



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew

Chapter 26

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Introduction

Chapter Main Points

- The events leading to the arrest of Jesus
- The institution of the Lord's Supper
- Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial



An Overview

- This lengthy chapter describes the abundance of events leading to Jesus' arrest and trial, with the conspiracy to kill Jesus (1-5,14-16)
- Jesus' anointment by Mary (6-13)
- The last Passover supper and institution of the Lord's Supper (17-35)
- Jesus' prayers in the garden (36-46)
- The betrayal by Judas and accompanying arrest (47-56)
- The appearance before Caiaphas and the council (57-68)
- And Peter's denial as foretold by Jesus (69-75)



The Plot to Kill Jesus (26:1-5)

- *When Jesus had finished all these sayings*, refers to His talk recorded in the three preceding chapters
- The time was Tuesday night, after the Jewish Wednesday began; that is, after sunset, Compare Mark 14:1-11, Luke 22:1-6, John 12:1-8
- *After two days*, The day indicated is Friday
- The Passover feast, see Exodus 12:1-14
- It was the greatest of the Jewish feasts
- The paschal lamb was a type of the slain Christ
- Jesus Christ informed His disciples of His sufferings which were soon to take place at Jerusalem, lest they might be discouraged, when they saw their Master condemned to die on a cross



The Plot to Kill Jesus (26:1-5)

- This second council of the Jews against Jesus, was held on Wednesday, two days before the Passover
- The Christian Tradition originated the fasting on Wednesdays because on this day Judas betrayed Christ, and the Jews ordered His death
- The fasting on Fridays, because on that day Jesus suffered death for our redemption



The Plot to Kill Jesus (26:1-5)

- Assemblies were held in the public places, at the gates, or in the courts of the nobles
- According to Jewish accounts, the Sanhedrin was composed of seventy-one members
- The high priest was the president
- The chief priests, or heads of the twenty-four courses, distinguished representatives of the scribes, and elders of the people, the heads of the great families, constituted the membership



The Plot to Kill Jesus (26:1-5)

- *Not on the festival*, it was not through a motive of religion that they made this objection, but only lest an uproar would happen in His favor among the people for they looked upon him as a great prophet
- These people were fearful not of offending God, nor of increasing the horror of their most terrible crime, by committing it on the Passover, but of offending men by raising an uproar
- Such a day seemed to them at first improper, but this was overruled, when Judas informed them how he could and would put Him into their hands on Thursday night

The Anointing at Bethany (26:6-13)



- Simon was probably a man Jesus had healed of leprosy
- It is not likely that he had been a leper at that time
- Lepers could not keep company with healthy people and had to remain isolated from the population (Lev 13:45-46)
- *A woman*, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, John 12:3
- The pouring ointment upon the head of Christ was a token of the highest respect

The Anointing at Bethany (26:6-13)



- The value of the ointment is roughly estimated afterwards at three hundred denarii (Jn 12:5)
- There is much contention among commentators about the transaction mentioned here, and in John 12:3
- Some supposing them to be different, others to be the same
- St. Augustine observes, that this pouring of the ointment on Jesus is not recorded by St. Matthew in due order of time
- It was not done on this Wednesday, but as St. John expressly tells us, (12:1) *six days before the Pasch, or Paschal feast,*

The Anointing at Bethany (26:6-13)



- St. Matthew goes back to an event that occurred at Bethany before the Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, because he is about to relate the treachery of Judas, and it was brought to a crisis by that event
- This anointing was different from that done in the house of the Pharisee, and in Galilee, mentioned by St. Luke 7:37

The Anointing at Bethany (26:6-13)



- It was mainly Judas, “*But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, who would betray Him, said, ‘Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii?’*” (Jn 12:4-5)
- *His disciples* , The plural is put for the singular; this mode of speaking was common among the Hebrews
- Matthew 27:44, *the thieves also*, i.e. one of them
- Matthew 28:17, *some doubted*, i.e. one, Thomas
- It is, however, possible that Judas, who made the objection, was followed in the sentiment by the some or the rest of the disciples

The Anointing at Bethany (26:6-13)



- St. John adds the fact that the pretended zeal for the poor was the cloak for greediness
- Strange, he had wasted that which was more precious than the ointment of *fragrant oil*
- Where there is true love in the heart to Jesus Christ, nothing will be thought too good to bestow upon him

The Anointing at Bethany (26:6-13)



- Jesus spoke on her behalf; that the tender bud of her faith might not be wounded, but that her virtues might be watered with tenderness, and thus assisted to produce greater fruit for the future
- When, therefore, we behold any good action done, though some imperfection may creep in with it, still ought we to behold it with kindness, and assist it to bring forth more perfect acts for the time to come, (St. Chrysostom, hom. lxxxi)

The Anointing at Bethany (26:6-13)



- The Lord Jesus, in His sympathy with all human affections, recognizes the love that is generous in its personal devotion as noble and excellent in itself
- After His departure, as the teaching of Matthew 25:40 reminds us, the poor are His chosen representatives, and our offerings to Him are best made through them
- This saying does not contradict what He afterwards said: *behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world;* (28:20) because in the former, He only speaks of His physical and bodily presence, but in the latter text, of His spiritual presence and constant assistance

The Anointing at Bethany (26:6-13)



- It was customary to anoint the dead and lay the body in spices
- The Jews used to do this to show their constant respect to the deceased, and their belief of the resurrection
- Jesus said that this was "really" a preparation for that burial; a fitting Him in a proper manner for the tomb
- Mary may have not understood clearly that He was then about to die

The Anointing at Bethany (26:6-13)



- But she had done it as an act of kindness and love, to show her regard for her Lord
- This act of faith and love was so remarkable, that it would be reported, as a memorial of Mary's faith and love, to all future ages, and in all places where the gospel should be preached
- This prophecy is fulfilled



Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus (26:14-16)

- A comparison of all the accounts will show that when Judas' greed was thus disappointed, he went, at the first opportunity, to the priests
- The purpose that had been formed by the priests and scribes after the resurrection of Lazarus (Jn 11:47) may well have become known, and have suggested the hope of a reward
- The reward was relatively a small one, apparently about the market-price of a common slave (Zech 11:12)
- The chief priests saw through the wickedness of Judas, and, as if mocking both his Master and himself, estimated their reward accordingly



Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus (26:14-16)

- The Judas did not betray his divine Master out of fear, but out of greed and love of money
- Judas is justly considered as one of the most infamous of men, his conduct base beyond description, and his motives were evil and wicked
- But how many, since his time, have walked in the same way!
- How many, for the sake of worldly wealth, have renounced the religion of their Lord and Master, and sold Jesus, and their interest in heaven, for a short-lived portion of secular good!
- Of all passions the love of money is the most evil

Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples (26:17-25)



- The Jews began their feasts, or festivals, from sunset of the evening before
- Christ eat the *Pasch*, or *Paschal lamb*, after sunset
- And when the Paschal supper was over, he consecrated the blessed Eucharist
- St. Mark and St. Luke, as writing for Gentile readers, add the explanation that it was then that the Passover was to be slain

Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples (26:17-25)



- The Paschal lamb was to be slain and eaten in Jerusalem, and therefore special preparations were needed
- *pascha* signifies *a passing by*, or *passing over*
- The children of Israel passed in haste on that night out of the land of Egypt
- The angel, who on that night killed all the first-born of the Egyptians, seeing the doors of the Israelites stained with the blood of the paschal lamb, passed by all theirs untouched

Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples (26:17-25)



- It was a figure of our Savior passing out of this life to His Father
- The Passover and the week long celebration of Unleavened Bread are listed as two separate feasts in the Old Testament (i.e. Ex 12-13; Lev 23:4-8; Num 28:16-25) and only Unleavened Bread is listed as the pilgrim feast (Ex 23:14-17; 34:18-23; Deut 16:5-17; 2 Chron 8:13); however, in Jesus time (30 AD) the names of the two feasts were used interchangeably to refer to the entire 8 holy days

Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples (26:17-25)



- It is probable that this means some person with whom Christ was well acquainted, and who was known to the disciples
- The disciples are directed to determine the place in the city by a certain sign (Mk 14:13)
- They do so and make ready in the guest chamber
- The circumstances are more particularly marked in Luke 22:8
- *My time is at hand*, That is, the time of my crucifixion

Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples (26:17-25)



- The lamb was killed "between the evenings," Exodus 12:6 - that is between three o'clock pm and nine o'clock pm in the evening
- The Jews counted two evenings - one from three o'clock pm to sunset, the other from sunset to the close of the first watch in the night, or nine o'clock pm.
- The paschal supper was commonly eaten after the setting of the sun, and often in the night, Exodus 12:8
- Some pretend, from this circumstance, that Jesus did not eat the paschal lamb that year, because it was to be eaten, *standing*, according to the law

Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples (26:17-25)



- But they might stand at the paschal lamb, and eat the rest of the supper on couches; as it was then the custom
- We must not hence suppose that He transgressed the law
- He first eat the Pasch according to the Mosaic rite, standing, and then *sat down* to supper, (St. Chrysostom, hom. lxxxii)
- Judas had already betrayed him, Matthew 26:15, and he was now about to deliver him into the hands of the chief priests, according to the agreement he had made with them

Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples (26:17-25)



- *And they were exceedingly sorrowful, St John (Jn13:22) has the graphic words “Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.”*
- The sorrow was partly that Christ should be betrayed at all, into the hands of His enemies
- And partly, that so vile an action should be done, by one from among themselves; and greatly, because they knew not, nor could not imagine, who of them could be guilty of such an terrible sin
- One may wonder how Judas showed or expressed sorrow?

Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples (26:17-25)



- Judas had delivered himself up into the hands of the devil, and therefore, he was capable of delivering up his Master into the hands of the chief priests
- When men are completely hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, they can outwardly perform the most serious acts of devotion, without feeling any sort of inward concern about the matter
- Each asks the personal question, Is it I? No one accuses, even by implication, his neighbor

Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples (26:17-25)



- Did Judas not know that Christ knew the secrets of his soul! Or had his love of money so far blinded him
- From John 13:23-26 we learn that these words were spoken to the disciple that leaned on the Savior's bosom and were unheard by Judas and the rest
- *He who dipped his hand*, He that is associated to me, “*Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me*”, according to the prophecy of the psalmist, cited by St. John, 13:18 Jesus Christ does not here manifest the traitor; He only magnify the extent and wickedness of the crime

Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples (26:17-25)



- The words are remarkable as the first direct reference of the coming passion and death to the Scriptures which prophesied of the Messiah
- *woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed*, A declaration of the awful judgment that would befall the traitor
- *It would have been good for that man if he had not been born*, this was a proverbial mode of speaking among the Jews in frequent use

Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples (26:17-25)



- In relation to Judas, it proves the following things:
 1. The crime which he was about to commit was exceedingly great
 2. The misery or punishment due to it would certainly come upon him
 3. He would certainly deserve that misery, or it would not have been threatened or inflicted
 4. His punishment would be eternal

Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples (26:17-25)



- He knew, in his conscience, that he had already betrayed his Master, and was waiting now for the servants of the chief priests, that he might deliver Him into their hands; and yet he says, *Rabbi, is it I?*
- It is worthy of remark, that each of the other disciples said, *Lord, is it I?* But Judas dares not, or will not, use this title, but simply says *Rabbi, is it I?*

Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples (26:17-25)



- St. John says that Jesus then said to Judas, *What you do, do quickly.* “*he then went out immediately. And it was night*”, (Jn 13:27,30). Judas, therefore, left before the Lord's Supper was instituted
- Here St. Chrysostom justly remarks the patience and reserve of our Lord, who by his great meekness and self-possession, under the extremes of ingratitude, injustice, and blasphemy, shows how we ought to bear with the malice of others, and forget all personal injuries

Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper (26:26-30)



- As they were eating the paschal supper, near the close of the meal
- Jesus Christ proceeds to the institution of the blessed Eucharist
- He would not institute it at the beginning of his ministry
- He first prepares His disciples for the belief of it, by changing water into wine, and by the miraculous multiplication of the loaves
- *And blessed it*, Or sought a blessing on it; or "gave thanks" to God for it
- This "breaking" of the bread represented the sufferings of Jesus about to take place - his body "broken" or wounded for sin

Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper (26:26-30)



- He does not say, *this is the figure of my body*--but, *this is my body*
- Neither does He say *in this*, or *with this is my body*, but absolutely *this is my body*; which plainly implies transformation or transubstantiation
- Christ in the blessed sacrament is *corporally* and *substantially* present; but not *carnally*; not in that gross, natural, and sensible manner
- *This is my body*, By these words, and His divine power, Christ changed that which before was bread into His own body; not in that visible and bloody manner

Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper (26:26-30)



- Yet so, that the elements of bread and wine were truly, really, and substantially changed into the substance of Christ's body and blood
- Christ, whose divine power cannot be questioned, could not make use of plainer words than these set down by St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. Paul to the Corinthians: *this is my body; this is my blood*
- The Holy Eucharist is not only *a sacrament*, but also a *sacrifice*, succeeding to all the sacrifices of the ancient law, which Christ commanded all the priests of the new law to offer up

Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper (26:26-30)



- The words "*which will be shed*" are literally in the Greek text "is being poured out"
- The liturgical command "poured out" is the instruction in the blood ritual for a sin sacrifice in the book of Leviticus (Lev 4:7,18,25,30)
- The instruction for the blood ritual in the Hebrew text of Leviticus for the blood of other sacrifices is that they are either splashed against God's sacrificial altar or in some rituals will be sprinkled towards the veil of the Holy of Holies or smeared on the horns of the sacrificial altar or the incense altar in certain rituals of sacrifice (Lev 1:5,11; 2:8; 4:7,18,30; Exo 24:6,8 on the altar and the people)

Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper (26:26-30)



- Jesus' actions not only fulfilled His promise in the Bread of Life discourse (Jn 6:22-59) that those who eat His flesh and drink His blood will have eternal life because His flesh is true food and His blood true drink, but His dress in the seamless garment of a priest and His ritual words that repeat the words of the covenant ratification ceremony at Mt. Sinai and the blood ritual for a sins sacrifice in Leviticus signify that the Last Supper is a liturgical ceremony in which a new covenant is being formed and a sin sacrifice is being offered

Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper (26:26-30)



- Literally offering Himself in what Jesus has announced is a New Covenant sacred meal that night in the Upper Room, Jesus was beginning His journey to the altar of the Cross and was the fulfillment of the prophecy of the prophet Jeremiah, (Jer 31:31-34)
- Just as Jesus announced that this is my blood of the covenant (Mt 26:28), in Exodus 24:8 Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you"

Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper (26:26-30)



- Sts. Luke and Paul even include the words "new covenant" in the offering of Jesus' blood (Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25), and Jesus words *which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins* identify His sacrifice as a sin offering, as prophesied in Isaiah 53:12
- His promise is that through His flesh and blood one is spiritually united to His life and the promise of eternal life (Jn 6:54-55)
- Those present would have understood that in some way that the sacred meal had been transformed forever into something much more profound than eating the flesh of a sacrificial animal in memory of a past historical event that recalled God's redemption and Israel's thankfulness

Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper (26:26-30)



- He is done with earthly rites, and at this sad moment points them to a future reunion at the marriage supper of the Lamb
- Do this in remembrance of me (Lk 22:19) points to a permanent institution, to be observed until the Lord comes the second time
- *new wine*, Wine of a widely different nature from this - a wine which the kingdom of God alone can afford
- The command is therefore binding on all who believe in Christ; and disobedience to it is sin, for the unbelief that keeps men away is one of the worst of sins

Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper (26:26-30)



- The subsequent practice of the apostles (Acts 2:42,46; 20:7), and still more the fact that directions for the Lord's Supper were made a matter of special revelation to Paul (1 Cor 11:23), seem to make it clear that Christ intended the ordinance for a continuous one, and that his apostles so understood it
- It was customary to conclude the Passover by singing the Psalms from 115th or 118th

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial (26:31-35)



- Christ's arrest will make the disciples all run away and forsake Him
- What they experience will be a crisis of faith that includes a crisis of expectation of what they understand of Jesus' mission
- They will not be able to reconcile how the Son of God who has come to restore and redeem His people will allow Himself to be taken by mere men
- Jesus quotes from Zechariah 13:7
- Jesus is referring to a prophecy that He applies to Himself in the striking down of God's Shepherd and the scattering of the Apostles in that time of crisis

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial (26:31-35)



- *But after I have been raised*, This promise was given for their encouragement and support, and also to give them an indication where He might be found
- He says this for their comfort, that though He, their shepherd, should be arrested, condemned, and crucified, should be smitten with death, and be laid in the grave, yet He should rise again; and though they should be scattered abroad, yet should be gathered together again by Him, their good shepherd; who would after His resurrection, appear to them, be at the head of them, and go before them, as a shepherd goes before his sheep: for it follows

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial (26:31-35)



- Galilee was the native place of most, if not all of them
- St. Peter bravely proclaims that unlike the others his faith in Jesus will never change and he is willing to die for Him
- After our Savior had assured them of the prediction of the prophet, that the flock should be dispersed, and had confirmed it Himself, still Peter denied it; and the more Christ assured him of his weakness, the more, according to St. Luke, (22) did Peter affirm that he would not deny him

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial (26:31-35)



- Let us believe him in every possible circumstance, though it may appear to our senses and understanding contradictory; for, the word of God can never be made void; but our senses may easily be deceived. When, therefore, he says, *this is my body*, let us without any the least hesitation immediately believe and contemplate the mystery with the eyes of our understanding, (St. John Chrysostom, hom. lxxxiii)

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial (26:31-35)



- Was not this warning enough to St. Peter not to trust in his own strength, but to depend on God?
- He does not take the warning which his Lord gave him
- He trusts in the warm, sincere attachment to Christ which he now feels
- All the disciples said the same thing, and all fled at the approach of danger, "forsaking" their Master and practically denying that they knew him, Matthew 26:56
- Peter and the disciples were sincere, but knew not their own weakness

The Prayer in the Garden (26:36-46)



- *Gethsemane*, This word means oil-press
- *St. John* calls it "a garden" This garden was on the western side of the Mount of Olives, and a short distance from Jerusalem
- *St. Luke* says, *He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed*; i.e. where He used to spend part of the nights in prayer
- He speaks to the eight who were to remain and takes with Him but three to be witnesses of His anguish
- Christ knew that a time of distress was coming upon Him
- He chose to go privately to pray, an example worthy of our imitation

The Prayer in the Garden (26:36-46)



- Jesus takes the same three who witnessed the transfiguration and one of His greatest miracles (Mk 5:37) along with Him
- He hid His feeling till He had reduced His following to three
- Then allowed His feelings to appear to those who, He hoped, could bear the revelation and give Him a little sympathy
- He took these three that they might contemplate this agony in the light of that glory which they had there seen
- *sorrowful and deeply distressed*, It means, to be pressed down or overwhelmed with great anguish

The Prayer in the Garden (26:36-46)



- This was produced, doubtless, by a foresight of His great sufferings on the cross in making an atonement for the sins of people
- *My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death*, to be very heavy; with the weight of the sins of His people, and the sense of divine wrath, with which He was so pressed and overwhelmed
- His spirit were almost quite gone
- He was just ready to pass out, sink and die; His heart failed Him
- It was not fear of the agony, or fear of death, for He bore all, when the moment came, so beautifully that a heathen officer exclaimed, surely he must be the son of a god

The Prayer in the Garden (26:36-46)



- These feelings show the weakness of His human nature, and the greatness of His sufferings in it
- The human nature was still in union with the divine person of the Son of God, and was sustained by Him, but left to its natural weakness, without sin, that it might suffer to the utmost, and as much as possible for the sins of God's elect
- Our Lord suffered himself to be thus dejected, to convince the world of the truth and reality of His human nature, (St. Jerome)
- Is it possible for a mortal to comprehend the mystery of His suffering?

The Prayer in the Garden (26:36-46)



- *a little farther*, St. Luke adds (Lk 22:41) “about a stone’s cast.”
- *Fell on his face*, This was the usual posture of prayer in times of great earnestness, Numbers 16:22; 2 Chronicle 20:18; Nehemiah 8:6
- It reflects the deepest humiliation
- If it were possible to save men, and carry out the divine work of redeeming them
- The word cup is frequently used in the Sacred Writings to point out sorrow, anguish, terror, death

The Prayer in the Garden (26:36-46)



- He was pleased to let us know what He naturally feared, as man, yet shows His human will had nothing contrary to His divine will, by presently adding, “*not as I will, but as You will.*”
- This is an example of perfect faith by which alone answers to prayer can be obtained
- He that insists on his will, when it is contrary to the will of God, fails in faith

The Prayer in the Garden (26:36-46)



- St. Luke says they were sleeping from sorrow (Lk 22:45)
- Great sorrow astonishes
- This earnest appeal was addressed to St. Peter particularly on account of his warm professions, his impulsive zeal, and his self-confidence
- If he could not keep awake and watch with the Savior for one hour, how little probability was there that he would adhere to Him in the trials through which He was soon to pass

The Prayer in the Garden (26:36-46)



- *Watch*, Greater trials are coming on
- It is necessary, therefore, still to be on your guard
- *And pray*, Seek aid from God by supplication, in view of the thickening tribulations
- We watch by being intent on good works, and by being attentive that no wicked doctrine take hold of our hearts
- Thus we must first watch, and then pray
- Our Lord does not direct them to pray to God that no temptation might befall them, but that they might not be overcome by the temptations

The Prayer in the Garden (26:36-46)



- *“The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”* This is addressed to the disciples; that they were not to trust too much to their own courage; for although their spirit was ready to undergo any temptation, their bodies were still so weak, that they would fail, unless strengthened by prayer
- As if Christ is telling them “you are truly sincere; but your good purposes will be overpowered by your timidity. You wish to continue steadfast in your adherence to your Master; but your fears will lead you to desert him.”

The Prayer in the Garden (26:36-46)



- *He went away and prayed, saying*, More earnestly, says St. Luke, who adds the account of the bloody sweat (Lk 22:44)
- His agony returned on Him
- Now He asks only, *Your will be done*
- The motive of this return may have been, as before, the craving for human sympathy in that hour of awful agony
- In this address the humanity of Christ most evidently appears; for it was His humanity alone that could suffer; and if it did not appear that He had felt these sufferings, it would have been a presumption that He had not suffered, and consequently made no atonement

The Prayer in the Garden (26:36-46)



- Christ prayed for the third time to teach us perseverance in our prayers
- The repetition in prayer indicates intensity of feeling
- St. Luke mentioned that an angel came and strengthened Him (Lk 22:43)
- The hour when he needed their watchfulness and sympathy was past
- They had failed to guard in the hour when He wished to be alone with God
- Now the moment is at hand; the soldiers are approaching

The Prayer in the Garden (26:36-46)



- The betraying is intended either the betraying of Him by Judas into the hands of the high priest, Scribes, and Pharisees; or the delivery of Him, by them, into the hands of Pilate, and by him to the Roman soldiers; all which were by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God
- This betraying was determined by God; the time, the very hour was fixed, and was now approaching
- As soon as Christ had said these words, Judas, with his band of soldiers, appeared

The Prayer in the Garden (26:36-46)



- *Rise, let us be going*, It is obvious that the latter clause does not involve any suggestion of flight, but rather a call to confront the danger
- There are two ways of answering a prayer for the removal of a burden
- In one, the burden is taken away, and we remain the same; in the other, we are made so strong that the burden is no longer a burden to us

The Prayer in the Garden (26:36-46)



- It is probable that our Lord spent considerable time in prayer, and that the evangelists have recorded rather "the substance" of His petitions than the very "words."
- He returned repeatedly to His disciples, doubtless to caution them against danger, to show the deep interest which He had in their welfare, and to show them the extent of His sufferings on their behalf

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane (26:47-56)



- The account of Jesus' being betrayed by Judas is recorded by all the evangelists, Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:2-12
- Judas knew the place where the Lord would go to pass the night (Jn 18:2)
- *Judas, one of the twelve*, More deeply to mark his dishonorable ingratitude and wickedness; he is a traitor
- Judas was at the head of *a great multitude*, went before them to show them where Christ was, and to deliver Him into their hands
- He had not been asleep, he had been with the chief priests

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane (26:47-56)



- Judas wished to give them a sign, because Jesus had before been apprehended, and had escaped from them on account of their ignorance of His person; which on this occasion He could also have done, if such had been His pleasure. (St. John Chrysostom)
- The signal, as arranged, was to be simply a kiss
- The signal actually given was kissing accompanied with embraces to ensure that there should be no mistake as to the person intended

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane (26:47-56)



- Judas was demonstrative in his salutation more than usual
- *"The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords"* (Ps 55:21)
- As soon as he appeared, before the rest could come up; for, *he went before them*, as Luke says, and that not only as, their guide to direct them to the person they wanted, but he separated himself from them, that it might not be thought that he came with them, or belonged to them

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane (26:47-56)



- *Friend*, The Greek word denotes, not friendship, but companionship
- It is used in rebuke, Matthew 20:13 and 22:12
- Here the word is relative to the Rabbi, Matthew 26:49, “thou, my disciple.”
- St Luke preserves a further answer to Judas, “*are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?*”
- “*why have you come?*”, This was said, not because Jesus was ignorant why he had come, but probably to fill the mind of Judas with the consciousness of his crime, and by a striking question to compel him to think of what he was doing

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane (26:47-56)



- *Laid hands on Jesus*, But not before they had felt that proof of His supreme power by which they had all been struck down to the earth, John 18:6
- The heroic behavior of the blessed Jesus, in the whole period of His sufferings, must be observed
- With what composure does He go forth to meet the traitor!
- With what calmness receive that malignant kiss!
- With what dignity does He deliver Himself into the hands of His enemies! Yet plainly showing His superiority over them
- It is strange that, after this, they should dare to approach Him; but the Scriptures must be fulfilled

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane (26:47-56)



- It is remarkable that, though all four Gospels record the fact, St. John alone (Jn 18:10-11) records the names both of the disciple who struck the blow (Peter) and of the servant whom he attacked
- St. Peter did not comprehend the meaning of what Christ had said, Luke 22:36 *He that hath not a sword, let him buy one*, which was no more than a warning of the approaching danger
- Now Peter, or some of them, asked, and said: *Lord, shall we strike?* But he struck without waiting for an answer

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane (26:47-56)



- Christ said that not only to rebuke St. Peter for his rashness, but to soften the minds of the multitude, who must have been angry at such an action
- Indeed, had it not been for these words and Christ's action and more especially had it not been owing to the powerful influence Christ had over the spirits of these men, in all probability St. Peter, and the rest of the apostles, had been all destroyed at once
- Jesus told him that his unseasonable and imprudent defense might be the occasion of his own destruction
- In doing it he would endanger his life, for they who took the sword perished by it
- This was probably a proverb, denoting that they who engaged in wars commonly perished there

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane (26:47-56)



- Jesus gives another reason for not using the sword: if it were God's will that His Son should be rescued, it could be done in a different way
- *twelve legions*, The number in reference to the number of his apostles and Himself
- A legion was a division of the Roman army amounting to more than 6,000 men
- Judas being away, but eleven disciples remained
- Divine resources are boundless
- He could have evaded the enemies had He chosen; the angels would have come to His rescue, if He had wanted it, but He gave Himself unto death

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane (26:47-56)



- Among all the indignities heaped upon Jesus by His enemies, the only one that he complains of is that He should be bound like a robber
- The reason why the Jewish princes did not seize our Lord in the temple, was, because they feared the multitude; on which account Jesus retired, that He might give them an opportunity, both from the circumstances of place and time, to apprehend Him: thus showing us, that without His permission they could not so much as lay a finger upon Him
- The evangelist informs us in the following verse of the reason of this conduct; *that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled*, (St. Chrysostom)

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane (26:47-56)



- The eleven apostles who a little while before thought they never could forsake the Lord fled away as soon as He was seized
- St. Peter and another soon followed after at a distance
- St. Mark says (14:51) that a young man followed with nothing on *but a linen cloth* According to St. Luke these words were addressed to “the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and elders,” where it appears that some members of the Sanhedrin had in their evil zeal joined in the capture
- The same Evangelist adds, “*this is your hour, and the power of darkness*”(Lk 22:53)

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane (26:47-56)



- Jesus had but twelve disciples who professed unbreakable attachment to Him
- One of these betrayed Him, another denied Him with oaths, and the rest run away and completely abandon Him to His cruel enemies
- How many, when attachment to Christ would lead them to danger, leave Him and flee!
- We never know our hearts upon the prospect of great trials, until we come to struggle with them, and to be engaged in them

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin (26:57-68)



- Our Savior Christ was led in the night time, both to Annas and Caiaphas: and first to Annas
- St. John alone, probably from the special facilities which he possessed as known to the high priest, records the preliminary examination before Annas (Jn 18:13,19-24)
- It was obviously intended to examine Him and to draw from His lips something that might serve as the basis of an accusation
- It was against the rules of Jewish law to hold a session of the Sanhedrin or Council for the trial of capital offences by night
- This assembly was therefore an informal one

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin (26:57-68)



- St. Peter had fled at first with the others; but his affection drew him back to see what befell his beloved Master
- He followed the crowd at a safe distance, and, joined afterwards by St. John
- St. John appears to have entered the court with the guard that held Christ; but St. Peter remained outside until he was introduced by his fellow apostle, who was known to the servant who kept the door (Jn 18:16)
- The servants were the officers of the Sanhedrin, and the high priest's servants
- St. Peter sat there to see the result of the examination

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin (26:57-68)



- This verse is parenthetical, interrupting the course of the narrative in order to prepare the way for the account of Peter's denial (26:69-75)
- Many, in this, imitate St. Peter
- They are afraid to follow the Savior closely
- They fear danger, ridicule, or persecution
- They "follow Him," but it is at a great distance; so far that it is difficult to discern that they are His followers
- We may measure our faithfulness by our desire to be with Him, to be like Him, and by our willingness to follow Him always through trials, persecution, and death, Philippians 3:10

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin (26:57-68)



- *Sought*, The tense of the Greek verb implies a continued process of seeking
- The chief priest and the elders business was to examine and detect false witnesses, and to inflict the same punishment upon them, which they by their false testimony intended to have brought on another, Deuteronomy 19:18
- Yet they were determined, right or wrong, to put Him to death even by false witnesses

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin (26:57-68)



- There were many who presented themselves to bear witness against Jesus; yet the Sanhedrim did not find what it wanted to find, because of the lack of that agreement between two of the witnesses at least which the law required (Num 35:30; Deut 17:6; 19:15)
- Our Savior had said, "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,*" (Jn 2:19) and they affirm that He had said, *I am able to destroy* which were not true words of Christ
- Christ spoke of the temple of His body, and they of the material temple
- Had the Jews attended sufficiently to our Savior's words, they would easily have perceived of what Christ was speaking

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin (26:57-68)



- The question implies a long continued silence, while witness after witness were expressing their tricky falsehoods
- The high priest rose up from his seat in great wrath and anger
- Partly because they could get better testimony; and partly because of Christ's silence, (Isa 53:7) giving no answer to the witnesses
- Jesus knew that His hour has come; and therefore defense would be of no use: He had often before borne sufficient testimony to the truth
- Our Savior knew perfectly well, that whatever He said would be condemned; and therefore the more Jesus was silent to what was alleged against Him, the more did the high priest try to extort an answer from Him, that he might have some accusation against the Lord of glory

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin (26:57-68)



- According to St. Luke, Christ before answering directly, said to them: *“If I tell you, you will by no means believe,”* (Lk 22:67)
- Was Jesus morally bound to answer? Why not continue silent?
- It was an important opportunity to declare Himself as the Messiah
- Silence would, in the circumstances, have extended to denial
- *Nevertheless*, I have something more startling to tell you
- What follows describes the future of the Son of Man in apocalyptic terms, and is meant to suggest the thought: “the time is coming when you and I shall change places; I then the Judge, you the prisoners at the bar”

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin (26:57-68)



- I am the Christ, the promised Messiah and you and this whole nation shall shortly have the fullest proof of it
- You shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, fully invested with absolute dominion, and coming in the clouds of heaven, to execute judgment upon this wicked race
- Our Lord appears to refer to Daniel 7:13
- This may also refer to the final judgment

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin (26:57-68)



- This rending of the high priest's garments was expressly contrary to the law, Leviticus 10:6; 21:10, yet in case of blasphemy, or any public calamity, it was thought allowable, 2 Kings 19:1; 1 Maccabees 11:71
- It was in general a common method of expressing violent grief, Genesis 37:29,34; Job 1:20, and it was customary with the Jews, whenever they hear any blasphemous doctrines uttered against the majesty of the Almighty, to rend their garments in hatred and disapproval of what was said

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin (26:57-68)



- The high priest wishes to get a vote by an uproar, not in a formal way
- *He is deserving of death*, This was the punishment pronounced by the Law on blasphemy (Lev 24:16); the death was, however, to be by stoning (Acts 7:58)
- The stoning sentence was used before the Jews became subject to the Romans
- After they were subject to the Romans, though the power of inflicting capital punishment was taken away, yet they retained the form when they expressed their opinion of the guilt of an offender

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin (26:57-68)



- This meeting, which condemned Christ to death, was not a regular council of the Sanhedrin; for it was not held in the appointed chamber, and was conducted at night, when criminal processes were forbidden
- The meeting next morning (Mt 27:1) was convened for the purpose of considering how this informal sentence should be executed

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin (26:57-68)



- This was the second trial, the first examination being informal before Annas, and is mentioned only by St. John (Jn 18:13,24)
- There was a third, named only by St. Luke, at the dawn of day, because a decision by the Sanhedrin in the night was illegal (Lk 22:66)
- This meeting only confirmed the decision reached in the night before three o'clock
- It is also referred to in Matthew 27:1

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin (26:57-68)



- This was done as a mark of the most profound hatred, Job 16:10; 30:10; Isaiah 50:6; Micah 5:1
- We learn from St. Mark (Mk 14:65) and St. Luke (Lk 22:63) that these acts of outrage were carried out, not by the members of the Sanhedrin, but by the officers who had the accused in their custody, and who, it would seem, took advantage of the time between the two meetings of the council to indulge in this unjustifiable cruelty
- Here, also, they were unconsciously working out a complete correspondence with Isaiah's picture of the righteous sufferer (Isa 1:6)

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin (26:57-68)



- Spitting was considered among the Jews an expression of the greatest condescension (Deut 25:9; Num 12:14)
- Even to spit before another was regarded as an offense, and treated as such by heathen also
- They offered Him indignity in all its various and offensive forms
- Jesus bears all with meekness, without even one word of reply
- Their conduct toward Him now was expressly prophesied of, by a man whose Divine mission they did not pretend to deny; Isaiah 50:6

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin (26:57-68)



- They had previously blindfolded Him (Mk 14:65; Lk 22:64)
- And now they mockingly bid him to name the person who struck Him
- *Christ*, They use the term sarcastically. " *You call yourself Christ, the Prophet of God; well, then, divine miraculously, without seeing, who is he that smote you.* "

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly (26:69-75)



- It is mentioned also in Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:55-62; John 18:15-18,25-27
- The accounts of the four gospels may differ slightly, and exactly in such a way as the evidence of honest witnesses might be expected to differ in describing the minor details (which at the time would appear unimportant) in a scene full of commotion and significant incidents
- While the preliminary examinations were being held before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, Peter and John entered the court of the palace

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly (26:69-75)



- This court was an open square, enclosed by the palace which was built in a quadrangle all around it
- From its doors and windows opened into the rooms built around it, so that St. Peter was not in the palace, yet in the interior court, where he could see and hear through the open door the proceedings in the hall
- Oriental houses are still built with this interior court
- *a servant girl came* We are not told why she suspected him

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly (26:69-75)



- He was at this time in the interior court, and is said by St. Luke to have been standing among them (Lk 22:55) by the fire that had been kindled in the courtyard on account of the chilliness of the night
- St. Peter by the wonderful providence of God, in being appointed to be a witness of all these things, is prepared to be an example of outstanding faithfulness through this experience of unbelief

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly (26:69-75)



- This was the first set of accusations and denials
- The ambiguous denial was made fervently and openly, so that all around heard it
- *I do not know what you are saying*, This is almost a denial of the allegation made, though in an indirect way, implying, "I do not know what you are alluding to."
- It does not seem that he would have incurred any danger if he had boldly confessed his discipleship, so that this renunciation was unnecessary
- St. John was known to be a disciple thou also was with Jesus of Galilee

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly (26:69-75)



- Alarmed by the accusation, he withdrew into the porch, an arched passage that led from outside into the inner court
- Another maid followed him and made the charge
- In both cases the charges were based on assumptions
- Before, he followed at a distance, now he denies; this is the second gradation in his fall

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly (26:69-75)



- St. Luke says, *About an hour after* (Lk 22:59)
- St. John says that the third charge was made by a relative of Malchus, who asserted that he saw St. Peter in the garden (Jn 18:26)
- St. Mark says that they accused him of having a Galilean dialect (Mk 14:70)
- As most of the disciples of Jesus were Galileans, this draws attention to St. Peter
- St. Peter was now irritated beyond endurance
- He could no longer resist the evidence that he was known

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly (26:69-75)



- He not only, with an oath, repeats what he had said in the second, but he affirms it with curses of divine wrath on himself if he spoke not the truth
- His first simple denial was succeeded by an oath, and this was succeeded thirdly by curses Matthew 26:70,72,74
- One fall draws on another, and generally a deeper one
- To a simple untruth is added perjury
- And to this, horrible condemnations against himself

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly (26:69-75)



- His faith had failed when he saw his Master apparently helpless in the hands of his enemies
- In how few words how great a sin may be committed! Matthew 12:24 and Acts 5:8
- *A rooster crowed*, This was at the opening of the fourth or morning watch, at about three o'clock
- The cock often crows about midnight, or not long after; and again always about the third hour after midnight, or three o'clock
- This shows that the second trial of Jesus took place before the dawn.

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly (26:69-75)



- St. Luke says (Lk 22:61), “*The Lord turned and looked upon St. Peter*”
- So it appears he was near to our Lord, either at the time when the cock crew, or shortly after
- He must be reproached and alarmed, otherwise he will proceed yet farther in his iniquity
- However, Jesus rebuked him with tenderness and love
- The look of Christ broke his heart
- He left the place where he had sinned, and the company which had been the occasion of his transgression

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly (26:69-75)



- St. Peter felt bitter anguish of soul, which evidenced itself by the tears of contrition which flowed plentifully from his eyes
- The fall of St. Peter is recorded by "all" the evangelists is high proof of their "honestly."
- They were willing to tell the truth as it was; to conceal no fact, even if it made much against themselves, and to make mention of their own faults without attempting to appear to be better than they were
- St. Peter's denial was recorded so that one may not despair if he sins, but cast himself immediately with a repentant heart on the infinite tenderness and compassion of God

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly (26:69-75)



- Judas sinned, betrayed and sold the Lord because of greed
- Afterward he was sorry, but it was the sorrow of this world that produces death (2 Cor 7:10)
- It was remorse, not repentance, and he went and hanged himself
- St. Peter's repentance was attested by the bitterness of his tears; by his humble submission to his Lord's subsequent rebuke (Jn 21:15-17); and by his subsequent courage in confessing Christ in the face of threatening danger (Acts 4:8-12,19)

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly (26:69-75)



We should draw from St. Peter's denial important practical lessons:

- The danger of self-confidence, 1 Corinthians 10:12
- When a man begins to sin; his fall from one act to another is easy and perhaps almost certain
- True repentance is deep, thorough, and bitter
- When we sin when we fall into temptation, let us retire from the world, seek the place of solitude, and pour out our sorrows before God
- To show a believer his weakness, to check self-confidence, and to produce dependence on Jesus Christ, one may be permitted to show how weak, and feeble, and rash he is



The Illegal Conviction of Christ

Prof. Greenleaf, a distinguished jurist, says:

- Throughout the whole course of the trial, the rules of the Jewish law of procedure were grossly violated, and the accused was deprived of rights belonging even to the meanest citizen
- He was arrested in the night, bound as a malefactor, beaten before his arraignment, and struck in open court during the trial
- He was tried on a feast-day, and before sunrise
- He was compelled to criminate himself, and this under an oath of solemn judicial adjuration; and he was sentenced on the same day of conviction
- In all these particulars the law was wholly disregarded."



Conclusion

- How many days was it to Passover when Jesus finished talking to the people and came to the disciples?
- What two things did Jesus tell them would happen to Him?
- What do we know about Judas' character from the Gospels?
- What question did the disciples ask when they saw the woman pour precious ointment on Jesus?
- Who was the woman and what did Jesus say about her?
- What aspects of the Last Supper does St. Matthew's account highlight?
- What is significant about Judas betraying Jesus for the sum the chief priests paid him?



Conclusion

- Why didn't the disciples know who would betray Jesus after He told them *"It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it"* (Jn 13:26)?
- Why does Jesus pray to let the cup of suffering pass Him by?
- What sign did Judas give to the soldiers to identify Jesus?
- Why does Jesus break His silence before Caiaphas? What is the significance of Jesus' response to Caiaphas as the High Priest?
- How have you handled the major hardships of your life? What does acceptance to God's will mean to you? How similar to Jesus' obedience is your own?