

Episode #931 Matthew 26 Part 4-The Bread and the Cup

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord was sharing the Passover meal with His disciples, and He had just revealed to them the startling fact that one of them was going to betray Him!

III. Revelation of the Traitor. Matthew 26:21-25.

- A. Verse 24. We come on people who believe in universal salvation, reconciliation, or restoration. Yet here we read that it would have been good for Judas if he had not been born. As long as this is true, we cannot believe in any salvation of Judas, and if one person is not saved, then there can be no universal salvation or reconciliation. A.E. Knoch realized this, and suggested He meant that it would have been good for Himself, Jesus Christ, if Judas had not been born! As if the Lord would not have been betrayed if there had been no Judas. Did not Christ know what He was doing when He chose Judas as His disciple? There had to be a traitor, as it was written. Yet Judas became that voluntarily, and his guilt remains on him, as he never submitted. Killing yourself out of regret is not faith or submission to God, but a final, stubborn refusal to come to God, instead seeking to deal with his sins on his own (by killing himself). For his terrible betrayal and unbelief in the light of the brightness of the revelation given to him, he is one of the worst sinners of the Bible, and it would have been better for him if he had died in the womb. As long as Judas would have been better off not being born, we cannot believe he is to be saved, for no matter what punishment he might have to go through beforehand, if he ultimately will be saved, then it was infinitely better for him that he was born. No, Judas will not be saved, and his sin was not excusable. Some have tried to make excuses for Judas, but these excuses simply won't wash. He was not just trying to impel the Lord to start conquering the Romans or acting like he thought Messiah should act. In reality, He was betraying the Lord in order to break up His band of disciples so he could retire to his own place, Acts 1:25, that he had bought with the money he embezzled from the Lord's purse, Acts 1:18. He wanted to be sure he could never be caught. When we consider the majesty of the One he betrayed, his sin was staggering. His guilt is not only staggering, but his punishment will be as well. Better for him he had not been born.
- B. Verse 25. Judas now speaks up, as the others did, no doubt trying to blend in. He knew very well whom the Lord meant, though perhaps he was hoping that Jesus had gotten wind of a betrayal, but did not know who. Instead of Lord, *kurios*, he calls him Rabbi, Teacher. This was not necessarily a less personal name, for Mary Magdalene, upon seeing Him alive (John 20), called Him this. Yet it is an interesting change from what the others said, omitting owning Him as his Master. He confirms that He meant Judas by these words, which in Greek answer affirmatively very strongly. Yet somehow the others seem to not have gotten the message, according to John 13:29. Perhaps Judas was too trusted, being the treasurer, and even now sitting on the Lord's left, behind him as He reclined the other way, and so in the position of greatest trust. In John, the Lord marks Judas out by honoring him. Perhaps the disciples just could not grasp such a method of marking out a traitor. Plus, they all had been asking Him, and He had not specifically answered them. Did they decide they could not tell which

one He meant or who He was answering? At any rate, the gospel authors tell us that the Lord did mark him out, but only Judas seems to have gotten the message at the time that the Lord knew his traitorous heart.

IV. The Bread and the Cup. Matthew 26:26-30.

- A. Verse 26. The bread was the unleavened bread of the Passover. This was to remind them of the haste with which they came out of Egypt, haste that was really a miracle. It was physically impossible to move millions of people out of the land of Egypt in one day, and yet the Lord brought them out that way. They had come in as a family of seventy-five in one day, and they went out as a nation of millions in the same amount of time. They left so fast that the women did not have time to leaven their bread, and so the unleavened bread of Passover was to remind them of that great miracle.
1. "Blessed it" is *eulogeo*, spoke well of it or extolled it. The bread of Passover was not just any bread, but a Divinely-given remembrance of the mighty work of God for Israel in the past. It was a praiseworthy thing, and the Lord praised it. Are factory-made wafers at communion services worth such praise?
 2. Unleavened bread must be divided by breaking; there is no tearing it or cutting it, for it would simply crumble. Yet much of their bread was hard. The Lord broke bread at the feeding of the five and four thousand as well, again because that is how it had to be divided. The idea that "breaking bread" is a Biblical term for the "Lord's supper" ritual is empty imagination. Even in our culture, "breaking bread" is used to mean "eating." There is no religious significance to this term; just a practical one.
 3. "This is My body" means this represents My substance. We should realize the figure of speech Metaphor, not literal. It is foolish to make out that the bread actually turned physically into His body, not to mention disgusting. The Lord never meant this, and any study of figures of speech in Scripture should reveal it. This was a radical thing: to give a new significance to an old, God-given ritual. No one but the One Who made the ritual in the first place would have the right to do this. Of course, this does not mean that the old significance went away, but that this new one was added to it, and for the Lord's disciples, must now be the greater and more important significance. One could add a significance to a common ritual for one's own family or circle of friends, but only the Lord Who made the ritual in the first place could add it for all, but He did, and all will acknowledge it in the coming Kingdom. The bread represented His substance, which He gave to His people when He returned to heaven. Matthew 16:18, "I will build of Me." This was not about His body on the cross, but the reality of what He was given to His apostles.
- B. Verse 27. This was the cup of bitters, to remind them of the bitterness of their slavery in Egypt. Notice that He spoke well of the bread, and gave thanks for the cup. They all drank from the same cup; no personal, sanitary cups.
- C. Verse 28. This represents My blood of the new covenant. The Lord gives this familiar element of the Passover a new significance, just as He did for the bread. This would be something for them to think about from then on every year when they celebrated it. What He was introducing was not a new ordinance, but adding an element to the old Passover. I Timothy 2:5 tells us that there is one Mediator between God and men

today, the Man Christ Jesus. We have Him to mediate between us and God. We look to Him, not to ordinances, to do this.

1. Blood of the new “covenant,” in Greek *diatheke*. (The erroneous idea of a testament comes out of the Vulgate Latin translation, which made this *testamentum*.) A reference to the same new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. This word should be viewed as the same as the Old Testament word by the principle of Divine interchange; see Hebrews 8:8-9 with Jeremiah 31:31-32. All covenants were ratified by the sacrifice (shed blood) of the covenant. We think that sounds strange, but why should writing your name on a piece of paper ratify a covenant?

V. Conclusion. The Lord gave new significance to the Bread and the Cup of the old Passover ritual, given by Jehovah Himself. How could anyone do this? No one but the One Who gave the ritual in the first place could have done it. The Lord by doing this proved Himself not only Lord of the Sabbath, Matthew 12:8, but also Lord of the Passover. Do we believe He is the God of the Old Testament, and do we own Him as our Lord as well?