

Betrayal

I can hardly believe that this chapter marks the mid-point of our study. Even though the passages of scripture we are studying are emotionally difficult, I pray that you will stick with it! The blessings from perseverance will be more than you can imagine as you come to know our Lord and Savior better. He adores you and has given more than we can ever imagine in drawing *you* close to his heart. Each passage you have studied further opens the eyes of your heart to the passionate love of Jesus. Everything he went through was for you, for me, for each one of us whom he has called into his flock. Let's stay in the Word together as we sit with Jesus and his closest disciples this week.

Our attention for this week will be focused on the events of the Last Supper. We spent quite a bit of time last week learning about Passover. The feast commemorates the original Passover night when each Israelite family in Egypt sacrificed a lamb and painted the doorways to their homes in its blood as a sign to the Angel of Death to *pass over* that home as it sought to destroy the first born of all Egypt. By that sacrifice each Israelite family was spared and prepared to be delivered of the oppression of Egypt and delivered into the Lord's Promise Land. As we remember what we learned last week, let's see how Passover is fulfilled in the life of Jesus.

The Last Passover

*"I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.
For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God"*
(Luke 22:15-16)

Our passage of scripture today focuses on what we have come to call The Last Supper, but intentionally I have referred to it as the Last Passover. I want us to focus on how Jesus fulfilled the command issued to all of Israel to observe this solemn feast. Just as he carefully and deliberately fulfills each element of its tradition, he also institutes a new feast commemorating the establishment of the New Covenant soon to be enacted by his death and resurrection. Before we begin our study, take a few minutes to come before the Lord asking him to open the eyes of your heart and granting you understanding of his teaching.



Read Luke 22:7-20 and answer the following questions.

According to Luke, what day is it?

How many cups of wine did Jesus refer to in verse 17-20?

"Who Do You Say I Am?":

A Study of Jesus, Part 2

Lesson 5 Homework

If you read carefully, you would have noticed 2 cups mentioned in this passage. In fact the cup mentioned in verse 17 is the First Cup of the Passover. From our discussion last week what do the four cups represent (Hint: Exodus 6:5-70)? With what is this cup associated?

What do you think Jesus means when he says in verse 16, *"I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God"*? Read also Matthew's record of this event in Matthew 26:29.

That future celebration in the Kingdom of God is mentioned in Revelation 19:6-9. What celebration is that?

From our discussion about Passover we also looked at the significance of the bread, in particular the *Afikomen*. We learned that the *afikomen*, the broken piece of matzah, was to be eaten by all at the table as a reminder of the Passover lamb. The tradition of the *afikomen* wouldn't enter the Seder until sometime after the destruction of the temple in AD 70 and the dispersion of the Jews. In our passage of study, Jesus pauses over the breaking of the bread that would become identified with the *afikomen*. What does Jesus do with the bread verse 19?

Turn to John 1:29. What does John the Baptist prophesy about Jesus?

The cup mentioned in verse 20 is the Third Cup, the Cup of Redemption. How does its meaning fit in with the New Covenant that Jesus is instituting? What does redemption involve?

✕ Jesus institutes this new Sacrament, the Bread and the Cup, in the middle of the Passover dinner. The Passover tradition becomes an enacted parable to teach the disciples about the New Covenant described in Jeremiah 31:31-34. What is he teaching the disciples? Take a few minutes to think about this from the point of view of the disciples. Certainly the disciples wouldn't come to understand this until after the resurrection, but what do you think was clear to them?

As we learn the significance of the various traditional elements of the Passover meal I am in awe of how Jesus fulfills each aspect so dramatically. This tradition and observance was established so long before Jesus entered into our world. But yet God designed it from the beginning to point to his salvation plan through his Son. Just as the Lord delivered Israel out of bondage and slavery in Egypt and brought them to the Promise Land -- a land flowing with milk and honey; Jesus throughout his ministry promises that by faith in him we too can be delivered from the oppression and bondage of sin and brought into the wonderful land of the Kingdom of God. Through believing in his identity as the only Son of God, he is the only one capable of healing our souls and forgiving our sins, the only one able to purchase our freedom at the cost of his life. Through the last Passover he revealed himself as John's prophecy, *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."* He is the *Afikomen*, the Passover Lamb, broken for the forgiveness of sin, for all to partake and share. He is the Cup of Redemption. It is his blood that is spilt as the cost of our redemption. He tells us to remember him each time we partake of the meal. Through this meal he is present among us reminding us that we are not alone in our desert wanderings to the promised Kingdom of God. He travels with us in the presence of the Holy Spirit. He guides and leads our minds and hearts just as God lead Israel through the desert with a pillar of fire. We are not abandoned or forsaken; he is with us, just as Jeremiah promised:

"Who Do You Say I Am?":

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*³³ "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel
after that time," declares the LORD.*

*"I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts.*

*I will be their God,
and they will be my people.*

*³⁴ No longer will a man teach his neighbor,
or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,'
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest,"
declares the LORD.*

*"For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more."*

Jeremiah 31:33-34

I find verse 16 of our passage today to be a bittersweet promise to his disciples, and to us. He tells those gathered around the table with him that he *"will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."* This is Jesus' last Passover with his beloved friends; there will not be another next year. He knows what is soon to come. In a matter of hours everything will change. In a matter of days he will no longer be with them. The next time he will partake of the fruit of the vine will be in the Kingdom of God at the wedding feast of the Lamb. At the end of the age all of us will have entered the Kingdom of God, and we will be gathered with Jesus at his banquet table. We will all be gathered around him prepared as a bride to be united with him forever. It is something glorious and wondrous to consider. He is waiting for each one of us, each of his beloved to join with him in celebration. How I long for that celebration to begin!

Jesus Predicts his Betrayal

*"The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed,
but woe to that man who betrays him." (Luke 22:22)*

Dear Ones, in our scripture passage today we rejoin Jesus and his closest disciples at the Passover table. Our passage today directly follows our preceding lesson; you may want to reread Luke 22:14-20 to keep the context of our lesson in mind. We will be examining Jesus' prediction of Judas betrayal in both the Gospels of Luke and John. Take a few minutes to pray that the Lord will bless you with understanding as we consider the scripture passages before us.



Read Luke 22: 20-23 and John 13: 21-30. Answer the following questions.

Complete the following verses from Luke 22:21-22, and beneath each, write down what you think Jesus means.

- *"But the hand of him who is going to betray me is _____ mine on the table.*
- *The Son of Man will go as it has been _____,*
- *but _____ to that man who betrays him."*

✂ Read John 13:26-27. According to the Bible Knowledge Commentary, the host giving a morsel of bread to a guest was a sign of friendship. Jesus in handing the bread to Judas did three things. What three things did his action infer?

What do you think it means that "Satan entered him"? (v. 27) Jesus spoke the verses recorded in Matthew 12:43-45 to the religious leaders. How might these verses be applied to Judas?

Do you think anyone at the table understood who the betrayer was? Give scriptural support for your answer.

"Who Do You Say I Am?":

A Study of Jesus, Part 2

Lesson 5 Homework

There is always a tension between the freedom to choose our own actions, a freedom given us by God, and God's sovereign will. God's love for us is such that he does not hold us captive; he does not force himself upon us. He makes himself known to us gently. He reveals his love to us quietly, yet at times boldly, but never forcibly. He gives us the freedom to make our own decisions hoping that one day we will choose to love him in return. He wants us to choose to be in a relationship with him based on love and freedom, not fear and servitude.

Freedom to choose comes at a cost. Some will not choose to love God. Instead they will choose to love themselves, or love their lives more than God. They will come to the decision that the circumstances of their lives – their wealth, power, position, are of their own work and have no need of God. This can be true of a life that appears either greatly blessed in wealth, power and position, or of a life denied wealth, power and position. Some people will come to believe either they don't need God because they can prosper on their own, or they think God has been absent in the difficulties of their life and therefore they think they don't need him, or worse, that God doesn't want them. All of these attitudes are false. God loves each and everyone one of us, and wants to draw each and every one of us into his kingdom. It was the whole purpose of sending his son into the world: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16).

Not only will some not choose to love and accept God during their lifetime, they will never choose God no matter what circumstances come to pass in their lifetime. God knows the hearts of all humankind. He has known from the beginning who will choose to love him and who will persist in loving themselves. I believe this is true of Judas. Judas, one of Jesus' closest disciples who had the privilege to live and follow Jesus closely throughout his ministry, not only witnessing, but participating in Jesus' miraculous signs and wonders. He was there for all of Jesus' teaching, both publicly addressed to the people of Israel as well as privately addressed to the inner circle of his disciples. Despite the privileged position Judas held, he could not come to a place where he loved Jesus more than himself. God knew, Jesus knew, that this betrayal would happen from the beginning.

The prophets described in detail the things that would come to pass upon the Messiah. Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 are two among many prophecies that speak of the brutality that would befall Messiah. The events of the crucifixion and the resurrection were ordained, or decreed, from the beginning. God chose to use Judas as an instrument in his plan. This does not absolve Judas from his choice. Judas still is accountable for his actions. Even in watching the consequences of his actions come to pass, he does not repent of his actions, he despairs, he loses all hope and kills himself. He condemns himself through his own choices. But our Lord never stopped loving Judas and I am sure hoping against hope that Judas would turn from his path. No one knew better than Jesus where Judas' actions would lead, and they would lead to a judgment upon Judas for his failure to believe Jesus and repent of his actions. Jesus' words are full of regret and sorrow at the last supper, not anger and judgment.

When has God used the most difficult circumstances of your life to teach you about his sovereignty? What were those circumstances and what did he reveal to you about himself in those difficult times?

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

*"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."
(Luke 22:31-32)*

In our previous passage we watched as one of Jesus' closest friends made the deliberate decision to betray him to the enemies of God. It is hard to imagine that one who traveled with, dedicated his life to, and was a daily witness to the ministry of Jesus could turn against him and lead him to his death. It is a devastating betrayal, and one that Jesus knew would happen. Yet Jesus continued to love him and offered him the opportunity to change his mind. Judas went and did what was destined to be. Moments after Judas' departure, Jesus tells Peter that he too, will forsake him. Unlike Judas, Peter's abandonment would have a different result. Before we consider today's scripture passage, take some time to come before the Lord and reflect upon Luke 22:31-32 (above). This verse is the crux of our study today and the application of it to our own lives is one that each one of us has either already encountered or will at some time in the future.



Read Luke 22: 31-34 and answer the following questions.

Jesus uses the metaphor *"to sift you as wheat"* in describing the process that God will permit Satan to do to Peter and the disciples. To sift as wheat means to separate the wheat kernels from the sheaves and stalks of harvested wheat. In Jesus' day this was done by strewing the wheat on the threshing floor and a worker would toss the stalks in the air with a winnowing fork separating the wheat from the chaff. After this long process, what was left would be shaken through a sieve further separating the grains from the chaff. What was left of chaff and stalks would be thrown into the fire and the grain kept.

What does Jesus mean by faith? What does it mean that Simon Peter's "faith will not fail"?

"Who Do You Say I Am?":

A Study of Jesus, Part 2

Lesson 5 Homework

Read Job 1:6-12 and 42:1-16. What are the similarities of these two passages?

What has Jesus prayed for? See John 10:27-29 and 1 John 2:1. What do we know will happen when Jesus prays on our behalf?

What is it that Jesus predicts that Peter will deny three times?



How is this different than Judas' betrayal?

Back in verse 32 what does Jesus predict will come of the "sifting"?

In the past Jesus had sent his disciples off with nothing, and they lacked nothing. Why does Jesus tell them *"But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one."* (v. 36). Why does Jesus tell them to purchase a sword and carry their own provisions?

It is not obvious in English translation, but as Jesus begins speaking (in verse 31) the "you" in "to sift you as wheat" is plural. It includes *all* the disciples. Satan will test the faith of all the disciples. His hope is that through sifting their faith, they will be rendered as nothing but chaff. The denial of *knowing Jesus* is not the goal of Satan. He wants to crush the disciples like stalks of wheat and so shake their faith that they all deny their allegiance to Jesus. Satan wants nothing more than for each of the disciples to revoke their faith in Jesus being the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. Jesus prayed, interceded on their behalf, that their belief would remain firm and not fail. He prayed that they would remain loyal and not disavow their allegiance to him despite their inability to stand up against the threat of the religious leaders

and Roman authorities. Jesus' prayer was greater than Satan's attack. The disciples' faith would remain firm.

Then Jesus' focus shifts to Simon Peter. The subsequent "you" is singular and is addressed specifically to Peter. Simon Peter did not disavow Jesus, but he did deny him. Peter would repent of his denial and in so doing come to fulfill the rest of Jesus' prediction that he would strengthen his brothers. The sifting would not end with Jesus' arrest and Peter's denial. The events of Passion Week are the beginning. After the Religious Leaders and Roman authorities put an end to Jesus they would come after his disciples. They would fear that the disciples would continue where Jesus left off and lead Israel into an uprising. The disciples would need to equip themselves and resolve to carry on God's plan to take the truth of the Kingdom of God to the ends of the world despite future imprisonment, persecution, hardship and death. The disciples would be facing increasingly dangerous times. The fact that the disciples had only two swords among them reveals that they greatly underestimate the danger to come. Jesus' words *"That is enough"* (v.38) is best understood as breaking off further discussion¹, not as an assent to the disciples having enough swords. Two swords would not be enough to protect them against what was to come.

Betrayal and Arrest

"Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"
(Matthew 26:46)

We have arrived at our last passage this week and it is one that is difficult to study without being overcome with emotion. Jesus has led his disciples up to the garden of Gethsemane where he has spent much time in agonizing prayer. He has beseeched Peter, James, and John to watch with him and pray; but in exhaustion they fall asleep while Jesus alone faces the dark hours of the night before Judas arrives with the high priest's men. Before we begin, ask the Lord to bless your study of his word today.



Read Matthew 26: 43-56 and answer the following questions.

Fill in verse 47: "While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the _____, arrived." Why do you think Matthew identified Judas this way? What does it emphasize and what does it fulfill? (See Psalm 41:9)

¹ New American Commentary, Luke 22: 38

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Lesson 5 Homework

Who is it that comes with Judas and how are they equipped?

Who sent them?

Why do you think Judas address Jesus as Rabbi rather than Lord as do the disciples (of which he had been one)?

How does Judas greet Jesus and what do you think it means?

What does Jesus' response indicate? (See John 18:4.)

Aside from the foolish thought that the eleven disciples accompanying Jesus could prevent what was to come in the face of the large, armed contingent brought by Judas, why do you think Jesus stopped and rebuked the disciples from drawing swords?

Jesus' reply to Judas and the temple authorities in verses 55 and 56 are recorded slightly differently in Luke's gospel. Read Luke 22:52-53. Why do they come to arrest in the dark of night?

Read Matthew 26: 31-35. Despite their loyal words what does Matthew tell us happened in the last part of verse 56?

Judas arrives in the garden with an armed contingent sent by the high priest and the elders of Israel (the Sanhedrin). We are told that they are armed with clubs and swords. Swords were usually carried by Roman soldiers, and John 18: 3 describes a detachment of soldiers accompanying Judas. It is likely that the high priest requested a detachment of soldiers in order to prevent a possible riot upon arresting Jesus. Along with the soldiers came officials from the Sanhedrin. Judas fulfilled his role well, he made it possible for the high priest to have Jesus arrested away from the crowds of Jerusalem, unseen and unheard.

It is not likely that Jesus needed to be identified. He certainly would have been recognizable to the Jewish officials. He frequently taught publicly in the temple courts where

all could come and hear him, and where he disputed with the religious leaders on several occasions. Judas' kiss is a conventional greeting of their day, but it is also the greeting of those who know each other well. Judas wasn't needed so much to point out to the crowd which among the disciples was Jesus, but rather to give an official identification of Jesus as the roll of formal accuser required when the trial was convened.² Jesus would have been recognized easily by any one of the official temple delegation.

It is interesting to observe the irony of the well armed crowd who came to arrest Jesus. Jesus never spoke of or encouraged anyone to take up arms against the authorities in Jerusalem. Jesus' kingdom was one of peace and obedience to God. Jesus rebukes his disciples for pulling out their inadequate number of swords and reminds them he could call down "*twelve legions of angels*" to defend him should he choose to do so. One legion is 5-6 thousand soldiers, Jesus could command an overwhelming angelic army of 72 thousand angels underscoring the invincible power available to him. He declines to utilize that power because it does not conform to the will of God.³ He is obedient to his father's plan and allows himself to be arrested.

Jesus addresses the crowd that has come to arrest him and rebukes them for coming in the dark of night. He has not hid himself from them, nor preached anything for which they had grounds to confront him by day. Because of their cowardice and fear they dared not risk arresting him in the temple. Because of their evil intent, they executed the work of the prince of darkness in the dark of night. The very arrest of Jesus in the dark of night was illegal; it was unlawful to make the arrest at night upon the word of a hired accuser.⁴

The last words of our passage today record the weak faith of the disciples who fled in fear as their beloved Lord was taken away. The shepherd was struck and the flock scattered⁵. Their hearty vows of steadfastly standing by Jesus in whatever was to come quickly dissipated in the fierce reality of arrest, imprisonment, and possible execution. Again Jesus stands alone to face the assaults of darkness. Shakespeare never penned so tragic a story as the Word of God.

Personal Reflection:

We can trust in the fact that a time will come or has already come when our own faith is tested. Have you experienced such a time in your life? What did you learn from that experience? What did the Lord teach you through your trial? What are the promises associated with 1 Peter 1:6-9?

² NIV Life Application Bible notes Matthew 26:48.

³ New American Commentary

⁴ Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁵ Ezekiel 34:5-6