

FACT QUESTIONS

1. When did this consultation between Judas and the authorities occur?
2. Explain Matthew's elaborate introduction of Judas as "one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot."
3. List facts in Judas' life with Jesus that conspired to tempt him to betray Him.
4. What circumstances in Jerusalem facilitated Judas' going to the chief priests to offer to turn Jesus over to them?
5. State the probable terms of the agreement.
6. What is today's value of thirty pieces of silver?
7. List other Biblical allusions to thirty pieces of silver.
8. In what way did Judas' offer create the mechanism whereby the Sanhedrin's decision not to capture Jesus during the feast was completely reversed so as to make Jesus' earlier prediction come true?
9. Describe the type of opportunity the authorities wanted Judas to find that would be ideal for capturing Jesus. Why did not Judas betray Jesus immediately?
10. How much time did Judas think He had to deliver Jesus into their hands? How much did he actually have, according to the actual history of the events?

SECTION 65

JESUS CELEBRATES HIS LAST PASSOVER AND
INSTITUTES THE LORD'S SUPPER

(Parallels: Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-39a; John 13:1—18:1)

TEXT: 26:17-30

17 Now on the first *day* of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt thou that we make ready for thee to eat the passover? 18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Teacher saith, My time is at hand; I keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. 19 And the disciples did as Jesus appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

20 Now when even was come, he was sitting at meat with the twelve disciples; 21 and as they were eating, he said, Verily I say unto you,

that one of you shall betray me. 22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto him every one, Is it I, Lord? 23 And he answered and said, He that dipped his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. 24 The Son of man goeth, even as it is written of him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born. 25 And Judas, who betrayed him, answered and said, Is it I, Rabbi, He saith unto him, Thou hast said.

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27 And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins. 29 But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. Why did the disciples ask Jesus where preparations for the Passover should be made?
- b. Why do you think Jesus had not previously announced the location?
- c. Does it not appear that His instructions, as to where this feast is to be celebrated, are deliberately devious? What possible purpose could there be for such ambiguousness, if His disciples needed to know? Or did they?
- d. Since Jesus was a wanted Man, do you think His disciples would have encountered difficulties with the authorities as they presented the lamb for slaughter by the priests?
- e. What is the householder, where the Passover is to be eaten, to understand by Jesus' mysterious phrase, "My time is at hand"? Do you think His most intimate disciples understood it? If so, what would it mean to them? If not, how could Jesus expect a less intimate disciple to grasp it? If so, why say it?
- f. On what basis could Jesus count on the host's consent?
- g. Why do you think Jesus waited until evening to go to the appointed house for the Passover meal?
- h. If Judas already knew he would betray Christ and Jesus Himself had clearly predicted that someone would do this, what possible

purpose could be served by repeating this prediction at the Passover supper?

- i. If Jesus' intention were to predict Judas' betrayal, why did He continue to use such ambiguous language right up to the very departure of Judas? Should not prophecies be expressed in clear, literal language without all this beating around the bush?
- j. How do you think Judas reacted to Jesus' blunt, even if somewhat ambiguous, prediction that one of the Twelve would betray Him? How would you have reacted, if you were Judas and knew what he knew?
- k. Jesus said, "The Son of man goes, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man, if he had not been born." How does this affirmation relieve God of all responsibility for Judas' actions and lay the blame squarely on the betrayer himself?
- l. How does the above-cited affirmation prove that Judas' betrayal did not catch God unawares, but, rather, was actually foreseen and planned for by God, to carry forward His own program?
- m. How does this statement of Jesus demonstrate categorically that the widely-believed hope, that everyone shall finally be welcomed by God, is simply without any foundation in truth?
- n. Do you think that Jesus waited until the Passover supper was completed before instituting the Lord's Supper, or that He simply transformed its various elements as they moved from one part of the Passover ritual to the next, thus giving new meaning to them? Why do you decide as you do?
- o. Is there any special symbolism involved in Jesus' taking the Passover bread, blessing it and breaking it for distribution among the disciples? If so, what symbolism?
- p. How could Jesus say, "This is my body," with reference to the bread, when, as a matter of fact, He was present bodily there before them?
- q. Now deal with the cup: how could its contents be called "my blood," if His blood were yet in His veins?
- r. If Jesus is our Passover Lamb, why did He make no use of the literal lamb to say what He uses loaf and cup to teach?
- s. Why did He term it "the blood of the covenant"?
- t. Why would not Jesus drink that cup again until the day it could be drunk "new with you in my Father's Kingdom"? In what sense would He do this? In this particular context, why is this promise such glorious news?

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

The first day of Unleavened Bread arrived, on which it was necessary to sacrifice the Passover lambs. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and get the Passover meal ready for us to eat."

"Where do you wish us to go and do this?" they asked.

"Go into the city," He told them. "Just after you enter the city, a certain man carrying an earthenware water-jug will be coming toward you. You follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher sends word: My appointed time is near. At your house I shall celebrate the Passover. Where is my guest room where I am to eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will then show you a large upstairs room all furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

The two disciples did as Jesus had directed: they left and went into the city. They found things just as He had told them they would. So they prepared the Passover.

When the evening hour came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve and took His place at the table with them. They were reclining around Him at the table.

[At this point Luke records Jesus' earnest desire to eat the Passover with the Apostles and the first cup. John records the washing of the disciples' feet and the first intimations of the unclean betrayer. Perhaps Luke's narrative of the ambitious contention among the disciples about their relative personal importance should also be included here.]

As they were at table eating, when Jesus had spoken about the betrayer and His own direct connection with God, He became deeply agitated in spirit and exclaimed, "I tell you the truth, one of you who is eating with me will betray me."

The disciples were deeply pained to hear this. One by one they began to ask Him, "It is not I, is it, Lord?"

"The one who will betray me is right here at the table, eating supper out of the same dish with me!" He answered. "The Son of man is going to His destiny, as the counsel of God has determined for Him and as the Scriptures have written of Him. But what misery awaits His betrayer! It would have been better, if that man had never been born!"

The disciples looked at one another, puzzled and uncertain as to whom He referred. They began to question each other about which of them was going to do this.

One of Jesus' disciples, an especially close friend, was reclining at the table on Jesus' right. So Simon Peter signalled to him: "Ask Him whom He is talking about."

So that disciple leaned back close to Jesus and asked, "Lord, who is it?"

Jesus responded, "It is the man to whom I give this bit of food after dipping it in the sauce."

So when he had dipped the morsel, He handed it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Then, after the morsel, Satan took possession of him, and he spoke, "Surely, it is not I, is it, Rabbi?"

Jesus said to him, "It is you, not I, who said what is the case. What you are going to do, make quick work of it!"

Now, no one at the table guessed what He meant by this. Some surmised that, because Judas was in charge of the common fund, He was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast." Others thought He meant that Judas should donate something to the poor. So, after Judas accepted the morsel from Jesus, he left immediately. And it was night. . . .

After Judas' departure, Jesus commented, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and in Him God is glorified. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and do it at once."

[Here John records the new commandment.]

As the meal proceeded, Jesus picked up some unleavened bread. When He had blessed it by giving thanks, He broke it and shared it among the disciples, saying, "Take this and eat it: it represents my body which is sacrificed for you. Do this to remember me." Similarly, after the meal was concluded, He lifted a cup of wine. When He had given thanks, He offered it to them, stating, "Drink from it, all of you."

So they all drank from it. Then He went on.

"This cup represents my blood which seals the new covenant with God, the blood which is to be shed on behalf of multitudes of people for the forgiveness of their sins, I can tell you for sure that I shall never drink this wine again, until the day comes when with new meaning I drink it with you in my Father's Kingdom, the long-awaited Kingdom of God!"

[Here John reports Jesus' prediction that the disciples cannot follow Him where He must go. Peter promises total loyalty, but Jesus predicts his threefold denial. Luke also reports the predicted denials and the unexplained sword purchase (Luke 22:31-38).

Jesus presents His last discourse (John 14-17). John 14:30 may mean that Jesus and the Twelve arose to leave, but lingered further in the Upper Room until Jesus completed His instruction and His intercessory prayer. Otherwise, what are the probabilities that Jesus did all the teaching of John 15-17 while walking through the streets of Jerusalem that night?]

When Jesus had spoken these words, they sang the Passover Psalms. Then they went out of the city across the Kedron Valley, as He was in the habit of doing, to the Mount of Olives.

SUMMARY

Jesus organized the Passover supper preparations in such a way as to leave Judas ignorant of the location until the last minute, and, in doing so, demonstrated His divine foresight. During the supper itself He clearly pointed out His betrayer, while contemporaneously giving him clear warning to back out. When, however, Judas left, Jesus gave new meaning to the bread and wine. It would now represent His own suffering and the ratification of the new covenant. After a long series of far-reaching instructions, He led His men out to His appointment with destiny.

NOTES

I. PREPARATIONS FOR THE LAST SUPPER (26:17-19)

26:17 Now on the first day of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt thou that we make ready for thee to eat the passover? According to Luke, Jesus called Peter and John to begin these preparations. This question, then, reflects their obedient response to His order (Luke 22:8).

Technically, *the Passover* and the feast of *unleavened bread* are two distinct festivals, the former being a one-night celebration on 14 Nisan and the latter a feast lasting one week from 15-21 Nisan. (For their history and character, see Exod. 12:1-51; 13:3-10; 23:15; Lev. 23:4-8; Num. 9:1-14; 28:16-25; Deut. 16:1-8; Ezek. 45:21.) Two circumstances led people to call both feasts by the same name.

1. Because the feast of *unleavened bread* immediately follows the Passover, at which only unleavened bread is also eaten, the day of the Passover itself could be considered *the first day of unleavened*

bread, although technically, the longer feast began on the evening of 14 Nisan (= 15 Nisan).

2. If Jews purified their houses of all leaven during the evening of 13 Nisan, or at the very latest, during the morning hours of 14 Nisan (Cf. Edersheim, *Temple*, 221), the 14th becomes virtually *the first day of unleavened bread*, even though, technically, it is Passover.

Even Josephus (*Ant.*, XIV,2,1; XVII,9,3; cf. XI,4,8) calls the feast of unleavened bread "Passover," which would make *the first day of unleavened bread* coincide with the Passover (cf. *Wars*, V,3,1), precisely as does Matthew. Josephus does this fully aware that the official *first day of unleavened bread* occurs on the day following (*Ant.* III,10,5). He even speaks of the feast of unleavened bread thus: "We keep a feast for EIGHT days, which is called . . . of unleavened bread" (*Ant.* II,15,1). This makes Passover virtually part of the feast of unleavened bread.

This popular, untechnical language explains why *the first day of unleavened bread* is clearly defined by Mark and Luke as "the day . . . on which the passover lamb had to be sacrificed." Both authors use imperfect tense to point to Jewish customary practice. Further, all the Synoptics describe it as the day on which Jesus intended to eat the Passover. Again, since no one—neither the disciples nor the host—questions Jesus' order to prepare the Passover meal at this particular time, one is led to the natural conclusion that this moment is the regular time. No one asks, "Why at this unusual time?" but, simply, "Where do you wish us to prepare?" Therefore, *the first day of unleavened bread*, according to Matthew, is Thursday, Nisan 14. This is because the events narrated from the Passover supper until Jesus' burial all occurred by normal Jewish reckoning, on Friday, Nisan 15, which began at sunset on the preceding day. (See Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:42; Luke 23:56; Matt. 27:62; 28:1.)

IS MATTHEW'S DATING WRONG?

Even a superficial reading of Matthew's chronological notices concerning events in Jesus' Last Week must lead to the conclusion that he reports a consistent, straightforward story: Jesus actually participated in the Passover supper at its normal time on the evening of

Nisan 14, was captured and tried that night by Jewish authorities, and, next day (Nisan 15) was tried and crucified by the Romans. He was in the grave by Friday evening (= beginning of Nisan 16), all day Saturday (= Nisan 16) and arose Sunday morning, Nisan 17. With this accounting the other two Evangelists are in total agreement.

Some scholars attempt to prove that John contradicts (or silently corrects) this view. Then they seek alternative solutions that would leave the Synoptics a semblance of historical respectability, notwithstanding this apparently undeniable error. Accordingly, say the scholars, Jesus ordered a supper on Nisan 13 that in many respects resembled the Passover, but, of course, without the lamb. At this meal He instituted the Lord's Supper. Consequently, then, being arrested that night, He died on the cross at the very hour the rest of the Jews were sacrificing their paschal lambs on Nisan 14. Thus, He fulfilled the Passover symbolism. But does this reconstruction fit the facts?

Several unprovable presuppositions are necessarily involved:

1. The Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, gradually, but erroneously, came to identify what occurred in the Upper Room with the Passover itself, whereas John supposedly corrects this erroneous connection. Their motive, it is supposed, was to give emphasis to Jesus' fulfillment of the Passover typology, by picturing Him as dying at the very hour the paschal lambs were slain.
 - a. However, why did the Synoptics so obviously place Jesus' death on the day AFTER what they mistakenly took for a Passover meal, instead of linking it with the Passover itself? They set Jesus' death too late for synchronizing the supposed typological symbolism with His death. Either they inexplicably failed to see this contradiction or such symbolism was not part of their belief or purpose.
 - b. Further, if the symbolic synchronization of Jesus' death with the Passover slaying were truly God's great design, surely the Gospel writers would have been alert and sympathetic to this nuance and as much as anyone else. Granted that they linked Christ's death with the slaying of the Passover, how explain how these intelligent writers could blunder so obviously as to connect Jesus' Last Supper with the actual Passover (i.e. 14 Nisan) in their histories, rather than with the night preceding His death, i.e. Nisan 13, as according to the theory, they should have done?

2. It is also assumed that the Evangelists did not intend to describe a regular Passover meal. Contrarily, their every phrase clearly affirms the traditional preparation for and participation in a common Passover supper. Absent is any inkling of deviation from the standard celebration, either on the part of Jesus, His disciples or their host. Simply underline the word "Passover" in the following texts for complete conviction of this fact: 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-10, 13, 15.
3. If Jesus were crucified at the very hour the Passover lambs were slain, how could we explain the multitude of Hebrews milling around the cross, when they should have been in the Temple most deeply involved in preparing their own lambs by sacrifice and in purchasing whatever was needed for their own celebration of the Passover that very evening? (Luke 23:48ff.; Matt. 27:55f.; Mark 15:40f.).
4. Affirmations in John are thought to militate against the version presented by the Synoptics:
 - a. *John 13:1* supposedly dates the Last Supper as before the regular Passover time. John simply affirms, however, that "Before the feast of Passover . . . Jesus loved" His disciples. It does not date the supper, because John next documents how Jesus acted at the feast "when the supper [finally] came" (*John 13:2*).
 - b. *John 13:29* When Judas left the Last Supper, the others supposed he went to purchase items essential to the feast. Some usually assume that no shops would have been open at that late hour, were it the regular Passover night. Again, they assume "for the feast" means "for the Passover" proper next day.
 - (1) However, "for the feast" means only for the total seven-day celebration, not strictly for the Passover. (See above.)
 - (2) How would the high holiness of the Passover stop merchants from desecrating it more than the solemn sacredness of the Temple would stop the priests from desecrating it by their operating their animal market with its precincts?
 - (3) Edersheim (*Temple*, 394; cf. his *Life*, II,508 and *Append. XVII*,786) citing the last two chapters of the Mishnah, notes that, even on the assumption that the Sabbath followed the Passover—a belief essential to some interpretations of *John 19:31*—

Though servile work was forbidden on the first Paschal day, the preparation of all needful provision for the feast

was allowed, and must have been the more necessary, as, on our supposition, it was followed by a Sabbath. Indeed, Talmudical law distinctly allowed the continuance of such preparation of provisions as had been commenced on the 'preparation day.' . . . Even now Rabbinical ingenuity can find many a way of evading the rigour of the Sabbath-law.

Therefore, anyone who assumes that absolutely no stores would be open hence nothing could be purchased on Passover evening must be able to prove it, against the conclusion of the disciples who were well acquainted with what could or could not be done in Jerusalem on Passover night. (See Keil- Delitzsch, *Pentateuch*, II,439.) This greater freedom explains the disciples' reasoning. Edersheim (*Life*, II,508) argues even further:

The mention of these two suggestions by the disciples seems almost necessarily to involve, that the writer of the Fourth Gospel had placed this meal in the Paschal Night. Had it been the evening before, no one could have imagined that Judas had gone out during the night to buy provisions, when there was the whole next day for it, nor would it have been likely that a man should on any ordinary day go at such an hour to seek out the poor. But in the Paschal Night, when the great Temple-gates were opened at midnight to begin early preparations for the offering of . . . the festive sacrifice, which was not voluntary but of due, and the remainder of which was afterwards eaten at a festive meal, such preparations would be quite natural. And equally so, that the poor who gathered around the Temple, might then seek to obtain the help of the charitable.

c. *John 18:28* Because the Jews feared defilement that would prohibit them to "eat the Passover," many assume John means the regular Passover meal had not yet been eaten. This assumption is fallacious because:

- (1) "Passover" does not necessarily nor exclusively refer to the Passover meal proper, since *tò pàscha* has the following well-documented meanings: (See also Josephus' usages above.)

- (a) The Passover lamb itself (26:17, 19 = Mark 14:12, 14, 16; Luke 22:7f., 11, 13, 15)
- (b) All that concerns the meal itself (26:19; John 13:1f.)
- (c) Passover day itself (Exod. 12:14, 17; 13:3; Lev. 23:5; Num. 28:16; John 12:1)
- (d) The entire Feast of Unleavened Bread is loosely called the Passover (cf. Ezek. 45:21; Luke 2:41 = Mark 14:12) and Passover is termed "first day of unleavened bread." The use of the expression "the feast" refers, not merely to the Passover Supper, but to all the festivities of the seven-day festival (John 13:29; 19:14; Matt. 27:15 = Mark 15:6). This use of "the feast" harmonizes with other examples. (Cf. John 4:45 = 2:23; Tabernacles was a seven-day feast yet termed "the feast." Cf. John 7:2, 10f., 14, 37; Passover, John 11:56; 12:12.)
- (e) The offerings of the Passover week. (See Edersheim cited below.)

So, the Pharisees were concerned about their ceremonial purity to eat other sacrificial meals of the Passover week. (Cf. Deut. 16:2f.; II Chron. 30:22.) So, John is in perfect harmony with prophetic precedent, since Ezekiel calls "the Passover, a feast lasting seven days" (Ezek. 45:21, NIV, esp. in Heb. and LXX). Thus, John refers to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, treating it as virtually part of the Passover.

- (2) Edersheim (*Temple*, 218) reminds that Hebrews must bring TWO sacrifices for the Passover: the regular Passover lamb and a peace- or fellowship-offering. (Cf. Exod. 23:14ff.; 34:18f.; Deut. 16:16f.; Lev. 23:37f.) Because this second offering was in addition to the Passover lamb, it could be offered anytime during the Passover week, but *must be eaten only by persons who were ceremonially clean* (Lev. 7:19-21). This explains the hypocritical preoccupation to remain outside Pilate's defiling quarters. *They could not have eaten their Passover peace-offerings, not the Passover lamb itself, in a state of defilement.*

To this it might be objected, "Was this fellowship offering ever called 'eating the Passover,' as John terms it?" Edersheim (*op. cit.*, 251f.; also 395) proves that this Chagigah ("festival offering") was specifically Paschal, citing a learned Jewish writer, Dr. Saalschutz, "The

whole feast and *all its festive meals* were designated as the Passover. See Deut. 16:2; comp. 2 Chron. 30:24 and 35:8, 9; *Sbach. 99b, Rosh ha Sh. 5a*, where it is expressly said, 'What is the meaning of the term Passover?' (Answer) 'The peace-offerings of the Passover.' Thus, "it is this second Chagigah which the Jews were afraid they might be unable to eat, if they contracted defilement in the judgment hall of Pilate" (Edersheim, *op. cit.*, 218).

- (3) Further, because defilement from whatever cause always ceased at sundown with washing (Lev. 11:24f., 28, 31; 15:1-27; 17:15, etc.), these Jews could never have feared defilement for the regular Passover Supper which is *always eaten after sundown*. Rather, they feared defilement that interfered with their sacrificing and eating the festive sacrifice (Chagigah) that very day, Nisan 15.
- d. *John 19:14* is rendered by some (cf. RSV), "Preparation FOR the Passover" which describes the day Jesus was tried, therefore, He partook of an early pseudo-Passover supper or did not respect the proper, normal date. But this unnecessarily forces John to contradict the Synoptics. However, this verse should be rendered (as NIV): "It was the day of Preparation OF Passover week" (*paraskeuè tou pàscha*). That *pàscha* here does not refer to the Passover meal, but to the entire week, is evident in that John already recorded that meal which the Synoptics unquestionably connected with "eating the Passover (lamb)."
- e. *John 19:31* is interpreted to mean that Jesus was crucified on the day used for preparation for the Passover which that year fell on the Sabbath making it "a high day."
- (1) But *Paraskeuè* actually says "Friday" as clearly as words can communicate. Not only does this term mean "preparation" in general, but, as a technical term for a day of the week, it means "Friday" (Rocci, 1422; Arndt-Gingrich, 627). Josephus (*Ant.*, XVI,6,2) clearly documented the day before the Sabbath as the day of preparation in the time of Augustus, i.e. a custom in use long before Jesus' death. John further defines the day meant, by his registering the Jews' urgency to remove the bodies from the crosses, lest they remain there "on the sabbath." Therefore, it was Friday. Their concern arose because "that sabbath was a high day," but

this does not prohibit its being Saturday. Again, John himself agrees that Jesus was in the tomb before sunset on Friday (John 19:42). Further, this Saturday was called a "high day," not because it was the first day of Passover, but the second, when the firstfruits offering was made. ("Sabbath" in Lev. 23:11 refers to the Passover rest, not Saturday. Cf. Josh. 5:11; see Keil-Delitzsch, *Pentateuch* II, 439-441.) No evidence exists to show that, in the year Jesus died, there were any coincidence between (a) *the first day of unleavened bread*, and (b) the weekly Sabbath, which would make that Saturday a special Sabbath, or "high day." Rather, that Saturday, Nisan 16 that year, was a special Sabbath, because the weekly Sabbath coincided with the firstfruits offering. (See Edersheim, *Temple*, 256ff.)

- (2) That Joseph of Arimathea could buy a linen shroud or that the women could prepare spices on Nisan 15 is not contrary to the hypothesis that the day was a festival involving Sabbath rest. (That Nisan 15 was Friday is proven by the women's resting next day, "on the sabbath according to the commandment.") So they were able to function on the Passover without any consciousness of having violated its sanctity (Luke 23:56). Obviously, the festival rest was not observed with the same rigor as normal Sabbath rest. Edersheim (*Temple*, 396) cites the Jerusalem Talmud that "expressly declares it lawful on Sabbaths and feast-days to bring a coffin, graveclothes and even mourning flutes—in short to attend to the offices for the dead—just as on ordinary days."

Therefore, is it not of utmost importance to seek out those facts that render possible a satisfying, yet uncontrived harmony between the Synoptics and John? Any supposed contradiction between them is the creature of intolerable ignorance and uncritical acceptance of pseudo-scholarly hypotheses that show a philosophical and moral bias toward driving a wedge between the Lord's witness.

5. The various movements of Jewish leaders and other people involved in Jesus' arrest, trials and crucifixion all on the night of gravest importance and high solemnity is no argument against believing the Last Supper identical with the Passover. Their mad zeal to crush the Galilean Prophet would completely explain the actions of men who, in trying Him, did not hesitate to violate their own criminal code and tread on the principles of truth and righteousness.

6. The silence of the Synoptics as to whether a lamb were present on the table can be no positive argument that there was none. Since they declaredly intend to describe a Passover meal, they may safely assume that an intelligent reader, who knows anything about a Passover, must also know that, *by definition*, such a supper must include the lamb that was sacrificed. (Cf. Mark 14:12 = Luke 22:7.)
- f. That Jesus observed the Passover regularly is further evidenced by the impossibility of His obtaining a lamb at any other time. Unless He made some exceptional omission of the lamb, of which deviation Scripture silence is complete, the presence of the Paschal lamb on the table meant that the meal was eaten on Nisan 14 at evening. In fact, the lamb, by definition, had to be sacrificed in the Temple and its blood applied to the altar by the priests. But as no Sadducean priest could be induced to comply with exceptional requests of "that renegade Nazarene," no Paschal lamb would be sacrificed at any time other than the traditionally appropriate time. Hence, no Passover supper could be observed complete with lamb, until the correct day for slaying it.
7. John's Gospel shows incidental agreement with the Synoptics with reference to the release of Barabbas. They say that customarily a prisoner was to be released "at the feast" (27:15 = Mark 15:6) and John specifies "at the Passover" (John 18:39). But this conversation between Pilate and the Jews occurred in the morning (27:1; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66; 23:1; John 18:28; 19:14; cf. Mark 15:25). Therefore, Jesus' crucifixion and Barabbas' release could never have occurred on 14 Nisan, since the forenoon hours of that day could not be termed "the feast" nor "the Passover," except by a very loose use of language, because the feast does not begin until evening. Otherwise, Barabbas was officially released *before* the feast.

Consequently, Matthew's dating is neither wrong nor contradictory to that of John. (See Seth Wilson's "Was Jesus Crucified on Friday?" in Butler's *John II*, 405ff.)

The passover

26:18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Teacher saith, My time is at hand; I keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. Evidently Jesus intended to remain

outside of Jerusalem (perhaps at Bethany?) while Passover preparations were going on. This accomplished several practical purposes: He risked no untimely clashes with the authorities and by His absence He did not distract worshipers from their own preparations. *Go . . . to such a man (pròs tòn deina)* is Matthew's summary of how the disciples were to find the proper house. (See PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY for Mark and Luke's information.) It is extremely doubtful that Jesus mentioned the man's name, because Judas, by inquiry, could have learned his address and directed the police there before Jesus could finish teaching His men (John 13:31—17:26). For security reasons, therefore, Jesus did not name the man and thus effectually hid the address from Judas. Consequently, He could enjoy that last, earnestly desired Passover meal in an undisturbed privacy with His disciples.

And say unto him. The identity of this completely unknown householder cannot be even partially discovered from what Jesus told His men to say. *The Teacher saith. My time is at hand.* For Jesus, this was to be a bitter-sweet hour with its positive side (cf. John 2:4; 12:23; 13:1) and its painful crisis (John 17:1). In His mind, this phrase meant, "the schedule set by my Father for bringing to a successful conclusion my mission to redeem the world." Thus, Jesus proves how thoroughly conscious He was of the impending suffering (John 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20). However, *my time is at hand* is not so precise an expression of time that one must assume He thought His suffering were so near that the Paschal meal must be observed ahead of its proper time.

I keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. No irregular schedule is implied here; rather the contrary, because, were this some aberration from the norm, a great deal more explanation would be required to convince an unsympathetic householder to cooperate with the exceptional nature of the request. Therefore, it is quite likely that Jesus had already established some previous understanding with this person. That Jesus could describe the needed space as "my guest room" (Mark 14:14), and that it would be "furnished and ready" (Mark 14:15), points even more certainly to a previous agreement. In fact, because thousands of families would be seeking just such a room in Jerusalem for observing the Passover, it is more in keeping with Jesus' foresight to suppose that, to insure absolute tranquility for this Last Supper.

Speculation surrounding the man's identity ranges from people of means and potentially spacious houses like Nicodemus (John 3:1ff.; 19:39) and Joseph of Arimathea (27:57, 60; Luke 23:50), to the capacious residence of Mary, John Mark's mother (Acts 12:12). Was this the same Upper Room utilized by the Twelve and others for prayer and temporary lodging later (Acts 1:13f.)? Nevertheless, the man's identity is as unknown to us as it was to Judas.

The hypothesis of a previous contact does not compromise Jesus' supernatural discernment that guided His two messengers to meet the man bearing the water-pot at precisely the right moment (Mark 14:13ff. = Luke 22:10f.).

26:19 And the disciples did as Jesus appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Peter and John entered Jerusalem, saw and followed the man indicated by Jesus. The gracious householder showed them spacious, second-floor room (Mark 14:15 = Luke 22:12). Did Jesus mean that it would be furnished with cushions to sit on and a low table, or that it had already been inspected for leaven? Perhaps the Apostles were to do this latter task before bringing the other elements for the feast such as water, basin and towel (John 13:4f.).

Merely because nothing in this entire account is ever said about a paschal lamb does not prove that there were none, or that Peter and John could not have procured it, or that Jesus deliberately celebrated the Passover one day earlier than the official date. That they could have procured the lamb is obvious for several reasons:

1. The Law required that the lamb be selected on 10 Nisan (Exod. 12:3, 6). This means that the lambs all be set aside on Sunday, the day Jesus made His Messianic entry into Jerusalem. Would the necessity to select the lamb four days early be obviated in Jesus' time by purchasing directly from Temple stock preselected and approved and kept among Temple sacrificial animals until purchased by Passover buyers? (Cf. John 2:15.) However, it is morally unlikely that Jesus, who severely condemned the market in the Temple proper, would send His men there to take advantage of its convenience, unless, of course, that markets were by now re-located somewhere outside.
2. That the two Apostles could have slain the lamb at the regular time is completely reasonable, because of the vast assembly of Hebrews who must crowd the slaying of their lambs into the afternoon hours of Nisan 14. Thousands of lambs were normally slain

between three and five o'clock (*Wars*, VI,9,3) by hundreds of priests with the assistance of Levites who skinned them (II Chron. 35:1-19). It is only remotely possible that one of the apostles would be recognized by any unfriendly priest assisting with the slaying. Contrarily, were there no friendly priest or Levite to whom they might turn?

Unless the owner of the Upper Room furnished everything, the two disciples would need to procure unleavened bread, wine, the bitter herbs and the fruit sauce and roast the lamb.

II. CELEBRATION OF THE LAST SUPPER (26:20-25)

26:20 Now when even was come, he was sitting at meat with the twelve disciples. The time is not Thursday evening, 14 Nisan, the beginning of Nisan 15. Presumably, Peter and John's preparations occupied the better part of the day, so they did not rejoin the others until finished. Mark (14:17) notes that Jesus did not even come near the Upper Room until after sunset, perhaps choosing to remain outside of Jerusalem all day for the above-mentioned practical considerations. At the Passover hour everyone else in and around Jerusalem would be deeply absorbed in his own participation in the Passover meal.

Matthew begins his narration where *He was sitting at meat* already. Before this, however, the disciples had bickered among themselves about their relative importance, perhaps as they took their places at the table (Luke 22:24f.; however, Luke's account may not be in strictly chronological order). Then, Jesus washed the disciples' feet to teach them the meaning of true greatness of humility and service (John 13:1-20).

He was sitting, rather, reclining (*anékeito*) Roman-style on a couch, or in the Oriental custom, on cushions arranged on the floor spoke-like around a low (U-shaped?) table in the center of which the food was placed. The original Passover institution required Israelites to eat the meal standing (Exod. 12:11). By custom, however, this detail had been abandoned to bring the feast's observance into line with Israel's Egypt, their enjoyment of security in the Promised Land seemed to dictate that they partake of the meal comfortably sitting or reclining.

With the twelve disciples means in the absence of many others. The women who came with Him from Galilee (27:55) and the other men were apparently scattered out over Jerusalem as guests in private homes or camped out on the hills surrounding the City.

The betrayer betrayed

26:21 **And as they were eating, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.** Into the phrase, *as they were eating*, Matthew compressed several incidents that occurred before this. (See PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY; cf. John 13:1-20; Luke 22:14-18, 24-30.)

Verily I say unto you gives this statement a deep solemnity that arises out of Jesus' own deep, spiritual agitation (John 13:21). In effect, then, Jesus faced a multifaceted crisis:

1. He must warn the disciples that the impending shock was no surprise to Him, so that they would be the better braced for it when it came (John 13:11, 19). Yet He must not tell them too much, lest they block Judas' freedom to act and thus hinder God's plan.
2. Foreknowledge of Judas' betrayal did not diminish the pain for Jesus. He is fully aware that one of His own men is under contract to betray Him. But He loves that man. Now He must put words to His mounting concern for him, revealing enough to be effective yet without saying too much.
3. He must warn Judas that He knows all, giving him the opportunity to back out while there is time. Yet He knows that Scripture portrays the betrayer as His own intimate friend. So, He cannot force Judas to repent without violating his freedom of choice.
4. Yet, in some way, He must create a spiritually receptive environment in which He could proceed with the last, vital instruction. Until Judas left, perhaps Jesus felt the oppressive spirit that evilly moved the man to act.

So, even if in His humility He washed Judas' feet along with the others'. He must now distinguish him from the rest. But this revelation is not easy for Jesus because of these pressures (John 13:21).

One of you shall betray me. Study how Jesus treated Judas, and stand in awe of God's respect for human freedom. The Lord did not expose him by name, violently attack Him or wither him with supernatural power. His arsenal of appeals was multiple and varied: He began by shocking him with the heinousness of what he was contemplating, a move that was calculated to catch Judas completely off-guard. Then He appealed to Judas' sense of fellowship and love. Last, He appealed to Judas' self-defensive instinct by a stern warning well calculated to stir his fear of God. Granted, none of these appeals turned the man around, but it was because Jesus completely respected

his freedom of choice. In no case did Jesus coerce Judas even to save him.

What does this revelation say about Jesus? Even this prediction of the betrayal documents Jesus' confidence in the resurrection. Of what value would it be for a permanently dead Christ to vindicate His true identity by revealing that He knew all along which course events would take? To what purpose assert that He was able to elude the cross, but consciously chose to die thereon, only to remain buried forever? Merely to glorify a one-way martyrdom? If He knew how to avoid death by eluding His betrayer, but was trapped in full knowledge, would He not be judged a fool, if there were no resurrection to free Him from death's clutches? Thus, even though the announcement of the betrayal shook these men, it was nothing compared to the supreme horror of His crucifixion. But when these events had all become history and Jesus stood triumphant on life's side of the grave, what faith-grounding energy they could derive from the knowledge that Jesus saw it all ahead of time and, despite, the temptations to avoid it, and at great risks to Himself, chose to go through it anyway!

What does this revelation mean to the Church? Just as Judas was at the table of Jesus Christ, so rogue disciples, in the role of believer, continue to appear at the Lord's Table, so we must not be scandalized whenever and in whomever it appears.

Doubt mixed with hope

26:22 **And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto him every one, Is it I, Lord?** Unable to believe their ears, these men are stunned, grieved. Their distressed reaction cries out the pain of their soul. They are *sorrowful*, not only because Jesus would be betrayed, but because one of them would do this unthinkable, cowardly deed. Regaining their voices, they formulate their hesitant, incredulous question in Greek form that expects a negative answer, "It is not I, is it, Lord?" They hope against hope for a negative answer. Since the Lord did not indicate when the betrayal would occur, they may not even have connected His words with that very night. (Contrast 26:31, 34: "this night.") Perhaps they believed that He referred to some distant future when they might possibly be tempted to betray Him. This explains why their reaction reflects a distressed self-doubt. Otherwise, they could have categorically denied any intention to be

traitor to Him that very night. Instead, *they began to say unto him every one, "one after another"* (Mark 14:19; *heis katà heis*).

1. By this keen sensitivity and genuine self-doubt, they really proved their innocence and deep loyalty to Jesus. Pricked by memories of their lack of graciousness, their weakness of love, the extent of their selfishness and the reality of their doubts, their own conscience accused them. Painfully aware of the deceitfulness of their own hearts, they distrust themselves. But they prove their discipleship real as they bare their soul for His scrutiny and trust His testimony both to the fact just announced and to the identity of the guilty one. Better question one's own maturity and loyalty than doubt the Lord's word!
2. It is a mark of the beauty of their humility that each lays himself open to accusation. Not one of them questioned the loyalty of his fellow apostle, even by insinuation. Peter will break this rule later (26:33). But for now the group is compact, each disciple searching his own heart.

Out of their self-examination arises two observations:

1. It illustrates how thoroughly Judas had succeeded in hiding his plans and even his mentality from his brother-apostles. They saw nothing unusual in Judas' character or talk that would arouse their suspicions. But Jesus read the secrets of Judas' heart.
2. But that the other disciples had discerned nothing unusual in Judas may actually depict to what extent they too shared his false, carnal Messianism. (See notes on 26:14; cf. Acts 1:6; Matt. 20:20ff.; Luke 22:24ff.) This may simply indicate how close to disaster they too walked, were it not their greater confidence in Jesus!

Each dismayed, *Is it I, Lord?*, should have shaken Judas with powerful force, because the betrayer knew the innocence of each man. Finding himself in the moral minority could have persuaded him to repudiate his plan. But the innocence that drove the others to question Jesus does not motivate Judas, so he does not speak up at this point. He may be taken aback that Jesus has somehow uncovered his plot, but for reasons of his own, he cannot be greatly distressed that such a betrayal is really also a denial of his discipleship. (See on 26:14.)

Dare we ask ourselves with the same painful objectivity what kind of situation or temptations would ever undermine our resolve to serve

Jesus, sufficiently to compromise our loyalty to Him? This humility is the only appropriate spirit with which to approach the Lord's Supper. Hope as we might that we be equal to the severe testing of any future situation, no one can predict with certainty that he shall stand up under fire.

The outrageousness of treason

26:23 And he answered and said, He that dipped his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. Rather than use knives and forks to eat, they followed Oriental manners by dipping their food from the common dish with their hands. Some believe *the dish* He refers to was the *charoseth*, a dish of thick spicy sweet-sour fruit sauce composed of figs, dates, raisins, vinegar and other ingredients.

It is evident, however, that Jesus has not yet directly answered anyone's heart-wrenching question. Although *he that dipped* (*ho embapsas*) appears to point to one past act, as if Judas had just done so, the Lord refers, not to an act just completed, but to the fact without reference to time. (Time, per se, is not a necessary part of the sense of the aorist participle, the emphasis being primarily on the act itself, as opposed to a continuing process.) Because many were dipping in the bowl with Jesus during that meal, the dipping would not in itself unmask the traitor. However, probably not all of the Twelve would *dip his hand with [Jesus] in the dish*, as there might be several such dishes on the table for that many people. So, this revelation decidedly limits the list of potential betrayers to those dipping directly with Him, a fact that even more decisively highlights the closeness of this fellowship. Further, if, as Edersheim (*Life*, II,493f.) pictures it, Judas is seated on Jesus' left and John on His right, it would be an easy matter for Judas to *dip his hand with [Jesus] in the dish*. It also explains how Jesus could easily be talking directly with Judas without others hearing (26:25) and then hand him the sop (John 13:25ff.).

Jesus' purpose is not merely to point to the mechanics of eating nor specifically to the seating order at the table. Nor is this a whispered aside to John, as is His later remark (John 13:26), because nothing is said here that would distinguish Judas from the others. Rather Jesus' semi-enigmatic response intends to rouse the moral indignation and stir the conscience of everyone present. This response underscores the moral inconceivableness of the betrayer's act. "He is my table

companion, sharing the deepest bonds of fellowship." The very instrument of betrayal, "the hand of him who betrays me," was not only ready to grasp the opportunity to be false to Jesus, but even at that moment was "on the table with" Him (Luke 22:21).

1. He pushes every disciple to distrust his own heart and loyalty against the presumption that would cause the failure of nearly everyone that very night. Everyone of them, in a sense, *dipped his hand . . . in the dish* then "deserted Him and fled" (26:56).
2. He focuses on the underhandedness with which He, the Lord of glory, would be betrayed to suffer. To the Oriental, to eat together is to form a bond of fellowship for which those who thus participate should be willing to give their lives to protect that of the other covenanters. The ultimate treachery, as Jesus hammers it out, is that one would arise from *this* meal, in which he had shared from the identical dish, and go out to repudiate this covenant of friendship and be traitor to Him.
3. Jesus also demonstrates how thoroughly He Himself is master of this crisis. He is not merely tightening the accusing circle around Judas. His purpose is didactic apologetics: "I tell you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he" (John 13:18ff.).
4. By appealing to the bond of fellowship to which Judas was theoretically committed by eating with Jesus, He intends to rouse Judas' conscience to grasp the enormity of what he planned. Not only does He warn Iscariot that he is found out, He also longs to save him, if possible. For Judas to resist the pressure of his conscience will demonstrate how far he was beyond recall. In fact, his rationalizations (see on 26:14) probably justified his eating with his Victim, because, if we have rightly understood him, he did not admit that Jesus would be hurt in the final life-and-death crisis. Consequently, Judas could see no violation of hospitality, table fellowship or implied friendship. *For Judas, therefore, Jesus was not Lord, nor His appeals or arguments final. Judas still reigned over his heart, not Jesus.*

26:24 The Son of man goeth, even as it is written of him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born. All the disciples needed to come to terms with the true purpose behind Jesus' suffering. Their mistaken sorrow and shock were caused by a wrong view of God's program in which there was no place for a butchered Christ. So He must assure them of two things:

1. *The Son of man goeth* to His death. This is a conscious decision to which no human being is forcing Him. They cannot snatch His life from Him. Rather, He actually intends to lay down His life (John 10:17f.; 15:13; Rom. 5:7). By establishing these priorities, higher even than self-preservation itself, He explains both to Judas and the Eleven why He was making no move to stop this terrible deed.
2. *Even as it is written of him.* His death would not spell the unaccountable victory of evil, but, rather, the marvelous success of God's set purpose. Luke (22:22) has: "as it has been determined." This sovereign decree was well-documented ahead of time by the prophets. (Cf. Isa. 53; Ps. 22; Dan. 9:26f.; Zech. 12:10ff.; 13:1.) These the disciples were far too reluctant to believe. (Cf. Luke 24:25ff., 44ff.; John 20:9.) What is *written of him must take place!* (Cf. Luke 22:37; Matt. 26:54, 56.) Our Savior, God's Son, plants His feet firmly on the Old Testament as upon a firm foundation that can never be shaken. For Him, its message, which centers in His own Messiahship, is the revelation of God's determination to carry out His program to head up everything in Christ. Jesus is unafraid to say this, even if those Old Testament prophecies predict His shame and suffering.

Woe unto that man . . . good were it for that man if he had not been born. This sentence sounds so drastic a pronouncement that Judas' sin is often blown out of proportions, as if we common mortals could never match his consummate wickedness. But, elsewhere, Jesus endeavors, with the same vigorous language to impress upon every disciple that all arrogance, self-satisfaction and indifference toward others deserves the severest measures, even death (18:5-9)! Non-existence is to be preferred to sin! (Did this concept lurk in Judas' mind to become the twisted autosuggestion that led to his suicide?) Further, if Judas be thought "a common sinner," (see notes on 26:14), what does this ominous sentence of awful judgment awaiting him mean? Why was Judas' sin so wrong? These questions find their solution in Jesus' warning: *Woe to that man.* In this *woe* are two sentiments:

1. FOREBODING JUDGMENT. While there is not even a breath of personal animosity in Jesus' heart, His sorrowful outcry is founded on the curse that God must pronounce upon such a sinner.
 - a. Judas sinned, because it is a crime to turn an innocent man over to the violence of his fiercest enemies from whom he could never receive just treatment and who are unquestionably determined

to kill him. This is objectively wrong, whatever Judas' subjective reasons might be (cf. 26:14).

- b. Further, it is objectively wrong because of the unspeakable wickedness of any disciple who dares believe himself wiser than the King Himself to organize and manipulate the program and progress of the Kingdom of God to achieve his own ends, whatever they be or whatever his supposed motive.
- c. Judas sinned, because Jesus here exposed and condemned Judas' masterplan to betray Him. This final warning pushes Judas to realize that, if the betrayal now goes through, he must now sin with full awareness. Now there can be no extenuation of guilt nor excuse. That Judas bull-headedly plunged on to this diabolical appointment must mean, then, that he considered his own rationale far more convincing than Christ's attempted deterrent. This is the moral failure typical of most of us. Whether meant as open rebellion or not, Judas hereby defied the wisdom of Jesus Christ!
- d. Judas' sin is objectively wrong, because he did it deliberately, regardless of the use God planned to make of his treachery. The man acted freely. If interviewed about his scheme before Jesus' arrest, Judas would probably openly claim personal credit for the genius of his plot. Nowhere could he have discerned any compulsion from God. Thus, not even Judas would have blamed God for this severe condemnation, because he fully expected something quite different to develop from his plotting. (See on 27:3ff.) Nor is his sin transformed by the fact that God knew he would do it and permitted him to go ahead. God's secret purpose to utilize the man's falseness for His own glory does not change the objective nature of the crime freely chosen by Judas. That Jesus is destined by Divine sovereignty to be betrayed does not in any way minimize the responsibility of His betrayer nor justify him in any sense, merely, because he made God's plan function—any more than Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar or Caiaphas could be excused for their hardness of heart. McGarvey (*Matthew-Mark*, 226) rightly argued:

This shows that a man who, by a wicked act, brings about the purpose of God, bears the same guilt as though God had no purpose in it. It is his own act and motive for which he is judged, and not the results which God may have intended to bring out of his act.

2. **SADNESS MINGLED WITH LOVING MERCY.** Jesus' awareness that with His disciple, Judas, He shall fail, notwithstanding His last impassioned appeals to turn him, wrings from Him this wail of sorrow. If there is any anger in Jesus, it is not so much against Judas the man, as against the superstition, ignorance, selfishness and resultant evil in him that makes him impervious to the last heart-broken pleas to reconsider. Jesus' sadness may also be wrung out of Him, because He foresees the unbearable self-reproach that would engulf Judas when he finally grasped the horrible impact of his deed.

The Lord's dire warning actually treats Judas with merciful indulgence by effectually furnishing the traitor a motive, *hence also a chance*, to back out of the conspiracy. Let the Bible texts affirm that the Messiah must suffer and even suggest that a close friend betray Him (Ps. 41:9; John 13:18), but let not dear Judas decide to be that man!

Good were it for that man if he had not been born. But Judas had been born, and his only escape now is by repentance. Nothing in sovereign predestination demanded that *he* be the apostate apostle. God's program would have been fully carried out, even if Judas backed out! Prophecy only said, "Someone." Let that turncoat be someone else! Jesus' solemn sentence must silence everyone who would defend Judas. For, from this point on, to become Judas' defense lawyer is to commit the same sin of which Iscariot himself was guilty: presumption to argue against the Lord's judgment.

Jesus' warning should have shaken the man to core, because He has just affirmed, "I know whom I have chosen" (John 13:18). Although the Lord had not consciously selected Iscariot to groom him for treachery, at the same time He made no miscalculation in choosing him, as if He could somehow be taken unawares by Judas' scheming.

On what basis could Jesus reasonably admonish the man, if He knew all along that this disciple would not submit to His will? Should not Jesus have simply given up without trying? This quandary faces every disciple who must feel the attraction of doubting whether a given reprobate can be brought to repentance. But that Jesus *did* admonish Judas urges us to go ahead and try. Further, He acted in harmony with God and His prophets who also mercifully attempted the impossible. (Study Gen. 4:6f.; Prov. 29:1; Isa. 5:1-7; 6:9f.; Ezek. 3:18ff.; 18:30ff.; 33:1ff. esp. vv. 30-33; Luke 13:6-9, 34f.; Acts 20:25-31.) So, ironically, even from Jesus' full consciousness of His

own failure to persuade Judas, we may draw strength to labor incessantly to win others, despite the ever-increasing odds against their conversion. Even while using every appropriate persuasion to lead them to repent, we may not force their will. And, in the end, their loss will grieve us, but never so greatly as did the loss of Judas to our Lord. But He thoroughly understands what we undergo when we fail, because He has been there too on the night when Judas walked out eternally unpersuaded.

The betrayer's bold bluff

26:25 **And Judas, who betrayed him, answered and said, Is it I, Rabbi? He saith unto him, Thou hast said.** While others questioned themselves, for Judas to remain silent would have been damning evidence of his complicity. Steeling himself, therefore, he risks exposure. However, if, as we believe (cf. notes on 26:14), Judas felt no malevolence toward Jesus personally, but, rather, a certain superiority, his question here is, from his point of view, neither shameful nor defiant mockery. Rather, as he reflects on Jesus' revelation that a turncoat is in their midst, he may be thinking, "You may call me a traitor today, but tomorrow you will thank me for what I am doing for you!" Further, Judas' curiosity may have been pricked by Jesus' startling announcement, so he now tests the quantity and quality of His intelligence source to discover how much the Rabbi really knows. Or is He merely guessing? So, Judas' question is not wholly false, even if it is a feint.

Is it I, Rabbi? While the others called Jesus, "Lord," Judas, alone terms Him, *Rabbi*. Could he not bring himself to confess Jesus as "Lord"? Although to call Him their "Teacher" was a mark of high respect and true discipleship (John 13:13f.), how very far *Teacher* is from confessing Him Lord (Rom. 10:9; 14:9; I Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11)! This title for Judas is really hypocritical, because in this very moment he was unwilling to let Jesus teach him! For him, Jesus was neither really Teacher nor Lord.

Not asked together with the pained questions of the others (v. 22), but after Jesus' stern warnings (v. 23f.), Judas' bold question appears too isolated to have escaped the notice of everyone. But in the confusion of the general debate that arose, while others continued asking, Jesus continued to talk. (Cf. John 13:22; Luke 22:23.) Then, Judas, sensing that continued silence would be damning, speaks.

He saith unto him, Thou hast said. Did Jesus really say this, or is this merely Matthew's summary of the incident related by John 13:23-27, in the sense that Jesus answered Judas positively only by handing him the sop? (So, Godet, *John*, 255.) While this signal gesture was intelligible to John, unless Judas (and potentially others) heard the signal, "It is he to whom I shall give this morsel, when I have dipped it" (John 13:26), it would not have been understood by Judas to whom the answer here in Matthew was supposedly given. Therefore, Jesus actually spoke to Judas to reveal His supernatural insight into Judas' perfidy. Then later, when Peter gestured to John, He told John the signal, but to no one else.

Although some believe that *Thou hast said* means "Yes" in the same way the American expression, "You said it!" affirms so definitely, several factors must be taken into consideration:

1. Jesus' answer was not heard in the confusion. Everyone was talking, because they began to question one another which of them it was that would do this" (Luke 23:23). Otherwise, had these words been distinctly heard in that electric atmosphere, the other disciples could have pounced on the traitor instantly. Perhaps Jesus whispered His positive answer.
2. Further, if they heard Him, they may not have believed the betrayal imminent, supposing that this revelation referred to some distant future, not to the impending crisis that very night. Because they could not believe that Jesus would die soon, despite His many warnings, they would even postpone the eventual betrayal to some hopefully distant day.
3. However, it may be doubted whether this expression is so precise and definite as would appear from its use elsewhere (cf. 26:64). While not intentionally evasive, this response mildly demurs at the formulation of a statement made by the other party in the conversation. Hence, there is no need to suppose that, had anyone heard Jesus say this, he would instantly recognize Judas for the traitor. Rather, Jesus' less-than-definite expression, "The words are yours," might have even appeared to deny Judas' treachery. "Not I, but *you*, Judas, said it." Thus, whoever overheard it may have judged Jesus' answer too vague for certainty. But a meaningful look of Jesus may convince Judas that He really does know about Judas' plot, but will not tell, leaving Judas really free to decide his own course.

That this response of Jesus is not a precise answer exposing Judas is proven by the fact that no one correctly guessed why Jesus sent him out from the Passover (John 13:28f.). Because *thou hast said* is all that Matthew records, since he omitted the dipping of the sop, we must conclude that Jesus did, in a sense, commit Himself to a positive answer. Nonetheless, because of the foregoing considerations, it may be that this commitment is much clearer in light of subsequent events than it was when originally uttered by Jesus there at the table.

However, one disciple, John, did learn the traitor's identity, not directly nor verbally, but by a gesture (John 13:23ff.). Jesus dipped a bit of bread into the sauce and handed it directly to Judas. Some see this gesture as treating Judas as an honored guest on the part of a careful host, a last, loving attempt of Jesus to break through Judas' reserve of determination to carry out his plan. Jesus thus directed this last appeal to all that was possibly yet loyal in the man. Contemporaneously, by this exquisite gesture of oriental hospitality. He hid Judas even more effectively from all others. But Iscariot's brazenness remained impenetrable, leading Jesus to hurry him out into the night to get on with his demoniacal business. Still, John could not react swiftly enough to block him, because the Lord deliberately hurried the man out before anyone really grasped what was happening. Perhaps John did not react in harmony with that explosive revelation, because he saw that it had been Jesus Himself who sent Judas beyond their reach.

The fact that John alone records the dipping of the sop specifically points to a Passover meal. "In the Passover Haggadah the Passover supper is distinguished from all other meals in several ways including 'on all other nights we do not dip even once, but on this night twice'" (Barrett, *John*, 373; cf. Mishnah, *Pesach*, 10,4). Further, that John alone records that when Judas left "it was night" (John 13:30), points to the Passover meal, not some other, because, while any other supper meal could be eaten at any time from the later afternoon to early evening, "the Passover-offering could be eaten only during that night and only until midnight" (*Zebahim* 5.8 cited by Barrett, *John*, 374).

Judas, strongly urged by the authorities not to precipitate the crisis but to wait until "after the feast in the absence of the multitude" (cf. Luke 22:6), now finds himself discovered. Compelled by his fear of retaliation from the others, if they learn he is to act this very night,

and hurried out by Jesus, he dashed to his fellow plotters to obtain the necessary men to arrest Jesus. Thus, before they really wanted it, he hastened the crisis, making Jesus' arrest and sufferings to occur during the Passover feast contrary to their earlier prudential judgment to wait. But this precipitation of the events began with Jesus' quiet, skillful move that sent Judas forth to his ungodly, morally mad mission. This resulted in the fulfillment, right on schedule, not of the rulers' careful plotting, but of God's eternal plan. Even in this detail Jesus showed Himself Master of men and circumstances, and, bless God, fully Master of Himself!

III. INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (26:26-30)

THE BROKEN BREAD

26:26 **And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed and brake it; and he gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.** The expression, *as they were eating*, by its very ambiguity does not permit us to know at what stage in the Paschal Supper Jesus established His memorial. Edersheim (*Life*, II,510) is undoubtedly right to affirm that "it almost seems as if the Evangelists had intended, by their studied silence in regard to the Jewish Feast, to indicate that with this celebration and the new Institution the Jewish Passover had for ever ceased." Further, Matthew does not indicate when Judas went out. John, who alone reports his departure, does not document the Lord's Supper. So, the final proof is lacking whether Judas partook of it.

However, it is more probable that Jesus did not confuse matters unnecessarily by mixing the exposure and expelling the betrayer with the vital instruction on the Lord's Supper, since the disciples' minds would have wavered back and forth from their consternation about betrayal to their concentration on Jesus' death. But even this is not conclusive, since our own self-examination easily accomplishes this every Sunday as, at the Lord's table, we contemplate our own betrayals of discipleship.

Again, because of the divided manuscript evidence in Luke, scholars are divided concerning the order of the Lord's Supper institution: did the cup or bread come first, or were there two of the traditionally four Passover cups involved in Luke's account, one mentioned before the Lord's Supper and one

during its institution? Two answers are possible to deny the unwarranted assumption that Matthew and Mark are at insoluble variance with Luke:

1. While the available manuscript evidence of Luke is definitely debatable, there are valid reasons for considering it virtually certain. (See the controversy even among textual editors in *Textual Commentary*, 173.) The longer form of Luke's text containing the cup-bread-cup order appears to enjoy the best manuscript documentation and best reasons for its inclusion.
2. There are affinities between Luke's account and that of Paul (cf. Luke 22:19f. with I Cor. 11:23ff.), which, according to some, argue that Paul and Luke share the same oral tradition. Nevertheless, Paul, when reporting the essential facts of the Supper's institution, *always* follows the order: "eat/drink," "bread/cup," and "body/blood," never inverting either of these elements. (I Cor. 10:16f., 21 does not relate the Passover event.) Therefore, if Luke intended to transcribe the tradition as he received it originally from Paul, the original autograph of Luke likely had the rendering given by the majority of textual witnesses: "cup-bread-cup," the first of these cups being related to the Passover, not the Lord's Supper.

Jesus took bread, not loaves of raised dough, but the flat, unleavened bread of the Passover meal. *And blessed*: to give God thanks for any food is virtually to bless it, since thanksgiving consecrates it (I Tim. 4:4f.). In this sense, *blessed* (*eulogésas*) and "gave thanks" (*eucharistésas* 26:27; cf. 14:19 with John 6:11; see Mark 8:6, 7) amount to the same thing, hence are practically synonymous. While undoubtedly Jesus always gave thanks for food, His doing so at the Passover was also traditional, not specifically commanded by God as an essential part of this ordinance. Why is it that He *brake it*? Although breaking for others after giving thanks was Jesus' habit (cf. Luke 24:30, 35), Edersheim (*Temple*, 241f.) considers the act a normal traditional part of the Paschal ceremony.

Take, eat; this is my body. Because it was *bread* that He broke and gave to them, calling it His *body*, He pointed to Himself as the Bread of life that would nourish them with eternal life. (See John 6:53ff.) *Take, eat*: this symbolic enactment teaches them that His life and its power over death must be appropriated by each disciple in a way so intimate and personal that it may be compared to the assimilation of

food whereby its nutritional power becomes part of the disciple, giving him the power of Christ's life. When taken literally, His language sounds like mystical nonsense. Nevertheless, the implication is that Jesus' life, as this is expressed in His concrete historical incarnation is literally our only life. He really is the only source and sustainer of our physical and spiritual life (Col. 1:17; 3:1ff.; Phil. 1:21; John 1:4; 15:1-11). But this life is not merely our juridical acceptability with the Father, but our personal, conscious feeding our souls on Christ Himself.

The shared cup

26:27 **And he took a cup, and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.** Both Paul (I Cor. 11:25; and Luke 22:20) agree that the institution of the cup took place at the conclusion of the Passover meal. *He gave thanks!* Aside from the traditional blessing of the cup (cf. I Cor. 10:16), how could He sincerely feel like giving thanks to God for the somber meaning of *that cup*? He gave thanks, because He thoroughly believed in the final victory of the program of God whereby the Father would bring joy out of shame and death. He could be grateful, because He believed!

In English, *Drink ye all of it* sounds like "Drain the cup," whereas Jesus said, *All of you drink of it (piete ex autoû pântes)*. This *all of you* stands in evident contrast to the general Roman Catholic practice of forbidding the cup of anyone but the priest, but Jesus emphasized the common sharing. *All of you* does not prove that Judas was present, as if "the Twelve" were addressed as a yet unbroken group, for Jesus could reasonably address this to those yet present and faithful to Him, though Judas be now gone.

Rather, His point is another: unity in the fellowship. As each disciple drinks from the cup he shares not only with every other who does so, but he thereby commits himself to that fellowship. He drinks together with others in the memory of Jesus' redemptive death, thus committing himself to share in the meaning of that sacrifice. This also involves our moral obligation to the rest of the family. More than any other, this must be thought of as "the cup of brotherhood." Western Christians must recapture what it means for people to "drink together," notwithstanding the ungodly abuses of this concept among drunkards. Drinking together constitutes a pledge of mutual loyalty. This simple act practically expresses an oath of

allegiance to live in fellowship with, to defend and die for those with whom one drinks. In the Lord's Supper it is with Jesus Christ and His Church that we drink! There can be no higher allegiance, no more precious fellowship, no more sacred commitment than this. As we eat and drink, honoring the memory of Christ's redemptive sacrifice, we commit ourselves to hate sin and abandon it to express our loyalty to Him. We solemnly consecrate ourselves to the promotion and progress of all that is precious to Him.

In this light, then, there could be little doubt that He also drank from this same cup. Luke's citation, "I shall never eat . . . drink . . . until the Kingdom of God comes" (Luke 22:15, 18) is to be interpreted in harmony with Matthew 26:29, i.e. after this sad celebration of the Last Passover, He would no longer participate in the Passover itself until its full significance were realized in the Kingdom. (See on 26:29.)

26:28 **For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins.** After the disciples all drank from the cup (Mark 14:23f.), Jesus furnished this threefold explanation of the cup's symbolism:

1. *This is . . . blood of the covenant.* This entire sentence is a highly compressed reference to the long-awaited arrival of the "new covenant" (Jer. 31:31ff.) which God, through the Messiah (Isa. 42:6; 53:12 death) would make with His people and whereby He would completely forgive their sins, absorbing its penalty Himself. But even such a *covenant* could not be ratified without the shedding of *blood*, as was the ancient Mosaic pact (Exod. 24:8). Because ancient covenants were considered a life-and-death matter, they were sealed with blood, because the life is in the blood (Lev. 17:11). Failure to keep them spelled the forfeiture of the transgressor's life. So, a covenant with a holy God that offers forgiveness of sins and fellowship could not be established without the judicially appropriate substitutionary shedding of blood for the sinner (Heb. 9:22). So, by saying, *the blood of the covenant (tô haïma . . . tês diathékes)*. Jesus associated this new symbolism with the ancient words of Exodus 24:8 pronounced at Sinai. By using this Mosaic terminology, Jesus deliberately interprets the Mosaic institution as having no meaning except as it finds its perfect final fulfillment in Him. God has never had but one grand scheme of redemption,

even though this was expressed in various covenantal relationships. The initial phases only prepared for the final, perfect *covenant* established by Jesus Christ.

Further, because the Sinaitic pact united the many tribes of Israel into a holy nation, a people for God's own possession with a mission to accomplish in world history (Exod. 18:4f.), it would appear that Jesus intends that the new covenant create the new Israel of God from all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues to have the same privilege and purpose. (Cf. I Peter 2:9f.; Gal. 6:16). In this light, then, the Lord's Supper becomes a celebration of this new brotherhood, for it points not merely to a personal covenant with God, but also to the covenantal creation of the new people of God. (See Paul's use of this concept: I Cor. 10:17 and perhaps 11:29.)

2. *This is my blood . . . which is poured out.* His expression excludes natural death and points to the blood-shedding of a sacrificial victim. So saying, Jesus depicts Himself as God's Lamb. (Cf. John 1:29; Heb. 7:27.) His self-giving institutes a new relationship which makes the Mosaic covenant obsolete.
3. *For many unto remission of sins.* His death as a substitutionary sacrifice was the purpose of His coming (20:28). This phrase gives the clearest sense to the suffering of Jesus. His mission is neither simply to teach pious moral doctrine or eschatological visions, nor suffer martyrdom as a supreme model of fidelity to duty. His purpose was to establish a covenant between man and God in the only way it could be: by *blood* which achieves *remission of sins*. By beginning with elements of the Passover, He drew attention to the exodus, no more from the slavery of Egypt, but from slavery to sin. Consequently, participation in the Supper must involve our renewal of our own individual total self-commitment to God's program to eliminate all sin in ourselves and in others, for in Jesus' death God's passionate hatred for sin and His passionate love for sinners meet.

For many may be an intentional echo of Isaiah 53:11f. that pictures the Messiah's vicarious death in the place of sinners. He did not give His one innocent life for the forgiveness of but one person—one life for one life—, but for all humanity (John 12:32; cf. Paul's argument, Rom. 5:12-20).

Unto remission of sins does not connect forgiveness with participation in the Lord's Supper, as if He said, "Drink . . . for the

remission of sins," so that whoever missed the Supper for whatever reason could not be forgiven until the next occasion for partaking. Rather, the participation is a celebration of a past fact and renews our confidence that we have been forgiven by His blood. All the disciples who partook that night were already "clean" before Jesus instituted this Supper (John 13:10f.; 15:3).

Whereas Luke (22:20) and Paul (I Cor. 11:25) both say, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," the difference is slight, because the real basis of *the covenant* whereby remission of sins is to be enjoyed, is still Jesus' blood. He simply makes the cup stand for this fundamental principle. When one partakes of the cup, he thereby recognizes and respects *the covenant* and its provisions.

The translation of the RSV, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20) wrongly applies the pouring to the cup, rather than the blood. Even though both "cup" and "blood" are neuter gender in Greek, the appositional phrase, "which is poured out," is located after "my blood," and should be considered to modify it. A much better rendering would be: "this cup is the new covenant in my blood which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins."

Take, eat. This is my body . . . Drink ye all of it. This is my blood. Literal identification of Jesus' body and blood with the bread and cup is excluded by the fact that Jesus stood there before them, holding these symbols in His hands. Instead, although this eating and drinking are physical acts, they are nonetheless truly spiritual, because they are based on a belief and a participation in something that cannot be seen or felt. While not literally a partaking of flesh and blood, the acts are nonetheless real, precisely because spiritual. What is eaten and drunk is still bread and wine to the sense, but to the soul, it is undoubted spiritual participation in all the reality of Jesus Christ.

This bread is my body . . . this cup is my blood. By beginning with elements common to the Passover meal, Jesus pointed to Himself as the true fulfillment of the Paschal symbolism. It is remarkable that He made no direct allusion to the lamb. This is because the lamb is to serve no purpose in the new Supper He instituted, for He Himself is "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). "Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed" (I Cor. 5:7). By His choice, therefore, we partake only of bread and wine that symbolize

to us what the Paschal lamb represented to the Israelites, God's Lamb. Thus, because our Lord Himself fulfilled this symbolic feast in all of the rich meaning God intended Israel to grasp as they observed it, our participation in the Lord's Supper fulfills all the symbolic significance of the ancient Passover. So, if Israel's eating of the Paschal lamb signified their identification with all that the lamb represented and accomplished spiritually for them, our eating of the bread and drinking the wine signifies our loyal fellowship in all that Jesus accomplished through His flesh and blood too.

What bread and wine mean to the body, participation in the body and blood of the Lord must mean to our inner life. By sharing in the broken bread and the cup of blessing, we really, even if symbolically, participate in the vibrant life that was His (I Cor. 10:16f.). Therefore, if not to partake of bread and wine, common staples of the Middle-East diet, is to starve, not to absorb Jesus' soul-sustaining love, message and attitudes cannot keep us alive spiritually either. We must have Him to live! For the disciples, the net result of this revelation should be high encouragement to believe that Jesus' approaching suffering was no freak disaster inflicted by brutal men or unforeseen by God. So far from frustrating His purpose, His death would actually accomplish His true mission. While His suffering would seem to be the entirely unjustified sin of resentful, ungodly men, it would be Jesus' freely chosen way of ratifying a covenant which would redeem men from sin and initiate a new age. Rather than shiver in horror of His shameful death, He glorified His suffering by elevating it to a central place in the institutional life of His people. In this covenantal ritual of eating and drinking, they thereby bind themselves once again to keep the covenant, by their own self-giving life like that of Jesus. Thus, the Supper is more than a supremely appropriate commemoration of the great redemptive act He would accomplish on the cross. It is also a continuing reminder of His love and of our dependence upon Him. Thus, the appropriate attitude for partaking of the Supper must be aroused, not so much by an intellectual acceptance of a past fact alone, as by hearty gratitude toward the generosity of Him who did it: "Christ's love compels us . . ." (II Cor. 5:14; Gal. 2:20).

SPECIAL STUDY

GOD IN THE BOX:

ROMAN CATHOLIC TRANSUBSTANTIATION

The "miracle" of transubstantiation whereby the bread and wine undergo a change into the literal body and blood of Christ is a tradition

that entered ecclesiastical life around 380 A.D. and became dogma of the faith in 1215. (Cf. Everett Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak*, chaps. VIII-X for the history of its development.) In 1226 Catholics began to kneel in the presence of the host, the consecrated wafer of the Eucharist kept in a special box called "the Tabernacle," because it was thought to become the presence of Christ in their midst. "Continuing idolatry" must be the judgment on this worship of the consecrated Host, whereby, according to Pope Paul VI (Encyclica "Mysterium fidei," No. 35),

Not only during the offering of the sacrifice and the carrying out of the Sacrament, but also afterwards, while the Eucharist is kept in the churches and chapels, Christ is truly the Emmanuel, that is "God with us." Since he is with us day and night, he dwells with us full of grace and truth. . . . The Catholic Church professes this service of worship of the Eucharistic Sacrament not only during the Mass, but also beyond its celebration, by saving the consecrated bread with the maximum diligence, presenting it to the solemn veneration of the faithful Christians, carrying it in procession for the rejoicing of the Christian multitude.

In theory, these views of traditional Romanism (as opposed to modern controversial Catholic theology) are based on Jesus' words, *This is my body . . . this is my blood*. By these words Catholics officially believe that Jesus Himself worked, hence, sanctioned the miraculous transformation. That such a position cannot be sustained from the words of Christ, is proven by the following considerations:

1. After having said, *This is my body . . . this is my blood*, He referred to the *bread* as simply *bread* (I Cor. 11:26) and to the cup as "the fruit of the vine," (26:29; Mark 14:25), although both, according to the theory, should have already changed into flesh and blood. Paul, too, speaks of the supposedly transformed *bread* as simply *bread* two more times and calls the wine simply "the cup" three times, after citing the supposedly miraculously transforming words of Jesus (I Cor. 11:27ff.). Now, if neither Jesus nor Paul could discern any change in these elements, there must have not been any.
2. In the Catholic mass there is no transformation that can be discerned by the impartial observer, not even by the Pope himself (*Osservatore Romano* for 1-2 July 1968, p. 2). The wafer remains

what it is and the wine drunk by the priest is still wine. But calling it a "spiritual miracle" is inexcusable, because, when Jesus worked real miracles, tangibly verifiable changes occurred. When He turned water into wine, for example, everyone could tell that it was no longer water, but the finest wine (John 2:9f.). There was no need for ecclesiastical hocus-pocus nor mental gymnastics nor auto-suggestion to cause people to think a material change had taken place when it had not.

3. Such a miraculous transformation, in the nature of the case, is not to be expected from Christ. The Roman Catholic doctrine of the mass, established by the Council of Trent (canons 1 and 2 of the Decretal on the Eucharist, and sanctioned by Vatican II), affirms that the Eucharist is a propitiatory sacrifice that is offered to take away the sins of the living and dead in Christ. (Cf. *Documents of the Second Vatican Council*, "The Liturgy," §§ 9,354, 1288.) Thus, every mass becomes a repeated renewal of Christ's sacrifice, which shifts the believer's attention from the proclamation of Jesus' death and resurrection to the pretended "mystery" of the mutation of the Eucharist's elements (*ibid.*, §§ 286, 1252-1254). But Christ's sacrifice was a unique event: once for ever (Rom. 6:9f.; Heb. 7:25-27; 9:22, 25-28; 10:12-14)! Thus, the supposed necessity of other, repeated, complementary sacrifices of Christ's body and blood to remove sins, is diametrically opposed to the Bible doctrine of the uniqueness and sufficiency of Christ's original sacrifice (Heb. 10:17f).
4. Such an interpretation turns into wooden, prosaic literalism the figurative language of a Teacher whose lessons abound in vivid pictures. *This is my body . . . my blood* are simply metaphors, that vivid figure of speech which creates a relationship between two objects by calling one of them by a term that denotes the characteristic of the other, thus, rhetorically transferring the characteristic of the one to the other so as to suggest some analogy between them. While many illustrations could be cited (like John 10:7, 9; 14:6; 15:1; I Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Matt. 5:13-16; Jer. 2:13; Gen. 49:9, 14, 21, 22, 27), the one which shows most convincingly that Jesus' language is to be understood figuratively is Luke's version: "This cup . . . is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20; cf. I Cor. 11:25). By affirming that "this cup" is a "new covenant," He brings together two otherwise unconnected ideas to make His point. This combination is simply another metaphor of

the same type utilized by Matthew and Mark's version: *This is my body . . . my blood*. At any rate, Jesus warned against turning metaphor into literalism with precise reference to His body and His blood, when He cautioned so emphatically, "The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63).

5. The disciples themselves understood Jesus to speak symbolically, because no serious objection arose from these Hebrews against the cannibalism implicitly involved in eating real human flesh and drinking real human blood, for to them this could not be less than totally abhorrent. (Contrast the unbelievers, who, like the traditional, Catholic position, thought Jesus spoke literally, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" John 6:52!)
6. Possibly utilizing the ancient formula of Exodus 12:11, at the Passover Hebrews spoke of the Passover lamb thus: "This *is* the body of the lamb which our fathers ate in Egypt." (Cf. Edersheim, *Temple*, 232, who documents a similar statement in Mishnah, *Pes.* 10.3.) Although it was decidedly not the same lamb, each Passover lamb stood for and memorialized it.
7. We present a photograph to our acquaintances, saying, "This is my mother," knowing that they cannot misunderstand us to affirm that the picture itself is our parent. Similarly, while alive in their presence, Jesus could even more easily hand them bread and wine and affirm, *This is my body . . . my blood*, without their misunderstanding Him to mean that some metaphysical change had come over those common elements which even their own senses could not discern, but which Jesus continued to speak of as bread and wine.

Therefore, certain knowledge not only of this text but also of Jesus' general use of metaphors and of His style of Kingdom, as well as genuine spiritual discernment are all needed to restrain us from repeating the sacramental substitution of the Church's Dark Ages. Those men, unwilling to believe that the spiritual influence of the Supper lay in mere symbols, attributed to the figure all the powerful virtue of the things symbolized, transferring the power of salvation from Jesus the Savior to the sacrifice of the mass. But salvation cannot be acquired through the magical properties of earthly elements, but by a new standing before God, a position determined by personal faith in Jesus Christ and attained by His self-sacrifice once for all forever. The certainty that we truly and

properly partake of Christ is not made possible as the result of an ecclesiastical magic trick accomplished only by authorized personnel (which also shifts attention to a special priestly hierarchy). Rather, this certainly is obtained by the willing confession that all who eat His flesh and drink His blood in the sense that HE expressed, that is, by absorbing His words, His Spirit and His life, have His life abiding in them (John 6:53-63).

This supposed miraculous change only occurs because of the sacerdotal authority of the priest, hence the attention of the participant is directed toward celebrating the glories of the sacerdotal hierarchy while he concentrates on that imaginary miracle performed thereby. Thus, the conscience of the worshipper is gradually drawn away from the Gospel emphasis to an obsession with human mediation and a god in the box, the consecrated wafer in the Tabernacle. The most negative effect of this belief is its emphasis on a daily miracle created by priestly power, while the power of a Christ risen to die no more is relegated to an event in the dusty past, remembered once a year at Easter.

That not even all Catholicism is agreed on the transubstantiation dogma is evidenced in all the Catholic theologians' struggles to oppose it especially before Vatican II. The Pope's stern rebukes of Catholics who oppose the doctrine, measure the magnitude of lower-level dissent among progressive Catholics (Encyclica "Mysterium fidei," No. 4). Let us hope that the new Catholic theology be able to free itself from the official dogmatics of the past which had nothing to do with the Bible and were useless to strengthen the faith, and that they might proceed more swiftly and freely on the road toward a return to God's Word.

Undaunted confidence in the future

26:29 But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. This declaration stands in astonishing contrast (*légo dè humîn*) with what, to His disciples, must have seemed inexplicable pessimism. But Jesus intends to infuse into them His own unshakable confidence in His final victory. After picturing His death in the symbols of bread and wine, He now lays before them a stunning challenge: "I have just talked about my death, but now I promise

you that the long-awaited Messianic Kingdom of God will have come on earth before another Passover rolls around! Dare you believe *that*? This year I drink this cup of Passover wine, part of the old, Mosaic economy. Next year we will drink together in an entirely new way *in the Kingdom!*"

His words, however, must not be mistaken for a somber refusal to drink, as if, by a supposed Nazarite vow of abstinence, He were consecrating Himself for the imminent sacrifice of His life. Nor is there any indication that He were fasting, rather than participating in the Passover. *I shall not drink henceforth* implies, without distinctly affirming it, "I have drunk up to now." It is *henceforth*, i.e. from now on, that the change would come. Otherwise, the disciples must wonder why, of all people, Jesus alone did not participate with them in the Passover in the normal way. But of His non-participation there is not a word in Scripture. That He neither ate nor drank is a hypothesis contrary to His strong desire expressly declared (Luke 22:15f.). In fact, *henceforth (ap'arti) . . . until (héos)* means that He ate the Passover meal, but this is absolutely the last time to do so under these conditions. From this Passover feast forward, He would not participate in such a festal celebration until it could be shared with His people in a new way *in the Kingdom*. Thus, He says farewell to the Passover, and consequently, to the Mosaic dispensation founded on it. Edersheim (*Temple, 233f. with bracketed additions from his Life, II,492*) described the Passover as specially suited to typify Christ and end with His death:

It was a sacrifice, and yet quite out of the order of all Levitical sacrifices [and distinct from all others]. For it had been instituted and observed before Levitical sacrifices existed; before the Law was given; nay, before the Covenant was ratified by blood (Ex. 24). In a sense, it may be said to have been the cause and foundation of all the later sacrifices of the Law, and of the Covenant itself. Lastly, it belonged neither to one nor to another class of sacrifices; it was neither exactly a sin-offering nor a peace-offering, but combined them both. And yet in many respects it quite differed from them. In short, just as the priesthood of Christ was a real Old Testament priesthood, yet not after the order of Aaron, but after the earlier, prophetic, and royal order of Melchisedek, so the sacrifice of Christ was a real Old Testament sacrifice, yet not after the order of the Levitical sacrifices, but after that of the earlier prophetic Passover sacrifice by which Israel had become a royal nation.

No wonder, then, that Jesus should make a definite break with the Mosaic institution once the completion of His own mission should bring it to final fulfillment. It is this finality that causes this particular Passover to be called "the Last Supper." But the break is not so radical that He must be seen as refusing to participate in the last Hebrew Passover. *This fruit of the vine* means "this Passover wine" (Luke 22:15-18), because not only had Jesus given the wine new meaning, but now categorically affirms that He would nevermore taste it until this new meaning had been realized in the Kingdom. On the question of wine versus grape juice, see below. He cannot mean He would nevermore eat common meals with the disciples before the Ascension (Acts 10:41). The fact remains, therefore, that for Jesus the cup still contained simple *fruit of the vine*, not blood, even after referring to it as His "blood."

Until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. Did Jesus see the Last Supper as a prelude to the great Messianic or to the Lord's Supper, or both?

1. THE MESSIANIC BANQUET (8:11f. = Luke 13:28f.; 14:15ff.). *That day in my Father's kingdom* has an eschatological ring to it, since *that day* commonly points to some great day of the Lord. (Cf. Isa. 10:20, 27; Hosea 1:5; Amos 9:11; Zech. 12:3-11; 13:2, 4; 14:4-21; Matt. 24:36; Luke 21:34; I Thess. 5:4; cf. 5:2; II Thess. 1:10; II Tim. 1:18; 4:8.) Further, even in Matthew the Christian era is distinguished from the eternal Kingdom (5:10?; 13:43; 25:34 as opposed to 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; 12:28; 13:11, 19, 24, 31, 33, 44-47; 16:19, 28, etc.). And in that realm of eternity we may anticipate full, uninterrupted, unsullied, restored fellowship with the Lord. (Cf. I Thess. 4:17; Rev. 3:20?; 7:14ff.; 19:9; 2:1-4.) Not only does this supper commemorate; it anticipates, looking backward to the cross and forward to our future celestial fellowship. Our present, earthly communion is not mortal like our bodies, but has a joyous, eternal future. We celebrate in hope of that grand reunion with our Lord in His eternal Kingdom.
 - a. But the true eschatological fellowship with the Lord cannot exclude all fellowship with Jesus now or be thought to be postponed until the Lord's Supper find its heavenly fulfillment in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. This view discounts the high importance Jesus attributes to His real fellowship with His Church on earth now (cf. 18:20).
 - b. *In my Father's kingdom* may rightly be thought parallel to Luke's expressions "until the Kingdom of God comes . . . until

it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God" (Luke 22:16, 18). These are similar in thought to Luke 9:27 (= Matt. 16:28 = Mark 9:1) and refer, not to the post-judgment eschatological Kingdom, but to the Kingdom of Christ which began during the lifetime of the early Christians, i.e. the Church.

- c. Certainly, we proclaim His death "until He comes again" (I Cor. 11:26), but to suppose that His promise refers exclusively to the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb, is to minimize the present participations of all living saints *in the Kingdom*.
2. THE LORD'S SUPPER. Jesus officiated at the last Passover supper ever truly celebrated according to God's will. That very next day at three o'clock in the afternoon,—at the hour of prayer and the offering of the last daily sacrifice (cf. Acts 3:1; Mark 15:34)—the Passover was fulfilled when the Lamb of God was sacrificed (I Cor. 5:7; Col. 2:14). The following Pentecost the Kingdom of God was fully inaugurated on earth and the new covenant executed. From that date on, Jesus began to have communion with His disciples *in the kingdom* as it is now in anticipation of the Messianic banquet in the eternal Kingdom. So, even now the eschatological fellowship with the Lord may be ours in foretaste and promise at His Table. Even now, therefore, Jesus communes with His own (18:20; I Cor. 10:16). He is not content to be without us at His table where He is Master Host and our Fellow-banqueter. So, there is joyful optimism in His promise: *I shall . . . drink it new with you in the Kingdom*. How this prospect inspires us to be at that Table, meeting Him there as the Church to have fellowship with Him!

FRUIT OF THE VINE: WINE OR GRAPE JUICE?

Would first-century Hebrews ask this question? Or, is not this a query typical of a sympathy for a dogmatic position of total abstinence, rather than temperance, toward all forms of alcohol? (See author's study: "Should Jesus Drink Wine?" my vol. II, 526ff.)

The question of wine versus grape juice does not revolve around whether grape juice were available in the spring at Passover time or whether Jews anciently used hermetic sealing methods to prevent it from spoiling or fermenting. The question is what they did, when both wine and grape juice were available.

Fruit of the vine, as Jewish sources reveal, is but a beautiful paraphrase for wine. (See Davis, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 818ff., where Mishnah *Berakoth* 6:1 is cited; *I.S.B.E.* art. "Wine," 3086ff.; *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, V, art. *oinos*, 163.167; also I, art. *g nema t s amp lou*, 684.) According to the Mishnah, *Pes.* 2, fermented drinks of grain that had had contact with the yeast of bread were forbidden. Edersheim (*Life* II,485) contends that "the wine was the ordinary one of the country, only red; it was mixed with water, generally in the proportion of one part to two of water." To this he appends the footnote: "The contention that it was *unfermented* wine is not worth serious discussion, although in *modern* practice (for reasons needless to mention) its use is allowed." He cites the Jerusalem *Pes* 37c as indicating that each of the Paschal cups generally contained only about 94 grams (or 3 ounces) of watered-down wine. By the end of the traditional four cups, if the wine were diluted to half water, the most alcohol anyone would have drunk would be about 11-12% of a third of a liter (or about 1.4 oz.)! Today, normal Jewish table-wine straight from Israel, labelled "Pure for Passover" (*kosher le Pesach*), is 11-12% alcohol.

The argument that the *fermentation* of wine, as opposed to unfermented grape juice, would disqualify wine for use on the Passover Supper, assumes that Jewish authorities considered such fermentation to be equal to leaven or yeast. This view, however, does not accurately reflect Biblical logic. The fermentation of wine was obviously not considered "leaven," since wine could be poured out as a libation on God's altar during a burnt-offering (Exod. 29:39-41; Lev. 23:13; Num. 28:7f.), whereas no leaven must ever appear there (Exod. 23:18; Lev. 2:11). (Only when offerings were to be eaten by priests, Lev. 7:12ff., or by other, Lev. 7:16ff., could yeast be allowed with offerings. Cf. Lev. 23:15-20.)

McGarvey (*Fourfold Gospel*, 658) decides,

The word "wine" is nowhere used in any of the accounts of the Lord's Supper, the terms "cup" and "fruit of the vine" being employed in its stead. Those, therefore, who choose to use unfermented grape juice are guilty of no irregularity.

However, such brethren usually also insist that the original type of Passover bread, i.e. Mazzoth, or unleavened bread, be restored in

the Church's faith and practice. Would not consistency demand that they respect Jewish Passover practice in their "fruit of the vine" as much as their "unleavened bread"?

Then, are those who use grape juice sinning, because they do not use Passover wine along with Mazzoth (unleavened bread)? While the unfermented grape juice they drink in the Lord's Supper is probably not what Jesus distributed among His disciples, nevertheless, their conscience is weak due to their acceptance of total abstinence taught for Christian doctrine (despite Col. 2:16-25). So, they cannot change until they be convinced of the Scriptural validity of using wine. To change without conviction is sin (Rom. 14:23). However, until they are persuaded, they must never condemn their brothers who use wine with understanding and Scriptural bases. Similarly, their wine-drinking brothers must not sneer at their abstaining brothers' conscience against using wine.

THE LORD'S SUPPER, A PERMANENT INSTITUTION

That Jesus intended a perpetual observance of His Supper is suggested in His plea: "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19; I Cor. 11:24f.). Paul points to the only appropriate termination of our participation: "until He comes" (I Cor. 11:26). Although no specific rule determines the frequency of participation, our love for Jesus is our highest norm. Subsequent early Christian practice illustrates their understanding that Jesus expected His Church to observe it perpetually (Acts 2:42, 46?; 20:7; cf. Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak*, Chap. VI).

Logically, by virtue of our continued need to feast our souls on Christ Himself, the Lord's Supper would be a continuous reminder of our dependence on Him and on the terms of the covenant under which our forgiveness is secured. The question, "How often should we observe the Supper?" is thus already answered in a non-legalistic way: "No more than you need to be reminded of the cost of your salvation, no oftener than you need to express your dependence on Jesus, no more regularly than you need forgiveness for your violation of the covenantal terms of your relationship with God, no oftener

than you need to meditate on your responsibility to the whole Body of Christ, the 'many' for whom this sacrifice was made." Therefore, observance of the Supper every week could never be too often for those who are spiritually sensitive to these needs. From this point of view, then, every Lord's Day may not be enough, but merely the accepted minimum for the local assembly of Christians to be able to get together.

Edersheim (*Life*, II,491) saw the symmetry in Jesus' ministry as it relates to us:

With a sacrament did Jesus begin His Ministry: it was that of separation and consecration in Baptism. With a second Sacrament did He close His Ministry: it was that of gathering together and fellowship in the Lord's Supper. Both were into His Death: yet not as something that had power over Him, but as a death that has been followed by the Resurrection. For, if in Baptism we are buried with Him, we also rise with Him; and if in the Holy Supper we remember His Death, it is as that of Him Who is risen again—and if we show forth that Death, it is until He come again. And so this Supper, also, points forward to the Great Supper at the final consummation of His Kingdom.

God's son defies with a triumphant song

26:30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. Much preceded this *hymn* that Matthew does not report. John penned the fuller account of those last, precious hours with the Eleven during which Jesus unburdened His heart in a discourse that forms the content of John 13:31—17:26. Although John 14:30 reports Jesus' order, "Rise, let us leave here," they may have stood up to go, but lingered further in the Upper Room, while Jesus continued His instruction, His intercessory prayer, and finally this *hymn*.

As a translation of Matthew's words, the phrase, *when they had sung a hymn*, is misleading, because it points to a single *hymn*, whereas Matthew wrote *humnésantes*: "they having sung hymns or having hymned." This aorist participle does not specify how many hymns

they sang or for how long, but merely views the action as an event. It was traditional to bring the Passover celebration to a close by singing Psalms 115-118. It is not necessary to treat these Psalms together as a bloc to be sung together as one *hymn*. So, they could well have sung these Psalms. Edersheim (*Life*, II,488) affirmed that, during the actual slaying of the Paschal lambs in the Temple, while the blood was being applied to the altar, the Levites led the worshipers in chanting Psalms 113-118. This repeated Psalm-singing vividly brought the slaying of the Paschal lamb right into the Passover supper itself. Sometimes also Psalms 120-137 were sung at the close of the feast (Edersheim, *Temple*, 244, note 2).

The original precept required, "Not one of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning" (Exod. 12:22). That *they went out*, rather than remain in the Upper Room, cannot be cited as proof that Jesus did not participate in the truly Last Passover. The Jews in Palestine distinguished the characteristics of the original "Egyptian Passover" from those of the permanent institution, since some of the former were considered out of harmony with the true meaning of the Passover, once Israel arrived in the Promised Land. These features were not to be considered an essential part of the ordinance itself. So, as was His custom (Luke 22:39) every night during His Last Week (Luke 21:37), He left the City.

They went out to the mount of Olives. Leaving the Upper Room they started walking through the dark streets of the City toward their specific destination, the Garden of Gethsemane. This ended Jesus' privacy, because He was aware that Judas knew His habits well enough to predict He might eventually make this move (John 18:2).

So, after singing of the victory over sin and death, of zeal for the glory of God, of the joy of service to God, of the goodness of God in all of its manifestations, Jesus went out to Gethsemane and the cross, SINGING, "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever" (Ps. 118:29). How could He SING with the doom of divine judgment and human infamy awaiting Him just a few hours later? In those Psalms He sang of consecration to God, calm truthfulness and fortitude in trial. Because Jesus SANG, we too can sing, even if our eyes and hours are now washed with tears.

For a rich spiritual experience, why not turn to Psalms 113-118 and read those great songs aloud, as if you stood with Jesus and the Eleven in the Upper Room, knowing what He knew about the coming cross? What thoughts go through your mind as you contemplate the

cross through the language of those Psalms? What must Jesus have thought about? How do these Psalms calm your troubled soul, as you too say, "The LORD is my strength and MY SONG"? Or, "The LORD is with me: I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Cf. Heb. 13:6.)

FACT QUESTIONS

1. List five ways the Scriptures use the term "Passover."
2. During the Last Week did Jesus eat the regular passover meal at the normal time? What texts show whether He did or not?
3. On what day of the week did Jesus eat the passover meal? Prove your answer.
4. Identify "the first day of unleavened bread": Why call it by this title? What was its function? What two major preparations did the Jews usually make on this day? How do the Synoptics distinguish this day from "the day of preparation?"
5. What does Jesus mean by the expression, "My time is at hand"?
6. What specific arrangements would normally be needed to be made for Jesus and His men to eat the Passover?
7. Name the two disciples commissioned to make the arrangements.
8. How were these two disciples instructed to proceed from the moment they left Jesus to make the arrangements?
9. Why did Jesus eat the Passover in the evening?
10. When, precisely, did Jesus point out Judas as the traitor? List the various events at the supper in order to show this moment.
11. How did Jesus indicate the traitor to be Judas?
12. How did Jesus hide the betrayer's identity until his departure from the Upper Room?
13. How did the other Apostles react to Jesus' announcement that one of them would betray Him?
14. Quote the text wherein Jesus absolved God of all responsibility for Judas' betrayal and contemporaneously established Judas' complete freedom of choice.
15. At what general point in the Passover did Jesus institute the Lord's Supper?
16. What was the original symbolism of the unleavened bread in the Passover?
17. Name the figure of speech involved in the expression: "This is my body . . . my blood," then explain how Jesus' words are to be understood.

18. Explain how blood and covenants are connected in the plan of God, then apply this understanding to Jesus' use of these terms in connection with forgiveness of sins.
19. Jesus said, "I shall . . . drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." To what astounding reality does this promise point?
20. Were Jesus and His disciples accustomed to sing a hymn in connection with Passover? If so, what hymn was it?
21. What does the Lord's Supper say to the participant about the purpose of Jesus' death?
22. Show the meaning(s) of the Lord's Supper by quoting passages of Scripture that state or imply its meaning.

SECTION 66

JESUS PREDICTS PETER'S DENIALS AND OTHERS' FAILURE

(Parallels: Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-38; John 13:31-38)

TEXT: 26:31-35

31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended in me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. 32 But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee. 33 But Peter answered and said unto him, If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended. 34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. 35 Peter said unto him, Even if I must die with thee, *yet* will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. Why do you think Jesus announced the disciples' failure ahead of time? Would not this tend to discourage them from doing better? What specific advantage(s) did He seek, by giving them this advance notice?
- b. What does it mean for someone to "be offended in" Jesus?
- c. Why did Jesus inform the disciples that, "After I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee"? How could the anticipation of His return to Galilee do anything for them in their bewildered state?