

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

MATTHEW 26:1-75

Chapter 23 was Jesus' last *public sermon*. He blasted the Pharisees for their hypocrisy. Chapter 24-25, the Olivet Discourse, was His last *private sermon*. Jesus encouraged His disciples to watch and be ready for His return.

Now in chapter 26 we're told all that Jesus needed to say has been said.

His role is now shifting from *preacher* to *Passover Lamb* – from *sermonizer* to *sacrifice*. Jesus now steps out of the pulpit and heads to the cross...

“Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, He said to His disciples, You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.” Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and plotted to take Jesus by *trickery and kill Him.*” History tells us the Jewish High Priest, Caiaphas, had four brothers, who were all involved in the Temple trade.

They had a business exchanging money and selling sacrifices – ripping off innocent worshippers. The Temple market was *a family racket*.

Caiaphas had come to power because his father, Annas, the former High Priest, had stepped down to avoid an appearance of a conflict of interest.

When Jesus cleansed the Temple He upset the whole

Jewish hierarchy, but none more so than Caiaphas. Jesus challenged his authority and threatened his revenue stream. It's no surprise Jesus' murder was hatched at Caiaphas' house.

As a side note, in 1990 archeologists working in the old city of Jerusalem dug up a tomb containing an ossuary, or "bone box". Inscriptions determined that the bones belonged to Caiaphas the High Priest. It was the first physical evidence outside the Bible of Caiaphas' existence - testifying to its historical reliability.

“But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

The anger of these men had been brewing all day. Jesus had not only driven out the moneychangers from God's House, but He'd turned the tables on the Jewish scholars who tried to trap him in a theological riddle. It was a bad day to be a Sadducee. These Jewish leaders had been exposed and humiliated.

On Monday night a consensus forms – they'll lay low until the time is right.

The deed can be done while the people are asleep - or before the feast – while the masses are preoccupied with Passover preparations. *Meanwhile...*

Verse 6, “When Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil...”

These kinds of perfumes were imported from India, and

were very expensive. This vial was probably a family heirloom and worth a year's wages.

John 12 tells us it was Lazarus' sister, Mary, who brought this flask.

“And she poured it on His head as He sat at the table.”

There's a good chance this precious oil was intended to be Mary's dowry - her ticket to marriage. If so, by breaking it and using it to anoint Jesus' head she was saying she was willing to forego marriage, and pledge all her love to Jesus.

“But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste?” John says specifically that it was Judas who was upset with Mary's actions.

“For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor.”

Actually, this was a smokescreen. Judas wasn't at all worried about the poor.

John 12:6 tells us Judas was the treasurer of Jesus' evangelistic association and thief to boot. All along he'd been skimming off the top, depositing the checks, but taking the cash out of the offering. Author Kent Hughes appropriately labels Judas, **“The man who knew the price of everything and the value of nothing.”**

“But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me.

For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not

have always.”

Judas was *pilfering*, but his excuse was *pragmatism*. You can hear him babble, "What about the enormous needs in the world? Soup kitchens, homes for unwed mothers, homeless shelters - they need funds. Why waste money on worship?"

Understand worship is never *practical* – it's *spiritual*. Its value can never be measured on a calculator or deposited in a bank.

The word "**worship**" is an old English word which means "**worth ship**." To worship is to ascribe worth and value to God. It's not a monetary exchange - or a physical transference of goods – it's an emotional exchange.

Worship isn't designed to benefit man - though it often does in spiritual ways. Rather worship is an attempt to bless the heart of God. It's an unselfish act.

Worship is like buying flowers for your wife.

On a practical level it's a terribly waste of resources. But relationally, it's a much appreciated and valuable gesture. The value of worship cannot be appreciated or understood except by lovers. And obviously, Judas was not a lover of God.

The word "*Judas*" means "*praise*", but the man knew nothing of real worship.

Mary's act is a demonstration of true worship unparalleled in Scripture. It epitomizes the essence of worship. It's a story that's told in all four Gospels.

Here we find the ABC's of worship. Think of the acrostic... **A**
– B – C...

"A" is for adoration. Mary's act was motivated by love not legalism, delight not duty. Worship is never forced or coerced. It flows from a heart in love with Jesus.

"B" is for brokenness. The fragrance filled the room and touched the head of Jesus only after the vial had been broken. Likewise, worship flows from a broken life. We won't *ascribe worth to God* until we're aware of *our own unworthiness*.

"C" is for costliness. Worship always costs the worshipper. It'll cost you time, or effort, or image. **"I'm just not into raising my hands. I don't want anyone to think I'm a fanatic."** As with Mary, real worship is oblivious to what other people think.

Mary's act, like all true worship was more *romantic* rather than *pragmatic*.

This is why people on the outside - who aren't madly in love with Jesus - will never understand the extravagance of worship. To them it appears a waste.

Jesus says in verse 12, **"For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial."** Perfumes were placed on a corpse to mask the odors as the body deteriorated. But Mary believed that the body of Jesus would not see corruption.

She was one of the few people who heard Him promise to rise the third day.

She believed in His resurrection so she anointed Him *before* His burial.

It's interesting, Jesus told His disciples many times He'd be crucified and three days later rise from the dead – but it sailed over everyone's head but Mary. *Why?*

Could it be there's a close association between *revelation* and *adoration*?

The person who spends time worshipping at the feet of Jesus sees truths that others miss. Worship breeds *communication with God* and *insight about God*.

Verse 13, “Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”

We're fulfilling this prophecy tonight. Once again the aroma of worship is in the air. As Alexander Maclaren puts it, “The fragrance was soon dissipated in the scentless air, but the deed smells sweet and blossoms forever.”

“Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?” And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.” It was the price of a slave.

“So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.”

Judas is a complex character, and we could spend the rest of the night trying to unravel his twisted mind. One theory for his betrayal was his disappointment.

He expected Jesus to bring a physical, political kingdom – he'd be the czar of the IRS - but Jesus had no such ambition. Judas in turn, sold Jesus out.

And this has happened many times since. People come to Jesus and expect Him to *bless their business* - or *save their marriage* - or *solve their problem...*

And when they don't get the desired outcome - they turn on Jesus. A true follower doesn't insist on his own agenda. To follow is to let Jesus lead.

Verse 17 “Now on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?" And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples." So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.” A Passover Seder - or celebration - doesn't just happen. Detailed prep has to take place. Jesus sends his disciples to make preparation.

They took their lamb to the Temple to be slaughtered.

They went to the market for unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and crushed fruit.

They return to the upper room and purged the house of leaven.

They roasted the lamb. The aroma of roasted mutton filled Jerusalem's streets.

“When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?"

It's amazing to me that Jesus had known from the beginning the identity of His betrayer, but the disciples were oblivious. That says a lot about how Jesus treated Judas. If I'd been in Jesus' position the identity of my betrayer would be clear.

The disciples would've concluded, "For three years Judas has done all the dirty work. He's on permanent latrine duty. He gets the cold food and rides in the back."

If it had been me, Judas would've been in the doghouse from the beginning.

But apparently, that's not how Jesus had treated Judas. Jesus loved His future enemy. He'd exalted Judas by making him the treasurer. Jesus had trusted His betrayer - even when He knew Judas was a thief. He cared for Judas. Jesus gave him every opportunity to repent and avoid his destiny.

Verse 23 "(Jesus) answered and said, "He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!"

It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

John's Gospel gives us additional light on why and how Jesus indicated Judas.

In ancient times guests reclined around the table. They leaned back on their left elbow, and ate with their right hand. John says occasion, he'd lean back and rest his head on Jesus' shoulder. We're told Peter motioned to John to ask Jesus to identify His betrayer. But he wasn't close enough to

whisper to Jesus Himself.

Jesus and Judas were close enough to dip their bread together in the bowl.

Put all this together and you get a picture of the seating arrangement that night. Jesus was at the head of the table. John was on his right. Judas was on his left.

In ancient Israel, *the left-hand position* was for *the right-hand man* – the place of honor. It's chilling to realize Jesus' head was just inches from Judas' heart as He announced to the group that there was a betrayer among them. I'm sure even the evil Judas, with his iron-clad conscience, had a hard time keeping his composure.

“Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, “Rabbi, is it I?” He said to him, “You have said it.” John 13:30 tells us, “Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night” - in more ways than one.

Verse 26 “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.”

The unleavened bread was cooked on a griddle. The bread came out bumpy, striped, and perforated. It was a perfect picture of the crucified Jesus.

A piece of Jewish matzo is the only portrait we have of Jesus...

He's **unleavened** or sinless. Leaven was a type of sin. The **bumpiness** reminds us how His face was beaten and bruised.

The **stripes** teach us how Jesus' back was lashed into ribbons.

And the **holes** - the pierced marks – remind us how the thorns pierced His head, the nails His hands and feet, and the Roman spear punctured His side.

When Jesus held up the bread, and said to His disciples, **"This is my body"** - the men in the room had no idea Jesus was holding up a picture of Himself.

Understand for His first disciples this was revolutionary. Jesus redefined a 1500 year old tradition. After the Passover meal the Jews had dessert - or Afikomen.

The bread Jesus held up reminded the Jews of their faith in Egypt. They didn't use leaven because God promised they would leave the next day. There was no time for the bread to rise. At the Passover they ate unleavened bread.

But from now on this bread will speak of their faith in Jesus. He is the Afikomen, or dessert. Jesus is the bread of life. He's the sustainer and satisfier of our soul.

Through His sacrifice upon the cross we experience an exodus from our sin.

"Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." This was the 3rd cup of the Seder, the cup of redemption.

For 1500 years it looked back to the eve of the exodus, and the blood of the lamb that was spread on the doorposts and threshold of the Hebrew houses in Egypt. When the death

plague saw the blood it passed over the house.

But Jesus *redefines* the *wine*. From now on, it speaks of His blood.

When the blood of Jesus is spread on our hearts death passes over us.

On the night of the Passover it didn't matter the worthiness of the people within the house - all that counted was the application of the blood. Likewise, none of us are granted salvation because we're worthy. Our only hope is the blood of Jesus.

When God made His covenant with Moses He ratified it with blood. Moses sprinkled blood upon the altar. But in Christ, God has made a new covenant.

Our status with God is no longer dependant on our righteousness and good works - we have a right standing with God because of the good work of Jesus.

A group of seminary students had deep admiration for an old professor. He was a godly man. One night they waited outside his room to eavesdrop on his prayers.

They expected a long, fluent prayer, but all he uttered was a short, simple prayer. "Lord, I just want to thank you that we're on the same old terms."

This is the key to godliness - remembering it's not our work, but Jesus' work.

"But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." The next glass of wine Jesus drinks will be

to toast His bride after we're raptured - and join Him in heaven.

Verse 30 **"And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."** The Passover psalms were the **Hallel Psalms** - Psalms 113-118.

What a treat it would've been to hear Jesus sing!... If you read this section of psalms you'll find they speak primarily of the Messiah's suffering and rejection.

It would've been an eerie, somber experience - to hear Jesus, on the threshold of the cross, sing about the suffering He would experience the very next day.

"Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: (Jesus quotes from Zechariah 13:7) 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

"But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

All twelve disciples – not just Judas - will fall. They'll stumble. They'll all forsake Jesus, but He won't forsake them. The Shepherd will be struck and the sheep will be scattered – yet when the Shepherd arises He will lift up His fallen sheep.

Verse 33 **"Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."** Peter is so self-confident.

Notice the pride in the contrast he draws. **"Even if all are made to stumble, I will never... stumble."** Lord, they may be weak, but not me, I could never deny you!

Hey, beware of pride... **God-confidence, Good! Self-**

confidence, *Bad!*

About the time you think you're able to stand on your own you'll fall flat on your back. Our only hope is the grace, and mercy, and power of God's Spirit.

“Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." Peter had been strutting around the apostolic barnyard like a rooster, but he'll end up proving chicken before the rooster crows.

“Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.” The other disciples didn't want to be shown-up by Peter.

Verse 36 “Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there.”

The word "Gethsemane" means "oil press." I love to visit this garden.

It's on the western slope of the Mount of Olives - across the Kidron Valley from the Temple Mount. It's a lovely grove of very old olive trees – some date back to the time of Jesus. You're next to the same trees under which Jesus prayed.

There's actually a private garden across the street. Tip the gatekeeper and you can spend time meditating on what happened there. It's still a very special place.

At the time of Jesus the garden no doubt, had an active press that squeezed oil from the olives. It was probably near this *press* that Jesus felt the *pressure* of His own emotions. In

the Garden of the oil press Jesus was crushed and squeezed.

Gethsemane was Jesus' hour of testing - His moment of truth.

Hey, the battle was not fought on the cross. By the time Jesus got to the cross His obedience was a foregone conclusion. The battle was fought in Gethsemane.

The outcome was decided the night before the crucifixion. Victory was won by Jesus not *standing before the Jews and Pilate*, but *kneeling before His Father*.

Verse 37 "And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee (James and John), and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.

Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death.

Stay here and watch with Me."

He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

View this scene through the lens of all four Gospels and an interesting picture emerges. Luke tells us Jesus knelt and prayed. Mark says He fell on the ground and prayed. Matthew describes Him falling prostrate on His face in prayer.

Put it all together and it seems Jesus collapses under the weight of His emotional distress. He kneels - buckles - then stretched out on His face.

Luke also mentions that Jesus' beads of perspiration were the consistency and appearance of large drops of blood.

Jesus was in inexplicable agony.

As Matthew puts it, He was "exceedingly sorrowful and deeply distressed."

And His prayers are no mere whispers. Hebrews 2:7 tells us, "(Jesus) offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears." In an amazing moment, the Master of every situation buckles under to His burden.

The writer of Hebrews tells us Gethsemane was necessary, for through it, Jesus learned obedience. Jesus, the Son of God, *learned obedience*.

Obedience is not something you learn by reading or hearing about – you learn to obey by doing it – by making the tough choices in difficult situations.

"Then He came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, "What? Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

What a true statement. How often have we knelt to pray and fallen asleep. Satan seems to have the ability to make our eyes heavy and heads drowsy.

Our spirit has been redeemed. We love God and want to love others – but doing God's will is difficult because it requires the cooperation of our flesh.

Our good intentions are not enough. We have to learn obedience.

"Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I

drink it, Your will be done."

People assume Jesus is asking to escape the cross – *the cup was the cross*.

I don't think so. I believe the cup Jesus wanted to pass from Him was full of hurt and rejection. He just predicted His disciples would deny Him. Judas is on his way to betray Him. In a few hours, His people, the Jews, will shout "*Crucify Him...*"

It's one thing to die for people who appreciate Your sacrifice - it's another thing to die for the people who hammer in the nails. I believe Jesus was tempted just as we're tempted – to stop loving – to build up a resentment – to hold a grudge.

There are several prophetic psalms that give expression to Jesus' pain...

Psalm 41:9 predicts the Master's hurt and rejection, "*Even My own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate My bread, has lifted up his heel against Me.*"

Psalm 55:12, "*For it is not an enemy who reproaches Me; then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates Me who has magnified himself against Me; then I could hide from him. But it was you... My companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng.*"

Jesus and Judas walked to the Temple together. They worshipped God side-by-side. How would you react if your supposed friend ended up betraying you?

Jesus was born to die. The wise men bring embalming fluid to the baby shower.

Jesus had been telling His disciples for months He would be crucified.

John 17:1 refers to the cross as His moment of glory.

Jesus isn't asking God to avoid the cross - but to remove the resentment He feels so He can embrace the cross - *and I believe God answered His prayer.*

He took away the dreaded cup and replaced it with His supernatural peace.

And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words."

"Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? What an honor for Peter, James, and John to be present in the garden.

I can't think of a holier moment in history – yet the disciples are sawing logs.

Jesus wakes them with ominous news, "Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand." Now that the pain has passed Jesus is ready.

"And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him." Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him." For years I wondered why the priests needed Judas...

Surely, they could pick out Jesus on their own. They'd seen

Him often enough. And why did Judas identify Him with a kiss – he could've just pointed a finger...

Again, I believe it was Satan's attempt to embitter Jesus. A kiss – a symbol of friendship was a dagger in His back. Satan hoped a betrayal would cause Jesus to throw up His hands - forget the cross. That's why Jesus had prayed that the Father would take the cup from Him - and God obliged. His heart now overflows with love.

Look at how Jesus responds to Judas' kiss, **But Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?"** He calls Judas "friend". Jesus looks his betrayer in the eye and feels nothing but love. *We need to ask God for strength to love our enemies.*

Verse 50 **"Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him..."**

And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

John 18:10 identifies the brother with the blade as Peter. Peter tries to slice the servant down the middle. He goes for his head and misses - nicking off his ear.

"But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? Or 72,000 troops..."

How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?" Jesus is telling His disciples that this is not their fight. It's the fulfillment of Scripture.

“In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.”

We're told by John Jesus grabbed the ear, dusted it off, and put it back on the man's head. The priestly posse was stunned – by His power *and His kindness*.

When do criminals perform miracles of healing on those who arrest them?

Sadly, the replacing of the ear on Malchus' head has been repeated countless times throughout the centuries. In fact, this is Jesus' most common miracle.

Far too often Jesus has to heal folks that his servants hurt! God help us!

Verse 57 introduces the most important trial in history...
“*The Jewish Sanhedrin versus Jesus of Nazareth...*” “**And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.**”

The Sanhedrin was the 70 member Supreme Court of Judaism.

When we piece the Gospels together we find that Jesus was tried five times...

John 18:13 says that after His arrest Jesus was taken first to

Annas, the former High Priest. Then He was brought to the house of the current Priest, **Caiaphas**.

Once condemned by the Jewish Sanhedrin and Caiaphas He was taken to the Fortress of Antonio, the headquarters of the Roman Procurator, **Pontius Pilate**.

In the hands of the Romans Jesus became a political hot potato.

Pilate tried to pass the buck. He hears that Jesus is from Galilee so he shuffles Him to **Herod**. Herod refuses to hear the case, and sends Jesus back to **Pilate**.

Until I visited Jerusalem I pondered how all this movement could take place in a few short hours... From the **Mount of Olives**, east of Jerusalem – to southwest of the city, the **priestly neighborhood of Annas and Caiaphas** – to the northeast corner of the Temple Mount and the **Roman Fortress of Antonio** - a trip back to the city-center and **King Herod** - then back to the **headquarters of Pilate** at the Fortress.

You assume all the travel would've taken quite a while.

But one trip to Jerusalem sorts it out. Today, the entire Old City is less than one square mile. You can walk from one side to the other in less than an hour.

At the time of Jesus, the city was not much bigger.

Go to Jerusalem and you can trace Jesus' steps on the night of His arrest in probably an hour. Especially, if it was at night and the streets were empty.

Verse 58 **“But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high**

priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.” Here Matthew does a great job of dramatic writing - for the rest of the chapter he shifts from *courtroom* to *courtyard* – from *the big rock* to *the little rock* – from *Jesus’ trial* to *Peter’s trial*.

Jesus prayed in preparation. Peter slept. He didn’t need to pray, He boasted that He would never deny Jesus. **Guess who folds and who remains faithful?**

Vance Havner once said of his relationship with God, “**The Lord had the strength and I had the weakness, so we teamed up! It was an unbeatable combination.**” This is the lesson a self-confident Peter is about to learn.

“**Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none.**” Their own stooges couldn't get their story straight. Those who lied about Jesus contradicted themselves.

According to the Law of Moses, a matter had to be confirmed by two or three witnesses. The Sanhedrin couldn’t find any collaborating testimony.

Its interesting this Jewish court broke several of their own rules that made the proceedings illegal. **First**, they were never allowed to make judgments at night.

Second, they couldn’t make judgments outside the Temple chambers.

Third, a capital conviction was not to be rendered during the Passover.

If Perry Mason had defended Jesus he'd have the case thrown out of court.

Verse 60 "But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.' "

Herod's Temple took over 40 years to build, and it was still not finished. Yet Jesus said He could destroy the Temple and build it again in three days.

The Jews thought Jesus had threatened their sacred Temple.

When Jesus spoke about the Temple He was talking about His own body. John 2:19 quotes Him. His body would be torn down, but raised again in three days.

Verse 62 "And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" But Jesus kept silent." Recall Isaiah 53:7, "As a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth."

"And the high priest answered and said to Him (Caiaphas cuts to the chase), "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"

Remember the Jewish thought process... the son of a cow is a cow, the son of a man is a man, and the son of God is God... He's asking Jesus if He is God.

Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." It

was a very clear confession. *Yes, Jesus claimed to be God.*

Jesus actually quotes three OT passages - Isaiah 52:8, Psalm 110:1, Daniel 7:13. All three verses relate to Messiah's second coming. Jesus applies them to Himself. He says, "Today, you've judged Me, but when I return I will judge you!"

"Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death."

People might deny Jesus was God, but they can't deny He made the claim. His claim to deity was not the creation of the Church. It came from Jesus' own mouth!

Verses 67-68 are difficult to read, "Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?" Once the death sentence was passed this stately crew of dignified Jewish gentlemen turn crude and brutal and vulgar.

They spit in His face. They threw a coat over His head and punched Him.

The Jewish Talmud had a weird teaching that the Messiah could identify folks by His sense of smell alone. Thus the Jews blindfold Jesus and asked Him who it is that's striking Him. In other words, "Prove that You're the Messiah."

Verse 69 shifts from courtroom to courtyard... "Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him,

saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee." But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying." And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth."

But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!"

Recall verse 58, what led to Peter's denial. He "followed (Jesus) at a distance." Allow some distance to grow between you and Jesus and your love will grow cold.

Verse 73 "And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you." Peter was from Galilee. Evidently the Galileans had a different drawl than Judeans.

"Then (Peter) began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!"

Today sailors have a reputation for foul language. In Jesus' day fishermen had the same sort of label. Peter had probably cussed his tangled nets a time or two.

But he never dreamed he would ever curse the Lord he loved so dearly.

"And immediately a rooster crowed." Roosters were banned from Jerusalem at the time of Jesus. The priests viewed them as dirty birds. The fowls would defile the holy city. It was unusual to hear a *cocka-doodle-do* in Jerusalem.

This was a specific sign to Peter that his confidence had been misplaced.

This last December when we were in Jerusalem, Kathy and

I went over a day early and walked the city walls. Across the valley from Gethsemane we heard a rooster. We both paused and listened. And thought of how it must've hit Peter.

“And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” So he went out and wept bitterly.”

The word translated “wept” is the Greek word for “bowels or intestines.” Hey, Peter's weeping sprang from a deep down sorrow, a gut-wrenching grief.

Never has a disciple fallen so far, so fast as Peter. *And he's a warning to us.*

Peter sat at the Master's feet - saw Jesus raise a girl from the dead - saw Him in His glory - performed miracles in His name - even walked on water - yet his own courage and commitment wasn't enough! *Peter needed power outside of himself.*

And so do we... The Christian life is not like an automobile – powered by a fuel tank. It's like an old streetcar - powered by contact. We have to be in constant contact with the Holy Spirit to be what God wants and to stand for Jesus.

Hudson Taylor once wrote, “God chose me because I was weak enough. He trains somebody to be quiet enough, and little enough, and then uses him.”

Loudmouthed, bigheaded Peter is becoming quiet and little – and usable.