

THE FOUR PASSOVERS OF JESUS CHRIST'S MINISTRY

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During our preparation for the Passover each year, we tend to focus our attention on the last Passover of Jesus Christ's ministry, and the events surrounding it. And rightly so. We should be ever mindful that our Lord and Savior lovingly gave His life for us, for without His sacrifice, we would have no hope of eternal life.

However, what is often over looked, is the fact that the gospels record four Passover seasons during Christ's 3 1/2 year ministry. In fact Christ's public ministry both began and ended in Jerusalem during the Passover season.

So today, since we are again entering the spring Holy Day season, I thought it might be a good time to review the events and teachings of Jesus Christ, during these four Passover's. Which upon reflection, express broad themes that encapsulate the gospel message of God's love for us, and the hope of salvation for mankind.

Through this study, I will try to shed some light on several scriptural translations, that are a bit confusing, but when understood, give us greater clarity into the timeline of Christ's ministry.

And I will also offer an alternative viewpoint of the timeline regarding the last 6 days of our Saviors life.

Scripture records that a man can serve as a priest beginning from age 30. Therefore, Christ's ministry is understood to have began after He turned 30 years of age. As a side note, both Joseph and David are recorded in scripture as having began there positions of ruler-ship at age 30 as well.

All 4 gospel accounts, record Jesus being baptized by John in the Jordan

After His baptism, Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit, to fast for 40 days, in which time, He also underwent the temptation by satan.

Upon defeating satan, He is joined by His first four disciples; Andrew, Peter, Philip and Nathanael. This in recorded in John chapter one.

In John chapter two, Jesus Christ's and these four disciples go to the wedding in Cana, wherein we are informed of His first recorded miracle, that of turning water into wine.

Considering that the Apostle John records in John 21, that Jesus did a countless number of miracles during His short ministry, of which only a few are recorded in scripture.

One then might ponder why, that this miracle of changing water to wine, is the very first one recorded for us?

Often, I have read right over this passage without giving it much thought. However upon reflection, this miracle seems to outline the very essence of the Gospel message that Christ was to proclaim over the course of the following 3 years.

For consider that water is synonymous with spirit, as wine is to blood. Scripture informs us that the life is in the blood. [Gen.9.4] So by changing the water to wine, might Jesus Christ, as Immanuel, "God with us" be setting an example of why He came to earth in physical form.

To change the very nature of the human carnal spirit, in order to bring humanity to salvation by giving us the gift of eternal life.

A short time after this event at the wedding, John 2.12-13 informs us that the first of the 4 Passovers takes place.

Let's turn to **John 2.12-17**, and pick up the story.

- 12 After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.
- 13 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
- 14 And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business.
- 15 When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables.
- 16 And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"
- 17 Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."

So from this account of cleansing the Temple during this first Passover season, we can draw the spiritual parallel, with our own spiritual temple being cleansed by Jesus Christ, by sacrificing Himself for us.

This physical act of cleansing the temple, in a sense foreshadowed His sacrifice as the Passover Lamb of God that would take place, just outside the gate of Jerusalem 3 years later. To take away the sins of the world.

In fact, in the next several verses, Jesus Himself draws this very analogy.

Let's read that, continuing in **verses 18-22**

- 18 So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"
- 19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

- 20** Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"
- 21** But He was speaking of the temple of His body.
- 22** Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

So by these actions during this first Passover during Christ's ministry, He physically demonstrated the spiritual lesson of needing to be cleansed of sin and the process by which it would be accomplished.

However, as we know, removing sin from our lives is an ongoing process, that requires active participation on our part as well. This fact is underscored by the Feast of Unleavened Bread, during which time we are to remove all leaven from our dwellings, which of course is symbolic of removing the sin from within our physical temple.

This first Passover also gives us another valuable principle about this cleansing and redemptive process. JOHN 2.23

- 23** Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.

Let's continue the story flow, of what else occurred during this week of Unleavened Bread. JOHN 3.1-17

- 1** There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.
- 2** This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

This in my mind is a very telling verse. The religious leaders knew that Jesus Christ was sent to them by the authority of God. So they were not blinded from this truth, and yet they were still opposing His teaching.

So since this meeting took place during the days of Unleavened Bread, Jesus uses this opportunity to explain to Nicodemus the underlying spiritual significance of the Spring Holy Day season.

That being, the process through which, we can be born from above. Continuing in verse 3.

- 3** Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
- 4** Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"
- 5** Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
- 6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
- 7** Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Now after this Jesus explains to Nicodemus, exactly who He was, and that He indeed was, the Lord God of the Old Testament. Let's read on.

13 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

So these verses are both a powerful witness against the religious leaders of Christ's time, as well as a wonderful message of hope for humanity as a whole.

By being cleansed through our acceptance of Christ's Passover sacrifice, after baptism, the process of living in newness of life, symbolized by the Feast of Unleavened Bread, may begin.

Thus, through God's gift of the Holy Spirit, we are able to overcome our carnal nature so that we can be fully born into the Kingdom of God, at Christ's glorious return. Continuing in verses 16-17

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

John 3.16 is probably the most quoted verse in all the Bible. But the world has rejected the very means by which this great truth becomes a reality for them. By rejecting God's Passover and thereby the willingness to allow Jesus Christ to truly become Lord over their lives.

So the overarching theme of this first Passover during Jesus Christ's ministry, is the revelation of God's loving plan of redemption and ultimately then also the salvation, for all of mankind.

Furthermore, the temple cleansing, helps to express the passion and zeal that Jesus Christ has for, not only doing our Father's will, but also for His fervent desire for us, His spiritual temple to be pure as well.

So the next time you are watching a sports event, or some other large gathering and you see a sign with John 3.16, remember that Jesus recited those words during the first Passover season of His earthly ministry.

The Second Passover Season

The second Passover season in the Gospels is a little harder to define, at first glance. For it is masked by a fairly vague translation, in most bible versions.

Luke 6:

- 1 Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them, rubbing them in their hands.

What day is the second Sabbath after the first? This phrase might be more precisely, or more literally translated from the Greek as “On the second- first Sabbath, or “ on the second Sabbath of the first order”

These Sabbaths of the first order, refer to the 7 annual high Sabbaths or Holy Days. So what seems to be referred too in verse one, is that on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, [the second Sabbath of the first order] during the second year of Christ’s ministry, Jesus was walking through a grain field with His disciples.

OK, now that we have properly defined the time frame, let’s continue reading in **verses 2-5**.

- 2 And some of the Pharisees said to them, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?”
- 3 But Jesus answering them said, “Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him:
- 4 how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?”
- 5 And He said to them, “The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”

There are several principles that we can spiritually glean from this account of interaction between Jesus and the Pharisees.

First, it seems that what Christ is telling the Pharisees in verse 5, is that He, Christ, was the Lord God of the Old Testament. And therefore, since He gave the law to Moses, He also knew the proper application of it.

Let’s turn to **Deuteronomy 23.24-25**, and glean some further insight into these verses of Luke chapter 6.

- 24 “When you come into your neighbor’s vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes at your pleasure, but you shall not put any in your container.
- 25 When you come into your neighbor’s standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor’s standing grain.

So we see from these verses that it was not unlawful to pluck a few heads of grain to feed yourself if you are hungry. But you were not allowed to harvest the grain and keep it for a later date.

Therefore what we find here is that the Pharisees are finding fault with the disciples picking and eating grain on a High Sabbath, which was the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. In their eyes the disciples were working on the Sabbath, by plucking the heads of grain and rubbing them in their hands.

Interestingly, Jesus does not directly address the Pharisees judgement of the disciples picking the grain. Rather Jesus addresses the motivation for His disciples doing so. They were hungry. And so Jesus sights the example of David going to the Tabernacle in Nob and asking Ahimelech the high priest for something to eat.

This is recorded in 1 Samuel 21. To save some time, I won't turn there now, I'll just summarize the incident.

David and the men that were with him were hungry, so David asked the priest for something to eat. Ahimelech explained to David that the only food he had was the holy showbread that had just been removed from the presence of God, in front of the Holy of Holies. According to the law, once this bread had been consecrated for holy use, only the high priest and his family were allowed to eat it.

For reference, that law is recorded in Leviticus chapter 24. So according to the letter of the law, what David and Ahimelech did was clearly wrong. However, Jesus is making the point, that what is really important is the underlying spiritual fulfillment of keeping God's law, and that is love.

Clearly Ahimelech understood something that the cold hearted Pharisees did not. And that is the spiritual intent of the law, and how to apply the principles of God's word in a way that is truly pleasing to God.

So Ahimelech had fulfilled the second Great Commandment, by showing love for his neighbor, by fulfilling a basic human need.

Matthew's account of this event adds a little more information. Let's read that, **Matthew 12.1-8**

- 1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.
- 2 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!"
- 3 But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him:
- 4 how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?"
- 5 Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?"

Friends, how did the priesthood profane the Sabbath? What Jesus is referring too in verse 5 are the daily sacrifices that were required to be conducted under the Mosaic law. We find this recorded in **Numbers 28.9-10**. Again, to save time I'll just read it.

- 9 'And on the Sabbath day two lambs in their first year, without blemish, and two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, with its drink offering—

10 this is the burnt offering for every Sabbath, besides the regular burnt offering with its drink offering.

What we find from these verses is that on the Sabbaths, the priests were required to do extra work. They had to prepare and sacrifice 2 lambs and extra grain and drink offerings besides the regular daily sacrifices. And on the high Holy Days, even further animal sacrifices were required.

So Jesus is comparing all the work that the Levitical priesthood had to perform every Sabbath, with the disciples simply picking a few heads of grain.

Let's continue reading in **verse 6 of Matthew chapter 12.**

6 Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple.

So again, we see Christ, informing the Pharisees that He was the Lord God of the OT in the flesh, and therefore He knew how to properly keep the Sabbaths of God.

And in verses 7-8 we find the punch line, the principle reason, for Christ's witnessing to the priesthood. Let's read it.

7 But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.

8 For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Here, Jesus is quoting from Hosea 6.6. "God desires mercy, or having genuine love for each other, to be the underlying motivating factor of our obedience, rather than simply living by the letter of the law.. Sacrifice is only the means to the end. Love is the fulfilling of the law, as we read in ROM. 13.10.

Rather than showing care and concern for the disciples in their hunger, the cold hearted judgmental Pharisees only found fault.

Therefore, the spiritual lesson we learn from this second Passover season of Christ's ministry, is to rid ourselves of our desire to find fault with others, and replace it with the desire to sincerely have care and a loving concern for one another.

So to summarize thus far, Christ's first Passover season revealed God's love for us, while this second Passover season reminds us to live by the golden rule, thus fulfilling the second Great Commandment, by loving each other.

The 3rd Passover

The 3rd Passover season of Jesus Christ's ministry, occurs around the events recorded in John chapter 6.

Let's turn there, and read those opening verses.

John 6.1-6

- 1 After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias.
- 2 Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.
- 3 And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.
- 4 Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.
- 5 Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"
- 6 But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

What follows is the miracle of the feeding of the 5000.

And these events recorded in John 6, are quite familiar. We read them every year at the Passover. And rightly so, for as we read in verse 4, these scriptures record events that took place very close to the Passover.

So we will not spent to much time on them now. Let's just get to the crux of the meaning of Christ's teaching of this, His 3rd Passover season of His ministry.

John 6:26-39

- 26 Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.
- 27 Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."
- 28 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."
- 30 Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?"
- 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"
- 32 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.
- 33 For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."
- 34 Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always."
- 35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.
- 36 But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.
- 37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.
- 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

39 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ”

My friends, these verses are both comforting and enlightening. Comforting in the hope of the salvation that God wills to give us, through our enjoining to the body of Christ.

Which is symbolized by our baptismal covenant and by the renewing of that covenant every year by and through the deep significance of the Passover ceremony.

And enlightening in the fact, that these verses teach us that the Unleavened Bread that we eat for 7 days, during these days of Unleavened Bread, is a reminder that we must be spiritually nourished by the washing of the water by the word every day of our lives.

And not only ingest it, but more importantly, we must make these living words apart of us. Using them by applying the living principles into our lives, making them apart of our very nature.

And in so doing, we grow to emulate God, growing closer to Him and hopefully each other, as well. And so by abiding in His love, we may eventually enter into eternal life, by and through the sanctification we gain through Jesus Christ.

This is the hope and promise, recorded in Christ's third Passover.

So now we arrive at Jesus Christ's 4th and Final Passover Brethren, consider that almost 1/3 of the entire gospel text, is devoted to the events surrounding Christ's final Passover.

So, what I would like to do with the remainder of my time today, is to kind of hit the high spots, of the last week of Jesus's life in the flesh, leading up to the fulfillment of the Passover.

And friends, as I stated at the beginning of my message today, the timeline that I am going to espouse, may be a bit different than what is generally excepted in the church.

I have gone over this timing quite a few times, and just can't seem to make all the events that we are going to cover, fit together, with Jesus entering Jerusalem on the Sabbath.

Now I admit that this alternate timing does present a difficult question regarding the merchants selling offerings on the Sabbath. I do find this a bit difficult to except, that this would have been allowed.

However, looking at this question, from the flip side. It would explain Christ's utter rage in His actions of cleansing the Temple, 3 year years earlier.

So with that said, I'll precede with this alternative timing, going through all of the pertinent scriptures, during Christ's last 6 days on earth.

And as always, I hope to solicit discussion, after this message, in that we can all put our heads together and discover the truth of the matter. For iron sharpens iron.

So with that disclaimer, let's continue. Let's begin 6 days before the Passover. Please turn to **John 12:1-13**

1 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead.

2 There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.

The word translated supper in verse 2, means the chief or evening meal. So this was towards the end of the day, that Christ went to Lazarus's home. And it was 6 days before the Passover, which I will assume to mean Christ's sacrifice, since He is the fulfillment of the Passover.

As it says in **1 Corinthians 5.7**, the last part of the verse; "For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us"

Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, as is stated in John 1.29, who takes away the sins of the world. In fact, John repeats this statement several verses down in John 1.35, that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Passover, being the Lamb of God.

In Exodus chapter 12, which is the first place we find the term Passover used in scripture, the Passover is defined in verse 21 as the Lamb.

Let's quickly turn there and read that passage. For the Passover itself is often confused with being a day.

Exodus 12:

21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb.

Now although the word lamb is in italics, it helps to clarify what the subject matter is. The Passover is not a day, for you can not kill a day, the Passover is a specially selected sacrificial lamb.

We find this same definition of the word Passover, in the NT as well. Turn please to:

Luke 22:

7 "Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed"

Note, the second part of verse 7. In this verse, we find the Passover defined the same way as it was in Exodus 12:21. Again, the term Passover, literally means the special sacrificial lamb.

Jesus Christ, is the fulfillment of the Passover sacrifice, and when was Jesus killed? At the end of the Wednesday, Nisan 14.

So now, getting back to our timeline, if we count backwards 6 days from near sunset on Wed, Nisan 14, it would make this time to be Thursday evening, Nisan 8, going into the beginning of Friday Nisan 9.

Continuing in John 12, verse 3.

- 3** 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.

In going through the scriptures of this last week, we find that Jesus was anointed twice. Here by Mary, 6 days prior to the Passover, and later we will see that Jesus is anointed a second time, 2 days before the Passover. Continuing in verse 4

- 4** But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said,
5 "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?"
6 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.

As a side note, 300 denarii, is equal too about a years salary for the average laborer. This oil, about a pint in volume, was so costly because it originated in India, where the Nard plant was grown. Continuing in verse 7.

- 7** But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial.
8 For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."
9 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.
10 But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also,
11 because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus

So that ends the events of Friday evening, that is the first part of Friday Nisan 9. Now in the next verse we begin the day light part of Friday.

John 12:

- 12** The next day[day light part of the day] a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,
13 took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' The King of Israel!"

It's interesting to me that this large crowd of people, would cry out Hosanna. Which translated means "save us" And that they would call Christ the King of Israel. Of course all of this has prophetic connotations, but the fact that the crowd was enlightened to this fact, is itself enlightening.

It seems that the crowd was responding to the fact, that they knew Jesus had raised Lazarus from the death, and therefore possibly had the thinking that He could save them in a physical sense also. Let's continue reading in **verses 17-19 of John 12.**

- 17** Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness.

18 For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, “You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!”

So we also see here, that jealousy was the reason why the religious leaders wanted to kill Christ. They felt that He was going to take away their influence and prominence, in the sight of the masses.

If we turn to Luke 19, we can get more of a mental picture of these events. **Luke 19:37-42** Just to interject here, in the previous verses we find that Jesus is riding down the Mount of Olives towards Jerusalem on a young donkey. OK verse 37.

37 Then, as He was now drawing near 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 they had seen,

38 saying: “ ‘Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!’ Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

39 And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.”

40 But He answered and said to them, “I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.”

41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it,

42 saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.

OK, so Jesus is descending down the Mount of Olives towards Jerusalem, and the masses are crying out to Him.

Now if we go back to John 12, we find more of what happened as Christ made His triumphant entrance into Jerusalem. We left off in John 12:19, let’s pick up the story flow again beginning in verse 23

John 12:23-33

23 But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

27 “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

28 Father, glorify Your name. ”Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”

- 29** Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him."
- 30** Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake.
- 31** Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.
- 32** And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."
- 33** This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

So after Jesus speaks all these words, He arrives at Jerusalem, and then He goes into the temple. We find this recorded in MARK 11.11, let's turn there please.

Mark 11:11.

- 11** And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

The question arises, what might He have been looking to find? We may find the answer to this question, in the events that transpire the following day.

So that ends Friday. The story flow then picks up again, the next morning. Which would be Sabbath morning the 10th of Nisan.

Mark 11:12-19

- 12** Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry.
- 13** And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.
- 14** In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again. "And His disciples heard it.

Friends, this may be a warning to us, that we had better be about our Father's business, producing spiritual fruit by developing the mind of Christ, or we may also be cured at some point. Continuing in verse 15.

- 15** So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.
- 16** And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple.
- 17** Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.' "
- 18** And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching.
- 19** When evening had come, He went out of the city.

Another interesting point here. Recall what we read earlier in John chapter 2. What we find from this account, is that Jesus concludes this last week of His ministry, just as He had began it, 3 1/2 years earlier, by cleansing the Temple, of sin and corruption.

Again, we can take this as a spiritual sign of what God wants to do in our lives, if we are obedient to Him.

Moreover, since this was His last Sabbath in the flesh, we can understand His rage, at how these self righteous religious people, were profaning the Sabbath, by peddling sacrificial doves and making change for offerings, most likely with a fee attached.

And as I alluded too, this may be the reason why Jesus had entered the temple and looked around the previous day, as well. And so as we read in verse 19, these events conclude the Sabbath of Nisan 10.

Let's now pick up the story flow in **Mark 11:20**

20 "Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots"

This verse helps to set the time frame, in that what follows, occurs on Sunday, Nisan 11. Jesus goes back to the Temple to teach, and He is confronted by the religious leaders.

Continuing in **Mark 11:27-29**

27 Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him.

28 And they said to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?"

These questions, probably are in response to His cleansing of the Temple, on the previous day, and maybe also in relation to His daily teaching.

29 But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things:

30 The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me."

31 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?'

32 But if we say, 'From men'"—they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed.

33 So they answered and said to Jesus, "We do not know."

And Jesus answered and said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

It's interesting that the religious leaders would ask this question of Him, when we consider what Nicodemus stated several years earlier in John 3, where it's recorded he said "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

Nevertheless, these events begin a final two day confrontation between Jesus and the religious elite, in which Jesus recites a number of parables, mostly condemning their egotistical hypocrisy.

Moreover, it is during this 2 day time span, that Jesus conveys a lot of information to His disciples. There is too much to cover here in one sermon, so to summarize, the next 2 days, which would be Sunday and Monday Nisan 11 and 12, are recorded in Matthew chapters 21 through 25, Mark 12-13, and Luke chapters 20 and 21.

And we know this to be the case, as Sandy alluded to last week, from Matthew 26, verses 1-2. Let's turn to **Matthew 26** and read down through verse 12. Starting in verse 1.

- 1 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples,
- 2 "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

So, in following the timeline. If we figure, 2 days from what was probably Monday, late afternoon, when He spoke these words, than that would bring us to Wednesday late afternoon. Which of course was the time that He was being crucified. Continuing in verse 3.

- 3 Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest,
- 4 and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him.
- 5 But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."
- 6 And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper,
- 7 a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table.
- 8 But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste?"
- 9 For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor."
- 10 But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me.
- 11 For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always.
- 12 For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial.
- 13 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."

So again, we see that this is the second time within this final week, that Jesus is anointed for burial. Recall, the first time was at Lazarus's home, where Mary poured the perfumed oil on Jesus' feet. This time, it occurs at Simon's house, where the oil is poured on Christ's head.

And this must have transpired Monday evening, near or at the end of the 12th of Nisan. For as we have seen, it was Messiah's habit this last week, to travel to Jerusalem by day to teach in the Temple, and then at night, retire to Bethany.

So I'm guessing, this to be Monday evening, since Jesus states, in verse 2, that He will be crucified in 2 days on the Passover.

I believe we can confirm this time line, if we continue reading down through **Matthew 26**. Let's continue reading in verses 14 to 17, to see the story flow.

- 14** Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests
15 and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver
16 So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.
17 Now on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"

Now this has been a very confusing verse to me in the past, as I'm sure it has been for you as well. For how could the first day of Unleavened Bread occur before the Passover?

The answer is, that there is a gross mistranslation of the Greek text. Your bibles may indicate this, for you may notice that the words *day of the feast*, is in italics. A more literal translation would read, On the first of the unleaveneds, the disciples came to Jesus.

OK, so what does that mean? On the first of the unleaveneds? Well after consulting with the "The Code of Jewish Law" which is a 550 page book delineating the laws and customs of Judaism, I believe I have found a reasonable explanation.

It seems that according to Jewish custom dating back to the first century, all leaven had to be removed from one's dwelling by 10 AM on the 13th. Therefore, the 13th became known as the first of the unleaveneds, since all leaven was to be removed by that date.

And that understanding fits perfectly, with the time line we have been reviewing. As we covered in verses 6-13 of MATT. 26. Jesus was anointed of burial near or at the end of Nisan 12, which was at the end of Monday.

Then, later that night, which would be the beginning of Tuesday, Nisan 13, Judas, makes the deal to betray Jesus. Then as we read in verse 17, on the daylight portion of Tuesday, Nisan 13, on the first of the Unleaveneds, the disciples go to make preparation for the New Testament Passover meal.

Which would take place after sunset that evening, at the very beginning of Wednesday, Nisan 14. The day the Passover lambs were to be slain at the temple.

And with that I think I will begin to bring this message to a close, since the events that follow are so well known.

I'd like to conclude by reading some of our Saviors final words, which are recorded in the book of John.

John 17, beginning in verse 20

- 20** "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;
21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

What a wonderful prayer that Jesus gave for us. And through these parting words, which He spoke on the evening prior to his fulfillment of the Passover sacrifice, we find the summation of the theme, that He had woven into the previous 3 Passovers.

This passage in John 17, emphasizes the ultimate goal or end result, of faithfully applying the lessons we learn, from the examination of the first 3 Passover seasons of Christ's ministry.

Stated simply, that summary is as follows. God loves us, and thus has called us to salvation, as we learn from John 3.16 and the events surrounding Christ's first Passover.

Thus we must apply the lessons derived from the Feast of Unleavened Bread, being feed by the true bread of God's word that came down from heaven.

Casting off the man of sin, and walking in newness of life, developing God's loving nature, reflected by and through our obedience to God's word, as well as sincerely developing loving care and genuine concern for one another.

These are the principles reflected in the 2nd and 3rd Passover during Christ's earthy ministry.

And thus through our patient endurance, coupled with God's loving mercy, we will hopefully soon see the fulfillment of God's plan manifested in us.

Becoming at one with God the Father and Jesus Christ, through the power of the resurrection, and the marriage of the Lamb.

Made possible by the singular most important act of love, in human history. The Passover of Jesus Christ, by His death and the hope given to us through His resurrection.

Friends, as we partake of the Passover once again this year, let us all be greatly humbled, and so ever grateful for the supreme offering of our loving Savior.

Thank you for your time today.

Thomas C. Trinko
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