

Jesus' Prayer, Betrayal, Arrest, Trial, and Sentencing

Matthew 26

Group ¹	C	V	Description
The Plot to Kill Jesus	26	1-2	Jesus predicts arrest and crucifixion after the Passover
		3-5	A plot to kill Jesus planned by the Jewish religious leaders
The Precious Ointment		6-13	Jesus anointed with costly oil
Judas' Bargain		14-16	Judas' bargain to betray Jesus
		17-19	Preparation for the Passover
The Last Supper		20-25	Last Passover; betrayer identified
The Lord's Supper Instituted		26-29	Lord's Supper
		30	The group travels to the Mount of Olives
		31-35	Peter's denial and the disciples scattering is foretold on the way to Mount of Olives
The Garden of Gethsemane		36-38	Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane
		39-41	Jesus prays and finds the disciples sleeping
		42-46	Jesus prays a second and third time and finds the disciples sleeping after each
Jesus' Betrayal and Arrest		47-50	Jesus' betrayal by Judas Iscariot and arrest
		51-54	One of the Disciples cuts off the ear of the slave of the high priest and Jesus rebukes them for turning to violence
		55-56	Jesus questions his arrest at night rather than when he was in public and the disciples flee
Jesus before Caiaphas		57-58	Jesus is brought before Caiaphas and Peter follows close behind
		59-64	The religious leaders keep putting forth false witnesses to accuse Jesus and then finally accuse Him of blaspheme
		65-66	The sentence of death is pronounced
		67-68	Jesus is beaten and spit upon
Peter's Denials		69-75	Peter's denies knowing Jesus three times and then weeps bitterly when he realizes the prophecy concerning him had come true

Themes in the Chapter²	Commandments, Discipleship, Faith, God, History, Love, Prophecy, Sin
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Reflections

This chapter begins the story of one of the saddest events of human history. Yes, there have been other instances of great human tragedy in history and even in the world today. But in terms of global,

1 (NASB) "Group" column from the headings in the NASB text.

2 (Full Color Bible) Theme suggestions without references to allow the reader to discover them in their reading.

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multigenerational impact, none compares to the betrayal, arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus, the Son of God.

Jesus has just ended His discourse on discipleship that would be needed in the years to come and now turns His attention to preparing the disciples for the events that would soon take place, within a matter of days. Let's consider the events of this chapter.

Questions

1. What does Jesus tell the disciples will be happening in a matter of days? V1-2
2. What were the religious leaders doing during this time prior to the Passover and why then? V3-5
3. In whose home and what event took place when Jesus was having a meal in their home? V6-7
4. What is the reaction to this act of devotion on the part of the woman? V8-9
5. What was Jesus' response to the woman's act and the disciples reaction? V10-13
6. What does Judas Iscariot do after this? V14-16
7. When and where do Jesus and the disciples make preparations for the Passover celebration? V17-19
8. What happens during the Passover that caused the disciples to become grieved? V20-25
9. After these events, Jesus introduces an activity to the disciples. What is it and what significance does Jesus give to it? V26-29
10. Jesus has a conversation with the disciples on the way to the Mount of Olives. What does Jesus tell them and how does Peter respond? V30-35
11. What did Jesus do and what instructions did He give the disciples upon arriving at their destination? V36-38
12. How many times does Jesus go off by Himself to pray and what is the nature of His prayers? Also, what are the disciples doing while Jesus is praying? V39-46
13. How is Jesus betrayed into the hands of the mob that came to arrest Him? V47-50
14. Who was attacked when Jesus was arrested and by whom? What was Jesus' response to the attack? V51-56
15. How does Jesus' trial proceed and what is the decision of the high priest? V57-68
16. While Jesus' trial is taking place inside the house, what happens to Peter in the courtyard? V69-75

Conclusion

Everything that Jesus did revolved around doing the will of His Father and, while still living on the earth, His desire to fulfill all that was prophesied about the Messiah who would bring salvation to the people. Clearly He acknowledges His humanity by indicating His distress but His faithfulness to His mission took priority. This same priority is still at work in Jesus' submission to His Father still today.

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There and Then: Here and Now

Answer the questions below as you reflect on your own life and this part of our study³: *my LOG vs others SPECK. Here are some possible responses I've identified from the text that might apply to anyone.*

S - Are there *sins* for me to avoid or confess?

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P - Are there *promises* from God for me to claim?

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E - Are there *examples* for me to follow or avoid?

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C - Are there *commands* for me to obey?

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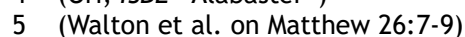
K - How has this passage increased my *knowledge* about God / Jesus / Holy Spirit?

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³ *Navigator Bible Study Handbook* (The Navigators), with additions & Matthew 7:1-5.

Response to Questions

6. Judas makes a deal with the Jewish religious leaders to betray Jesus into their hands. We don't have the details of the rest of the meal or even how soon Judas did this but it appears to be fairly soon, if not the same night or early the next day.
7. Jesus tells the disciples on the first day of Unleavened Bread when they ask Him where He wants to observe the Passover to "Go into the city to a certain man..." This could be Matthew's way of summarizing the details which might very well have already been planned during one of their earlier visits in Jerusalem prior to Passover. We don't know, but the man in question agreed to be Jesus' host.
8. At some point in the meal, Jesus announces that one of them will betray Him. The disciples respond by declaring their resolve to be faithful. Jesus then gives them the further clue as to the identity of His betrayer—the one who dips his bread in the bowl with Jesus. In the graphic, we see the likely position



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of Jesus and some of the disciples around the table for the Passover meal.⁶ (I won't go into all of the reasons for the arrangement but leave it to the user to research on their own.) When Judas asks, Jesus confirms it by saying, "You have said it yourself."

9. Jesus at a certain point in the meal, which had many rituals associated with it, introduces what has become known as the Lord's Supper or Communion. He does this by taking a piece of bread, unleavened because of the Passover, and declares that it is His body. He then takes a cup, which likely contained unfermented wine due to yeast/leaven restrictions during Passover, and declared that this was His blood of the covenant. He also declares that this will be the last time He will do this with His disciples until He returns. We still celebrate this with fellow believers each time we partake of Communion. The covenant Jesus is fulfilling the Old sacrificial covenant and at the same time establishes a New Covenant foretold by Jeremiah. This is confirmed best by the writer of Hebrews and in other places.⁷

Exodus 24:7-8 NASB Then he took the book of the covenant and read *it* in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" **8** So Moses took the blood and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Leviticus 17:11 NASB 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.'

Jeremiah 31:31-34 NASB "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, **32** not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. **33** "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. **34** "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Hebrews 10:4-10 NASB For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. **5** Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME; **6** IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE. **7** "THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'" **8** After saying above, "SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE *in them*" (which are offered according to the Law), **9** then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." He takes away the first in order to

⁶ (Edersheim 207-8, 490-512; Plantinga) — online/PDF: www.ccel.org/ccel/edersheim/lifetimes

⁷ (Torrey) **Matthew 26:28 — blood:** Exo 24:7-8; Lev 17:11; Jer 31:31; Zec 9:11; Mar 14:24; Luk 22:19; 1Co 11:25; Heb 9:14-22, Heb 10:4-14, Heb 13:20 — **shed:** Mat 20:28; Rom 5:15, Rom 5:19; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14, Col 1:20; Heb 9:22, Heb 9:28; 1Jn 2:2; Rev 7:9, Rev 7:14

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establish the second. 10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

10. After the group sings a hymn, the proceed to the Mount of Olives. Along the way, Jesus tells the group that all of them will abandon Jesus during the night. He also quotes from Zechariah 13:7 as a confirmation. Jesus also assures them that He will meet them in Galilee. Peter responded by saying that he would never “fall away” because of Him, even if all the others do. Jesus assures him that he will, in fact, the very same night, deny him three times before a rooster crows. Peter responds again saying that he would never deny Him, even if threatened with death. The rest of the disciples were agreeing with Peter in the protests. We will see later in the chapter what happens.

11. Earlier in the text (v30), the group is said to be traveling to the Mount of Olives but here we see that they arrive at a place called Gethsemane. The *ISBE*⁸ has this to say about this place.

“*geth-sem´a-nē* (Γεθσημανει, *Gethsēmane*) (... probably from the Aramaic *gath sh^emānīm*, “oil press”): Mentioned (*Mat* 26:36; *Mar* 14:32) as a place (*chōnion*), margin “enclosed piece of ground,” to which Jesus and the disciples retired after the last supper; in *Joh* 18:1 it is described as a “garden” (κηπος, *kēpos*), while *Lk* (*Luk* 22:40) simply says “place” (τόπος, *tópos*). From *Joh* 18:1 it is evident that it was across the Kidron, and from *Luk* 22:39, that it was on the Mount of Olives. Very possibly (*Luk* 21:37; *Luk* 22:39) it was a spot where Jesus habitually lodged when visiting Jerusalem. The owner—whom conjecture suggests as Mary the mother of Mark—must have given Jesus and His disciples special right of entry to the spot.”

The exact location is not known for sure but there are four different sites identified as the possible location by various groups.⁹

Upon their arrival, Jesus instructs the disciples to sit in a certain place while He goes to another place to pray. Jesus then took the three members of His inner circle of disciples—Peter, James and John—with Him and became increasingly grieved and distressed and then asked them to keep watch with Him as He prayed.

12. Three times Jesus removes Himself from the disciples to spend time in prayer alone. We only have two brief quotations of the content of His prayers. However from Jesus’ first encounter with the sleeping disciples, it would appear that His prayers were much longer, possibly lasting even an hour each session.

Matthew 26:39 *NASB* And He went a little beyond *them*, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.”

Matthew 26:42 *NASB* He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, “My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.”

The key to Jesus’ prayers is this: the human part of Jesus didn’t want to endure what He knew was coming, but His faithfulness to doing His Father’s will superseded whatever grief He was experiencing. Jesus does become frustrated with His disciples for not being able to stay awake. He had asked them to keep watch with Him while He prayed. The second time it is

8 (Orr, *ISBE* “Gethsemane”)

9 (Wikipedia contributors)

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indicated that their “eyes were heavy”. Jesus knows their spirit is willing but their physical beings were not up to the task. We shouldn’t be too hard on the disciples for being weary while praying. The *Believer’s Bible Commentary* offers this note.¹⁰

We dare not condemn them when we think of our own prayer lives; we sleep better than we pray, and our minds wander when they should be watching.

Finally, the third time He returned from praying, Jesus wakes the disciples and announces that the time of His betrayal has arrived.

13. According to the text, while Jesus was still telling the disciples that the time had arrived, Judas Iscariot approached Him along with a large crowd armed with swords and clubs from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Judas had told the group ahead of time that he would indicate who Jesus was by kissing Him upon greeting Him. So Judas went straight up to Jesus and greeted Him with a kiss and announced, “Hail, Rabbi!” Jesus acknowledged Judas’ betrayal and allowed Himself to be arrested and He was seized by the crowd.
14. The text says that one of the people who were with Jesus reached for his sword and cut off the ear of the slave of the high priest. Only John indicates that it was Peter who did this. John also tells us the name of this man, Malchus. John seems to indicate that he personally knew the man because later in his account he gives a clue, just as he does in other places in his gospel.

John 18:15-16 NASB Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest, **16** but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in.

Jesus’ response is direct and clearly shows that violence is not to be a part of those who are His disciples. Besides, if God wasn’t willing to allow this to happen, He would quickly rain down His wrath in the form of His angels coming to Jesus’ defense. But the more important issue is the fulfillment of scripture, which was Jesus’ whole purpose for coming.

Matthew 26:52-54 NASB Then Jesus *said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. **53** "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? **54** "How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?"

Matthew 5:17-18 NASB "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. **18** "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

Even when facing imminent death, Jesus stays true to His purpose for coming. Even in His message to the mob that had come out arrest Him, violently if they have to, under the cover of night, acknowledges that these events need to take place in this manner in order to fulfill scripture.

15. Jesus’ trial takes place that same night. Upon arriving at the home of the high priest, Jesus is brought into the interior of the house but Peter, who had followed the group, stayed outside in the courtyard with the officers awaiting the outcome.

¹⁰ (MacDonald and Farstad on Matthew 26:41)

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Many false witnesses were brought forward but none of them could agree in their testimony until finally two could, meeting the requirement of the Mosaic Law. Sadly, the Jewish leaders were all too quick to ignore the rest of the law concerning witnesses.

Deuteronomy 19:15-21 NASB "A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed. **16** "If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him of wrongdoing, **17** then both the men who have the dispute shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who will be *in office* in those days. **18** "The judges shall investigate thoroughly, and if the witness is a false witness *and* he has accused his brother falsely, **19** then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you. **20** "The rest will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such an evil thing among you. **21** "Thus you shall not show pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

When asked for a response to the accusation, Jesus said nothing. Then Caiaphas, the high priest, invoked the living God to bear witness, asked Jesus directly if He was "the Christ, the Son of God". To which Jesus responded in the affirmative and indicated that He by quoting a well-known prophecy concerning the coming Messiah.

Caiaphas then declared no more need of witnesses to be brought forward as they had all heard with their own ears the "blasphemy" from Jesus. At which point the crowd started to beat and spit on Him and ridicule Him by asking Him to prophesy who it was who hit Him. All the while, Jesus was silent.

16. Three times Peter is approached and asked if he is one of Jesus' disciples. Each time Peter denies knowing what they are talking about. His anger gets the best of him in the end and he curses and swears, "I don't know the man!" At which point, the rooster crows and Peter remembers the words of Jesus. Peter then leaves the compound, weeping bitterly as he flees.

Key Words: New Testament, Gospels, Matthew, Jesus, Gethsemane, Prayer, Betrayal, Judas Iscariot, Peter, Caiaphas, Alabaster Oil, Prophecy, Scripture



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