

Matthew 26:1-35 - A Atypical and Antitypical Passover

★ I. Introduction: The Finale of the Story

★ A. This morning, we're are in Matthew 26 and we are nearing the end of Matthew

1. I'm sure you've heard me say dozens of times through our study of Matthew that Matthew is divided into five sections that alternate action and teaching - but we finished the fifth section of Matthew last week and we aren't quite done
2. But we are done with an important part of the book - the last three chapters don't belong to Matthew in the same way that the first 25 do - these last chapters are a cap, a seal on the book of Matthew, a Grand Finale that ends the book
3. And this isn't just my analysis of the book, Matthew actually carefully crafts his words so that we see this in the book
 - a. At the end of each of Matthew's five sections, he marks the end of the section with a repeated phrase, some variation of the phrase, "when Jesus had finished these sayings"
 - ★ b. For example, in Matthew 7:28 it says - *And when Jesus finished these sayings*, or again, in Matthew 13:53 it says - *And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there*,
 - ★ c. And there's a similar statement in Matthew 26:1, but listen to the extra word - *When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples...*
4. Matthew is finished with Jesus' teaching ministry - Jesus had finished all of His sayings, there was no more to teach
 - a. And that's an important part of the book of Matthew - there were five sections of teaching given to the disciples, five sections of teaching for a new Israel - Matthew is consciously crafting his book to be a new Torah, a new instruction for a new people
 - b. Just as the original Torah had five books - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy - the new Torah also has five books - Beginnings, Gospel, Explanation, Community and Judgment - a new Torah given to a new people
5. But Matthew is not done, because something is missing
 - a. I alluded to this at the beginning of the book as we saw the parallels in the beginning of Matthew with the story of Moses - Jesus' story paralleled Moses' story, but there's one glaring omission - Passover
 - b. The Passover and then the sacrifice at the mountain sealed God's people to Him and sealed the Torah to be their possession, their heritage to pass down through their generations; so, if there is a new people and a new Torah, there needs to be a new Passover and a new sacrifice to seal this new Torah for a new people
 - c. This is the Grand Finale - the Torah has been given, but now it needs to be sealed, a new people has been called out but they need to be passed over, the promise has been declared, but the promise needs to be fulfilled

B. And this is the story of Matthew 26-28

1. We're going to see a new Passover, we're going to see the Torah sealed for a new people and it is going to culminate in the promise being fulfilled - the Son of Abraham will send blessings to the nations, the heir of Moses will deliver His people, and the Son of David will reign as king
2. And the King, with His authority, will send His people out with a new Torah, telling them that all of His instructions must be brought to all people, all nations must bow the knee to this new Torah
3. That is what we are building to over the next four weeks in Matthew - but this week we're just starting the drama of the Grand Finale, we are setting up the scene for the great sacrifice

★ C. So for the next two weeks we are going to cover Matthew 26 and the first half of Matthew 27

1. These are the last events that are going to culminate in the cross, we might call this the path to the cross
2. And, as we read this section, we're going to notice that the path of the cross is a series of contrasts, a series of alternating stories that contrast one concept with another, in fact every other story here is about betrayal
3. These alternating stories are bringing us to the cross and they are going to grow in intensity until we reach the cross

D. So let's read Matthew 26:1-35 together

★ E. As we come to Matthew 26, I think Matthew is preparing us to apply the story of the Cross to ourselves

1. We are rapidly approaching the cross, but before we get to the cross, Matthew needs to prepare us for it
2. These alternating sections, the staccato stories of betrayal, are meant to draw our passions into the story of the cross, Matthew wants to affect us emotionally, to prepare our attitude for the story of the Cross
3. But Matthew isn't merely emotional, in the midst of the emotional turmoil of these chapters, Matthew is going to teach us some very clear truths about what the cross represents, He wants to prepare our intellect for the story of the Cross
4. So Matthew is preparing us, preparing our intellect and our attitude to respond rightly to the Cross

★ F. Proposition: Our emotions and our intellect must both be drawn in, even overwhelmed, before we can approach the cross

- ★ 1. **Outline:** Three contrasts (Purpose + Futility; Beauty + Betrayal; Sufficiency + Necessity)

★ II. Purpose and Futility (1-5)

★ A. The Purpose of the Cross

- ★ 1. In verse 2, Jesus makes His fifth and final prediction of His coming suffering - *"You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."*
2. Each of the predictions have grown on the others, each prediction reveals a little more than the one before it and prepares the disciples a little more for His coming sacrifice.
3. And, in this last prediction, Jesus, for the first time, reveals a time to His suffering, in two days at the Passover
4. But what strikes me here, and this is true of each of Jesus' predictions but somehow particularly poignant here, is the assuredness, the finality, the unwaveringness of Jesus' declaration - He was going to go to the cross in two days, there would be no change of plans
- ★ 5. There is a purposefulness in this declaration - I am going to the cross - it reminds me of Luke's statement in Luke 9:51 - *When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.*
6. Jesus has spent the last week defeating and pronouncing judgment on faithless Israel embodied in the scribes and the Pharisees and He just described to His disciples His glorious return and final victory, but Jesus wasn't unclear where He was going next - those judgments lay in the future, the cross must come first - He is setting His face like flint to meet it
7. And so Jesus declares that He is going to go to the cross, He is going to fulfill His purpose, He is going to redeem His people - that's what comes next and nothing is going to stop Him, not even death itself
8. So, as we come to the cross, we ought to feel the glory, even the heroicness of the cross, the Son of God, the great champion of God's people has set His face to fight and even to fall defeating the enemy of God's people

★ B. The Futility of the Cross

1. Immediately after Jesus' concise statement of purpose, another purpose is contrasted
 - ★ a. In verse 3, the chief priests and the elders plot together to cause Jesus' death - so, in a way, they are aiming at the same thing Jesus is, but notice a glaring contrast - *But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."*
 - b. Jesus is aiming to die at the Passover, and the chief priests and elders are glad to fulfill His purpose, but not during the feast - they are seeking Jesus' death, but it must be on their terms in a way that doesn't threaten their power
 - c. Part of the hatred that the priests and elders, the scribes and the Pharisees had for Jesus was that they thought He threatened their way of life, He threatened to stir up a riot or a revolution and provoke the power of Rome
 - d. So He needed to die, but not during the feast because there could be a riot that would grab the attention of Rome
2. So, they had a purpose as well, they were plotting and scheming, but their scheming came to naught
 - a. Jesus declares that He is going to go die at the Passover, the chief priests and elders declare that He will die, but not at the feast - only one of their purposes can prevail because they are at odds with each other
 - b. And, as we look forward, we see that Jesus' purpose prevails, the plans of the priests come to nothing - Jesus is arrested the next evening and dies in two days at the feast just as He said He would, and, notwithstanding the priests desire, a crowd gathers in the courtyard of the Roman governor with riotous intent, even shouting down Pilate when he speaks to the crowd
 - c. The plans of the priests and the elders were futile, they were worthless, they came to nothing - their plans to kill Jesus were overwhelming foolish and foolhardy, they were opposing the very Son of God, nothing would happen outside of His purpose
3. But the futility of the chief priests and elders' plans points to a deeper futility
 - a. When we look at the cross, we ought to see that it is full of futility, full of purposiveness and futility
 - b. The cross displays the futility of everything that man has ever done - our work, our actions, our plans have culminated only to destroy the Son of God, to bring the perfect and powerful Son of God to the cross
 - c. It ought to tear our souls to see the cross and see our futility, the worthlessness of our deeds that brought the universe crashing down on the head of the only perfect One
4. So, the cross stands and declares that all of the plans of men are worthless
 - ★ a. Men may plot and scheme, *"the kings of the earth may set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 'Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.'"*
 - b. But, *"He who sits in the heavens laughs, and the Lord holds them in derision."* (Psalm 2:2-4)
 - c. In the oddest of ways, the cross shows that God wins - men may purpose, but their purposes will come to naught
 - d. The cross calls us to rejoice in our hero but also to despair of ourselves - our plans will fall and will fail, nothing that we do will ever accomplish anything, but His purposes have stood, He has accomplished His goal
 - e. So, who will we follow, our own selves or the crucified Son of God? What will we rejoice in, our plans or His accomplishments? What will we rest in, our ability or His?

★ C. **But, in the midst of the intrigue, in the emotional pull of the contrast, Matthew teaches us something: The cross was the fulfillment of the Passover story**

1. These first five verses, and really the whole of chapter 26 draws our attention to one significant event - the Passover
 - a. Jesus said His death had to come at the Passover, the Jews said His death had to come any time but the Passover, but Jesus' purpose prevailed
 - b. It had to be during the Passover, it couldn't be at any other time, just as it had to be at Jerusalem, it couldn't be at any other place
2. But why did it have to be at the Passover? Why is this the point of disagreement between the priests and Jesus?
 - a. At the center of the disagreement is a disagreement about what Jesus' death means - the priests and the elders believe that Jesus' death is meaningless, an enemy to be gotten rid of with as little fuss as possible, but Jesus declares that His death is the fulfillment of everything that had come before
 - b. Jesus is declaring that the antitype of the Passover had arrived, the fulfillment of the Passover story and its rich heritage for the Jewish people was at hand - the story that had been remembered and reenacted for centuries and millennia was always pointing forward to this moment
 - c. Another sacrifice was going to be presented to provide another deliverance - God's people were going to be freed from bondage and God's righteous judgment was going to pass over them
3. And this is important to Matthew's gospel because this is one of the purposes of Matthew's gospel
 - a. Matthew's purpose is to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament story, that all of the Old Testament promises and types and figures had one purpose - to point forward to the Messiah
 - b. And Matthew is writing His gospel for a church that is predominantly Jewish and is still surrounded by the Jewish nation, a church that will be tempted to go back and to join the Jews again especially as the events of AD70-AD130 approach and the patriotic thing to do will be to join the Jews and fight Rome
 - c. But Matthew wants to be clear - the purpose of the Jewish nation is at an end because their purpose has been subsumed in Christ - the glory of Israel is that it all was pointing forward to Christ, preparing the way for a savior
 - d. And the feast, the ancient memory and tradition at the heart of the Jewish nation was no different - for generations and millennia the Passover had been celebrated in memory of deliverance but also in hope of a future deliverance, and that deliverance was here - the purpose of the Passover was being completed
 - e. There would be no reason to go back, to cling to the old Jewish traditions because those traditions had been superseded and fulfilled, now they should cling to Jesus and rejoice in Him
- ★ 4. Jesus' purpose and the futile scheming of Caiaphas point us to the glories that Paul declares in I Corinthians 5:7 - *For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*
 - a. Jesus' and the priests opposition over the time of His death was important - either He was or was not the fulfillment of the Passover
 - b. And Jesus prevailed, He was the Passover lamb, the One who would be sacrificed to deliver God's people from God's wrath

★ III. Beauty and Treachery (6-25)

★ A. The beauty of the cross

1. As the Passover approaches, Jesus goes out of the city to Bethany where He had many followers, Simon, who's mentioned here, as well as Lazarus and Mary and Martha, who we learn are at this meal in John
2. And during this meal a woman who was attending, again, we know that it is Mary the sister of Lazarus, but Matthew is not concerned about that - a woman who was attending comes and anoints Jesus with perfume - literally with myrrh
 - a. And there is so much we could say about this episode: Here Jesus is declared to be the Messiah, God's anointed One; here Matthew declares that His book is nearly over, his book is bookended by two anointings; here is a declaration of impending suffering and doom because of the symbolism of myrrh for burial - they would perfume corpses to keep them from stinking - but also remembering what happens after myrrh is presented - the slaughter
3. But Jesus focuses on one thing - beauty
 - ★ a. Matthew 26:10 - *But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me.*
 - b. As we see the woman anoint Jesus, we are called to see beauty - especially the poignant beauty of Jesus' death
 - c. Jesus is the anointed Messiah coming to the end of His story in suffering and death, but His suffering and death would be a beautiful thing - it would be no less than the redemption of the world, a thing of beauty, a thing to be wept over but weeping tinged with awe at the beauty of sacrifice - the beauty of the women weeping at the tomb
4. And Jesus calls His disciples to see this beauty, to desire this beauty, to grasp this beauty
 - a. The disciples were criticizing the woman because they believed anointing Jesus with the perfume was a waste - a year's worth of wages that could have been given to the poor
 - b. Now, John tells us that Judas spearheaded this criticism, but Matthew tells us that all of the disciples were involved - Judas, perhaps, had become a spokesperson for the worst impulses of the disciples as Peter had become for their best impulses - but generally the disciples, perhaps to varying degrees, failed to see the beauty of this act
 - c. But Jesus calls them back and calls them to see the beauty of what is happening - the sacrifice promised millennia ago, the sacrifice promised to Adam and to Moses and to David was being prepared in their presence
 - d. Indignance was not the attitude of the moment but awe - so, as we approach the cross, we ought to feel the mournful beauty of what is happening, the glory of God's plan worked out in the death of His only Son
5. As a side note, we shouldn't let Jesus words to the disciples wash over us too quickly
 - a. Caring for the poor is, clearly, a central duty of God's people - But, caring for the poor can be done from many false motives and it is not the ultimate goal, the ultimate good -we ought to do it for our Lord, but it is not ultimate
 - b. And this is why the protestations of the disciples fall flat - Jesus is calling their motives false, John will specifically attribute a greedy motive to Judas, but whatever each of the disciples' motives were, they were false
 - c. Their motives in protesting that this money should be given to the poor were not focused on Jesus - they were motivated some by greed, perhaps others by fame, perhaps others by rule-keeping, but none by Jesus
 - d. If they were motivated by Jesus, they would have seen that here it was better for that gift to go to Jesus to prepare Him for His suffering and death - but they were overlooking the beauty of Jesus
 - e. So we should and let's dedicate ourselves to serving the poor, but we should make sure that we are doing so in order to honor Christ, in order to make His name known and for no other reason

★ B. The Treachery of the Cross

1. While the story of the woman would be remembered as long as the gospel was preached, a moment of infamy follows directly after in Matthew's account - Judas goes to the chief priests to negotiate a betrayal for Jesus
2. And again, it is meant to be contrasted - the woman saw beauty and poured out her most valuable possession to prepare Him for burial, Judas failed to see the beauty of Jesus and determined to enrich himself by betraying His Master
 - a. The woman rejoiced in beauty, Judas is only full of treachery
 - ★ b. And in Judas we see the treachery that stands at the heart of the cross - we feel the weight of John's words - *He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.*
 - c. The Messiah came to save but His own people hated Him, even those closest to Him turn away and determine to make a quick profit in His death - the cross is a symbol of infinite treachery
 - d. But the treachery goes even deeper than this, Judas comes back to the disciples and joins them at the Passover meal, He eats the Passover with Jesus all the while planning and plotting to betray Him
 - ★ e. So Jesus references the cry of Psalm 41 - *My enemies say of me in malice, "When will he die, and his name perish?" And when one comes to see me, he utters empty words, while his heart gathers iniquity; when he goes out, he tells it abroad. All who hate me whisper together about me; they imagine the worst for me. They say, "A deadly thing is poured out on him; he will not rise again from where he lies." Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.*

- f. The cry of that Psalm is intense - God, why do my enemies hate me so? God, why are they seeking my death? God, why does even my close friend turn away from me? God, why is he who ate bread with me betraying me? God, there is no one left, none who honors the king, none who seeks my good! - Even my close friend!
- g. The depth of Judas' treachery ought to pierce to our very souls, we ought to feel the terror and the evil going on in these moments and tear our hearts asunder with grief and with anger
3. But the cross' treachery points beyond just Judas and pierces to the heart of all men
 - a. Judas' treachery stands out here, but in reality Judas merely stands as our representative
 - b. Judas commits an act of treason against his King which leads to the King's horrible death - but that's what all of us have done, we ought to see ourselves reflected in Judas
 - c. All of us have betrayed our Master, each of us had a hand in the cross, it was our greed and our sin that brought Jesus to the cross - Judas may have been the closest, but he was our chosen representative
 - d. And so, again, the cross stands as the symbol of infinite treachery - a treachery, a treason, a rebellion that started from the beginning with our first parents and has continued until now - the cross throws our treachery in our face
 - e. We turned against our God, we rebelled against our Master, we pursued our own pleasures instead of rejoicing in obedience, and our treachery led to the death of our King - we should mourn and weep over such treachery
 - f. It is right for us to be angry, in fact, we ought to be angrier, outraged with a divine justice at Judas - but this passage calls us to turn and look at ourselves - that anger should be directed at us, our hands took part in the spilling of blood
4. So the cross stands and declares that the hearts of all men are treacherous
 - a. We ought to feel the enormous, even infinite weight of that treachery as we approach the cross
 - b. Our hearts ought to resonate with the song, *'Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice, call out among the scoffers'*
 - c. The cross the act of treachery and each of us had a hand in it - the cross came about through treachery because the cross came about through treachery - Judas was merely a representative of us, we sought the death of our Lord

☀ **C. Instruction: The cross was the purchase price to redeem a dead slave**

1. As in the previous episode, Matthew imbues the contrast with meaning calling us to see the cross for what it is
2. The contrast focuses on giving and taking - the woman gave of her bounty to prepare Jesus for burial, while Judas took from the Chief Priest in order to betray Jesus to death
3. And the important part comes in how much Judas took - And they paid him thirty pieces of silver.
4. Thirty pieces of silver was an important sum in the Old Testament
 - ★ a. The first and most glaring reference comes from Zechariah 11, where the God-given and yet despised shepherd is valued at thirty pieces of silver - *Then I said to them, "If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them." And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver.*
 - b. The thirty pieces of silver testified to the truth that Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus was God's shepherd and His rejection by the rulers of the people actually supports that truth and does not deny it
5. I'll come back to Zechariah 11 next week, because Matthew is going to quote from Zechariah 11 again in regards to this thirty pieces of silver, but there is an older reference that I think Matthew wants us to see as well
 - ★ a. Exodus 21:28-32 - *"When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten, but the owner of the ox shall not be liable. But if the ox has been accustomed to gore in the past, and its owner has been warned but has not kept it in, and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death. If a ransom is imposed on him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is imposed on him. If it gores a man's son or daughter, he shall be dealt with according to this same rule. If the ox gores a slave, male or female, the owner shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.*
 - b. Thirty pieces of silver was the price to redeem a life, specifically the price to redeem the life of a dead slave
 - c. This valuation was no accident - there were dead slaves that needed to be redeemed, the cost of their life needed to be paid, and the cross was the payment of this ransom price
6. We are the dead slaves and the cross is the ransom price for our lives
 - a. Judas' role here is incredibly important - in the midst of his self-serving greed and treachery, He is displaying to us the meaning of the cross
 - ★ b. We were the slaves in sin, Romans 6:20 - *For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.*
 - ★ c. We were dead in sin, Ephesians 2:1 - *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins*
 - ★ d. But the ransom price was paid, I Timothy 2:5-6 - *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.*
 - e. The betrayal price was thirty pieces of silver because the cross was that thirty pieces of silver, the cross was the ransom paid for dead slaves to ransom the life of the transgressor

★IV. Sufficiency and Necessity (26-35)

★A. The Sufficiency of the Cross

1. In verse 26, we come to one of the most well-known parts of the Bible - the bread and the cup at the last supper
 - a. And there is so much that could be said here, each word here is filled with meaning to the point of overflowing
 - b. And much has been said about this scene, but there is so much to say here that I'm going to intentionally say very little - there is no way I can do justice to this paragraph this morning, so I just want to draw one thing out
2. As Jesus took the Passover bread which reminded the Jews of their deliverance from Egypt and the Passover cup which recalled the four promises God made to the Israelites - I will bring you out, I will deliver you, I will redeem you, I will take you to be my people - as Jesus came to these symbols rich with meaning, He preempts and absorbs their meaning
 - a. Jesus says that these things are about Him - they are His body, His blood
 - b. At a Passover meal in which there is no mention of a Lamb, Jesus declares that He is what His people need
 - c. First, the lack of mention of a lamb is incredible - the disciples sit down to Passover with Jesus and none of the Gospels care to mention a lamb - whether one was there or not, I don't know, but the disciples didn't find it important later because the lamb was sitting in their midst - Jesus declares that He is the lamb sacrificed so that God can pass over His people
 - d. And then Jesus takes the unleavened bread, God's provision for the journey out of Egypt and plainly says that His body will be the better Passover bread, He will be the provision that God's people need to leave slavery
 - e. And then Jesus takes the cup, the symbol of God's promises to Israel, and He says that it is His blood that will buy the promises, and this is so full of symbolism there is almost no end
 - f. His blood was the blood of the Passover lamb painted on the doorposts of God's people
 - g. And His blood was the blood of the Covenant, the seal of a New Covenant for a new people of God
 - ★h. Israel had been promised that there would be a New Covenant - Jeremiah 31:31 - *Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah* - and Jesus declares that He is the seal of that New Covenant, the blood that is sprinkled on the people and on the posts in Exodus, the blood that allows God to call us His people and the blood that makes Him our God
3. And so I have called this the sufficiency of the cross
 - a. In these few short verses, Jesus has poignantly declared that He, and particularly His sacrifice, is sufficient to bring a new people to God - everything that God's people need is met in Christ, everything, there is nothing necessary beside Him - He is the blood of Passover, He is the provision in the wilderness, He is the seal of the Covenant
 - b. By the end of the day, God's people will have been redeemed because His sacrifice paid it all

★B. The Necessity of the Cross

1. Immediately after supper, as they leave the upper room, the tone changes though
 - ★a. Jesus says, verse 31 - *You will all fall away because of me this night.* and then quotes out of Zechariah 13 - *For it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'*
 - b. Jesus was going to provide what was necessary, but the disciples did not have what was necessary yet - when the shepherd is struck they will be scattered - Jesus would be faithful to His task, but they would all be faithless to Him
 - c. Peter's protestation highlights this truth - Peter declares that he is sufficient to the task, there is no way he would ever desert Jesus, there is no way he would ever fall away
 - d. Jesus gently corrects him, though, telling Peter that this very night he would deny Jesus three times - Peter's efforts, Peter's declaration of purpose would be useless to keep him from falling away
 - e. Peter really was no different than Judas - both of them would betray and deny their Master, both of them were incapable of following the king, of entering the kingdom on their own, of providing their own salvation
 - f. Peter needed a savior - Peter didn't have the ability to stay with Jesus, he needed Jesus to go to the cross to give him that ability - there's a great promise wrapped up in here as well because Jesus says that after they all fall away, on the other side of the cross Jesus will gather them again - But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.
 - g. Peter needed a savior, all of the disciples did - they couldn't really follow Jesus until Jesus had gone to the cross
2. So the cross stands and declares that the efforts of men are insufficient
 - a. Our efforts, our purposes, our declarations that we will serve God, that we will do well enough, that we will be good enough for God are as worthless as Peter's declaration
 - b. We are insufficient to the task, we are desperately needy, on our own we will always fall away because we are mired in sin and destruction - we need Jesus to rescue us - the cross is infinitely sufficient and it is infinitely necessary to us, we are so woefully insufficient to our need

☀ C. The cross was seal of a New Covenant

1. Both of the prophecies alluded to or quoted in this section point us to one thing: the New Covenant
- ★2. Starting with the second prophecy quoted in Matthew 26:31 out of Zechariah 13:7-9 - *"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me," declares the LORD of hosts. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones. In the whole land, declares the LORD, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive. And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"*
 - a. The prophecy speaks of a time of judgment when the chief shepherd is cut off and the flock is dispersed
 - b. There will be a time of tribulation, of fire, but the end result will be the purification of God's people
 - c. Zechariah is speaking against the prevalent idolatry of his day, but he sees a day when idolatry will be destroyed, the faithlessness of God's people will be dealt with and abolished - two thirds will be cut off and perish, but one third will be left alive and the one third will be refined as silver and gold
 - d. God's people are not faithful to the covenant, but they will be made faithful - the people of God are not worthy to be God's people, but they will be made worthy
- ★3. And then the first prophecy alluded to in Matthew 26:28 out of Jeremiah 31:31-34 - *"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."*
 - a. The faithlessness of God's people, the problem seen by all of the prophets, including Zechariah, could only be cured by making a better covenant with God's people - a covenant that not only betrothed God's people to God, but also provided for God's people to be worthy to be God's people
 - b. A New Covenant needed to be made, a covenant that would:
 - i. Put God's law in the hearts of God's people
 - ii. Fulfill the heart of the previous covenant, *"I will be their God, and they shall be my people."*
 - iii. Cause God's people to know God personally
 - iv. Provide a means for washing away the sin of God's people
 - c. These were all things the first covenant had failed to do and without these things, God's people could never truly be God's people - if God's kingdom was to truly be inaugurated in this world, a better covenant was needed
4. And, as we approach the cross, Matthew wants us to see Jesus' death as fulfilling these promises
 - a. Jesus' death would be the striking of the shepherd that would end with purified sheep, Jesus' death would be the seal of a New Covenant that would wash away sin, enliven new hearts, and fulfill the covenant promise
 - b. God's people aren't worthy to enter the kingdom, God's people are sufficient to enter the kingdom, God's people need a savior, but Jesus would be sufficient to bring these things about
 - c. Jesus is going to the cross to provide the blood of a better covenant - a more powerful covenant sealed by an infinitely more valuable blood - a covenant that was sufficient for God's people
 - ★d. For once there had been blood of the covenant, Exodus 24:8 - *And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."*
 - ★e. But now there would be a better covenant, Hebrews 13:20-21 - *Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*