

**Text:** Matthew 26:1-16

**Title:** Crucifixion and Burial Imminent

**Truth:** Jesus nears the time of His death.

**Date/Location:** October 16, 2022 at FBC

## Introduction

The public ministry of the Lord Jesus has come to an end now. He will spend some more time with the disciples in a private meal and meeting. The chapter ends with Jesus being condemned to die.

### I. Murderous Plot, 1-5

A. In two more days the Passover was on the calendar, and the Lord prophesied that and He would be crucified. The crucifixion coincides with the Passover in God's plan because Christ was the ultimate sacrificial lamb who takes away sin. He was the "fulfillment" or "antitype" of the type of the Passover. The original Passover was a remembrance of God's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The new Passover is a remembrance of God's deliverance from sin through Jesus Christ, which he was about to accomplish through His self-sacrifice.

Because of the number of participants in the feast and the number of days covered in the passion week narratives, there is an issue about exactly when the Passover was. I believe the Lord died right around the time of the evening sacrifice on Passover, when the Passover lamb was killed. Some have suggested Thursday for this, and most Christians accept Friday. I am not an expert in these matters. I do not think that exact minutes matter in this situation, nor if there were two days of sacrifice to accommodate all the worshippers, or if the crucifixion was on Thursday or Friday. God has all that worked out.

B. It is like that prophecy is the final "gate" that opened for the plan to unfold. "Then" the chief priests, scribes, and elders gathered together to plot their next move. This was not group of a handful of men. This was a cabal<sup>1</sup> of several dozen men in the San Hedrin

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<sup>1</sup> Not the same as *cabala* or *Kabbalah*.

All Scripture is from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

council and others. The San Hedrin, we are told, was 70 men. Others put the number at 23. Regardless, it seems there were other highly placed Jewish authorities, not just San Hedrin members. Some of their number, like Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, did not consent to their plan (Luke 23:50-51, John 19:38-39). Perhaps the high priest Caiaphas called the meeting and led the effort. I bring up the size of the group of men to highlight the pure evil of this act. It was agreed-upon by many men who were in collusion to overthrow the future King of Israel. They were the ultimate traitors in a plot to rid themselves of His—in their minds—unpleasant presence. He offered salvation and a kingdom under His authority, but they perceived themselves and their authority to be threatened.

- C. They plotted, together forming a malicious plan of evil will to seize Jesus in a deceptive or secretive operation, and then kill him. They felt it was too dangerous to do this publicly and during the Passover holiday, so they planned to do it later. They were afraid of the crowds. They figured the common folk were not going to be favorable to their evil because they liked what Jesus was doing for the nation with healings and teaching and so forth.

But because of what we said above about the connection of the original Passover and this new one, God had ordained it to work out His way, not theirs. Even in their most devious plot, the Jewish leaders could not implement the plan as they wished.

- D. Wherever there is fear of man involved, or the taking polls to figure out “what is right,” there is a problem. If *you* are doing something because you are caving in to peer pressure, or wanting to please people, or *not* obeying God because of the fear of people...then you are in the wrong.

## **II. Anointing for Burial, 6-13 (See Mark 14:3-9)**

- A. Nevertheless, the stage was set, and God was permitting them to implement their plan, though somewhat modified as to the timing.
- B. The Lord spent some time at the home of Simon the Leper. This man was most likely one of the people whom Jesus had healed of leprosy. He would not have been able to live in a city, or in a home

in a city, while he was sick. Now he lived in Bethany, which was the same town where Lazarus was from (John 11:1-12:8).

- C. Notice that in John 12:1-8 a similar anointing event occurs. That one was **six days before** the Passover. The event we are studying seems to have been **two days before**. The events could be one and the same if Matthew “rewinds” his narrative a few days in order to tell this story immediately before he recounts the greed of Judas which led him to sell access to Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

Another difference mentioned in the explanation of the events is that the woman anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped them with her hair. She could have done that after pouring most of the contents on his head.

The similarities with the complaint about the waste and the house filling with the smell of the perfume are other indications this may have been the same event.

There is yet another similar passage: Luke 7:36-50. That happened at another Simon’s house—Simon the Pharisee and was many months before the crucifixion.

- D. A woman took a flask of costly perfume oil and poured out the whole thing on Jesus’s head as He was sitting there. The container was an alabaster flask. Alabaster was a type of stone used to make vases and jars. It may have come from Egypt but could have been sourced locally. Because the contents of the flask were expensive and fancy, likely the flask was not cheap.

But the woman broke it open; this was an extravagant move that would prevent the flask being used on anyone else. I cannot see how the flask would have had to be broken, so the woman did that perhaps to expeditiously get at the contents. The contents of the flask were derived from pure nard or spikenard. See Song of Solomon 1:12, 4:13-14. The fragrance comes from the strong-smelling roots of the plant, which was a perennial, and may have been another import—from India. I did not research the details on its source or the process by which the perfume was produced.

The woman poured out the entire contents on Jesus. It must have run down on his hair and head and face and neck and body and clothing.

- E. You can probably imagine in your mind's nose that the house was filled with the aroma of the perfume, maybe even to the point of giving the occupants a headache!
- F. Judas Iscariot raised a complaint and seems to have been joined by several other disciples. You could chalk up their complaint to a practical or frugal nature, but it appears to be more than that. They were indignant, calling this act of worship a waste because the perfume was worth a year's wages. At least for Judas, we know that he was afflicted with greed and thievery (John 12:6). He wanted the money more than he wanted to worship Jesus, or to see others worship him. Judas was a deceiver, a non-believer.
- G. This is a great contrast to the woman. By now, she probably understood that He was indeed the Son of God, Savior of the world. This one, if indeed Mary, knew firsthand that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, and that He himself was the resurrection and life. He was the long-awaited Messiah of Israel and worthy of her highest worship.
- H. Jesus became aware in His human consciousness that there was a dispute about her action. He confronted them right away in her defense. They were entirely out of place for troubling the woman, giving her a hard time. She had done a good work, but for the good work they trashed her.
- I. One reason that it was so appropriate for her to do what she did was that the Lord had a very short time left on earth. He was worthy of one last pouring out of worship, no matter the expense. There would be comparably an almost inexhaustible amount of time to give aid directly to the poor. The Lord said, "you have the poor with you always."

There is no way that the human race will falsify this statement. Try as we might, there will always be poor people on earth, at least until the kingdom comes. Why? Because there is sin, and sin leads

to oppression, natural disasters, divorce, laziness and the like. All these factors lead directly into poverty.

Both worship and helping those in need, particularly those in the church family, are things Christians are to do. But worshipping the Lord is more important, *particularly* in the situation where He is about to be killed.

- J. The anointing that the woman did was a pre-burial anointing. Jesus would not have a proper burial—even for a common person, much less the King of all creation. This was an act prompted by God for the preparation of Jesus’s human body.
- K. Jesus then informs the audience that what she did will be recounted whenever the good news of salvation is shared—throughout the entire world. It is in the Scriptures not only to remind us of the beauty and priority of devoted worship, but as a memorial for the woman herself. Her faith and dedication are an example for us all. Matthew among other Bible authors was reminded of it by the Spirit of God and wrote it down under His superintendence so that it has come to us over the centuries.

### **III. Judas Joins the Murderous Plot, 14-16**

- A. In contrast to the woman’s worship, we saw Judas’s greed for money. He did not get his hands on the large sum from selling the perfume, so he went elsewhere for some cash.
- B. He sought out the chief priests and offered to betray Jesus if they would pay him some money. How wicked that is! But then get this—the priests *agreed* to do it! Evil all the way around.
- C. They gave him the price of a slave—30 pieces of silver. That may be around \$250 today. See Exodus 21:32. This also calls to mind the passage in Zech. 11:12-13. This was not much compared to 300 denarii which was about a year’s wages. For a measly few bucks Judas joined the plot *to kill a man, a most wonderful man*. He valued the Lord that little. The priests valued Him that low amount. He was worth little in their eyes. They treated him with contempt.

## **Conclusion**

These 16 verses set the stage for chapters 26-27 of Matthew's gospel. The rest of the text will show the outworking of the Lord's betrayal, crucifixion, and burial.

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