

Lent 2026



St. Matthew's account of Jesus's Passion's fulfilling prophecy

For St. Luke's Methodist Church's Lenten "Soup & Sermon" 2026 February 25

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- Invocation & Opening Prayer

- Introductory Matters:

I am glad again to have the privilege of being at this event and “overview” my Special Midweek Sermon Series for Lent. You may have seen the 2026 Series briefly described already, either in my column for last Saturday's newspaper (<https://pilgrimlc.org/news/ministers-moment-february-21-2026>) or on Pilgrim's website (<https://pilgrimlc.org/lent-2026>).

By its placement and content, St. Matthew's Divinely-inspired Gospel account seemingly bridges the Old Testament and New Testament, especially for its original primary audience of ethnically and former-religiously Jewish-Christians, by seemingly emphasizing more than the other three Gospel accounts how Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah are fulfilled by the New Testament ministry and Passion of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, our Savior.

- Five Examples of St. Matthew's account of Jesus's Passion's fulfilling prophecy:

1. Psalm 41:9 in Matthew 26:23-24

In St. Matthew's account of the Upper Room portion of Jesus's Passion (Matthew 26:1-29), after saying that “He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me”, Jesus says that He “goes as it is written of him” (written in the Scriptures verbally inspired by God through men), and Jesus speaks “woe to that man by whom He is betrayed”. Precisely what “is written” seems to be Psalm 41:9, that a close friend, who has eaten His bread, has lifted up his heel against Him (confer John 13:18 and 26). Jesus freely has gone, is going, and will continue to go through the betrayal, not checking boxes off a “to-do list” but fulfilling God's saving will (confer Luke 22:22). Judas also is free to betray Jesus and, by the Holy Spirit, to repent.

2. Zechariah 13:7 in Matthew 26:31, 54, 56

At the beginning of St. Matthew's account of the Gethsemane portion of Jesus's Passion (Matthew 26:30-56), Jesus tells His disciples that they will all fall away because of Him for it is written, in Zechariah 13:7, that the Shepherd will be struck and the sheep will be scattered (compare John 16:32), and by the end of the portion all the disciples left Him and fled. In between,

Jesus both rhetorically asked Peter how the Scriptures might be fulfilled if Jesus's arrest were opposed and told the crowds that what had happened had happened so that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled (compare Mark 14:49). At least Zechariah 13:7 is in view (compare John 18:1-11, with possible reference to John 17:12 and Psalm 109:8).

3. Matthew 26:34 in Matthew 26:75

In St. Matthew's account of the Palace of the High Priest portion of Jesus's Passion (Matthew 26:57-27:2), the Evangelist reports: that, while Jesus is inside confessing Who He (Jesus) is, Peter is outside three times denying his relationship to Jesus; that the rooster crows; and that Peter is reminded of Jesus's "prophecy" that Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed. While less explicit, the example nevertheless arguably still is prophecy and fulfillment. Although Jesus is both the "prophet" and the object of the denial, the prophecy more-directly involves Peter alone, who then is moved through humble means to weep bitterly, at least in sorrow over his sin, if not also with faith in God's forgiveness for Jesus's sake.

4. Jeremiah 18:2-3; 19:11; 32:6-11; Zechariah 11:13 in Matthew 27:9-10

In St. Matthew's account of the Praetorium portion of Jesus's Passion (Matthew 27:3-31), Judas changes his mind and returns the thirty pieces of silver to the Jewish leaders, whose malpractice arguably at least contributes to his suicide and results in the purchase of the potters field and so fulfillment of prophecy. This example is one of ten times St. Matthew's account uses a distinctive expression indicating that something happened so that what was prophesied might be fulfilled. St. Matthew refers to Jeremiah, passages of which seem to color a reference to Zechariah. Jesus Himself is perhaps the least involved in this example, with the prophecy and fulfillment centering primarily on Judas and the Jewish leaders.

5. Isaiah 53:9 in Matthew 27:57, 60

In St. Matthew's account of the Calvary portion of Jesus's Passion (Matthew 27:32-66), Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea, asks for and receives Jesus's body and lays it in his own new tomb. None of the Gospel accounts mention the burial's fulfilling prophecy, but St. Matthew alone mentions Joseph's being rich, as prophesied in Isaiah 53, a passage St. Matthew earlier had referred to as being fulfilled by Jesus's casting out spirits and healing diseases (Matthew 8:16-17), and so seemingly infers further fulfillment. The primary focus is on the action of Joseph of Arimathea, with Jesus's being the completely passive object of his burial at this point, though Jesus's earlier action/inaction is what brings Him to this point for us.

- Concluding Thoughts: All of this matters because of our sins. We do not want to miss the forest for the trees! Jesus says that what is written in the Scriptures is that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins (both our sorrow over our sin and our trust in God's forgiveness for Jesus's sake) should be proclaimed in His Name to all nations (Luke 24:44-47). Jesus's Passion and the Church's subsequent ministry of Word and Sacraments fulfill those two main things for us and for our salvation.
- Questions & Comments
- Invitation: live in-person/on-line, Wednesdays 7:00 p.m. Vespers (2/25-3/25; 6:00 p.m. Supper) Or, stream or download video or audio later (sermons at www.pilgrimlc.org/sermons)
- Closing Prayer & Benediction

The banner graphic at the top of this handout was composed by Pilgrim member Katy Myers, whom we hereby thank, using an uncredited 1886 image (and so in the public domain) of an older woodcut depicting Judas's betrayal of Jesus found at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zdryd6f/revision/5>.