

## THE FAST TRACKED PASSION STORY WITH A PUNCHLINE. Dn Peter Chapman

OK, so here is the readers digest, galop through Matthew 26 & 27. But this point is so full of interconnectedness.

We see right from the beginning Jesus makes it clear what is going to happen to him. My time is near, he says, someone will betray me. Then he offers bread and wine and says This is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. We take this point as being about the crucifixion, but Jesus is not pointing forward he is pointing back to the old covenant, where blood is sprinkled in the holy of holly place in the temple for the atonement (forgiveness) against sin. Now he will be God's new covenant for all humanity it means no more sacrifices. In Gethsemane, he prays, not my will but your will be done. It is the same words we pray in the Lord's Prayer.

Jesus is then arrested by a Priestly mob with their soldiers and in his defence Peter cuts off the ear of one of them. Jesus says put your sword away, I could call on God and twelve thousand angels or more could rescue me. But Jesus does not, and his disciples split and run off. Peter denies even knowing Jesus.

Now they take him to the Sanhedrin, the group of scribes, priests and elders with Caiaphas the chief priest to judge Jesus guilty, a predetermined conclusion. Now back before all this, Jesus had healed a blind man and this bloke was kicked out of the synagogue this triggered Caiaphas to prophecy by default that they should kill Jesus for the sake of Israel. Little did he realise what he was saying.

Now Judas who betrayed him, only followed Jesus for political reasons,. He realised he had done a monumental stuff up, because Jesus is not defending himself or asking God to step in. He goes back to the priests and tried to return the silver. The priests said What is it to us "You bear the responsibility"

The priests take Jesus to Pilate, and Pilate sees he is not defending himself and he quickly realises, the Priests want him to condemn Jesus to death on bogus charges. They hated Pilate and were avoiding judging Jesus and wanted to make it Pilates responsibility. Pilate turns the game on them, he picks the worst criminal of all and says, I will release on Barabbas or Jesus called the Christ who he knew was innocent.

They chose Barabbas, and Pilate says the same words the Priests said to Judas, You bear the responsibility. And they say His blood be on us and on our children. Then Jesus is mocked, wiped and beaten by the soldiers and ultimately nailed to the cross. The soldiers, priests and crowd all shout at Jesus, save yourself if you are the Son of God. Let God deliver you or maybe Elijah. Eventually Jesus gives up his spirit, and at that time it is dark there is an earthquake and the Temple curtain over the holy of Holies is torn in two. Then the centurion standing guard watching says, Truly this was the Son of God.

The message is in the last two episodes, in the torn curtain and the acclamation of the gentile soldier. Matthews readers who understood the Jewish customs now understand that the way to God is open to all humanity Jews and gentiles alike. The Holy of Holy has become redundant and a gentile confesses Jesus as Son of God. We are all participants of what Jesus called His new covenant. The cross is far more than a bloke dying way back in history, we are all invited to enter into a new way of life that Jesus brings to us through his death and ultimately to live his resurrected life.