



# Matthew: New King, New Kingdom

## Cell Notes 2020

### STUDY 9. Fulfilment of the Kingdom Plan

**Instructions for leader.** This is a meditative reading of Matthew 26.57–28.20.

You will need a copy of the script for each person reading (see below). You might like to consider enlarging the script if you have those who will struggle with small print.

The passage is divided into 9 sections, separated by dotted lines. Each section should be read by a different person (if your group is small people can read more than one each).

A separate person should be assigned ALL the sections in red italics, which are from Isaiah 53 and interspersed throughout the story. They should also read the whole of Isaiah 53 at the end.

Encourage people to read slowly and leave pauses between the sections.

After reading it through, leave a few minutes silence for people to meditate individually. Then you might like to respond in various ways:

- Worship: you could use songs such as Once Again (Matt Redman), Lost in Wonder (Martin Layzell), Living Hope (Phil Wickham)
- Discussion, possibly in small groups: ask questions such as ‘what struck you afresh from the reading?’, ‘which part impacted you the most this time?’, ‘how do you want to respond to what we’ve just read?’

This would be a good opportunity to invite people to the Maundy Thursday foot-washing and communion service (evening of 9 April at the Appleby Rooms), to commemorate the Last Supper and Jesus’ death.

## Matthew 26.57–28.20. (New Living Translation)

### Part 1.

*My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.*

Then the people who had arrested Jesus led him to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of religious law and the elders had gathered. Meanwhile, Peter followed him at a distance and came to the high priest's courtyard. He went in and sat with the guards and waited to see how it would all end.

Inside, the leading priests and the entire high council were trying to find witnesses who would lie about Jesus, so they could put him to death. But even though they found many who agreed to give false witness, they could not use anyone's testimony. Finally, two men came forward who declared, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the Temple of God and rebuild it in three days.’”

*He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word.*



# Matthew: New King, New Kingdom

## Cell Notes 2020

Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, “Well, aren’t you going to answer these charges? What do you have to say for yourself?” But Jesus remained silent. Then the high priest said to him, “I demand in the name of the living God—tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.”

Jesus replied, “You have said it. And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God’s right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Then the high priest tore his clothing to show his horror and said, “Blasphemy! Why do we need other witnesses? You have all heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?” “Guilty!” they shouted. “He deserves to die!”

Then they began to spit in Jesus’ face and beat him with their fists. And some slapped him, jeering, “Prophecy to us, you Messiah! Who hit you that time?”

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### Part 2.

*We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.*

Meanwhile, Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl came over and said to him, “You were one of those with Jesus the Galilean.”

But Peter denied it in front of everyone. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said. Later, out by the gate, another servant girl noticed him and said to those standing around, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.”

Again Peter denied it, this time with an oath. “I don’t even know the man,” he said. A little later some of the other bystanders came over to Peter and said, “You must be one of them; we can tell by your Galilean accent.”

Peter swore, “A curse on me if I’m lying—I don’t know the man!” And immediately the rooster crowed.

*Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down.*

Suddenly, Jesus’ words flashed through Peter’s mind: “Before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me.” And he went away, weeping bitterly.

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### Part 3

Very early in the morning the leading priests and the elders of the people met again to lay plans for putting Jesus to death. Then they bound him, led him away, and took him to Pilate, the Roman governor.

When Judas, who had betrayed him, realized that Jesus had been condemned to die, he was filled with remorse. So he took the thirty pieces of silver back to the leading priests and the elders. “I have sinned,” he declared, “for I have betrayed an innocent man.”

“What do we care?” they retorted. “That’s your problem.”



*All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all.*

“They took the thirty pieces of silver—  
the price at which he was valued by the people of Israel,  
and purchased the potter’s field,  
as the Lord directed.”

*He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.*

“Why?” Pilate demanded. “What crime has he committed?”



# Matthew: New King, New Kingdom

## Cell Notes 2020

But the mob roared even louder, “Crucify him!”

Pilate saw that he wasn’t getting anywhere and that a riot was developing. So, he sent for a bowl of water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood. The responsibility is yours!”

And all the people yelled back, “We will take responsibility for his death—we and our children!”

*Unjustly condemned, he was led away.*

So, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified.

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### Part 5.

*He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.*

Some of the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into their headquarters and called out the entire regiment. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him.

*He was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins.*

They wove thorn branches into a crown and put it on his head, and they placed a reed stick in his right hand as a scepter. Then they knelt before him in mockery and taunted, “Hail! King of the Jews!” And they spit on him and grabbed the stick and struck him on the head with it. When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified.

*He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth.*

Along the way, they came across a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus’ cross. And they went out to a place called Golgotha (which means “Place of the Skull”). The soldiers gave Jesus wine mixed with bitter gall, but when he had tasted it, he refused to drink it.

After they had nailed him to the cross, the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice. Then they sat around and kept guard as he hung there. A sign was fastened above Jesus’ head, announcing the charge against him. It read: “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” Two revolutionaries were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.

*He was counted among the rebels. He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.*

The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. “Look at you now!” they yelled at him. “You said you were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. Well then, if you are the Son of God, save yourself and come down from the cross!”

*He was struck down for the rebellion of my people.*



# Matthew: New King, New Kingdom

## Cell Notes 2020

The leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders also mocked Jesus. "He saved others," they scoffed, "but he can't save himself! So he is the King of Israel, is he? Let him come down from the cross right now, and we will believe in him! He trusted God, so let God rescue him now if he wants him! For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" Even the revolutionaries who were crucified with him ridiculed him in the same way.

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### Part 6.

*It was the LORD's good plan to crush him and cause him grief.*

At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. At about three o'clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

*We thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!*

Some of the bystanders misunderstood and thought he was calling for the prophet Elijah. One of them ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, holding it up to him on a reed stick so he could drink. But the rest said, "Wait! Let's see whether Elijah comes to save him." Then Jesus shouted out again, and he released his spirit.

*No one cared that he died without descendants, that his life was cut short in midstream.*

At that moment the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split apart, and tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead. They left the cemetery after Jesus' resurrection, went into the holy city of Jerusalem, and appeared to many people. The Roman officer and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, "This man truly was the Son of God!" And many women who had come from Galilee with Jesus to care for him were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James and Joseph), and the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee.

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### Part 7.

*He was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave.*

As evening approached, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea who had become a follower of Jesus, went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. And Pilate issued an order to release it to him. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth. He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left. Both Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting across from the tomb and watching.

The next day, on the Sabbath, the leading priests and Pharisees went to see Pilate. They told him, "Sir, we remember what that deceiver once said while he was still alive: 'After three days I will rise from the dead.' So we request that you seal the tomb until the third day. This will prevent his disciples from coming and stealing his body and then telling everyone he was raised from the dead! If that happens, we'll be worse off than we were at first."



# Matthew: New King, New Kingdom

## Cell Notes 2020

Pilate replied, "Take guards and secure it the best you can." So they sealed the tomb and posted guards to protect it.

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### Part 8.

*Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have many descendants. He will enjoy a long life, and the LORD's good plan will prosper in his hands.*

Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb.

Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint. Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying. And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and he is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there. Remember what I have told you."

*Who has believed our message? To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm?*

The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples the angel's message.

*When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins.*

And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they ran to him, grasped his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Don't be afraid! Go tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there."

As the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and told the leading priests what had happened. A meeting with the elders was called, and they decided to give the soldiers a large bribe. They told the soldiers, "You must say, 'Jesus' disciples came during the night while we were sleeping, and they stole his body.' If the governor hears about it, we'll stand up for you so you won't get in trouble." So the guards accepted the bribe and said what they were told to say. Their story spread widely among the Jews, and they still tell it today.

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### Part 9.

*I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier, because he exposed himself to death.*

Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted!

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father



# Matthew: New King, New Kingdom

## Cell Notes 2020

and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

*Who has believed our message?*

*To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm?*

*My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot,  
like a root in dry ground.*

*There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance,  
nothing to attract us to him.*

*He was despised and rejected—*

*a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.*

*We turned our backs on him and looked the other way.*

*He was despised, and we did not care.*

*Yet it was our weaknesses he carried;*

*it was our sorrows that weighed him down.*

*And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God,  
a punishment for his own sins!*

*But he was pierced for our rebellion,  
crushed for our sins.*

*He was beaten so we could be whole.*

*He was whipped so we could be healed.*

*All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.*

*We have left God's paths to follow our own.*

*Yet the LORD laid on him  
the sins of us all.*

*He was oppressed and treated harshly,  
yet he never said a word.*

*He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.*

*And as a sheep is silent before the shearers,  
he did not open his mouth.*

*Unjustly condemned,  
he was led away.*

*No one cared that he died without descendants,  
that his life was cut short in midstream.*

*But he was struck down  
for the rebellion of my people.*

*He had done no wrong  
and had never deceived anyone.*

*But he was buried like a criminal;  
he was put in a rich man's grave.*

*But it was the LORD's good plan to crush him  
and cause him grief.*

*Yet when his life is made an offering for sin,  
he will have many descendants.*

*He will enjoy a long life,  
and the LORD's good plan will prosper in his hands.*

*When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish,  
he will be satisfied.*

*And because of his experience,*



# Matthew: New King, New Kingdom

## Cell Notes 2020

*my righteous servant will make it possible  
for many to be counted righteous,  
for he will bear all their sins.  
I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier,  
because he exposed himself to death.  
He was counted among the rebels.  
He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.*