**VOLUME 7; CHAPTER 13 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THE SON OFMAN - DELIVERED UP by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*The Son of Man is delivered up to be crucified.*

*Matthew 26:2*

THE FIRST THIRTY VERSES OF THIS CHAPTER ARE CHARACTERIZED by contrast, by conflict, and yet by a strange and arresting co-operation. We are in the vestibule of the Holy Place of the sacrifice of the ages. The air is heavy with the electric sense of approaching storm; yet it seems so still, and clear, that we hear and see acutely, and things commonly veiled are startlingly revealed as we read these wonderful words. Let us attempt, then, reverently to listen and to watch. Our theme is the story of the whole paragraph, the keynote is the text. In these words of our Lord, spoken to His disciples, we have His introductory declaration to everything that was now to follow in the mission of the King. Let us first examine the words, and then the whole scene in their light.

It is well that we should remind ourselves in the first place of the occasion on which our Lord uttered these particular words. Matthew is careful to tell us, "It came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these words." The declaration followed immediately on the Olivet prophecy which is recorded for us in chapters twenty-four and twenty-five of this particular Gospel.

In order that we may come the more readily and the more accurately into the atmosphere necessary for the understanding of these words of Jesus, it may be well to recall that prophecy and its setting.

The loneliness of Jesus at this time was very pronounced. The Olivet prophecies were uttered to His disciples in answer to an inquiry, which inquiry resulted from things He had been saying to the rulers of the people in those last days in which He had definitely and finally rejected the Hebrew nation, for the time being, from the position which they had occupied in the economy of God. When Jesus uttered the prophecy on Olivet He had been rejected by His own nation, and He had rejected them. Solemn words had passed His lips: "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." A sad and awful wail had passed those selfsame lips: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." He was strangely alone. A group of men were gathered round about Him, His own disciples, those whom, having loved, He loved unto the end, and that in spite of their failure to understand Him. But they were unenlightened, were entirely unable to apprehend the profoundest passion of His heart, or the things that He was saying to them. There He sat on Olivet's slope, outside the city of His love, surrounded by a few men utterly unable to come near to Him in the deepest and profoundest things of His spiritual life.

And yet I pray you observe His dignity, His authority, the glory of His outlook, the assurance of His words, the unfaltering courage and confidence of every sentence that He uttered, He was looking on, far beyond the immediate surroundings, His glance encompassing the centuries that lay ahead, and the millenniums. He had been thinking of the ages yet to come in the economy of God for this world; and as He uttered His prophecy we are amazed at the clarity of His vision; but more amazed at His assumption of authority, and His absolute certainty of victory. He speaks of things immediate, and then of things nigh at hand, of the destruction of Jerusalem and strange experiences through which friends and foes alike would pass in the coming days, until, at last, in a passage which, if I may reverently say such a thing of the Lord, was characterized by singular majesty and beauty of diction, He drew a picture of all nations being gathered before Him, and He alone the Arbitrator of their destinies, finding His verdicts, passing His sentences.

Such was the Olivet prophecy. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these words, He said, Ye know that after two days is the feast of passover, and the Son of Man is delivered up to be crucified." With set intention, as verily believe, Matthew thus emphasized the occasion on which these particular words passed the lips of our Lord. As we have seen in recent studies in this Gospel of Matthew - perhaps almost monotonously to some people - a great change passed over the method of Jesus' ministry at Caesarea Philippi. From the moment in which the great confession was made, He commenced to speak of the Cross; returning to the subject again and yet again, it ran through His teaching, saturating and ever permeating all His thinking.

On Olivet's slopes having uttered His prophecy, suddenly, startlingly, He recalled them to the thing He had been speaking of through all those months, but with a new emphasis, declaring no longer that it is necessary that these things should be, but that the hour had come. "The Son of Man is delivered up to be crucified."

Now let us try to understand what our Lord really meant when He said this. In the Authorized Version the text reads: "Ye know that after two days the passover cometh, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified." Let me immediately clear the ground by saying that I consider that to be not merely a mistranslation, but a very misguiding mistranslation.

I shall ask you to observe a word and a tense in this statement of Jesus. The word is now rendered, "delivered up." Taken in its simplicity, as the men would undoubtedly take it who heard Him utter it, the word simply means to be given into the hands of a person. It does not in itself suggest either faithfulness or faithlessness. It may describe an act of treachery, but it may describe an act of trust. To deliver up, to deliver over, to surrender, to yield to a certain person, or to a certain set of circumstances, whether in the keeping of faith, or by its violation, whether traitorously, or trustfully, does not appear in the word itself. Therefore we must interpret the word according to its setting, according to the whole movement in the midst of which we find it.

In the next place, let us observe a tense. "The Son of Man is delivered up." Here there is no question. Grammarians will all be in agreement with me when I say that this is the simple statement. There is no difference of opinion, no quarrel about manuscripts. Here we have undoubtedly the accurate word. "The Son of Man is delivered up." Now, as a matter of fact, at the moment when Jesus said this He was perfectly free; as a matter of fact, at the moment - I speak entirely within the limitations of the moment and the human - He could have escaped. He was not arrested. It would have been perfectly easy for Him to do what His disciples had urged Him to do again and yet again; in the quiet silence of the night He might have left Jerusalem. It is perfectly true, as we shall see, that men everywhere were plotting for His arrest, that one of His own number was in the intrigue, but at the moment He was not arrested, He was free.

The difficulty has been recognized by expositors, and I find that one has suggested that He used the present tense for the future, and another that He used the full relative present, as though He had said, "The Son of Man is being delivered up." But you will immediately see that all this is gratuitous. He said, "The Son of Man is delivered up," and I abide by the thing He said, that which was simply and actually true at the moment when He said it. As yet not apprehended, as yet not within the final meshes that were being woven around Him by His enemies, He saw all the future clearly, and He spoke with quiet, calm assurance. Speaking first within the terms of a calendar with which they were familiar, He said, "Ye know that after two days the passover cometh," and then, "The Son of Man is delivered up." That was not the full relative present in the sense of meaning "is being delivered up." That was not the careless affirmation of a speaker who described the future in the terms of the present. That was the statement of One Who spoke in that eternal present which was the tense of His deepest nature and His profoundest life. That was the statement of One Who had already said to His enemies, "Before Abraham was, I am," thus putting into contrast the past tense of the founder of the nation, with the ever-present tense of His own consciousness, and claiming that His own abiding consciousness antedated the past experience of the founder.

And He made use of exactly the same tense when, after the Olivet prophecies, He said to the group of disciples who were with Him, in the shadow of the impending Cross, "The Son of Man is delivered up to be crucified."

And yet it is perfectly evident that our Lord was now drawing their attention to the fact that the actual crucifixion was imminent. That was the accommodation of the eternal present of His own consciousness to the tenses of their consciousness. He spoke to them because the eternal was merging into the temporal; that which was abidingly true in His own consciousness, from the standpoint to which we shall come in a moment, was now about to become patiently, observantly, historically true. In that declaration He indicated to them the fact that the deliverance which was the initiation of their own national history, and of which the passover was but a shadow, was about to be fulfilled. The eternal fact in the Being of God, adumbrated in the passover for the sake of the people that He would make, was now to be wrought out into actual visibility and accomplishment in the history of the world.

This was no mere passing intuition, foretelling something that was about to happen. It was a profound declaration that the thing which is in the divine economy was now to become visible in human history, "The Son of Man is delivered up."

During His life He had spoken of the final hour on more than one occasion in the tenses of human consciousness. And more than once those who understood Him best, especially John, drew attention to the fact that our Lord said to men, "Mine hour is not yet come." John, writing of Him, said, "No man took Him; because His hour was not yet come." At the wedding feast Jesus said to His mother, "Mine hour is not yet come." It is a most superficial exposition which declares He could not work the miracle, for He did work it immediately. There was profound meaning in His answer even when she - dear, sweet soul, highly favored of God, and forever to be held in regard by the sons of men, the Virgin Mother - was desirous of precipitating some manifestation of His power in order to further the accomplishment of His Mission, He said, "Mine hour is not yet come."

From that first utterance and throughout the ministry of Jesus the same declaration is found, but He was ever speaking in the terms of human experience. To Herod He sent this message: "Go, and say to that fox, Behold, I cast out devils and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I am perfected." That was His Word to the man who would fain have ended His ministry for very fear of Him, or for fear of his own sin. In it Jesus declared that the perfecting hour, the ultimate hour, the strangely mysterious hour on the dial of time, in which eternity would express itself in the terms of redemption, was not yet come. It was postponed until, His public ministry ended, the Olivet prophecy uttered, He quietly said to His disciples, "After two days the passover cometh, and the Son of Man is delivered up to be crucified." In the terms of human thought, He was on the eve of being delivered up; in the economy of God, He is delivered up.

It was language which revealed the voluntary nature of the sacrifice of the Son of God. It was language expressive of the great volition; it was language that defied all the attempts that His enemies were making to arrest Him! In effect, He Who sat in the heavens, laughed, and had in derision the men who were set against His anointed! And the laughter and derision of God were born of the fact that through the processes of their opposition He was marching to their salvation, and to their ultimate redemption!

There came a day when a man who saw Him, and gave himself to Him, and became His great Apostle to the Gentiles, with his own hand wrote, or to his amanuensis dictated, these words, "Who loved me, and gave Himself up for Me." The word there rendered "gave" is the same Greek word as the word here translated "delivered up." He loved me, and delivered up Himself for me. He was delivered, not by Judas, not by the priests, not by the rulers, not by the Roman procurator, but by the infinite, overwhelming, all-compelling passion of the heart of God.

Thus the little incidents of time and space, and of human calendars and almanacs are lost, and in the vestibule of the Holy Place of the sacrifice of the ages we hear the Master say, "The Son of Man is delivered up to be crucified."

Reverently we now turn back to the whole paragraph, that we may survey the scene or scenes in the light of that declaration. Let us spend one moment in noticing a matter of chronological order in this chapter. In the first five verses we have a story, which is continued at verse seventeen. Verses six to sixteen constitute an interpolation, something that the evangelist wrote here, not in chronological order but for the purpose of explaining something else that he was about to write. This great declaration of Jesus was made two days before the passover. John in his Gospel, giving an account of this selfsame event in the house of Simon, says it was six days before passover. Consequently, the things recorded from verse six to sixteen happened four days before Jesus made the declaration we have considered.

Now I take up my Testament and look at two little words. In verse six, "When Jesus was in Bethany," and I run on to verse fourteen, and "Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot." Then it is seen that the two incidents are joined together. First, Mary, with her alabaster cruse of ointment, and then Judas, with his intrigue and his plotting. With that chronological order in view I go back to my first five verses and once again I notice two little words. In verse one, "When Jesus had finished all these words"; and in verse three, "Then were gathered together the chief priests." Thus once more I am face to face with two things happening simultaneously. Jesus was talking to His disciples, and He said, "After two days the passover cometh, and the Son of Man is delivered up to be crucified." While He was saying that, at the very hour, Caiaphas and the priests and the rulers were planning to arrest Him, and they said, "Not at the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people." In chronological order, the last thing is the feast, the final passover in the old economy, the first passover in the new, the transference by act of Jesus of the ancient passover to the new feast.

Such are the scenes. It will readily be seen that I cannot, and it is not necessary for my present purpose that I should, deal with any one of these in detail. But for a few moments let us by the help of God's Holy Spirit move back into the midst of them. The feast in Bethany, the aroma of the ointment that filled the room, the criticism of Judas, the speculation of the disciples! Then the Olivet discourse in the interval between other matters! Then our Lord uttering these great words, while somewhere priests were plotting to arrest Him! I say let us try to get into the atmosphere of it all!

If we watch, I think that the first matter to impress us - let me put it from the standpoint of personal experience - the first matter that has impressed my soul in the reading of this paragraph is that of the wonderfully strange co-operation that is manifest. God in Himself and through His Son is seen moving toward the Cross, the Son declaring that He is delivered up to be crucified; according to a Pentecostal interpretation, the Son delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. On the other hand, Satan in himself and through his children, through those to whom Jesus had but recently said, "Ye are of your father the devil," who "was a murderer from the beginning," and "a liar, and the father thereof," - Satan, through his children, moving toward the Cross, determined that it should be erected, plotting for it. Then, back in those earlier days, Mary at Bethany preparing Him for His burial, with the keen intuition of the heart of a woman seeing the shadows on His face more clearly than others saw, desiring to do something that would tell Him she saw and understood, breaking all the bounds of prudence as she poured the spikenard on feet and head, preparing Him, as He said, for His burial. And Judas, going to the priest, saying, What will you give me? plotting for His death.

Now, is not all this in itself strange and arresting? Heaven, and earth, and hell, all at work against each other, toward one end and purpose. The strangest of all conflicts, and yet the most marvelous of all co-operations. God, in the Person of His Son, moving toward the Cross, arranging for it; Satan, expressing himself through his emissaries, moving toward the Cross, arranging for it; Mary, sweet and tender lover of the Lord, anointing Him for burial; Judas, base, a master traitor, sacrificing his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. God and Satan, Mary and Judas, co-operating toward the Cross. It is the wonder of all wonders, one of the most amazing pictures in the New Testament!

Then, when I have observed this strange and wonderful co-operation, I look again, and the conflict is as self-evident as is the co-operation. Beneath all the things which are, after all, on the surface I discover a conflict, a conflict of intention, a conflict of method, and when I come to the human level, a conflict of attitude. On the higher level I see spiritual forces in antagonism. God Himself, Who is a Spirit, and the spirits of evil in conflict of intention.

What is the Divine intention? As God in His Son moves toward the Cross, my inquiry may be answered by the simplest of all statements, but verily there is none better. The divine intention is at all costs to save men. What was the intention of Satan as he moved toward the Cross? It was the intention at all costs to destroy the Saviour. Thus we see two opposing purposes of the universe concerning humanity, moving to the same goal, but with an entirely different intention. God set upon saving men at all costs, Satan set upon the destruction of the Saviour.

When I come into the realm of that which is more visible and more patent, I have again a striking revelation of conflict of method. Jesus said, "After two days the passover cometh, and the Son of Man is delivered up to be crucified." The priests and the elders said Not at the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people. Notice the conflict of method, in what it reveals of the underlying principles and purposes. Begin with the priests. Not at the feast. Why not? It was the language of temporizing policy: We mean to kill Him, but we must be careful. Not at the feast; there will be an uproar! There you have a revelation of the whole genius of that which is common in government and authority, the whole genius of that which renders a people distressed, scattered, undone; the whole genius of that against which Jesus Himself had flung Himself with almost relentless fury in His teaching. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." That is the genius of all false government, a policy which temporizes, is affected only by temporal concerns, and temporal interests.

Over against that is the language of Jesus, the voice of God. At the passover. And why at the passover? Because in all His appointments of feasts and fasts, of ceremonies and rituals, in the ancient economy, there had been profound and eternal significance; and now, with the finest delicacy of fulfilment, God kisses His symbol into actuality, and the actual, ultimate, final passover in human history shall be accomplished at the hour of the passover among the people to which it had symbolized things yet to be. On the one hand, the mastery of eternal principle; on the other, subservience to temporal policy.

And once more, and now we are on another level, we are among our own kith and kin; we are simply looking at humanity, no longer at the conflict as between God and Satan, no longer at the conflict as between Jesus, the Shepherd King of true and final authority, and the false rulers of the people; no longer at the conflict as between principle and government, but at a conflict of attitudes between human beings in the presence of the one great Lord and Master and Saviour of humanity. Mary and Judas; lavish expenditure and selfish economy! But you say these things are too small in the light of such vast things! What is an alabaster cruse of ointment in the presence of all these infinite things? What is the opinion of the man who holds the bag about what ought to have been done with the nard in the presence of the infinite things? The small things of all human lives are the sacramental symbols of the great. Nothing is small.

No lily-muffed hum of a summer bee,

But finds some coupling with the spinning stars.

Right in the midst of the vast things of eternity, breaking out through the speech of the Son of God, behold the two human attitudes which stand forevermore in contrast. Lavish expenditure for very love, improvident pouring out in a tribute of adoration of the most costly things! That is Mary. On the other hand, selfish calculating economy! That is Judas. These things are revealed in the vestibule approaching the Holy Place where the sacrifice of the ages is to be offered.

But there is one more contrast. I leave the first paragraph, and the second which chronologically is first, and I come to the passover itself and to the feast. And I ask you in all quietness and solemnity, and I shall use as few words as I know how, to look at the contrast. Behold Judas at the passover and Jesus at the passover. Incarnate evil sitting as a guest, receiving the hospitality of Jesus, while all the time in possession of the blood money of the Son of God, maintaining hypocrisy to the end by asking, "Is it I, rabbi?" That defies exposition.

Incarnate love, sitting with the betrayer, suddenly breaking out into thanksgiving, in prospect of the suffering which should make possible the saving even of Judas, if Judas will but trust Him. That is the ultimate contrast of the scene.

Let our final thought center on the conflict. God, determined on the Cross in order to save men; Satan, determined on the Cross in order to destroy the Saviour! My question seems almost irreverent - I pause, and yet I must put it. Who won? If Christ rose not, then I am of all men most pitiable. If Christ rose not, God failed, and Satan won. I greet you! He rose, and I cannot end this meditation in the vestibule save as I recognize that there flashes back upon it all the light of the resurrection morning. And by that sign and token I know that God won!

Ah! how those words follow me. Some of my nearest friends will be tired of hearing me repeat them, but I cannot help it:

One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word!

In that conflict it was the Word Who was victorious, and not the old systems. There sin and grace came to grips, and not grace was destroyed, but sin. The victory was with the Son of God.

All this is more than history. "The Son of Man is delivered up," not at this moment, on this day of our calendar, delivered up by sin to death, in order that sin may live; but delivered up by God to death, in order that sin may die, and men may live.

The final question is not whether we are with the priests desiring to slay Him, or with God detemined that He shall die. That is not the question at all. That is settled. We have agreed with the priests and sinned; we have consented to His dying by our sin.

The question now is what shall we as sinners do in the presence of the death which He accomplished, and the word "accomplished" can be used only of it, because beyond the death was the resurrection? What shall I do with this death? Shall I trust it, or shall I spurn it? Upon my answer to that question will depend - because I have heard the evangel, because I have stood under the shadow of His Cross - my relation to God through the ages that are to come.

Then be it mine to say, So help me God, so help me God,

I take, Oh, Cross, thy shadow

For my abiding place;

Content to let the world go by,

To know no gain or loss -

My sinful self my only shame,

My glory all the Cross.