

Teen Bible Study Notes: Friday, February 8, 2019

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The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ – Lecture #25

Book and Chapter – Matthew – Chapter 26 (verse 17 – all)

MATTHEW 26

The Passover Is Prepared

Jesus, at the close of His earthly life, set an example for the continuance of the Passover for the New Testament Church when He was with His twelve disciples on the night before he was crucified.

V17 Now on the first *day of the Feast* of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him “Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?”

Luke 22:8 – tells us that the disciples were Peter and John.

Matthew 26:17 – Passover Day

In the *New King James Version* – notice that the words – *day of the Feast* – are in italics. This indicates that these words do not appear in the original Greek. Italicized words were added by the translators either for clarity in English or because they thought the word was necessary.

Properly translated, **Matthew 26:17** should read: “Now [on] the first [day] of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?” The addition of “day” is required by the Greek; the addition of the “Feast of” is not required.

The specific day referred to in this passage is the 14th of the month, Passover day. This conversation took place as that day began. Remember that God begins and ends days with sunset (**Leviticus 23:32**). In other words, they talked at sunset at the beginning of the 14th day of the month. Later that evening, Jesus introduced the Christian Passover (**Matthew 26:20**).

Insert Note: Leavened bread may be eaten on the Passover day. But because unleavened bread was used at the actual Passover meal, the day of the Passover came to be considered “the day of unleavened bread (Luke 22:7).

Luke 22:7 “Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed.”

The day of the Passover is the final occasion on which all leavened bread is to be put out of the home in preparation for the seven Days of Unleavened Bread, which immediately follow sunset

on the 14th day of the month (**Exodus 12:18-19**). The day of the Passover consequently came to be considered one of the day of Unleavened Bread.

The day referred to is thus the day before the 15th, when the Feast of Unleavened Bread officially began. Because translators were confused on this point, they wrongly inserted “feast of” in the Authorized Version.

The first century Jewish historian Josephus confirms this. He tells us that the Passover was on the 14th day and preceded the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which lasted for seven days, that is, from the 15th day to the 21st day of the first month of the sacred year. In common speech, he says, the entire eight-day spring festival was called “the days of Unleavened Bread.” (See *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 2-15-12; Book 3-10-5).

Luke 22:1 – shows that the word “Passover” was also used to refer to the entire period. The two terms were then used interchangeably.

Luke 22:1 “Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover.”

Matthew 26:17 then, refers to the day immediately preceding the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Today, we refer to it as Passover day.

Personal Correspondence Letter – L230 – Worldwide Church of God.

V18 And He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.’”

V19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

The Passover Is Celebrated

V20 When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve.

V21 Now as they were eating, He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.”

V22 And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, “Lord, is it I?”

“*Lord, is it I?*” – expects a negative response. The meaning is – “I’m not the one, am I?”

V23 He answered and said, “He who dipped *his* hand with Me in the dish will betray Me.

The dish – was a bowl of broth in which guests dipped pieces of bread.

V24 The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.”

Question: Why is Jesus called the “Son of Man.”

Answer: Christ was not referred to as God the Father’s **Son** (except in prophecy – see **Psalm 2:7** and **II Samuel 7:14**) until His human birth (**Hebrews 5:5-8; Luke 1:32**). Likewise, God the Father was not referred to as the Father before that time. In fact, the Father’s existence was not clearly revealed until after Christ’s coming (**Luke 10:22; Matthew 11:27**).

Not until He was born of a human mother, Mary, was Christ given the title “Son of Man.” Christ’s divesting Himself of His glory in order to become our sacrifice was a vital part of God’s plan, and was necessary in order for Jesus to become a fully understanding and compassionate High Priest (**Hebrews 4:15**).

Hebrews 4:15 “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin.”

So, this title designates a very important attribute of Christ. In the Old Testament, Christ had many different titles. Since that time, the title and attributes of “Son of Man” have been added to them.

Personal Correspondence Department Letter L115 – Worldwide Church of God.

V25 Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, “Rabbi, is it I?” He said to him, “You have said it.”

New Symbols Instituted at the Passover

Before His crucifixion, Christ instructed His disciples how the ***New Testament*** Passover should be observed by true Christians in remembrance of his suffering and death.

And He instituted the New Testament Passover symbols on the very day the Passover lambs had always been slain – on the 14th of Abib.

The Passover was instituted in Egypt ***weeks before*** the Israelites arrived at Mt. Sinai and was repeated in the covenant made at Sinai, but it was ***not instituted*** by that covenant. The sacrifices instituted ***after*** the covenant was made and ratified at Sinai ceased to be necessary at Christ’s death. Therefore they were not perpetuated by symbols in the New Testament Church. Only the Passover is continued – and it only with the ***new symbols*** of unleavened bread and wine [*and, of course, the foot-washing ceremony*].

Jesus did not abolish the Passover – He merely changed the ***symbols*** used. Instead of shedding the blood of a lamb and eating its roasted body, we are now to use unleavened bread and wine.

V26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.”

Unleavened Bread – was to symbolically represent Christ’s body, which was to be brutally beaten and cut open for mankind.

The Hebrew Passover was always eaten with unleavened bread (**Exodus 12:8**).

This is My body – means “This symbolizes My body” (**See I Corinthians 10:4**).

V27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you.

V28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Wine – was to symbolically represent His blood, which was to be shed for many the remission of past sins.

Jesus had previously told the Pharisees, in a statement that they did not understand, that unless a person *symbolically eats* His body and *drinks* His blood, he has no hope of receiving eternal life.

John 6:48 “I am the bread of life.”

John 6:53-54: V53 “Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

V54 Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Some believe that when Jesus said “This is My body...this is My blood,” or spoke of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, he meant those statements to be understood literally – the bread and wine miraculously become His literal flesh and blood. This is not what Jesus meant at all!

The word “is” (in both Greek and English) also means “represents.” That is its *obvious meaning* in **Matthew 13:38**, for example.

Matthew 13:38 “The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one.”

The unleavened bread and wine are *symbols* that *represent* the body and blood of Jesus Christ!

The absolute proof that the bread and the wine are not the literal flesh and blood under the visible form of bread and wine –the doctrine of transubstantiation – is found in the first council held in Jerusalem late in A.D. 49.

The council was under the direct supervision of the Holy Spirit and the apostles and elders of the Church of God. It was unanimously agreed, after much discussion, that all Christians must “abstain...from blood” (**Acts 15:29**).

And most certainly it is never permitted to eat any flesh other than the clean foods – animals, fowl and fish – defined in **Leviticus 11** and **Deuteronomy 14**. It is unthinkable to eat human flesh. And certainly eating blood with flesh is clearly forbidden to every nation, even in the time of Noah. “But you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is*, its blood” (**Genesis 9:4**).

Those who believe the doctrine of transubstantiation reject not only this council, but the teaching of the Bible on this clear and absolutely authoritative decision and doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the apostles (**Acts 15:28**).

V29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”

This verse anticipates God’s Kingdom when Christ will reign on the throne of David. Today he is seated with the Father on His throne and intercedes for us.

The *fruit of the vine* – Jesus gave His disciples was *fermented wine*, not grape juice. Grape juice could be made only in the autumn, and could not be preserved until spring. It was either fermented into wine, or else made into a heavy syrup that was used as a sweetener.

This definitely was not grape juice or syrup! In Jesus’ day, the Jews used only fermented wine at the Passover.

The Bible nowhere condemns the drinking of alcoholic beverages – only their *abuse*. If we obey Jesus’ command – “...This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of me” (**I Corinthians 11:25**) – we will drink a very small amount of wine once each year at the Passover service in remembrance of Christ’s shed blood.

Question: Did Christ break His word? When Christ took a drink on the cross did He go against an earlier statement He made?

Answer: Jesus was observing His last Passover on earth as a human. He then went on to make this specific statement: “But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom” (**verse 29 above**).

Jesus was quite clearly saying that this was the last time He would drink the “fruit of the vine” until some future time in the Kingdom of God.

Now notice what happened after Christ received the terrible scourging, and was on His way to be crucified (**Mark 15:22-23**).

Mark 15:22-23: V22 “And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull.

V23 Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take *it*.”

Jesus remembered His words not to drink wine.

Jesus takes a drink

But, a little later, while Jesus was suffering on the cross, another incident took place that seems to throw doubt on Christ’s ability to keep His word.

Mark 15:34-36: V34 “And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*’

V35 Some of those who stood by, when they heard *it*, said, ‘Look, he is calling for Elijah!’

V36 Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put *it* on a reed, and offered *it* to Him to drink, saying, ‘Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down.’”

If we now pick up the account of the same incident as recorded by John, we read:

John 19:29-30: V29 “Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put *it* on hyssop, and put *it* to His mouth.

V30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.”

From this account in **John**, it is clear that Jesus *did* take a drink, and therefore seemingly went against His word.

What Jesus meant

As with all such apparent contradictions, there is a simple explanation for this incident. In this instance, it is necessary to delve into the Greek language.

When Jesus was offered a drink from the container in **John 19:29-30**, the word translated “sour wine” is *oxos*, and can be better rendered “*vinegar*.” This is how the word appears in the King James Bible and some other translations.

But, is not vinegar also considered “fruit of the vine”? After all, the name itself is *vinegar*.

The answer to that legitimate question is that **while vinegar is truly a “fruit of the vine,” it is not the same kind as used in the Passover meal.**

The wine that Jesus and His disciples used for that meal was of the finest quality. Nothing else was appropriate, especially at that particular Passover, since that was the first time that the special symbolism linking Christ's shed blood to the wine could have been understood. The Greek word used for such wine is *oinos*. So we could render **Matthew 26:29**, "...I will not drink of this *oinos* from now on until..."

So when Jesus said during the Passover meal, "...I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" He was being quite accurate. He was not saying He wouldn't drink *any* kind of wine or similar liquid, just that he wouldn't be having that particular kind of fruit of the vine – wine used as a symbol of His blood at Passover. He would not again be observing the Passover as a human. He was about to be crucified!

When we understand the difference between the Greek words used in these accounts, it is obvious that Jesus Christ didn't make an untrue statement during the Passover meal. Nor did He, of course, at any other time.

As the Scriptures clearly tell us, "...it is impossible for God to lie..." (**Hebrews 6:18**).

Peter's Denial Is Predicted

V30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

V31 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: *I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.*'

All of you will be made to stumble – All of the disciples, not just Peter, caved to the pressure and abandoned Christ.

"I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered" – This Old Testament prophecy is found in **Zechariah 13:7**.

V32 But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

V33 Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."

V34 Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."

V35 Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.

The Prayer in the Garden

V36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there."

Gethsemane – which means “oil press” was east of Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives. It was a place where olives were crushed and ground.

Judas had already gone and was about to return and betray Him (**John 13:21-30**), so the Lord left eight of His disciples at this spot.

V37 And he took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.

This is the third time Jesus singled out Peter, James, and John to accompany Him for a specific purpose. (1) The Transfiguration (**Matthew 17:1-13**), (2) The raising of Jairus’s daughter (**Luke 8:49-56**), (3) And now here.

V38 Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.”

Watch – literally means to “stay awake.”

V39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*.”

Jesus knew how excruciatingly painful His death would be. But more importantly, Jesus prayed with great fervency knowing that He, the sinless Son of God, was about to bear the sins of the world and face separation from His Father.

Three times He asked the Father if it would be possible to begin His plan of salvation for mankind in some other way.

V40 Then he came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, “What, could you not watch with me one hour?”

Could you not watch with Me one hour – Although addressed to Peter, the question was meant for all three disciples. Earlier Peter had claimed that he would never forsake Jesus and that he would even die for Him (**verse 35**); yet Peter could not stay awake to pray with Jesus at the time of His greatest need.

V41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.”

The disciples needed to stay awake **and pray** because they were about to be tested themselves. Here the word **flesh** emphasizes human weakness.

V42 He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.”

V43 And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

V44 So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

The fact that Jesus *prayed the third time, saying the same words* indicates that there is nothing wrong with repetition in fervent prayer. It’s OK to ask God for something more than once – this does not demonstrate a lack of faith. Jesus prayed the same prayer three times – and so earnestly that he sweat blood (**Luke 22:44**).

V45 Then He came to His disciples and said to them, “Are *you* still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

V46 Rise, let us be going. See, he who betrays Me is at hand.”

This verse shows Jesus’ active submission to the Father’s will, as He stated in **verse 42**. Jesus did not go reluctantly, but with determination to do the Father’s will.

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane

V47 And while he was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people.

V48 Now when the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.”

V49 Then immediately he went up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed Him.

V50 And Jesus said to him, “Friend, why have you come?” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.

Friend – even though He knew Judas’s wicked heart and actions, Jesus offered him friendship. The words translated – *why have you come* – may also mean “Do what you have come to do.”

V51 And suddenly, one of those *who were* with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

John 18:10 – informs us that the swordsman was Peter. This action was performed with one of the two swords that the disciples had (**see Luke 22:38**).

V52 Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

V53 Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?

A *legion* in the Roman army was about six thousand men.

When one considers the power of one angel, as seen in the Old Testament (**Exodus 12:23; II Kings 19:35**), the power of more than 72,000 angels is beyond comprehension.

Exodus 12:23 – the death angel struck dead all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, and the firstborn of livestock except for those who had blood on the lintel and two doorposts.

II Kings 19:35 – “...the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when *people* arose early in the morning, there were the corpses – all dead.”

In fact, there are untold millions of angels serving God at His universe-ruling throne in heaven. Notice:

Daniel 7:9-10: V9 I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of His head *was* like pure wool. His throne *was* a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire.

V10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.”

Jesus had all of heaven’s power at His disposal, yet He refused to use it.

V54 How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?”

If Jesus had called for angelic aid, the prophetic Scriptures foretelling His betrayal, his death, and His resurrection would not have been fulfilled. This point is so important that it is stated twice (**verse 56**).

V55 In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me.

V56 But all this was done that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

Compare Peter’s claim – **verse 35** – “...even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” with Christ’s words in **verse 41** – “...The Spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.”

There is a powerful lesson in all of this for us. We must watch [*stay awake*] and pray if we hope to pass the tests that lie ahead for each one of us.

Luke 21:36 “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

He was brought informally before the Sanhedrin (the Jewish court) by night, beaten and spit upon (**verse 67**), then sent to Pilate and Herod and mocked by their soldiers (**Luke 23:11; John 19:2-3**). Yet in all this Jesus never sinned, never became angry or vindictive – not even when crucified!

V57 And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

V58 But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest’s courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.

The servants – were probably house servants.

V59 Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death,

V60 But found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward

V61 And said, “This *fellow* said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’”

This was a misquotation and misapplication of Christ’s words.

Jesus was not talking about the physical building. He was referring to His body. The sign Jesus gave the Jews, that He was the Messiah, was the sign of His resurrection, three days after His death.

John 2:19-21: V19 “Jesus answered and said to them [*the Jews*], ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’

V20 Then the Jews said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’

V21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body.”

V62 And the high priest arose and said to Him, “Do You answer nothing? What *is it that* these men testify against You?

V63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I adjure You [*I put You under oath*] by the living God that You tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God.”

The high priest thought he needed to put Christ under oath in order to get a truthful confession. Christ needed no such oath; He had indicated that He was *the Christ, the Son of God* on several occasions (**John 8:58; John 10:30-33**).

V64 Jesus said to him, “*It is as* you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Jesus answered the high priest’s request in the affirmative and then fortified His answer by applying two clearly Messianic passages to Himself (**Psalm 110:1** and **Daniel 7:13**).

Psalm 110:1 “The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”

Daniel 7:13 “I was watching in the night visions, and behold, *One* like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Day, and they brought Him near before Him.”

V65 Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, “He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy!

Jesus’ claim of sitting at the right hand of God (**verse 64**) was an assertion that He was the Son of God and was, to this unbelieving high priest, a clear case of *blasphemy*.

V66 What do you think?” They answered and said, “He is deserving of death.”

V67 Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck *Him* with the palms of their hands.

V68 Saying, “Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?”

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly

V69 Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, “You also were with Jesus of Galilee.”

V70 But he denied it before *them* all, saying, “I do not know what you are saying.”

V71 And when he had gone out to the gateway, another *girl* saw him and said to those *who were* there, “This *fellow* also was with Jesus of Nazareth.”

V72 But again he denied with an oath, “I do not know the Man!”

V73 And after a while those who stood by came to *him* and said to Peter, “Surely you also are *one* of them, because your speech betrays you.”

V74 Then he began to curse and swear, *saying*, “I do not know the Man!” And immediately a rooster crowed.

Not only did Peter *began to curse*, He also *swore* that he did not know Jesus!

And immediately a rooster crowed – Some have claimed that there is a contradiction between this passage, where the rooster is said to crow (presumably once) after Peter denies Jesus three times, and the statement found in Mark’s Gospel that *the rooster would crow two times* (see **Mark 14:72**). Others believe that to see a contradiction is simply a forced reading of the text.

Matthew, Luke, and John make the simple statement that a rooster would crow – whereas Mark, which was based on Peter’s memories, emphasizes the exact number of times the rooster would crow.

V75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” Then he went out and wept bitterly.

He went out and wept bitterly – indicates Peter’s genuine repentance. Upon repentance – God forgave him.