

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**MATTHEW 26****Matthew 26**

Matthew twenty-six opens with just two days remaining until Passover and the time when the Lord Jesus knew He would be rejected and crucified. This He would do; this is why He came to earth. He came to save us from our sins; your sins and mine. While at Bethany, in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, Jesus would be anointed for His burial by Mary. This caused Judas, the treasurer of the band of disciples, to reveal his wicked and selfish heart. John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, records this in greater detail than any other gospel writer.

"But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was going to betray Him, asked, "Why wasn't this perfume sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" Judas did not say this because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. As keeper of the money bag, he used to take from what was put into it." (John 12:4-6)

After Jesus' open rebuke of Judas, he then determined that he would look for an opportunity to betray Jesus, and so it was.

"Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, and said, "What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?" And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him. From then on, he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Jesus." (Matthew 26:14-16)

Beginning with verses 17-35, the scene is the large room where the Lord Jesus would have eaten the

Passover meal with His disciples. It is important for us to remember at this point that one of the cardinal rules for proper Biblical interpretation, which has been reiterated often through the 365 Bible Reading Plan, is *"Every Bible writer from Moses to John assumed that the people to whom they were writing understood the language, the history, the geography, and the cultural context of the day."* The ceremony of the Passover is known to the Jews from every nation as it would have already been established at the time of Jesus. But it is almost unheard of until recent times by most followers of Jesus in Western culture, especially in the United States. Jesus followed an order of service that had been followed for generations and is still followed today. The Passover meal was built around four cups of wine that would be taken to illustrate the miraculous deliverance of the Jewish people from Egyptian bondage and slavery. Jesus changed the ritual concerning the drinking of the third cup, called the "Cup of Redemption," and this part of the Passover ritual is now called "Communion" or the "Lord's Supper" in most evangelical churches in Western culture.

The remainder of Matthew twenty-six records the prediction that Peter, the leader among the disciples, would betray the Lord and deny Him publicly three times. He did. The agony of Jesus in the garden of the "Olive Press" Gethsemane. His betrayal by Judas Iscariot, and his appearance before the Sanhedrin, the religious ruling body of the Jewish people, where Jesus was accused and condemned. Finally, the chapter ends with Peter's denial of knowing Jesus as the Lord.

Prayer and Action Steps

Lord, thank You for Mary and her insight into the time in which she was living and for the sacrificial gift she bestowed upon Jesus. Thank You for Your forgiveness. Thank You for Your grace toward Peter and toward me. Help me to tell the wonderful message of salvation in Jesus to someone today. Amen