

# Matthew 27:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

## Analysis

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**And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.**

The chief priests' dilemma with Judas's blood money (thirty silver pieces) reveals their hypocritical legalism. The Greek symboulion *lambanō* ("took counsel") indicates deliberation - they couldn't return blood money to the treasury (*korban*, dedicated to God) yet had no qualms about using it for Jesus' crucifixion. Their solution: purchase *agros kerameus* ("potter's field"), likely depleted clay deposits worthless for agriculture, to bury *xenoi* ("strangers," foreigners, those without family burial sites).

This fulfills Zechariah 11:12-13, where thirty silver pieces (a slave's price, Exodus 21:32) represent Israel's contemptuous valuation of God's shepherd, cast to the potter. Matthew's fulfillment formula (v. 9-10, citing Jeremiah/Zechariah) shows divine sovereignty orchestrating details. The "Field of Blood" (*Akeldama*, Acts 1:19) becomes a permanent witness to religious leaders' guilt and Messiah's rejection.

Theologically, this illustrates how even evil actions serve God's redemptive purposes. The priests' attempt to solve their moral dilemma paradoxically creates enduring testimony to their crime. Blood money purchasing a burial field ironically points to Christ's blood purchasing redemption and His burial securing

resurrection. God transforms humanity's worst (deicide) into our greatest hope (salvation).

## Historical Context

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This event occurs during Passover week, 30 or 33 CE, in Jerusalem under Roman prefect Pontius Pilate. The chief priests (Sadducees controlling the Temple) held significant religious and limited political power under Roman oversight. Their concern with halakhic purity (ritual law) while orchestrating judicial murder epitomizes Jesus' critique of straining gnats while swallowing camels (Matthew 23:24).

The potter's field location is traditionally identified with Hakeldama on the south side of the Hinnom Valley, where archaeological evidence shows ancient burial caves. Potter's fields existed where clay deposits were exhausted, leaving land unsuitable for crops but usable for burials. Ancient Jewish concern for proper burial, especially of foreigners and poor who couldn't afford family tombs, motivated such designated burial grounds.

The thirty silver pieces (likely Tyrian shekels, the only currency accepted for Temple tax) equaled about four months' wages. Zechariah 11:12-13's "goodly price" is bitterly ironic - the value of a gored slave represents Israel's valuation of God's shepherd. Matthew's conflated citation (attributing to Jeremiah what appears in Zechariah) may reference Jeremiah's potter imagery (Jeremiah 18-19) or reflect ancient manuscript arrangements listing Jeremiah first among prophets.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does the chief priests' scrupulous concern about blood money while orchestrating Jesus' murder illustrate the danger of legalism divorced from justice and mercy?
2. In what ways does the 'Field of Blood' serve as a permanent witness to both human guilt and divine sovereignty in redemption?
3. What is the significance of thirty silver pieces (a slave's price) as the valuation of God's Shepherd, and how does this intensify the betrayal's horror?
4. How does God's sovereignty transform evil human actions (Judas's betrayal, priests' blood money use) into fulfillment of prophetic Scripture?
5. What connections exist between the blood money purchasing a burial field and Christ's blood purchasing redemption through His death and burial?

## Interlinear Text

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συμβούλιον	δὲ	λαβόντες	ἡγόρασαν	ἐξ	αὐτῶν	τὸν
<b>counsel</b>	<b>And</b>	<b>they took</b>	<b>and bought</b>	<b>with</b>	<b>them</b>	G3588
G4824	G1161	G2983	G59	G1537	G846	
Ἄγρον	τοῦ	Κεραμέως	εἰς	ταφὴν	τοῖς	ξένοις
<b>field</b>		<b>the potter's</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>bury</b>		<b>strangers</b>
G68	G3588	G2763	G1519	G5027	G3588	G3581

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