθηκαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl ἐπιτιθημι  
 place on, place, put  
 κεφαλη, ης f head  
 κάλαμος, ου m reed, rod, cane

In context probably a wooden staff.

δεξιος, α, ον right, δεξια right hand

"The natural trappings of royalty, but every one a piece of mockery" Morris.

γονυπετεω kneel  
 ἔμπροσθεν prep with gen before, in front of  
 ἐμπαιζω ridicule, make fun

Many MSS (A W Θ<sup>f,13</sup> TR) have the imperfect tense ἐνέπαιζον, 'they were mocking,' instead of the aorist tense, perhaps to harmonize with the imperfect ἔτυπτον, 'they were beating' or 'began to beat,' of v. 30.

χαίρω rejoice; imperat used as a greeting  
 βασιλεῦ Noun, voc s βασιλευς, εως m king

"These immature soldiers could not know that one day they would again kneel before and confess as exalted Lord (Phil 2:10–11) the very one whom they now sarcastically hailed as the 'King of the Jews.'" Hagner.

**Verse 30**

καὶ ἐμπύσαντες εἰς αὐτὸν ἔλαβον τὸν  
κάλαμον καὶ ἔτυπον εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ.

ἐμπυω spit on

τυπω beat, strike

"There would have been no serious physical violence about this part of the incident, but there was contemptuous mockery of all that Jesus stood for." Morris.

Hagner comments, "The acts perpetrated against Jesus mentioned here would have brought to the early church's remembrance a passage in the third servant song of Isaiah, viz. Isa 50:6: 'I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.'"

**Verse 31**

καὶ ὅτε ἐνέπαιζαν αὐτῷ, ἐξέδυσαν αὐτὸν τὴν  
χλαμύδα καὶ ἐνέδυσαν αὐτὸν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ  
καὶ ἀπήγαγον αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ σταυρῶσαι.

ὅτε conj when, at which time

ἐκδύω see v.28 for this and following

ἱματιον, ου n garment, clothing, robe

ἀπαγω lead away by force, lead

σταυρωω see v.26