

Did Matthew make a mistake in the Bible?

Question: In Matthew 27:9, why does Matthew claim that Jeremiah prophesied that 30 pieces of silver would be used to purchase the Potter's Field, when in fact it was Zechariah? Did Matthew make a mistake in confusing Jeremiah with Zechariah? (Zech. 11:12-13)

Answer: No, this is not a mistake. Matthew 27:9-10 states the Scripture was fulfilled through two acts:

1) The purchase of a potter's field

2) That 30 pieces of silver was the price of the Messiah.

The fulfillment of both parts of the prophecy came from two different prophecies—Jeremiah 32:6-8 (the Potter's Field) and Zechariah 11:12-13 (the 30 pieces of silver).

Zechariah doesn't mention the purchase of the field or the appointment to buy a field.

Jeremiah doesn't say anything about the betrayal but does state that the Lord appointed him to buy a field. Jeremiah also doesn't mention the other details connected with the purchase of this potter's field—that it was to be bought for 30 pieces of silver, the price of Him that was valued (Matt. 27:9), or that this money would be cast into the Temple (Matt. 27:5). Zechariah added these details.

Since the fulfillment came from two Old Testament prophets, why did Matthew only mention Jeremiah? In Jesus' day the books of the prophets were headed by Jeremiah, not Isaiah as it is today. Quotations were identified by the name of the first book of the group, rather than the specific book within the group. Matthew combines both prophecies together, but only mentions Jeremiah because he was the major prophet and had foretold what Matthew intended to stress—the purchase of the field.