

Matthew 26b

What did Jesus predict next (v. 31)? That the disciples would desert Him very soon—that very night. They would all "fall away" (have a lapse in their faith) because of what would happen to Him. They still did not understand that the Messiah must die. By quoting Zechariah 13:7, where Zechariah prophesied that the Shepherd would be struck down and the sheep scattered.....Jesus was telling them again that He would die, and that their scattering from Him was something within God's sovereign plan. This did not excuse their failure, but it prepared them for it and helped them to recover from it.¹

What promise did Jesus offer (v. 32)? Jesus assured the disciples that He would meet them in Galilee after His resurrection. He would be waiting for them when they arrived. This promise assured them that He would not abandon them.

How did Peter reply (v. 33)? He strongly reacted against the idea that he would desert Jesus. Peter affirmed he would never deny the Lord, even if all the others did. Peter was ready to suffer martyrdom with Jesus, but he was unprepared for Jesus' voluntary, self-sacrifice on the cross.

How did Jesus respond (v. 34)? Despite Peter's claim to remain faithful to Jesus, Jesus predicted that Peter would deny Him three times that very night before the crowing of the rooster in the early morning..

Then Peter said what (v. 35)? Still protesting his loyalty, Peter insisted that he would die with Christ rather than deny Him. All the disciples chimed in their agreement. They were sincere; they meant what they said. It was just that they didn't know their own hearts.²

Where did Jesus lead His disciples next (vv. 36-37)? To the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus told eight of the eleven disciples with Him to sit and wait, then took Peter, James and John deeper into the garden. These three formed the inner circle of Jesus' most trusted disciples.

What did He say to them (v. 38)? *Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."* Jesus meant that He felt agony and painful grief so deeply that He sensed that it would almost kill Him

Experiencing grief to the point of distress and trouble such as He had never known in His earthly life, He asked the three disciples to stay and keep watch with Him. In this hour of His greatest need the Lord wanted those with a sympathetic understanding to stay close by with Him.³

"No man, in sinful and mortal flesh, can understand the conflict in the holy soul of Jesus who had never experienced the slightest shadow of sin and had never known any barrier between Himself and the Father."⁴

Going a little farther into the garden, what did Jesus pray (v. 39)? Separating Himself then from the three, He prayed, *"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."*

The "cup" refers to God's wrath. Jesus undoubtedly had in mind His coming separation from the Father (27:46) and His coming contact with sin as He *became* sin for mankind (2 Corinthians 5:21). The significant thing about this prayer, however, was that the Lord submitted His will to the will of His Father.⁵ Above all else He wanted His Father's will to reign.

What happened when he returned to the disciples (vv. 40-41)? When Jesus returned to the three, He found them asleep. He awakened them and reprimanded Peter (not the three) for his inability to bear with Him in prayer.

Jesus urged them to remain spiritually alert and to continue praying for strength to withstand the temptation that He had told them was coming (vv. 31-35).

When He went away a second time, what did He pray (v. 42)? Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, again expressing the same attitude of submission to the Father's will. He recognized that the cup (cf. v. 39) could not pass away unless He "drank" fully of it. He would drink the cup of suffering and death to the dregs.

When He returned to His disciples for the second time, what were they doing (vv. 43-44)? The three disciples were sound asleep again, but this time He did not wake them. A third time, He went away and prayed the same prayer.

When Jesus returned to the disciples the third time, what did He say to them (vv. 45-46)? He awakened them with the news that His betrayer was coming and they must go meet him.

While He was still speaking with the disciples, what happened (v. 47)? A large crowd sent by the religious leaders came to arrest Jesus. They probably thought that they were going to have to contend with at least eleven frightened and belligerent disciples, if not more people. The large group was probably considered necessary to make sure Jesus did not get away (Luke 4:28-30; John 8:59).

What prior arrangement had Judas made with the religious leaders (v 48)? Judas would use a kiss as the sign to help the mob distinguish Jesus from His disciples. Judas needed to identify Jesus because it was dark and because, even though many people knew about Jesus, far fewer had really seen Him up close. Judas turned the symbol of love, a kiss, into a symbol of hypocritical betrayal with his action.

When Judas kissed Jesus and the men seized Him, what happened in the next moment (vv. 50-51)? One of Jesus' disciples grabbed his sword and attempted to defend Jesus by striking out at those in the arresting group. He struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. John identifies the disciple as Peter (John 18:10).

How did Jesus respond (v. 52-54)? The Lord immediately stopped the violence and reprimanded Peter for his efforts. He did not need anyone's defense, for He could have called on His Father who would have sent twelve legions of angels to defend Him. But that would only have frustrated the divine program. The Scriptures predicting His betrayal, suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection had to be fulfilled.⁶

What did Jesus say to the crowd (vv. 55-56)? He asked them why they had come out in this manner to arrest Him. He had been in their midst daily, teaching in the temple courts; arrest had been possible at any time. Obviously, these religious leaders feared the people's acknowledgment of Him. But the will of the Father was being fulfilled as well as the writings of the prophets who spoke of His death.⁷

At that point what did the disciples do (v. 56)? All the disciples deserted Him and fled into the night—though they had vowed they would never do so (vv. 33, 35). The sheep were scattering (v. 31).⁸ By abandoning Jesus, the disciples fulfilled one of these prophecies, as Jesus had predicted (cf. v. 31; Zechariah 13:7).

¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Matthew, 2025 Edition (published by Sonic Light), 673.

² William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1302.

³ Louis A. Barbieri Jr., "Matthew," The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Victor Books, 1985), 83.

⁴ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Matthew, 2025 Edition (published by Sonic Light), 675.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1304.

⁷ Louis A. Barbieri Jr., "Matthew," The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Victor Books, 1985), 85.

⁸ Ibid.