

Matthew 26

Gabriel told Mary at the birth of Jesus that He would “save His people from their sins” (1:21). Jesus, through His obedience to the commands of God, will become the initiator of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him (Heb. 5:8-9). Matthew 26 contains events that lead up to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world; events which fulfill the first message preached by Jesus (Matt. 4:17). The betrayal, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus covers roughly 1/3 of the gospel accounts.

See the beginning of chapter 21 for a chart possibly portraying the daily events of the life of Jesus. Perhaps 26:1-5 occurred on Wednesday. The Passover was on Thursday (26:17-19, 20-29), the crucifixion and burial on Friday, and the Sabbath rest on Saturday.

Zechariah 9-14 plays a significant role in the last week of Christ on earth. Zechariah 9:9 has already been fulfilled in 21:5. Zechariah 14:4 is fulfilled in 24:3. Zechariah 2:6 is fulfilled in 24:30-31 while Zechariah 9:11 is fulfilled in Matthew 26:28 while Zechariah 11:12-13 is fulfilled in Matthew 27:9. The Bible student should carefully consider *all* of Zechariah 9-14 to have been fulfilled in the *first coming* of Jesus Christ in light of the fact that *no further* references to the fulfillment of Zechariah is found after the resurrection of Christ.

TRANSLATION - 26:1-5:

1 Then it happened when Jesus completed all these words, He spoke to His disciples, **2** “You know that after two days the Passover will happen, and the Son of Man will be handed over for to be crucified.” **3** At that time, there gathered together the chief priests and the elders of the people into the palace of the high priest, the one called Caiaphas. **4** And they plotted in order that Jesus cunningly they might arrest and might kill. **5** But they were saying, “Not during the festival in order that a turmoil might not happen among the people.”

GREEK WORDS:

“To finish, complete” (ver. 1) is used 28 times in the NT; 7 times in Matthew, first at 7:28; this will be the last. “Words” (*logos*) is used 330 times, 33 times in Matthew. “Disciples” was used first at 5:1. “Passover” (ver. 2) is used here, for the first time; it is used in Matthew 26:2, 17-19. The word is used in the NT 29 times. It is used in the OT 50 times (see “OT References” below). The phrase “Son of Man” was used first at 8:20; it is used 31 times in Matthew, 88 times in the NT, 84 times in the Gospel accounts. “To hand over” or “to deliver up” was used first at 4:12. Observe how frequently the verb is used in this context: 26:2, 15, 16, 21, 23, 24, 25, 45, 46, 48; 27:2, 3, 4, 18, 26. “To crucify” was used first at 20:19. It is used 46 times in the NT, 10 times in Matthew.

“To gather together” (ver. 3) is used 59 times in the NT, first at 2:4. “Chief priests” was first used at 2:4 (see “Archaeology” there). “Elders” was first used at 15:2 (see “Archaeology” there). “Palace” is used here for the first time: 26:3, 58, 69. It is further used 9 times in the NT. It likely refers to the court or courtyard of the palace. This is the first mention of Caiaphas, the high priest (26:3, 57). He is mentioned 9 times in the NT, especially by John (11:49; 18:13-14, 24, 28).

“To plot” or “to counsel” (ver. 4) is used 4 times: Matt. 26:4; John 18:14; Acts 9:23; Rev. 3:18. “Deceit, cunning, treachery, stealth” is used 11 times; only here by Matthew. “To seize or to arrest” was used first at 9:25. “To kill” was used first at 10:28. “Feast” or “festival” (ver. 5) is used here for the first time; also in Matthew, at 27:15. The word is used 25 times in the NT, 17 in John. “Turmoil or tumult” is used here and 27:24 in Matthew, among 7 uses. “People” was used first at 1:21.

PARALLELS:

Parallels are found in Mark 14:1-2; Luke 22:1-2; John 11:45-53.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

The assembly of these “enemies” of Christ brings to mind some passages such as Psalm 2 (cf. Acts 4:25-26) and Psalm 31:13.

ARCHAEOLOGY:

Annas was the first in his family to be appointed high priest by the Roman government. He served from A. D. 6-15. Subsequently, five of his sons and one son-in-law (Caiaphas) were named high priest. Caiaphas served the longest of any high priest in the first century, from A. D. 18-36. There was considerable corruption on the part of this family, in conjunction with their Roman masters. Caiaphas will consent to put Jesus to death, out of fear that he could instigate the Romans to anger. “They who would avoid Rome’s wrath must instead incur God’s. They save their lives but lose their souls (contrast Matt 16:26).”¹ There were at least 28 high priests from 37 B. C. to 67 A. D.

COMMENTS:

Jesus completed the many series of sermons He would give, which have stretched over a period of three to three and a half years (cf similar sayings in 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1). Yet He will continue to teach, in word and example, until He returns to heaven. Because the Passover was soon, Jesus needed to have that festival meal prepared. Usually the father would oversee the meal itself but on this occasion, Jesus will serve in that role. This would be Tuesday evening, as we consider time, but Wednesday based on the Jewish view of “days” (which began at sundown and ended at sundown). Jesus states here that it was necessary to eat the Passover because the Son of Man must be handed over to be crucified. Jesus had predicted already His crucifixion at 20:19. As He portrayed the desolation of the temple at the end of chapter 23, He included “crucifixion” of God’s messengers as one reason (23:34). We can only imagine the impact His words here have on His apostles. Notice how frequently the verb “to hand over” is used throughout this and the subsequent chapter: 26:2, 15, 16, 21, 23, 24, 25, 45, 46, 48; 27:2, 3, 4, 18, 26. This prophecy shows that Jesus knew of, and was in control of, the events leading to the crucifixion (compare the use of “it must” in 16:21 and 26:54).

While His disciples were getting the Passover ready, the chief priests assembled with the elders of the Jews in the court of the palace of the high priest, Caiaphas. This was likely an informal gathering of the Sanhedrin. They consulted with one another that they might arrest Jesus through cunning or deceit and kill Him. They began plotting Jesus’ destruction as early as 12:14 (see also 21:38, 45-46). However, one of the biggest, most important feasts of the Jews was going on, and Jerusalem would be crowded and their support of the Messiah would be high. So, the group hesitated for fear of the crowd of people.

APPLICATION:

Jesus will show clearly that He, perhaps better said, the Father, is in complete control over the events leading to the cross and resurrection. While these events illustrate the sovereignty of the Lord, nothing suggests that God forces men to make their decisions in violation of their freewill. Rather, His sovereignty means He works *through* their free decisions to accomplish His will. Also, while God was controlling the events leading up to the death and resurrection of Jesus (26:2, 18; 27:62ff; 28:11ff), this does not mean that God controls *all* events. The particular (regulating these events) does not prove the general (regulating all events).

TRANSLATION - 26:6-13:

6 And Jesus being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, **7** a woman approached Him having an alabaster flask of very expensive perfume and she poured [it] on His head, while reclining. **8** But seeing, the disciples were angry saying, “For what [is] this waste?” **9** For this was able to be sold for much and to be given to the poor. **10** And after knowing, Jesus said to

¹ Blomberg, 384.

them, “Why do you cause trouble to the woman? For a good work she had accomplished for me. **11** For always the poor you have with yourselves, but me not always you have. **12** For she putting this perfume on My body for to prepare Me for burial she did. **13** Truly I say to you, wherever may be preached this gospel in all the world, it will be spoken also what she did for her memorial.”

GREEK WORDS:

“Bethany” (ver. 6) was mentioned back at 21:17. The name “Simon” (especially referring to Simon Peter - 20 times in the NT) is found 75 times in the NT, 9 in Matthew. “Leper” was found first at 8:2. “Alabaster” (ver. 7) is used 4 times: Matt. 26:7; Mark 14:3; Luke 7:37.

“Perfume” is used 14 times scattered evenly through the Gospel accounts and also Revelation 18:13. The word is *myrrh*, which might refer back to 2:11. “Very expensive” is found only here. “To pour out” is found here and Mark 14:3. “Head” is found first at 5:36. “To recline at a table” is found first at 9:10. See also 22:10-11.

“To be angry or indignant” (ver. 8) was used first at 20:24. “Waste” was used first at 7:13. “To be able” (ver. 9) is used first at 3:9. “To sell” was used prior to here at 13:46; 18:25. “Poor” was used first at 5:3. “To know” (ver. 10) was used first at 1:25. “Trouble or bother” is used first here (its only use in Matthew); it is used 18 times in the NT. “To cause or to make happen” is used here first; it is used 16 times in the NT. “Work” was used first at 5:16. “To do, accomplish, carry out” is the verb form of the prior noun. It was used first at 7:23.

“To put” (ver. 12) was used first at 3:10. “Body” was used first at 5:29-30. “To prepare for burial” is used here and John 19:40. “To preach” or “proclaim” (ver. 13) was used first at 3:1. “Gospel” was used first at 4:23; it is used 76 times in the NT. “World” is used first at 4:8. “Memorial” is used three times: Matt 26:13; Mark 14:9; Acts 10:4.

PARALLELS:

Parallels to this paragraph are found at Mark 14:3-9 and John 12:1-8.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

Verse 11 is an allusion to Deuteronomy 15:11. Lepers were required to remain outside the camp of Israel (Lev. 13:45-46). For this Simon to host a dinner means he was likely cured.

ARCHAEOLOGY:

This perfume was very expensive, being imported from India. Bethany was about 2 miles east of Jerusalem; it will be too far for Jesus and the apostles to stay while they are observing the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which had to be celebrated in Jerusalem.

COMMENTS:

This event happened six days before Passover (John 12:1), but Matthew places it here, probably to show: 1) a contrast between her actions and those of the Sanhedrin as well as Judas Iscariot; 2) the preparation for burial of Jesus, which Matthew does not otherwise record. This “Simon” is not otherwise mentioned in the Gospel accounts, outside of this event; he is known as “the leper” from his previous condition. It is likely Jesus had healed him earlier.

This woman, identified by John as Mary, the sister of Lazarus (John 12:3), took an alabaster flask of ointment from myrrh and poured it over His head as He reclined at the table. Jesus had just talked about the need to serve the poor (25:34-40), and the disciples become indignant, considering this a waste. They believe that the perfume could have been sold for a lot (John says it was worth a whole year’s salary, John 12:5), and given to the poor. On the surface, we can understand the apostles’ anger. It was customary during the Feast of Unleavened Bread to give to the poor (cf. John 13:29).

Yet, Jesus knowing their thoughts, took the opportunity to teach them a lesson and to predict, again, His death. Rather than causing Mary trouble, Jesus states that she had accomplished a “good” thing (with the sense of “beautiful”), for Jesus. The poor, in fact, would

be around forever. But Jesus would not be around forever (physically) for them to treat in such a thoughtful manner. In fact, Jesus states in verse 12, Mary had put the perfume on His body to prepare His body for burial. We do not know if Mary intended that understanding; perhaps, in contrast to the apostles, she understood and accepted Jesus' predictions of His death, although it is not clear that she was among those who was informed of His coming death. Or Mary may have simply done a loving act and Jesus reinterpreted her actions in light of what He knew was going to happen. Either way, Jesus puts emphasis on her actions by stating in verse 13 that wherever His gospel of His kingdom was preached, this behavior would be preached in the whole world. The gospel would include His life, His teachings, His death, His anointing for the burial by Mary, and His resurrection. Mary would always be remembered for her gesture of love on behalf of Jesus. Indeed, we are still talking about it!

APPLICATION:

Both in this event and in the other event that involved Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42), we learn that service to Jesus might take precedence over service to the poor and that the important needs to take precedence over what is immediate.

TRANSLATION - 26:14-16:

14 At that time after coming one from the twelve, the one being named Judas Iscariot, to the chief priests **15** he said, "What do you desire me to give, and I to you will hand over Him?" And these determined to him thirty [pieces of] silver. **16** And from that time, he was seeking an opportunity in order Him to hand over.

GREEK WORDS:

"Twelve" (ver. 14) was found at 10:1-2, 5. "Judas" is mentioned 44 times; there were more than just this individual named "Judas." The name is found 10 times in Matthew. "Iscariot" is found 11 times in the NT, only 10:4 and 26:14 in Matthew. "To desire" or "to want" (ver. 15) is used 208 times in the NT, 42 times by Matthew. "To set, determine" was used first at 2:9. "Silver" was used first at 25:18, 27. "To seek" (ver. 16) was used first at 2:13, 20. "Favorable opportunity or right moment" is used only here and Luke 22:6.

PARALLELS:

This event is found also in Mark 14:10-11 and Luke 22:3-6.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

The selling of Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (ver. 15) fulfills the prophecy of Zechariah 11:13, which will be made explicit in Matthew 27:9.

COMMENTS:

In contrast to Mary's loving, selfless gesture, Matthew tells us that "one of the twelve," Judas Iscariot (mentioned in Matthew earlier only at 10:4 as one of the apostles), came to the high priests, mentioned in the first paragraph (26:1-5). They had decided to wait in arresting Jesus until after the festival, lest they stir up the animosity of the common people. But Judas is going to make a deal with them.

Judas asks what they would give him, if he "hands over" Jesus into their custody. They agreed among themselves for thirty pieces of silver. It is not possible to determine how much this would be. It may have been one month's wage (30 denarius) or as much as four months' wage (if they were thirty *shekels*, which would be 120 denarius). It was, however, nothing compared to the perfume Mary had just spent on Jesus! Matthew will tell us in 27:9 that this sum and Judas' actions fulfilled Zechariah 11:13.

The only motivation given in the Scriptures for Judas' betrayal is money (cf. John 12:6). While we can imagine that some type of disappointment in the person and work of Jesus might have been involved in Judas' actions, the Scriptures do not give us any hint in that regard.

From that point, Judas will keep his eyes and ears open for an opportunity to hand over Jesus to His enemies. Luke (22:3) and John (13:2) will state that Judas is allowing himself to be influenced by Satan.

APPLICATION:

It has been said that everyone has a price. The idea is that each person will violate their deepest held beliefs, principles, or morals, if they were given enough money. Judas' price was 30 pieces of silver. Do we have a price?

TRANSLATION - 26:17-25:

17 Now on the first [day] of [the feast of] unleavened bread there approached the disciples to Jesus, saying, "Where do You desire we might prepare for You to eat the Passover?" **18** And He said, "Go into the city to a certain one and say to him, 'The teacher says, 'My time is near.' For you I will celebrate the Passover with My disciples.' **19** And the disciples did as Jesus directed them and they prepared the Passover. **20** And evening coming, He reclined at table with the twelve. **21** And while they were eating, He said, "Truly I say to you that one among you will hand Me over." **22** And being extremely distressed they began to say to Him each one, "It is not me, Lord?" **23** And after answering, He said, "The one dipping with Me the hand into the bowl, this one Me he will hand over. **24** On the one hand, the Son of Man is going away even as it has been written concerning Him, but woe to that man through whom the Son of Man will be handed over. Better it was being for him if he had not been born, that man." **25** And after answering, Judas - the one betraying Him - said, "It is not me, Rabbi?" He said to him, "You said [it]."

GREEK WORDS:

"Unleavened bread" (ver. 17) is used only here in Matthew; it is used 9 times in the NT. "To prepare" was used first at 3:3. "A certain one" (ver. 18) is used only here. "Teacher" was used first at 8:19. "Time, season" was used first at 8:29. "Near" was used first at 24:32-33. "To celebrate" is actually the verb "to do or make" which is used in verse 19. It is used 568 times in the NT, first at 1:24. "To eat" (ver. 21) is used first at 6:25, 31.

"To be distressed" (ver. 22) is found first at 14:9. "Extremely" was used first at 2:10. "To dip" (ver. 23) is found here and Mark 14:20. "Bowl" or "dish" is used here and Mark 14:20. "To write" (ver. 24) was found first at 2:5. "Woe" is found first at 11:21; it is found 46 times in the NT. "To be born" was used extensively in chapter 1, out of 97 uses in the NT. "Rabbi" is used first at 23:7-8. It is used 15 times in the NT.

GREEK GRAMMAR:

The question "It is not me..." (ver. 22) expects a negative answer. "It has been written" (ver. 24) translates a verb in the perfect tense, denoting an action in the past, but which has ongoing relevance.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

The reference to Judas betraying His friend (ver. 21) fulfills the idea behind Psalm 41:9. When Jesus predicts His suffering, in particular His suffering on behalf of others (ver. 28), He is indicating that He is fulfilling the words and imagery of Isaiah 52-53: the Suffering Servant.

ARCHAEOLOGY:

The "Feast of Unleavened Bread" was so-named because leaven had to be removed from the house before Passover was celebrated (Exo. 12:1-20; Lev. 23:4-8; Num. 9:1-14; 28:17; Deut. 16:1-8).

The table at which Jesus and His apostles sat is not the famous table of the Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting. This table was shaped like a "U" with three cushions on each side, on which diners would lean on their elbows with their feet extended away from the table.

COMMENTS:

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was an eight-day festival centered around the Passover (the two terms could be used interchangeably; Mark 14:1, 12; Luke 22:7). Early during the initial celebration, the disciples came to Jesus to ask Him where He wanted them to prepare the Passover for them to eat. He gave them instructions, as He had with the triumphal entry (21:1-11). This continues to show Jesus knows what is happening and is in control of the events. He tells the disciples, when they meet a certain man, they are to identify Jesus as “the teacher.” Apparently Jesus had communicated with him earlier, so he would be prepared to meet Jesus’ request. This individual would help prepare the place for the Passover meal for Jesus and His disciples. They would have taken a lamb to the temple to be killed, prepare the meal with its herbs, wine and bread, and they prepared the room.

When evening arrived, Thursday evening known by the Jewish calendar as 15 Nisan, Jesus and the twelve were in the upper room. They were eating the Passover meal when Jesus predicted that one of the twelve would hand Him over (ver. 21). Jesus had just made reference to His burial (ver. 12) and had, of course, predicted His death, burial, and resurrection multiple times (16:21; 17:22-23; 20:18-19; 26:2). Now, the disciples are extremely distraught and began asking if the betrayer was each of them (ver. 22). Jesus plainly said in verse 23 that it would be one who was dipping his hand with Jesus in the dish. This dish was probably a sweet relish or sauce made from fruit and nuts. We are sure if we should understand Jesus to be making a general announcement that someone sitting at the table (in other words, a friend) would betray Him or if Judas was, at that moment, dipping his hand with Jesus. It does not seem the latter is the correct understanding, otherwise it seems the apostles would have turned on the betrayer.

In verse 24, Jesus states that these events are being worked out in order to fulfill prophecy, what “has been written.” Yet, even as God, in His sovereignty, works events in order to bring about the sacrifice of His Son, it is also true that the betrayer is responsible for his own choices. In that sense, Jesus declares that it would have been better for the betrayer to have never been born (ver. 24-25).

In pure hypocrisy and unaware (at that moment) that Jesus knew all things, Judas echoed the question of the twelve: “It is not me, is it?” But Jesus penetrated the facade and stated in verse 25 plainly that it was Judas. He will be called the “son of perdition” in John 17:12.

APPLICATION:

There is nothing hidden from the eyes and knowledge of the God of heaven (see Hebrews 4:12-13). On the negative side, this means that no sin can be hidden from God. He knows all things and will bring to reckoning every sin, regardless whether it was committed openly or secretly (Rom. 2:16). On the positive side, this means that no pain, no hurt, no problem is hidden from the loving Father in heaven. He knows all things and He has the love, wisdom, and power to resolve all problems His followers have (cf. Matt. 10:29-31).

Greed, particularly for money, is intensely condemned in the NT, with Paul equating it with idolatry: Luke 12:15; Rom. 1:29; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5; 2 Peter 2:3, 14.

TRANSLATION - 26:26-30:

26 And while they were eating, Jesus taking bread and blessing [it] broke and after giving [it] to the disciples said, “Take. Eat. This is My body.” **27** And after taking the cup and giving thanks, He gave to them saying, “Drink from it, all, **28** For this is My blood of the covenant, that concerning many being poured out for the releasing of sins. **29** But I say to you, I will not at all drink from now on from this, being produced from the vine, until that day whenever it I may drink with you new in the kingdom of My Father.”

30 And after singing they went out unto the Mount of Olives.

GREEK WORDS:

“Bread” (ver. 26) was used first at 4:3-4. “To bless” was used first at 14:19, out of 41 uses. The Greek word, transliterated, gives us the word *eulogy*. “To break” was used first at 14:19. “Body” was used first at 5:29-30. “Cup” (ver. 27) was used first at 10:42. “To give thanks” was used first at 15:36. This Greek word, transliterated, gives us the word *eucharist*. “Blood” (ver. 28) is used 97 times in the NT, at 16:17 first in Matthew. It is used 11 times in Matthew. “Covenant” is used 33 times in the NT; this is its only use in Matthew. It is mostly used in Hebrews, 17 times. “To pour out” was used first at 9:17. “Releasing” (the word is a noun) or “forgiveness” is used only here in Matthew, out of 17 uses in the NT. “Sin” was used first at 1:21. This is its last use in Matthew (out of 7 uses). “Vine” (ver. 29) is used 9 times, only here in Matthew. “New” was used first at 9:17. For “kingdom,” see notes at 3:2. For “Father,” see notes at 2:22. “To sing” (ver. 30) is used here; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Heb. 2:12. “Olives” is found first at 21:1. The phrase “Mount of Olives” is found 12 times in the Bible, twice in the OT: 2 Sam. 15:30; Zech. 14:4; the other times are in the Gospel accounts.

PARALLELS:

This event is found also in Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:15-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

For the phrase “the blood of the covenant,” see Exodus 24:8; Zech. 9:11 and the Hebrew writer’s extensive discussion of this in chapters 9-10 (see also 9:20). The “new covenant” was predicted in Jeremiah 31:31-34, fulfilled in the new covenant (“testament”) of Jesus Christ: Hebrews 8:8-13; 9:15-22. That Jesus poured His blood “for many” seems to fulfill the prediction of the Suffering Servant from Isaiah 52-53 (see 53:12).

ARCHAEOLOGY:

The “wine” which the Jews drank was from the grape vine, but there is no way to know at what point of fermentation the juice was in any given passage, unless the context requires us to interpret “wine” in the sense of fermentation which was intoxicating. Even so, later Jewish writings state that the wine was diluted with three parts of water, one part wine.

The traditional form of the blessing for the bread at Passover was: “Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the world, who brings forth bread from the earth.” For the wine, the blessing was: “Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the world, who created the fruit of the vine.” “Fruit of the vine” was a Jewish idiom for grape juice.

COMMENTS:

We have come to the Passover celebration itself. If later Jewish history was practiced during this period of their history, there were four cups drunk during the meal, interspersed with various courses of the meal, as well as rehearsal by father and son of the reason for the Passover: the exodus from Egypt (Exo. 12:26; 13:8). Scholars believe that the “cup” in this text is the third cup of the meal.

Jesus took the bread, blessed it, broke the loaf, and gave it to the disciples. He commanded them to eat it, saying “This is My body.” The apostles would not have imagined that Jesus was saying the bread was literally His body, nor that it would literally turn into His body. Both those concepts are foreign ideas, imposed on the text.

Similarly, Jesus took the cup (probably the third cup of the meal), and giving thanks, He gave it to them, commanded each of them to drink from it. As the bread pictured to them the body of Jesus, so the wine in the cup would picture for them the blood “of the covenant,” which would be poured out for the forgiveness of sins. It is remarkable that so many Bible scholars will be so detailed in so many aspects of their scholarship but the vast majority of them will overlook (ignore?) the parallel, both in Greek (εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν) and in English of the phrase “forgiveness of sins” which is used here, of the blood of the Lord’s Supper, and of immersion in water in Acts 2:38. If the preposition “for” (εἰς) in Matthew 26:28 means “in order to obtain forgiveness of sins,” then the same preposition, in the exact same phrase in Acts

2:38, means “in order to obtain forgiveness of sins.” Clearly, the NT writers wanted to draw the two together showing, in the words of Ananias to Saul of Tarsus, that it is through the immersion in water (baptism) that the blood of Christ washes one of their sins (Acts 22:16; cf. Heb. 10:22; Rev. 1:5).

In verse 29, Jesus promises that He will not drink (or eat) of the meal until He does so with them in a new way in the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of His Father. While it is popular to apply this promise to the “messianic banquet” which we have seen hinted in Matthew’s gospel (5:6; 8:11; 14:20; 15:37; 22:11-12; 25:10, 21, 23), it is far better to see Jesus predicting the communion He would have with His followers when they observe the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 10:16-17) on the first day of every week (1 Cor. 11:20ff; 16:1-2; Acts 20:7).

Once the disciples, and Jesus, had finished the Passover meal, they sang psalms together (Psalms 113-118), and left to go to the Mount of Olives. Bethany (26:6) was too far from Jerusalem for them to stay through the next few days’ activities. Luke tells us they slept on the slopes (21:37; 22:39).

APPLICATION:

The Lord’s Supper is clearly one of the central points of Christian worship. The early church observed the memorial under the guidance of the apostles (Acts 2:42) and the missionaries taught it in the newly-formed churches (Acts 20:7). Paul gave more explicit instructions in his letter to the Corinthians (11:19-17-32; 16:1-2).

In Acts 20:7, we read that the Christians in Troas took the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week. The clear implication of the text is that the *reason* the Christians came together on the first day of the week was to observe the Lord’s Supper. “To break bread” is a clear infinitive of purpose. But this is not the only verse that requires a first-day-of-the-week assembly.

In Hebrews 10:25, the author says that Christians should not forsake the assembling of Christians together. The letter of Hebrews was not written to a specific congregation like Romans or Corinthians, but to all Christians. Since the Hebrew writer is not explicit about the details, there is implied that the Hebrew Christians already knew the details of this assembly.

In 1 Corinthians 11:20 & 33, we have the implication that there was an assembly for “eating the Lord’s Supper” and this “coming together” was a regular pattern. This context of 1 Corinthians 11 clearly does not tell us when the Lord’s Supper was eaten or how frequently.

But, one text ties together all three of these texts (Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:25; 1 Corinthians 11:20, 33). Acts 20:7 tells us that it was not a one-time decision nor was the Lord’s Supper specific to the city of Troas. That one text is 1 Corinthians 16:1-2. When Paul wants the Christians in Corinth to take up the collection, he does not command them to assemble. They were already in the habit of assembling “on the first day of the week.” Why the first day of the week?

First, because that was the day that Jesus arose from the dead.

Second, on that day was when the apostles guided the first-century Christians to observe the memorial of that death, burial, and resurrection, that is, the Lord’s Supper. So here in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, Paul is saying, “When you gather together on the first day of the week to take the Lord’s Supper, when the whole church is gathered together, then take up a collection.”

The apostles, Paul specifically, commanded the first century Christians to gather together on Sunday, the Lord’s Day, in order to observe the Lord’s Supper. At that very assembly, we note from Acts 20:7 that there was preaching and from 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, there was giving. From other passages, we also learn they sang and prayed.

One last thing should be noted. In 1 Corinthians 11:20, Paul calls the Communion the “Lord’s Supper.” The word translated “Lord’s” is unique in that it is an adjective (“lordly”). There is only one other time in the NT in which that word is found: in Revelation 1:10, the “Lord’s Day.” The implication then is that every Lord’s Day ought to have a “Lord’s Supper” and if it is not the “Lord’s Day,” then there should be no “Lord’s Supper.”

There is no doubt from early church history that weekly communion was the pattern of the first-century church. G. W. Bromiley, writes in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, volume three under "Lord's Day" (158):

The expression "Lord's Day" found only in Christian sources, first appears in Rev. 1:10 as a designation of the first day of the week. ...[I]t derives from the parallel expression "Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. 11:20), since the early Christians gathered *on the first day of the week to celebrate this meal* as the culmination of their corporate worship. An account of an early (late 50s) Lord's Day service is found in Acts 20:7-11. ...Hence, Lord's Day worship is the Christian festival of the Resurrection, in which Christians, like the original disciples, have fellowship with one another and with the risen Christ whom they trust as Savior and worship as God (emph. mine).

We also note that Jesus gave His life "for many." This fulfills the picture of Jesus shedding His blood for others: Matthew 20:28. See also Romans 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 1:4; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 2:2; 4:14. Jesus is the "Passover lamb." 1 Cor. 5:7.

In addition to the Lord's Supper, Christians are also to sing, teaching and encouraging one another in the word of God: Acts 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; James 5:13.

It is evident that Jesus commands Christians to celebrate His death and resurrection. That is the law. To create rituals to celebrate His birth, His life, His miracles, are lawlessness (cf. Matt. 7:21-23).

TRANSLATION - 26:31-35:

31 At that time, Jesus said to them, "All of you will be offended at Me in this night, for it has been written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the shepherd will be scattered."

32 And after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee. **33** And after answering Peter said to Him, "If all will be offended at you, I myself will never be offended!"

34 Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, that in this night, before a rooster sounds, thrice you will deny Me." **35** Peter said to Him, "If it is necessary for me with You to die, I will not you deny!" The same even all the disciples said.

GREEK WORDS:

"To be offended" (ver. 31) was used first at 5:29-30. It is used 14 times in the NT. "To strike, hit" is used here at 26:31, 51 in Matthew; it is used 10 times in the NT. "Shepherd" was used first at 9:36. "To be scattered, dispersed" was used at 25:24, 26. "Sheep" was used first at 7:15. "To raise up" (ver. 32) was used first at 1:24. It does not always refer to a resurrection, as it does here. "Galilee" was first used at 2:22. "Rooster" (ver. 34) is used 12 times in the NT, three times in Matthew: 26:34, 74-75. "To sound" is the verb related to the word "voice." Here, it of course carries the idea of "crowing." The verb was used first at 20:32. "To deny" was used first at 16:24. "It is necessary" (ver. 35) carries the idea of some moral or spiritual compulsion; see its use in Matthew: 16:21; 17:10; 18:33; 23:23; 24:6; 25:27; 26:35, 54. "To die" (ver. 35) was used first at 8:32.

PARALLELS:

This event is also found in Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-34; John 13:36-38.

COMMENTS:

Around that same time, probably on the way to the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus predicted that all His disciples would be offended at Him, that very night. How did He know this? "For it has been written..."

In this short paragraph, Jesus prophesies three events:

1. His apostles will be scattered, fulfilled in verse 56.

2. He will meet His apostles in Galilee, fulfilled in 28:7, 10.

3. Peter will deny Jesus, fulfilled in 26:69-75.

Here, Jesus quotes Zechariah 13:7 as being fulfilled in that event. In Zechariah 13:7, the “Lord of Hosts” speaks to His sword, commanding it to strike His shepherd. Once the shepherd is struck, the sheep will be scattered. Here, Jesus is the shepherd who is struck and His disciples are the sheep which are scattered. In John 20:19, we read that they hid from the Jewish authorities.

Then Jesus predicts that once He is raised (and the disciples still do not understand the prediction of the resurrection, which He prophesied three times: 16:21; 17:9, 23; 20:19) He will meet them in Galilee. The angels will recite this prediction of Jesus in 28:7, 10 and it will be fulfilled in 28:16-20.

Peter, however, as his impetuous nature tended to do (see 14:28-31; 16:22-23; 17:4; 19:27), spoke and bragged that if the other apostles were to be offended, he himself would never be offended! Peter simply did not know himself very well. He made the statement with all sincerity, honesty, and self-confidence, but little of self-awareness. Jesus emphasized in verse 34 that in that very night, before the rooster would crow, Peter would deny three times that he knew Jesus! Jesus had blessed those who were not offended in Him, at Matthew 11:6.

Yet, in the face of a bold and clear prediction of Jesus, Peter still denied (ver. 35) that he would deny Jesus. In fact, he predicted that he would die with Jesus but he would not deny him! How sadly Peter would be wrong. However, the other apostles also repeated Peter’s denial. They would all prove to be untrustworthy.

It is here that one should read the further events from that night, recorded in John 13-17.

APPLICATION:

It is important to note the strength of the apostles’ denial here, for they did not expect the resurrection of Christ (nor His death for that matter). This weakness on their part gives stronger credibility to their change of heart and change of mind later, when, in the face of certain death, they preached the resurrection of Jesus Christ (see Acts 4:19-20; 5:27-32).

Although some modern “scholars” want to deny certain aspects of this account as being historical - they argue the apostles were asleep, how could they know what Jesus prayed? - Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into all truth (John 14:25-26; 15:26-27; 16:13). Based on the character of Jesus, we trust that statement to be true.

TRANSLATION - 26:36-46:

36 At that time, Jesus came with them into the garden called Gethsemane and He said to the disciples, “Sit down here until [which] after going there, I might pray.” **37** And after taking Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to be distressed and to be troubled. **38** Then He said to them, “Deeply grieved is My soul until death; remain here and watch with Me.” **39** And going further a little, He fell on His face, praying and saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let pass away from Me this cup; nevertheless not as I Myself desire but as you.”

40 And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “Thus you were not able one hour to watch with Me? **41** Watch and pray, in order that you do not enter into temptation; for the spirit [is] willing but the flesh [is] weak.”

42 Again a second [time] after going, He prayed saying, “My Father, if this is not possible to pass, unless I drink it, let be done Your will.” **43** And after coming again, He found them sleeping, for their eyes were having been burdened. **44** And after leaving them again after going away He prayed a third [time] the same word saying again. **45** At that time, He came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep from now on and rest. Behold the hour has come near and the Son of Man is being handed over into the hands of sinners. **46** Raise up; let us go. Behold, the one handing Me over has come near.”

GREEK WORDS:

“Garden” (ver. 36) or “place, piece of land” is used only here in Matthew, out of 10 uses in the NT. Most of those are in Acts (7 times). “Gethsemane” is only mentioned here and its parallel passage in Mark 14:32. “To sit down” is used 46 times in the NT, first in Matthew at 5:1. “To pray” is used in this text at 26:36, 39, 41, 42, 44. It was first used in 5:44. “To be distressed” or “to grieve” (ver. 37) is used often in Matthew: 14:9; 17:23; 18:31; 19:22; 26:22, 37. Its synonym “To be anxious, distressed, or troubled” is used only three times in the NT: 26:37; Mark 14:33; Phil. 2:26. “Deeply grieved” (ver. 38) is used 5 times: Matt. 26:38; Mark 6:26; 14:34; Luke 18:23-24. “Soul” was used first at 2:20. “Death” was used first at 4:16. “To remain” was used first at 10:11. “To be awake, watchful, on the alert” is used in verses 38, 40, 41. It was used first at 24:42-43.

“To fall” (ver. 39) was used first at 2:11. “Face” was used first at 6:16-17. “Father” was used first at 2:22. “To pass or pass away” is used 29 times in the NT, first at 5:18. “Possible” was first used at 19:26. “Cup” was used first at 10:42. See also 20:22-23. “To sleep” (ver. 41, 43, 45) is used first at 8:24. “To have power, to be able” (ver. 40) is used first at 5:13. “Testing” (ver. 41) or “temptation” was used at 6:13. This is its only other use in Matthew. “Spirit” was used first at 1:18, 20. “Willing or ready” is used here; Mark 14:38; Rom. 1:15. “Flesh” is used first at 16:17. “Weak” was used first in the last chapter: 25:43-44. “Will” (ver. 42) is used first at 6:10.

“To be burdened” (ver. 43) is used here only in Matthew; it is used also at Luke 9:32; 21:34; 2 Cor. 1:8; 5:4; 1 Tim. 5:16. “From now on, henceforth” (ver. 45) was used first at 22:6. “To rest, remain quiet” (ver. 45) was used first at 11:28. “Sinners” was used first at 9:10-11, 13.

GREEK GRAMMAR:

The commands in verse 41 are present tense, suggesting continuous action. The verb “to come near” (ver. 45, 46) translates a verb in the perfect tense, to denote the present condition of a past action. We also note that the “hour” has “come near” in verse 45, which is parallel to “the one betraying Me” who has “come near” in verse 46. The one refers to the other.

PARALLELS:

This paragraph is found also in Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

The nature of Jesus’ heart during His prayers reflects thoughts from Psalm 42:6, 11; 43:5.

As we saw in 20:22-23, the “cup” in the OT referred to God’s wrath and/or suffering: Psa. 11:6; 16:5; 23:5; 60:3; 75:8; 116:13; Isa. 29:9-10; 51:17, 21-23; Jer. 16:7; 25:15-29; Lam. 4:21; Ezek. 23:31, 33; Zech. 12:2. The imagery is also used in Revelation 14:10.

COMMENTS:

“Gethsemane” is a compound word, meaning “oil press.” The garden was known for its olive trees, which were apparently cut down by Titus when he attacked Jerusalem in A. D. 70. This was a place where Jesus habitually prayed (John 18:2). In the shadow of the cross (speaking figuratively), Jesus comes here to pray, with His disciples. He leaves most of them at the entrance and withdraws deeper into the garden with His inner circle of friends: Peter, James and John, the sons of Zebedee (cf. 17:1). Then He began to feel deeply troubled and distressed. Consider what He was about to endure: 1) abandonment by His friends; 2) serving as a sacrifice for the sins of the world (2 Cor. 5:21); 3) abandonment by His Father in heaven (27:46); 4) the pain and agony of the crucifixion; 5) the temptation (perhaps?) to blaspheme God under the trials He would endure and excruciating pain He would experience (Heb. 4:15).

In fact, Jesus tells His apostles that His very soul was deeply grieved to the point of death. So He asked them to remain where they were and watch with Him. Jesus then went a

little further Himself into the garden and fell before His heavenly Father in prayer and asking His Father that if it were possible, He might take away from Jesus that cup He was about to drink. Jesus calls God "My Father," in Matthew, at 7:21; 8:21; 10:32-33; 11:27; 12:50; 16:17; 18:10, 19; 20:23; 25:34; 26:29, 39, 42, 53. This is 15 uses of the phrase in Matthew; the phrase is not used in Mark, 8 times in Luke, 26 times in the Gospel of John, three times in Revelation (2:27; 3:5, 21).

As in all of His life, Jesus would submit to the will of His Father. When Jesus came to His apostles, He found them sleeping. He asked if they did not have sufficient strength for an hour to watch with Him. His reference to an hour perhaps suggests that He had been praying for an hour. He tells them a second time to watch and pray so they will not enter into temptation themselves in what they were about to experience (cf. 6:13). However, Jesus also acknowledged that the "spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (ver. 41). That is why He spent so much time in prayer!

Jesus withdrew a second time to pray privately with His Father and this time, He is more resolved to His future and giving Himself into the hands of the Father. He acknowledges that it is not possible for the events to pass without Him drinking from that cup of the Father's wrath. Again, He prays, "Let your will be done" (cf. 6:10). He returned to His apostles again and, again, found them sleeping because their eyes were heavy with sleep. He left them to pray again, substantially repeating His prayer for the third time (cf. 2 Cor. 12:7-10).

Jesus returned to His apostles the third time and encouraged them to sleep while they could and get their rest. The next several hours would be very hard on them. Then, Jesus acknowledges that His hour had come and He says the "Son of Man is being handed over", or betrayed, into the hands of sinners. From a theological perspective, it is the Father who is handing Jesus over. From a physical perspective, it is Judas. He tells His apostles to arise, they must go. "The one betraying Me, or handing Me over, has arrived."

APPLICATION:

As Jesus powerfully illustrates here, we should always pray "if the Lord wills" (James 4:15). See an example of this perspective in the apostle Paul at Acts 21:14.

The "hour" of Jesus' betrayal is continuously emphasized in the Gospel of John: 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23; 13:1; 16:4; 17:1. The Hebrew writer tells us that Jesus learned obedience by the things which He suffered (5:7-8) and, becoming complete, He became the initiator of salvation for those who obey Him.

We will be less prone to giving in to temptation if we stay spiritually alert (Rom. 13:11-14; 1 Cor. 11:30; 16:13; Eph. 5:14; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:4-8; 1 Peter 5:8). Certainly Christians need to pray frequently: Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17; 1 Peter 4:7.

TRANSLATION - 26:47-56;

47 And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve came and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs from the chief priests and elders of the people. **48** And the one handing Him over gave to them a sign, saying, "Whomever I will kiss, He is, arrest Him."

49 And immediately, after coming to Jesus, he said, "Greetings, rabbi!" And he kissed Him obviously. **50** And Jesus said to him, "Comrade, for what you have come?" Then, approaching, they laid hands on Jesus and arrested Him. **51** And behold, one of those with Jesus, after extending his hand drew his sword and after striking the servant of the high priest, he removed his ear. **52** Then Jesus said to him, "Return your sword to its place; for all those taking a sword by a sword will perish. **53** Or do you think that I am not able to call My Father, and He will provide to Me immediately more than twelve legions of angels? **54** Therefore, how will the Writings be fulfilled that thus it is necessary to happen?"

55 In that hour, Jesus said to the crowd, "As against a bandit you have come out with swords and clubs to apprehend Me? Each day in the temple I was sitting, teaching, and you

did not arrest Me. **56** And this all has happened in order that the writings of the prophets may be fulfilled.” At that time, all the disciples, after leaving Him fled.

GREEK WORDS:

The name “Judas” (ver. 47) is used 44 times in the NT. This Judas, Iscariot, is only mentioned in 10:4 before this text, 26:14. The designation “the twelve” is used 27 times in the Gospel accounts to refer to the original twelve apostles: 10:2; 19:28; 20:17; 26:14, 20 47. After the Gospel accounts, the phrase is used only 8 times: Acts 6:2; 7:8; 1 Cor. 15:5; James 1:1; Rev. 21:12, 14, 21. This “sword” was first mentioned in 10:34. It is used in this text at 26:47, 51-52, 55. “Clubs” is only used in this context in Matthew (26:47, 55), out of 20 uses in the NT. The word “people” was first used at 1:21.

“Sign” (ver. 48) was seen in 12:38-39; 16:1, 3-4; 24:3, 24, 30; 26:48. “To kiss” was first seen at 6:5. “To arrest or seize” is used in this text at 26:48, 50, 55, 57; 28:9. It was first used at 9:25. “Greetings!” (ver. 49) was first seen at 2:10. “Rabbi” means “teacher” in Aramaic but the word was carried over into the Greek NT, probably because it continued to be used by first century Christians. It is used in Matthew at 23:7-8; 26:25, 49. “To kiss obviously” is related to the verb “to kiss” in the previous verse but this is an emphatic form of that verb, used here; Mark 14:45; Luke 7:38, 45; 15:20; Acts 20:37.

“Comrade” (ver. 50) or “friend” is used at Matthew 20:13; 22:12; 26:50. “To put or lay” is used 18 times in the NT, first at 9:16. “Behold” (ver. 51) is used in this text at 26:45-47. “To extend” is used 16 times, first at 8:3. “To draw out” is used here; Luke 22:41; Acts 20:30; 21:1. “To strike or hit” is used here at 26:31, 51, out of 10 uses in the NT. “Slave” is used first at 8:9. “To remove, cut off” is used only here in Matthew, out of 10 uses. “To return” (ver. 52) was used first at 5:42. “To perish or die” is used 90 times in the NT, used first at 2:13.

“To think or seem” (ver. 53) was first used at 3:9, out of 62 uses. “To call, summon, encourage” was first used at 2:18. “To place beside, provide” is only used here in the NT, out of 41 uses. “Legion” is only used four times: here; Mark 5:9, 15; Luke 8:30. “Angel” or “messenger” is used first at 1:20, 24. “Writing” (ver. 54) refers most often to the writing of the OT Scriptures; the word was first used at 21:42. It is used 50 times in the NT. “Bandit or highwayman” (ver. 55) is used 15 times in the NT, first at 21:13. “Teaching” is used frequently in Matthew, first at 4:23. “Prophet” (ver. 56) is used extensively in Matthew (37 times), first at 1:22. The verb “to flee” is used 29 times in the NT, first at 2:13.

GREEK GRAMMAR:

“Greetings!” (ver. 49) is a present imperative verb. Jesus’ question to the apostles in verse 45 could, grammatically, be translated as a question, a statement, or even a sarcastic command. His comment to Judas in verse 50 could, grammatically, be translated as a command, a statement, or a question. Read the statements each way and hear a different nuance in Jesus’ voice.

PARALLELS:

This paragraph has its parallel in Mark 14:43-50; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:3-12.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

Jesus stated that His death was the fulfillment of Scripture (ver. 53-54). Consider how many times Jesus, or Matthew, wrote that His life was to fulfill Scripture: 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 3:15; 4:14; 5:17, 33; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 21:4; 26:54, 56; 27:9. A host of angels were guarding Elisha and his servants in 2 Kings 6:17.

ARCHAEOLOGY:

The “sword” was a short dagger (ver. 47). “Legion” (ver. 53) was roughly 6,000 soldiers. See “Archaeology” at 8:5ff for further information about the Roman military. The whole Roman Empire only had 25 legions.

COMMENTS:

While Jesus was still speaking to His apostles, Judas shows up. Matthew draws our attention to this infamous act of treachery with the word “behold!” He also reminds us that Judas was “one of the twelve,” one of Jesus’ special followers who was uniquely chosen (10:4). He led a contingent of armed individuals, with swords and clubs, coming from the religious and political leaders of the Jewish people. Judas had given them a sign, so they would know which individual was Jesus. Perhaps the men did not know Jesus by sight; perhaps it would have been difficult to see in the garden at night. Yet, this sign illustrates that the Jewish leaders were not interested in arresting the apostles. Judas would kiss the man who was to be arrested.

As Judas approached, he greeted Jesus with “Greetings, rabbi!” He is the only one in Matthew who referred to Jesus as “rabbi” (26:25, 49). Then, he gave Jesus an obvious kiss (the verb is an intensified form of the verb “to kiss”). Jesus returned the treachery by referring to Judas as “comrade” or “friend.” Then he called on Judas to fulfill what he had come to do. So, the officers arrested Jesus. Matthew again draws our attention to the following action with “behold!” One of Jesus’ apostles draw a sword and struck a slave of the high priest sent to arrest Jesus and cut off his ear. John informs us that the apostle who drew the sword was Peter (18:10) and the man whose ear was cut off was Malchus. Jesus restored the ear to Malchus (Luke 22:51), a fact which Matthew omits.

Jesus encourages Peter to return his sword for “all those taking the sword by the sword will perish.” It was necessary to submit to the will of the Father and this was not the time for armed combat. If it had been the Father’s will, Jesus could have called twelve legions of angels, 72,000 angels, to defend Himself and His eleven apostles. The “twelve” might also reflect the twelve tribes of Israel. Clearly Jesus had more and better defense at His command than a few swords (see John 12:27)! However, that was not the Father’s will. The Father’s will had been spoken in Scripture (the OT) and Scripture, being the words from the mouth of God, had to be fulfilled.

Then Jesus rebuked the crowd of officers sent from the chief priests and elders. They came out against Him as if He were a thief, a common criminal, a brigand, with swords and clubs, in the darkness of night (which Jesus does not say). Yet every day, He had preached and taught openly in the temple and they did not lay a hand on Him. Perhaps His thoughts would strike a cord in the heart of some of the men, perhaps Malchus. They had, in fact, tried to arrest Jesus earlier (John 7:32, 44-46), but after hearing Him speak, they left empty-handed. Again, Jesus said that these events had to happen for the writings of the prophets to be fulfilled. Notice at the very end, Jesus is still promoting the writings, teachings, Word of the Father (cf. Isa. 53:12).

Then the apostles left Jesus and fled for their lives. Four of the men, Peter, James, John, and Andrew had “left” their nets to follow Jesus (4:20, 22). Now, under pressure, they “leave” (same verb) Jesus to stand trial alone. Jesus had predicted this behavior, based on Zechariah 13:7, back in verse 31.

APPLICATION:

Jesus told Pilate that His servants would not fight because the kingdom is a spiritual kingdom (John 18:36). Jesus taught His disciples not to seek revenge in 5:38-42. It is generally true that violence produces violence. The OT and the NT both encourage God’s people to leave revenge and justice in the hands of God: Gen. 4:14; 9:6; Exo. 21:12; Prov. 22:8; Ecc. 10:8; Isa. 50:11; Hosea 10:13; Romans 12:17-21.

However, God also gave the civil government the right to punish violence, murder specifically, in Romans 13:1-4. When an individual, acting on behalf of civil law (if the police cannot arrive in time, for example), defends himself, even in killing an assailant, he or she is not morally culpable. Christians are to provide for their own (1 Tim. 5:8), including defense. Yet, the kingdom of heaven itself is not fought with physical weapons (cf. 2 Cor. 10:3-6).

The fact that Jesus could have called 72,000 angels to defend Him but chose not to do so is an illustration of the Christian virtue called “meekness.” It is power, under control. See 1 Cor. 4:21; 2 Cor. 10:1; Gal. 5:23; 6:1; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:25; Titus 3:2; James 1:21; 3:13; 1 Peter 3:15. See also Matthew 11:29; Luke 1:52; Rom. 12:16; 2 Cor. 7:6; 10:1; James 1:9; 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5.

TRANSLATION - 26:57-68:

57 And those arresting Jesus brought [Him] to Caiaphas, the chief priest, where the scribes and elders were gathered together. **58** And Peter followed Him from a distance until the palace of the chief priest and entering inside he sat with the attendants to see the end. **59** And the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin kept seeking false testimony against Jesus, how Him they might cause to die. **60** And they did not find many approaching of false testimony. And finally after approaching two, **61** said, “This One said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and after three days I will build [it].’”

62 And after rising the chief priest said to him, Nothing You answer what these are testifying against You?” **63** And Jesus was silent. Then the chief priest said to Him, “I put you under oath according to the Living God that You might answer me, if You are the Christ, the Son of God!”

64 Jesus said to him, “You have said. Nevertheless, I say to you, from now one you will see the Son of Man sitting on the right of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

65 At that time, the chief priest ripped his cloak saying, “He has blasphemed! What yet need do we have of testimony? Behold now you heard the blasphemy! **66** What does it seem to you?” Those after answering said, “Deserving of death He is.” **67** At that time, they spit on His face and punched Him, and those slapped [Him] **68** saying, “Prophecy to us, Christ, who is the one hitting You!?”

GREEK WORDS:

“To arrest or seize” (ver. 57) was used in this text first at verse 4. “Caiaphas” was first mentioned at verse 3. “Chief priests” was found first at 2:4. “Scribes” were also found first at 2:4. “Elders” were first mentioned at 15:2. “Attendant” or “officer” (ver. 58) is used 20 times in the NT, first at 5:25. “End” was used first at 10:22. “Sanhedrin” (ver. 59) was first mentioned at 5:22. See “Archeology” there. “False testimony” is only used here (26:59-60) and 15:19. “To cause to die or put to death” is found 11 times in the NT, first at 10:21.

“To destroy or demolish” (ver. 61) was used first at 5:17. “Temple” refers to the temple itself, with its holy rooms (not the whole temple compound), used first at 23:16-17, 21, 35. “To build” was first seen at 7:24, 26. “To answer” (ver. 62) is used 231 times in the NT, first at 3:15. “To testify against” is used here; 27:13; Mark 14:60. It has the same root word (testimony or witness) as “false testimony” at 59-60.

“To be silent” (ver. 63) was used first at 20:31. It is used 10 times in the NT. “To put one under oath” is one word, used only here in the NT. “Christ” is used first at 1:1, used 529 times in the NT, 16 times in Matthew. “Son of God” is used 8 times in Matthew: 4:3, 6; 5:9; 8:29; 26:63; 27:40, 43, 54. The phrase “Son of Man” is used 31 times in Matthew. This will be its last use. “Power” was used first at 7:22. “To rip” or “tear” (ver. 65) is used 5 times in the NT: here; Mark 14:63; Luke 5:6; 8:29; Acts 14:14. “Cloak” was used first at 5:40. “To blaspheme” was used first at 9:3, out of 34 uses in the NT. “Testimony” was used first at 18:16. The noun “blasphemy” was first used at 12:31.

“To think or seem” (ver. 66) was used earlier at verse 53. “Deserving” was used first at 5:21-22. “To spit” (ver. 67) is used 6 times in the NT: here; 27:30; Mark 10:34; 14:65; 15:19; Luke 18:32. “Face” was used first at 6:16-17. “To punch, strike with the fist” is used 5 times: here; Mark 14:65; 1 Cor. 4:11; 2 Cor. 12:7; 1 Peter 2:20. “To slap” is used in 5:39 and here in the NT. “To prophecy” is used first at 7:22. “To strike or hit” is used here; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:64; John 18:10; Rev. 9:5.

GREEK GRAMMAR:

“They were seeking” (ver. 59) translates a verb in the imperfect tense, indicating continuous action in the past. These men were intent on finding *something* for which they could accuse Jesus of a capital crime.

PARALLELS:

This passage is also found at Mark 14:53-65; Luke 22:54-55; John 18:13-14, 19-24.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

There were to be a minimum of two witnesses at a trial for capital punishment (Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6; 19:15). Blasphemy did carry the punishment of death: Lev. 24:10-23. The suffering servant in Isaiah 50:6 is fulfilled in the trial of Jesus.

COMMENTS:

While it is true that several illegalities occurred during the trial of Jesus (see below under “Application”), there might be less than many scholars suppose. They base their assessment on the Mishnah *Sanhedrin* (4-7). However, this text dates at least to the late second-century and it is not clear that their rules were in effect during the days and trial of Jesus.

Verse 57 begins the so-called Jewish trial of Jesus. The Sanhedrin, or a part of the body, assembles together in order to make the “legal” case for Jesus’ death before they turn Him over to the Roman government, Pontius Pilate (chapter 27), for the death penalty. Caiaphas was the high priest at that time and the Sanhedrin was assembled together in his palace, or at least the courtyard of the palace. This was an *ad hoc* assembly. They did not expect to arrest Jesus so quickly or so easily during the festival.

Matthew tells us in verse 58 that Peter followed at a distance, which sets the scene for verses 69-75. To illustrate the bias of the Sanhedrin, in verse 59 Matthew tells us that the Sanhedrin kept seeking “false witness” against Jesus. While they were obviously not looking for liars, they were also not concerned if the witness was true or not, or if the witnesses agreed or not. They had already determined the conviction; they just needed some “evidence.” Matthew tells us they were having a difficult time finding such testimony.

But then two showed up and said that they had heard Jesus say He would destroy the temple of God and build it in three days. It might be easy for some to construe Jesus’ action with the moneychangers in 21:12-13 as being against the temple. Also, in John 2:19-21, Jesus had predicted that He would destroy *His* temple, and raise it in three days, referring to His body. It was a heinous crime to desecrate the temple of the God/s of a people. This would be brought up at His crucifixion (27:40). Having heard this “testimony,” the high priest rhetorically asked if Jesus would respond to those testifying against Him. Jesus, in fulfillment of prophecy, remained silent (cf. Isaiah 53:7). After all, it was God’s will for Him to be crucified.

So, the high priest put Jesus under a legal oath, in the sight of the Living God, to tell them all if He is the Christ (Messiah in Hebrew), the Son of God. The designation “Son of God” and “Messiah” are used interchangeably here (cf. 2 Sam. 7:14; Psa. 2:7; 89:26-27). Jews saw the two designations as synonyms, but they certainly did not understand the terms correctly, as the death of Jesus illustrates.

Jesus responded shortly: “You say.” This illustrates that the words of the high priest were true, but Jesus had to define the terms differently than how the Sanhedrin understood them. Jesus quotes or alludes to Psalm 110:1 (see also at 22:41-46) and Daniel 7:13-14. From that point forward, the Sanhedrin would see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of “The Power” (another designation for God), and coming in the clouds of heaven. As we commented in chapter 24, “coming on the clouds” could be a reference to the Son coming in judgment. When Jesus rose from the dead, the Sanhedrin would “see” / “know” / “experience” the fact that Jesus was, in fact, the Son of God, the Messiah, and everything else He had claimed to be.

Peter tells us that Jesus received that kingdom, returning to the Father in clouds (Acts 1:11) and sitting down at the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:30-33). Luke's account of the trial of Jesus makes this connection more clearly: Luke 22:69.

At those words, the Sanhedrin interpreted Jesus as committing blasphemy, at which the chief priest tore his clothes and said to the rest of the assembly, "He has blasphemed. What yet need do we have of testimony? Behold, now, you heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" Jesus will be condemned for speaking the Truth. Everyone answered, "He is worthy of death."

Verses 67-68 record the abuse and mockery directed against Jesus by a crowd of individuals who portray themselves as honoring the dignity of God. These men spit in Jesus' face. They punched Him. They struck Him, challenging Him to prophesy (if He is the "Christ"), who struck Him? Meanwhile, outside...

APPLICATION:

The Law had commanded not to bear false witness against another (Exo. 20:16) and it also commanded that false witnesses should experience the penalty they had hoped to inflict on the defendant (Deut. 19:16-19). Nothing of this happened in this trial. The Law also forbid someone from being put to death on his own testimony (Deut. 17:6). The Law also forbid high priests to tear their clothes (Lev. 21:10-11).

The Jews will bring up the Christians' view of the temple at the trial of Stephen in Acts 6:14.

TRANSLATION - 26:69-75:

69 And Peter sat outside in the palace; and there approached him one maiden saying, "Even you were being with Jesus of Galilee." **70** But he denied before all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying." **71** And after going out one of the gateways another girl saw him and to those there, "This one was being with Jesus of Nazareth." **72** And again he denied with an oath that "I do not know the man." **73** And after a little, after approaching, those standing said to Peter, "Absolutely even you from them you are, for even your speech makes you evident." **74** At that time, he began to curse and to swear oaths that "I do not know the man," And immediately a rooster crowed. **75** And Peter remembered the statement of Jesus having said that "Before a rooster crows three times, you will deny Me." And after going outside he wept bitterly.

GREEK WORDS:

"Maiden" (ver. 69) is used only here in Matthew, out of 13 uses. "To deny" (ver. 70, 72) was used first at 10:33. "Nazareth" (ver. 72) was used first at 2:23. This is its last use in Matthew, out of 13 occasions. "Oath" was used first at 5:33. "Truly, absolutely, really" (ver. 73) was first used at 14:33. "Form of speech, accent" is used here; John 4:42; 8:43. "Clear or evident" is used here; 1 Cor. 15:27; Gal. 3:11.

"To curse" (ver. 74) is used only here. "To swear an oath" is used first at 5:34, 36. "Rooster" was found first at 26:34. "To crow" means "to sound;" it was used first at 20:32. "To remember" (ver. 75) was first used at 5:23. "Word, statement, saying," is used first at 4:4. "To deny" was first used at 16:24. "To weep" was first used at 2:18. This is its last use. "Bitterly" is used only here and Luke 22:62.

GREEK GRAMMAR:

The verb "were being" (ver. 69, 71) translates the imperfect tense, indicating a continuous past action. The verb "having said" (ver. 75) translates a verb in the perfect tense, indicating the permanent nature of a prophecy.

PARALLELS:

This event is also found in Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:56-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27.

COMMENTS:

Peter had boasted that He would die with Jesus, but He would not deny Jesus (26:33, 35). Now, in contrast with Jesus' moral and spiritual strength exhibited while He is on trial for His life, Peter is doing all he can to separate himself from Jesus, to save his life. He is in the courtyard of the priest and a servant girl (at the lowest possible social status!) identifies him as one with Jesus in Galilee. Peter denied this statement in front of all those standing there, feigning ignorance of her comment.

Sometime later, as he was exiting the gate, another female saw him and said to those around that Peter was with Jesus of Nazareth. Again, a second time, Peter denied, making an oath to call down God's wrath on him if he were lying, that he does not know "the Man." We have already illustrated that the officers did not go out to arrest all the apostles, only Jesus. Also, when Peter drew the sword, he could have been killed immediately. Yet, the officers allowed him to live. While we ought to be careful judging Peter as if we would have done something differently, there does not seem to be any reason why he should have denied his association with Jesus. He does not appear to be in any danger. How often do we fail morally or spiritually because of a perceived, but not real, fear?

For a third time, this time a group of individuals around, emphatically ("Truly") declare that Peter was a follower of Jesus because his speech was of a Galileean. Peter's accent gave him away (cf. Acts 4:13). At that point, Peter began to curse (some scholars suggest he was directing the curses at Jesus) and to swear oaths that he did not know "the man" (observe the impersonal nature of his designation of Jesus).

Then, the rooster crowed, just as Jesus had predicted. Peter immediately remembered the statement of Jesus that Peter would deny Jesus three times before the rooster crowed. At that memory, Peter went outside, by himself, and wept bitterly (the last word in the verse and chapter). Would the last words Jesus ever know coming from the mouth of Peter be this series of denials? Peter would have much to lament over the next 48 hours!

APPLICATION:

Jesus' followers would later be known as the "sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5).

Peter's remorse illustrates Paul's comment about godly sorrow produces repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). John 21:15-19 is widely understood, perhaps correctly, to symbolize the "recommissioning" of Peter to his role in service to Jesus. Just as he denies Jesus three times here, in that text, he reaffirms his love for his Lord.

You and I need to be careful that, in our spiritual pride, we not fall from the grace of God (1 Cor. 10:12). Peter cautions us to add Christian virtues to our lives so we will not fall (2 Peter 1:5-11).

It is difficult to believe that early Christians (in the 2nd and 3rd centuries) who were prone to idolize other Christians, would "concoct" this story of Peter's betrayal. It is far more likely that it really happened and was recorded by the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God.