

Rediscovering Jesus in the Jewish Gospels

The Plot, The Precious Ointment, and the Price of Betrayal

Lesson 49 Matthew 26

Timeline Review

Examining the number of things Jesus did and taught in just four days (96 hours) from Palm Sunday until Passover on Wednesday evening is staggering. The New Testament devotes 18 chapters to this last week recorded in chapters 21-26 of Matthew; 11-14 of Mark; 19-22 of Luke; and 13-17 of John. It is eye opening to the Jewish person, who has been taught that the New Testament is an anti-Jewish book, that 20% of the content of the four Gospels is devoted to the Jewish Passover Seder. In fact, two prominent Jewish scholars from Hebrew University in Jerusalem have identified the Gospels as the most ancient texts containing a detailed description of the Jewish Passover Seder dinner.ⁱ Jewish writings containing details of the Passover Seder do not appear in the Talmud until hundreds of years after the first century New Testament writings.

In the chronology of the life of Christ, entitled 72 Steps from Glory to Glory, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* lists the events of the Passion Week of Jesus from Palm Sunday through the Passover/Last Supper as Step #51. ⁱⁱ The ministry accomplishments performed by Jesus include His 34th & 35th recorded miracles, 6 prophetic predictions #'s 30-35, 7 parable #'s 32 - 38, 2 sermons #'s 13 & 14, 2 prayers #'s 12 & 13. Wilmington references the following passages. (Matthew 21:8-23:9; 24:1-42; 25:1-46; 26:1-5, 14-30; Mark 11:8- 13:37; 14:1,2,10-25; Luke 12:11,12; 13:34,35; 19:36-20:8, 20-40, 45-47; 21:1-38; 22:2-34; John 12:12)

According to John 12, Jesus arrived in Bethany six days before Passover. Since he ate supper in Bethany with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, his arrival at the latest would have been on Thursday. This meal couldn't have been on a Friday evening, because the guests from the city of Jerusalem would have to travel home before the gates were closed at sundown on Friday in preparation for Sabbath. The distance from Bethany to Jerusalem was more than the maximum allowable "Sabbath day's journey" (Acts 1:12) of 2000 cubits approximately 2/3rds of a mile or about 1 kilometer.ⁱⁱⁱ John says many other Jews had come to this home to see Lazarus who had been raised from the dead. Dinner guests from further than a Sabbath day's journey would have had to spend the night where they took their Sabbath meal. Furthermore, if this was a Sabbath supper, then it would certainly have been noted in the text as (δεῖπνον-deipnon- Greek word for supper), that is, the chief meal (usually in the evening). This is not a *Shabbot* meal, but rather it was a special dinner in honor of Jesus who had raised their brother from the dead. A Shabbot Meal was to honor the Lord of the Sabbath. When defending His disciples picking grain on the Sabbath, Jesus claimed to be the "Lord of the Sabbath day" (Matthew 12:8, Luke 6:5). The Pharisees viewed Jesus at best as a self-proclaimed Rabbi who did not properly enforce the Sabbath, and at worst, a Sabbath violator himself. They did not consider him to be God – Elohim, the Lord – Adonai. No Sabbath was to be dedicated to the honor of even the greatest of Rabbis – Moses. Paul the former Pharisee refers to God the Father as "Lord of the Sabaoth" (Romans 8:29). Jesus' arrival in Bethany on Thursday according to John's time marker "six days before Passover" avoids the Sabbath timing conflict. Starting the count on the next day (Friday) would place the Passover beginning at sundown on Wednesday. This places Jesus' arrest on Wednesday night and His crucifixion on Thursday. This would meet the minimum "heart of the earth" three-day/three-night prophecy of the period between Jesus' death and resurrection (Matthew 12:40).

This accounting places His death at 3 pm on Thursday and His resurrection by 6 am Sunday. This timetable puts His body in the grave for 63 hours which is 9 hours short of the 72 hours/three days and three nights. How then does a Thursday crucifixion account for the shortfall of the full 72 hours "three nights"? The best explanation is using the Jewish partial

day theory for that partial day, which refers to a fractional part of a day or night as one day and one night. Therefore, nine hours short of three days and three nights is not a problem. In the Friday Crucifixion traditional theory, the partial day theory breaks down for never is the partial day theory expanded to make 1.5 days or 2 days and 2 nights equal to 3 days and nights. While some evidence in Jewish writings allows for a part of a day to be referred to as an entire day, nowhere can it be found in calculating two nights to equal three.

David recorded a prophecy of Messiah's death in which God said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell nor suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Psalm 16:10). Also, when considering God's predominant attribute as mercy, it's worth noting that David recorded a prophecy of Messiah's death in which God said, "You will not leave my soul in Hell, nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption" (Psalm 16:10).

God shortening the 72 hours out of mercy, having made the soul of Jesus an "efficacious" "offering for sin," does not violate the requirement of the substitutionary death and burial of His anointed Messiah. Nor is it outside of the realm of His omnipotence to completely satisfy His justice in less than the full 72 hours. Speaking of God's characteristic mercy in the future 7-year Tribulation known to Jews as "the time of Jacob's trouble" Paul says, "For he will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Romans 9:28). Jesus had just taught that God would in mercy "shorten those days" lest "no flesh" survive, but "for the elect's sake" those days should be shortened. The Jewish remnant of believers in the end days just prior to His second coming to earth are the elect. The point being that if God can shorten the terrible Day of the Lord for the "elect's sake" then would He do less for His "Anointed's" sake? The Apostle Paul speaking in Antioch said "I will give you the sure mercies of David. . . he saith also in another *psalm*, thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Acts 13:34,35). A Thursday crucifixion and a pre-dawn Sunday resurrection falling 9 hours short of 72 is not a problem, however a Friday crucifixion and a pre-dawn Sunday resurrection being a day and a half short of the three days and three nights prophecy has theologically problematic calculations, namely that it would mean that Jesus failed His own sign test challenge.

There is also a problem with a Wednesday crucifixion in addition to the shorter time to accomplish all the works and teachings of Jesus that are listed above. There is the problem of the decay of the corpse after death. This was prophesied of the Messiah's death, "Thou wilt not ALLOW THINE Holy One to see corruption" which indicates the probability that the entombment would be cut short before His body could see corruption. A Wednesday crucifixion would have His body in the grave (3.75 days) 15 hours past the 72-hour point at which decomposition was thought to begin. Remember Martha said of Lazarus on the fourth day "by this time he stinketh" (John 11:39). A Friday crucifixion only gives two nights and one day for Jesus to be in the heart of the earth between his last breath and His first resurrection breath. In conclusion, holding onto a Friday crucifixion dependent on the partial day theory strains credibility by making two nights (Friday and Saturday) equal to three nights. Both Wednesday and Friday crucifixion scenarios pose problems. Thursday is the only viable option and can be easily determined by Jesus' arrival in Bethany six days before Passover, as the text states.

In the previous chapters Jesus had condemned the religious leaders of Judaism in Jerusalem with several parables and then outright denounced their unbelief with seven woes and a final condemnation.

"That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." (Matthew 23:35,36)

He wept over the fate of Jerusalem "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matthew 23:37- 39)

The Plot to Have Jesus Killed (26:1-5;)

The plot began right after Jesus was anointed in the home of Simon in Bethany (Mark 14:1, 12) “after two days is the Passover.” A Wednesday Passover eve would have put their official meeting to plot after their rebuke of Him for the crowds praising Him as Messiah on Palm Sunday. They would not have met on the Sabbath.

Sanhedrin

Chief Priests and Elders constituted the Sanhedrin

The Sanhedrin (in Greek means ‘a sitting together’ or ‘council’) was the supreme council of the Jews who met within Jerusalem’s temple in a place known as the chamber of hewn stones (although they sometimes met in the house of the High Priest). The Sanhedrin was like the U.S. Supreme court in that they were the final authority on decisions that affected the religious and political life of all Jews.

In New Testament times, the Sanhedrin was composed of seventy-one members (the High Priest, a vice chief justice and sixty-nine general members). Only chief priests, elders, and scribes were eligible to sit on the council. They are variously referred to as “the chief priests, the elders, and all the council” (Matthew 26:3 and 59) and the “chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people.”

Jesus gave his sharpest sermon to them; “Woe unto you, Scribes, Pharisees, Lawyers” (Luke 11).

This group was the driving force that insured Jesus was betrayed, falsely arrested, falsely accused, unjustly judged, and condemned to a death on the cross. It was the members of the council who bribed Judas Iscariot with thirty pieces of silver to betray Jesus (Matthew 26:14-16). It was they who, contrary to Jewish law, had Jesus arrested without a formal accusation of wrongdoing. (Deuteronomy 19:15).

The Precious Ointment No Contradiction Two anointings

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Bethany at Passover week	*	*		*
Capernaum early ministry			*	
John the Baptist still alive			* 7:40	
Home of Simon the leper				*
Home of Simon the Pharisee	*	*		
Spikenard			* 7:20-28	
Alabaster Box poured	* 26:7		* 7:38	*
Alabaster box broken		*		
300 pence	“Sold for much”	* 14:3		
Mary		*	* Magdaline 8:1	*
Lazarus & Martha present				*
Story will be a memorial	*	*		
Sinful woman			*	
Anointed head	*	*		
Anointed feet	*	*		*
Room filled with odor				* 12:3

Judas upset	*	*		*
For my burial	*	*		*
Chief Priests plotted	*	*		*

(26:8) The disciples had indignation. Judas spoke up. John wrote: “This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief and had the bag and bare what was put therein.” (John 12:6)

The Price of Betrayal (26:14-16)

Judas went to the chief priests asking how much they would give him for betraying Jesus.

“Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.” (Luke 22:3,4)

It is likely that they had first approached him prior to this feast. They covenanted with him for 30 pieces of silver.

He sought opportunity to betray him.

“And they were glad and covenanted to give him money. And he promised and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.” (Luke 22:5,6)

“But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.” (John 6:64)

The Antiochan Stater

A Tyrian shekel



“The word used in Matthew 26:15 (Greek - ἀργύρια, *argyria*) simply means "silver coins",^[10] and scholars disagree on the type of coins that would have been used. Donald Wiseman suggests two possibilities. They could have been tetradrachms of Tyre, usually referred to as Tyrian shekels (14 grams of 94% silver), or staters from Antioch (15 grams of 75% silver), which bore the head of Augustus.^[11] Alternatively, they could have been Ptolemaic tetradrachms (13.5 ± 1 g of 25% silver).^[12] There are 31.1035 grams per troy ounce. At spot valuation of \$28/oz in 2021, 30 "pieces" 30 pieces of silver is the price prophesied as well as the final purchase to be made with that silver.

“And I said unto them, if ye think good, give *me* my price; and if not, forbear. So, they weighed for my price thirty *pieces* of silver. And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty *pieces* of silver and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.” (Zech. 11:12,13)

He takes the coins and throws them "to the potter". Schilder notes that Zechariah's payment indicates an assessment of his worth, as well as his dismissal.^{[19](p 74)} In *Exodus* 21:32, 30 pieces of silver was the price of a slave. Zechariah calls the amount a “prised” – (Hebrew *yâqar yaw-kar'* - be precious, heavy, valuable) ^{iv}