**Research: Passover and Garden of Gethsemane**

**Matthew 26:1, 2, 18, 19, 26–28, 36, 38–45**

“Jesus intended this evening to be etched deeply on the memories of his followers. Every word and action was important. It was an unrushed few hours before the gathering storm” (Walker 159).

1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,

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

“Christ's Final Announcement of his Death, as Now within Two Days, and the Simultaneous Conspiracy of the Jewish Authorities to Compass It—The Anointing at Bethany—Judas Agrees with the Chief Priests to Betray His Lord” (Jamieson-Faucett-Brown Commentary).

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.

*And he said, Go into the city to such a man*— This implies that Jesus named the person to whom they were sent, though the evangelists have not thought it of importance to mention his name. He told them further, that on their entrance into the city they should find one of the man’s servants in the street, bearing a pitcher of water. This person he ordered them to follow, without saying anything to him, because as he was carrying the water home he would lead them straight to his master’s house, with which, it seems, the disciples were not acquainted” ([www.biblehub/commentaries/matthew/26)](http://www.biblehub/commentaries/matthew/26%29).

**My time is at hand.**—For the disciples, the “time” may have seemed the long-expected season of His manifesting Himself as King, and the memory of such words as those of [John 7:8](http://biblehub.com/john/7-8.htm) (“My time is not yet full come”) may have seemed to strengthen the impression between the lines, and see that it was the “time” of the suffering and death which were the conditions of His true glory ([John 12:23](http://biblehub.com/john/12-23.htm);[John 13:32](http://biblehub.com/john/13-32.htm))” (<http://biblehub.com/commentaries/matthew/26-18.htm>, Ellicott’s Commentary).

Jesus is fully aware that the time of his mission is in its final moments. He wanted to celebrate this last meal with his disciples. Scholars have always argued over when the Last Supper actually took place. Was it on the Passover night and was it a Passover meal? Or was it on the night before?

32:28

The Passover, which Jesus ate with his disciples in the month Nisan on the night before his crucifixion, was a mournful occasion, a sad supper taken at the close of day, in the twilight of a glorious career . . .

“This element of necessary caution and secrecy can be sensed in the way Jesus made the preparations for his ‘Last Supper’ with his disciples. It was customary, if at all possible, for Jews to celebrate the annual Passover meal within the walls of the city. So Jesus needed a location somewhere inside the city. Yet, because the religious authorities were now looking for an opportunity to arrest him (Luke 19:47), the location needed to be secure and secret. So Jesus gave his disciples some rather coded instructions. The result, however, was that they encountered a discreet owner who provided them with a ‘large upper room’—probably somewhere on the slopes of the city’s more wealthy western hill” (Walker 155).

“The disciple would doubtless be surprised at the proposal of Jesus to keep the Passover a day before the legal time. The apostles were therefore instructed to give the reason: ‘My time is at hand,’ i.e., My death will happen before the legal time of the Passover arrives” (Dummelow 709).

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

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.

“A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace” (IB 7.575).

“Jesus took bread; which lay by him, either on the table, or in a dish. Though this supper is distinct from the "passover", and different from any ordinary meal, yet there are allusions to both in it, and to the customs of the Jews used in either; as in this first circumstance, of "taking" the bread: for he that asked a blessing upon bread, used to take it into his hands; and it is a rule (l), that "a man does not bless, "until he takes the bread into his hand", that all may see that he blesses over it.

Thus Christ took the bread and held it up, that his disciples might observe it: and blessed it; or asked a blessing over it, and upon it, or rather blessed and gave thanks to his Father or it, and for what was signified by it; and prayed that his disciples, whilst eating it, might be led to him, the bread of life, and feed upon him in a spiritual sense; whose body was going to be broken for them, as the bread was to be, in order to obtain eternal redemption for them: so it was common with the Jews, to ask a blessing on their bread” (<http://biblehub.com/commentaries/matthew/26-26.htm>, Gill’s Exposition).

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

The cup represented the persecutions that were going to take place in the near future. They were to drink all of it, dedicating themselves to this new covenant of selfless love.

Mrs. Eddy makes the following statements about the Last Supper and the communion it symbolized.

35:19

Our Eucharist is spiritual communion with the one

God. Our bread, “which cometh down from heaven,”

is Truth. Our cup is the cross. Our wine the inspira-

tion of Love, the draught our Master drank and com-

mended to his followers.

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

“**My blood of the New Testament] RV** 'my blood of the covenant.' This is a clear proof that Jesus regarded His death as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world, and, therefore, as altering the relation of the whole human race to God. As Moses had once made a covenant with God by the blood of victims sprinkled on the people ([Exodus 24:8](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Exodus+24:8&t1=en_nas)), so now Jesus by His own blood made a new and better covenant.

**Shed for many**] i.e. probably 'for mankind,' stress being laid on their multitude” (Dummelow).

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.

“The word *Gethsemane* is felt by most Bible scholars to mean ‘oil press.’ Why do you think an oil press would be located on the Mount of Olives? It’s at the base of the Mount of Olives so the fruit would have flowed from the slope where the trees were and ended up for pressing purposes at the bottom of the mountain. The symbolic nature of that is probably not lost on any of us. The intense pressure the olive is placed under between two huge stones, where the hulk, the skin, the pulp, all pressed out of condition, distorted, and yet the essence is not caught by the pressure of those stones. It flows out to bless mankind in many ways. Olive oil was used for what? Anointing was for kings, priests, royalty, for heat and for light” ” (Crisler, *Master* 79).

“We are probably to imagine a walled area, owned perhaps by an acquaintance of Jesus and his disciples, containing an olive grove and some olive presses. They may have slept there on previous nights, slightly separated from the many other Galilean pilgrims bivouacked on the hillside. The gospel writers speak at this point of Jesus going out ‘as usual to the Mount of Olives’ (Luke 22:39) and of Judas knowing the place well ‘because Jesus had often met there with his disciples’ (John 18:2). So Jesus’ chosen place for his final place of prayer was a familiar one. Under the light of the full Passover moon, singing a few hymns or psalms interspersed with gloomy silence, they would have walked from the Last Supper in the Upper City down into the Kidron Valley and then up towards Gethsemane” (Walker 123).

“The gardens of Jerusalem were outside the city, because it was forbidden to plant a garden within the walls” (Dummelow 712).

“In the dark hours of Friday morning Jesus came to Gethsemane (oil press), a small grove of olive trees at the foot of the Mount of Olives. At its entrance, he directed eight of the apostles ‘sit ye here while I go and pray yonder.’ He advanced beyond the eight in every sense of the term—into a realm they were yet unaware of” (Shotwell 316).

38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

39 And he went a little farther, 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.

“Withdrawing even from these three, he went ‘a little farther’—‘about a stone’s cast.’ As he had gone many times to a mountain top to pray, so now he went ‘farther’ to a new altitude of consecration and self-surrender” (Shotwell 317).

“Jesus says, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee. He’s praying his own Lord’s prayer, showing that this is not a prayer that he doesn’t participate in himself. ‘Abba,’ as some of you may know, is behind every use of Jesus’ word ‘Father’ in the gospels. ‘Abba’ is the Aramaic word. No other religious thinker or writer before his time had ever used ‘Abba’ for God. ‘Abba’ is a child’s word. It is ‘Daddy.’ It’s one of the first two words that a Hebrew and an Arab child learns today.

“Look at that discipline requiring human thought to conform and yield to the divine when all outlines and barriers around mentality as we have become accustomed to it fall away, and we find no limitations to thought or mind at all if we are the image of the mind of God. ‘*Not my will but thine be done*.’ Is Jesus using his own prayer in Gethsemane? If that Lord’s Prayer can carry one through Gethsemane, it can carry one through anything” (Crisler, *Master* 108).

“At the beginning of his ministry he had faced the temptation of Satan and repudiated worldly policy; now in Gethsemane he faced the temptation of avoiding the cross. Three times he kneeled down with his face to the ground and prayed for strength and willingness to do the Father’s will. The first time he said, ‘O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt’” (Shotwell 317).

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

“**What, could ye not watch with me one hour?** You, Peter, that even now wert so resolute for me; and you, James and John, that told me, you could drink of the cup whereof I drank, and be baptized with the baptism I should be baptized with; what, do you faint the first time? (Matthew Poole)

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

“**Temptation**] i.e. the temptation to forsake and deny Christ.” (Dummelow).

“Watch - See [Matthew 26:38](https://biblehub.com/matthew/26-38.htm). 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 calamities.

“That ye enter not into temptation - That ye be not overcome and oppressed with these trials of your faith so as to deny me” (Barnes’ Notes).

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.

“He went away again the second time,.... To the same place as before, or at some little distance; after he had reproved his disciples for their sleeping, and had exhorted them to watchfulness and prayer, suggesting the danger they were liable to, and the condition they were in:” (Gill’s Exposition).

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

“for their eyes were heavy; with sleep through fatigue, sorrow, &c. Mark adds, "neither wist they what to answer him", [Mark 14:40](https://biblehub.com/mark/14-40.htm); they were so very sleepy, they knew not how to speak;” (Gill’s Exposition).

44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

“**The third time**] not a 'vain repetition,' but a repetition of intense earnestness. In great agony men do not frame many words, but say the same words many times” (Dummelow).

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.

“**Sleep on now**] spoken with reproachful irony, 'Thou have slept through My agony. Sleep also through My betrayal and capture.'” (Dummelow)

“The hour is at hand - The "time" when the Son of man is to be betrayed is near.

Sinners - Judas, the Roman soldiers, and the Jews” (Barnes’ Notes).

“The hour is at hand

“He probably heard the tramp and saw the lanterns of Judas and his band” (Vincent’s Word Studies).