



Matthew Lesson 36

August 17, 2021

“The *Megillah* of Matthew”

26:29-56

Tonight, we continue in chapter 26. Yeshua is in an upper room, a room possibly in the Essene Quarter of Jerusalem, celebrating Pesach with His disciples. It is Tuesday, *Nisan* 13, in the evening. He had just explained to His disciples how the New Covenant prophesied by Jeremiah would be placed in effect. *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).

In ancient days, it was common for two parties to make a covenant with each other, in effect, a binding contract regarding something they had agreed upon. In actuality, they would “cut a covenant” with each other, a blood covenant, a ceremony which could contain a number of different elements. The central act was the “cutting.” An animal was killed and cut in two and the two halves laid opposite each other. The two men would walk between the two halves while saying “may G-d do this to me if I break this covenant.” Then each would cut the palm of their hand and clasp hands allowing the blood to mingle. Sometimes they would exchange names, adding a part of the other’s name to their own name and they would state the terms of the covenant before a witness, pledging their assets to the other. If something happened to you, your covenant partner would see that your wife and children were taken care of. Sometimes, a memorial meal with bread and wine was eaten.

Yeshua’s cutting of the covenant for us does not follow exactly the ancient elements, but in principle establishes the covenant rights. ADONAI’s cutting of the covenant for Abraham in Genesis 15 also had some of the traditional elements. Abraham was familiar with the ritual of cutting a covenant and ADONAI used something familiar to him to make an eternal promise. The same was true with Yeshua’s cutting of the covenant. Some of the elements were there. But, there was one major difference between the cutting of a covenant between two men and ADONAI cutting a covenant. In a human covenant each person had covenant responsibilities, but in the Abrahamic Covenant, nothing depended on Abraham. Everything depended on ADONAI, who promised to be faithful to His covenant. The same is true for the New Covenant. It is guaranteed by ADONAI and sealed by His Son Yeshua’s blood. And the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel all testify that it is an everlasting covenant.

That was what Yeshua explained to His disciples at His last Passover *Seder* as He invited them to symbolically partake of His body and blood which would put the New Covenant into effect. The next day, the covenant would be cut with Yeshua’s own body and blood. The Passover lamb that died and was eaten for their *seder* was a symbol of the Passover lamb in Egypt whose blood on the doorposts caused the Death Angel to pass over their houses. In the same way, Yeshua was to be the Passover lamb, whose blood when applied to our hearts as an acceptance of His sacrifice, will cause eternal separation from

ADONAI to pass over us. But, the more specific action of Yeshua had to do with *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement.

Just as Passover and *Shavuot* were fulfilled by Yeshua, so was *Yom Kippur*. And, it was fulfilled when He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven taking His own blood in His hands. The Book of Hebrews explains: *11 But when Messiah appeared as Kohen Gadol of the good things that have now come, passing through the greater and more perfect Tent not made with hands (that is to say not of this creation), 12 He entered into the Holies once for all—not by the blood of goats and calves but by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption* (Hebrews 9:1-12 TLV). Yeshua entered the original Tabernacle, the one in heaven which was made without hands and placed His blood on the mercy seat as an atonement for our sins, past, present and future. He did this as ADONAI's anointed High Priest and in doing so, eternally paid the sin price. He only had to do it once and it became eternally effective, an everlasting covenant. It is our prayer that our Jewish brothers and sisters would understand this, that they would understand that they don't have to pray that their names would be in the Book of Life every year on *Yom Kippur*. Their lives will be in the Lamb's Book of Life permanently as soon as they trust in Yeshua's *Yom Kippur* offering of His own blood. This is because Yeshua has already fulfilled the sacrificial part of *Yom Kippur*. The portion of it which remains is His return as the righteous judge of all mankind.

From the lack of a response by His disciples, it is pretty obvious to us that they did not really understand. And, then Yeshua said: *29 "But I say to you, I will never drink of this fruit of the vine from now on, until that day when I drink it anew with you in My Father's kingdom"* (Matthew 26:29 TLV). He may have been referring to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in the Book of Revelation (Revelation 19:7-10). We don't know if that is a metaphor or an actual dinner at which we all eat with Yeshua. If we do actually eat and drink at that time, it may very well be in heaven. We will be there briefly after being caught up in the clouds (1Thessalonians 4:16-18) by Yeshua before returning to earth with Him to take part in the Battle of Armageddon.

*30 After singing the Hallel, they went out to the Mount of Olives* (Matthew 26:30 TLV). *Hallel* means praise and is Psalms 113-118. They were sung with a tune unknown to us today during *Pesach*, *Shavuot* and *Sukkot* as well as *Chanukkah* and *Rosh Chodesh*. Psalm 136 is known as the Great *Hallel*, but it is not sung at these festivals.

Since verse 30 said that they left the *seder*, these next verses must have been while they were walking because they had not yet reached the Garden of Gethsemane. *31 Then Yeshua said to them, "This night you will all fall away because of Me; for it is written, 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'* *32 But after I am raised up, I will go before you to the Galilee"* (Matthew 26:31-32 TLV). Earlier, in Matthew 24:10 Yeshua spoke of this same time when He said: *10 "And then many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one other"* (Matthew 24:10 TLV). The Greek word used in both these verses to translate "fall away" is *skandalizó* (skan-dal-id'-zo). It means "to cause to stumble." In the fleshly fear of many of Yeshua's followers, they would fall away and cause others to stumble, a fulfillment of Zechariah's words: *7 "Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, against the man who is My companion! It is a declaration of Adonai-Tzva'ot. Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered"* (Zechariah 13:7 TLV)! Judah had already left to betray Yeshua to the High Priest. Yeshua was speaking to the remaining eleven, but also referring to some of His other followers who would be led astray by what was about to happen to Him. He told them that for a time some of them would lose their faith. It's just like with

sheep. They need a shepherd. When the Shepherd Yeshua is not there to lead them, the sheep scatter.

*33 But Peter replied to Him, "Though all fall away because of You, I'll never fall away."*  
*34 Yeshua said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."* *35 "Even if I must die with You," Peter says to Him, "I'll never deny You!" And so said all the disciples (Matthew 26:33-35 TLV).* And, as we know, fear got the best of Kefa and he denied Yeshua three times and then the rooster crowed. But, in defense of Peter and all the disciples, in the end they were faithful and all died a martyr's death except John, but he was substantially tortured. It was necessary for them to run away in fear in order that Zechariah's prophecy could be fulfilled.

*36 Then Yeshua comes with them to a place called Gethsemane, and He tells the disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray" (Matthew 26:36 TLV).* The Garden of Gethsemane, meaning "wine press of oils," is *Gat-Sh'manim* in Hebrew. Even today, there are olive trees growing there that were there when Yeshua prayed there. It is presumed that there was an olive oil press there in that day.

*37 And He took along Peter and Zebedee's two sons, and He began to be sorrowful and troubled.* *38 Then He tells them, "My soul is deeply grieved, even to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with Me" (Matthew 26:37-38 TLV).* He took Kefa, Ya'acov and Yochanan, Peter, James and John to keep watch. He chose them earlier to witness His transfiguration and now He chose them to be with Him in the time of His deepest sorrow.

*39 Going a little farther, He fell face down and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me! Yet not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39 TLV).* What was "this cup?" It was the cup of Yeshua's destiny to be crucified, but it also symbolized ADONAI's judgment against sin. Just as Yeshua drank the cup symbolizing His blood at the *seder*, now He must drink it in reality. Very soon, the fullness of divine wrath would fall on Him. While He was the Son of G-d, he was also fully human and had to deal with the fear and dread of what He knew would come in a few hours. It is also possible that in His humanness, He dreaded having His Father turn His back on Him even for a moment.

*40 Then He comes to the disciples and finds them sleeping; and He tells Peter, "So couldn't you keep watch with Me for one hour? 41 Keep watching and praying, so that you won't enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:40-41 TLV).* It still does not seem that they fully grasp the situation. They don't know where Judah is, that he has gone to betray Yeshua to the High Priest. But, they certainly should be able to interpret Yeshua's current emotional state. "We would have stayed awake if we had been there," we say, but would we? Since He began His ministry, Yeshua has told His disciples four times that he was going to die and hinted at it several other times, but it did not sink in and they still seemed very unaware of what was going on. But, maybe we're being too harsh on them. In Luke's presentation of this same event, he included this: *45 When He rose up from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them asleep, exhausted from grief (Luke 22:45 TLV).* This puts a slightly different light on it. Luke said that they were not indifferent to Yeshua's anguish. Their sleeping had a cause, the cause of being exhausted from the worry and concern for Yeshua that they were feeling. But even so, this was still disappointing to Yeshua. These three trusted disciples whom He had asked to watch, went to sleep. *Kefa* had just bragged that he would never do this.

42 Again for a second time He went away and prayed, saying, “My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, let Your will be done” (Matthew 26:42 TLV). Of course, Yeshua knew that it was the Father’s will. I believe that He was speaking from His human self, a self which automatically recoiled against pain and impending death. But, even in His human self, Yeshua knew that it must be done and He readily submitted to the Father’s will.

43 And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. 44 So He left them again and prayed a third time, saying the same words once more (Matthew 26:43-44 TLV). Mark adds: 40 .. They didn’t know what to answer Him (Mark 14:40b TLV). They were so very sleepy that they could not even answer intelligently. And, then Yeshua prayed again, not exactly the same prayer, but He prayed for the same purpose. In His human self and feeling left alone, Yeshua prayed this third time to ADONAI.

45 Then He comes to the disciples and says to them, “Still sleeping? Taking your rest? Look, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being delivered into the hands of sinners. 46 Get up, let’s go! Look, My betrayer is near” (Matthew 26:45-46 TLV). Yeshua used *remez*, hinting at another Scripture, to refer to Daniel chapter 7: 13 “I was watching in the night visions. Behold, One like a Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days, and was brought into His presence. 14 Dominion, glory and sovereignty were given to Him that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will never pass away, and His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13-14 TLV). It’s all a part of ADONAI’s eternal plan. His Son, the Son of Man, whom He has given an everlasting kingdom, must first be betrayed and killed. Yeshua has now conquered His human self-preservation desire and is now ready to face whatever is to come.

47 While Yeshua was still speaking, here came Judah, one of the Twelve, and with him a big crowd with swords and clubs, from the ruling kohanim and elders of the people (Matthew 26:47 TLV). Apparently there were ordinary citizens there as well as Temple guards, but according to John, there were also Roman soldiers: 3 So Judah, having taken a band of soldiers and some officers from the ruling kohanim and Pharisees, comes there with lanterns, torches, and weapons (John 18:3 TLV). What the TLV has translated as “a band of soldiers” is translated from the Greek *speira* (*spi'-rah*) and does mean a band of soldiers, in this case, Roman soldiers. This group is described as a cohort, a group equal to one tenth of a Roman legion, about 480 soldiers. It seems amazing that Caiaphas the High Priest would take that many soldiers to arrest Yeshua, but knowing him, he probably wanted to make a big show.

48 Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘The One I kiss, He’s the One—seize Him!’ 49 And immediately Judah drew near to Yeshua and said, “Shalom, Rabbi!” and kissed Him (Matthew 26:48-49 TLV). Judah actually did call Yeshua Rabbi. It is translated this way because the Greek word is *rhabbi* (*hrab-bee'*), meaning “my master,” “my teacher” or my “Rabbi.” The Greek word translating his greeting to Yeshua is *chairó* (*khah'-ee-ro*), meaning “rejoice” or “be glad,” but also a greeting; hail. If he was speaking Hebrew, his hail would have been *shalom*. But, to give such a positive greeting along with a kiss, seems unthinkable. But, Judah may have done it to make it appear normal to the other disciples, who had no idea that he was about to do this.

50 “Friend,” Yeshua said to him, “do what you’ve come to do.” Then they came up and threw their hands on Yeshua and seized Him (Matthew 26:50 TLV). Yeshua called Judah *hetairos* (*het-ah'-ee-ros*), meaning companion, comrade or friend. It seems strange that Yeshua would give the name “friend” to a man whom he knew was his enemy and who was

about to betray him. According to the Greek, Yeshua may not have said friend, but companion, a word which refers to someone who spends a lot of time with you, but is not necessarily a close friend. But, knowing Yeshua's nature, we have to believe that even in betrayal, Yeshua continued to love Judah and most likely called him friend.

*51 And suddenly, one of those with Yeshua stretched out his hand and drew his sword, and he struck the kohen gadol's servant and cut off his ear. 52 Then Yeshua said to him, "Put your sword back in its place! For all who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. 53 Or do you suppose that I cannot call on My Father, and at once He will place at My side twelve legions of angels? 54 How then would the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so"* (Matthew 26:51-54 TLV). Many have suspected that "one of them" who drew his sword was *Kefa*, the impetuous one. But, we really don't know. At their Passover seder according to Luke we see this: *36 Then He said to them, "But now, whoever has a money pouch must carry it as well as a travel bag. And whoever does not own a sword must sell his cloak and buy one"* (Luke 22:36 TLV). They replied: *38 ... "Master, look here! Two swords!" And He said to them, "It is enough"* (Luke 22:38b TLV). Why did Yeshua tell them at the seder that they needed a sword? We don't know for certain, but it may have been so that Yeshua would be numbered among the transgressors. Isaiah prophesied: *12 "Therefore I will give Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the spoil with the mighty— because He poured out His soul to death, and was counted with transgressors"* (Isaiah 53:12a TLV). Whoever cut off the *Kohen HaGadol's* servant's ear was a transgressor and Yeshua was among them. Luke tells it this way: *50 And one of them struck the servant of the kohen gadol and cut off his right ear. 51 But Yeshua answered and said, "Stop this now!" And He touched the man's ear and healed him* (Luke 22: 50-51 TLV). Two swords were enough to fulfill prophecy and then Yeshua healed the man. Verse 54 of Matthew 26 makes it clear this is what Yeshua intended: *54 How then would the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so"* (Matthew 26:54 TLV).

*55 At that hour Yeshua said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs, to capture Me as you would a revolutionary? Every day I sat teaching in the Temple, and you didn't seize Me. 56 But all this has happened so that the writings of the prophets would be fulfilled."* Then all the disciples fled, abandoning Him (Matthew 26:55-56 TLV). The High Priest had plotted regarding how to arrest Yeshua because his group feared the people who believed Yeshua was a prophet. They didn't arrest Him in the Temple or anywhere else in view of the people because of their fear. But, as Matthew wrote, all this happened so that prophecy would be fulfilled. One such prophecy is regarding Judah: *10 "Even my own close friend, whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me"* (Psalm 41:10 TLV). This verse from Isaiah also speaks of this: *8 Because of oppression and judgment He was taken away* Isaiah 53:8a TLV). And, His disciples did run away a fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah 7 *"Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, against the man who is My companion! It is a declaration of Adonai-Tzva'ot. Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered! I will turn My hand against the little ones"* Zechariah 13:7 TLV).

We conclude our lesson here tonight. Yeshua is in the captivity of the High Priest Caiaphas. It is Tuesday, *Nisan* 13 in the late evening. As foretold in Exodus 12, the Passover lambs were to be sacrificed on *Nisan* 14 which is the next day. The fully human and fully G-d Passover Lamb, Yeshua, will fulfill His eternal destiny and be hung on the tree in less than twenty-four hours. *Shalom aleichem!*