

Discipleship in the company of Matthew



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Matthew's Passion Story

- A glance at the whole story
- The sources behind Matthew's version
- The details of Matthew
- The Jesus of Matthew's Gospel
- A prayer



The whole story

- There is a core similarity between the four accounts of the death of Jesus in the New Testament. However, they differ in sequence and in details, allowing various understandings of the cross to unfold.
- Thus both Mark and Matthew treat the death as tragedy, the tragic outcome of the ministry of Jesus, rejected by his people and abandoned by his followers.
- Matthew's bring his own interpretation to bear (1) in the overall context of the his Gospel and (2) in the details which which he either adjusts or adds.



The whole story

- Luke, in contrast, treats the death of Jesus as that of a martyr-prophet, on the model of Old Testament prophets, who suffered for the their preaching and in anticipation of the death of Stephen in the Acts (by Luke also).
- In the Fourth Gospel, the portrayal is that of a triumph, which brings together the lifting up, the hour and the glorification of Jesus.
- Because the death of Jesus was and is such a deeply mysterious and indeed perplexing event, different dimensions are explored and laid bare by different New Testament writers, the earliest being Paul.



The whole story

- Matthew 26-28
- The last and greatest testing
- Jesus, the obedient Son of God
- Innocent, he gives his life for the forgiveness of sin (= words over the cup)
- Jesus prays Psalm 22
- His death is accompanied by apocalyptic signs (temple veil, earthquake, tombs opening).
- Matthew 28:16-20 marks a resolution and a new beginning.
- The time of "church" is to follow.



The sources for the story

- **Material found in Mark, Matthew and Luke** (triple tradition = T)
- **Material found in Mark and Matthew** (double tradition = D)
- **Material unique to Matthew himself** (found nowhere else = M)
- *There is no Q material in the Passion narrative*



| Matthew | Source | Topic | Mark | Luke |
|-------------|--------|----------------------------|----------|--------------|
| 26:1-5 | T | Conspiracy against Jesus | 14:1-2 | 22:1-2 |
| 26:3-13 | D | Anointing at Bethany | 14:3-9 | – |
| 26:14-16 | T | Betrayal of Judas | 14:11-10 | 22:3-6 |
| 26:17-19 | T | Preparation for Passover | 14:12-16 | 22:7-13 |
| 26:20-25 | T | The traitor | 14:17-21 | 22:14, 21-23 |
| 26:26-29 | T | The Lord's Supper | 14:22-25 | 22:15-20 |
| 26:30-35 | T | The way to Gethsemane | 14:26-31 | 22:39, 31-24 |
| 26:36-46 | T | Jesus in Gethsemane | 14:32-42 | 22:40-46 |
| 26:47-56 | T | Jesus arrested | 14:43-51 | 22:47-53 |
| 26:57-75 | T | Jesus before the Sanhedrin | 14:53-72 | 22:54-71 |
| 27:1-2 | T | Transfer to Pilate | 15:1 | 23:1 |
| 27:3-10 | M | Death of Judas | – | – |
| 27:11-14 | T | Trial before Pilate | 15:2-5 | 23:2-5 |
| 27:15-26 | T | Sentence of death | 15:6-15 | 23:17-25 |
| (27:19) | M | Pilate's wife's dream | – | – |
| (27:25) | M | "His blood be upon us..." | – | – |
| 27:27-31 | D | Mocking by the soldiers | 15:16-20 | – |
| 27:32 | T | The road to Golgotha | 15:21 | 23:26-32 |
| 27:33-44 | T | The Crucifixion | 15:22-32 | 23:33-43 |
| 27:45-56 | T | The Death on the Cross | 15:33-41 | 23:44-49 |
| (27:51b-53) | M | Earthquake | – | – |
| 27:57-61 | T | The Burial of Jesus | 15:42-47 | 23:50-56 |
| 27:62-66 | M | The guards at the Tomb | – | – |

Matthew's Passion

- It is evident that Matthew follows Mark's account very closely, step by step.
- The context of the Gospel is different: birth stories, great discourses, resurrection appearances and the great commission at the end.
- Clearly, in this Gospel, the Messiah is the Son of God, Emmanuel, God with us.
- He is also the Son of Man, the son of David.
- The tragedy at the centre is Israel's rejection of the Messiah.



Matthew's Passion

- Jesus' death fulfils the Scriptures
- The figure of Jesus dominates all the scenes
- The Jews are responsible for the death of Jesus



Matthew's Passion

- (1) Gethsemane: the word to the disciple who struck with the sword (26:52-54)
- (2) The death of Judas (27:3-10)
- (3) The dream of Pilate's wife (27:19)
- (4) Pilate washing his hands (27:24-25)
- (5) Self-curse of the people (27:25)
- (6) An earthquake at the death of Jesus (27:51)
- (7) The opening of the tombs (27:52-53)
- (8) The guards at the tomb (27:63-66)
- (9) An earthquake at the resurrection (28:2)
- (10) The guards paid off (28:11-15)
- (11) The appearance in Galilee (28:16-20)



Matthew's Passion

- Jesus is much more in charge of events in Matthew.
- "Jesus" - 17 times in Mark's Passion; 40 in Matthew's redaction.
- The bare statistic indicates a fundamental shift from victim to protagonist, somehow in charge of his own death.
- This can be shown noting some characteristics unique to Matthew's gospel.



Details (1)

Matthew 26:52 Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will die by the sword. **53** Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? **54** But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?"



Details (2)

Matthew 27:3 When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. **4** He said, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." **5** Throwing down the pieces of silver in 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 they are blood money."

7 After conferring together, they used them to buy the potter's field as a place to bury foreigners. **8** For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. **9** Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, **10** and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."



Details (3, 4, 5)

Matthew 27:19 While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him."

Matthew 27:24 So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."

25 Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!"



Details (6, 7, 9)

Matthew 27:51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook (*seismos*), and the rocks were split. **52** The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. **53** After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many.

Matthew 28:2 And suddenly there was a great earthquake (*seismos*), for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

Matthew 8:24 A windstorm (*seismos*) suddenly arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves, but he was asleep.



Moment of death

Matthew 27:45 From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. **46** And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "**Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?**" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" **47** When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for

Elijah." **48** At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. **49** But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." **50** Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. **5**



In summary

- Matthew's passion uses Mark's account fairly completely.
- The wider context of the Gospel puts before us the figure of Jesus as Son of God, Son of Man and Messiah.
- His origin is "in God" and his resurrection is recounted.
- Jesus directs the final events of his life.
- The innocence of Jesus is underlined – he is "righteous"
- The innocence of the Romans is also strengthened.
- The tragedy, in Matthew, is that Israel did not recognise him.
- This is illustrated in the actions and destiny of Judas/Judean/Jew.



In summary

- The Gospel of Matthew's receives the core teaching of the Gospel of Mark.
- Jesus is first of all the Son of God, who must suffer, die and be raised from the dead.
- This took place so he could return at the end of the ages and gather his elect.
- However, Matthew enriches Mark's understanding of Jesus in several ways.



In summary

- **Jesus Messiah, the Son of David** (descent from David, battle with evil, teaching, reaching those on the margin)
- **Jesus Messiah, the obedient Son of God** (unique relationship; 11:25-27; temptations and mockery around the cross)
- **Jesus Messiah, the teacher of righteousness** (teaching, preaching and healing; the five great discourses)
- **Jesus Messiah, saviour of God's people** (forgiveness sins, the kingdom, ministry, saving death and resurrection; "saviour" of all the nations)



In summary

- **Jesus Messiah, the judge at the end of time** (NB the "Son of Man"; many "hints" throughout the Gospel; certain parables are important).
- **NB** Titles and terms such as Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man, son of David are important in Matthew's presentation.
- **However** the story of Jesus cannot be "reduced" to such designations.
- **The central focus** of Matthew is on Jesus as the one who fulfils the scriptures of Israel, teaches his disciples a greater righteousness, inaugurates the Kingdom of God and saves his people from their sins.



The Last Words of Jesus

- Mark "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?"
- Matthew "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"
- Luke "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."
- John "It is finished."



The Last Words of Jesus

Psa. 22:11 On you I was cast from my birth,
and since my mother bore me **you** (are) **my God**

Psalms 22:11 ‘ālekā hāšlak̄tî mērāḥem mibbeten ’immi **’ēlî ’āttah:**

עָלַיךָ הַשְׁלַכְתִּי מִרְחֹם מִבֶּטֶן אִמִּי אֱלֹהֵי אֶתְּהָ:

Psalms of Lament: Pss 22:11; 63:2; 118:28; 140:7

Eliattah = **Eli attah** = My God, it is you!

Eliatha = **Elia tha** = Elijah, come!



Prayer

O God of eternal glory, you anointed Jesus your servant to bear our sins, to encourage the weary, to raise up and restore the fallen.

Keep before our eyes the splendour of the paschal mystery of Christ

and, by our sharing in the passion and resurrection, seal our lives with the victorious sign of his obedience and exaltation.

We ask this through Christ, our liberator from sin, who lives with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, holy and mighty God for ever and ever. Amen.