

6.14

The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew

Theme: Jesus Dies as One Abandoned

Peter, James, and John fall asleep while Jesus prays in the garden (26:36–45).

Judas betrays him (26:47–50; 27:3–10).

Disciples forsake him and run away (26:56).

Jewish leaders mock him as a false messiah (26:27).

Peter denies him (26:69–75).

The crowds call for him to be crucified (27:15–23).

Roman soldiers mock him as a false king (27:27–30).

Passers-by join Jewish leaders in mocking him on the cross (27:39–43).

Crucified criminals taunt him (27:44).

Darkness covers the land, and Jesus cries out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (27:45–46).

Theme: Jesus’s Death Saves His People from Their Sins

At birth, Jesus is identified as the one who will save his people from their sins (1:21).

Jesus predicts and accepts his passion as the will of God, declaring that he has come to “give his life a ransom for many” (20:28; cf. 16:21–23; 17:22–23; 20:17–19; 26:39, 42).

Jesus speaks of his blood being shed “for the forgiveness of sins” (26:28).

At his death, people rise from the dead, indicating that the power of death has now been broken and life after death is possible (27:50–53).

Theme: Jesus Dies as the Son of God

Jesus’s identity as Son of God is what arouses the most opposition from those who kill him (21:38–39; 26:63–66; 27:41–43).

Ironically, Jesus’s death confirms his identity as Son of God (27:54).

Theme: Jesus Remains Present with His Followers after His Death

Jesus’s death does mark the beginning of a time when he is, in some sense, absent (9:15; 26:11).

But in another sense, Jesus remains eternally present (28:20): among missionaries (10:40), children (18:5), those who pray (18:20), and those in need (25:31–46).