

Passover with the King

Matt 26:17-30

SS Lesson for 04/10/2022

Devotional Scripture: Rev 19:6-9

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Key Verse: Matt 26:29

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

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- Prepare the place by Divine guidance (Acts 16:6-10)
- Prepare the place to accomplish a specific purpose (Est 4:12-14)
- Prepare the place by God's arrangement (1 Cor 12:18)

Prepare the time (18)

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- Prepare the time because God's time is Divine (Isa 55:8)
- Prepare the time to use it wisely (Eph 5:15-16)
- Prepare the time because the end is near (1 Cor 7:29-31)

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- Obedience to witness (Acts 8:26-31)
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CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE ECHOES COMMENTARY

Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The Passover meal commemorates the struggles that began in Egypt. When eating it together Jesus and his disciples not only remembered what had happened to their people but also anticipated what was to come. Our lesson takes us about midway into the week of Passover, after Jesus and many others had arrived in Jerusalem for the feast. (Other accounts of the meal are found in Matthew 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:17–20; John 13:1–30; compare 1 Corinthians 11:17–34). God commanded the Jewish people to observe the Passover Feast in memory of their dramatic deliverance from bondage in Egypt (Exodus 12). Passover became a national spiritual holiday. God had commanded it to be celebrated in Jerusalem on the 14th day of the first month (Leviticus 23:5; Numbers 28:16). This was the month of Nisan (formerly called Aviv in the Hebrew religious calendar), which is late March and early April. During Jesus' time, groups of pilgrims slew their lambs at the Jerusalem temple, where the blood would be sprinkled on the altar. Then they went to celebrate the meal with their families or other companions in groups of at least 10 people. Despite the lamb's centrality to this feast, the bread and fruit of the vine play much larger roles in the accounts of Jesus' last supper (see Mark 14:12–26; Luke 22:7–38; contrast John 13:1–30). The symbolism of the animal's absence from the story should not be lost on us. As our lesson begins, the sacrifice was already present.

Key Verse: Matt 26:29

But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

26:1-5. The words, **When Jesus had finished saying all these things**, are the last of five such turning points in the book (cf. 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1). As soon as Jesus completed the Olivet Discourse, He reminded the **disciples** that **the Passover** feast was only **two days away** and that He would **be handed over to be crucified**. The events in 26:1-16 occurred on Wednesday. Though there is no record of the disciples' reactions to the Lord's words, Matthew did record the plot that developed among the religious leaders to **kill Him. In the palace of the high priest... Caiaphas**, the plan was begun **to arrest Jesus in some sly way** but **not until the Feast** had passed. Their thinking was to wait until the many pilgrims who had converged on Jerusalem for the Passover had gone home. Then they would dispose of Jesus in a quiet way. Their timing was not God's timing, however, and the advancement in the timetable was due in part to the willingness of Judas Iscariot who volunteered to betray the Lord.

26:6-9. During the final week of His life before the Cross, the Lord spent the nights in **Bethany**, east of Jerusalem on the south slopes of the Mount of Olives. Matthew recorded an event that took place one evening **in the home of... Simon the Leper**. John described the same event in greater detail (John 12:1-8), giving the names of the individuals. The **woman** who **poured** the oil **on Jesus' head** was Mary (John 12:3), and the disciple who first objected to the action was Judas Iscariot (John 12:4). The **perfume** was **very expensive** (Matt. 26:7), worth "a year's wages" (John 12:5; lit., "300 denarii"). Obviously this act of love was costly for Mary.

26:10-13. The Lord was aware of the disciples' comments ("Why this waste?" v. 8) and their heart attitude ("they were indignant," v. 8; cf. 20:24; 21:15) behind their words. Judas Iscariot was not motivated by his concern for **the poor** (John 12:6). He was a thief and was concerned about the money not being put in their common purse which he controlled. Jesus reminded them that because **the poor would always be with** them they would have many opportunities to show kindness, but He would **not always** be among them. Mary's **beautiful** act prepared His body **for burial** (Matt. 26:12). Jesus had spoken several times of His coming death (e.g., 16:21; 17:22; 20:18), but the disciples did not seem to believe His words. Mary believed and performed this act as a testimony of her devotion to Him. As a result her sacrificial act is often proclaimed **throughout the world**. Perhaps it was this act and the Lord's approval of it that made Judas willing to betray the Lord. From this scene Judas went to the chief priests and offered to betray Jesus.

26:14-16. Judas Iscariot must have been viewed by the religious leaders as an answer to their prayers. Judas' offer **to the chief priests** to betray Jesus Christ was more than agreeing to point out Jesus to arresting officers. Judas was offering his services as a witness against Jesus when He would be brought to trial. He would do anything to gain more money (cf. John 12:6). The offer was made in exchange for funds, probably paid out immediately to Judas. **Thirty silver coins** were the redemption price paid for a slave (Ex. 21:32). This same amount was also prophesied as the price for the services of the rejected Shepherd (Zech. 11:12). The exact value of the agreed price cannot be determined because the coinage was not identified; it was simply called "silver" (*argyria*; cf. Matt. 25:18). But it could have been a substantial amount. The bargain had been struck and **Judas** was now being looked to by the religious leaders as their deliverer from their biggest problem, Jesus of Nazareth. Judas knew he had to follow through, for his word had been given and money had been exchanged.

26:17-19 (Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13). Most Bible students believe that the events recorded in Matthew 26:17-30 took place on Thursday of Passion Week. This was **the first day of the** seven-day **Feast of Unleavened Bread**. On that first day Passover lambs were sacrificed (Mark 14:12). The Feast of Unleavened Bread followed immediately after the Passover; the entire eight-day event was sometimes called the Passover Week (cf. Luke 2:41; 22:1,7; Acts 12:3-4; see Luke 22:7). **The disciples** who were sent to make preparations for **the Passover** meal were Peter and John (Luke 22:8). The place of the Passover celebration is not designated in any of the Gospels, though it took place in **the city** (Matt. 26:18), that is, Jerusalem, probably in the home of someone who acknowledged Jesus as Messiah. That he willingly opened his home indicated he had an awareness of Jesus and His claims. Besides finding the location, **the two disciples... prepared the Passover**, that is, they purchased and prepared the food, which probably took them the greater part of the day.

26:20-25 (Mark 14:17-21; Luke 22:14-23; John 13:21-30). **When evening came, Jesus** entered the prepared room, an "upper" (upstairs) room (Luke 22:12), and partook of the Passover supper **with the Twelve**. During the celebration, Jesus said that **one of** those sitting with Him was about to **betray** Him. This revealed Jesus' omniscience (cf. John 2:25; 4:29). Surprisingly no disciple pointed to another with an accusing finger, but each became **very sad and began to** ask if he would be the betrayer. **Jesus** added that **the one** betraying Him had been sharing close fellowship with Him; they had eaten out of **the same bowl**. Jesus said He would **go** (i.e., die) **just as it** had been **written** by prophets (e.g., Isa. 53:4-8; cf. Matt. 26:56). **But woe to the one who** would betray Him. **It would be better for** that one **if he had never been born**. Jesus was pointing out to Judas the consequences of his betrayal, for while he had already taken the money to betray Jesus the act was not yet accomplished. When **Judas** asked the Lord, **Surely not I, Rabbi? Jesus** clearly pointed him out as the betrayer. Not surprisingly, Judas called Him "Rabbi," not "Lord" as did the other disciples (v. 22; cf. v. 49). The Lord's words were not understood by the other disciples, as John made clear (John 13:28-29). If they had understood, it is doubtful they would have let Judas leave the room. Since they did not understand, Judas departed (John 13:30).

26:26-30 (Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:19-20). **Jesus** then instituted something new in the Passover feast. **While they were eating, He took bread and gave** it a special meaning. **Then** taking **the cup** of wine, He **gave** it a special meaning too. Jesus said the bread was His **body** (Matt. 26:26) and the wine was His **blood of the New Covenant** (v. 28). While Christians disagree on the meanings of these words, it appears Jesus was using these elements as visible reminders of an event about to take place. The bread and wine represented His body and blood about to be shed, in keeping with the remission of sins promised in the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-37; 32:37-40; Ezek. 34:25-31; 36:26-28), a covenant that would replace the old Mosaic Covenant. His blood was soon to be shed **for many** (cf. Matt. 20:28) **for the forgiveness of sins**. This portion of the Passover supper has been followed by Christians and called the Lord's Supper or Communion. Jesus committed this ordinance to the church to be followed as a continual reminder of His work in their salvation. It is to be commemorated until He returns (1 Cor. 11:23-26). Jesus told the disciples

He would **not** eat this meal again with them **until** the institution of His **Father's kingdom** on earth. After the Passover meal, Jesus and the disciples together sang **a hymn**, left the home, and **went out to the Mount of Olives**.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Preparations for the Passover (Matt 26:17-19)

17 Now on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"

18 And He said, "Go into the city 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.'""

19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

Prepare the place (17)

Prepare the place by being obedient (Acts 8:26-29)

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road — the desert road — that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." 27 So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

Prepare the place by Divine guidance (Acts 16:6-10)

6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. 8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Prepare the place to accomplish a specific purpose (Est 4:12-14)

12 When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, 13 he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. 14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"

Prepare the place by God's arrangement (1 Cor 12:18)

18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

Prepare the time (18)

Prepare the time because God's time is vastly different from man's (2 Peter 3:8-9)

8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Prepare the time because God's time is Divine (Isa 55:8)

8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord.

Prepare the time to use it wisely (Eph 5:15-16)

15 Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

Prepare the time because the end is near (1 Cor 7:29-31)

29 What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; 30 those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; 31 those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

Prepare through obedience (19)

Obedience to show faith (Gen 22:9-12)

9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. 12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

Obedience to witness (Acts 8:26-31)

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road — the desert road — that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." 27 So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." 30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. 31 "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

Obedience to follow Jesus (Matt 9:9)

9 As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

Obedience because it leads to righteousness (Rom 6:16)

16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

Betrayer Identified at the Passover (Matt 26:20-25)

20 When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve.

21 Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."

22 And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?"

23 He answered and said, "He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me.

24 The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

25 Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?" He said to him, "You have said it."

Accusation of the betrayer (20-21)

Accusation that causes a longing to clear one's self (2 Cor 7:10-11)

10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. 11 See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.

Accusation that causes remorse at the knowledge of weaknesses (Matt 26:75)

75 Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Accusation that leaves one unworthy and seeking mercy (Luke 18:13)

13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

Accusation that causes accountability and responsibility (Matt 27:3-5)

3 When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. 4 "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." 5 So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

Suspicion of the betrayer (22)

Suspicion that causes questioning of guilt (Luke 22:23)

23 They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

Suspicion that causes the seeking of the guilty (John 13:22-24)

22 His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. 23 One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. 24 Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means."

Suspicion that causes hurtful feelings (John 21:17)

17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

Suspicion that could lead to repentance (2 Cor 7:8-9)

8 Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it — I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while— 9 yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us.

Actions of the betrayer (23-24)

Actions of one who was thought of as a friend (Ps 41:9)

9 Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.

Actions that were prophesied (John 13:18)

18 "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the scripture: 'He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.'

Actions that dishonors (Mic 7:6)

6 For a son dishonors his father, a daughter rises up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law — a man's enemies are the members of his own household.

Actions that were prompted by Satan (Luke 22:3)

3 Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.

Confession of the betrayer (25)

Confession that is revealed by God (Matt 16:15-17)

15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.

Confession prompted by the truth from the Holy Spirit (John 15:26)

26 "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

Confession that acknowledges Jesus is God (1 John 4:2)

2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

Confession to the glory of God (Phil 2:10-11)

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Remembering Jesus' Sacrifice at the Passover (Matt 26:26-30)

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.

28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Remembering the Bread and Body (26)

Bread that represents Jesus' body (1 Cor 11:23-25)

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Bread from heaven that provides eternal life (John 6:50-51)

50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Bread that is good for the soul (Isa 55:2)

2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.

Remembering the Cup and Blood (27-29)

The cup Jesus had to undergo (Luke 12:50)

50 But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!

Blood that is of the covenant (Matt 26:28)

28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Blood that brings redemption (Eph 1:7)

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

Blood that cleanses the conscience from dead works (Heb 9:14)

14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Remembering the fellowship (30)

A fellowship that is based on love and obedience (John 14:23)

23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

A fellowship that makes one complete (2 Cor 13:11)

11 Finally, brothers, good-by. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

A fellowship that calls for living righteously (1 John 1:6-7)

6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

A fellowship that makes one sanctified (2 Cor 6:16-17)

16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." 17 "Therefore come out from them and be separate," says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

The Perfect Private Opportunity for Betrayal – Or Was it? (Matthew 26:17-19)

17 Now on the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?" 18 He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is near. I will observe the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" 19 So the disciples did as Jesus had instructed them, and they prepared the Passover (Matthew 26:17-19).

Without further revelation, we might think that the end is near for Jesus, nearer than He prophesied. According to Matthew's bare-bones account, the disciples know it is time for them to observe the Passover with their Lord, and they don't know where that will be. Surely they will need to make the necessary preparations. All Jesus needs to do, it would seem, is to tell them where He wishes to observe Passover and they will take care of these preparations.

Matthew simply tells us that Jesus instructed them to go to the city "**to a certain man**" and tell him that the Master's time is near, and that He will observe Passover at his house. What man? What house? Which disciples? Matthew withholds this information from his readers. He merely tells us that the disciples did as Jesus instructed. Knowing what we do from verses 14-16, we might easily conclude that Jesus is walking straight into a trap. If Judas knew where this private celebration would be held, all he had to do was to inform the Jewish leaders and Jesus could be arrested privately.

Matthew leaves us holding our breath, wondering if Jesus will be arrested. From his abbreviated and somewhat vague description of events, we might conclude that Jesus informed all of His disciples where the Passover would be observed. Thankfully, we are given a much more detailed account by Mark:

12 Now on the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, Jesus' disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?" 13 He sent two of his disciples and told them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. 14 Wherever he enters, tell the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover

with my disciples?” 15 He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.” 16 So the disciples left, went into the city, and found things just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover (Mark 14:12-16).

As always, Jesus had carefully made the necessary preparations to assure that His purposes would be accomplished. Mark informs us that Jesus told only two of His disciples how to prepare for the Passover, and thanks to Luke (Luke 22:8), we know that one of these was *not* Judas. The two disciples were Peter and John, presumably the most trustworthy of the bunch, the two who would become prominent leaders in the church after Pentecost.

Jesus had carefully prearranged for the Passover with an unnamed person, who would appear to be a follower of Jesus as Messiah. Even if overheard by the other disciples (something I am inclined to assume), the instructions our Lord gave to Peter and John would not have given the specific information Judas would have required. Even Peter and John did not know where they were going ahead of time. They would be met by a man carrying water. Was this by previous arrangement, or by providence? We are not told. Did this man know to meet the disciples, or did they providentially come upon him? The two disciples were told to follow this man to the place where he was taking the water. Was this the water for the disciples’ feet to be washed? We do not know. But inside they would meet the owner of the house. They were to indicate to him that they were looking for the room where “**the Teacher**” would observe Passover. He will then show them the room he has already prepared. Presumably the disciples would make any remaining preparations, and then at the last moment Jesus would arrive with the rest of His disciples. That would prevent Judas from slipping out and revealing the place where they would privately gather. Judas may have been willing to betray Jesus at this point, but he was not able, because Jesus had prevented him from doing so. Jesus is in control, not Judas, and not the other disciples, and not the Jewish leaders who were determined to kill Him. Indeed, this meal would not be the occasion for them to get the best of Jesus; it would be the occasion that Jesus would set in motion the events which would lead to the fulfillment of His prophecies regarding His death, *during Passover*.

Another Shocking Revelation (Matthew 26:20-25)

20 When it was evening, he took his place at the table with the twelve. 21 And while they were eating he said, “I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me.” 22 They became greatly distressed and each one began to say to him, “Surely not I, Lord?” 23 He answered, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. 24 The Son of Man will go as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for him if he had never been born.” 25 Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, “Surely not I, Rabbi?” Jesus replied, “You have said it yourself” (Matthew 26:20-25).

In the Book of Proverbs, we are told, “**The wicked person flees when there is no one pursuing, but the righteous person is as confident as a lion**” (Proverbs 28:1). How could Judas be anything but uneasy about His relationship with Jesus and His disciples? And He had good reason, for Jesus knew *from eternity* who would betray Him:

“But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus had already known from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) (John 6:64)

70 Jesus replied, “Didn’t I choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is the devil?” 71 (Now he said this about Judas son of Simon Iscariot, for Judas, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.) (John 6:70-71)

How Judas must have dreaded looking Jesus and his fellow-disciples in the eye, knowing he had agreed to betray them all. But he must hold out until he could discern a favorable time to hand Jesus over to His enemies, and this could only be done by remaining among them.

Unlike Mark, Matthew has kept his readers in suspense, wondering what will come of all these things. Had we not known the outcome, we should be wondering if Judas would have known and revealed the time and place of their gathering for Passover. In the midst of the meal, Jesus drops a bomb that shakes all of His disciples: One of them is going to betray Him. All of the disciples are shocked, so much so that they are not thinking of others, but only of themselves: “**Surely not I, Lord?**” (Matthew 26:22)

Judas knows he is the betrayer, and now he seeks to learn whether Jesus knows it or not: “**Surely not I, Rabbi?**” (Matthew 26:25)

Note the subtle change from the disciples’ “**Surely not I, Lord**” to Judas’ “**Surely not I, Rabbi.**” In a conversation that the others somehow did not hear, or at least did not grasp, Jesus clearly indicated to Judas that He knew he would betray Him. Jesus did more than reveal to Judas that his treachery was known; He issued a warning to Him regarding the eternal consequences of his actions:

“The Son of Man will go as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for him if he had never been born” (Matthew 26:24).

Once again, Matthew keeps us in suspense. He does not tell us how Judas responded. He simply goes on to describe the significance of our Lord’s death at Passover. But John gives us some important additional details:

26 Jesus replied, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread after I have dipped it in the dish.” Then he dipped the piece of bread in the dish and gave it to Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son. 27 And after Judas took the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are about to do, do quickly.” 28 (Now none of those present at the table understood why Jesus said this to Judas. 29 Some thought that, because Judas had the money box, Jesus was telling him to buy whatever they needed for the feast, or to give something to the poor.) 30 Judas took the piece of bread and went out immediately. (Now it was night.) (John 13:26-30)

From Matthew’s suspenseful account, we are left in doubt as to what became of Judas after our Lord’s shocking revelation to him that he was the betrayer. Jesus knew exactly what Judas was about to do. Did the disciples, sitting there when the private words were exchanged between Jesus and Judas (which informed Judas that Jesus knew it was him), hear? Did they understand what Jesus had just said? If they did Judas was in grave danger. You will recall that at least Peter was armed with a sword (see Luke 22:38; John 18:10-11). I doubt that had he known what Judas was up to he would have hesitated to use his sword to defend his Lord, and to eliminate the threat Judas posed.

From John’s Gospel, we know that our Lord gave Judas permission to leave, and, indeed, to get on with his mission: “**What you are about to do, do quickly**” (John 18:27).

Judas could not get out of that room fast enough. He could never go back. Jesus knew him to be His betrayer, and he could not be certain that the disciples might not figure it out. Whatever he did, he must do it quickly. And so Judas left the room and went immediately to the Jewish leaders to betray the Lord Jesus. And so we now know, thanks to John, that the last verses of our text are an account of what took place after the departure of Judas. The bread and the cup would be shared only among those who believed.

We dare not miss the significance of what we have just read. Our Lord’s revelation (to Judas at least) of the identity of His betrayer forced him and the Jewish leaders to revise their plans. They had earlier resolved that the arrest and murder of Jesus would not be during the feast. Now, if Judas were to enable them to achieve their goal of arresting Jesus, it would have to be now, during the feast. Judas could never return to our Lord’s inner circle of disciples. Judas must act now or never, and act he did. But that is the subject of our next study. For now we will go back to that private room, back to our Lord and His true disciples, and to the meaning of His death.

The Meaning of Passover (Matthew 26:26-29)

26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks he broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said, “Take, eat, this is my body.” 27 And after taking the cup and giving thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you, 28 for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, that is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, from now on I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:26-29).

Jesus was the Passover Lamb: 4 But he lifted up our illnesses, he carried our pain; even though we thought he was being punished, attacked by God, and afflicted for something he had done. 5 He was wounded because of our rebellious deeds, crushed because of our sins; he endured punishment that made us well; because of his wounds we have been healed. 6 All of us had wandered off like sheep; each of us had strayed off on his own path, but the Lord caused the sin of all of us to attack him. 7 He was treated harshly and afflicted, but he did not even open his mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughtering block, like a sheep silent before her shearers, he did not even open his mouth (Isaiah 53:4-7).

On the next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “**Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**” (John 1:29)

32 Now the passage of scripture the man was reading was this:

“**He was led like a sheep to slaughter**, and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 33 In humiliation justice was taken from him. Who can describe his posterity? For his life was taken away from the earth.” 34 Then the eunuch said to Philip, “Please tell me, who is the prophet saying this about—himself or someone else?” 35 So Philip started speaking, and beginning with this scripture proclaimed the good news about Jesus to him (Acts 8:32-35).

7 Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch of dough—you are, in fact, without yeast. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 So then, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of vice and evil, but with the bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

14 So I said to him, “My lord, you know the answer.” Then he said to me, “These are the ones who have come out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! 15 For this reason they are before the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple, and the one seated on the throne will shelter them. 16 They will never go hungry or be thirsty again, and the sun will not beat down on them, nor any burning heat, 17 because the Lamb in the middle of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 7:14-17).

Verses 26-29 of our text explain the significance of our Lord’s death, at just the right time – Passover. Leaving Judas behind, Matthew turns to our Lord, who is the true focus of this text. Jesus is the Passover Lamb, the One symbolized by the lamb sacrificed at the first Passover, just before the Israelites left Egypt (Exodus 12). He is the One foretold by Isaiah (Isaiah 52:13—53:12, etc.). His death must take place during Passover, because He is the true Passover Lamb.

Matthew does not go into great detail in our text, but he does give us the essentials. Our Lord gave the disciples bread, which symbolized His sinless body. He alone was without sin, and thus qualified to die for the sins of others, rather than for His own sins:

God made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we would become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21; see John 8:46).

18 You know that from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors, you were ransomed—not by perishable things like silver or gold, 19 but by precious blood like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb, namely Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Minutes after I had delivered this message in our church, we were observing communion. The relevance of this text came to me as we were partaking of the bread. The bread does not symbolize the death of our Lord; the cup does, symbolizing Christ’s shed blood. The bread symbolizes the perfection of our Lord’s body. He is the only One who has ever been without sin. He is the unblemished, spotless Sacrificial Lamb. The bread is unleavened, symbolizing the sinlessness of our Lord. It is only because of His sinless perfection that He could die for the sins of others. The sinlessness of our Lord is the reason why His shed blood is precious and effective for us.

Mary’s act of selfless, sacrificial worship now comes into even sharper focus. Mary’s fragrance was to be used for the purpose of anointing and enhancing someone’s body. What better body to use it on than the perfect body of our Lord, Jesus Christ? Her act of worship is a testimony to the perfection of our Lord, in a human body. Her sacrificial act not only prepared our Lord’s body for burial, it declared the perfection of His body as a suitable sacrifice.

Jesus then passed the cup, symbolizing His blood, which would be shed on the cross of Calvary. The meaning and significance of His shed blood is further explained as being **“the blood of the covenant, that is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins”** (Matthew 26:28). Jesus’ death on the cross instituted the New Covenant, fulfilling Old Testament texts like this:

31 “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” (Jeremiah 31:31-33, NASB).

As the true Passover Lamb, Jesus fulfilled the New Covenant, and delivered repentant sinners from the guilt of the Old. In so doing, He accomplished the forgiveness of sins, once for all, for all who believe (**“for many,”** Matthew 26:28). His words looked forward, not only to His death at Calvary, but also to His resurrection:

29 I tell you, from now on I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:29).

We can now look back and see the hand of God in every portion of our Scripture text. Jesus revealed His plan to die by crucifixion at the time of the Passover. The Jewish leaders resolved that He would die, but in a different way and at a different time. The anointing of Jesus by an unknown woman (unknown so far as Matthew is concerned, but we know her to be Mary) was the straw that broke the camel’s back for Judas. He could not

stand to see such extravagance, such waste! And the disciples bought into this argument. Only Mary, it would seem, had a grasp of what was about to happen, and acted appropriately.

Judas then went to the Jewish leaders and struck a deal. He would provide them with just what they needed – an inside track to be able to find the right time and place to seize Jesus. He would betray the Lord Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. It looked as though this could happen at our Lord's observance of the Passover with His disciples. But Jesus carefully eliminated this possibility by sending only Peter and John, and in such a way as to not reveal the whereabouts of the meal ahead of time.

When they were all gathered at the table, Jesus shocked Judas and the others by revealing that one of them would betray Him. Judas alone received word from Jesus that it was he who would betray Him. This sent Judas into a panic, and thus while the others celebrated the Passover (and the first communion service) with Jesus, Judas was collaborating with the Jewish leaders to bring about the arrest of Jesus. But it would still be at the time and place of our Lord's choosing, as our next lesson will show.

(Adapted from URL: <https://bible.org/seriespage/passover-plan-man-proposes-god-disposes>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Jesus knew that his whole life pointed to a final Passover that would be an act of ultimate obedience. He would be preparing himself to fulfill his mission as the perfect Passover Lamb (see John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Revelation 5:12; 13:8). His life was given in sacrifice for the sins of humanity, washing us clean in his blood so that our sins are forgiven, never to be brought against us. One last Passover with his closest friends would mark the beginning of a new Lord's Supper that galvanizes Christian worship to this day. Themes of remembrance and thanksgiving have united Christians worldwide for nearly 2,000 years in a practice that honors our crucified Lord. All Christians are given opportunity to remember God's miraculous salvation, with a new ceremonial meal shared by a new family. We participate together, knowing that we are part of a body in a new covenant with God, forgiven of sins through the body and blood of Jesus. What the prophets dreamed of is the life that we today have been given in Christ. At the same time, we long for the ultimate coming of the Father's kingdom when we will sit at the table with Jesus himself. We live in anticipation of this joy. Every bite of bread or sip of the fruit of the vine connects us to the past, present, and future of God's story.

Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

Passover Commemorated - This occasion marks the time when the Hebrew children prepared to leave Egypt. Each family placed lamb's blood over their doorpost to signal the death angel to "pass over" their home. God instructed His children to remember this great deliverance each year with a feast, a time of praise to the Lord and a meal of bread, wine, bitter herbs, and lamb to symbolize what they had gone through in their bondage.

The Betrayer - As Jesus and His disciples ate their Passover meal together, He revealed some shocking news: one of them was a traitor. Only Jesus knew about Judas and his evil intentions. Several began to ask, "Is it me?" Judas sat on the left side of the Lord in the place of honor at the feast. It was also an honor to be given a piece of bread by your host, a special act of hospitality. Judas received the bread as Jesus handed it over—this seemingly insignificant act fulfilled prophecy (Ps. 41:9). With Satan guiding his steps, Judas left to tell the religious leaders where to find Jesus.

The Lord's Supper - After Judas departed, Jesus took some of the unleavened bread and a cup of wine and explained that the broken bread now represented His soon to be broken body, given for the world's sins. The wine represented His blood, about to be spilled for those same sins. Through Jesus, God was making a new covenant with people. Jesus' death and resurrection opened the door to humanity's forgiveness and cleansing from sin. No more barriers between God and man.

Time to Remember - Each time Christians receive Communion, it's a time to ask the Lord to look deeply into our hearts. It's a time to remember Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross, to remind us of our commitment to Him and His kingdom as we serve Him here on earth.