

## Matthew 26:17–30 (NKJV) – Group Study Questions

### Parallel Passages

- **Mark 14:12–26** – Parallel account of the Passover meal and institution of the Lord’s Supper
- **Luke 22:7–23** – Includes additional details about the meal and betrayal announcement
- **John 13:1–30** – Foot washing and Judas leaving the meal
- Related passages:
  - Exodus 12:1–14 – Original Passover
  - 1 Corinthians 11:23–29 – Paul’s teaching on the Lord’s Supper
  - Jeremiah 31:31–34 – Promise of the new covenant

### Study Questions and Responses

#### 1. Why is it significant that Jesus institutes the Lord’s Supper during Passover? (*Matthew 26:17–19*)

Passover commemorated God delivering Israel from slavery in Egypt through the blood of the lamb placed on the doorposts (Exodus 12:13). By instituting the Lord’s Supper during Passover, Jesus connects that historical redemption to Himself.

Throughout Matthew, Jesus has been moving toward the cross intentionally (Matthew 16:21; 20:18–19). Now, during the very meal remembering deliverance through sacrifice, He presents Himself as the fulfillment of what Passover pointed toward.

Paul later writes:

“For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.”  
— *1 Corinthians 5:7*

The original Passover involved temporary deliverance from physical death; Jesus points toward deliverance from sin and ultimate judgment.

Everyday Application: God often builds understanding progressively. The Passover had meaning long before Jesus, but its deeper fulfillment became clearer later. Sometimes we only understand what God was preparing after seeing the larger picture.

#### 2. What does Jesus’ knowledge of Judas’ betrayal reveal about His approach to suffering and rejection? (*Matthew 26:20–25*)

Jesus is not surprised by betrayal. He knows what Judas intends, yet still shares the table with him. This reflects the larger pattern throughout Matthew where Jesus moves knowingly toward suffering (Matthew 26:2).

Psalms 41:9 anticipated betrayal by a close companion:

“Even my own familiar friend... has lifted up his heel against me.”

What is striking is not merely Jesus' knowledge, but His restraint and patience. He exposes the betrayal without public humiliation or immediate judgment.

At the same time, Jesus makes clear that Judas remains morally responsible:

“Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!” (Matthew 26:24)

Divine sovereignty and human responsibility operate together.

Everyday Application: Jesus understands betrayal personally. This passage reminds us that being wounded by others is not outside God's awareness. It also warns us that proximity to spiritual things does not guarantee a transformed heart.

### **3. Why do the disciples each ask, “Lord, is it I?” (Matthew 26:22)**

The disciples are deeply troubled and begin examining themselves individually. Significantly, none of them immediately points fingers at others.

This moment reflects humility and uncertainty about their own strength. Earlier in Matthew, Jesus warned:

“The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

— *Matthew 26:41*

The disciples likely understand enough about themselves to know they are capable of failure.

In contrast, Judas asks:

“Rabbi, is it I?” (Matthew 26:25)

While “Rabbi” itself is not necessarily negative, Matthew may be highlighting a subtle difference between outward respect and true submission.

Everyday Application: Healthy spiritual life includes self-examination. It is often easier to identify weakness in others than to honestly ask where we ourselves may fail or drift.

### **4. What is the significance of Jesus calling the bread “My body”? (Matthew 26:26)**

Jesus takes ordinary Passover bread and gives it new covenant meaning. The bread becomes a symbol connected to His coming sacrifice.

Throughout Scripture, God often uses physical signs to communicate spiritual realities:

- Passover lamb (Exodus 12)
- manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16)
- sacrifices under the Law

Jesus now places Himself at the center of these themes.

The emphasis here is not merely on ritual, but on remembrance and participation in what His sacrifice accomplishes (1 Corinthians 11:24–26).

Everyday Application: God often uses ordinary things to communicate profound truths. This reminds us that spiritual realities are meant to shape everyday life, not remain abstract ideas.

### **5. What does the “blood of the new covenant” mean? (Matthew 26:27–28)**

Jesus refers to:

“My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

This directly echoes:

- Exodus 24:8 – covenant ratified with blood
- Jeremiah 31:31–34 – promise of a new covenant

Under the old covenant, sacrifices were repeated continually. Jesus points toward a covenant grounded in His own sacrifice.

Matthew has consistently shown humanity’s inability to produce righteousness on its own. Now Jesus reveals that forgiveness will come through His death.

Everyday Application: Forgiveness is costly. This passage reminds us that grace is not casual or cheap—it comes through sacrifice. Recognizing that deepens both gratitude and humility.

### **6. Why does Jesus say He will not drink again until the kingdom comes? (Matthew 26:29)**

Jesus points beyond the cross toward future fulfillment:

“I will not drink... until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”

Even in the shadow of suffering, Jesus speaks with certainty about restoration and future fellowship.

This connects with earlier kingdom themes in Matthew:

- the marriage feast imagery (Matthew 22:1–14)
- many coming into the kingdom feast (Matthew 8:11)

The cross is not the end of the story.

Everyday Application: God’s people often live between suffering and fulfillment. This passage reminds believers that present hardship is not final—God’s purposes move toward restoration.

### **7. Why is worship (singing a hymn) significant at the end of this passage? (Matthew 26:30)**

After announcing betrayal, suffering, and death, Jesus and the disciples sing a hymn before going to the Mount of Olives. Traditionally, this likely involved portions of the Hallel Psalms (Psalm 113–118), which celebrate God’s deliverance and faithfulness.

What makes this powerful is the timing. Jesus worships knowing what lies ahead.

This reflects a consistent biblical pattern:

- worship is not dependent on comfort,
- but rooted in trust in God's character.

Everyday Application: Worship is often deepest not when circumstances are easy, but when faith chooses to trust God despite uncertainty or suffering.

### **8. What overall transition is taking place in this passage?**

Matthew 26:17–30 marks a major transition:

- from old covenant symbolism
- toward fulfillment in Christ.

Passover, covenant blood, sacrificial imagery, and kingdom expectation all converge around Jesus Himself.

The meal also creates a dividing line:

- one disciple betrays,
- others struggle,
- yet Jesus continues steadily toward the cross.

Everything is moving toward the central act of redemption Matthew has been building toward throughout the Gospel.

Everyday Application: Jesus becomes the center of the story—not merely a teacher within it. This passage invites us to consider whether our faith is centered primarily on religious practice or on Christ Himself.

### **9. Why do the arrangements for the Passover meal seem so deliberate and somewhat concealed? (Matthew 26:17–19; Mark 14:12–16; Luke 22:7–13)**

Matthew's account is brief, but Mark and Luke provide additional details showing how carefully Jesus directed the preparations for the Passover meal. The disciples are told they will meet:

- a specific man,
- carrying a water pitcher,
- who would lead them to a prepared upper room (Mark 14:13–15).

The instructions are remarkably precise. In the cultural setting, a man carrying a water pitcher would have been noticeable, making him identifiable to the disciples. The arrangements also appear intentionally discreet, especially since Judas was already seeking an opportunity to betray Jesus (Matthew 26:14–16). Many believe Jesus intentionally avoided publicly revealing the location beforehand so the Passover meal and His final teaching with the disciples would take place before the arrest.

But the detailed instructions likely served another purpose as well: they reinforced to the disciples that Jesus was not losing control of events. Even as betrayal and suffering approached, He

remained calm, purposeful, and fully aware of what was unfolding. Throughout Matthew's Gospel, Jesus repeatedly demonstrates foreknowledge and authority:

- predicting His death (Matthew 16:21),
- arranging the triumphal entry (Matthew 21:1–6),
- identifying the betrayer (Matthew 26:21–25).

These details would strengthen the disciples' understanding later that the cross was not accidental chaos, but part of God's redemptive plan.

Jesus Himself says:

“My time is at hand.”

— *Matthew 26:18*

The timing, location, and events are unfolding under divine purpose, not merely human control.

Everyday Application: God often works through details we may not initially notice or understand. Looking back, believers frequently see ways God was guiding circumstances even in difficult seasons. This passage reminds us that Jesus was not reacting fearfully to events—He was walking faithfully within the Father's timing, and that same sovereign care still applies today.