

Matthew, chapters 26

“My time has come”—The King commits Himself to His Kingdom mission

I | INTRODUCTION

1 / Jesus has completed His ‘disciple-making’ teaching ministry with the last of five major teaching discourses that Matthew records in **chs 24-25**. Just a literary note here: Matthew will add this same line at the end of all five of Jesus’ major discourses that you will read in **ch 26.1**: **“When Jesus had finished all these sayings...”** You will find this same transition statement at the ends of **chs 5-7, 10, 13, 18, and here**. Look for them...

2 / Now, Jesus is committing Himself to the mission He had come to complete. This is why He was born and why He came into our world. Yes, He had come to say all the words He has said, and He has come to do all the works He has done ... but the most primary purpose for which He has come is to **“save His people from their sins”** by His substitutionary death and victorious resurrection. And so, as Jesus says here in **ch 26.18**, **“My time is at hand.”** That time has come—that time is NOW. This is the same **my time** that He so often called **My hour** in John’s Gospel.

3 / So now here in **ch 26**, Matthew is giving us the narration of those final events that will lead to His death on the cross and then His resurrection from that death here over the next and final three chapters of Matthew.

II | CONNECTIONS & CONTEXT

1 / We need to remember and keep in mind that Matthew has already recorded three separate occasions when Jesus has pulled His disciples aside and specifically, explicitly told them beforehand that everything that is going to happen here...will happen. You should review those intense prophetic teaching encounters in **chs 16.21; 17.22-23; 20.17-19**. Every detail that Jesus foretold will be fulfilled here in these following narratives. Of course, we know that none of this is a surprise to Jesus because He has known it from before the world began [**Revelation 13.8**]. And, everything that will transpire here is also prophesied beforehand in the Old Testament. Repeatedly—just in this narrative—we are reminded either by Jesus’ own words or Matthew’s commentary that everything that happens is **“as it is written...that the Scripture might be fulfilled.”** We won’t have the time or space here to note each one—just look for them.

2 / **ch 26** is a long chapter—75 verses—so, as always, we can’t give here anything more than an outline and brief summary of the sections of the narrative. But what we do want to do is to show how Matthew writes what he does to give us an account of the Gospel of the Kingdom that Jesus has been teaching about from the beginning...and how that Gospel is the record **“...that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, (and) that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures... [1 Corinthians 15.3-7].**

3 / If your Bible edition is broken up into paragraphs, you will find +/- ten distinct paragraphs of narrative. But for our purposes now, we will break down those paragraphs into four major ‘acts’—each of which will have other ‘scenes’ within the ‘act.’ But each ‘act’ will describe a distinct movement toward the ultimate end—the Cross and the resurrection.

III | ch 26.1-16 | Judas transacts his treacherous betrayal

1 / These verses relate Jesus’ own advance word that He gave His disciples about what is about to transpire. Again, Jesus is trying to prepare His disciples for the ultimate shock and trauma of His crucifixion—but they are still not going to be prepared for it. He plainly tells them: **“You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”** We have no way of knowing what they didn’t ‘get’ about all these explicit fore-warnings He’s been giving them. But they are still going to be caught off-guard. They have been observing the **Passover** since the days of the Exodus. They themselves had observed the **Passover** every year of their lives.

Jesus, though, knows that, at this **Passover**, He Himself will be **“The Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world” [John 1.29]**. He will explain this when the meal comes.

2 / But Jesus also tells them that on this Passover, **“the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”** In other words, He will be ‘handed over’ by betrayal. Now, there were many ‘hands’ involved in His ‘handing over.’ Among them were the chief priests and elders of Jerusalem and Pilate. But the one who transacted the ‘handing over’ was none other than one of the Twelve—Judas Iscariot. And so, in this section, there is an ‘inclusio’ or ‘book-ends’ in **vv 2 & 16**. Matthew does this on purpose. The same word is used for **delivered up** in **v 2** and **betray** in **v 16**. So Matthew ties this section together by the use of **betray** to show that Jesus was **delivered up** by the **betrayal** of Judas.

3 / Let’s worship God by His perfect purpose and plan. In **vv 3-5**, **“the chief priests and elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest...and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill Him. But they said, ‘Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.’”** Jesus had to go, and they were willing to conspire some kind of secret assassination after Passover to get it done. BUT, God had already determined that *it would be during the Passover feast* because Jesus Christ Himself was the Passover!

4 / This is where Judas enters the picture. In **vv 14-16**, Judas secretly meets with them and offers to **deliver [betray] Him over to you**. They can’t pass up this opportunity to enact their murderous plot.

5 / There is one more scene in this section that Matthew uses to ‘make his point.’ In **vv 6-13**, we find the narrative of Mary’s anointing the head of Jesus with the costly burial ointment. Jesus says **“she has done it to prepare me for burial.”** And so, in this section, Matthew is asking us: *“What is your response to Jesus’ death”* He has shown us the intent of the chief priests and elder to kill Jesus; he has shown us Judas’s treacherous act to betray Jesus over to them; and smack in the middle, he has shown us Mary’s act of love and gratitude to Jesus for His sacrifice of Himself for her.

IV | ch 26.17-30 | The Passover Lamb offers His own body and blood

1 / We are told in numerous other places in Scripture that **“Jesus offered Himself...”** He offered Himself to God as our spotless, sinless Substitute; and He will offer Himself to the arresting party later in the narrative; and He offers Himself to us as our loving Savior and Redeemer. He pictures this perfectly and memorably in the Passover supper He ate with His disciples—for whom He was dying.

2 / Jesus had already made the arrangements for where He would eat this last Passover with His disciples, as we see in **vv 17-18**. He told His disciples **“Go into the city [Jerusalem] to a certain man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, ‘My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’”** So they did. THIS is where we get the title of this lesson. THIS is the hour, the occasion, and the mission for which He had come...and to which He is committing Himself.

- *AND, just as surely as Jesus made all those specific arrangements for that supper, He has also made all the arrangements for the Final Supper He will share with us when the Kingdom comes in its fullness [see v 29]!*

3 / When they recline at the table, though, for the traditional meal, Jesus unsettles them again with another disturbing announcement: **“And as they were eating, He said, ‘Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me!’”** Of course, they were all shocked to their core [and no one suspected Judas]—and they all began to ask Jesus: **“It isn’t me, Lord, is it?”** Jesus only hints that **“He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me”**... but, as the host of the meal, He has served them all with a portion of the broken bread dipped in the *charoset* sauce. But it was going to be *one of them—His closely-knit band of twelve disciples*.

4 / AND THEN...Jesus startles them again with another metaphor as He serves them after one of their ‘cups of blessing’ [there were several cups of wine they drank during the course of the meal]: as He continues with the course of the meal, He breaks and serves them bread and declares: **“Take, eat; this is my body!”** That is what Matthew records—Jesus said more as the other Gospel writers record: **“This is my body which is broken for you...Take, and eat it! Do this in remembrance of me!”**

- Of course, we now know that He was initiating and instituting the Lord’s Supper which we still observe—“**until He comes**” [1 Corinthians 11.23-26]—to remember His broken body on the Cross—as our sinless, spotless, substitutionary sacrifice for our sins. *He was the Passover!*
- Then...the cup: “**And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s Kingdom!’**” [see Revelation 19.6-8]
- Here again, Jesus promises the fullness of the Father’s Kingdom of Heaven which He had come to inaugurate...and which will be revealed in **that day**, the Day of His Second Coming. *We are eagerly awaiting and anticipating that Day—and we are sure it will come because He has promised...and “the Word of God cannot be broken”!*

5 / The meal concludes, “**And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives**” [v 30]. Action by action, movement by movement, *Jesus commits Himself to fulfill, accomplish, and ‘finish’ His Kingdom mission...*

V | ch 26.31-46 | The ‘Second Adam’ conquers His Garden temptation and surrenders to ‘the cup’ in His agonies of prayer

1 / There are yet more agonies yet to be experienced before the actual physical and spiritual pains of the Cross ... and so they proceed to the Garden of Gethsemane. NOTE: in the plan of God, a ‘garden’ is the site and venue of both the need of our redemption and the provision of the redemption. Adam failed his temptation in the *Garden* of Eden and plunged our whole race into sin. Jesus comes as the Second Adam to be tempted—whether He will follow through with His commitment to His redemptive mission—also in a *Garden*. Both our fall into our sin and our redemption from our sin—both transpired in a *garden*.

2 / As the now-Eleven disciples enter Gethsemane, Jesus leaves eight of the disciples near the entrance, telling them “**Sit here, while I go over there and pray.**” He summons Peter, James, and John to go with Him further in. And then He leaves them with specific and urgent instructions.

- We can’t even begin to plumb the depths or relate to what was going on in His soul; but His urgent plea expresses the agony, the conflict, the temptation that was already wrenching Him to the core of His God-Man being: “**My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here and watch with me.**” He just wants them to share in the depths and griefs of His agony. He goes yet “**a little farther.**” This was about a stone’s throw further [Luke 22.41].

3 / There are actually three times Jesus goes to His solitary place of agonizing prayer. The different Gospel writers reveal that “**He knelt and prayed,**” and Matthew here describes the utter agony of His travail: “**...He fell on His face and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.’**” Luke 22.43-44 describes the extremities of His agonies...

- This was real agony—real temptation. The temptation was *whether He would commit Himself to drink the ‘cup’ that was required to be God’s all-sufficient Passover sacrificial Lamb for the forgiveness of our sins!*
- The emblem of the ‘cup’ as it is revealed in all the Scripture is the ‘cup’ of God’s wrath and judgment against sins. Even the first Passover lamb that was slain in Egypt for their salvation was NOT ONLY for their salvation from slavery and bondage ... BUT it was also the bearer of God’s judgment wrath against the sins of their captors.
- Jesus, as a real man, dreads the physical pains, agonies, and torturous death of crucifixion—BUT MORE, He dreads the agonies of God’s wrath against the sins that He would bear as our Substitute. He bore, NOT ONLY the blame for our sins as our atonement and Redeemer, but He so identified with our sin, “**For our sake, [God] made Him to be sin who knew no sin...**” [2 Corinthians 5.21]. Having been **made to be our sin**, God must punish Him as if He were the sinner.

- That meant He would have to endure the Holy wrath and judgment of God that we would have suffered if we had endured it on ourselves. And that means: separation from the face and pleasure of God for the season required to exhaust that punishment. He will express the agonies of this ‘cup’ when He screams from the Cross during the three hours of darkness: **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?”**
- No one of us pretends to understand how all this transpired between the Father and the Son. And we can’t adequately explain how this relationship was transacted in these experiences—we just know that Jesus struggles with its prospects. But, He commits Himself to the fulfillment of His God-sent mission when He surrenders to the Father’s will—which was also His own will as the Surety of the New Covenant.

4 / Every time Jesus returns to His disciples, He finds them dozing and falling asleep as they wait for Him. They can’t even stay awake and watch with Him as He struggles and agonizes for their salvation. He had already forewarned them all [and Peter, in particular] that they would abandon Him in His direst time of need [vv 31-35]. And especially Peter, in his typical fashion, had pledged to Jesus that *he* would never desert or abandon Jesus, even if it meant defending Him to his own death. Jesus warns Peter that *he will deny Him—even repeatedly, three times!* We will see how this plays out, true to Jesus’ warnings...

- ***We, too, must receive this same advance preparations for our own temptations! “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak!” [v 41].***

VI | ch 26.47-75 | The religious authorities arrest, charge, indict, and sentence Jesus to death

1 / So now, we come to this rather lengthy conclusion of our **ch 26** lesson passage. I will make some brief comments about the three ‘scenes’ in this ‘act.’ The ‘act’ includes all the movements from the Garden of Gethsemane through the mock ‘hearings/trials’ before the religious authorities. These scenes will fulfill and put into motion the predictions Jesus made to His disciples in v 2: **“...the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”** [See I | INTRODUCTION (1/) of these notes...].

2 / I want us to take note of at least these important observations concerning Jesus’ sovereignty in all that is occurring: [1] Jesus knows all that will happen to Him, long before it happens...not just in the moments prior; [2] All of these events have been decreed and predestinated from before the creation of the world in the eternal purposes of God [Acts 2.23]; [3] Every movement has been prophesied, typified, and foreshadowed in the OT Scriptures [see v 31, 56; et. al.]; [4] Also—and keep this in the forefront of your mind as you read on—Jesus Himself is in charge/control of everything that is happening to Him. He rules over all His experiences as LORD and The Son of Man [Daniel 7.13-14]. He willingly submits to the Father’s will, and all these events are exercises of His sovereign rule and jurisdiction as The King of the Kingdom of Heaven!

- vv 47-56 | Judas arrives with the armed officers of the ‘Temple police’ to arrest Jesus and take Him into their custody. Judas identifies Jesus, his Rabbi, with a kiss. Jesus surrenders. Peter attempts to ‘rescue’ Jesus with his short sword—cuts off Malchus’s ear—Jesus heals it back. **“Then all the disciples left Him and fled”** as Jesus had told them they would [see v 31].
- vv 57-68 | Jesus appears before the high priest, Caiaphas. They must elicit some ‘violation’ according to their ‘law’ to justify their killing Him—even suborning false witnesses. Jesus acknowledges that He is **“the Christ, the Son of God”** and that they will see Him again in His sovereign Lordship and judgment. They condemn Him to death [vv 65-66].
- vv 69-75 | Peter follows Jesus—sneaking and slinking, trying to remain anonymous and incognito—into Caiaphas’s palace courtyard. And over a series of temptations to deny that He knows Christ, he fails and does deny...just as Jesus had forewarned him he would [see vv 30-35]. His remembrance of Jesus’ words breaks his heart: **“And he went out and wept bitterly.”**

“...if we are faithless, He remains faithful—for He cannot deny Himself!” [2 Timothy 3.13]