

## Group Study Questions – Matthew 27:27–31; 45–54 (NKJV)

### Parallel Passages

#### Jesus mocked by the soldiers:

Matthew 27:27–31 parallels **Mark 15:16–20** and **John 19:1–3**. A related mocking scene appears in **Luke 23:11**, when Herod and his soldiers treat Jesus with contempt.

#### Darkness, Jesus' death, veil torn, centurion's confession:

Matthew 27:45–54 parallels **Mark 15:33–39** and **Luke 23:44–49**. John gives additional details about Jesus' final moments, the sour wine, His statement "It is finished," and the piercing of His side in **John 19:28–37**.

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Matthew 27 shows Jesus mocked, crucified, and seemingly defeated. Yet Matthew surrounds His death with signs: darkness falls, the veil tears, the earth shakes, graves open, and a Roman centurion confesses Him as the Son of God.

The whole Gospel has led us here. The King has come, but not as expected. The Son obeys, suffers, and gives His life. The temple veil is torn. Access to God is opened. Death begins to lose its grip.

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### 1. What is the significance of the soldiers mocking Jesus as "King of the Jews"? (*Matthew 27:27–29*)

The soldiers put a scarlet robe on Jesus, twist a crown of thorns, place a reed in His hand, bow before Him, and mock Him: "Hail, King of the Jews!" They intend to shame Him, but Matthew shows deep irony: the One they mock as King truly is King.

This moment connects back to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, where Matthew quotes Zechariah: "Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey" (Matthew 21:5; Zechariah 9:9). It also connects to the charge placed over His head: "This is Jesus the King of the Jews" (Matthew 27:37). Matthew has been showing that Jesus' kingship does not look like worldly power. He rules through humility, obedience, and sacrifice.

Jesus had already taught this pattern: "Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant" (Matthew 20:26), and He came "to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

Everyday Application: Jesus challenges our normal ideas of strength and success. Following Him may mean choosing humility, restraint, and obedience when the world expects self-defense, image-building, or control.

### 2. Why is the crown of thorns meaningful beyond simple mockery? (*Matthew 27:29*)

The crown of thorns was meant as cruel parody. A real king wears a royal crown; Jesus is given a painful one. But thorns also reach back to the curse after Adam's sin, when the ground brought

forth “thorns and thistles” (Genesis 3:17–18). Matthew does not directly explain the crown this way, but the image fits the larger biblical story: Jesus bears the shame, pain, and curse connected to sin.

From the beginning of Matthew, Jesus’ mission was clear: “He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). Now, at the cross, that mission is reaching its climax. The soldiers mean to degrade Him, but the scene quietly points to the weight of human brokenness Jesus is carrying.

Everyday Application: Jesus is not distant from the pain and brokenness of the world. He entered it, bore it, and carried it. When we suffer under the effects of sin—our own or others’—we can remember that Christ understands and has come to redeem.

### **3. What does Jesus’ silence and endurance during the mocking teach us? (Matthew 27:27–31)**

Matthew records no response from Jesus during this abuse. He is mocked, spit on, struck, and led away to be crucified. His silence reflects Isaiah’s prophecy of the suffering servant: “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth” (Isaiah 53:7).

This also shows Jesus living out His own teaching from the Sermon on the Mount. He taught His followers not to return evil for evil, saying, “Whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also” (Matthew 5:39). At the cross, Jesus embodies the very righteousness He taught.

His silence is not weakness. It is surrendered strength. He is not powerless; He has already said that He could call on His Father for “more than twelve legions of angels” (Matthew 26:53). Yet He chooses obedience so the Scriptures may be fulfilled (Matthew 26:54).

Everyday Application: There are times to speak, but there are also times when faithfulness means refusing to retaliate. Jesus teaches us to entrust our reputation, pain, and need for justice to God.

### **4. What is the significance of the darkness from the sixth hour to the ninth hour? (Matthew 27:45)**

Darkness falls from about noon to 3 p.m., the brightest part of the day. This signals that Jesus’ death is more than a tragic execution. In Scripture, darkness often appears with judgment, grief, or divine intervention. In Egypt, darkness came before the Passover deliverance (Exodus 10:21–23). Amos also speaks of the sun going down at noon in a day of judgment and mourning (Amos 8:9–10).

Matthew has already connected Jesus to Passover themes at the Last Supper, where Jesus said His blood was “shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28). The darkness shows the seriousness of sin and judgment, but also the depth of God’s redemptive work through Christ.

Everyday Application: The cross teaches us not to treat sin lightly. Yet it also teaches that God can work redemption in the darkest moment. Darkness does not mean God is absent; at the cross, God was accomplishing salvation.

## **5. Why does Jesus cry out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46)**

Jesus is quoting Psalm 22:1. This is a real cry of anguish, but it also points readers to the whole psalm. Psalm 22 begins in suffering and abandonment, but it moves toward trust, deliverance, and worship among the nations (Psalm 22:22–31).

Matthew has already shown Psalm 22 being echoed at the cross. The mockers say, “He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now” (Matthew 27:43), which closely reflects Psalm 22:8. Jesus’ cry shows that He is entering the deepest suffering as the righteous sufferer, but not outside the purposes of God.

This moment also brings together Matthew’s larger story. The child called “Immanuel,” meaning “God with us” (Matthew 1:23), now experiences the agony of abandonment so sinners may be brought near to God.

Everyday Application: Faith does not require pretending pain is small. Jesus gives us permission to bring honest anguish before God. Even words of deep sorrow can be words of faith when directed toward Him.

## **6. What does the tearing of the temple veil reveal about Jesus’ death? (Matthew 27:51)**

When Jesus dies, the veil of the temple is torn in two from top to bottom. The veil separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, where God’s presence was symbolically associated under the old covenant (Exodus 26:31–33). Only the high priest could enter, and only once a year on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:2, 29–34).

The tearing from top to bottom suggests God’s action. Through Jesus’ death, access to God is opened. Hebrews later explains that believers have boldness to enter by the blood of Jesus, “through the veil, that is, His flesh” (Hebrews 10:19–20).

This fulfills a major movement in Matthew. Jesus is “God with us” (Matthew 1:23). He cleansed the temple and called it a house of prayer (Matthew 21:12–13). He predicted judgment on the temple system (Matthew 24:1–2). Now, through His death, access to God is no longer centered on the temple veil, but on Christ Himself.

Everyday Application: We do not approach God through status, performance, or religious achievement. We come through Christ. That should make us humble because access was costly, and confident because the way has truly been opened.

## **7. Why does Matthew mention the earthquake, split rocks, opened graves, and raised saints? (Matthew 27:51–53)**

Matthew alone includes these dramatic signs. The earthquake and split rocks show creation responding to the death of Jesus. Earlier in Matthew, Jesus calmed the sea and revealed authority over creation (Matthew 8:23–27). Now creation itself trembles at His death.

The opened graves and later appearance of saints after Jesus' resurrection point toward resurrection hope. Matthew is not saying the final resurrection has fully arrived, but he gives a sign that Jesus' death has begun the defeat of death. The timing matters: Matthew says they came out of the graves "after His resurrection" (Matthew 27:53). Christ remains central as the first and decisive victor over death, consistent with Paul's later words that Christ is "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20).

This also connects with Matthew's earlier hints of Jesus' power over death, such as the raising of the ruler's daughter (Matthew 9:18–26).

Everyday Application: The cross is not only about forgiveness; it also points to victory over death. Believers still grieve, but not as people without hope. Death is real, but because of Christ, it is not final.

### **8. What is significant about the centurion's confession, "Truly this was the Son of God"?**

*(Matthew 27:54)*

The centurion is a Roman soldier, part of the execution scene, and yet he recognizes something true about Jesus. This is striking because many of the religious leaders reject Jesus, while an unexpected Gentile witness confesses Him.

Matthew has prepared us for this pattern. Gentile Magi come to worship Jesus near the beginning of the Gospel (Matthew 2:1–11). A Roman centurion shows great faith, and Jesus says many will come from east and west to sit down in the kingdom (Matthew 8:5–13). A Canaanite woman shows persistent faith (Matthew 15:21–28). Now, at the cross, another Gentile recognizes Jesus' identity.

The centurion may not understand the full meaning of "Son of God," but Matthew presents his confession as a powerful testimony: the crucified Jesus is truly who He claimed to be.

Everyday Application: God can open the eyes of unlikely people. We should not assume who is too far away, too hardened, or too outside our expectations to respond to Christ.

### **9. How do the mockers misunderstand Jesus' refusal to save Himself? *(Matthew 27:39–44)***

The mockers say, "If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Matthew 27:40). Their assumption is that true power would prove itself through self-rescue. But this echoes Satan's earlier temptation: "If You are the Son of God..." (Matthew 4:3, 6). In both cases, Jesus is tempted to use His identity apart from the Father's will.

Jesus does not come down because His mission is not to save Himself but to save others. He had already said that He came "to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). The mockers think the cross disproves His identity; Matthew shows that it fulfills His mission.

Everyday Application: Sometimes obedience to God may look like weakness to others. The cross teaches that faithfulness is not always proven by escape; sometimes it is proven by endurance.

**10. How does this passage show both human evil and God’s redemptive purpose? (Matthew 27:27–54)**

The soldiers mock, the leaders reject, the crowd ridicules, and Jesus is crucified unjustly. Human evil is fully visible. Yet Matthew also shows that these events are not outside God’s plan. Jesus repeatedly predicted His suffering, death, and resurrection (Matthew 16:21; 20:18–19; 26:2). At the Last Supper, He said His blood would be shed “for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28).

This is one of the central beauties of Matthew’s Gospel: everything has been moving here. Jesus was born to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). He was identified as God’s beloved Son (Matthew 3:17; 17:5). He taught kingdom righteousness (Matthew 5–7). He served the weak and outcast. He predicted His death. Now, at the cross, His mission reaches its climax.

The cross is not accidental defeat. It is where human sin is exposed and God’s saving mercy is revealed.

Everyday Application: God’s sovereignty does not make evil good, but it means evil does not get the final word. Believers can trust that God is able to work redemptively even through painful, unjust, or confusing circumstances.