

**Matthew 26:1 ¶ And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,**

**Matthew 26:2 Ye know that after two days is *the feast of the passover*, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.**

I will honestly note up front that I encounter some difficulties trying to synthesize the gospel accounts of these events. I am sure that it is a problem with my understanding and not being able to read it in the original language from a 1<sup>st</sup> century perspective. The problems all have to do with minor details. The major details are very much in sync and relate eyewitness testimonies that support the primary truth being conveyed.

Matthew notes that it is two days until Passover, and the Son of man is going to be betrayed and crucified. I wonder if the disciples even processed what He said.

**Matthew 26:3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,**

**Matthew 26:4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill *him*.**

**Matthew 26:5 But they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar among the people.**

Meantime, the chief priests, scribes and elders were gathered together at the palace of the high priest, Caiaphas, plotting how they might deceitfully accuse Jesus and arrange for His death. They wanted to avoid the feast day and any possible problem with the people.

**Matthew 26:6 ¶ Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,**

**Matthew 26:7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat *at meat*.**

**Matthew 26:8 But when his disciples saw *it*, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose *is* this waste?**

**Matthew 26:9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.**

I am including scripture from John that appears to be describing this same event, in spite of a few discrepancies. John notes that this event occurred six days before Passover, which would indicate that Matthew's account is not strictly chronological or it is another similar event entirely—but I don't think so.

*John 12:1–11 “Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he*

*said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein....the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus."*

In light of the accounts of both apostles, it seems that Jesus was staying at the house of Simon the leper in Bethany with His friends—Lazarus, Martha and Mary. Note: Martha is still busy doing and serving, and Mary is still at the feet of Jesus.

According to John, at supper that evening Mary took a pound of spikenard, a very expensive ointment, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped them with her hair. Matthew doesn't identify the woman, and indicates that she poured it on His head. I have no problem believing she probably did both. The response of the disciples, and Judas in particular, are so much the same as to indicate that they must be referencing the same event.

John focuses on the response of Judas, because he wants to point out that Judas was the treasurer of the group and was a thief. Though he expressed his concern regarding what could have been done for the poor if they had sold the ointment, he was using his position for personal profit—much like so many of the false teachers and preachers that permeate the airwaves and lead many large churches today. Note: Research revealed that the precious ointment was worth about a year's wages.

John also notes that the chief priests also wanted to kill Lazarus since he was a living testimony to the truth that Jesus was the promised Messiah. His resurrection had caused many to believe on Jesus.

**Matthew 26:10 When Jesus understood *it*, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.**

**Matthew 26:11 For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.**

**Matthew 26:12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did *it* for my burial.**

**Matthew 26:13 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, *there* shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.**

When Jesus realized that Mary's action was being criticized, He affirmed her actions as a good thing. He noted that there would always be poor people among them, but He would not always be with them—at least in physical form. That sounds arrogant and unloving. Since we always take scripture as a whole, we know that is not the case. Jesus is trying to prepare them for His death and the fact that they will be left with their faith to carry on. God will provide for all, rich and poor, who depend on Him. Anything He withholds from us or allows to impact us is for our good when our desire is to serve Him.

Jesus declared that Mary had anointed Him for burial and that her actions would be told wherever the gospel was preached throughout the world. I loved

Spurgeon's quote concerning this scripture: "Is anything wasted which is all for Jesus? It might rather seem as if all would be wasted which was not given to him."

**Matthew 26:14 ¶ Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,**

**Matthew 26:15 And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.**

**Matthew 26:16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.**

Luke provides further insight on this section of scripture.

*Luke 22:3–4 "Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them."*

Satan entered into Judas Iscariot—something that he could only do because he had rejected Jesus as the Messiah, his Lord and Savior. Judas then went to the chief priests and offered to deliver Jesus to them for a price. They subsequently agreed on 30 pieces of silver, the value of a slave, in payment for his betrayal. From that moment on, Judas was on alert for an opportune time to accomplish his objective.

Adam Clarke notes, "Being disappointed of the prey he hoped to have from the sale of the precious ointment, he sold his Master to make up the sum."

**Matthew 26:17 ¶ Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?**

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

**Matthew 26:19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.**

*Mark 14:12 "And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?"*

*Luke 22:7–8 "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat."*

*John 13:1 "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."*

These verses represent the discrepancy in accounts that are most puzzling regarding Jesus' last supper with His disciples. From my research, Burton Coffman offers the most reasonable explanation since even the synoptics all

agree that Jesus' body was removed from the cross on the day of preparation during which the Passover lambs were killed.

"In view of the above, Christ's last meal, called the Passover, was not actually that. At least, it was not on that Passover day. It preceded the Passover. There is no evidence that a lamb was prepared and eaten by the Lord and his disciples. The true Lamb was present with them, and he would be slain on the morrow of this same 14th Nisan, fulfilling the type to the letter. No one should be disturbed by the designation of this last meal as the Passover by the synoptics, for without doubt the term was used in an accommodative sense because it so resembled and so nearly coincided with the actual Passover. John's gospel makes it impossible to believe that it was actually the ordinary Passover."

*Luke 22:10–12 "And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready."*

I included Luke's account since he included more specifics concerning how they were to identify the man that would accommodate them. All accounts imply either prior planning or supernatural intervention—either of which is readily believable to me.

**Matthew 26:20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.**

**Matthew 26:21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.**

**Matthew 26:22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?**

**Matthew 26:23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth *his* hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.**

At the appropriate time Jesus sat down with the twelve for the evening meal. As they ate, He unexpectedly announced that one of them would betray Him. This caused them all to question if it could be he. Jesus answered that it was "he that dipped his hand with me in the dish." Mark seems to clarify that His answer was not specific.

*Mark 14:20 "And he answered and said unto them, It is **one of the twelve**, that dippeth with me in the dish."*

Guzik makes the following observation: "Jesus said this not to point out a specific disciple, because they *all* dipped with Him. Instead, Jesus identified the betrayer as a *friend*, someone who ate at the same table with Him."

John's narrative indicates that this thought must have been especially troubling to John and Peter because they asked Jesus more privately (after He had washed their feet) who it was. To them He gave a more specific answer.

*John 13:23–26 “Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus’ breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.”*

**Matthew 26:24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.**

**Matthew 26:25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.**

The message of verse 24 should have been very chilling to Judas, but his heart had already been sold to the devil. Though he pretended concern, we are told by John that his heart was so hardened that Satan was once again able to take possession of him.

*John 13:27 “And after the sop Satan entered into him.”*

Adam Clarke made an insightful comment: “...when men are completely hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, they can outwardly perform the most solemn acts of devotion, without feeling any sort of inward concern about the matter.”

**Matthew 26:26 ¶ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.**

**Matthew 26:27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;**

**Matthew 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.**

*Luke 22:19 “And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.”*

We now come to the scripture that provides the basis for our observance of the Lord’s supper. It stood out to me as I read the different accounts that Jesus did not command this observance to be continued. The instruction that this was to be observed on a regular basis in the church came through Paul.

*1 Corinthians 11:23–30 “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. **For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.** Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to*

*himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."*

It's very obvious that the Lord is using the bread and wine to picture the sacrifice that He was going to make to provide for our salvation. It was not and did not become His actual flesh and blood. The purpose for continuing this observance is to remind us of His sacrificial provision for the remission of sins, the suffering He endured to provide for our salvation as we look forward to His return.

Jesus also makes clear to the disciples that He is instituting a new covenant—a covenant that was foretold by Jeremiah.

*Jeremiah 31:31–33 "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."*

This covenant would supersede the old covenant as established with Moses. The fact that the instruction for this observance was given to the church through Paul shows that it was intended to embrace all people that choose to follow Jesus in faith.

**Matthew 26:29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. Matthew 26:30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.**

Jesus notes that He will not drink of the fruit of the vine again until He is able to drink it anew with His disciples in the Father's kingdom.

Matthew ends his account of the last supper at this point and states that they sang a hymn together before leaving to go to the Mount of Olives.

Luke informs us that:

- There was a dispute among the disciples as to who would be the greatest.
- The Lord informed Peter that Satan wanted his opportunity to tempt him and that he would deny his Lord three times before the rooster crowed that day. (Hebrew accounting of day was evening and morning.)
- The Mount of Olives was a customary place of retreat for Jesus.

*Luke 22:24 "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest."*

*Luke 22:34 "And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."*

*Luke 22:39 "And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives...."*

Judas was very familiar with this place.

*John 18:2 "And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples."*

It is interesting to note that John does not include the last supper; however, he is the only one that tells us of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples, and he places it before identifying Judas by handing him the sop but before informing Peter that he would deny Him.

*John 13:4-11 "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean." (In other words, Judas was still present.)*

It also appears from John's record that all the teaching included in John 14-17 took place either before they left for the Mount of Olives or while they were on the way there, but clearly before crossing the brook and entering the Garden of Gethsemane.

*John 18:1 "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples."*

**Matthew 26:31 ¶ Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.**

**Matthew 26:32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.**

"offended" = to entrap, i.e. trip up...or entice to sin

"smite" = to knock (gently or with a weapon or fatally)

Jesus is warning the disciples that the events about to transpire that night would really test their faith in Him. He pictures Himself as the shepherd and them as the sheep. He notes that in fulfillment of prophecy they will act like sheep without a shepherd when He is taken and killed.

*Zechariah 13:7 "...smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones."*

Jesus also encouraged them to understand that He will resurrect from the grave and meet them in Galilee.

**Matthew 26:33** Peter answered and said unto him, Though all *men* shall be offended because of thee, *yet* will I never be offended.

**Matthew 26:34** Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

**Matthew 26:35** Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

Again, Luke adds a little more insight.

*Luke 22:31–34 “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.”*

Poor, precious Peter—his heart was truly willing, but his flesh would prove weak. He boldly declared that his faith would not waiver even if everyone else’s did. Jesus then told Peter that Satan wanted to tempt him to sin. At this point, this would have been a special revelation to Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Jesus lovingly told Peter that He had already prayed for his faith not to fail. He then basically tells Peter that once he has come through his experience with his faith still intact, he should strengthen his fellow believers with his testimony.

Peter then boldly declares that he will stand strong with Jesus, even to the point of going to prison or even death. It was then that Jesus told Peter that he would deny him three times before the crowing of the rooster the next morning. Once more Peter assured Jesus that he would never deny him—even if it meant his death. Matthew also notes that the other disciples joined Peter in declaring their loyalty to the Lord.

Because of the signs of the times that surround us and the general moral decay of our culture, I am already praying for God’s empowerment to be able to stand strong in the face of persecution—no matter how terrifying it may become. I am also praying the same for my precious family. If Peter could deny the Lord so readily after spending intimate time with Him in person for three years, how vulnerable are we! I would never have believed as we started our family that this would ever have to be a prayer on my lips as a citizen of the United States of America. Oh how I wish that the person who completes the bride would accept Jesus as Savior so we can go home! I do take comfort in knowing that we have the supernatural empowerment of the Holy Spirit indwelling us—something Peter was not yet privileged to possess during his time of temptation.

**Matthew 26:36** ¶ Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

**Matthew 26:37** And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

**Matthew 26:38** Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even

**unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.**

Once Jesus and the disciples got to the garden called Gethsemane, He asked the disciples to sit and wait while he went apart to pray. He took Peter, James and John with Him a little further and asked them to “watch with Him.” This was His inner circle, and He wanted their support as He sought the Father in prayer for strength and comfort to endure what was coming. The wording indicates that He was heavy with grief.

**Matthew 26:39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.**

Jesus then went a bit further apart from His inner circle and fell on His face in prayer. His prayer (my paraphrase)—Father, if it is possible, I’d really rather not suffer what is to come; nevertheless, not my will, but Yours be done.

**Matthew 26:40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?**

**Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.**

Jesus then came back to Peter, James and John and found them asleep. He questioned Peter, the one who had declared unfailing loyalty—Couldn’t you watch (and pray is implied) with me even one hour? He then exhorted Peter to watch and pray so that he would not be tempted. What would be the temptation? Events to come would be a trial of his faith. He reminded Peter that though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak.

I liked the following comment by David Guzik: “Jesus found victory at the cross by succeeding in the struggle in Gethsemane. Peter - just like us - failed in later temptation because he failed to watch and pray. The spiritual battle is often *won* or *lost* before the crisis comes.”

**Matthew 26:42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.**

Once again Jesus went apart to pray asking the Father to let this cup pass—but once again affirming His desire to do the Father’s will. Paul explains it a bit further in his letter to the Galatians. I think it is important to note that it is Jesus the man that is struggling so with the flesh at this time.

*Galatians 5:17 “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”*

**Matthew 26:43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.**

**Matthew 26:44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third**

**time, saying the same words.**

Once again, Jesus returned to His disciples to find them asleep. He didn't bother to say anything to them this time; He knew they were tired and would need what little rest they could get. He then went again and prayed to the Father a third time—with the very same request.

I think it is at this point that Luke provides further information.

*Luke 22:43–44 “And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”*

I think Jesus is so disturbed at the thought of being separated from His Father for any amount of time as He bore our sins, that it caused Him to sweat “great drops of blood.” Though the Father's will required that Jesus drink the cup before Him, it was a Father's heart to send an angel from heaven to strengthen His Son.

I think it is important to notice that Jesus was sincerely persistent with His prayers. Though He is repeating the prayer, it is not with “vain repetition” that was warned against in chapter 6.

*Matthew 6:7 “But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.”*

Jesus is praying with heartfelt intensity for deliverance, but His overriding desire is to do the Father's will. He is the perfect model for us to follow in our own prayer lives.

**Matthew 26:45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.**

When He returned to the disciples the third time to find them sleeping yet again, He spoke (mainly to Himself I believe) and told them to sleep on and get what rest they could before having to deal with what was coming. The hour for Jesus' betrayal was now come, and He would suffer to the point of death at “the hands of sinners.”

**Matthew 26:46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me. Matthew 26:47 ¶ And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.**

How much time elapsed from the previous verse is not revealed, but it could not have been long. Jesus must have heard the throng of people headed His way, and woke the disciples up. He told them that His betrayer was “at hand.” The wording indicates that Jesus intended to meet His betrayer; He never intended to try to escape.

While He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, came leading a great multitude of people armed with swords and clubs. Matthew also notes that the crowd included some of the chief priests and elders.

I think Adam Clarke's comment expressed the truth: "They did not come as officers of justice, but as a desperate mob. Justice had nothing to do in this business. He who a little before had been one of the leaders of the flock of Christ is now become the leader of ruffians and murderers!"

**Matthew 26:48** Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

**Matthew 26:49** And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.

**Matthew 26:50** And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

Judas had previously told the arresting officers with him that the man he greeted with a kiss was the man they wanted. This was necessary since the Roman guards who were part of arresting mob probably did not know Jesus by sight. At this point John provides some further insight.

*John 18:4-9 "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none."*

In my thinking, this had to have occurred before Judas identified Jesus with a kiss, or maybe the kiss of betrayal came between the two questions.

Jesus approached the crowd and asked them who they were looking for. They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I am he." When Jesus identified Himself, the crowd fell backward to the ground. Jesus then asked them once again whom they sought, and they again said "Jesus of Nazareth." Once again Jesus told them that would be He. He then asked that they let his friends go peacefully.

As Matthew often does, he noted that Jesus once again was cognizant of showing that He spoke the truth. This was in reference to the prayer He had lifted up to the Father within their hearing prior to entering Gethsemane.

*John 17:12 "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."*

Jesus asked Judas why he had come--with such a formidable force seems to be implied. The soldiers then took hold of Jesus to arrest Him.

**Matthew 26:51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.**

**Matthew 26:52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.**

**Matthew 26:53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?**

**Matthew 26:54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?**

This action by Peter is recorded in all four gospels, but only John identifies Peter as the perpetrator. Peter intended to live up to his declaration I think, so he begins his attack by cutting the ear off a servant of the high priest that John identifies as Malchus.

*John 18:10 "Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus."*

Only Luke, the beloved physician, tells us that Jesus healed Malchus' ear.

*Luke 22:51 "And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him."*

Jesus immediately told Peter to put away his sword unless he wanted to die by the sword. He reminded Peter that He could pray to His Father, and He would send twelve legions of angels to fight on His behalf. If he did that, however, the scriptures that foretold His death would not be fulfilled. From Jesus' perspective, that could never be.

"legion" = Easton's Dictionary: "a regiment of the Roman army....It originally consisted of three thousand men, but in the time of Christ consisted of six thousand, exclusive of horsemen, who were in number a tenth of the foot-men."

**Matthew 26:55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.**

**Matthew 26:56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.**

Jesus addressed His next remarks to the multitudes. My paraphrase: Why did you come with such a show of force to arrest me? I've been teaching daily in the temple. Why not take me then?

Again Matthew notes that everything was happening in accordance with the prophecies foretold in scripture. This is yet another reference to the writing of Zechariah as well as to the words of Jesus quoted previously in this chapter.

*Zechariah 13:7 “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.”*

*Matthew 26:31 “Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.”*

Sadly, he also notes that all of His disciples deserted Jesus and fled for their lives.

**Matthew 26:57 ¶ And they that had laid hold on Jesus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.**

The arresting officers proceeded to take Jesus to Caiaphas, the high priest; and the scribes and elders were already assembled in anticipation of His arrival.

*John 18:12–13 “Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.*

John notes that they bound Jesus and took Him first to Annas, the previous high priest and father-in-law to Caiaphas. Ellicott notes that this was probably done in order to gain information with which to make their accusation against Him before the Council.

John also informs us how Jesus was treated at His encounter with Annas.

*John 18:19–24 “The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.”*

**Matthew 26:58 But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest’s palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.**

Though Peter ran with the others, he followed at a distance to the palace of the high priest and mingled among the servants to find out what would happen. John informs us that he went as well and also provides further information.

*John 18: 15-16 “And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.”*

John was from a prominent family and was known by the high priest, and it was through his intervention that Peter was able to enter the palace grounds.

**Matthew 26:59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;**

**Matthew 26:60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,**

**Matthew 26:61 And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.**

Though the chief priests, elders and all the council sought witnesses that would provide the accusations to justify putting Jesus to death, they could find none. Many false witnesses stepped forward, but evidently their testimony wasn't even acceptable to those intent on killing Jesus. Finally, two false witnesses came forward declaring that Jesus had stated that He could destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.

Technically, the witnesses were testifying correctly—but out of context—as explained by John.

*John 2:19–21 “Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body.”*

David Guzik notes the following concerning the illegalities associated with the judicial treatment of Jesus:

- According to Jewish law, criminal cases could not be tried during the Passover season.
- According to Jewish law, only an acquittal could be issued on the day of the trial. Guilty verdicts had to wait one night to allow for feelings of mercy to rise.
- According to Jewish law, all evidence had to be guaranteed by two witnesses, who were separately examined and could not have contact with each other.
- According to Jewish law, false witness was punishable by death. Nothing was done to the many false witnesses in Jesus' trial.
- According to Jewish law, a trial always began by bringing forth evidence for the innocence of the accused, before the evidence of guilt was offered. This was not the practice here.

**Matthew 26:62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?**

**Matthew 26:63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.**

**Matthew 26:64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power,**

**and coming in the clouds of heaven.**

Caiaphas then stood and addressed Jesus asking if He had a response to the accusation. Jesus didn't answer, so Caiaphas asked Him again. This time he invoked "the living God" as the authority demanding an answer from Him. He pointedly asked Jesus if He was "the Christ, the Son of God." How he got there from the accusation under review is beyond me.

The NIV Commentary explains it well: "The outcome is now inevitable. If Jesus refuses to answer, he breaks a legally imposed oath. If he denies he is the Messiah, the crisis is over—but so is his influence. If he affirms it, then, given the commitments of the court, Jesus must be false. After all, how could the true Messiah allow himself to be imprisoned and put in jeopardy?"

Jesus answered in the affirmative. He also added that the day was coming when Caiaphas (and all the others gathered there) would see the Son of man (referencing himself) sitting on the right hand of power (God's hand being understood) and coming in the clouds of heaven. This is a reference to the words of the prophet Daniel.

*Daniel 7:13–14 "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."*

Jesus was warning them of the eternal consequences of their actions.

**Matthew 26:65 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.**

**Matthew 26:66 What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.**

At the words of Jesus the high priest rent his clothes (a sign of grief, indignation or shock) and declared that Jesus had spoken blasphemy before the Council so there was not need for further witnesses. In other words, he understood implicitly that Jesus was declaring Himself the Messiah spoken of by Daniel. He asked for and got a declaration of guilty and pronounced a death sentence; it seems that the verdict was unanimous. The problem—they did not have the authority to carry out their sentence; that would have to come from the authority of Rome.

**Matthew 26:67 Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,**

**Matthew 26:68 Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?**

They then began to torture Jesus by spitting in His face and hitting Him with both their fists and their palms. Mark tells us that they covered His face.

*Mark 14:65 "And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him...."*

Then they taunted Him saying that if He was really the Messiah, He should prove it by telling them who had hit Him.

**Matthew 26:69** ¶ Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

**Matthew 26:70** But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

**Matthew 26:71** And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and said unto them that were there, This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

**Matthew 26:72** And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

**Matthew 26:73** And after a while came unto *him* they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

**Matthew 26:74** Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

**Matthew 26:75** And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

This chapter closes with an account of the shameful denials by Peter. As Peter was waiting outside the palace, he was warming himself by the fire.

*Luke 22:55 "And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them."*

One of the servant girls noted that she thought she recognized Peter as one of Jesus' disciples, but Peter immediately denied it. He evidently decided to relocate and went to the porch. Another servant girl pointed out to those around them that Peter was a follower of Jesus, but again Peter denied it; this time with an oath that he didn't even know the man.

Eventually, another person approached him and declared that Peter had to be a follower of Jesus because his speech (accent) betrayed him. This must be the same man noted by John as recognizing Peter as the one who had cut off the ear of his kinsman. At this point Peter began to curse and swear that he did not know "the man."

*John 18:26 "One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?"*

Immediately the rooster crowed.

Luke adds a little more.

*Luke 22:61 "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."*

That look must have devastated Peter; he left and wept bitterly at what he had done.