

2 main purposes of this series: Authority of the Word. Harvest of souls.

Behold The Lamb: Final Days John 12:1-11 FBC Canton Sunday am March 8, 2026

Introduction: How would you spend your final week on the earth?

What would be the most important thing you could do?

Who would you spend time with? What would you want to say? What legacy would you want to leave in those final moments?

Even though this is Jesus final week, it was not the end of his ministry.

It was not the end because although he was fully man, he was also fully God.

a. **Six days before the Passover**: John gave a time marker, telling us that this was the last week before the death and burial of Jesus. Almost one-half of John's Gospel is given to this last week. Matthew used more than 33% of his Gospel to cover that week, Mark nearly 40% and Luke over 25% — to **seven days** of Jesus' entire life.

I. Not just a Passover, but the Passover. V. 1-3, Exodus 12. Six days before the Passover would have been Nisan 8. This was just before the lamb was taken into the home on the 10th.

a. Calendar proves priorities.

i. Miraculous places. John 11

ii. Jesus people:

1. Martha served, a doer.

2. What would you ask Lazarus?

3. Mary poured.

a. Very expensive offering. 300 denarii is 300 days of wages.

b. Very unusual offering. During the meal anointing.

c. Very humble offering. With her hair down.

d. Very fragrant. For the burial of Jesus.

i. Did she know his time was close?

ii. Or did she just do this because she knew someday he would die?

4. Disciples challenged to build them, not drain them.

II. The Almighty or the almighty dollar? V. 4-6, Matthew 6:24. Someone would betray Jesus, it did not have to be Judas, but it would be someone who was a friend, and who would get paid 30 pieces of silver. The only person who God said it would have been better not to be born was the one who betrayed Jesus. He said this because this person would be beyond redemption.

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

a. A friend will betray. Psalm 41:9

9 Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.

b. Money will be involved. Zechariah 11:12-14

12 Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain." So, they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. 13 And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter" — that princely price they set on me. So, I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter.

c. Those who serve the dollar are always complaining about others' excess.

- i. Because they don't trust there could be a different and better use of the dollar besides their own selfish reasons. FOR HIS BURIAL.
- ii. They complain because they want to control for their own purposes.

III. Burial comes after death. V. 7-8, I Corinthians 15:1-4 Because he was buried and then rose again, we will have real resurrection bodies when we rise. I Thessalonians 4:13-18

a. Fatal torment, not fainted.

- i. If he had not really died, why didn't any of his detractors claim that?
 1. They didn't...because they couldn't.

b. Empty Tomb, not wrong tomb.

- i. The detractors could not deny the tomb was empty, they could only make another excuse.
 1. Excuse is a thin line of reasoning with a whole lot of hot air.

c. Appearances, not hypnosis. John 20:26-27

26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" 27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

- i. 40 days, over 500 at once...no such thing as mass hypnosis.
- ii. Witnesses...first hand.

d. Transformation of disciples from scared to defiant. They died for these truths.

IV. Many come, but not all believe. V. 9-11

a. Signs create wonder and point to the Messiah. 7 "I am"

- i. Those who have been given life from death will be fought against. Lazarus was to be killed too...did they ever?

The 7 "I AM" Statements of Jesus From the Gospel of John ; NKJV

1. "I AM the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." 6:35
2. "I AM the Light of the World" 8:12
3. "I AM the Door" 10:7
4. "I AM the Good Shepherd" 10:11,14
5. "I AM the Resurrection and the Life" 11:25
6. "I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life" 14:6
7. "I AM the True Vine" 15:1

Conclusion: What is keeping you from believing?

David Guzik Study Guide for John 12

THE HOUR HAS COME

A. A dinner at Bethany.

1. ([John 12:1-2](#)) Lazarus eats and Martha serves.

Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.

a. **Six days before the Passover:** John gave a time marker, telling us that this was the last week before the death and burial of Jesus. Almost one-half of John's Gospel is given to this last week. Matthew used more than 33% of his Gospel to cover that week, Mark nearly 40% and Luke over 25% — to seven days of Jesus' entire life.

b. **There they made Him a supper:** Less than a week before His crucifixion, Jesus attended a dinner in Bethany, probably to celebrate the raising of Lazarus from the dead. With all Jesus had on His mind, knowing His fate as He came to Jerusalem for Passover, it is remarkable that He attended this dinner at all. Most would not feel like socializing.

i. "He would not pain His hosts by self-absorbed aloofness at the table. The reason for the feast is obviously the raising of Lazarus, as is suggested by his being twice mentioned in verses 1 and 2." (Maclaren)

ii. **There they made Him**: “The ‘therefore’ (which the A.V. omits) points to the gratitude for Lazarus’ restoration, which that household now showed by entertaining Him at supper.” (Trench)

c. **Martha served**: It seems that this dinner was at the home of Simon the Leper ([Matthew 26:6](#) and [Mark 14:3](#)). His friends Martha, Lazarus, and Mary were also in attendance. Because **Martha** seems to be the hostess, some think Simon the Leper was related to Mary, Martha, and Lazarus or even that he was Martha’s husband. If common customs were followed, this dinner was for the men of the village and Martha and the other women **served**.

i. It’s easy to see Martha in our imagination bringing the best dishes first to Jesus, pressing Him to eat more and more. She was so grateful and so happy to serve Jesus. Her service was appreciated and valued.

ii. “John does not state, as do Mark and Matthew, that the host at Bethany was Simon the leper. In the story of [Luke 7](#) the host, Simon the Pharisee, is almost certainly a different Simon from the one mentioned in Mark. Simon was a very common Jewish name.” (Tasker)

iii. “The only discrepancy of any consequence being that the Synoptists seem to place the feast only two days before the Passover. But they introduce the feast parenthetically to present the immediate motive of Judas’ action, and accordingly disregard strict chronology.” (Dods)

2. ([John 12:3](#)) Mary anoints the feet of Jesus.

Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

a. **Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus**: In the midst of the supper, Mary gave a remarkable gift to Jesus. It wasn’t unusual to wash the feet of a guest, but it was unusual to do it during the meal itself, to use **very costly oil of spikenard** to do it, and to **wipe the feet with her hair**, using the hair as a kind of towel.

- Mary’s gift was remarkably **humble**. When a guest entered the home, usually the guest’s feet were washed with water and the guest’s head was anointed with a dab of oil or perfume. Here, Mary used this precious ointment and **anointed the feet of Jesus**. She considered her precious ointment only good enough for His feet. “To attend to the feet was the task of the most lowly slave. Thus Mary’s action denoted great humility as well as great devotion.” (Morris)
- Mary’s gift was remarkably **extreme**. She used a lot (**a pound**) of a **very costly oil of spikenard**. Spices and ointments were often used as an investment because they were small, portable, and could be easily sold. Judas believed this oil was worth **300 denarii** ([John 12:5](#)), which was worth a year’s wages for a workingman.

- Mary's gift was remarkably **unselfconscious**. Not only did she give the gift of the expensive oil, she also **wiped His feet with her hair**. This means that she let down her hair in public, something a Jewish woman would rarely do.

i. **Oil of spikenard**: "Both John and Mark describe it by the adjective **pistikos** (**Mark 14:3**). Oddly enough, no one really knows what that word means. There are four possibilities. It may come from the adjective **pistos** which means **faithful** or **reliable**, and so may mean **genuine**. It may come from the verb **pinein** which means **to drink**, and so may mean **liquid**. It may be a kind of trade name, and may have to be translated simply **pistic nard**. It may come from a word meaning the **pistachio nut**, and be a special kind of essence extracted from it. In any event it was a specially valuable kind of perfume." (Barclay)

ii. "It was very costly, but it had not cost a penny too much now that it could be used upon **him**. There was a pound of it, but there was none too much for **him**. It was very sweet, but none too sweet for **him**." (Spurgeon)

iii. "The act is all the more striking in that a Jewish lady never unbound her hair in public. That apparently was a mark of loose morals. But Mary did not stop to calculate public reaction. Her heart went out to her Lord and she gave expression to something of her feelings in this beautiful and touching act." (Morris)

iv. In all of this, Mary is a study of devotion to Jesus. "The life of Mary is painted for us, in three memorable pictures, in each of which she is at the feet of Jesus." (Erdman)

- **Luke 10:39**: Mary sat at Jesus' feet and **learned**.
- **John 11:32**: Mary fell at Jesus' feet and **surrendered**.
- **John 12:3**: Mary anointed Jesus' feet and **honored** Jesus.

v. "You must sit at his feet, or you will never anoint them; he must pour his divine teaching into you, or you will never pour out a precious ointment upon him." (Spurgeon)

b. **The house was filled with the fragrance of the oil**: The sense of smell makes for long-lasting memories and John remembered how Mary's essential oils made the whole house smell good.

3. (**John 12:4-6**) Judas objects to Mary's rich gift.

Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

a. **Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him**: In a short time Judas would betray Jesus. His betrayal was so much darker when contrasted with the brightness of Mary's devotion

to Jesus. Judas probably objected to Mary's gift because he was shamed by her simple and powerful display of love.

i. This is the only place in the New Testament where Judas is mentioned as doing something evil other than his betrayal of Jesus, and even this was done in secret. Judas successfully hid the darkness of his heart from everyone except Jesus. Outward appearances often deceive. Many people have a religious facade that hides secret sin.

ii. "He would sell his very Saviour. And a fair match he made: for, as Austin saith, Judas sold his salvation, and the Pharisees bought their damnation." (Trapp)

b. **Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred, denarii:** This was an awkward scene. Then Judas broke the embarrassed silence with his sharp sense of financial values — but no appreciation of what God valued. He thought this was too much love and devotion to show to Jesus.

i. "Judas, blinded in self-interest, criticized her action, and so revealed himself as utterly opposed to the very spirit of the Lord Himself." (Morgan)

ii. The isn't this all a little much attitude of Judas was contagious. [Matthew 26:8](#) shows Judas was not alone in this objection. Others seem to have felt that Judas made some sense. "The shock of what they had seen must have caused a brief embarrassed silence, which was broken by one voice giving expression to the sentiments of many." (Bruce)

iii. Sometimes this thinking is twisted into a justification for all kinds of opulence and luxury, claiming that nothing is too good for Jesus — and in the twisting, for those who claim to serve Him. We notice that this was done directly for Jesus, not for any of the disciples. We also notice that it was poured out in a single act, and not something like a work of art that could be sold for the benefit of the poor or the extension of the kingdom of Jesus.

c. **This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it:** We rightly suppose that John did not know at that time that Judas was a thief; this was hidden to the disciples. Yet we also rightly suppose that Jesus did know that Judas was a thief yet He still appointed Him to be treasurer.

i. [Luke 8:2-3](#) tells us that generous women provided some of the financial needs of Jesus and His disciples. That money would be kept and managed by Judas.

ii. "When a man has gone so far in selfish greed that he has left common honesty behind him, no wonder if the sight of utterly self-surrendering love looks to him folly." (Maclaren)

iii. "The Greek word translated bare take (bastazo) means both 'carry' and 'carry off'. Judas did both!" (Tasker) "That ἐβάσταζεν can bear the sense of 'take away' or 'make away with' is beyond dispute." (Dods)

- iv. “The verb ‘bare’ [**take**] is in the imperfect tense, showing that he habitually carried it”, and habitually carried from it. (Trench)
- v. It was probably through greed and discontent the devil gained a foothold in Judas’ life. “Take heed of discontent. It was the devil’s sin that threw him out of heaven. Ever since which this restless spirit loves to fish in troubled waters.” (Trapp)
- vi. By some chronologies Judas went out the next day and made his bargain with the religious leaders to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-16, Mark 14:10-11). “The impression left is that Judas, seeing one source of personal enrichment lost, hastened to create another.” (Morris)

4. (John 12:7-8) Jesus defends Mary and explains what she did.

But Jesus said, “Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always.”

- a. **Let her alone**: If we are extreme in our love for Jesus, He will not criticize us; that was what Judas did. It is much better to be like Mary (extreme in our love for Jesus) than to be like Judas (criticizing others who show such great love for Jesus).
- b. **She has done this for the day of My burial**: In the same way that it would be rude to loudly object to funeral expenses at the service for the deceased, so it was inappropriate for Judas or anyone else to put a price on Mary’s love and devotion to Jesus while He was still alive.

- i. “Unusual expense at a funeral was not regarded as unseemly; why should anyone object if the ointment which would otherwise have been used to anoint his dead body in due course was poured over him while he was still alive and able to appreciate the love which prompted the action?” (Bruce)
- ii. Mark 14:9 says, Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her. “The Evangelist who records that promise does not mention Mary’s name; John, who does mention the name, does not record the promise. It matters little whether our names are remembered, so long as Jesus bears them graven on His heart.” (Maclaren)
- iii. What John wrote about the fragrance of the oil filling the house may have been his way of saying what Mark 14:9 said. “There is a rabbinic saying ‘(The scent of) good oil is diffused from the bed-chamber to the dining-hall while a good name is diffused from one end of the world to the other.’” (Morris)

5. (John 12:9-11) The plot to kill both Jesus and Lazarus.

Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But

the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

a. **The chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also**: The **chief priests** were mostly Sadducees, and the Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection. Lazarus was a living example of life after death, and having him around was an embarrassment to their theological system. For them, there was only one solution to this embarrassing problem — **to put Lazarus to death also**.

i. "What a giant like madness was this, to take up arms against heaven itself! to seek to kill a man, only because God had made him alive!" (Trapp) "In this devilish proposal the obduracy of unbelief is exhibited in its extreme form." (Dods)

ii. "When men hate Christ, they also hate those whom he has blessed, and will go to any lengths in seeking to silence their testimony." (Spurgeon)

iii. "How blind were these men not to perceive that he who had raised him, after he had been dead four days, could raise him again though they had slain him a thousand times?" (Clarke)

b. **On account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus**: This made the problem of the chief priests worse. The miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead drew **many** people to Jesus. Therefore, in the opinion of these religious leaders, Lazarus also had to be stopped.

i. **Went away and believed**: "The expression 'were going and believing in Jesus' may be Semitism, meaning 'were increasingly believing in Jesus'." (Bruce)

Where do the Hebrew Scriptures prophesy the death and resurrection of the Messiah?

Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, the promise of a Messiah is clearly given. These messianic prophecies were made hundreds, sometimes thousands of years before Jesus Christ was born, and clearly Jesus Christ is the only person who has ever walked this earth to fulfill them. In fact, from Genesis to Malachi, there are over 300 specific prophecies detailing the coming of this Anointed One. In addition to prophecies detailing His virgin birth, His birth in Bethlehem, His birth from the tribe of Judah, His lineage from King David, His sinless life, and His atoning work for the sins of His people, the death and resurrection of the Jewish Messiah was, likewise, well documented in the Hebrew prophetic Scriptures long before the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ occurred in history.

Of the best-known prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures concerning the death of Messiah, [Psalm 22](#) and [Isaiah 53](#) certainly stand out. [Psalm 22](#) is especially amazing since it predicted numerous separate elements about Jesus' crucifixion a thousand years before Jesus was crucified. Here are some examples. Messiah will have His hands and His feet "pierced" through ([Psalm 22:16](#); [John 20:25](#)). The Messiah's bones will not be broken (a person's legs were usually broken after being crucified to speed up their death) ([Psalm 22:17](#); [John 19:33](#)). Men will cast lots for Messiah's clothing ([Psalm 22:18](#); [Matthew 27:35](#)).

[Isaiah 53](#), the classic messianic prophecy known as the "[Suffering Servant](#)" prophecy, also details the death of Messiah for the sins of His people. More than 700 years before Jesus was even born, Isaiah provides details of His life and death. The Messiah will be rejected ([Isaiah 53:3](#); [Luke 13:34](#)). The Messiah will be killed as a vicarious sacrifice for the sins of His people ([Isaiah 53:5-9](#); [2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). The Messiah will be silent in front of His accusers ([Isaiah 53:7](#); [1 Peter 2:23](#)). The Messiah will be buried with the rich ([Isaiah 53:9](#); [Matthew 27:57-60](#)). The Messiah will be with criminals in His death ([Isaiah 53:12](#); [Mark 15:27](#)).

In addition to the death of the Jewish Messiah, His resurrection from the dead is also foretold. The clearest and best known of the resurrection prophecies is the one penned by Israel's King David in [Psalm 16:10](#), also written a millennium before the birth of Jesus: "For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay."

On the Jewish feast day of Shavuot (Weeks or Pentecost), when Peter preached the first gospel sermon, he boldly asserted that God had raised Jesus the Jewish Messiah from the dead ([Acts 2:24](#)). He then explained that God had performed this miraculous deed in fulfillment of David's prophecy in [Psalm 16](#). In fact, Peter quoted the words of David in detail as contained in [Psalm 16:8-11](#). Some years later, Paul did the same thing when he spoke to the Jewish community in Antioch. Like Peter, Paul declared that God had raised Messiah Jesus from the dead in fulfillment of [Psalm 16:10](#) ([Acts 13:33-35](#)).

The resurrection of the Messiah is strongly implied in another Davidic psalm. Again, this is [Psalm 22](#). In verses 19-21, the suffering Savior prays for deliverance "from the lion's mouth" (a metaphor for Satan). This desperate prayer is then followed immediately in verses 22-24 by a hymn of praise in which the Messiah thanks God for hearing His prayer and delivering Him. The resurrection of the Messiah is clearly implied between the ending of the prayer in verse 21 and the beginning of the

praise song in verse 22.

And back again to [Isaiah 53](#): after prophesying that the Suffering Servant of God would suffer for the sins of His people, the prophet says He would then be “cut off out of the land of the living.” But Isaiah then states that He (Messiah) “will see His offspring” and that God the Father will “prolong His days” ([Isaiah 53:5, 8, 10](#)). Isaiah proceeds to reaffirm the promise of the resurrection in different words: “As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see light and be satisfied” ([Isaiah 53:11](#)).

Every aspect of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah had been prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures long before the events ever unfolded in the timeline of human history. No wonder that Jesus the Messiah would say to the Jewish religious leaders of His day, “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me” ([John 5:39](#)).

Authentication

We know Jesus is the Messiah because He fulfills the Law and the Prophets. The first thing He did after His resurrection was give two disciples a seven-mile Bible study starting with Moses, pointing out all the references to Himself.

Epistemology is the study of knowledge, its scope and limits. It answers the question “How can we know?” How do we know that Jesus Christ was the Messiah? Our answer is that He fulfilled a multitude of prophecies - not just one or two specific, individual verses, but the Hebrew Scriptures as an integrated whole. Our epistemological approach recognizes the incredible power of fulfilled prophecy.

According J. Barton Payne’s Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy, at least 8000 predictive verses forecast the future in 1800 different predictions on more than 700 different matters. This is just one catalog, but it makes the point that the Bible is prophetic. It’s not just a quaint collection of tribal history over the centuries. It is far more than that. It is supernatural in its origin, and it demonstrates its authenticity by manifesting an origin from outside the dimensionality of time altogether.⁷

There are more than 300 prophecies of Christ’s First Coming, and we could take several books to carefully examine them one after another. For our purposes here, we don’t need to look at all of them. Nine will do, nine prophecies given centuries before their fulfillment:

- The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Mic 5:2; Mat 2:1,5).
- He would present Himself as King riding a donkey (Zec 9:9; Mat 21:1-9; John 12:12-16).
- He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zec 11:12; Mat 26:15,27:3-5).
- The “blood money” transaction would occur in the temple and the money would end up finally in the potter’s hands (Zech 11:13; Mat 27:6-10).
- He would have wounds in His hands (Zech 13:6; John 20:24-28).
- He would make no defense even though He’s innocent (Isa 53:7; Mar 15:3-5).
- He would die with the wicked yet be buried with the rich (Isa 53:9; Mar 15:27; Mat 27:57-60).
- He would be crucified (Psa 22:16, Zech 12:10; John 19:16ff).
- He would rise again (Psa 16:10; Isa 53:12; Mat 12:40; Mat 28:6,7).

These are just nine prophecies, and by analyzing the circumstances surrounding each one, we come up with an a priori likelihood of each taking place. When we do this, the statistical calculation of a single person fulfilling all nine gives a ridiculously improbable number. There may have been several people born in Bethlehem and crucified during the years Rome ruled the world, but few would have been buried with the rich even though they died with the wicked, after having been betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, after having ridden into town on a donkey and hailed as King. Jesus didn't just ride into town on a donkey; the people crowded Him to lay down palm branches and welcome Him, calling "Hosanna" and celebrating Him as the Son of David - the Messiah, the King (Mark 11:1-10; John 12:12-16). Then, above all else, He rose again from the dead! Remember, these are just nine verses. There are more than 300 to take into consideration.

The main point is that these prophecies establish Jesus' identity with more certainty than probably any other person on the face of the earth. I'm more certain that Jesus Christ is the Messiah of Israel than I am of my own name, and I can demonstrate that mathematically.

Those nine prophecies are the easy ones. The Old Testament lays out in great detail in Genesis 22, Psalm 22 and in Isaiah 53 narratives that are just astonishing in their precision. Psalm 22 reads as if it were dictated by Jesus in first person singular while He hung on the cross. It opens and closes with His first and last statements, and it describes what He sees as He hangs on the cross. Crucifixion was not around until the Persians devised it, yet David describes the Messiah's death and suffering 1000 years before Jesus Christ was born.

Isaiah 53 explains the purpose of the cross and its achievement with more detail than all of Paul's epistles put together.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:5-6

The Old Testament is filled with types and foreshadows of the purpose and identity of the Messiah, but it also describes certain aspects of His coming in exquisitely precise detail. In Daniel 9:24-26, Gabriel tells Daniel the exact day the Messiah would present Himself as King to Jerusalem, and Jesus held the "teachers of the Law" accountable to do the math and expect His coming. Their failure to recognize that day is the reason, according to Jesus in Luke 19:42-44, that Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70. The precision and the accountability is all there and clearly laid out in the Scriptures.

Form and Content

What was the human role in all of this? From the standpoint of form, the human writers contributed much to the writing of Scripture. They did historical research (like Luke), gave theological meditation, and used their own linguistic styles, favorite vocabulary, and so on. The writers each had their own writing styles, and over 200 different kinds of rhetorical devices or figures of speech are used in the Scripture. The majesty of Isaiah's book, the pragmatic pastoral rhetoric of Amos, the quick movie-script like descriptions of Mark, demonstrate the personalities of the writers. Their role shows up in the form but not in the content, and that is an important distinction.

Theologically, from the standpoint of content, the Bible regards the human writers as having contributed little. They are the conduits that God has used to give us His words. These concepts are what make the Bible distinctive, and a study on the inspiration of the Scriptures could alone fill volumes. It is a topic that Bible readers should research seriously.

This excerpt is from Dr. Chuck Missler's book *How We Got Our Bible*, available in print and eBook from <https://store.khouse.org>. Also available in a 2 hour video presentation [from our store](#).

The Last Week Of Jesus' Life

A Summary Of The Week

This study will review the events of the last week of Jesus' life. The week commenced with Jesus' arrival in Bethany six days before the Passover.

This summary of the related passages for each day will provide a useful ready reference for noting the parallel passages and is used as the basis for the rest of the study.

Six Days Before The Passover			
Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
			12:1
Five Days Before The Passover			
Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
21:1-11	11:1-10	19:29-44	12:12-19
Four Days Before The Passover			
Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
21:18-19	11:11-18	19:45-48	12:20-36
Three Days Before The Passover			
Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
21:18-25:46	11:20-13:37	20:1-21:36	
Two Days Before The Passover			
Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
26:1-16	14:1-11	22:1-3	12:2-8
One Day Before The Passover			
Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
26:17-56	14:12-52	22:7-53	13:1-18:12

The summary detailed below records the days before the Passover and the events recorded in the Gospels that took place on each day. The parallel accounts of the same event in each Gospel will help to clarify the details of the events of the week.

The time of the day when the event took place and the location where the event took place are also included where possible. It is not possible, with some of the events, to be certain exactly what time of day or where an event took place.

However in such cases an 'educated guess' has been made.

The objective of the overview in the summary is to provide a working framework of the events of the week that will enhance our studies and make it easier for us to visualise the flow of events.

Six Days Before The Passover

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day	Place
Jesus arrives in Bethany				12:1	afternoon	Bethany

Five Days Before The Passover

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day	Place
Triumphal entry into Jerusalem	21:1-11	11:1-10	19:29-44	12:12-19	Morning	Outside Jerusalem
Jesus wept over Jerusalem			19:41			
Jesus looks round		11:11				Temple
Returns to Bethany with disciples		11:11			Evening	Bethany

Four Days Before the Passover.

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day	Place
Jesus curses the barren fig tree	21:18-19	11:11-18			Morning	Mt of Olives
Cleansing of the temple	21:12-13	11:15-18	19:45-48			Temple
Some Greeks desire to see Jesus				12:20-36		Temple
Jesus responds to unbelief of the crowd				12:37-50		Temple
They return to Bethany		11:19			Evening	Bethany

Three Days Before the Passover

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day	Place
The disciples see the withered fig tree	21:18-22	11:20-26			morning	Mt of Olives
Priest's question Jesus' authority	21:23-27	11:27-33	20:1-8			Temple
Which son did his father's will?	21:28-32					Temple
Parable of the vineyard	21:33-46	12:1-12	20:9-19			Temple
Parable of the wedding banquet	22:1-14					Temple
Paying taxes to Caesar	22:15-22	12:13-17	20:20-26			Temple
Sadducees question about resurrection	22:23-33	12:18-27	20:27-40			Temple
Which is the great commandment?	22:35-40					Temple
Which is the first commandment?		12:28-34				Temple
Whose son is Christ?	22:41-46	12:35-37	20:41-44			Temple
Woe unto you ... hypocrites	23:1-39	12:38-40	20:45-47			Temple
The poor widow's gift		12:41-44	21:1-4		late p.m.?	Treasury
The Olivet prophecy	24:1-36	13:1-32	21:5-36		evening	Mt of Olives
Watch, days of Noah	24:37-51					Mt of Olives
Ten virgins	25:1-13					Mt of Olives

The man travelling into a far country	25:14-31	13:33-37				Mt of Olives
Sheep, goats and judgment	25:31-46					Mt of Olives

Two Days Before the Passover

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day	Place
Sanhedrin plot to kill Jesus	26:1-5	14:1-2	22:1-2		Morning	Palace of high priest?
Mary Anoints Jesus for his burial	26:6-13	14:3-9		12:2-8	Evening	Bethany
Judas' agreement to betray Jesus	26:14-16	14:10-11	22:3-6			Temple?

One Day Before the Passover

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day	Place
Preparation for the Passover meal	26:17-20	14:12-17	22:7-14		Morning	Jerusalem
Disciples strive 'who is the greatest'			22:24-30		Evening	Upper room
Jesus washes the disciples' feet				13:1-20		Upper room
Identification of Jesus' betrayer	26:21-25	14:18-21	22:21-23	13:21-30		Upper room
Last Supper instituted	26:26-29	14:22-25	22:15-20			Upper room
Judas leaves				13:32		Upper room
A new commandment I give you				13:31-35		Upper room
Prediction of Peter's denial	26:31-35	14:27-31	22:31-38	13:36-38		Upper room
Discourses in the Upper Room				14:1-31		Upper room
Then they sung an hymn	26:30	14:26				Upper room
Then they leave the Upper Room				14:31		On the way to Cedron
Abide in me				Chpt 15		On the way to Cedron
I go my way				Chpt 16		On the way to Cedron
Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven				Chpt 17		On the way to Cedron
Jesus prays in Gethsemane	26:36-46	14:26-42	22:39-46		Night	Gethsemane
Jesus betrayed, arrested, forsaken	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-53	18:2-12		Gethsemane

A Note On Days

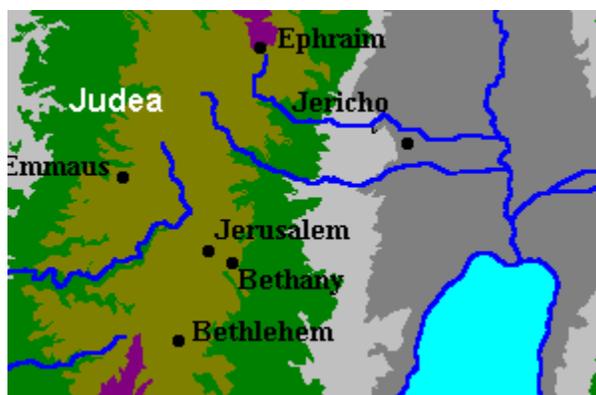
In order to understand better the time periods and events recorded in the Gospels we must appreciate that the Jewish way of recording days differs from the Western approach.

In the West our 'day' starts at midnight. The Jewish 'day' starts in the evening. This is seen in the way in which God describes the creation saying 'and the evening and the morning were the [nth] day' [[Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31](#)] where [nth] stands for the day of creation.

So we see in the Gospels that the 'day' commences at 6.00 p.m. which is sundown, roughly, in Israel. So when Jesus arrived in Bethany 'six days before the Passover' [[John 12:1](#)] we know that he arrived in Bethany before 6.00 p.m.. The 'next day' [[John 12:12](#)] when Jesus entered into Jerusalem on the colt is five days before the Passover as the 12 hours of the night have passed and they daylight hours of the day have just begun.

The Jewish method of reckoning days is the only method that allows for all the details in the last week of Jesus' life to be fitted together as can be seen from the table at the end of this study. So remember 'The evening and the morning' is the 'day'.

Places In the Last Week Of Jesus' Life



This map is of a very small part of the land of Israel. It provides a guide to the location of the places mentioned in the last week of Jesus' life. Jericho and Ephraim are included because Jesus made his way from a city called Ephraim via Jericho to Bethany on his way up to the Passover when he was crucified. Emmaus is the village to which the two were walking on the resurrection morning.

The Mount of Olives is North and East of Bethany. Indeed Bethany is on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives.

A Calendar Of Events

And Parallel Passages In The Last Week Of Jesus' Life

The four gospel records provide a detailed diary of the events of the last week of Jesus' life that culminated in the crucifixion.

By piecing together the four accounts and placing them within the time frame of the week we are better able to understand what happened during those days.

The following pages provide an outline of that week, placing the four gospel records together and setting the events into the day that they happened. Thus, at a glance, it is possible to see which passages provide information about the events of the week and on which days the events took place. The notes that follow are an expansion of the tables at the beginning of the studies. The location of the events has been left off the tables in the remainder of the study to simplify them and because the full tables are available at the front of the study.

Whilst it is possible to develop a calendar using any of the synoptic [Matthew Mark Luke] Gospel records Mark provides a framework that is the easiest to follow as can be seen from the table below.

We know that [Mark 11:1](#) is 5 days before the Passover because it is the day after Jesus arrived in Bethany that we know was 'six days before the Passover' [[John 12:1](#)].

Passage in Mark	Day before Passover
11:1	5
11:12	4
11:20	3
14:1	2
14:12	1

Using the gospel of Mark as a basis it is possible, with relative certainty, to slot the other gospel records into this framework and thereby establish clearly what happened on each of the days of the week that culminated in the crucifixion of Jesus.

The tables that follow show, in the left hand column, the event that took place. The next four columns show the related passages in the gospels and the final column shows the time of the day when the event took place. Thus it is possible, at a glance, to see what events took place on each day and to see the related passages of Scripture at the same time.

Six Days Before the Passover.

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
Jesus arrives in Bethany				12:1	afternoon

Six days before the Passover they arrive in Bethany in the afternoon. [[John 12:1](#)].

We should be aware of how the arrival in Bethany 'six days before the Passover' [[John 12:1](#)] fits into John's gospel account. None of the other gospel writers even mention the arrival in Bethany. Their focus is on the entry into Jerusalem on the next morning [[Matthew 21:1](#) [Mark 11:1](#) [Luke 19:29](#)].

The last detailed event of John's gospel was the raising of Lazarus at Bethany. [[John 11:1-44](#)]. Because of the raising of Lazarus the Pharisees 'took counsel together for to put him (Jesus) to death'. [[John 11:53](#)]. The effect of this discussion amongst the Pharisees was that 'Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.' [[John 11:54](#)]. The next event which John records is 'And the Jews' Passover was nigh at hand: ...' [[John 11:55](#)]. Thus John skips the events that took place in 'a city called Ephraim' [[John 11:54](#)].

None of the gospel records speak directly about the time Jesus was in the 'city called Ephraim'. However there is a section in Luke's record [from chapter 10 to 18:14](#) that is not found in any other record. The section culminates with [[Luke 19:29](#)] 'And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany ...' which matches the day after the arrival in Bethany of [John 12:1](#).

The section [Luke 10:38-42](#) is, therefore, speaking of a time when Jesus was in Bethany. The suggestion is that this was at the time of the raising of Lazarus. We know that Jesus left Bethany after the raising of Lazarus and went to 'a city called Ephraim' [[John 11:54](#)]. Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that this section of Luke from [chapter 11 to 18:14](#) relates to events that took place whilst Jesus was in the city 'called Ephraim'. This section, then, deals with the interval between the raising of Lazarus and the arrival in Bethany six days before the Passover.

Whilst John then records the anointing of Jesus in Bethany, that event did not occur until two days before the Passover [[Matthew 26:2,6](#) [Mark 14:1](#)]. John relates the details of the meal in Bethany at this point in the record because the meal in Bethany is thematically linked with the raising of Lazarus from the dead that is recorded in [John 11:1-44](#). The meal in Bethany of which John 12 speaks was a celebratory meal to commemorate the raising of Lazarus. Further study also shows that the meal in the upper room [[John 13-14:31](#)] also has a number of powerful links with the meal at Bethany.

It will be clear that John has little to say about the events of days 5 to 2 before the Passover. His focus is on the meal and its relationship to the whole matter of the raising of Lazarus and then the meal in the upper room and subsequent events.

This should alert us to the fact that whilst Matthew Mark and Luke take a fairly systematic chronological journey through the events of the last week; John is more thematic in the things spoken of. Therefore, if for this reason alone, it is unwise to base a chronology of the last week of Jesus' life on John's gospel. Furthermore, if

we find apparent discrepancies between John and the other records we should not assume that John is either speaking of a different event or that there is some error in one or more of the other records.

We should take account of this when considering any part of the gospel records. Each gospel writer has, by the spirit, specific points that are being made. Often the record is structured to highlight these features. If we focus on attempting to reconcile apparent contradictions rather than on the detail in each gospel writer's theme we may well miss the richness of the message.

We will deal in detail with the timing of this meal in Bethany when we look at the day that is two days before the Passover.

By telling us that Jesus was in Bethany [[John 12:1](#)] 'six days before the Passover' John provides a specific day from which we can commence our chronology of the week. As will be seen as we continue this study it is John alone which provides the start point for this week and therefore acts as the lynch pin in settling when Jesus died. The chart at the end of this work shows how all the details fit beautifully together to show when Jesus died, how that day fitted into the Passover preparations. Further the study demonstrates what day of the week Jesus' died and how he was in the grave 'three days and nights'.

Five Days Before the Passover.

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
Triumphal entry into Jerusalem	21:1-11	11:1-10	19:29-44	12:12-19	Morning
Jesus wept over Jerusalem			19:41		
Jesus looks round		11:11			
Returns to Bethany with disciples		11:11			Evening

After the digression of [John 12:2-11](#) John tells us that [[John 12:12](#)] 'on the next day' Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Therefore we can be certain that this day is actually five days before the Passover.

Five days before the Passover we have what may be called the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. There is not much recorded about this day. As Jesus arrives at the city he wept over the city. The triumphal entry into Jerusalem is one of the few events in Scripture that are recorded in all four gospel records.

This, of itself, should alert us to the great significance of this event in the life of Jesus. As if to reinforce the significance of the event it is the only event in the day that is recorded in any detail. From a consideration of the four gospel records we learn that Jesus, to the acclamation of his disciples [[Luke 19:37](#)] and the people [[John 12:12-13](#)] travelled up to Jerusalem. As he neared the city he wept over it [[Luke 19:41](#)] and spoke of the judgment that was to come upon the city [[Luke 19:42-](#)

44] he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple and looked round [[Mark 11:11](#)] and then went back to Bethany [[Matthew 21:17](#)].

Now those events would hardly fill a whole day. Let us assume that Jesus left Bethany at about 8.00 am - which, taking account of practices in the CENTER East is probably a late estimate of the start of his day. Jerusalem is no more than two miles from Bethany. Jesus and his disciples, even allowing for a short time to secure the ass, would have taken no more than an hour and a half to walk to Jerusalem. Thus we can see Jesus arriving at the city walls to the acclamation of the people by about 10.00 am. Even being thronged by a great crowd Jesus could be on Temple Mount within 15 minutes of arriving at the city. After he had 'looked round' it was 'eventide'. How long, we might ask, does it take to 'look round' the temple. From the time that Jesus arrived at the temple to eventide, based on our assumptions, was about 5 hours if we assume evening starts at 5 p.m. The events we have just discussed are described thus in [Mark 11:11](#) 'And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.' On considering the events of the day we are forced to realise that the entry into Jerusalem was the most important event by far on that day.

Weeping Over The City

As the city came into view Jesus wept over it and spoke of it's destruction [[Luke 19:41-44](#)]

Thus the joyous procession stopped as the city came into view. Jesus probably dismounted from the animal he was riding upon to survey the city rising up before him at the top of the hill from the Kedron Valley. Doubtless his demeanor puzzled the crowds who were singing praises to him as he traveled up from the floor of the valley. However their expectations did not match Jesus' own understanding of those things which were to befall him during the next week and the subsequent destruction of the temple and the city by the Romans which took place some forty years later in AD 70. As Jesus wept over the city he spoke of the judgment that was to come. On this occasion Jesus laments what is to come upon the city. His prime concern is that the city is to be destroyed. In the Olivet prophecy at the end of the third day before the Passover his great concern is that the disciples will be prepared for the event. However there are some links between this lament in Luke 19 and the Olivet Prophecy. They are tabulated below.

		<-----Olivet Prophecy ----->		
Prophecy	Luke 19:42-44	Matthew	Mark	Luke
compass thee	19:43	24:20		
children	19:44	24:19	13:17	21:23
not one stone	19:44	24:2	13:2	

Thus it can be seen that Jesus spoke of the destruction of the city at the beginning and at the end of the last week of his life whilst he was at Jerusalem.

Jesus Looked Round

Mark 11:16 informs us that Jesus 'looked round about upon all things' after he had entered the temple. This action was highly symbolic. Jesus was treating the temple as a house which had been declared as leprous.

Event	Law of Leprosy	Jesus
first look	Leviticus 14:34-38	John 2:13-14
7 days later	Leviticus 14:39	Mark 11:11
If still leprous remove stones	Leviticus 14:42	Mark 11:16
destroy house	Leviticus 14:44-45	Destruction of Jerusalem

The law of Moses was quite specific in instructing Israel how they should deal with a house which had leprosy. If it is suspected that the house is stricken with leprosy the priest is advised. of the problem and [[Leviticus 14:36-38](#)] 'Then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest go into it to see the plague, that all that is in the house be not made unclean: and afterward the priest shall go in to see the house: And he shall look on the plague, and, behold, if the plague be in the walls of the house with hollow strakes, greenish or reddish, which in sight are lower than the wall; Then the priest shall go out of the house to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days:' After seven days the priest was to return and re assess the situation. If the house was still leprous [[Leviticus 14:40-41](#)] 'Then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which the plague is, and they shall cast them into an unclean place without the city: And he shall cause the house to be scraped within round about, and they shall pour out the dust that they scrape off without the city into an unclean place:'. If this remedy did not work [[Leviticus 14:44-45](#)] 'Then the priest shall come and look, and, behold, if the plague be spread in the house, it is a fretting leprosy in the house: it is unclean. And he shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and he shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place.'

So we see that there was a threefold inspection by the priest. On the first occasion the condition is confirmed. The second visit examines the condition and the third visit condemns the house which is still plagued with the fretting leprosy'.

On the occasion of the first Passover during the ministry of Jesus he cleansed the temple. for we read [[John 2:13-16](#)] 'And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and

poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.'

On this fifth day before the Passover Jesus [[Mark 11:11](#)] 'entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany' This visit answered to the second visit of the priest. On this occasion Jesus was assessing whether his first cleaning three years earlier had achieved the desired effect. His inspection confirmed that the house was still leprous. There was nothing left to do. Jesus knew that the house had to be destroyed.

He returned the next day and [[Mark 11:15](#)] 'Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves;' On this occasion we are informed that he [[Mark 11:16](#)] 'would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple'. which answers to the injunction [[Leviticus 14:36](#)] 'Then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest go into it to see the plague, that all that is in the house be not made unclean: and afterward the priest shall go in to see the house:'

The destruction of the temple by the Romans in AD 70 when not one stone was to be left upon another answers to the breaking down of the leprous house.

The phrase 'looked round' is unique to Mark's Gospel account and is found in the following places:- Mark 3:5,34 5:32 9:8 10:23 11:11.

Great Expectations

It may be that the people had great expectations of Jesus as he entered Jerusalem. Doubtless this is why they cried 'Hosanna'. Their expectation was that Jesus would overthrow the Roman occupation and establish the kingdom of God. Doubtless that he looked round the temple but did not do anything would start to sow seeds of doubt in the minds of the thousands who would later cry 'crucify him, crucify him' [[Luke 23:21](#)].

Whilst Luke [[19:45](#)] seems to indicate that Jesus cast out the money changers on this occasion when he entered the temple the other records [[Mark 11:11-12](#)] show that he left the city and went to Bethany and that the casting out of 'them that sold and bought' [[Matthew 21:12](#)] took place on the next day as recorded in those gospel records.

We will return to the way in which the people greeted Jesus and some of the implications of that later in the study when we consider the way in which Psalm 118 figures in this last week.

The return to Bethany advertises that Jesus and the disciples used Bethany as their base during the week. See [[Mark 11:12, 19](#) [14:3](#)]. We might be led to think that Jesus spent each night on the Mount of Olives when we read 'And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.' [[Luke 21:37](#)]. However when we realise that Bethany is on the Eastern shoulder of the Mount of Olives we can see how the details in [Mark 11:19](#) and [14:3](#) are reconciled with the comment in [Luke 21:37](#).

Summary Of The Fifth Day Before The Passover

We see, therefore, that the fifth day before the Passover begins the work of the last week of Jesus' life. The triumphal entry into Jerusalem excited the people who were expecting 'that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.' [[Luke 19:1](#)].

However Jesus wept over the city, knowing that it was soon to be burnt to the ground by the Romans. On this occasion his lament was about the destruction of the city, in particular, whereas in the Olivet Prophecy at the end of the third day before the Passover his particular concern was that the disciples would be ready for the events he was speaking of. It is possible that the people had great expectations of Jesus at this highly charged time of the Passover. However his inactivity in the temple when he simply 'looked round' [[Mark 11:11](#)] must have caused the common people to wonder what was going to happen and the religious leaders to watch and discuss that night what Jesus was going to do.

Four Days Before the Passover

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
Jesus curses the barren fig tree	21:18-19	11:11-18			Morning
Cleansing of the temple	21:12-13	11:15-18	19:45-48		
Some Greeks desire to see Jesus				12:20-36	
Jesus responds to unbelief of the crowd				12:37-50	
They return to Bethany		11:19			Evening

On the way in from Bethany - by the Mount of Olives - Jesus cursed a fig tree - Why was he hungry? Didn't Mary and Martha make breakfast?

That Jesus 'hungered' may provide another insight into his humanity. He knew that within the week he would have been taken by cruel hands and crucified. He had told his disciples this on a number of occasions [e.g. [Matthew 17:22-23](#) [Mark 10:33](#)] He was aware of what that entailed. All men and women in Israel would be aware of what was involved in crucifixion. However our Lord, with his understanding of the Old Testament prophets, would have an even clearer understanding of what was to take place.

In times of stress the appetite is diminished and bodily functions are less in our control. That Jesus, having recently left Bethany, was hungry is an indication of the stress he was enduring at this time.

The Cleansing Of The Temple

This is the second time that Jesus cleansed of the temple. [John 2:13-17](#) records the first cleansing of the temple. This was on the occasion of the first Passover in the ministry of Jesus 3 years earlier. Selling animals for sacrifice was permitted under the Law of Moses. 'And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household,' [[Deuteronomy 14:24-26](#)]. Jesus was not objecting to the fact that men and women were buying animals for sacrifice. Rather he was objecting to the way in which it was being done.

As he cast out the money changers Jesus said 'It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; [[Isaiah 56:7](#)] but ye have made it a den of thieves. [[Jeremiah 7:11](#)]' [[Matthew 21:13](#)] It can be seen that Jesus is drawing together two passages from the Old Testament.

[Isaiah 56:1](#) informs us that God's 'salvation was near' and therefore the man 'that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.' [[Isaiah 56:2](#)] was to be 'blessed'. The salvation that was 'near' was Jesus. The Sabbath that was being polluted was the Sabbath of the Passover. It was being polluted with the buying and selling of animals. The Jews were about to reject the salvation that their God was offering in Jesus. Because of this rejection salvation was to be offered to the gentiles. [Isaiah 56:4-7](#) speaks of this:- 'For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, ... Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all nations.'

The CENTER Wall Of Partition

The prophet had spoken of the house as being 'a house of prayer **for all nations** but Herod's temple was used exclusively for Jewish worship. The Jews, in

the way that they had set out the courts in the temple precluded gentiles from approaching near to the inner sanctuary. On temple mount surrounding the temple area was a wall - the 'CENTER wall of partition' [[Ephesians 2:14](#)] - which a gentile could not pass. In fact at the gates in the wall where Jews could pass through there were signs stating that any gentile who passed beyond this point would be responsible for his own death. Thus gentiles were shut out of the temple.

Greeks Desire To See Jesus

After the cleansing of the temple we are informed 'And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship..., saying, Sir, we would see Jesus'. [[John 12:20-21](#)] The promise of Isaiah 56 regarding the 'sons of strangers' is coming true. Such an event would have been a great comfort to our Lord at this time. Whilst the Jews were polluting the temple there are gentiles who wish to be associated with it.

By joining the quotation from Isaiah 56 with 'but ye have made it a den of thieves' quoting [Jeremiah 7:11](#), Jesus is drawing the attention of the Jews to the consequences of polluting the temple. Jeremiah spoke immediately prior to the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians.

Jeremiah had been told to 'Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.' [[Jeremiah 7:2-3](#)] Because the people did not listen to Jeremiah's words the temple was overthrown.

Jesus has already told the people on the previous day 'If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.' [[Luke 19:42-44](#)]. Interestingly these words are linked in Luke to the cleansing of the temple because the cleansing of the temple is the next event recorded in Luke even though it took place on the following day as can be seen from a consideration of [Mark 11:12-17](#) which presents the cleansing of the temple on the day after the entry into Jerusalem on the ass.

In stark contrast to the Greeks who desired to see Jesus 'the scribes and chief priests ... sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him,' [[Mark 11:18](#)].

This contrast between the Scribes and chief priests on the one hand and the Greeks on the other is the reason why John tells us 'But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:' [[John 12:37](#)] because the Jews were fulfilling the words of Isaiah who said 'Who hath believed our report? and to

whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?' [[Isaiah 53:1](#)] which is also quoted in [John 12:38](#). The 'arm of the Lord' had been revealed to the gentiles.

In fact this unbelief had also been predicted by Isaiah in [Isaiah 6:9-10](#) 'Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:' [[John 12:42](#)]. Two of them will, when all hope seems to be lost, come out into the open. Both Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea are amongst those spoken of here in [John 12:42](#).

Summary Of The Fourth Day Before The Passover

Jesus spent last night in Bethany. On his way into Jerusalem with the disciples he cursed the fig tree because he was hungry. It is suggested that the hunger demonstrated that he was stressed at the prospect of the day's events.

On entering the temple he cleansed it of money changers. This is the second time that he had done this during his ministry. The first occasion was the first Passover in his ministry three years earlier.

The unbelief of the leaders is contrasted with the desire of some Greeks who desired to see Jesus. This response from gentiles must have been a great comfort to our Lord.

The day ended with Jesus returning to Bethany again.

[Click here for the next part of this Study](#)

THE LONGEST DAY -

Three Days Before the Passover.

We have noticed how such a large amount of each gospel record is devoted to this last week in Jesus' life. We have now arrived at the third day before the Passover. This is, in Scripture, the longest day in the life of Jesus. Of course all days were the same length. However the Spirit has chosen to record more about this day than any other day in Jesus' life. We see from Matthew that the events of this day cover almost five chapters. The day begins in [Matthew 21:18](#) and ended with [Matthew 25:46](#). Comparing [Mark 13:37](#), which is the end of the Olivet prophecy in Mark and [Mark 14:1](#), which is the beginning of the next day, confirms this view.

The record of this day present to us the most powerful onslaught of the Jewish authorities against Jesus and the end of his public ministry.

From late in the afternoon of this day Jesus is never seen teaching publicly again. His focus turns from the religious leaders and the common people to the twelve disciples. They become the prime focus of his words.

On the way into Jerusalem in the morning

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
The disciples see the withered fig tree	21:18-22	11:20-26			morning
Priest's question Jesus' authority	21:23-27	11:27-33	20:1-8		
Which son did his father's will?	21:28-32				
Parable of the vineyard	21:33-46	12:1-12	20:9-19		
Parable of the wedding banquet	22:1-14				

The disciples saw the fig tree cursed yesterday and now they are surprised to see that it had withered up. They will be introduced to the concept of the 'fig tree' shooting forth [\[Luke 21:29\]](#) at the end of today as they make their way back to Bethany.

We should appreciate the fact that the cursing of the fig tree, the disciples noticing that it was withered up and the parable of the fig tree all took place on the mount of Olives during the space of no more than 36 hours.

The question of the priest 'by what authority doest thou these things' [\[Matthew 21:23\]](#) is a response to Jesus' actions yesterday. On entering the temple he 'cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,' [\[Matthew 21:12\]](#). This action attacked the very lifestyle of the priests who gained a very lucrative income from the practice.

By asking them to reflect on the authority of John the Baptist Jesus is not trying to avoid the issue they raised. John had already testified 'behold the lamb of God ...' [\[John 1:29\]](#) and we know that many of the leaders went to John to listen because 'when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' [\[Matthew 3:7\]](#) We also know that 'the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptised of him'. [\[Luke 7:30\]](#).

Because they were unwilling to accept the testimony of John about Jesus they would not accept anything Jesus said about himself. Therefore, Jesus is not avoiding the issue of authority, rather he is focusing the leaders' minds on an unresolved issue. When they were able to form a judgment about John's baptism then they would be in a position to evaluate Jesus' authority.

They were unwilling, because they 'feared the people' [\[Mark 11:32\]](#), to commit themselves on the matter so had to respond 'we cannot tell' [\[Mark 11:33\]](#).

There were a number of occasions when the leaders 'feared the people' during the last week of Jesus' life. This was the first occasion. The second was after he had told the parable of the wicked husbandmen [[Matthew 21:33-45](#) [Mark 12:1-12](#), [Luke 20:9-19](#)]. The third was the next day [[Luke 22:2](#)] when they were consulting how they might take Jesus.

The phrase 'feared the people' catches the mental state of Saul when he failed to kill the Amalakites. [[1 Samuel 15:24](#)]. His excuse was that he had not done the will of God because of his fear of the people. Now whilst the leaders were not doing God's will when they feared the people they showed the same attitude as Saul. They, like Saul, were more interested in the praise of men than the approval of God. This was their downfall.

Jesus could have left them at this point and continued with his tasks for the day. If we had been in Jesus' shoes we might well have left them with the smug self satisfaction of knowing that we had silenced our critics. However our Lord was not like that. He was concerned that these men might confront their hypocrisy therefore he tells them three parables,

	Matthew	Mark	Luke
1] Which son did his father's will?	21:28-32		
2] Parable of the vineyard	21:33-46	12:1-12	20:9-19
3] Parable of the wedding banquet	22:1-14		

The three parables are all directed at the attitude of the religious leaders.

Earlier today, in response to the question about the baptism of John, the leaders had to say 'we cannot tell'. They were unwilling to commit themselves on the matter so they, in effect, remained silent. The three parables which Jesus now tells are designed to force the leaders to speak.

Which Son Did His fathers Will?

The first parable, by considering the two sons and their response . The first son refused to go but afterwards repented and went whereas the second son said he would go but did not. [[Matthew 21:29-30](#)]. Jesus then asks the religious leaders 'Whether of them twain did the will of his father?' The leaders have to answer and so 'They say unto him, The first.' . [[Matthew 21:31](#)]. That this parable relates to the issue of his authority and John is clear from the way in which Jesus continued when he said ' Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.' [[Matthew 21:31-32](#)]

The Parable Of The Vineyard

This parable is to be found in the following accounts [Matthew 21:33-46](#) [Mark 12:1-12](#) and [Luke 20:9-19](#). The parable of the vineyard by carefully using language from Isaiah 5 and Psalm 80, presents a picture of the householder's response to the various ways in which his servants have been treated. The final act of sending 'his son' [[Matthew 21:37](#)] answers to the sending of Jesus. The murder of the son because he is 'the heir' [[Matthew 21:38](#)] was to happen by the end of this week.

The Parable and Old Testament Echoes

The elements of the parable are; A planted vineyard, a hedge, a winepress and a tower. The vineyard was let out to husbandmen whilst the owner went into a far country. His servants were sent for the fruit but were beaten, killed and stoned. Further servants were sent, and similarly treated. Finally the son was sent, who was killed. The question what will the Lord of the vineyard do was asked to which the answer was given He will destroy ...

Many of the elements of the parable are drawn from the Old Testament.

	2 Chronicles 24	Psalm 80	Isaiah 5	Jeremiah 2
planted vineyard		80:8	5:1	2:21
The hedge		80:12		
Winepress			5:2	
Tower			5:2	
Let it to husbandmen				
The stoned servant	24:21			
He will destroy			5:6	

Bringing Forth Fruit

The Old Testament clearly indicates that the house of Israel were a vine which had been brought out of Egypt [[Hosea 11:1](#)] and planted [[Isaiah 5:2](#)] in the land which had been prepared for it. As such they were expected to bring forth fruit to God under the care of the priests and religious leaders.

Israels history demonstrated that they had rarely brought forth fruit despite the sending of the prophets rising early [[Jeremiah 11:7](#)]. Therefore in the days of Hezekiah the prophet Isaiah spoke the parable of the vineyard which is recorded in Isaiah 5. Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah, taking up the message of Isaiah prophesied Jerusalem shall be plowed as a field [[Micah 3:12](#)] which was to be a judgement from God in Hezekiahs day. However Hezekiah repented and humbled himself before his God [[2 Chronicles 32:26](#)]. Therefore the vineyard was not destroyed at that time. Jeremiah, at a later date, was able to remind the people of this, saying, Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the

mountain of the house as the high places of a forest. Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the LORD, and besought the LORD, and the LORD repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls. [[Jeremiah 26:18-19](#)]

The leaders to whom Jesus was speaking would be familiar with the Biblical background to the parable and the implications. Therefore the message could have been very powerful if only they had been willing to listen to the son.

What Will The Lord Of The Vineyard Do?

Jesus asked the question, 'When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?' [[Matthew 21:40](#)] to force the leaders to confront their mental state. However before the leaders were able to answer the question the answer is given by the common people. They said 'He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.' [[Matthew 21:41](#)]. Jesus endorsed this response as [Mark 12:9](#) and [Luke 20:16](#) indicate. The response of the leaders was God forbid [[Luke 20:16](#)]. The common people, listening carefully to Jesus words answer the question before the leaders can say a word. Jesus, in endorsing their answer, evokes the response God forbid from the leaders because they perceived that he spake of them [[Matthew 21:45](#)].

Sadly they did not heed the words of the parable nor reflect on Jesus and the common peoples answer, nor even their horror at the outcome. Jerusalem was overthrown by the Romans some forty years later.

At this point in the discussion Jesus draws the attention of the religious leaders to [Psalm 118:22](#) saying 'Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?' [[Matthew 21:42](#)].

The figure of the vine passes into Jesus teaching during the remainder of the week before the crucifixion.

Isaiah 5 predicted the removal of the hedge and the treading down of the vineyard - the house of Israel. Later on during the same day Jesus spoke to the disciples on the Mount of Olives. in response to their question when shall these things [the destruction of Jerusalem] be ... [[Luke 21:7](#)] Jesus, says. Jerusalem *shall be trodden down* of the gentiles ... [[Luke 21:24](#)]. Jesus is quoting Isaiah 5 again. I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard ... It *shall be trodden down* ... [[Isaiah 5:5](#)]. The Olivet

Prophecy is a private explanation of some of the details of the parable of the vineyard. The destruction of Jerusalem, which was accomplished by the Romans in AD 70 was a fulfilment of the parable which in turn was an exposition of Isaiah 5.

The absence of a repentant heart made the destruction a certainty, unlike in the days of Hezekiah. Hezekiah, on being presented with the judgement repented. The leaders in Jesusday did not.

Not A New Message

Nor was Jesus parable of the vineyard in Matthew 21 the first time this warning had been given to these leaders. John the Baptist had already given a similar warning which had gone unheeded. Three and a half years earlier, when he was baptising at Aenon the Pharisees came to investigate. John warned them O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance & the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. [\[Matthew 3:7-10\]](#)

Speaking To The Heart

There is no doubt that the leaders realised that Jesus spoke the parable of the vineyard against them for When the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. [\[Matthew 21:45\]](#). However, just as they had rejected the counsel of John the Baptist, they rejected Jesus. They sought to lay hands on him [\[Matthew 21:36\]](#) The only thing which prevented them from taking any action was they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet. [\[Matthew 21:46\]](#)

Answering The Lord

Is our motivation driven by a desire to please the Father or are we menpleasers who are compromised by what we think others will think of us? How would we answer the question what will the lord of the vineyard do &? Would we remain silent because we are convicted by the Lord, would we join with the common people and see the obvious outcome of such rebellion or would we join with the Pharisees saying God forbid because we desire to continue in our own ways with scant regard to the call of the master to bring forth fruit?

The Marriage Of The King's Son

The third parable in this section is about the marriage of the king's son. The wedding was furnished with guest who were 'both bad and good:' [\[Matthew 22:10\]](#) because those who were bidden declined the invitation. However there was one of the guests 'which had not on a wedding garment:' [\[Matthew 22:11\]](#). Just like the religious leaders, when confronted about his cavalier attitude to the requirements of the king he was 'speechless' [\[Matthew 22:12\]](#) 'Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.' [\[Matthew 22:15\]](#). thus demonstrating that the Word of God had no effect on their consciences.

What follows is amazing. There are three attacks on Jesus by the most unlikely alliances.

These attacks are triggered by the desire to take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor. [\[Luke 20:20\]](#). So we

see that so near to the death of Jesus the religious leaders still had not formulated a plan to arrest Jesus. It is for this reason that on the day when Jesus said Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. [\[Matthew 26:2\]](#) they were willing to pay Judas when he asked What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? [\[Matthew 26:15\]](#).

The first attack on Jesus

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
Paying taxes to Caesar	22:15-22	12:13-17	20:20-26		

Speaking of the Pharisees we are informed that 'they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians' [\[Matthew 22:16\]](#) An alliance between the Pharisees and the Herodians has only been seen once before in [Mark 3:6](#), where again the object was to 'destroy [him]' [\[Mark 3:6\]](#)

The alliance between the Pharisees and the Herodians is most surprising when their conflicting philosophies are understood. The Herodians, as their name suggests, were supporters of the family of the Herods. Herod was the leader appointed by the Romans over Israel. He was not a Jew. The Pharisees had separated themselves from the secular state in Israel. They viewed the Roman rulership and the corruption of the priesthood in the way that it was involved with Herod as a way of life they should avoid. Indeed the name 'Pharisee' is based on the Hebrew *pharez* which means divide. Thus we see two groups from totally opposite ends of the political spectrum joining forces against Jesus.

That the question 'Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?' [\[Matthew 22:17\]](#) is evident from their opening comments. Jesus sees through their hypocrisy responding 'Why temp ye me ye hypocrites?' [\[Matthew 22:18\]](#). His reply, which focuses on the dual responsibility towards the state and God silences them therefore 'they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.' [\[Matthew 22:22\]](#)

The second attack on Jesus

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
Sadducees question about resurrection	22:23-33	12:18-27	20:27-40		

Reinforcing the point that these events all happened on the same day the record continues 'The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him ..., ' [\[Matthew 22:23\]](#). Their attempt to trap Jesus was based on their miss-understanding of Scripture. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Therefore their question centered around the absurd question of the woman who had seven husbands and her position in the resurrection.

The Sadducees were a group of Jews who based all their teaching on the first five books of the Bible. That is the books of Moses. Jesus answer, which highlighted

that the doctrine of the resurrection was taught in the books of Moses, silenced the Sadducees.

Jesus had now dealt with the second onslaught on his authority. However the 'contradiction of sinners' [[Hebrews 12:3](#)] is not over yet. 'But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together'. [[Matthew 22:34](#)].

The third attack on Jesus

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
Which is the great commandment?	22:35-40				
Which is the first commandment?		12:28-34			

Whilst it may appear the Matthew and Mark are speaking about the same event a careful consideration of the details contained in the two Gospel records will demonstrate that there were, in fact, two different individuals who asked very similar questions.

Whilst the question 'which is the great commandment in the law' [[Matthew 22:36](#)] seems innocuous enough the Spirit informs us that he asked it 'tempting him' [[Matthew 22:35](#)]. Therefore even this question must be seen against the background of their attempts to undermine Jesus' position with the people.

In stating that the first commandment related to the attitude that should be manifested towards God and the second, the attitude that should be manifested to other men Jesus skilfully encompassed all aspects of the Law of Moses. These two commandments encompassed all the teaching of Scripture. Not just the Law of Moses. This is why Jesus was able to continue 'On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.' [[Matthew 22:40](#)].

The account in Mark 12 provides us with the second question on the matter of the commandments. Notice that whilst in Matthew the lawyer asked the question 'tempting him' no such motive is imputed to the scribe. Rather the scribe had heard that Jesus had 'answered them well' [[Mark 12:28](#)]. His motivation was different from that of the lawyer. The scribe wished to know more about the commandments in the law. He therefore asks about 'the first commandment of all' [[Mark 12:28](#)].

This man understood the law and the obligations it placed on the faithful believer for his responded to Jesus' words 'And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.' [[Mark 12:32-33](#)] which brought the response from Jesus 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.' [[Mark 12:34](#)]

This conversation with the scribe must have been a great comfort to Jesus during this day of bitter opposition to his authority and teaching.

A comparison of the two records which speak of the tempting question of the lawyer and the seeking after enlightenment by the scribe will help us to see that we are looking at two different, but related, events.

Matthew 22:35-40	Mark 12:28-34
35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,	28. And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?
36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?	29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:
37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.	30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.
38 This is the first and great commandment.	31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.	There is none other commandment greater than these.
40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.	32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:
	33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.
	34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

Whilst the three questions were all trick questions designed to trap Jesus in his words 'no man after that durst ask him any question.' [\[Mark 12:34\]](#) Surely the proverb is seen to be true 'The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand.' [\[Proverbs 12:7\]](#).

If we have ever had to deal with opposition to our position or have been involved in debate we will recognise the desire to 'quit whilst we are on top'. If we had been in Jesus' shoes at this time we might well have taken the opportunity of leaving the scene now our critics had been silenced. Our Lord was not concerned for his own welfare. Rather he was concerned for the salvation of men. For this reason he moves forward to encourage his audience to consider the implications of Scripture.

Jesus now questions the leaders

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
Whose son is Christ?	22:41-46	12:35-37	20:41-44		

Seizing the opportunity 'While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them ...' [[Matthew 22:41](#)]. However we should not think of this as Jesus just reproving the Pharisees for ' while he taught in the temple,' [[Mark 12:35](#)] he asked 'What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?' [[Matthew 22:42](#)]. The question about Christ, by contrast to the leaders' questions, was not a trick question. It was part of the continual instruction in the Law which Jesus engaged in.

Consistent with his three parables which he spoke earlier today Jesus is looking for a response from the leaders. 'They say unto him, The Son of David.' [[Matthew 22:42](#)] which produces the response from Jesus 'How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying ...' [[Matthew 22:43](#)]. Once again the Pharisees said nothing. The record tells us ' And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.' [[Matthew 22:46](#)].

This response contrasted starkly with the response of the common people who 'heard him gladly' [[Mark 12:37](#)].

This refusal to consider the implications of Scripture on the part of the Scribes and Pharisees provoked Jesus to say 'Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces,' [[Mark 12:38](#)]

Jesus warns his disciples and the people to beware of the leaders.

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
Woe unto you ... hypocrites	23:1-39	12:38-40	20:45-47		

Matthew 23 was spoken just prior to Jesus leaving Jerusalem to go to the mount of Olives three days before his death. However it was a distillation of what he had already said to the scribes and Pharisees on different occasions commencing from the time of his baptism.

	<----- parallel accounts - ---->					
Event	Matthew 23	Mark 12	Luke 20	Matthew	Mark	Luke

Heavy burdens	verse 4					11:46
to be seen of men	verse 5			6:5		
Uppermost seats	verse 6	verse 39				11:43
Greetings in the market	verse 7		verse 46			11:43
Devour widows uses	verse 14	verse 40	verse 47			
Make long prayers	verse 14	verse 40	verse 47			
Blind Pharisees	verse 19			15:4		
Tithe	verse 23					11:42
Mercy	verse 23			9:13 12:7		
Cups and platters	verse 25				7:4	
Whited sepulchres	verse 27,29					11:47
Generation of vipers	verse 33			3:7 12:34		3:7
All be fulfilled	verse 36			24:34	13:30	21:32
O Jerusalem	verse 37					13:34

The major criticism of the scribes and Pharisees centered around their self centered life style. They were concerned that what they did would be 'seen of men' [[Matthew 23:5](#)] They loved the 'uppermost seats' [[Matthew 23:6](#)] and 'greetings in the market place' [[Matthew 23:7](#)]. Even their motivation in prayer was 'for a pretence ...' [[Matthew 23:14](#)]

Whilst there was this outward show of worship and Godliness they were busy laying 'heavy burdens' [[Matthew 23:4](#)] devouring 'widow's houses' [[Matthew 23:14](#)].

They made a show of their religion by tithing trivial items [[Matthew 23:23](#)] and making a great show of observing the laws of cleanness in the way that they washed 'cups and platters' [[Matthew 24:26](#)]. However they were, in fact unclean despite this outward show. They were 'whited sepulchres' [[Matthew 23:27](#)] They were meticulous in the way in which they observed the letter of the law, making a great show of the traditions that their 'fathers' had added to what had been revealed through Moses. Their religion was one of 'works'. They thought that by doing things they were pleasing their God.

A recurring theme in the Scriptures is the fact that Yahweh does not want animal sacrifices. This is not to be taken to indicate that he did not institut sacrifices. He did, but they were added to remind Israel of their sinfulness, and not primarily as a means of pleasing Yahweh. 'Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor reommanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.'

[\[Jeremiah 7:21 - 23\]](#)

However Israel saw the offering of sacrifices as a virtue in themselves and forgot that the offering of the sacrifice was an advertisement of their sinfulness. Samuel had to reprove Saul on this point. Saul spared the Amalakites, in direct contravention of the word of Yahweh on the flimsy pretext that the people saved the animals alive to offer to the Lord. Saul, because he did not appreciate the value of obedience was reproved by Samuel with the words 'hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.' [[1 Samuel 15:22](#)]

This principle can be seen in other parts of Scripture:-

[Psalm 51:16 17](#), [Proverbs 21:3](#), [Isaiah 1:11 - 17](#), [Hosea 6:6](#), [Amos 5:21 - 24](#).

Jesus reinforced this point by appealing to some of those Scriptures to show that the leaders of his day had also missed the point.

Notice that Jesus's words in [Matt 23:37](#) are identical to those he used in [Luke 13:34](#)

[Matthew 23:37](#) O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them

[Luke 13:34](#) O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them

which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, *that 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!
as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!

This is a very powerful example of the way in which Jesus is drawing on the way he had spoken to the religious leaders in the past. He is making the same points again at this point in his ministry because his earlier words had not been heeded.

The use of Psalm 118 in the last week - a Passover Psalm

On the way in to Jerusalem	Matthew 21:9-10	Psalm 118:25-26
Have ye never read?	Matthew 21:42	Psalm 118:22
Ye will not see me until	Matthew 23:39	Psalm 118:26

Of the first occasion when the Psalm is sung we read 'And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;' [[Luke 19:37](#)]. They 'cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:' [[Mark 11:9](#)] 'Hosanna' quotes 'save now' [[Psalm 118:25](#)] 'blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord' quotes [Psalm 118:26](#). From Luke's account of the 'triumphal entry' we learn that it was not just the people but 'the whole multitude of his *disciples*.' [[Luke 19:37](#)] Maybe this incident gives us a little insight into the enthusiasm and expectation of the disciples at this time. The

Psalm was sung by Jews at Passover time as they looked for redemption through Messiah. The religious leaders were incensed that the people and disciples were calling out the words of the Psalm and applying them to Jesus for this reason. For this reason 'some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.' [\[Luke 19:39\]](#)

Two days later Jesus [\[Matthew 21:33-44\]](#) tells the parable of the wicked husbandmen. In response to the parable the religious leaders condemn themselves saying 'He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons'. [\[Matthew 21: 41\]](#). Against the background of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem the use of Psalm 118 again is most powerful, By observing 'Did ye never read in the scriptures, (quoting [Psalm 118:22](#)) The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.' [\[Matthew 21:42-43\]](#) Jesus re-focuses their minds on the same Psalm that the common people and the disciples used as Jesus entered the city two days earlier.

The leaders have their attention directed to the Psalm again when Jesus, after castigating them for their hypocrisy says 'Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' [\[Matthew 23:39\]](#), quoting [Psalm 118:26](#).

Thus it can be seen that rather than casual quotations from the Psalms we have a systematic use of Scripture to force the leaders to see that Jesus is, indeed, the Messiah spoken of in the Psalm. Furthermore, by appealing to 'the stone which the builders rejected' Jesus warns the leaders that they are about to reject the man of God's provision. The Messiah was here - but he did not fit in to their mould and so they did not recognise him.

The exhortation is clear. We are looking for Jesus to 'appear the second time' [\[Hebrews 9:28\]](#). However, through our own perceptions of what he should be like, we may not be ready for him. Whilst the establishment of the kingdom will be powerful and earth shattering it is clear from Jesus' teaching that there will be some of his disciples who will not be prepared for it. To those he will say 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels ...' [\[Matthew 25:41\]](#). Just as the religious leaders thought they were serving God and yet did not recognise The Messiah. We might think we are doing His will and yet actually rejected by our Lord at his appearing.

Still Three Days Before The Passover

Jesus leaves the leaders with the words 'your house is left unto you desolate' [\[Matthew 23:38\]](#) ringing in their ears. This is the end of his public ministry.

Jesus now gives his undivided attention to his disciples. He is never seen publicly teaching again from now to the end of the week. His public ministry has ended.

This is one reason why the meal in Bethany was held two days before the Passover even though Jesus arrived there six days before the Passover. Jesus knew that he had much to do during the week but that after the third day before the Passover he would be able to celebrate the raising of Lazarus with the family in Bethany. However this will be considered in more detail at the appropriate place in the week.

Jesus is now in the treasury

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
The poor widow's gift		12:41-44	21:1-4		late p.m.?

As Jesus leaves the temple he pauses by the treasury. He has spoken of the destruction of the temple and all that it stands for. As he sits he 'beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.' [[Mark 12:41](#)] Whilst he watched 'there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.' [[Mark 12:42](#)]. Jesus tells his disciples 'Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury': [[Mark 12:43](#)]. Her response contrasted starkly with those leaders who he warned the people about. She was oblivious of the eyes of Jesus who saw her generosity.

Jesus response appears to have triggered the disciples response when they 'spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts,' [[Luke 21:5](#)]. It seems that the disciples were awed by the sight of the temple . Jesus reminds them of what he has already told the religious leaders at least twice - 'As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.' [[Luke 21:6](#)]

Christ Our Passover

That Jesus was 'our Passover' [[1 Corinthians 15:7](#)] is not in doubt. He died at Passover time and was 'a lamb without blemish' [[1 Peter 1:19](#)].

However, in wonderful fulfillment of the details of the command in Exodus 12, even the events of the last week confirm the pattern of Jesus as the Passover lamb.

As the table below shows.

Events in Exodus 12	Date in Nisan	Days Before Passover	Events in Jesus' life
Lamb selected 12:3	10 Th.	5	Enters Jerusalem John 12:1-2
	11 Th.	4	Casts out money changers Matthew 21:12

	12 Th.	3	Leaders find no fault Matthew 22
	13 Th.	2	Feast in Bethany Mark 14:3
		1	Pilate finds no fault Luke 23:4
Lamb slain 12:6	14 Th.		Jesus dies Mark 15:34

The lamb was to be selected on the tenth day of the month and kept by the family in the house until it was sacrificed on the fourteenth day of the month. The Jews, during this time, ensured that the lamb was 'without blemish' [[Exodus 12:5](#)]. They did this by examining it to see that it conformed to God's requirements.

Likewise Jesus, during the time that he was in Jerusalem, was examined. He was firstly 'examined' by the religious leaders who, after the onslaught of Matthew 22, 'no man was able to answer him a word' [[Matthew 22:46](#)]. Jesus had silenced his Jewish critics. They had not been able to find any fault in him. During his trial by Pilate his innocence and faultless nature were recognised and he said three times 'I find no fault in him' [[John 18:38](#) [19:4, 6](#)]

Thus the gospel records present Jesus and the lamb which was kept by the family from the tenth day of the month Nisan which was faultless and therefore an acceptable sacrifice.

Jesus and The Disciples In The Temple and On The Mount Of Olives

Jesus and the disciples walk over the Kidron valley to the Mount of Olives where they sit down. Jesus then elaborates on his chilling words.

On the Mount of Olives - (on their way back to Bethany?)

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
The Olivet prophecy	24:1-36	13:1-32	21:5-36		evening
Watch, days of Noah	24:37-51				
Ten virgins	25:1-13				
The man travelling into a far country	25:14-31	13:33-37			
Sheep, goats and judgment	25:31-46				

Echoes Of The Olivet Prophecy During The Last Week of Jesus' Life

We have already alluded to the fact that Jesus had warned the religious leaders of the destruction of the temple. In fact he told them on two earlier occasions this week. The first was as he was entering in to Jerusalem on the ass. As he approached the city he lamented over the city [[Luke 19:43-44](#)]. The second time was when he spoke his final words to the religious leaders warning them that the desolation of their house was imminent [[Matthew 23:38](#)].

The Olivet Prophecy

Whereas the words to the religious leaders were words of judgment when Jesus speaks to the disciples about the destruction of the temple his concern is very different. When he spoke to the leaders he told them that the temple was to be destroyed. However when he spoke to his disciples he was concerned for their welfare during the turmoil that was to come.

Notice the emphasis in the 'Olivet Prophecy'

[Matthew 24:4](#) take heed

[Matthew 24:5](#) deceive

[Matthew 24:11](#) deceive

[Matthew 24:13](#) endure

[Matthew 24:24](#) deceive

[Matthew 24:25](#) told you before

[Matthew 24:42](#) watch

[Matthew 24:43](#) would have watched

[Matthew 24:44](#) Be ye also ready

[Matthew 25:13](#) watch therefore

The emphasis of the 'Olivet prophecy' is not that the disciples should be able to know exactly when the destruction of AD 70 was to come. Rather Jesus was concerned that they would be prepared for it when it did come. The warning for the disciples is that at the time of the end they would be in extreme danger from those who would overthrow their faith.

The lesson for ourselves is clear. Whilst we do not know the 'day nor the hour' - nor can we - we should take care to ensure that we are not deceived nor become complacent. Before AD 70 there were those in the community who questioned the destruction of Jerusalem 'Where is the promise of his coming' [[2 Peter 3:4](#)].

The immediate focus of Jesus words is the destruction of the temple by the Romans which took place in AD 70. Seen against the two earlier occasions when Jesus warns the leaders of the destruction of their house we cannot escape the conclusion that Jesus immediate focus is the events of AD 70. A consideration of two parallel passages will show that this is so.

[Matthew 24:15](#) When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place,

[Luke 21:20](#) And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies,

Luke explains that in the context of the destruction of the temple the 'abomination of desolation' is actually 'Jerusalem compassed with armies'

The sudden destruction when the people were not aware is likened to the days of Noah. People were going about their routine daily life, oblivious of the impending flood. Likewise when the Romans were to come against Jerusalem the people would be busy with their own lives and unconcerned about the impending destruction.

This warning of impending judgment coupled with the apathy of the people was used by Jesus to warn his disciples 'Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.' [[Matthew 24:42](#)]

Not only were they to watch but each one of them was to be 'a faithful and wise servant ...' [[Matthew 24:45](#)]

The warning for us is clear. It is not good enough to be aware that Jesus is going to come again. The realisation that he is to appear should cause us to be 'faithful and wise servants' who will be 'found so doing' [[Matthew 24:46](#)] when he appears.

The Olivet Prophecy and Luke 17

There are striking similarities between Luke 17 and the Olivet Prophecy. However, interestingly, there are no links between Luke 17 and Luke 21. The links can be seen in the table below.

Luke 17	Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
17:24 lightning	24:27		
17:26 days of Noe	24:37		
17:31 on the housetop	24:17	13:15	
17:34 one taken	24:40		
17:35 grinding together	24:41		
17:36 two in the field	24:40		
17:37 eagles gathered	24:28		

It is difficult to know for certain where Jesus was when he gave the warning about the destruction of Jerusalem in [Luke 17:20-37](#). However in [Luke 17:11](#) 'he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee' and that the event which immediately precedes this warning is the healing of the ten lepers in that region. Furthermore Jesus does not arrive in Jerusalem until [Luke 19:29](#) when he arrives at 'Bethphage and Bethany'. Therefore we can be sure that Luke 17 and the Olivet prophecy

paralleled in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 was spoken on a different occasion to [Luke 17:20-37](#).

The prophecy continues on into Matthew 25 with a series of parables. The chapter division is in an unfortunate position. Chapter 25 is also spoken on the Mount of Olives and should be seen in that light. The 'Olivet Prophecy' is concerned with far more than answering the disciples' question 'when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?' [[Matthew 24:3](#)]

As has been listed above we see that the parables are:-

	Matthew	Mark
Ten virgins	25:1-13	
The man travelling into a far country	25:14-31	13:33-37
Sheep, goats and judgment	25:31-46	

We remember that the disciples were concerned to know '*when* shall these things be' and '*what* shall be the sign' [[Matthew 24:3](#)]. The first of these three parables which we style 'The parable of the ten virgins' addresses these two elements of the disciples' question. The conclusion of the parable 'for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.' [[Matthew 25:13](#)] highlights that the parable relates to the disciples' question. However Jesus is careful, in the parable, to warn the disciples against expecting that they could predict when the events he had spoken of would take place.

Indeed, in the parable, even though some were prepared for the coming of the bridegroom because he 'tarried' they all slumbered and slept'. [[Matthew 25:5](#)]. The issue was whether or not the virgins had prepared for the coming of the bridegroom. Whilst all ten had lamps when they began their vigil only the wise 'took oil in their vessels with their lamps' [[Matthew 25:4](#)]. The implication is that the 'foolish' anticipated an early appearance of the bridegroom. The wise, on the other hand, were prepared for a long wait. In this parable Jesus was teaching his disciples that if they were to be 'wise' they should be prepared for the possibility of a prolonged wait for the fulfilment of the things he was speaking of.

The second parable - of the man travelling into a far country - is like the first. Jesus begins this parable with the warning 'Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.' [[Mark 13:33](#)]. Whilst we might think that these words relate to what has gone before they are linked with the parable which follows with the words 'For the son of man...' [[Mark 13:34](#)] where the warning is 'Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning:' [[Mark 13:35](#)]. However, by considering this parable as recorded in Matthew's record we gain additional information. Not only were the disciples to 'watch' and be prepared but they were also to work.

Whilst 'talents' were distributed 'to every man according to his several ability;' [\[Matthew 25: 15\]](#) each was expected to be industrious with those things committed to their charge. The two servants who were given the five and two talents are equally commended by their master at his return even though their eventual responsibilities were different. However the servant who had the one talent received a different response from his master at his return. The reason for the rejection was a consequence of the servant's assessment of his master. Because he feared his master's reaction if he were to fail he was inactive. Jesus is teaching his disciples that they should not, for fear of failure, hide away that which was committed to them. The disciple who feared his lord was the man who did not understand that God and Jesus anticipate failure but are looking for commitment.

The third parable that Jesus spoke on the mount of Olives at this time was to teach the disciples that they were unable to assess who was doing the Father's will and who was not by basing their judgment on what they saw. The dividing of 'sheep from the goats' [\[Matthew 25:32\]](#) demonstrates this. Whilst we might think that we would have no problem noticing the difference between sheep and goats this is not necessarily so in Israel. There are strains of sheep and goats which are very similar in appearance. In the parable the differences between the sheep and the goats was not to be found by looking on the outward appearance. In reality the difference was to be seen in the way that the people represented by the sheep and the goats responded to others. The sheep cared for others doing things 'as unto Christ' [\[Ephesians 6:5\]](#) The goat class were selfish and gave no thought to others.

The faithful disciples of Jesus manifests his love for his master by showing his love to others for 'If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' [\[1 John 4:20\]](#)

Therefore, combining the three parables which Jesus told in response to the disciples' question 'when ... what' we notice that Jesus warns them against expecting his immediate return and counsels them to be sure that they work for him and manifest their love for him in the way that they respond to others.

Set against the warnings in Matthew 24 to 'watch' 'take heed' which we have already noticed we must appreciate that Jesus is doing far more than foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem and his eventual appearance.

The focus of Jesus' teaching has moved from speaking to the religious leaders to preparing his disciples for his death. Therefore we ought not to be surprised to see the 'Olivet Prophecy' directed at the disciples own problems.

The warnings of the message are just as relevant for us today. If we focus only on the way in which Jesus predicted the overthrow of Jerusalem and his appearance we will miss much of the concern which Jesus shows for his followers. We might even find ourselves amongst the 'foolish', be a 'goat' or be the 'wicked servant'.

Summary Of The Third Day Before The Passover

This is the longest day in the last week of Jesus' life. That is there is more recorded about this day than any other, with the possible exception of the day of the crucifixion.

The day commenced, according to the Gospel records, with the disciples seeing the withered fig tree that Jesus had cursed yesterday. This fig tree is highlighted again in the Olivet prophecy at the end of today.

On arriving in the temple Jesus was confronted about the cleansing of the temple yesterday. Focus is made on the baptism of John which silences Jesus' critics.

What followed is a threefold attack on Jesus position which he silences. The only comfort that Jesus received at this time was the thoughts and question of the scribe who heard that Jesus had answered the lawyer 'well'. Jesus then uses the opportunity to confront his critics with a question about Christ. This question confounded his critics. Jesus then speaks to the leaders in parable showing them that God was going to destroy the temple because of their wickedness. He then followed this up with a stinging criticism of the Scribes and Pharisees. This ended his public ministry, so to speak. From now on the Gospels focus on Jesus' care for his disciples.

The Olivet prophecy was given to warn the disciples about the events which were to come upon Jerusalem. Parables are built into the prophecy to reinforce the warnings.

[Click here for the next part of this Study](#)

The Two Feasts

Two Days Before The Passover

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
Sanhedrin plot to kill Jesus	26:1-5	14:1-2	22:1-2		Morning

As has been noted already Jesus public preaching to the religious leaders is over. His focus is now on the needs of his disciples. Against this background the way in which the records tell us about this day is interesting.

The next two days have one thing in common. We know very little about what took place during the day. The focus is on the vents in the evening. This is rather like the fifth day before the Passover which was the day on which there was the 'triumphal

entry' into Jerusalem. On that day we learn about the entry into Jerusalem. which was but one small fragment of the day.

The main focus of this day two days before the Passover is the meal in Bethany which we will return to in due course. The only other event recorded is that the Sanhedrin plotted to kill Jesus. Thus, even though this event is recorded, it actually tells us nothing about what Jesus did. It just sets the scene for Judas' actions in the evening when he goes to the chief priests.

The anointing of Jesus

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
Mary Anoints Jesus for his burial	26:6-13	14:3-9		12:2-8	Evening
Judas' agreement to betray Jesus	26:14-16	14:10-11	22:3-6		

We have already considered 'Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany ... There they made him a supper ...' [[John 12:1-2](#)]. Whilst it might appear that John is telling us that the meal in Bethany was, in fact, six days before the Passover, we have to conclude that the meal was, in fact two days before the Passover.

Both Matthew [[26:2 and 6](#)] and Mark [[14:1 and 3](#)] place the meal in Bethany two days before the Passover. If we say that John is speaking of a meal six days before the Passover we have to accept one of the following conclusions.

1] There were two meals in Bethany in the last week of Jesus' life and that Jesus was anointed with precious ointment by a woman on both occasions.

or

2] Either John or Matthew and Mark are mistaken about which day on which the one meal took place.

Actually, the logical conclusion that should be drawn is that all the gospel writers are speaking about the same event which took place two days before the Passover. The differences between the accounts are a consequence of the objectives of each inspired writer.

It is possible to develop a detailed table which show similarities between the meal in Bethany as recorded in John and the one recorded in Matthew and Mark. The object being to 'prove' from the similarities that one event is spoken of. On the other hand it is possible to develop a detailed table which highlights the differences between John on the one hand and Matthew and Mark on the other. The object here is to 'prove' that the meal spoken of by John is a different meal from the one spoken of by Matthew and Mark. Again it is possible to compare the record in Matthew with

the one in Mark and show differences or similarities, depending on one's persuasion to 'prove' that they speak of one or two meals.

This approach is futile. It presumes that similarities or differences between different accounts can, of themselves, 'prove' whether two accounts speak of the same event. This approach is futile because it is possible to compare two or more accounts of the same event and yet notice differences. Further an approach which seeks to use similarities or differences runs the risk of missing the fact that each writer, by the Spirit, has clear objectives in mind. The reader should be looking for themes in the gospels which explain why each record is as it is. This is supremely relevant when considering the meal at Bethany.

The meal at Bethany was to commemorate the raising of Lazarus. This point has already been made when considering [John 12:1](#) before we looked at '5 Days Before The Passover' We should read John 12 with this in mind. [John 12:1](#) fixes the day of Jesus arrival in Bethany and therefore enables us to draw the conclusions we have been making about timing throughout the rest of the week. However [John 12:2-11](#) is an account of events which took place two days before the Passover. They are placed here, in parenthesis, because they link thematically with the events recorded in John 11 before Jesus went to 'a city called Ephraim' [[John 11:54](#)].

That the meal was held two days before the Passover even though Jesus arrived in Bethany six days before the Passover may relate to Jesus' workload during the week. Consider:-

Jesus' arrival in Bethany six days before the Passover would not be heralded by a phone call to the family there. Jesus' arrival would be, probably, an unexpected and pleasant surprise. The raising of their brother Lazarus would still be very much in the minds of Mary and Martha and his father Simon. Jesus left Bethany in rather a hurry after the raising of Lazarus because of the plot to kill him [[John 11:53](#)]. Now, the family might have thought that it would be a good time to have a meal together to celebrate this event. After all it was a joyous time of the year. The Passover was to be celebrated in six days. The family in Bethany were totally unaware of what was going to happen during the week and the work that Jesus had to do before his crucifixion.

Jesus, on the other hand, knew that he had much to do, but that he would finish the work with the religious leaders part way through the week, thereafter he would focus on the needs of his disciples specifically. Knowing this he responded to the enthusiastic and loving offer of the meal with the suggestion that it be postponed until two days before the Passover.

When the alabaster box is broken 'the house was filled with the odour of the ointment' [[John 12:3](#)] Whilst we do not see a house being filled with an odour elsewhere in Scripture the concept of a house being filled is seen in a number of places in Scripture. [1 Kings 8:10,11](#) and [2 Chronicles 5:13,14](#) speak of the glory of

God filling Solomon's temple. It was seen in the cloud which filled the temple. When Solomon, at the dedication of the temple finished praying, the glory of God filled the temple [[2 Chronicles 7:1,2](#)]. When Ezekiel, in vision, saw the destruction of Solomon's temple by the Babylonians he saw the glory of God as it filled the house of God before it departed from the city [[Ezekiel 10:3,4](#)]. When Haggai [[2:7](#)] says 'I will fill this house with glory' he is looking to the time when the temple which Ezekiel describes is built when he says 'So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house' [[Ezekiel 43:5](#)]

So when the New Testament introduces the idea of the house being filled [[John 12:3](#)] in the context of the burial of Jesus the link between Jesus' death and the manifestation of the glory of God in the house can be seen. The 'house' of which we speak is, in fact, the ecclesia 'for ye are the temple of the living God' [[2 Corinthians 6:16](#)] So it is fitting that 'there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house' [[Acts 2:2](#)].

This contrasts horribly with the mentality of the sinner who would entice the son to 'fill his house with spoil'. [[Proverbs 1:13](#)] This is rather like Judas who, when the house in Bethany was filled with the odour of the ointment, went to the high priests greedy for 'the rewards of iniquity.' [[Acts 1:18](#)] We must ask 'What motivated Judas to behave in the way that he did?' Whilst we cannot be sure about the motives which caused Judas to go to the chief priests when Jesus was anointed by Mary the gospel records give clues which present a startling picture.

Judas's Family.

Consider the following passages:-

[Matthew 26:6](#) "Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper. ...
"

[John 12:4](#) "... then one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son ..."

Matthew 26 mentions "two days before the Passover" [[v2](#)]. Jesus was in the house of Simon the leper when a woman comes with a box of ointment and poured it on his head.

John 12 records events commencing "six days before the Passover ..." [[v 1](#)]. He is having a meal which "they" made for him. The context is that of being in a house at Bethany where Martha served. [[v1-2](#)]. If Martha was making the meal it would seem reasonable that she was in her own home. We know that she lived in Bethany because Lazarus was her brother and he lived in Bethany. [[John 11:1-2](#)].

Matthew 26 and John 12 speak of the same event. Both records are recounting events just prior to Jesus' death and have Jesus in the same place. Matthew 26 speaks of "two days before the Passover" whilst John 12 has "six days". This is

because Matthew is presenting a chronological account whilst John's record is thematic. The association with 'six days before the Passover' the meal and the anointing of Jesus is linked thematically with the raising of Lazarus which is recorded in the previous chapter [John 11]. John's record aims to link the raising of Lazarus with the meal to show that the meal was a celebration of Lazarus being raised from the dead.

Additionally Matthew deals more with the history of events in the last week before introducing "two days before the Passover", whilst John gives little information about events before "six days before the Passover", rather than concentrating on specific events in detail then spends a lot of time dealing with events in the upper room [[John 13-17](#)].

Who Is Related To Whom?

1] We see that Lazarus was the brother of Mary and Martha.

2] Judas' father was Simon.

3] Mary and Martha's father was Simon the leper. Simon and Simon the leper are the same person.

4] Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived in Bethany

5] Simon the Leper is Simon (Judas' father)

6] Therefore Mary, Martha, were sisters to Lazarus and Judas Iscariot.

Developing a family tree we see the following:-

Judas was the brother of Lazarus! This suggestion provides a possible explanation for his behaviour. For three and a half years Judas had 'companied' [[Acts 1:21](#)] with Jesus. There is no record that Jesus made any special provision or had any celebration for him. On the other hand Lazarus, who appears on the scene from nowhere, received a great deal of attention from Jesus at this time. Judas, it is suggested, felt pushed out by his brother who was getting all the attention. Even his sisters Mary and Martha, were paying more attention to Jesus and probably Lazarus than they were to him.

We know that he was a thief [[John 12:6](#)] and it may be this, coupled with his sullenness at being ousted, in his own eyes, by his brother Lazarus which prompted his action.. Judas was jealous. Maybe also he was upset at having been so openly

rebuked by Jesus for it was Judas who said 'Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?' [[John 12:5](#)] and was therefore rebuked before the disciples and his family.

It has already been suggested that the unique section in Luke which includes the parable of the prodigal son was spoken by Jesus whilst he was in 'a city called Ephraim' [[John 11:54](#)]. This places that parable between the raising of Lazarus which took place before the time spent in the city of Ephraim and the meal in Bethany two days before the Passover.

We have demonstrated that the gospel records indicate that Judas Iscariot and Lazarus were brothers. In the parable of the prodigal son [[Luke 15:11-32](#)] Jesus develops his lesson by contrasting the behaviour of two brothers. The prodigal son wasted his share of the inheritance and then was welcomed home by the father whereas the elder son, had remained with his father all the time the younger son was away squandering his share of the inheritance. The setting, and the language that Jesus puts into the mouth of the father echo the details of the raising of Lazarus and are picked up in the details of the way in which Judas behaved at the meal in Bethany.

Parable Of Prodigal Luke 15	Lazarus	The Meal In Bethany
v11 two sons		John 12:2 Lazarus and Judas both there [two sons]
15:23 Make merry because son alive		The reason for the meal in Bethany
15:28 Elder son would not go into the feast		Matthew 26:14 Judas went out of the meal
15:24 dead / alive	John 11:44 Lazarus raised from the dead	
15:28 brother angry		John 12:4 Judas angry
15:32 this thy brother	Judas and Lazarus are brothers	Judas and Lazarus brothers

The parable of the prodigal son was spoken after the raising of Lazarus and before the meal in Bethany by the man that 'needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man. [[John 2:25](#)]. Jesus 'knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.' [[John 6:64](#)]. Therefore we can see the parable of the prodigal son as an exhortation to Judas, against the background of the raising of Lazarus. Jesus, anticipating what was in Judas' mind, attempted to instruct Judas about his own thought patterns. Jesus was seeking for repentance in Judas and a change in the way he thought about himself. The meal in Bethany demonstrated how Judas was so like the elder brother who would not go into the feast.

The Timing of The Anointing Of Jesus And The Meal In Bethany

We have noticed that John spoke of the raising of Lazarus - indeed he is the only writer who does. Also he is the only writer to tell us that Lazarus was at the meal in Bethany saying [[John 12:2](#)] "... but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him." Another link between the raising of Lazarus in John 11 and John's account of the meal in Bethany is the mention by name of "Martha" and "Mary" [[John 12:2,3](#)]. By contrast neither woman is named in Matthew 26 or Mark 14.

So John places the account of the meal at the point of entry into Bethany because of the thematic link with the raising of Lazarus in the previous chapter.

With this in mind a consideration of [John 12:1-12](#) will enable us to conclude that the reference to "six days before the Passover" is a comment upon when Jesus arrived in Bethany. The account of the meal is placed in parenthesis because of its thematic link with the previous chapter. Matthew and Mark, on the other hand, place the event where, chronologically, it occurred as they had no reason to recount it elsewhere. So if we wish to 'harmonise' John 12 with Matthew 26 and Mark 14 we would realise that [John 12:2-11](#) is inserted as a digression. The 'chronological' way to read John would be John 12:1 then continue at John 12:12.

John has already digressed in a similar way when speaking of the raising of Lazarus for [[John 11:1-2](#)] "Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. *It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick*". The section *in italics* is the section which is the digression here. Now whichever gospel record we review it is clear that the raising of Lazarus occurred before Jesus' was anointed in Bethany. Therefore we have evidence to support the suggestion that John does digress in his gospel. This lends weight to the suggestion that the comment about the meal in Bethany recorded in John 12 is a digression.

We should realise that we have not arrived at the conclusion that [John 12:2-11](#) is a digression in order to allow us to read John in a way which makes it consistent with Matthew 26 and Mark 14. The realisation that John is structured differently because of the thematic link with the raising of Lazarus is just the outcome of the study we have undertaken so far. Now we have to probe a little further to try to understand this thematic approach which John takes.

Parallels Between The Meal In Bethany And The Meal In The Upper Room

We have demonstrated that the meal in Bethany and the meal in the upper room, which we call 'The Last Supper' took place on consecutive evenings. The meal in Bethany was to celebrate the raising of Lazarus. The meal in the upper room was to memorialise Jesus' death. There are striking parallels between the two meals.

	Two Days Before The Passover in Bethany	One Day Before The Passover in the Upper Room	
--	---	---	--

	Jesus is with friends at Bethany	Jesus was with his disciples	
John 12:1	along with the disciples	- his friends	John 15:14
John 12:2	Martha Served	I ... serve	Luke 22:27
Matthew 26:7	Poured	poureth	John 13:5
John 12:3	wiped his feet	wash ... feet	John 13:5
John 12:3	wiped his feet	Wiped [feet]	John 13:5
John 12:4	should betray	one will betray	Matt. 26:21
John 12:7	Day of burying	Blood ... shed	Matt. 26:28
John 12:10	Consulted to kill Lazarus	Counsel to kill Jesus	John 11:53
Mark 14:10	Judas went out	Judas went out	John 13:30
John 12:11	Many believed on Jesus	Many believed on him	John 12:42
	[because of the raising of Lazarus]	[because of the raising of Lazarus]	

The similarities are interesting - but we must be able to benefit from what we see.

The raising of Lazarus incited many to believe on Jesus [[John 12:11](#)]. This 'belief' extended to the 'chief rulers' of whom 'many believed' [[John 12:42](#)] though on both occasions the leaders wanted to kill Lazarus [[John 12:10](#)] and Jesus [[John 11:53](#)].

We have already noticed that the leaders did not act because 'they feared the people' [[Mark 12:12](#)]. This behaviour is the behaviour of one who is unwilling to live a life consistent with his beliefs. We can be just the same. We can see a situation in ecclesial life about which we should speak. However we keep silent because we are concerned how others will react to what we say.

The two meals were both intimate events. On both occasions Jesus and his friends and some family members were together. We can imagine the warmth at the meal in Bethany. Jesus and the disciples had endured a tiring three days in Jerusalem. The friendship and warmth of that family in Bethany would have been a pleasant respite from the barbs and deceit of Jesus' opponents . Jesus was amongst friends. One would envisage that there would be no threat there.

The following night, in the upper room, he was with his friends - the disciples. Whilst there was rivalry amongst them as to who was to be the greatest [[Luke 22:24](#)] there was not open hostility against Jesus as there had been in the city during the days leading up to the meal in Bethany. Even though the disciples did not know what was going to happen to their Lord and were puzzled about some of the things he had said, they bore him no animosity. However at both intimate meals a betrayer was there [In Bethany [John 12:4](#) / [Matthew 26:14](#)]

[in the upper room [Matthew 26:21-25](#)]

Judas behaviour on both occasions demonstrated that he did not want to be with Jesus. His mind and heart were elsewhere. When he left the meal in Bethany to go to the chief priest in Jerusalem he walked some three miles, in the dark, into the city. So unhappy was he about the 'waste'.

We will return to the issue of Judas' departure from the meals when we consider the events of the 'Last Supper'.

By contrast to Judas, who presented his concern as being 'for the poor' [[John 12:5](#)], the woman anointed Jesus feet because of her love for him. The cost of the ointment was not an issue to her. Her response, by contrast to Judas, focused on Jesus rather than on herself. We learn of Judas' motives when we read '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](#)]. Mary's thoughts were totally different for Jesus tells us that 'against the day of my burying hath she kept this ointment'. [[John 12:7](#)]

Summary Of The Second Day Before The Passover

We learn little of the events of the daytime activities of Jesus. The record focuses on the meal in Bethany which was to celebrate the raising of Lazarus from the dead..

The anointing of Jesus in Bethany and the washing of the disciples feet in the upper room have striking similarities. Likewise the behaviour of Judas on both occasions is a powerful warning. During both meals he 'went out' because he preferred his own plans to the fellowship of Jesus and his fellow disciples. Lesson about ourselves are clear to be seen. We can be like Judas and Peter in our life in Christ

One Day Before the Passover

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
Preparation for the Passover meal	26:17-20	14:12-17	22:7-14		Morning
Disciples strive 'who is the greatest'			22:24-30		Evening
Jesus washes the disciples' feet				13:1-20	
Identification of Jesus' betrayer	26:21-25	14:18-21	22:21-23	13:21-30	
Last Supper instituted	26:26-29	14:22-25	22:15-20		
Judas leaves				13:32	
A new commandment I give you				13:31-35	
Prediction of Peter's denial	26:31-35	14:27-31	22:31-38	13:36-38	
Discourses in the Upper Room				14:1-31	
Then they sung an hymn	26:30	14:26			
Then they leave the Upper Room				14:31	

***From Blunt's Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology**

Article:- Paschal Controversy

Page 543

Various difficulties have surrounded the reckoning of Easter from the first origin of the Christian Church. The three synoptic Gospels are unanimous [[Matthew 26:17-19](#), [Mark 14:12-16](#), [Luke 22:7-9](#)] in their statement that our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist at his last Paschal Supper. St. John is equally precise in saying that the Jews would not enter the judgment hall 'lest they should be defiled' through blood pollution, and be precluded from eating the Passover in the evening [[John 18:28](#)].

How came it then that our Lord should have celebrated the Passover on one evening and that the Jews should have deferred the memorial feast till the corresponding period of the next day? This is a real difficulty, but the following is probably the solution.

Since the appearing of the new moon determined the Jewish calendar, an assembly was held in the Temple, on the closing day of each month, to receive intelligence respecting the first [sighting] of the new moon. If nothing was announced, a day was intercalated; yet if the appearance of the moon was afterwards authenticated the intercalation was cancelled. This naturally caused much confusion, especially in the critical month of Nisan. Hence (Talmud, Rosh Hashanah Gem. 1) it was permitted that in doubtful cases the Passover might be observed on two consecutive days.

For the intercalation of a day at Jerusalem could hardly be known in Galilee; and according to Maimonides, in these more distant parts of Judaea, the Passover was in some years kept one day, at Jerusalem on another. Our Lord coming in from the country followed the letter of the Law, but the main body of the Jews observing the 'tradition of the elders', sacrificed the Passover on the following day, in consequence of the intercalation of a day in the preceding month. Thus our Lord ate the Passover on the evening of the 14th Nisan, and was upon the same day the 'very Paschal Lamb' by the death of the cross.

John Henry Blunt [not the 'coincidence' man]. Published 1892 'New Edition'
published by Longmans Green & Co.

This day, like the previous day, is one on which we are told very little about what Jesus and the disciples did during the daylight hours. All we learn about the events of the day time is that the disciples went to make ready for the evening meal. Rather like yesterday the emphasis is on the events which took place in the evening

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
Preparation for the Passover meal	26:17-20	14:12-17	22:7-14		Morning

John does not detail these events. We have already noticed that John makes little mention of the intervening days between the triumphal entry five days before the Passover and the meal in Bethany two days before the Passover. After talking about the triumphal entry and the time Jesus was in the temple John moves to the

end of the week. Leaving aside any mention of the preparation for the 'Last Supper' he takes us straight into the meal.

Matthew Mark and Luke indicate that the disciples question 'Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover?'. The initiative came from the disciples. This may be an indication of how Jesus is concerned for his followers to think for themselves. It would be easy for the disciples to wait for Jesus to make decision on every matter. Jesus, knowing that the Passover was drawing very close, waited for the disciples' question to make them take the initiative for themselves.

The lesson is clear for us today. We might be inclined to leave decisions to others whom we think are more capable of dealing with the issues. However the lesson is that we should rely on our own initiative when we know something needs to be done rather than leaving the decision to others.

All three records demonstrate an air of secrecy about the place where the meal was to be prepared. Doubtless all the disciples heard the instructions given to Peter and John but the instructions, in themselves, were not sufficient for any of the disciples to know the location. Peter and John, when they entered the city, were provided with signs which Jesus had told them they would encounter. Therefore they were the only two of the disciples who knew, before the meal, where it was to be held.

We know that Judas had already agreed to betray Jesus. The secrecy of the location for the Last Supper could well have been designed by Jesus in order that Judas would not be able to interfere with the Last Supper. This meal was of supreme importance to Jesus. He did not want any disturbance during the meal. In fact, by organising the meal in a secret location, he was planning the way in which he would be taken by the chief priest. Even in this matter his concern was for the welfare of his disciples.

Once they were in the upper room Jesus told his disciples 'with desire I have desired to eat this Passover before I suffer' [[Luke 22:15](#)] and he 'sat down with the twelve' [[Luke 22:14](#)] and instructed the disciples about the bread and the cup. We will return to that aspect of the meal later. It was during the meal that Jesus told his disciples 'one of you will betray me' [[Matthew 26:21](#), [Mark 14:18](#), [Luke 22:31](#) and [John 13:21](#)]. This announcement produces a seemingly strange response from the disciples. 'And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.' [[Luke 22:24](#)]. It was this event which prompted Jesus to wash the disciples feet. [[John 13:1-20](#)].

The strife 'which of them should be accounted the greatest' is a feature of the disciples thought patterns right through the ministry of Jesus. In [Mark 9:34](#) the disciples had been arguing 'in the way' on this matter. On the way to Jerusalem this issue raises it's ugly head again. Peter had asked 'what shall we have ...' [[Matthew 19:27](#)] because the disciples had 'left all' [[Mark 10:28](#)]. Jesus promises all of them that 'ye which have followed me ... shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve

tribes of Israel.' [[Matthew 19:28](#)]. This promise prompted the 'mother of Zebedee's children' [[Matthew 20:20](#)], probably encouraged by her two sons James and John [see [Mark 10:35](#)] to ask that the two most important thrones of judgment be reserved for them. 'And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.' [[Mark 10:41](#)].

It might seem strange that the disciples responded like this in the upper room. However we should realise that the disciples still did not know what was going to happen. They had no idea that Jesus was going to be betrayed that night and crucified the next day. The disciples were consumed with self interest.

We should be able to see ourselves in the disciples at this point in time. So often we do not respond to the needs of others because we are so wrapped up in our own plans and expectations. We can be oblivious to the needs of others even though the words and signs show that there is something to be concerned about.

Whilst the argument continued amongst the disciples 'Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.' [John 13:2-6]. The record could easily have simply told us that Jesus washed the disciples feet. However the record makes extensive comment about how Jesus prepared himself and how he washed the disciples feet.

When considering the meal in Bethany parallels can be seen between the actions of Mary when she anointed Jesus' and the way in which Jesus washed the disciples feet in the upper room. Those similarities are reproduced again for convenience.

	Two Days Before The Passover in Bethany	One Day Before The Passover in the Upper Room	
	Jesus is with friends at Bethany	Jesus was with his disciples	
John 12:1	along with the disciples	- his friends	John 15:14
John 12:2	Martha Served	I ... serve	Luke 22:27
Matthew 26:7	Poured	poureth	John 13:5
John 12:3	wiped his feet	wash ... feet	John 13:5
John 12:3	wiped his feet	Wiped [feet]	John 13:5
John 12:4	should betray	one will betray	Matt. 26:21
John 12:7	Day of burying	Blood ... shed	Matt. 26:28
John 12:10	Consulted to kill Lazarus	Counsel to kill Jesus	John 11:53
Mark 14:10	Judas went out	Judas went out	John 13:30
John 12:11	Many believed on Jesus	Many believed on him	John 12:42

	[because of the raising of Lazarus]	[because of the raising of Lazarus]	
--	-------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	--

We should conclude that the way in which the two events are recorded are designed to cause us to see similarities between the two events.

One issue which has exercised Bible students for a long time is 'did Mary anoint Jesus head, his feet, or both his head and his feet?' This question is raised because of the way in which the gospel records present data about the event.

Consider the three accounts of the anointing of Jesus in Bethany and where Jesus was anointed

[Matthew 26:7](#) 'poured it on his head'

[Mark 14:3](#) 'poured it on his head.'

[John 12:3](#) 'anointed the feet of Jesus '

As we have already seen, that we should consider the theme which each writer is developing through the Spirit. We should not make our focus the differences between the records as if this is the major issue. We should appreciate that each writer was moved by the Holy Spirit to develop his record in the way that he did. It is naive in the extreme to conclude that the differences indicate problems with inspiration. Differences in Scripture between parallel accounts require careful examination as the very differences often indicate detailed themes.

Looking at John's gospel we note that it is John who alone tells us that Jesus' feet were anointed. It is John who alone speaks of the washing of the disciples' feet. We must recognise that John, by the Spirit, is wishing us to see this link between the two events. When considering the reaction of individuals at the anointing of Jesus at Bethany and the washing of the disciples' feet in the upper room some interesting features are seen.

Anointing of Jesus' feet	Washing the disciples feet
John 12:3 feet anointed	John 13:5 feet washed
John 12:4 Judas indignant	John 13:8 Peter indignant
Matthew 26:10 Judas rebuked	John 13:10 Peter rebuked
Matthew 26:16 Judas betrayed Jesus	John 13:9 Peter contrite

These details invite us to compare Judas and Peter. Both Judas and Peter are indignant at the anointing. Both were reproved by Jesus. Judas was invited to consider that the poor were always with them. Peter had to realise that he had to learn humility and accept the consequences of his unwillingness to be the servant. Judas did not learn the lesson. Peter was of a totally different make up. He was

willing to accept the rebuke of the Lord. This marks the difference between Judas and Peter. They both figure prominently in the last two meals that Jesus shared, and both miss the point of what is happening. Judas could not respond to the Lord. Peter did.

Judas demonstrated that he was not at one with Jesus and the disciples during the meal in Bethany or the meal in the upper room. Judas left the meal in Bethany to go and arrange the betrayal with the chief priest. [[Mark 14:10](#)]. As the meal would be in the evening we have to conclude that Judas left 'at night' even though the record does not say as much. Likewise he also left the upper room to go to the chief priests 'and it was night' [[John 13:30](#)]

On two occasions, during intimate meals, Judas demonstrated that his mind was elsewhere. He was more concerned to receive the 'reward of iniquity' [[Acts 1:18](#)] than have fellowship with his Lord and the other disciples.

The Same Night In Which He Was Betrayed ...

When Paul introduces the breaking of bread in 1 Corinthians 11 he reminds us of Judas' behaviour saying 'For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same *night in which he was betrayed took bread: ...*' [[1 Corinthians 11:23](#)]. This is a clear reference to the behaviour of Judas Iscariot in the upper room. Our familiarity with the record probably means that we do not notice that this is a rather discordant way to introduce the breaking of bread. The reason for this discordant aspect to his introduction is because there was a discordant spirit in the ecclesia at Corinth. Thus the Apostle is concerned to focus the believer's mind on the potential for going through the ritual of the breaking of bread without having a mind which has been affected by what it entails.

We have already seen that Judas had planned to absent himself from the meal in the upper room in order to conclude his evil deal with the chief priests. Last night he had made the arrangement to deliver Jesus to them [[Matthew 26:14-15](#)]. Now he sought an opportunity. This evening, when the disciples and Jesus were on their own would provide the ideal opportunity. Doubtless this is the reason why Jesus had kept the location of the meal secret from the majority of the disciples. Now Judas knew where they were he would be able to advise the chief priests who would be able to come and capture him without the knowledge of the common people. All through the meal Judas would be seeking an opportunity to leave and make his way to the chief priests. His mind would not be on the matters taking place in the upper room. He had another agenda.

This matches the mental state of some in the ecclesia in Corinth for 'When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.' [[1 Corinthians 11:20](#)]. Some were viewing the memorial service as an opportunity to have a good feed and to get drunk. Consequently others came hungry and were not satisfied. Some, like Judas', had another agenda. They, like Judas, had their minds

on other things. Consequently the purpose of their meeting together was lost on them. There was, therefore, in Corinth, a great need for self examination. Each brother and sister had to examine their own motives and thoughts when they came to the 'Lord's supper.' It is for this reason that Paul concludes his argument 'But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup....' [[1 Corinthians 11:28](#)]. They had to review their own hearts and decide whether they were at the 'Lord's supper' to gratify their own fleshly desires or whether they wanted to remember the Lord's death.

Likewise we must be sure of our own motives when we attend the memorial service. We must make sure that we do not have a hidden agenda

Questions, Questions ...

What follows is a series of questions by different disciples showing that they still did not understand what Jesus is saying. Against the background of the questions Jesus still has much to say and only a short time to say it. However he never cuts the disciples' questions short, nor does he ignore the question in order to tell them the things that are on his mind. He always leaves off the point he is making to deal with the question before continuing with the instruction.

Thus we see the patience of the Master, who, knowing that his time was come [[John 13:1](#)], still has time to address the anxieties of his disciples.

We must ask how our patience matches up to that of the Lord. We know that Jesus 'learnt obedience by the things which he suffered'. [[Hebrews 5:8](#)] and that 'tribulation worketh patience' [[Romans 5:3](#)]. Do we see our tribulation developing or shortening our patience?

The Questions

[John 13:36](#) Peter 'Whither goest thou?'

[John 14:5](#) Thomas 'How can we know the way?'

[John 14:8](#) Philip 'Shew us the Father'

[John 14:22](#) Judas (not Iscariot) 'How wilt thou manifest thyself to us and not unto the world?'

Unless we appreciate that individual questions are asked and unless we consider the questions themselves we will not be able to make sense of the rest of the words Jesus spoke in the 'upper room' precisely because they were answers to specific questions raised by the disciples.

Peter's question 'whither goest thou?' [[John 13:36](#)] and 'why cannot I follow thee now?' [[John 13:37](#)] prompts the discourse about 'many mansions' [[John 14:1](#)]. The

chapter division is most unhelpful. We see from the table of occurrences of the Greek word translated 'mansions' and its related word, that the matter of abiding becomes a major topic both in the upper room and on the way towards the Garden of Gethsemane.

The number of times that Jesus uses the word 'abide' in the upper room and on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane should cause us to ponder what he was teaching his disciples and what we should be learning from this.

Here is a list of all uses of the word in John 14 and John 15.

The use of 3438 / 3306 'mansions' 'Abide' on the last night of Jesus' life.

[John 14:2](#) mansions 3438

[John 14:23](#) abode 3438

[John 14:10](#) dwelleth 3306

[John 14:16](#) abide 3306

[John 14:17](#) dwelleth 3306

[John 14:25](#) present 3306

[John 15:4](#) Abide 3306 abide 3306 abide 3306

[John 15:5](#) abideth 3306

[John 15:6](#) abide 3306

[John 15:7](#) abide 3306 abide 3306

[John 15:9](#) continue ye 3306

[John 15:10](#) abide 3306 abide 3306

[John 15:11](#) remain 3306

[John 15:16](#) remain 3306

So, as can be seen from the use of this Greek word from the upper room towards the Garden of Gethsemane, a major topic is being introduced. The information was firstly given to Peter in response to his need to be comforted after being told that he will betray Jesus [[John 13:38](#)]. But the *abiding* of Jesus after his resurrection and ascension is of paramount importance to all the disciples.

The explanation to Peter and the rest is that his death and resurrection is an essential part of the plan that the Father has set in motion that Jesus and the disciples can be together forever. [[John 14:3](#)]. The abiding of Jesus is to match the way that the Father *abides* in Jesus [[John 14:10](#)]. This *abiding* of the Father was the means whereby Jesus was able to perform the works that he did [John 14:10] and the evidence that Jesus and the Father were *abiding* in believers would enable them to perform their works. [[John 14:12 - 14](#)].

The way that this *abiding* would be achieved is to be seen in the way in which Jesus and his Father *both* come and make their abode [[John 14:23](#)] with the disciples.

Notice that the record stresses 'we will come ... and make our abode with him' [[John 14:23](#)]. This contrasts sharply with the erroneous view that Jesus enters our heart at baptism. Jesus is speaking of the fellowship that is to exist between the believer and the Father and their saviour, the risen Lord.

By the time that we begin considering John 15 we have left the upper room for 'arise let us go hence' [[John 14:31](#)] marks the departure from the upper room. However the theme of abiding continues during the walk towards the Brook Cedron which is not encountered until [John 18:1](#).

Jesus now begins to expand how the disciple is to *abide* in him and also why he must continue to *abide* in him. What follows is crucial for us today. Whilst we do not have the power of the holy spirit, nor can we perform miracles we must appreciate why we must allow Jesus and the Father to 'come ... and make [their] abode with [us]' [[John 14:23](#)]

By developing the parable of the vine in John 15 Jesus is showing the importance of the *abiding* of the Father and son in the believer.

Israel were a 'noble vine' [[Jeremiah 2:21](#)] but because they did not abide in the commandment they became 'degenerate' [[Jeremiah 2:21](#)]. Likewise the believer today who does not 'abide' in Jesus [[John 15:4, 5, 6 & 7](#)] will not bear fruit and consequently will be 'taken away' [[John 15: 2](#)] The first century believers - and we - have the example of Israel, 'God spared not the natural branches [[Romans 11:21](#)] of the Olive tree 'because of unbelief' [[Romans 11:20](#)] We must take heed.

The way in which the believer was to bring forth fruit was to 'keep my commandments' [[John 15:10](#)] for in so doing he will 'abide in my love' [[John 15:10](#)]. In explaining this to his disciples Jesus was creating the environment whereby they, by remembering, after his departure, that in keeping his commandments his 'joy might remain' [[John 15:11](#)] in them.

In fact an Old Testament teaching is being developed by Jesus when he speaks to His disciples about 'abiding'. It relates to the way that the Father wishes to dwell with men.

He told Moses:- [[Exodus 25:8](#)] 'And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them'. or again:- [[Exodus 29:45 - 46](#)] 'And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.' Showing that He had a plan which involved Him being with His people.

When David had a desire to build an house for his God he was reminded that God had walked with His people through the wilderness [[2 Samuel 7:5 - 7](#)] and that whilst David was not to build an house for God an house would be built for David [[2 Samuel 7:27](#)]. This continued the teaching that God wanted to dwell with man. The promise that David would have an house built for him showed that the dwelling was to be in people, which is something which David clearly saw when he penned:- [[Psalms 127:1-3](#)] 'Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep. Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.' So he made a promise concerning the birth of the Messiah [[Isaiah 7:14](#)] 'Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.' Now we know what Immanuel means because the New Testament tells us clearly. [[Matthew 1:23](#)] 'Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.'

Thus we can see that the Father always had the plan that he would 'abide' with His people. The mechanism through which this was to be achieved can now be seen to be the raising up of His own son, who is the son of David and the seed of the woman. Through his death and resurrection he was to be the 'firstborn' [[Colossians 1:15](#)] of a new creation which was to be the 'temple of the living God' [[2 Corinthians 6:16](#)].

Indeed Jesus had already hinted at this plan very early on in his ministry, significantly recorded in John's gospel when he said 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body.' [[John 2:19-21](#)]

Returning to the questions in the upper room we must examine the questions raised by the disciples whilst Jesus was speaking to them in the upper room. Peter was not able to 'go' with Jesus [John 13:36](#) because Jesus was going to do something by his going away which only he could do. Jesus was to go away to obtain 'eternal salvation' [[Hebrews 5:9](#)] through his death and resurrection. Peter clearly did not understand this for if he had he would never have rashly said 'I will lay down my life for thy sake'. [[John 13:37](#)]. His allegiance to Jesus was never in question. Jesus knew what was in the heart of man [[John 2:25](#)] and so did not even need to hear any words from Peter. Peter's problem was that he was offering to do

what his Lord was about to do. Whereas the Lord was sinless Peter clearly was not. He did not yet understand the redemptive work of Jesus nor his own need for a sinless man to die. The rebuke of the Lord, therefore, was absolutely essential. Peter had to understand his own weakness in contrast with the confidence of the Master in the Father. We might concur with Thomas when he said 'we know not wither thou goest; and how can we know the way' [[John 14:5](#)] However Jesus did say that Thomas knew the way. How was it that Thomas did not realise that he knew the way?

A number of times we find recorded in John's gospel Jesus making claims about who he is.

- 1] [John 6:35](#) And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.
- 2] [John 6:51](#) I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.
- 3] [John 8:12](#) Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
- 4] [John 10:9](#) I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.
- 5] [John 10:11](#) I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.
- 6] [John 11:25](#) Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:
- 7] [John 14:6](#) Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

The disciples, and in particular Thomas at this point, did not comprehend what they had been told but they did know what they had heard. It is important to appreciate that Jesus expects them to accept what he has said. Thomas was to appreciate that the way to fellowship with the Father was only through Jesus [[John 14:6](#)] and that was going to be effected by Jesus going away. The Bold type in the above quotations presents a composite picture of what Thomas, and the others, had been told. If one were to piece together each of the points that are made a very comprehensive picture of the Lord is seen. Of course Jesus said even more than this, telling them plainly that he was to be crucified and rise again [[Matthew 16:21](#), [17:23](#), [20:19](#), [Mark 9:31](#), [10:34](#), and [Luke 9:22](#), [18:33](#)]. The disciples did not understand what they had been told because they were 'slow of heart to believe' [[Luke 24:25](#)]. However we do well to remember that Jesus 'upbraided them with

their unbelief' [[Mark 16:14](#)] lest we attempt to excuse our slowness in understanding and, consequently, believing what we read in Scripture.

For example how firmly do we believe this assurance 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee' which is a promise made to us a number of times [[Deuteronomy 31:6](#) [Joshua 1:5](#) [1 Chronicles 28:20](#) [Isaiah 41:13](#) [Hebrews 13:5](#)] and does relate to the promise 'we will come and make our abode with you' [[John 14:23](#)] .

Jesus concludes his comments to Thomas with the words 'from henceforth ye have seen the Father' [[John 14:7](#)]. This comment causes the perplexed Philip to ask 'Show us the father' [[John 14:8](#)]

This highlights another, related, gap in the understanding of the disciples. Philip, and probably the others, had failed to grasp that Jesus 'declared' the Father [[John 1:18](#)]. Whilst Philip is told 'he that hath seen me hath seen the Father' [[John 14:9](#)] Jesus is not wishing Philip or anyone else to focus on physical appearance. Philip would know well the Old Testament teaching that 'no man can see me and live' [[Exodus 33:20](#)]. Philip, schooled in the way of thinking of the Jews, would appreciate that when Moses requested to see God he was shown his qualities [[Exodus 33:18 - 20](#)].

Now Judas (not Iscariot) is perplexed. He wants to know how Jesus will manifest himself to the disciples but not to the world. [[John 14:22](#)] He was clearly locked into the idea of seeing the physical Jesus. Jesus, in his explanation to Judas, continues to develop the concept of the 'abiding' of the Father and son with the believer. Jesus was to be manifest to the disciples through the way in which the disciples 'keep my words' [[John 14:23](#)]. The teaching was presented by Jesus when he was with them but the comforter was to come and 'teach them all things' [[John 14:26](#)]. This assurance to Thomas - and the other disciples - is then presented as 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.' [[John 14:27](#)].

Jesus forces the point that he is still speaking about the *abode* that he introduced to Peter by using the same words of comfort as he used earlier.

[John 14:1](#) Let not your heart be troubled

[John 14:27](#) Let not your heart be troubled

Remember, we are still in the upper room at this point.

Having got so far in the education of the disciples Jesus and the eleven remaining disciples 'sing and hymn' [[Matthew 26:30](#)] and leave the upper room. John marks the departure from the upper room with the words of Jesus 'Arise, let us go hence' [[John 14:31](#)]

On the way to the Kidron

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
Abide in me				Chpt 15	
I go my way				Chpt 16	
Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven				Chpt 17	

So they now leave the upper room to make their way through the city to the Garden of Gethsemane, across the Brook Kidron.

Whilst we cannot be sure what time in the evening it was when they left the upper room we can make an educated guess. If we assume that the meal in the upper room began at sunset - 6.30 p.m. we might conjecture that the meal, the washing of the disciples feet, the discussions that took place and the singing of the hymn [[Matthew 26:30](#) [Mark 14:26](#)] took about two to three hours. Thus we can imagine that when they left the upper room it would be 9.00 p.m. at the earliest. However we should not assume that they were groping round the city and across the Kidron

Valley in pitch darkness even though they did not have modern electric street lighting. Passover was the 14th day of the first month [[Leviticus 23:5](#)] and the new moon marked the beginning of the month [[Numbers 10:10](#)] therefore the feast of the Passover was held half way through a Lunar month thus it would have been full moon when Jesus and the disciples left the upper room. We do not know exactly where the upper room was in the city, nor do we know the direction that the group took as they walked through the city and across the Kidron Valley to the Garden of Gethsemane. Indeed we cannot be sure even of the precise location of the Garden of Gethsemane. However if we can form a picture of the journey and the circumstances of the journey our appreciation will be enhanced.

Leaving the upper room Jesus begins to tell the eleven 'I am the true vine' [[John 15:1](#)] This is not a new topic unrelated to the discussion concerning abiding. As we have already seen the word 'abide' in John 15 is the same word as seen in the discussions in John 14. Rather Jesus is extending the theme of *abiding*' in order that he can discuss the consequences of not manifesting his love.

He now introduces the concept that the Father chastens His children that the complete vine might 'bring forth more fruit' [[John 15:2](#)]. However the chastening is here presented in terms of an husbandman tending a vine. Just as the husbandman cuts off unfruitful, dead and dying branches so not to diminish the vine's strength he carefully prunes and cuts fruitful boughs so that the potential might be maximized, so does the Father work with His sons and daughters. This process of purging has a cleansing effect. Consider the two verses below.

[John 15:2](#) Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he *purgeth* it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

[John 15:3](#) Now ye are *clean* through the word which I have spoken unto you.

The *italic* words are translated from the same Greek word.

Now we know that the way for a 'young man to cleanse his way is by taking heed thereto according to thy word' [[Psalm 119:9](#)] which is clearly where Jesus is drawing his idea from, for he has already said 'if any man love me he will keep my words and we will come unto him and make *our abode* with him' [[John 14:23](#)]. The converse of keeping his words is very distressing. For Jesus says 'if any man *abide* not in me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned' [[John 15:6](#)]

[Note that this is NOT to say that unfaithful believers end up in the Lake of Fire **MORE**]

However if we do abide in Him we will actually glorify God [[John 15:8](#)]. To abide in him we must bear fruit by keeping his commandments and by so doing the Father is glorified. This, actually, is how Jesus manifest God to the people during his ministry. By doing the will of the Father Jesus both retained the fellowship of his Father and pleased him for we read 'The father hath not left me alone; for I do always the things which please him' [[John 8:29](#)]. We must ask ourselves how we see our lives as both glorifying the Father and maintaining our fellowship with Him. This is the thrust of what Jesus, who is about to depart out of this world, is saying to his disciples.

Jesus passes on to present the ultimate manifestation of love by telling his disciples 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends' [[John 15:13](#)]. We notice that, whilst clearly speaking of his own impending death to redeem his brethren he utilises the words of Peter 'I will lay down my life ...' [[John 13:37](#)]. The impact of Jesus' use of those words would doubtless have startled Peter, and possibly the others who had heard Peter's affirmation in the upper room. However such commitment is actually required of Jesus' disciples. Of course we should realise that this is not the first time that Jesus has spoken of giving his life for his followers. We have already noted that he spoke of his crucifixion a number of times directly. Additionally he had told them in less obvious ways. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son' [[John 3:16](#)] 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep' [[John 10:11](#)]. Jesus says 'ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you' [[John 15:14](#)]. Some of Jesus' disciples did in fact lay down their lives for him. A consideration of the Acts of the Apostles provides us with names of some who did manifest that they were Jesus friends in the way that they showed their commitment to him.

However, like Moses, a willingness to give one's life for the errors of the people would not achieve the desired end that the Father had in mind unless the one who was to lay down his life were sinless. Therefore neither Moses' [[Exodus 32:32](#)] nor Peter's [[John 13:27](#)] expression of willingness would have sufficed for the task in hand, namely the redemption of mankind. We have not had to make this supreme sacrifice yet. However we are presented with an equally important sacrifice that we are to make. 'Present your bodies a living sacrifice ... which is your reasonable service'. [[Romans 12:1](#)].

Jesus now reminds the disciples of their high calling. Whilst they had continued with him during his three and a half year ministry they needed to be reminded; 'Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you' [[John 15:16](#)]. Whilst the call of the disciples is unique it patterns the relationship that we have with the Father through him, for it is those who are 'ordained to eternal life' [[Acts 13:48](#)] who believe the gospel, being those who are 'called of Jesus Christ' [[Romans 1:6](#)]. Therefore, just as the disciples were called that they 'should go and bring forth fruit' [[John 15:16](#)] we must do likewise.

Jesus' cruel death is now close at hand and the disciples still do not understand. They must be prepared for this evil act so Jesus now proceeds to explain why it is that he is hated and how that will be reflected in their lives. [[John 15:17 - 19](#)]. The disciples were to experience first hand this hatred not many days hence when they began to preach the risen Christ. However they anticipated that hatred at the time of the death of Jesus and when he was in the tomb for they all 'forsook him and fled' [[Matthew 26:56](#) [Mark 14:50](#)] and when he was in the tomb they were in hiding 'for fear of the Jews' [[John 20:19](#)].

He now brings to their mind previous comments that he has made to remind them that because 'the servant is not greater than his lord' [[John 15:20](#)] they as servants will suffer the same things as their master. If they were to reflect on what they had seen during the last three and a half years they would see what was in store for them. In reality there were those who persecuted Jesus and those who loved him. Those who loved him could easily be identified. They kept Jesus sayings and would keep the same sayings when presented by the disciples [[John 15:20](#)].

Jesus warned the disciples that they should avoid those who do not the works of the Father, Jesus continues by telling the disciples that those who hate him also hate the Father [[John 15:23](#)]. Now it is evident that the disciples avoided those who hated the Father. We must ask ourselves how discerning are we about the company that we keep? We are not persecuted as the first century brethren. We, therefore, do not have difficulties spending time with those who hate the Father. So we ask, with whom do we prefer to spend our time?

We sense a change in the mood of the disciples as they, walking through the city to the Brook Kidron, listen to Jesus. Whereas they have been asking questions and seeking for clarification in the upper room Jesus draws their attention to the fact that they are not asking questions. 'none of you asketh me whither goest thou?' [[John 16:5](#)] and then later when the record informs us 'Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him ...' [[John 16:19](#)] we learn that Jesus was aware of a discussion amongst themselves which they felt could not involve Jesus. It may be that they felt rebuked by Jesus' responses to their earlier questions. Though it is more probable that they felt ashamed because they did not understand what he was saying to them so they preferred to keep silent. However silence was not the solution. They were learning earth moving principles. If they did not understand them now they would have greater difficulties dealing with the trauma of the next

three days. Jesus, therefore, addresses the problem; saying 'do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said ...' [[John 16:19](#)] and speaks to the disciples as if they have actually expressed their confusion to him. There is no hint of criticism in his words, just a desire that they understand what he is saying.

We can learn an immense amount from this approach. We often say things which are not understood, either because the person listening has difficulty grasping the point that we are making or because we are not making the point clearly enough.

The natural reaction is to simply assume that the hearer either is not really interested or not bright enough to see the point that we are making. Against this background we either do not even bother to try to get our point understood or we represent our point in a tone of voice which shows that we think that the hearer is the one with the problem. Such an approach does not engender unity and love. The speaker feels superior and the hearer is made to feel inferior. This was not our Lord's approach and should not be ours either. For 'The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all men, be apt to teach, patient' [[2 Timothy 2:24](#)]

Jesus' approach clearly worked, he gained the confidence of his disciples who, with a change of heart, were willing to acknowledge that they now understood saying 'Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb' [[John 16:29](#)]. Notice that the disciples think that the change has been in the way that Jesus spoke to them, not in their own state of mind.

Jesus is concerned, in John 16, to warn the disciples that their word will not be heeded just as his has not. It was important that they understood that point because there was coming a time when ye 'shall weep and lament but the world will rejoice , and ye shall be sorrowful but your sorrow shall be turned into joy' [[John 16:20](#)] . They still did not understand that he was going to be crucified the next day and that they would be devastated but that three days later he would be alive for evermore and they would be elated.

They had to understand that despite their joy at the resurrection of Jesus they should not expect those who had been Jesus' enemies during his ministry to have a change of heart and turn to him. Jesus had already warned them 'They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service'. [[John 16:2](#)] which was a most natural thing to warn them of as he knew that they, fired with the knowledge that he was alive, would wish to tell others and would expect that they would be believed. Of course they had, during the ministry of Jesus, been carried along by his commitment and the enthusiasm of the common people who 'heard him gladly' [[Mark 12:37](#)].

Because he was going away he was concerned that they knew that he was not going to leave them 'comfortless' [[John 14:18](#).] He was also concerned that they would 'remember that I told you of these things' [[John 16:4](#)]. Furthermore they were assured that the joy that would be theirs on the resurrection morning would not be able to be taken away from them [[John 16:22](#)].

We remember our own experience when we were babes in Christ. We were going to tell the world and we discovered that the world did not want to know. Such experiences may have dulled our enthusiasm for speaking of those things. If we develop that state of mind we should take note of the words of warning from Jesus and look at the example of the disciples who, amidst great persecution preached the word and lived the gospel.

Jesus assures his disciples 'Whatsoever ye ask the father in my name he will give it you' [[John 16:23](#)]. We must reflect on what it is to ask in my name, for Jesus is not providing a simple code that we should use in order that our prayers will be heard.

He is, by using 'in my name' highlighting a relationship that the disciples shared with the Father through the son. This is true of ourselves also. The relationship of being 'in` ... is familiar to us already. We understand the phrases:-

in Christ

in Adam

in the flesh

They all speak of relationships. If we are 'in Christ' we are related to Jesus Christ and thus the Father. We were all 'in Adam' being related to him by birth, and thus inherited his nature. 'In the flesh' [[Romans 8:8](#)] is a subset of being 'in Adam' and describes a way of thinking which is prevalent amongst those who are 'in Adam'. Therefore when we ask for anything 'in my name' Jesus is telling us that we have a special relationship with the Father that means that He hears us. Of course we cannot ask for 'anything' in an unqualified way. We know that we must 'ask ... according to his will' if we expect him to hear us [[1 John 5:14](#)]. Which is tantamount to saying that we keep his commandments, thus manifesting his love. Thus, when we address the Father in prayer, we must appreciate our relationship with Him and also our responsibilities. We can make prayer work for us if we reflect on how we should pray. If we are careless in our prayers we might well be expecting that we will be heard for our 'much speaking' [[Matthew 6:7](#)].

[(1 Jn 5:13-15) CHILDREN OF GOD, BORN OF GOD MAY HAVE ASSURANCE THAT GOD HEARS AND ANSWERS THEIR PRAYERS AS THEY (1) CONTINUE TO BELIEVE IN THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD FOR ETERNAL LIFE AND (2) AS THEY ARE IN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE, AND (3) AS THEY PRAY TO GOD IN THE NAME OF HIS SON IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOD'S WILL BELIEVING THAT HE WILL ANSWER THEIR PRAYERS AS IT IS RECORDED IN SCRIPTURE PROPERLY INTERPRETED]

(1 Jn 5:13 KJV) "These things [I wrote to] you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that [you] may know that [you] have eternal life, [unto believing] on the name of the Son of God. (1 Jn 5:14 NASB) This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (1 Jn 5:15 NASB) And if we [have known] that

He hears us.*in* whatever we ask, we [have known] that we have the requests which we have asked from Him." =

From 1 Jn 5:13 we have, "These things [I wrote to] you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that [you] may know that [you] have eternal life, [unto believing] on the name of the Son of God," which the last phrase indicates that children of God, born of God are encouraged by their assurance of having eternal to continue believing in the name of the Son of God for the purpose of being better enabled to choose the means available to them to have fellowship with God and with one another according to Scripture - the subject of John's epistle, (1 Jn 1:1-4). And then verses 14 & 15 which follow, continue the context of children of God, born of God continuing to believe in the name of the Son of God for eternal life that they may be better enabled to choose the means to have fellowship with God and with one another resulting in their confidence before God when they pray: "This is the confidence which we [children of God, born of God] have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we [have known] that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we [have known] that we have the requests which we have asked from Him." The Greek phrase "ean ti aitOmetha" in 1 Jn 3:14 rendered "if we ask anything according to His will" is in the subjunctive mood: maybe children of God, born of God will and maybe they won't ask according to God's will. It depends upon their faithfulness to Scripture and their being in fellowship with God. And the Greek phrase "ean oidamen" in 1 Jn 5:15 rendered "if we have known," is in the indicative mood: if we suppose it is true that He hears us.*in* whatever we ask, then we have known that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

So Children of God, born of God may have assurance that God hears and answers their prayers as they (1) continue to believe in the name of the Son of God for eternal life and (2) as they are in fellowship with God according to Scripture, and (3) as they ask [pray to] God in the name of His Son in accordance with God's will believing that He will answer their prayers as it is recorded in Scripture properly interpreted, **MORE**. So when children of God, born of God pray according to God's will, they may know that God hears them, and that those requests will be fulfilled, albeit according to His will. Some answers to prayer will be fulfilled immediately, others later, and some will not be fulfilled in the lifetime of the child of God, born of God.

1 John 1:8-9 (NASB)

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness]

Having been perplexed by Jesus' words the disciples now take comfort from the fact that they now think that they understand him and his purpose clearly [[John 16:30](#)]. Jesus now brings them down to earth again, lest they be overconfident in their partial understanding, telling them 'Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone'

[\[John 16:32\]](#). However Jesus was not alone and he did 'overcome the world' [\[John 16:33\]](#) through his faith.

The Apostle John draws on this confidence, and other elements of Jesus' words to the disciples on the way to the Brook Kidron, when he reminds us 'whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?' [\[1 John 5:4 - 5\]](#) We should use the same experiences in the life of our Lord to give us confidence in our Father's willingness to bless us.

Having spent the whole of John 13, 14 and 15 speaking to the disciples Jesus turns to his Father in prayer. However the subject matter does not change. So far in the upper room, and on the way to the Brook Kedron, Jesus has been concerned to educate the disciples in the matter of *abiding*. His prayer to the Father concentrates on *unity*. That unity is between the Father and the son, and between the disciples and the Father and son.

This unity was to be achieved by the work of the Father. Just as he had *kept* the son; Jesus asks that they be *kept* by the Father. The mechanism that the Father is expected to use is worthy of consideration.

Jesus says 'keep through thy own name' [\[John 17:11\]](#) which harks back to the matter of asking anything in my name stressing that being kept by the father requires that we have a relationship with Him. We might wonder how the Father will keep the disciples, but we need not be left in doubt because Jesus, in his prayer, asks the Father to continue the work that he started during his ministry saying 'While I was with them I kept them in thy name' [\[John 17:12\]](#). We can see from the gospel records that Jesus cared for the disciples by his attention to them as a shepherd cares for the flock. Jesus instructed them and corrected their errors. This will be achieved in our lives by the living word of God and the chastening hand of the Father - if we are willing to 'endure chastening' [\[Hebrews 12:7\]](#).

[\[And by the indwelling Holy Spirit Eph 1:13-14\]](#)

We should not, however, assume that being 'kept' by the Father ensures that we will not fall. Jesus 'kept' the disciples but he lost 'the son of perdition' [\[John 17:12\]](#). Judas was lost because he did not 'endure chastening' [\[Hebrews 12:7\]](#)

[\[No. Judas was lost because he never believed in Jesus' propitiation / payment for his sins **MORE**\]](#)

and so was eventually given up 'to a reprobate mind' [\[Romans 1:28\]](#). The reason is clear. Judas did not 'retain God in his knowledge' [\[Romans 1:28\]](#).

The exhortation is clear for us too and Scripture abounds with examples of men falling away after being first delivered. [\[Jude 5 Hebrews 3:16 -17\]](#).

[not so. once saved always saved eternal security MORE]

Being 'kept' by the Father involves our 'sanctification' [[John 17:17](#)] We are made holy by the work of the Father. Of course this must be so, as we cannot make ourselves holy. The law teaches that corruption and uncleanness is passed on but holiness is not [[Haggai 2:12-13](#)]. Sanctification comes through 'thy word' [[John 17:17](#)]. This is why the Psalmist ask us 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? and goes on to provide the answer by taking heed thereto according to thy word'. [[Psalms 119:9](#)]. Thus we can see that holiness is not an innate quality that we possess but is a quality that we can acquire through our diligent application to the word of God and the teaching of the Master.

[But do not forget 1 Jn 1:9 confession of sins

1 John 1:8-9 (NASB)

- ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.**
- ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;**

The whole of the teaching of the Master during his three and a half years ministry is encapsulated in the things that he says to his disciples in the upper room and on the way to the Brook Kidron. If we wish to 'see God' we must manifest that 'holiness' in our lives [[Matthew 5:8](#)] Therefore we do well to take heed to the exhortation given 'as unto children' [[Hebrews 12:5](#)] for without 'holiness ... no man shall see the Lord' [[Hebrews 12:14](#)].

[Believers are sanctified unto eternal life when they believe. Thereby we shall be transformed into resurrection bodies in perfect righteousness / blameless / without sin whereby we shall see the Lord. This blamelessness cannot be achieved in our temporal lives - only when we are resurrected]

Jesus and the disciples now 'went forth over the Brook Kidron' [[John 18:1](#)] to his final last trial. We watch them crossing the Kidron and walking up the hillside into the garden, wondering at the love of that man who 'lay down his life for his friends' [[John 15:13](#)].

[and for the whole world, 1 Jn 2:2]

They arrive in Gethsemane

Events as recorded in gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	time of day
Jesus prays in Gethsemane	26:36-46	14:26-42	22:39-46		Night
Jesus betrayed, arrested, forsaken	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-53	18:2-12	

Echoes of the time when David fled from Absalom are clearly seen in the departure from Jerusalem, the crossing of the Kidron. and the prayer in the garden of Gethsemane.

David fleeing from Absalom	Jesus going to Gethsemane
David flees Jerusalem from Absalom	Jesus leaves Jerusalem
2 Samuel 15:23 David crosses Kedron	John 18:1 Jesus crosses Kedron
2 Samuel 16:6 Shimei casts stones	Luke 22:41 stone's cast
2 Samuel 15:26 David says 'thy will be done'	Matthew 26:42 Jesus prayed 'thy will be done'
2 Samuel 15:31 David's 'familiar friend' with Absalom	Matthew 26:47 Judas amongst those come to take Jesus
2 Samuel 16:9 Abishai would kill Shimei	John 18:10 Peter cuts off Malcus' ear

The way in which the gospel records present Jesus as following in the steps of his father David is designed to make us realise that Jesus used the events of the Old Testament to help him to decide how he should behave.

Considering David at the time of the uprising of Absalom his own son had risen up against him. His 'familiar friend' Ahithophel, his trusted counsellor had turned against him. David did not know how his God would deal with the issue so he fled Jerusalem. When he left the city he did not know whether God would restore the kingdom to him or not. Zadok brought the ark out of the city to David. However David showed his willingness to accept the will of his God saying 'Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation: But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him'. [[2 Samuel 15:25 -26](#)]. This response is so close to the way in which Jesus responded in his three prayers in the garden.

Jesus did not want to be crucified. He told his disciples 'my soul is exceeding sorrowful' [[Matthew 26:38](#)]. It is against this background that Jesus prays 'O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.' [[Matthew 26:39](#)]. This is the first prayer recorded in the garden. It was followed by two more. The second time he prays for strength that he might be able to fulfil his Father's will saying, 'O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.' [[Matthew 26:42](#)] and finally 'he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words' [[Matthew 26:44](#)].

There comes a time when we know the Father's will but struggle to keep it. We have said all we can in prayer. We have done all that it is possible for us to do. In such a circumstance we like Jesus, might do well to pray 'saying the same words'. We

know that the Father heard his son's groanings for 'there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.' [[Luke 22:43](#)]. Whilst we cannot see the angel we have the same confidence that 'if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:' [[1 John 5:14](#)]

Jesus knew the outcome of the events in David's life when he fled from before Absalom. David indeed was brought again into the city. Being able to identify with his father David provided Jesus, in this time of great stress, with a role model to copy.

We do well to identify with faithful men and women in Scripture.

Friend

These are the only uses of the word 'friend' 2083 in the New Testament. [[Matthew 20:13](#) [22:12](#) [26:50](#)] The first two are in parables towards the end of Jesus' life whereas the third is Jesus response to Judas' kiss in the garden of Gethsemane.

In the two parables the 'friend' is one who has been involved in the work [[Matthew 20:13](#)] and one who has been bidden to the marriage [[Matthew 22:12](#)]. However neither of the friends lives up to the expectations of the one calling them 'friend'. In Matthew 20 the labourer is not satisfied with what he has agreed to and in Matthew 22 the 'friend' had not prepared himself for the feast he had been called to.

In using this word in speaking to Judas [[Matthew 26](#)] Jesus is drawing the attention of Judas to the two parables and highlighting that he shares the characteristics of the individuals singled out for reproof in them.

Summary Of The Day Before The Passover

Like yesterday we are given little information about the events of the daytime activities of Jesus. We learn about the planning of the Passover meal in a location known to Jesus but kept secret from all the other disciples except Peter and John.

The meal in the upper room provides an insight into the way in which the disciples had not learnt humility. They were still striving about who was to be the greatest after three and a half years with Jesus. Jesus' object lesson of washing their feet shows that actions can speak very powerfully.

[John 13:5-15 (NASB)]

⁵ Then He *poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

⁶ So He *came to Simon Peter. He *said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?"

- 7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter."**
- 8 Peter *said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."**
- 9 Simon Peter *said to Him, "Lord, *then wash* not only my feet, but also my hands and my head."**
- 10 Jesus *said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all *of you*."**
- 11 For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean."**
- 12 So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined *at the table* again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"**
- 13 "You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for *so* I am.**
- 14 "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.**
- 15 "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.]**

Judas' behaviour matches his behaviour last night.

Jesus knew that this was to be the last time he would have opportunity to instruct his disciples before his death. He used that time to finish the instruction he had been giving all through his ministry. The disciples showed their inability to understand what Jesus was saying in the many questions they asked. Jesus manifested his patience in the way that he took time out to answer each and every question he was asked

He prayed for Peter and all the disciples because he knew what was to come and how they would respond.

In the garden of Gethsemane he turned to address his own needs. He took comfort from the way that David had been delivered from the evil intentions of Absalom so many years earlier.

HOME

The Resurrection Morning.

Our studies have stopped before we even get to the trial of Jesus. However in our minds we should move on to the resurrection morning. A little thought about our Lord's waking moments is a fitting place to go as we conclude this study.

In The Tomb Early On The First day Of The Week

The toil and anguish was all over. He had cried 'into thy hands I commend my spirit' [[Luke 23:46](#)]. With that he 'gave up the spirit' [[Luke 23:46](#)]. He had died quickly and so his legs were not broken. Doubtless the toil of the last three years had taken its toll on his body. Amidst great urgency he was removed from the cross and, had it not been for the care of two of his secret disciples he would have been cast into Ghenna. Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.' [[Matthew 27:58](#)] whereupon he and Nicodemus took the body, embalmed it with about an hundred pounds weight of myrrh and aloes before placing it in Joseph of Arimathea's own new tomb. [[John 19:39-40](#) [Matthew 27:57-60](#)]. As the Sabbath drew on, when all work had to stop, the women noted the place where Jesus was laid and departed, intending to return to complete the ritual of preparing the body for permanent rest in the grave at a later date.

Three Days And Nights

The next three days and nights were passed in depressed confusion by the women and the disciples. They had thought that Jesus was the one who would redeem Israel, but now he was dead in the grave. On the first day of the week various of the women journey towards the tomb to complete the burial of their Lord. However by the time they arrive at the tomb he is not there. 'He is risen'. [[Matthew 28:6](#) [Mark 16:6](#)].

We wish to consider just a small period of time whilst Jesus was in the tomb and discuss Jesus' thoughts on that resurrection morning.

Thou Hast Redeemed Me.

Our Lord's last words, according to Luke were 'into thy hands I commend my spirit'. [[Luke 23:46](#)]. These words showed Jesus' utter confidence in his father's ability to bring him out of the grave. David, in the Psalms, speaking in spirit of Jesus' thoughts and words shows his confidence in his God when he said 'Into thine hand I commit my spirit' [[Psalm 31:5](#)]. These words were doubtless in Jesus' mind as he died. The Psalm continues "thou hast redeemed me O Lord God of truth' and we can imagine that these were the first thoughts in the mind of our Lord on that resurrection morning as he awoke to newness of life.

There are other Scriptures which could well have been in our Lord's mind on that resurrection morning. He had lain in the enclosed space of the sealed tomb for three days and three nights, his body wrapped in about an hundred pounds weight

of myrrh and aloes. The inside of the tomb would not carry the odour of death. Rather there would be the sweet odour of those two spices.

The King's garments

On that resurrection morning our Lord would have awoken to the sweet smell of the myrrh and aloes and we can imagine his mind turning to the Psalms again.

Psalm 45 speaks of the king 'I speak of the things that I have made touching the king ...' [[Psalm 45:1](#)]. The king of whom the Psalm speaks is indeed the risen Lord for [Hebrews 1:8](#), when discussing the majesty of the risen Jesus, applies this Psalm to the status of Jesus after his resurrection.

Speaking prophetically of the risen Lord the Psalmist says:- 'All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.' [[Psalm 45:8](#)]. Whereas we might have thought that the Psalm was speaking in symbol of our Lord after his resurrection those words of the Psalm were actually true on that resurrection morning.

The smell of the myrrh and aloes might well have brought the Psalm to mind and all the wonderful promise that it contains.

So on that first day of the week the 'firstfruits of them that slept' could draw together both Psalm 32 and Psalm 45 and reflect on the majesty of those things that he had achieved by his resurrection.

The Odour Of The Resurrection

The odour of myrrh and aloes - the odour of the resurrection - is something that our Lord looks for in us. Not that we have attained unto the resurrection of the dead yet. However in this life we should be developing that character which pleases him. He is seeking to create us as that 'glorious church not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish'. [[Ephesians 5:25-27](#)]. And so the woman is described in the Song of Solomon as 'A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:' [[Song of Solomon 4:12-14](#)].

Our Lord would have us now manifesting that odour of the resurrection that we might awake with his likeness.

A Calendar Of Events In The Last Week Of Jesus' Life And To The Resurrection

	Days Before and after the feast	Events of the Day	Day of Month Abib	Time of day	Jewish Day of week	Gentile Day of week	Day Night
		Jesus arrives at	(Nisan)	6.00 p.m.		Friday	
John 12:1	6	Bethany to lodge Weekly Sabbath	9th	evening 6.00 am	7th	Friday	
		Weekly Sabbath	9th	Morning Noon 6.00 p.m.	7th	Saturday	
John 12:2	5		10th	Evening 6.00 p.m.	1st	Saturday	
Mark 11:1-11 John 12:12		Entry into Jerusalem Return	10th	Morning Noon 6.00 p.m.	1st	Sunday	
	4	to Bethany	11th	Evening 6.00 am	2nd	Sunday	
Mark 11:12-19		Fig tree cursed Return	11th	morning Noon 6.00 p.m.	2nd	Monday	
	3	to Bethany	12th	evening 6.00 am	3rd	Monday	
Mark 11:20		Fig tree withered In the Temple Olivet prophecy	12th	Morning Noon 6.00 p.m.	3rd	Tuesday	
Mark 14:1	2	Feast at Bethany	13th	Evening 6.00 am	4th	Tuesday	
Mark 14:12		Upper Room made ready	13th	Morning Noon 6.00 p.m.	4th	Wednesday	
	1	Last Supper Gethsemane Betrayed / Arrest	14th	Evening 6.00 am	5th	Wednesday	
John 19:31 Mark 15:34	Day of Preparation for Passover a day of unleavened bread	Trial and Crucifixion Jesus dies & Passover Lamb killed	14th	Morning Noon 3.00 p.m. 6.00 p.m.	5th	Thursday	In the tomb

Lev 23:6.7	Passover	Feast of Unleavened Bread Passover Sabbath	15th	Evening 6.00 am	6th	Thursday	1
John 19:31	first day	high day Passover Sabbath	15th	Morning Noon 6.00 p.m.	6th	Friday	1
		Weekly Sabbath	16th	Evening 6.00 am	7th	Friday	2
	second day	Weekly Sabbath	16th	Morning 6.00 am	7th	Saturday	2
		Resurrection	17th	Evening 6.00 am	1st	Saturday	3
Lev 23:11 Luke 24:21	third day	of Jesus	17th	Morning Noon 6.00 p.m.	1st	Sunday	3