

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

### SECTION 61

#### JESUS PREDICTS HIS OWN DEATH A FIFTH TIME

TEXT: 26:1, 2

1 and it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these words, he said unto his disciples, 2 Ye know that after two days the passover cometh, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. Why do you suppose Jesus thought it essential for the disciples' growth and even their sanity to repeat His death prediction one more time?
- b. Why do you think Jesus thought it essential that they hear it at this particular time in His ministry?
- c. Do you see any particular connection between Jesus' usual way of expressing His death prediction and the noteworthy addition made on this occasion: "You know that after two days the passover is coming"?
- d. If you see the connection suggested in the previous question, how does this connection reveal the greater plan of God behind the two events?
- e. Who do you suppose is going to "deliver up (the Son of man) to be crucified"? (1) Judas? (2) the Jewish authorities? (3) Pilate and the Romans? (4) God? On what basis do you choose or reject any of the above?
- f. Since this death announcement comes on the heels of "all these words" which Matthew records contextually in chapters 23-25 as almost one continuous discourse, how does this death announcement fit into all that Jesus has been saying?
- g. If Judas heard this announcement, what effect do you think this sinister warning had on him?

#### PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

When Jesus had finished His prophetic discourse, He commented to His disciples, "As you know, the Passover is the day after tomorrow, and I the Son of man, will be handed over to be executed on a cross."

## SUMMARY

Once again Jesus hammered home the unwelcome truth that He would be crucified, this time, however, specifying that this would occur during the Passover festival.

## NOTES

## 1. AFTER THE DISCOURSE

26:1 **And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these words he said unto his disciples.** Matthew deliberately indicates that the foregoing speech of Jesus is to be considered one continuous discourse, not a collage of bits and pieces taken from heterogenous sources and now compiled into one fabricated homily. While it is remarkable that Matthew repeatedly used the same formula (*kaì egéneto hòte etélesen ho Iesoûs tous lôgous toutous*), on what reasonable basis can any critic deny this excellent writer the right to make use of whatever connectives HE considers appropriate?

Because *all these words* refers contextually to the great Eschatological Discourse (chaps. 24, 25) and possibly also to the anti-Pharisean sermon (chap. 23), two important ends are achieved:

1. Because, in Matthew's outline, no more landmark sermons follow this remark, some deduce that our author speaks of the conclusion of Jesus' great public or semi-public discourses. However, the great valedictory speeches at the last Passover supper occur after this. (Cf. John 14-17.) So, Matthew does not add *all* to imply that Jesus' teaching is absolutely completed with no more to say to anyone, but simply that the foregoing lessons on chapters 23-25 are the background in which to understand what follows next.
2. Fully aware of the emotional impact His presentation of His own future glory must make on His yet immature disciples, Jesus must bring them back down to earth. With future glories ringing in their ears, resurrecting old wrong-headed Messianic concepts, they needed to be especially warned once again of His impending suffering, in order to be emotionally ready for what was coming.

## 2. APPROACH TO DEATH

26:2 **Ye know that after two days the passover cometh, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified.** The disciples are reminded of two great facts:

1. *After two days the passover cometh.* As Jesus often spoke of time this means "in a couple of days" or even "day after tomorrow," which counts the day on which the predicted event is to occur. (See on 12:40; 16:21; 17:23; 20:19 where Mark and Luke's parallel consistently say "on the third day" for Matthew's "after three days.") Despite what seems to us an imprecision on Jesus' part, He is not inaccurate. In fact, Matthew gives circumstantial evidence agreeing with the other Evangelists. John dated the arrival of Jesus at Jerusalem as "six days before the passover" (John 12:1) i.e. the day before the Messianic Entry (John 12:12). Beginning with the day after their arrival at Bethany, Mark incidentally lists the following five days as they occur:

1. Day 1, the triumphal entry (John 12:12; Mark 11:11)
2. Day 2, the cursing of the fig tree (Mark 11:12)
3. Day 3, the fig tree was noticed as withered (Mark 11:20)
4. Day 4, at the conclusion of the great day of debates, discussions and discourses, "it was not two days before the Passover" (Mark 14:1; cf. Matt. 26:2)
5. Adding these two days, the count tallies with that of John at five; or six including the arrival at Bethany.

Thus, Matthew's citation harmonizes with that of Mark and John too.

*The passover comes* on the 14th day of the month Abib or Nisan corresponding to our March-April. (Cf. Exod. 12; Lev. 23:4ff.; Deut. 16:1ff.; see notes on Matt. 26:17ff.) Since Jesus ate the Passover on Thursday night and was crucified on Friday (27:62; cf. John 19:31; Mark 15:42), this prophecy was pronounced late on Tuesday evening, 12 Nisan (Wednesday already begun). So, the *two days* are from Tuesday evening to Thursday evening.

2. *The Son of man is delivered up to be crucified.* His purpose was not simply to glance at the calendar, but to draw some internal connection between the Passover and His own death.
  - a. The connection is not that the crucifixion and the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb must strictly coincide at the same hour, since Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples. (See on 26:17ff.; cf. Luke 22:15.) That He died on the day following the lamb's sacrifice changes nothing, since His death occurred on the same day the Passover was eaten, i.e. on 15 Nisan which began at sunset on the 14th with the Passover meal. Rather, this solemn declaration draws a parallel between the two sacrifices as to their meaning and purpose.

- b. The present tense, *the Son of man is delivered up (paradidotai)*, need not refer to Judas' plot as already boiling in his heart. Rather, Jesus speaks with such confidence regarding the future fact, that He uses this vivid, realistic present in the place of the future tense. (Cf. Blass-Debrunner, § 323.) His prophetic confidence is not unexpected, because it arises out of God's set purpose and foreknowledge which handed Jesus over (*paradidotai*) to wicked men for crucifixion (Acts 2:23). Even here, sinful men must unwittingly cooperate with the eternal purpose of God! Even so, unless God hand Him over to be sacrificed, sinners could not touch Him (26:53).

The *you know* which governs the first clause, introduces also the second: "*You know* not only that the Passover is coming, but also that I have warned you for months that I must die. Now you must connect the two." He had gradually led them to this knowledge by hints (John 2:19ff.; 3:14; 6:51; 10:11, 15; Matt. 9:15; 10:38; 12:40; 21:38), but also openly and unmistakably (16:21; 17:12, 22f.; 20:17ff.). In this fifth, final prediction recorded in Matthew, there is the repeated certainty that the Romans would be the executioners, since crucifixion was not the usual Jewish method of capital punishment. The new element is the determination that He would die at this Passover.

Whereas His death will be decided by the Sanhedrin and executed by the Romans, Jesus is perfectly aware of what His foes are plotting. Dignified and majestic, He approaches His death with intelligent purpose and mastery, even defining the final hour Himself. The leaders would decide it must occur "not during the feast." But it is Jesus who definitely fixed the precise day as during the feast. This point is made clearer in the following section (26:3ff.). What took place on Golgotha that Passover was no freak accident in the vicissitudes of irrelevant history. But the realization of the eternal, predetermined plan of God! (Cf. Ps. 33:10f.; cf. 2:4; Prov. 19:21; Eph. 1:3-14; I Peter 1:19ff.)

Bruce (*Training*, 289) grasped the high appropriateness of Matthew's introduction to the Passion history, composed of four elements:

1. Jesus' prediction of His imminent crucifixion (26:1f.).
2. His enemies' consultation on how His elimination must be achieved (26:3ff.).
3. Mary's anointing His body for burial and further motivation of Judas' betrayal (26:6-13).

## 4. Judas' offer to betray Jesus to the authorities (26:14ff.).

In these four segments, Matthew puts together divine certainty, human audacity, deep love and unutterable duplicity. The program of God is pitted against human plotting. Baseness and hatred are contrasted with honest, deeply-felt love. Discipleship, for all its weakness and failure, is supremely treasured by God above all unbelieving scholarship and disenchanting cunning.

## FACT QUESTIONS

1. In what context did Jesus predict His death this time?
2. What specific teaching had Jesus just completed before making this announcement of His impending death?
3. On what day of the Hebrew calendar does the Passover occur? Therefore, on what day did Jesus pronounce this prophecy of His suffering?
4. How often had Jesus predicted His death to His followers before this? On what occasions?
5. Does the expression, "after two days," mean "on the third," "on the second day" or what? Give Bible evidence to support your answer.
6. What facts indicate that Judas had not already agreed with the authorities to betray Jesus?

## SECTION 62

## JESUS IS PLOTTED AGAINST BY THE RULERS

TEXT: 26:3-5

3 Then were gathered together the chief priests, and the elders of the people, unto the court of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas; 4 and they took counsel together that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him. 5 But they said, Not during the feast, lest a tumult arise among the people.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. The Gospels recount numerous clashes between Jesus and the authorities before this Last Week. What are the immediate causes