



Matthew Lesson 37

August 31, 2021

“The *Megillah* of Matthew”

26:57-27:26

Tonight, we are finishing up in chapter 26 and will begin chapter 27. In last our session, Yeshua and His disciples left their Passover *seder* in Jerusalem and crossed the Kidron Valley to the Garden of Gethsemane where Yeshua prayed. It is *Nisan* 14, the day which had begun at sundown, and was the day that lambs were to be slaughtered in the Temple for Passover. *Yehudah*, Judas, had left their *seder* earlier to carry out his betrayal of Yeshua and had brought Temple priests and guards who arrested Him.

*57 Now those who had seized Yeshua led Him away to Caiaphas, the kohen gadol, where the Torah scholars and elders had gathered (Matthew 26:57 TLV).* They took Yeshua to Caiaphas, but they didn't lead Him directly there. John tells us that they led Him first to Annas, Caiaphas's father in law, who was a High Priest from former years (John 18:13). We aren't told what happened at Annas's house. *58 Peter was following Him from a distance as far as the courtyard of the kohen gadol. And after going inside, he was sitting with the guards, to see the outcome (Matthew 26:58 TLV).* We wonder how *Kefa* got into the High Priest's courtyard and sat with the guards, no less? But, by reading in John we find out that initially he did not get into the courtyard. He waited outside. In John chapter 18, we are told that Peter was accompanied by another of Yeshua's disciples who was known to the High Priest and he followed Yeshua right into the courtyard. But, *Kefa* did not enter right away. He waited outside the gate until the other disciple, who is not mentioned by name, but whom we believe to be John, made it ok for him to enter. Now we have another question. How did John know Caiaphas well enough to be allowed the privilege of entry into his courtyard? We don't know the answer, but one speculation is that it was a business relationship with the servants of Caiaphas. John, being a fisherman, may have sold fish to the household so that the servant girl knew him. But, whatever it was, this relationship allowed *Yochanan* and *Kefa* into the courtyard of the High Priest.

*59 Now the ruling kohanim and all the Sanhedrin kept trying to get false testimony against Yeshua so they could put Him to death. 60 But they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward 61 and said, “This fellow said, ‘I'm able to destroy the Temple of God and rebuild it in three days’” (Matthew 26:59-61 TLV).* “Ruling *kohanim*” is a reference to Caiaphas and the chief priests under him. That “all the Sanhedrin” tried to get false testimony against Yeshua would indicate that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who were both Pharisee members of the group, weren't there because they certainly would not have done it. This group was referring to all the Sanhedrin who were there. The hour was late and it would have been impossible to contact all 71 members. It is also doubtful that Caiaphas's house would have been able to contain them all if they had been there. This was an illegal gathering of the court, complete with false witnesses. The official meeting place of the Sanhedrin was in a room in the Temple known as the chamber of hewn stones. Regarding “destroy this Temple,” we know that Yeshua did make that

statement, but He was referring to His body as the Temple and not the physical second Temple (John 2:19).

62 *The kohen gadol stood up and said to Yeshua, "Have You no answer? What's this they're testifying against You?"* 63 *But Yeshua kept silent. The kohen gadol said to Him, "I charge You under oath by the living God, tell us if You are Mashiach Ben-Elohim!* 64 *"As you have said," replied Yeshua. "Besides that, I tell you, soon after you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Matthew 26:62-64 TLV).* Yeshua did not answer Caiaphas's first question, but He did answer his second. He answered because Caiaphas presented the question under oath. Yeshua had taught earlier during His Sermon on the Mount: 37 *But let your word 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No,' 'No'—anything more than this is from the evil one."* (Matthew 5:37 TLV). And, that is what He did. He didn't swear by heaven or by the Temple. He just said: "As you have said," essentially saying: "I am the Anointed One, the Son of G-d." His next statement: "*you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven,*" emphasized that He was the anointed One. In this statement, Yeshua was using *remez*, the Hebraic way of hinting at a Scripture to connect it to His statement and to make a point. By saying that, Yeshua called Caiaphas's attention to Daniel 7:13: 13 *"I was watching in the night visions. Behold, One like a Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days, and was brought into His presence."* (Daniel 7:13 TLV). In effect, Yeshua said "I am the Son of Man who was given dominion by the Ancient of Days." Yeshua's statement also contains something else important. What is rendered from the Greek as "power" in "sitting at the right hand of Power" is in Hebrew, *HaG'vurah*, "the Power." This is also *remez*, pointing the High Priest to Psalm 110: 1 *A psalm of David. Adonai declares to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for Your feet."* (Psalm 110:1 TLV). This also shows that at that time, ADONAI's four letter name, *Yod Heh Vav Heh* in Hebrew, was not pronounced except by the High Priest on *Yom Kippur*. Yeshua never used His Father's name to refer to Him. He referred to Him be the euphemism "Heaven" and by the Hebrew Elohim, which is translated as "G-d. "Power" was a euphemism, a substitute word for ADONAI's name. Coming on the clouds of heaven was explained further by *Sha'ul* in 1Thessalonians 4 and 1Corinthians 15. It is the catching away of the righteous dead and the living when Yeshua returns as King.

Yeshua's statement really set Caiaphas off. 65 *Then the kohen gadol tore his clothes and said, "Blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, you've heard the blasphemy. (Matthew 26:65 TLV).* The High Priest ripped his robe, the Jewish expression for grief or anger, but I would have to think Caiaphas did it because he was angry. As Rabbi Herb pointed out several weeks ago, by doing this, he violated *Torah*. The High Priest had to maintain a level of dignity because he had on holy garments and performed holy acts before ADONAI. By tearing his clothes, Caiaphas violated ADONAI's command in Leviticus 21: 10 *"He who is the kohen gadol among his brothers, upon whose head the anointing oil is poured and is consecrated to put on the garments, is not to let the hair of his head hang loose or tear his clothes,.. (Leviticus 21:10 TLV).* But, Caiaphas was not a real *Kohen Gadol* in ADONAI's sense. He wasn't directly chosen by ADONAI in the normal way of choosing a High Priest. But, he may very well have been the High Priest that ADONAI wanted in office in order to use him to carry out his previously ordained plan for Yeshua to die. High priests during this period were chosen by the Roman Governor and usually for a sum of money. The High Priests bought their office and acted more like secular rulers than the holy priest that they were supposed to be.

66 *What's your verdict?*" "Guilty," they answered. "He deserves death!" 67 Then they spat in His face and pounded Him with their fists. Others slapped Him and demanded, 68 "Prophecy to us, you Messiah! Which one hit You?" (Matthew 26:66-68 TLV). By doing this, they fulfilled Isaiah 50, verse 6: 6 "I gave My back to those who strike, and My cheeks to those pulling out My beard; I did not hide My face from humiliation and spitting." (Isaiah 50:6 TLV). I point out again that this was not an official court and no official vote was taken.

69 Meanwhile, Peter was sitting in the courtyard. A servant girl came over to him and said, "You also were with Yeshua of the Galilee." 70 But he denied it before everyone, saying, "I don't know what you're talking about!" 71 When he went onto the porch, another servant girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Yeshua ha-Natzrati." 72 Again he denied it with an oath: "I don't know the Man!" 73 A little while later, some of the bystanders approached Peter and said to him, "Surely you're one of them, too—your accent gives you away." (Matthew 26:69-73 TLV). As Yeshua had told Peter at their seder, he would deny Him three times that night. Kefa was identified as being with Yeshua by two eyewitnesses and as a Galilean by a bystander who recognized his accent. Kefa's accent as a Galilean would have been as recognizable to Judeans as our Georgia accent is to New Yorkers. Even though he had just a few hours before said "Master, I will never deny you," he now denied Him three times. 74 Then he began to curse and to swear an oath: "I do not know the Man!" Right then, a rooster crowed. 75 Then Peter reminded himself of the word Yeshua had said: "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." And he went away and wept bitterly. (Matthew 26:74-75 TLV). In this, we also see the contrast between Kefa and Yeshua in their statements. Peter did not let his yes be yes and his no be no, but swore an oath to deny Yeshua.

Chapter 27. 1 When daybreak came, the ruling kohanim and elders of the people conspired against Yeshua to put Him to death. 2 And they tied Him up, led Him away, and handed Him over to Pilate, the governor. (Matthew 27:1-2 TLV). The conspiracy was to have the Romans put Yeshua to death. Even if the Sanhedrin had met legally and officially condemned Yeshua, they could not have put Him to death by stoning, the primary way of execution according to the *Torah*. And stoning, was not what ADONAI wanted. Yeshua's death had to be on the cross. Because Rome had taken the death penalty power away from the Sanhedrin, the only option that Caiaphas and his followers had was to have Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor pronounce the death sentence and carry out the execution. Fortunately, and obviously in ADONAI's plan, Pilate was in Jerusalem because of the approaching Passover. His usual headquarters were in Caesarea on the Mediterranean Sea, but being wary of riots during the festivals, he would bring extra troops to Jerusalem as a precaution. When Yeshua was brought before him, he would have been at the Antonia Fortress which overlooked the Temple Mount from its northern end. From this vantage point, Roman soldiers kept an eye on the Temple mount year round, but a greater number were there now because of Passover.

3 Then Judah, His betrayer, saw that Yeshua had been condemned. Feeling remorse, he brought the thirty silver pieces back to the ruling kohanim and elders, 4 saying, "I've sinned, betraying innocent blood!" But they said, "What's that to us? You see to it yourself!" 5 After tossing the silver into the Temple sanctuary, he left. Then he went off and hanged himself. (Matthew 27:3-5 TLV). Judah felt remorse. If Yeshua had already been condemned, as this verse states, this event would have taken place sometime after Pilate's judgment of Yeshua. Caiaphas and the others were in the Temple when Judah threw in the coins. The Greek word which the TLV translated "remorse" is *metamelomai* (met-am-el'-lom-ahee) which means to

regret or repent. Judah did feel regret that Yeshua would die. He felt it greatly, but the usage of repent here seems to mean that he changed his mind. He wished he had not done it. It was not a sincere repentance and a turning from his sin.

*6 But the ruling kohanim took the silver pieces and said, "It is not permitted to put these in the treasury, since it is blood money." 7 So after they conferred, they bought with them the potter's field, as a cemetery for strangers. 8 For this reason that field has been called the "Field of Blood" to this day. 9 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "And they took the thirty silver pieces, the price of Him on whom a price had been set by Bnei-Yisrael; 10 and they gave them for the potter's field, just as Adonai arranged for me." (Matthew 27:6-10 TLV). This also points out that this was a recounting of what they later did with the blood money. Regarding what happened to Judah, Shimon Kefa said: 18 (Now this man Judah bought a field with the reward of his wickedness. Falling headfirst, he burst open in the middle and his intestines splattered out. 19 And it became known to all those living in Jerusalem, so in their own language that field was called Akeldama—that is, 'Field of Blood.') 20 For it is written in the Book of Psalms, 'Let his dwelling place become desolate, and let there be no one living in it' and 'Let another take his position.' (Acts 1:18-20 TLV). Judah's sin bought the field, not him personally. There is no contradiction here and we just get more information from Peter than we do from Matthew. His quote from Psalms is from 69:26. What Judah did and what happened to him is a fulfilment of a prophecy by Zechariah: 12 Then I said to them, "If it seems good to you, pay me my wages, but if not, don't bother!" So they weighed out my wages—30 pieces of silver. 13 Then Adonai said to me, "Throw it to the potter—that exorbitant price at which they valued Me!" So I took the 30 pieces of silver and threw them into the House of Adonai, to the potter." (Zechariah 11:12-13 TLV). Matthew states that Jeremiah said this rather than Zechariah. A possible explanation is that he was referring to all of the prophets by referring to the first book of the prophets. The Word is true even if we don't know all the answers right now. Judah threw the thirty pieces into the Temple and the kohanim gave it to the "potter," with it bought the burial field.*

Caiaphas and his followers took Yeshua to the Antonia Fortress. *11 Now Yeshua stood before the governor. The governor questioned Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" "You say so," Yeshua said. 12 And while He was accused by the ruling kohanim and elders, He did not answer. 13 Then Pilate said to Him, "Don't You hear how many things they testify against you?" 14 Yeshua did not answer, not even one word, so the governor was greatly amazed. (Matthew 27:11-14 TLV). By asking Yeshua if He was King of the Jews, Pilate was not necessarily focusing on Caiaphas's charge of blasphemy. Yeshua's accusers had also suggested that by saying He was King of the Jews that it was rebellion against the Roman government. But, I think it more likely that Pilate was just curious and not seeking an answer to either of these questions. Matthew also leaves out many details of this encounter between Yeshua and Pilate. You are encouraged to read Luke chapter 23 and John 18 for a fuller understanding of what happened.*

*15 Now during the feast, the governor was accustomed to release to the crowd one prisoner, anyone they wanted. 16 At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Yeshua Bar-Abba. (Matthew 27:15-16 TLV). What's in a name? Yeshua Bar-Abba means "salvation" and "Son of the Father." Yeshua is Hebrew and Bar and Abba are both Aramaic loan words used in Hebrew. It is ironic that here we see two different sons of the Father called Yeshua. The one was a robber, insurrectionist and murderer and the other was the innocent, real Son of the Father. 17 So when they were gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Which one do you want me to release for you? Yeshua who is Bar-Abba,*

or Yeshua who is called Messiah?” 18 For he knew that they had handed Him over out of envy. (Matthew 27:17-18 TLV). Pilate said: “Do you want me to release Yeshua BarAbba or Yeshua HaMashiach?” He wasn’t fooled by their arguments. He knew that it was the competition which they felt that was a part of their purpose in getting rid of Yeshua. We also know from previous Scripture that they were worried because they knew that the people wanted Yeshua to be their king and might begin a revolution against the Romans. They were comfortable with life under the Romans and preferred the status quo. Yeshua the Messiah, the Anointed One, died so that Bar Abba, a guilty son of the Father, might have the opportunity to repent of his sins and be forgiven. We have no evidence that he did and his name was not heard again. But, Pilate was not fooled by Yeshua’s accusers. He saw through their ploy.

19 While Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him a message, saying, “Don’t have anything to do with that righteous Man, for today I’ve suffered many things in a dream because of Him.” (Matthew 27:19 TLV). Another thing which Matthew left out was Yeshua being sent to Herod as described in Luke 23. In Luke, we are told that when Pilate learned that Yeshua was a Galilean, he decided to send Him to King Herod who was the titular ruler of the Galilee. Herod also happened to be in Jerusalem at that time. Herod was delighted because he had been wanting to see Yeshua for a long time. Herod and his soldiers also mocked Yeshua and then returned him to Pilate. As Pilate was preparing to make his judgment, he got a message from his wife imploring him not to judge Yeshua. She called Him a “righteous man.” The Greek word *dikaios* (dik'-ah-yos) means righteous with the implication of being an “innocent man.” Apparently, ADONAI had shown her Yeshua’s innocence in a dream. Pilate thus knew that Yeshua was innocent. This was an opportunity for him to set Yeshua free.

20 Now the ruling kohanim and elders persuaded the crowds that they should ask for Bar-Abba and destroy Yeshua. 21 But the governor responded, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Bar-Abba!” 22 Pilate said to them, “What then shall I do with Yeshua, who is called Messiah?” “Execute Him!” all of them say. 23 But Pilate said, “Why? What evil has He done?” But they kept shouting all the more, saying, “Let Him be executed!” (Matthew 27:20-23 TLV). Pilate didn’t listen to his wife. He left it up to the crowd even though he knew Yeshua was innocent. This totally partisan crowd claimed Bar Abba’s freedom and kept shouting to “execute Him!” The crowd was one of Caiaphas’s and his follower’s making. And, it was a fairly small crowd, just a few hundred people. It was not the thousands who had welcomed Yeshua into the city just four days earlier. As we have previously read, Caiaphas was afraid of the masses. He knew that they adored Yeshua and he did everything furtively and away from where they could see what was going on.

24 When Pilate saw he was accomplishing nothing, but instead a riot was starting, he took some water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. “I am innocent of this blood,” he said. “You see to it yourselves!” 25 All the people answered and said, “His blood be on us and on our children!” 26 Then he released to them Bar-Abba. And after he had Yeshua scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified. (Matthew 27:24-26 TLV). Publicly washing the hands was a sign of innocence. In Deuteronomy 21, the elders of the city closest to where a dead body was found were to wash their hands to signify their innocence. Pilate obviously was not innocent. His washing may have been to declare his innocence in his mind, but was more likely “washing his hands of the matter,” essentially saying, “I will have nothing more to do with it. You make the decision.” And, that is what the crowd did. As a result, both he and the crowd are guilty of Yeshua’s death. While we know that ADONAI had ordained Yeshua’s death and that all of our sins are what caused Him to die, yet these people were

guilty of murder. But not all Jews were guilty. Unfortunately, many people over the years have used this situation to justify their anti-Semitic actions, and to accuse all Jewish people of Yeshua's murder. Pilate's scourging of Yeshua was not a personal act of cruelty. The scourging of any person who was to be crucified was routine and of a dual purpose. First, it was to hasten the death on the cross. Scourging was sometimes so severe that it would cause a person to be half dead when placed on the stake. Second, it was also a deterrent along with the actual crucifixion to any potential wrong doers.

That Yeshua lived in this time period meant that He would be put to death by crucifixion. The Romans only used this form of punishment for about four hundred years. Psalms 22 and 34 and Isaiah 53 reveal crucifixion by describing some of its effects. By dying on a cross, Yeshua was hung on a tree as described in Deuteronomy 21:22-23. These verses tell us that anyone hung on a tree is cursed of G-d. Yeshua became accursed for us that we might avoid being accursed by being guilty of violating *Torah*. The curse of *Torah* was not continuing to obey *Torah*. *Sha'ul* wrote to the Galatians: 13 "*Messiah liberated us from Torah's curse, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree")*"— (Galatians 3:13 TLV). ADONAI foreordained that Yeshua would be born and live in this society and this time period so that His death would be by crucifixion, that is, hanging on a tree. It was His perfect timing for the salvation of His chosen people Israel and for the whole world. By His death on the tree, Yeshua took the curse for us, something He could not have done in another time period. He paid sin's price and we avoid the curse if we accept His atoning death.

We end this lesson here. It is the morning of *Nisan* 14, the day on which the Passover lambs were to be slaughtered. Yeshua has been judged guilty and scourged in preparation for being placed on the execution stake, the tree. *Shalom aleichem!*