

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**MATTHEW 27****Matthew 27**

"Now when morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus to put Him to death; and they bound Him and led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate the governor."

(Matthew 27:1-2)

Jesus had spent the night in solitary confinement. He had been arrested by the temple guard and brought to the house of the high priest, Caiaphas, and now it was early morning. The Lord would have spent the night in a "pit," which was a type of holding cell for high-level prisoners such as Jesus of Nazareth. This was a cistern usually carved out of the porous limestone of Jerusalem. This would have been a type of torture designed to break the prisoner and bring them to the point of confession, recanting falsehood, blasphemy, or whatever the accusation was by the religious authorities. The Lord Jesus would have been lowered into the pit or holding cell. Then a large stone cover would have been placed over the open hole at the top. This would have put the prisoner in a totally dark place. The pit, which would have been in an open courtyard, would have been a combination of any water that would have seeped in, along with urine, feces, and all the odors, combined with the anxiety of being alone, abandoned, forgotten, and in total darkness. Jesus may have cried out to His God and Father that night the inspired words of Psalm 88 (Please take time to read

this heart cry of desperation, pinned hundreds of years before Jesus would have been in the pit of waiting).

The next move of the religious leaders was to take Jesus to the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, for a speedy execution under the Romans. As each of the gospel writers gives various details of the events that transpired on this day, Matthew gives us details of Judas Iscariot and his demise. Under the heavy hand of regret, remorse, and guilt, Judas went out and hanged himself. Matthew adds that a burial place was purchased, and he was buried. That place was also used for other strangers (Judas was not from Jerusalem) to be buried if death came to them while on pilgrimage or otherwise.

Matthew 27:15 begins the story of a notorious criminal in Roman custody named Barabbas. Pontius Pilate named this man as one who could be executed instead of Jesus of Nazareth. Still, the religious crowd of Jerusalem that day wanted Jesus to die instead and in the place of the malefactor. Barabbas was chosen to go free, while Jesus was condemned to die.

Sound familiar? The reality is that Jesus died, not only in place of Barabbas but also for each of us, as our substitute. Jesus died innocently in place of the sinful and guilty.

Prayer and Action Steps

Father in heaven, please remind me throughout this day that the Lord Jesus, Your eternal Son, died as a substitute in my place for my sins. May I live this day as a free person, grateful to the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, my Savior. Amen