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Matthew Lesson 35

August 3, 2021

“The *Megillah* of Matthew”

26:1-28

Tonight, we begin Matthew chapter 26. Yeshua has just completed a long teaching session for His disciples. They are about to leave the Mount of Olives where they have been all afternoon. It is Monday, Nisan 12.

1 Now it happened that when Yeshua had finished all these words, He said to His disciples, 2 “You know that Passover comes in two days, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be executed” (Matthew 26:1-2 TLV). Passover comes in two days. This was late Monday afternoon, Nisan 12 and Passover was to occur in late afternoon on Wednesday, Nisan 14. After the first Passover in Egypt, future Passovers were all about the slaughtering of the lambs. *1 Now Adonai spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying, 2 “This month will mark the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year for you. 3 Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month, each man is to take a lamb for his family one lamb for the household.” (Exodus 12:1-3 TLV).* Since *Shabbat*, the 10th of Nisan when Yeshua made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He was the lamb without blemish which had been kept in the household of Israel and was being examined. *6 “You must watch over it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to slaughter it at twilight” (Exodus 12:6 TLV).* Three of the four days of examination were now complete. There was one more day of examination remaining before Yeshua would be slaughtered at twilight.

3 Then the ruling kohanim and elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the kohen gadol named Caiaphas. 4 They plotted together in order that they might seize Yeshua by stealth and kill Him. 5 “But not during the festival,” they were saying, “so there won’t be a riot among the people” (Matthew 26:3-5 TLV). This had been in the minds of the ruling priests for some time, but this was the first time that we are told that they met together and plotted how to quietly lay hands on Yeshua and kill Him.

The house of Caiaphas would be an important scene again in one more day when Yeshua would be taken there and questioned. The remains of what many believe was Caiaphas’s house is now a church. It is named for an event which took place there, the Church of St Peter in Gallicantu. Gallicantu means “cocks crow” in Latin, a reference to *Kefa*’s denial of Yeshua in the courtyard there before the rooster crowed. The church is built on a very steep hillside on the eastern slope of Mount Zion at the southern end of Jerusalem. It is built on four different levels, the upper church, the middle church, the guardroom and the dungeon. The dungeon is where Yeshua would have been held before and after His questioning. We have seen it.

Yeshua and His disciples have left the Mount of Olives and the scene now changes to Bethany at the house of Simon the Leper. It is Monday evening, Nisan 12. *6 Now while Yeshua was in Bethany at the house of Simon ha-Metzora, 7 a woman came up to Him with an alabaster jar of very expensive oil. And she poured it on His head as He was reclining*

at the table (Matthew 16:6-7 TLV). This event is very similar to another one which took place at Bethany four days earlier, the *erev Shabbat* dinner which we described at Lazarus's house. Lazarus's sister *Miryam* took expensive nard and anointed Yeshua's feet. But, this is a different event at a different house in Bethany. The woman at Simon's house is not identified and she anointed His head and not His feet.

There is a bit of a mystery surrounding the host, Simon. We're not exactly sure who he was. Some say he was Lazarus. I don't see how that could be true because of the difference between anointing the feet and the head. Others say that he was the Simon the Pharisee of Luke chapter 7. Luke 7 was the scene of another anointing of Yeshua's feet by a woman, but much earlier in His ministry. We also don't know why Simon was called "the leper." It may have been that Yeshua had healed him of leprosy, but he obviously did not have it at the time of the dinner because he could not have been in contact with people if his disease was active. Lepers were required to separate themselves and identify themselves as being unclean if a person approached.

8 But when the disciples saw this, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? 9 It could have been sold for a lot, and the money given to the poor" (Matthew 26:8-9 TLV)! Very similar words were said in John 12 after *Miryam* anointed Yeshua's feet, except that on that occasion it was *Yehudah*, Judas, who made the statement.

10 But Yeshua, knowing this, said to them, "Why do you cause trouble for this woman? She's done Me a mitzvah. 11 You always have the poor with you, but you won't always have Me. 12 For when she poured this oil on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial. 13 Amen, I tell you, wherever this Good News is proclaimed in all the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her" (Matthew 26:10-13 TLV). This is also very similar to what Yeshua said about *Miryam* some four days earlier. He said of *Miryam* that she set the nard aside for His burial. He is a little more specific about this woman saying that she had prepared Him for burial and that it would be proclaimed as a memorial for her.

14 Then one of the Twelve, the one called Judah of Kriot, went to the ruling kohanim 15 and said, "What are you willing to give me if I hand Him over to you?" And they weighed out thirty shekels of silver for him. 16 From then on, Judah began looking for a chance to hand Him over (Matthew 26:14-16 TLV). We have gotten the point from other Scriptures that Judah was not whole-hearted in his discipleship. Following *Miryam's* anointing of Yeshua's feet at Lazarus's house we read this: *4 But Judah from Kriot, one of His disciples, the one who was about to betray Him, said, 5 "Why wasn't this oil sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" 6 Now he said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. Since he had the moneybox, he used to steal from what was put in it* (John 12:4-6 TLV). This Scripture from Zechariah is seen as a prophetic foreshadowing of everything which went on with Judah and what he did with the money: *12 "Then I said to them, "If it seems good to you, pay me my wages, but if not, don't bother!" So they weighed out my wages—30 pieces of silver. 13 Then Adonai said to me, "Throw it to the potter—that exorbitant price at which they valued Me!" So I took the 30 pieces of silver and threw them into the House of Adonai, to the potter"* (Zechariah 11:12-13 TLV). This may be a minor point, but I don't understand why the TLV translators decided to use the word "shekels" here. The Greek word is *argurion* (ar-goo'-ree-on) which simply means piece of silver. During this time in her history, Israel was unable to mint coins so it couldn't have been an Israeli shekel. It could have been a shekel from Tyre, one type of silver coin in use in Israel during that period. Other silver coins in use in Israel at that time were the Antioch Stater, the Ptolemaic tetradrachms

and the Athenian tetradrachms and possibly other Roman silver coins. The only Jewish coins in circulation were coins which were minted by the Hasmonean Jewish rulers more than one hundred years before, but were still in use. But, the Hasmoneans didn't mint silver coins. They minted only bronze. One coin from the Hasmonean mint which was still in use was the prutah, the coin which is often referred to as a "widow's mite." The meaning of the word mite is "very little" and was a reference to the two small bronze coins which the woman gave.

17 Now on the first day of matzah , the disciples came to Yeshua, saying, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover" (Matthew 16:17 TLV)? We don't exactly know how to understand this. Yeshua's words tell us that this day was a day for beginning the eating of *matzah*. Exodus describes when it is to be eaten: *15 "For seven days you are to eat matzot , but on the first day you must remove hametz from your houses, for whoever eats hametz from the first day until the seventh day, that soul will be cut off from Israel"* (Exodus 12:15 TLV). Leaven was to be removed on the first day before the eating of *matzah* began. Through Moses, ADONAI further explained it: *18 "During the first month in the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, you are to eat matzot, until the evening of the twenty-first day of the month"* (Exodus 12:18 TLV). This ties in with the Passover being slaughtered in the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan, the first day that Yeshua referred to, but Exodus shows that *matzah* would begin to be eaten the evening before the lamb was eaten.

As was said, that's not very clear in Matthew because it only refers to eating *matzah* and not to the slaughter of the lambs, but Luke has additional information for us. *7 Then came the day of matzah when the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 Now Yeshua sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, so we may eat"* (Luke 22:7-8 TLV). It says essentially the same thing in Mark 14:12. This gives us much more information. Luke tells us that this *was* "the day of matzah when the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed." Those things would actually take place on that day and that day was Tuesday, Nisan 13 by my reckoning and it was morning. In order to eat the Passover lamb that evening, it would have to be slain by the priests that day, Nisan 13 and not on Nisan 14.

Yeshua gave His disciples further instructions: *18 He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and tell him, "The Teacher says, "My time is near; at your house I am to keep the Passover with My disciples. 19 The disciples did as Yeshua had ordered them, and they prepared the Passover (Matthew 26:18-19 TLV).* The certain man is more completely described in Luke: *10 And He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters"* (Luke 22:10 TLV). Many believe that this man was an Essene, a member of a group of separatist Jews, Jews who opposed the hypocrisy of the priests. They did not marry and that is why a man was carrying water, usually a woman's job.

But, for Yeshua's disciples to completely prepare for the Passover, they would have had to make sure that the owner of the room had removed all leaven from the room and had purchased *matzah* for the dinner. They, themselves, would have had to go to the Temple and have a priest slaughter a lamb and bring it back to be roasted in the late afternoon. You couldn't go to the Temple just any day and have a lamb slaughtered. It had to be on a day recognized by the *kohenim* as in accordance with *Torah*. And, apparently it was because the lamb was slaughtered. And, all of this would have been done before sundown.

But the question is asked, "when did Yeshua eat His Passover meal?" Scripture makes it clear to us that it was the evening before He died on the 14th of *Nisan*. His Passover is described in Matthew 26, Mark 14 and Luke 22. Each of these Gospels very clearly states

that Yeshua ate the Passover the night before Scripture says that it was to be eaten. There is a lot of conjecture about the day of the week on which these things occurred. Since *Yeshua* died on the afternoon of *Nisan* 14 according to the requirement for the Passover lamb and He ate His Passover meal after sundown the evening before, He would also have eaten it on the 14th of *Nisan*, the same Hebrew day. The question of whether or not this was an actual Passover has been debated for many years. I personally believe that it was a Passover meal although I don't know exactly how it was. It has been suggested by some that *Yeshua* observed it according to the Essene calendar. We don't know if that is true. But the Scripture in Matthew 26:17 is clear: *17 Now on the first day of matzah, the disciples came to Yeshua, saying, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover? The Greek word translated here as "Passover" is Pascha and is a clear reference to what was to take place. Pascha can mean and refer to both the lamb and the actual meal. Yeshua could have meant either; "prepare the lamb; or prepare the meal."* But it is clear that *Yeshua's* last meal on the earth was a Passover meal eaten during the time that G-d specified that it be done although how it was is unclear. *20 Now when it was evening, Yeshua was reclining at the table with the Twelve (Matthew 26:20 TLV).* It was now 14 *Nisan*, Tuesday. The sun had set. The Passover Seder was about to begin.

21 As they were eating, He said, "Amen, I tell you, one of you will betray Me." 22 And being very sorrowful, they began, each one, to say to Him, "I'm not the one, am I, Master?" 23 And He replied, "The one who dipped his hand in the bowl with Me, he's the one who will betray Me. 24 The Son of Man indeed goes, just as it is written about Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." 25 And Judah, the one betraying Him, replied, "I'm not the one, am I, Rabbi?" Yeshua said to him, "You've said it yourself" (Matthew 26:21-25 TLV). Judah knew that he was the one, but apparently, the other disciples did not notice who had dipped into the bowl with *Yeshua*. *Yeshua* said that He would die as it had been written about Him. Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 are two of the best examples of this. *4 "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our pains. Yet we esteemed Him stricken, struck by God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities. The chastisement for our shalom was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4-5 TLV).* *16 "My strength is dried up like a clay pot, my tongue clings to my jaws. You lay me in the dust of death. 17 For dogs have surrounded me. A band of evildoers has closed in on me. They pierced my hands and my feet" (Psalm 22:16-17 TLV).* The disciples are still very much unaware of what is going on. *Yeshua* has said once again that He was going to die, but they seem to take no notice of it.

26 Now while they were eating, Yeshua took matzah ; and after He offered the bracha, He broke and gave to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 And He took a cup; and after giving thanks, He gave to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the removal of sins" (Matthew 26:26-28 TLV). The Passover seder of *Yeshua's* day seems to have been much more basic than ours. While our seder has four cups of wine, *Yeshua* only spoke of two cups and you have to read Luke to learn about the first one. Matthew only speaks of one cup. We also eat *matzah* four times in our seders today, but *Yeshua* only broke it once. Matthew, Mark and Luke all speak of the important cup of wine, but only Luke tells us when it occurred. *20 In the same way, He took the cup after the meal, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20 TLV).* He offered the first cup in verse 17. It was the cup after the meal which today we call "the cup of redemption."

At Passover that night Yeshua described to his disciples something which would become a reality through His own body and blood the very next afternoon. His death through the sacrifice of His body and His blood would initiate, that is, would cut the “New Covenant” which was prophesied through the Prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:30-33) hundreds of years earlier. As the only effective sacrifice for sins, Yeshua fulfilled the essence of the pattern set by the Egyptian Passover. Just as ADONAI required nothing of the Israelites in Egypt other than to place the lamb’s blood on the doorposts of their houses and to remain inside, so too Yeshua’s blood has caused the death angel to pass over those who accept His sacrifice. That is, by accepting His sacrifice, we symbolically place His blood on the doorposts of our hearts and are saved. By trusting in His sacrificial death, ADONAI gives us the promise of eternal life. Does Yeshua’s death on the cross accomplish the forgiveness of our sins as well? We usually think of that as being the case, but the Pesach sacrifice in the Temple provided no atonement. We, ourselves, must repent of our sins, but ADONAI has provided a way for their remission and it is not found in Passover.

There is no forgiveness of sins in the Passover other than the implication that ADONAI saved Israel from Egypt even though they had sins. When *Yochanan* the Immerser, John the Baptist, saw Yeshua coming to the Jordan River, he said: “*Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” (John 1:29b). How did John know this? How did he understand that Yeshua, the Passover Lamb, could take away sins? He obviously had spiritual insight through the *Ruach Kodesh*, but he also knew this because He knew *Torah*. And that is why all of ADONAI’s festivals which He ordained are important to every follower of Yeshua. Each one gives us some very important understanding about what occurred in these festivals and what the festivals might mean at their fulfillment at a future time. Passover, the first festival of the Biblical year, has already been fulfilled by Yeshua’s sacrificial death as our Passover lamb. *Shavuot*, Pentecost, the second festival of the year, has already been fulfilled by the outpouring of the *Ruach Kodesh*, the Holy Spirit, upon those who have trusted in Yeshua’s sacrifice. That leaves *Yom Teruah*, the Festival of Trumpets which we also know as *Rosh Hashanah*, *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement and *Sukkot*, the Festival of Tabernacles for a future fulfillment. We believe that they will each be fulfilled in some way by Yeshua in and around His return as *Melekh Mashiach*, King Messiah.

To understand how Yeshua’s death on the stake takes away our sins we have to understand another of ADONAI’s festivals, *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. Is *Yom Kippur* important to us today? Yes, very much so! It has already played a part in ADONAI’s plan for Israel and the Nations and there is more to come in the future. To begin to understand it we have to read from Leviticus: 11 “*For the life of the creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your lives—for it is the blood that makes atonement because of the life*” (Leviticus 17:11 TLV). The blood of Yeshua, the perfect and sinless Son of G-d, became the perfect atonement which would permanently take away man’s sins. Up until His death, sins were atoned for, literally covered, for only one year on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. And the High Priest had offer sacrifices in order to cover them again the next year and every following year. But, Yeshua and His sacrifice are very prominently involved in the events of *Yom Kippur* and we will presently see the connection.

The sacrifice of Yeshua’s human life and body for our sins was for everyone; every person that ADONAI created. And it was the fulfillment of G-d’s plan to bring redemption to all of His creation. But this redemption was only offered through Israel. There is no salvation available through any other nation or people. Jeremiah prophesied: 30 “*Behold, days are coming*” —it is a declaration of Adonai— “*when I will make a new covenant with the house of*

Israel and with the house of Judah— (Jeremiah 31:30 TLV). The New Covenant ADONAI made and instituted through Yeshua is with Israel which in Jeremiah's time consisted of the divided kingdoms of Israel in the north and Judah in the south. In Yeshua's day it was only one kingdom, the Kingdom of Judah. The northern Kingdom of Israel had been captured and carried away to Assyria hundreds of years before. Yeshua explained this very thing to the Samaritan woman at the well: 22 "*You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews*" (John 4:22 TLV). This woman was a descendant of the foreigners whom the Assyrians imported to repopulate the land. When He said this, Yeshua was speaking of the Israel as the Kingdom of Judah and of Himself, who was born of the Tribe of Judah. And each of us, Jews, Samaritans and other non-Jews, must enter into salvation through that one and only entrance point, Yeshua's sacrificial death, the salvation which is from the Jews. And when we confess our sins and sincerely accept Yeshua's sacrifice, we are either grafted in to Israel as a Gentile or re-grafted in as a Jew.

We will discuss *Yom Kippur* and grafting in further next session. We leave the Book of Matthew tonight with Yeshua and His disciples in Jerusalem at their Passover *seder*. The day is Tuesday, *Nisan* 13 in the evening. *Shalom aleichem!*