

Review

We are studying the gospel of Matthew, during the final week of Jesus' earthly ministry. He has been in Jerusalem for a couple of days, and has just finished giving an end-times overview to four of His disciples on the Mount of Olives.

26:1-2 Passover Is Coming

The Passover was just a couple days away now, and Jesus knew that He was going to be arrested, tortured, and killed. He'd been telling the disciples this ever since they realized that He was the Messiah (Matt. 16:13-21). Unfortunately, none of this had really processed in their minds. They had the information, but it was just too unreal to accept as fact.

26:3-5 Plotting Against Jesus

Ever since Jesus had come into Jerusalem that week (Matt. 21), He'd been having confrontations with Israel's leadership.

- As soon as He'd entered the temple, Jesus drove out the sellers and moneychangers (21:12).
- When the crowds were crying out to Him, "Hosanna to the Son of David," the chief priests and scribes got in His face (21:15).
- When He was teaching in the temple, the chief priests and the elders confronted Him about where His authority came from (21:23).
- The chief priests and the Pharisees were offended and enraged when He spoke parables about them (21:45).
- The disciples of the Pharisees, along with the Herodians, challenged Jesus publicly on His position regarding paying Roman taxes (22:15-16).
- The Sadducees argued with Him about whether there was life after death (22:23).
- The Pharisees sent an expert in the Law to Him to question His knowledge of the Scriptures (22:35).
- Jesus humiliated the Pharisees publicly when He asked about their knowledge regarding the relation of David to the Messiah (22:42).

- Then, He'd spent all of chapter 23 warning the crowds against the hypocrisy and pride of the Pharisees and scribes.

That was enough for the Jews' leadership. They determined to bring an end to this man. They met together in the court of the high priest to plot how they might kill Jesus. They knew that they must do it in secret, however, because the crowds regarded Him highly, and might start a riot and a rebellion.

26:6 Simon's House In Bethany

Jesus had friends in Bethany, with whom He stayed during the evenings. It may have been because Jerusalem was so crowded for the Passover and Unleavened Bread holidays that there was no room. But it is also likely that it just wasn't safe for Him and the disciples to stay in Jerusalem.

This little village is about two miles east of Jerusalem on the other side of the Mount of Olives. It was home to Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. On this evening, they were staying in the home of Simon the leper.

Although Jesus had two disciples named Simon (Simon Peter and Simon the Zealot), this man was neither. He was, we can only assume, one of the many people Jesus had healed of leprosy.

26:7-13 The Broken Vial

John tells us (John 12:3) that Martha's sister Mary was the one who began to anoint Jesus with this expensive perfume. "How expensive could a bottle of perfume be back then," you might wonder. Mark tells us that it was worth over three hundred denarii (Mark 14:5). Since a denarius was a day's wage, that tells us that this bottle would be valued at almost a year's salary!

The nature of this bottle was that it had to be broken to be used (Mark 14:3). The beautiful fragrance inside could not be released unless the container was broken. But when it was broken, and the contents poured out upon Jesus, the whole house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume (John 12:3).

Mary's act of worship was an example of brokenness and pouring

out. In the same way, we are called to worship the Lord. We remember the words of David as he said,

Psa. 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

And later, David wrote,

Psa. 62:8 Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us...

This is true worship, broken and poured out before God.

26:8-13 The Indignant Disciples

While Mary was worshipping, the disciples were complaining. "What a waste," they said to one another. "This was worth a fortune!" John tells us that Judas already had the value worked out in his head:

John 12:5-6 "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?" Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.

Judas had the money box, and used to skim off of what he was carrying. His stolen "commission" on something so valuable would have been a lot of money.

Jesus rebuked all of them for their attitude. Mary alone had heard and understood Jesus' statements about His upcoming death. She was anointing His body for burial. But the disciples were too hard-headed to see it.

26:14-16 Judas' Bargain

Judas had already been intending to betray Jesus (John 12:4), but this latest loss of income was the final straw. The hatred and anger so filled his heart that satan entered into Judas (Luke 22:3).

He then sought out those who hated Jesus and asked for money. At what price would you sell out the Son of God? Judas did it for 30 pieces of silver. Interestingly enough, 30 pieces of silver was the price paid for the life of a slave (Ex. 21:32).

The chief priests were thrilled (Mark 14:11) to now have a man on the inside working for them.

26:17-19 Preparing The Passover

Passover came, and the Passover Seder needed to be eaten. But the disciples needed to know where. Jesus had it all worked out, and explained where they should go, and with whom they should speak. This would be their final meal together before Jesus' death, which is why it has come to be known as "The Last Supper."

26:20-25 One Of You Will Betray Me

As they sat down to dinner, Jesus said something completely unexpected: "One of you will betray Me."

Of course, with hindsight, we point to Judas: "It's him! The one with the black cape, the fake mustache, and those beady little eyes!" But to eleven of the twelve disciples, this was unthinkable! They had worked together as a team for more than three years. And instead of being suspicious of the others, each asked, "Is it me?"

Of course, Jesus knew who it was. John told us early in his gospel, **John 6:64 ...Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.**

Jesus' take on the situation in which Judas put himself was that it would have been better for him if he'd never even been born.

Conclusion

And so in the verses we've seen this morning, we have a stark contrast: the worshipper and the betrayer. The one who viewed their relationship with Jesus as something to put value into, and the one who viewed it as a source of monetary gain. The one who was completely open and honest before God, and the one who became so bitter that the devil himself possessed him.