

an object lesson given at a potter's house; chap. 19 gives another object lesson in which a potter's jar is smashed. Chapter 32 tells how Jeremiah buys a field, but says nothing about a potter. For these reasons some have alleged a mistake in Matt 27:9, either in the autograph or in the textual transmission. There is even some slight evidence for the reading "Zechariah" instead of "Jeremiah." The NIV footnote refers to Zech 11:12-13 and also to Jer 32:6-9. The latter reference seems obscure but can, we think, be justified. The priests, it says, took the thirty pieces of silver and bought a burial place for foreigners. Very likely this means a burial place for the poor -- people for whom the public would have to provide a grave. For this reason some churches have reserved in their cemeteries a "potter's field" for the burial of poor people. Is there any reference in Jeremiah to the purchase of a field for the poor? Yes, but the reference depends on a word play in Aramaic (or Hebrew). The word play was not new with Matthew. In the list of towns to be conquered by the Assyrians, Isaiah mentions "Poor Anathoth" עֲנָתוֹת עֲנִיָּה (*anayah`anathowth* Isa 10:30). The word "poor" in Hebrew and Aramaic sounds much like the name of the town. When the priests bought a field to bury the "poor" it suggested to Matthew a word play on the name of Anathoth and the strange purchase Jeremiah had made at the word of the Lord. We do not use such word plays in English except in puns for the sake of humor. But we may remind ourselves that many a pun today is more far fetched than the comparison of the Hebrew/Aramaic words "poor" and "Anathoth." This is not to say that Matthew cited Jeremiah as a prediction -- only an interesting parallel illustrating the action of the priests and their purchase. It is as good an illustration as Hagar and Sarah and, we may add, as good an illustration as those sometimes given in pulpits today! Incidentally, the action of the priests need not be thought to contradict Acts 1:18. Since the priests recognized the thirty pieces of silver as blood money that they could not put into the treasury, they probably bought the field in the name of Judas.

The other Gospels do not seem to have exactly this type of reference to the OT. However, there is a class of passages somewhat allied found in all of the Gospels in which an OT verse referring in general to a righteous man or righteous sufferer is applied to Christ -- or one referring to wicked men is applied to Judas or others who refused Jesus' message. One illustration would be the quotation from Isa 29:13, found in Matt 15:8-9 as well as Mark 7:6-7. The original reference was doubtless to unbelieving Jews of Isaiah's day but was all too applicable to unbelieving Jews of the first century A.D. Another example is Ps 118:22-23, quoted in Mark 12:10-11 and parallels and also in 1 Pet 2:7. What was perhaps originally spoken because of an accident in the temple's construction becomes a statement of God's way of reversing human judgements, quite applicable to Christ and his rejection.

Of similar import is the quotation of the following verses of Ps 118 (vv25-26) in all the Gospels. It was at first an invocation used in temple worship, praying for God's saving help. It was applied to Christ by the children at Jesus' triumphal entry. Was it rightly applied? The Pharisees were shocked, but Jesus approved. The point is that "Hosanna" is a Grecianized form of the OT הוֹשִׁיעָה | *howsha`yah na'* ("save us") a cry