

Episode #9-32 Matthew 26 Part 5-Stumbling of the Disciples

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 was giving a new significance to the bread and the cup of the Passover

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

A. 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.

1. A reference to the same new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Christ is here proclaiming that it is His Own blood that shall ratify the new covenant of Jeremiah and bring into force this agreement between God and Israel. See Hebrews 9:19-22. Both covenants and the forgiveness of sins required the shedding of blood (death). Christ shed His blood for both purposes.
2. While Christ’s blood was shed for the sins of the world, His blood of the new covenant was only shed for “many,” not for all. It was shed to bring in this new agreement between God and Israel, but it was not shed for the Gentiles.
3. “Remission” or forgiveness, sending away, of sins. This is the first time in Scripture we read of remission or forgiveness of sins, but in this case it was regarding a national forgiveness of the sins of Israel. Since they broke the old covenant they were under its curse, and could never become the holy nation they were destined to be until that sin could be purged and a new covenant entered into. The forgiveness they needed to bring in the new covenant and the fulfillment of God’s promises to them came through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. We believers in the dispensation of grace have forgiveness and redemption through His blood according to Ephesians 1:7. This is ours by faith. It has nothing to do with the new covenant.

B. Verse 29. “Not” is the Greek *ou me*, the strongest possible Greek “no.” I will by no means drink of this fruit of the vine. It was either wine vinegar or wine steeped with wormwood. Either way it was the fruit of the vine. It was neither plain wine nor grape juice, as is used in religious rituals today. The Lord will do this in His Father’s government, even though He will not be dwelling on earth at that time. There may be many times during the kingdom of God when He will appear to some of His chosen and drink the Passover cup with them. The Lord appeared many times on earth in the Old Testament. He does not appear on earth in this way today, for those who saw Him would be able to act on the basis of sight, rather than of faith. Yet there will be nothing holding Him back from appearing on earth at that time.

C. Verse 30. Some try to make a big deal out of the fact that the bread and the cup are mentioned here, but not the lamb. Yet this does not mean that there was no lamb (or kid), but merely that He did not give a new significance to this. When God introduced a new Passover for the Corinthians to keep outside the land, they were to eat the bread and drink the cup, but count Christ as the Passover lamb shed for them, since Passover lambs could not be sacrificed outside Jerusalem. Perhaps this is why He did not speak of the lamb. Yet I think it would be a great mistake to assume the lamb was

not there, just because it is not mentioned. If it was not there, then it could not have been the Passover, and that is what they prepared for. Their preparations would have been sadly faulty if they missed the most important element!

1. A hymn was very traditional at the Passover meal. Bullinger suggests it was probably the second part of what they called “the great Hallel” (or Hallelujah), including Psalms 115, 116, 117, and 118.
2. Bullinger says their “going out” is proof that this was not the Passover, since at the original Passover they were not allowed to go out of the doors of their houses until the morning, Exodus 12:22. Yet in the ritual of the Passover in the land, they were not allowed to keep the Passover at their own houses, but only at the place the Lord would choose, Deuteronomy 16:2. Therefore they were not in their houses at all, and so were already out of the doors of them. The yearly Passover was different from the original one, and was really a commemoration of it.
3. It appears they went to the Mount of Olives every night at this time, and it seems likely that that is where they were staying. This is where He gave them His great proclamation of Matthew 24-25; see Matthew 24:3. See Luke 21:37 as well, which marks this out as the place He was staying.

IV. All Will Stumble; Peter Will Deny. Matthew 26:31-35.

- A. Verse 31. “Made to stumble” is the Greek *skandalizo*, from which we get scandalized. He had blessed the one who shall not be scandalized in Him in Matthew 11:6. Now, even the disciples are to be scandalized this night, when these who saw Him say to the wind and the waters “Peace, be still,” are going to see Him meekly surrender to His enemies. They could not understand why He would do this, and they would be offended. He refers to Zechariah 13:7. As far as we can tell, this is a direct fulfillment of that prophecy. Notice that the passage does not say that “this fulfills” what is written, which phrase we have suggested often means “fills fuller” and not what we mean by “fulfill.” Here, where it is what we think of as fulfilling a prediction, the word is not used.
- B. Verse 32. Notice that the Lord was ready and was planning on rising from the dead. (We too can plan on our resurrection as a reality we can think about in advance.) It only took the disciples by surprise because they did not understand or believe His words. He had foretold all these things in advance. Matthew (which focuses largely on His ministry in Galilee) is the gospel that talks about the disciples going into Galilee after His resurrection, ending with a great proclamation He made to them all there, Matthew 28:16-20. They must have then returned to Judea, for it was from the Mount of Olives that He ultimately ascended into heaven, Acts 1:12.
- C. Verse 33. Peter judged himself the most faithful one, but he was not. John stood at the foot of the cross with the Lord’s mother while Peter was outside the city weeping for his failure. He will come to a more accurate assessment of himself when questioned by the Lord after the fact in John 21.

V. Conclusion. The Lord well knew what He was facing, and was preparing for His coming death. However, His warnings to the disciples seem to have fallen on deaf ears. They could not believe that this tragedy really was coming on Him. Do we too fail to believe the Lord’s predictions when they clash with what we hope or want to believe? Let us believe every word our Lord gives us, even the uncomfortable ones!