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Jesus' Last Week- Introduction

Here's an overall view of what we might be looking into in detail through this series.

Jewish Days

Day	Jewish day	Modern day
First	Yom Rishon	Sunday
Second day	Yom Sheni	Monday
Third day	Yom Shlishi	Tuesday
Fourth day	Yom Revi'i	Wednesday
Fifth day	Yom Chamishi	Thursday
Sixth day	Yom Shishi	Friday
Seventh day	Yom Shabbat	Saturday

The actual day starts from 6 am to 6 pm.

The *first day* starts on the Sabbath day – Saturday evening 6 pm – and it ends on the first day evening at 6 pm. Genesis 1:5 (NKJV) – *God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.*

Further references can be found in Genesis 1:8,13, 19,23 and 31. Jewish people still follow this method for the ‘day’ calculation.

Our Time	6pm	5pm	4pm	3pm	2pm	1pm	12pm	11am	10am	9am	8am	7am	6am	
Hours	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1		
Jewish hours	12 th hr	11 th hr	10 th hr	9 th hr	8 th hr	7 th hr	6 th hr	5 th hr	4 th hr	3 rd hr	2 nd hr	1 st hr	2	

ONE HEBREW NIGHT

Our Time	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm	11pm	12	1am	2am	3am	4am	5am	6am
Hours		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Jewish Hours	First Watch			Second Watch				Third Watch			Fourth Watch		

JEWISH DAY

Passover is on the first month, i.e., the Month of Nissan on the 14th day (Leviticus 23:4–7), so the 14th day starts on the 13th day evening at 6 pm.

“These are the LORD’s appointed festivals, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times: ⁵The LORD’s Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. ⁶On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD’s Festival of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. ⁷On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. ⁸For seven days present a food offering to the LORD. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.” (NIV)

Hebrew Months

Jewish Month	Approximate Secular Month	Special Festival
Nissan	March–April	Passover
Iyar	April–May	Lag B’Omer
Sivan	May–June	Shavuot (Pentecost)
Tammuz	June–July	
Menachem Av	July–August	Tisha B’Av
Elul	August–September	
Tishrei	September–October	Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kipur, Sukkot
Marchesvan	October–November	
Kislev	November–December	Chanukah
Tevet	December–January	Conclusion of Chanukah
Shevat	January–February	Tu B’Shvat
Adar	February–March	Purim

Last week according to the Gospel of Mark

The Gospel of Mark gives the account of the last 5 days very accurately. Mark 11:1 is exactly 5 days before the Passover; it is the day after Jesus arrives from Bethany as per John 12:1, which is six days before Passover!

Days before Passover	Scripture
5	Mark 11:1
4	Mark 11:12
3	Mark 11:20
2	Mark 14:1
1	Mark 14:12

So we will work this out as our basic for the days, also incorporating information from the other Gospels in order to get a clear picture of Jesus' journey.

PASSOVER

The Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Time
Triumphal entry	21:1-11	11:1-10	19:29-44	12:12-19	Morning
Greeks visit/voice from Heaven				12:20-36	Afternoon
Jesus wept over Jerusalem			19:41-44		Evening
Return to Bethany		11:11			Night stay

PASSOVER

The Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Time
Cursing the fig tree	21:18-19	11:12-14			Morning
Second cleansing of the temple	21:12-16	11:15-18	19:45-48		Afternoon
Response to an unbelieving crowd				12:37-50	
Return to Bethany	21:17	11:19			

The Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Time
Fig tree withered and faith	21:19-22	11:20-26	21:38		Morning
Question on Jesus' authority	21:23-27	11:27-33	20:1-8		
Parable of two sons	21:28-32				
Parable of vineyard	21:33-46	12:1-12	20:19-26		Mid-morning
Parable of marriage feast	21:1-14				
Question on Caesar	22:15-22	12:13-17	20:19-26		
Great Commandment	22:34-40	12:28-34			
Pharisee and Scribes condemned	23:1-36	12:38-40	20:45-47		Afternoon
Jesus Laments over Jerusalem	23:37-39				
Widow's mite		12:41-44	21:1-4		
Olivet discourse	24:1-51	13:1-37	21:5-36		Evening
Parable of virgins	25:1-13				
Parable of Talents	25:14-30				
Inevitable of Final Judgment	25:31-46				

Jesus; His focus turns completely to the religious leaders.

THREE DAYS BEFORE PASSOVER

The Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Time
Sanhedrin plot to kill	26:1-5	14:1-2	22:1-2		Morning
Mary anoints Jesus	26:6-13	14:3-9		12:2-8	
Judas agrees to betray Jesus	26:14-16	14:10-11	22:3-6		Evening

TWO DAYS BEFORE PASSOVER

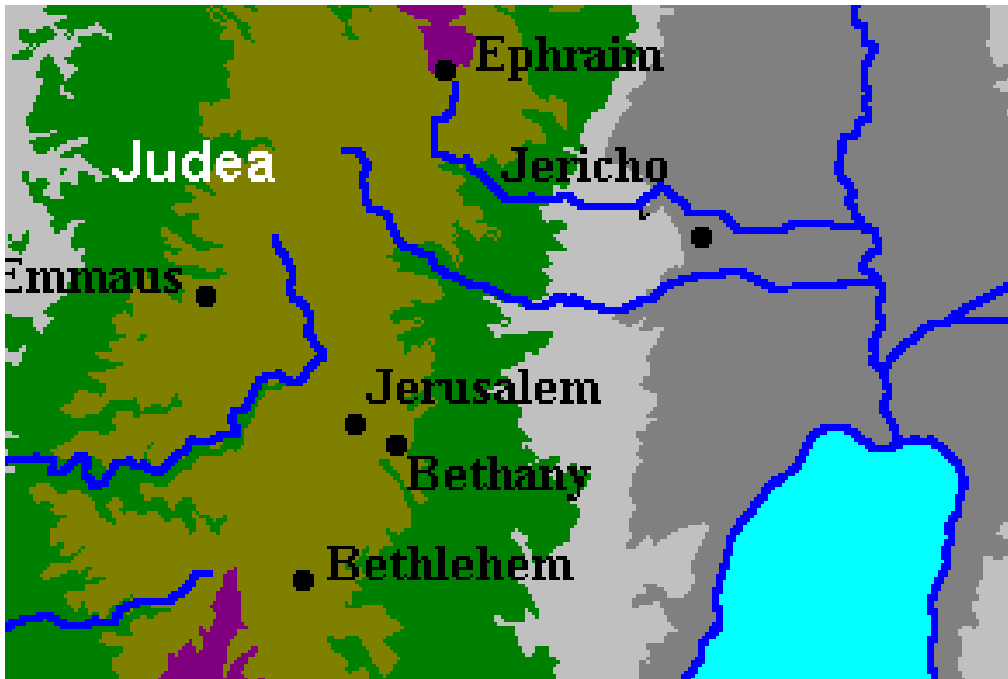
The Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Time
Preparation for Passover meal	26:17-20	14:12-17	22:7-14		Morning
Disciples' strife			22:24-30		
Jesus washes the feet of disciples				13:1-20	Evening
Identification of betrayer (upper room)	26:21-25	14:18-21	22:21-23	13:21-30	Evening
Last Supper	26:26-29	14:22-25	22:15-20		
Jesus leaves				13:32	
New Commandment				13:31-35	
Peter's denial predicted	26:31-35	14:27-31	22:31-38	13:36-38	
Discourse in the upper room				14-16	
Jesus' High Priest prayer				17	
Sung a hymn (upper room)	26:30	14:26			
Agony in Gethsemane	26:36-46	14:32-42	22:40-46	18:1-2	
Betrayal by Judas	26:47-50	14:43-45	22:47-48	18:2-9	
The arrest (Gethsemane)	26:51-56	14:46-52	22:49-53	18:10-12	
Jesus questioned by Annas (Sanhedrin)			22:54,63-65	18:7,13,19-24	
Examined by Caiaphas (High Priest house)	26:57-68	14:53-65		18:14-18	
Peter denies Jesus (courtyard)	26:69-75	14:66-72	22:55-62	18:25-27	

The Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Time
Formal trial	27:1-2	15:1	22:66-71		
Judas' death	27:3-10				Uncertain about the day and time
Trial before Pilate	27:3-10				Early morning
Before Herod			23:6-12		Morning
Before Pilate the 2nd time	27:15-23	15:6-14	23:13-23	18:39-40	Morning
Barabbas released	27:26-30	15:15-19	23:25	19:1-3	
Pilate sentences Jesus	27:24-25	15:20-23, 27-28	23:24	19:4-16	Morning
Way to Calvary	27:31-34		23:26-33	19:16-18	Mid-day 12 noon
First utterance on the cross			23:34		
Soldiers divide His clothes	27:35-36	15:24	23:34	19:23-24	
Second utterance on the cross			23:39-43		
Third utterance				19:25-27	
Darkness covers the earth	27:45	15:33	26:44-45		
Fourth utterance	27:46-47	15:34-35			
Fifth utterance	27:48-49	15:36		19:28-29	
Sixth utterance				19:30	
Seventh utterance and dies	27:50	15:37	23:46	19:30	3 pm
Centurion's testimony	27:51-56	15:38-41	23:45,47-49		
His side pierced	27:57-61	15:42-47	23:50-56	19:31-37	
Burial				19:38-42	Before 6 pm evening

Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Time
Tomb is opened	28:2-4				
Mary Magdalene and other women visit the tomb	28:1, 5-7	16:1-8	24:1-8	20:1	
Mary tells Peter and John			24:9-11	20:2	
Peter, Mary, and John visit the tomb			24:12	20:3-10	
The Saviour appears to Mary		16:9		20:11-17	
Mary tells the apostles		16:10-11		20:18	
Saviour appears to other women	28:9-10				
Chief Priest informed by guards	28:11-15				
2 Disciples on Emmaus Road		16:5:12-13	24:13-32		
Jesus appears to Peter			24:34		
Jesus Appears to all apostles except Thomas		16:14	24:33-49	20:19-23	

FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

Map of the places Jesus visited during the last week of His life on earth



Distances (in miles)

Jerusalem to Bethany → 2 miles

Jerusalem to Emmaus → 7 miles

Jerusalem to Bethlehem → 6 miles

Jerusalem to Jericho → 15 miles approx

Jerusalem to Ephraim → 8–15 miles depending upon where in the Ephraim region you are (Ephraim is not a city; it is a region)

The Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Time
Triumphal entry	21:1-11	11:1-10	19:29-44	12:12-19	Morning
Greeks visit/voice from Heaven				12:20-36	Afternoon

Jesus wept over Jerusalem			19:41-44		Evening
Return to Bethany		11:11			Night stay

Five days before Passover

Six days before the Passover, Jesus was in Bethany (John 12:1) – initially He goes to Jericho from Jerusalem and returns to Jerusalem via Bethany. When He goes into the city, He calls out to Zacchaeus and dines with Him (Luke 19:1–10), and on His way out of Jericho, He heals the blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46–52) and arrives at Bethany and stays in the home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha.

The Triumphal Entry

(Please take time to read this account in the four Gospels!)

After His overnight stay in Bethany, the next morning, Jesus and His disciples leave to Jerusalem. While they were on their way to Jerusalem, they come to Bethpage and Jesus asks His disciples to get a donkey for him. Bethpage is believed to be between Bethany and Jerusalem near the Mount of Olives. This is on the main road from Jericho to Jerusalem where the road starts to descend into Jerusalem. The Gospel of Matthew mentions Jesus asking for both the *colt* and the *donkey*, fulfilling the Prophecy of Zechariah in his book in Chapter 9:9

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph,
O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming
to you; He is just and endowed with salvation,
Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the
foal of a donkey. (NASB)*

See how specifically Jesus fulfilled the above prophecy even to the minute detail. Zechariah prophesied about Jesus not only riding an ass but also a colt (unbroken), the foal of an ass. Zechariah also mentioned the people rejoicing greatly and shouting, and that certainly came to pass on this day. In those days, laying down clothes, waving the branches of a tree and shouting proclamation were all part of a customary welcome to a king or a conqueror. Such was the reception given to Jesus. Luke 19:37 mentions that the people joyfully praised God in loud voices “for all the mighty works that they had seen”; the Gospel of John further elaborates that many went out to meet him on account of having heard of Lazarus’ resurrection.

The praises of the people were thus:

“Hosanna to the Son of David” – Matthew 21:9

“Blessed be the King” – Luke 19:38

“Blessed is the King of Israel” – John 12:13

“Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” –
Matthew 21:9 and Mark 11:9

“Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that
cometh in the name of the Lord” – Mark 11:10

“Hosanna in the highest” – Matthew 21:9 and Mark
11:10

“Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest” – Luke
19:38

This is the first time Jesus ever allowed His disciples or the Jews to call Him Lord and King. But when the Pharisees heard this, they ask Jesus to rebuke them but He refuses. This shows clearly that He is God, accepting His deity. There are eleven accounts of Jesus being worshiped (Matthew 2:2, 8:2, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25, 20:20, 28:9, 17; Mark 5:6; Luke 24:52; and John 9:38). The fact that Jesus received man’s worship further attests to the fact that He was God in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16). When Jesus refused to rebuke His disciples, he replied saying that if they don’t praise Him, the stones will – the creation worshipping God.

The Greeks Seek Jesus

There were some non-Jews – Greeks, Gentiles or Heathen as the Bible calls them, who wanted to meet Jesus and are brought to Him by Philip and Andrew. The fact that Jesus will bring salvation to both the Jews and the Gentiles is well established in the scriptures. Luke 2:32 (NKJV), *“A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.”* (Further scriptures in Isaiah 9:2, 42:6, 49:6, 60:1–3; and Acts 13:47.) However, Jesus said, *“I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”* (Matthew 10:5, 23, 15:24; John 1:11; and Romans 15:8). This reveals that Jesus’ earthly ministry was directed primarily toward the Jews and that after His death and resurrection, faith would be opened up to the Gentiles as well.

Jesus did minister on a few occasions to the non-Jewish people – the centurion’s servant (Matthew 8:5–13 and Luke 7:1–10) and the Syrophenician woman and her daughter (Matthew 15:21–28 and Mark 7:24–30). But this is the first time ever Gentiles come seeking Him during the festival time in Jerusalem – *not looking for a sign or a miracle*. This was clear to Jesus that His time on earth was coming to an end and also shows that His ministry was no longer confined to the Jewish people alone. Hence, He makes the following statement in John 12:24–27:

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. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 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. “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. (NKJV)

And so His statement about His death and glorification would break down the middle wall of partition between the Jew and the Gentiles (Ephesians 2:11-12).

Jesus, being fully God and fully human, did have emotions contrary to the will of His Father, as we see in Hebrews 4:15 – “*was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*” Therefore, having an emotion or desire contrary to God’s will is not always sin, but yielding to those emotions or desires is. Jesus refused to pray for His own desires to be met but rather submitted Himself to His Father’s will saying, “Father, glorify your name” (John 12:28).

Then, they heard the voice from Heaven (vv8-30):

Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.” Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to Him.” Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. (NKJV)

This is the third time Father God speaks audibly to His Son while HE was on the earth:

1. Jesus’ baptism in the River Jordan – Matthew 3:17, Mark 1:11, and Luke 3:22
2. Transfiguration of Jesus – Matthew 17:5, Mark 9:7, and Luke 9:35
3. John 12:28

We also see three different accounts of the same incident:

- a) Some said it thundered
- b) Some said an angel spoke

c) Jesus said it was the *voice* from Heaven

The purpose here, however, was for everyone to know that He is the son of God. Even today, we have people in such categories looking for signs and wonders, a few looking to hear from other men; but what God eagerly expects is that we hear from HIM directly.

Jesus' Death Predicted Again

Jesus predicts His death again here in this passage: the “lifting up of Son of Man” speaks of being lifted up on the cross – the crucifixion. The Jews understood this (v34). Also, this clearly shows that Jesus knew very well the way HE was going to be crucified. In John 18:32, John says that the reason the Romans were involved in the death of Jesus was because of this prophecy about the method of His execution, for crucifixion was the Roman style of execution.

Jesus said that He would die and rise again 14 times, of which 7 times He made a public statement and 7 times He spoke to His disciples in private.

No.	Scripture	Statement
1	John 2:19	<i>Private</i>
2	Matthew 12:39–40	<i>Private</i>
3	John 6:51	<i>Private</i>
4	Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31; and Luke 9:22	Public
5	Matthew 17:9–12	Public

6	Matthew 17:22-23; Mark 9:31; and Luke 9:44	Public
7	John 10:17-18	<i>Private</i>
8	Luke 11:29-30	<i>Private</i>
9	Matthew 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; and Luke 18:31-33	Public
10	Matthew 20:28	Public
11	John 12:7-8	<i>Private</i>
12	John 12:23-33	<i>Private</i>
13	Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; and Luke 22:19-20	Public
14	Mark 14:27-28	Public

Jesus Weeps Over Jerusalem

Jesus weeps over Jerusalem as HE could see what was going to happen to it under the regime of Titus in AD 70 – the complete destruction of Jerusalem; it also shows the compassion He had even for those who had rejected Him.

Herod's temple was a magnificent structure that was covered with gold. When the Romans burned the temple, the gold melted and ran down between the cracks of the stone in the building, stones measuring around ninety-four feet in length, ten and one-half feet in height, and thirteen feet in width. So to get all of the gold that melted and ran down among the stones, every stone was removed and broken into pieces, fulfilling the words of the Lord in Matthew 24:2, Mark 13:2, Luke 19:44 and 21:6, and the prophecy of Micah 3:12.

Return to Bethany

After all these events, Jesus goes back to Bethany and stays overnight with His disciples.

Let us worship Jesus as the Lord and our Saviour with songs of praise just as the people of Jerusalem did when Jesus entered the city triumphantly, as in Mark 11:9–10.

“Hosanna!

‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’

Blessed is the kingdom of our father David

That comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest!!

Four Days before Passover

The Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Time
Cursing the fig tree	21:18-19	11:12-14			Mornin g
Second cleansing of the temple	21:12-16	11:15-18	19:45-48		Afterno on
Response to an unbelieving crowd				12:37-50	
Return to Bethany	21:17	11:19			Night

Let us walk with Jesus again from Bethany to Jerusalem, about 2 miles away again today, its just four days away from Passover.

Cursing the Fig Tree

Talking about this event, to begin with, why would Jesus curse a fig tree? It is a fact that a fig tree should have figs by the time the leaves are evident. The fig tree produces fruits before the leaves appear. So, if there are no figs the time the leaves are out, there will not be any figs that year altogether. Jesus was *hungry!* What was His hunger about? Recount that this incident took place on the way to Samaria in John 4.

John 4:8, For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. (NKJV)

They were hungry and they had gone to buy food, and Jesus was sitting by the well side in Shechem or Samaria. Jesus then speaks to a Samaritan woman and He prophesies about her state, which then makes her believe that He is the Messiah, eventually spreading the news about Jesus to the others in the village. In the meantime, the disciples return to Jesus and offer Him food.

John 4:31, *Meanwhile, his followers were begging him, "Teacher, eat something."* (NCV)

But He responded as thus in John 4:32 (NKJV) – *But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know."* Jesus was still hungry but not for the physical food. He does convey it to His disciples, but they had no clue as to the food He was talking about, which He later explains as thus in John 4:34:

"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work." (NKJV)

Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work." (NLT)

Remember when Satan tempted Jesus to make bread out of stones, Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3 in Matthew 4:4 (NKJV) – *"Know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord."* Isn't it obvious then that He was not looking to satisfy His physical hunger but was rather looking to teach His disciples an important spiritual lesson through the event.

Mark 11:14 mentions that Jesus *answered* the fig tree! The tree has not spoken to Him verbally, but it had communicated to Him by showing off the leaves. All of God's creation communicates with its Creator; so are we expected to answer with faith. Therefore, this fig tree in the picture was professing something that it did not even have, though it was still too early for figs. It was hypocritical.

It is probably that this tree was representing the hypocrisy in nature and hence Jesus cursed it. We have learnt from our Discipleship lesson that Jesus hates hypocrisy – one of the most rebuked by Him. Read Matthew chapter 23 for a better understanding.

It is also possible that Jesus knew this action would gain the attention of His disciples, and He would therefore use it to teach them a lesson. Jesus was not only having trees talk to Him, but He was also talking to them, just as He also encourages us to do so, be it a mountain (Mark 11:23) or a storm in our life. What is the point in talking to a tree or mountain? When Jesus cursed the fig tree, it withered immediately. The Greek word used is “PARACHREMA,” which means “instantly” (Strong’s Concordance).

However, the disciples did not realize that the fig tree had died until the next day (Mark 11:20). If the tree died instantly, why did not they notice it until the next morning? The answer to this question is found in Mark 11:20. The tree was dead from the root up. The tree did die instantly, just as the Word declared, but what had happened to the roots was not visible until the next morning.

We understand that God created everything by His word.

Hebrews 11:3 – By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. (NKJV)

The whole creation was made by the spoken Word of God. In the same way, our words also have power when we release it in faith.

Proverbs 18:21 – Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit. (NKJV)

What we have here is a big spiritual lesson concerning receiving things from God. When we ask, we do receive as per Matthew 7:7, but sometime it takes a little while longer to manifest in the natural realm. When we physically see the manifestation of what we hoped for is

NOT when God actually answered our prayer; in fact the Lord answered when we prayed (Mark 11:24). But just as in the case of this fig tree, we do not see the result instantly in the natural realm as we cannot see His work behind the scenes but wait until it manifests.

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

This is something very difficult for us to imagine. The merciful, graceful, all compassionate God, full of love, who cries looking at His people, who used all of His money to meet other's needs, who multiplied the food for the people, shows His other side for the second time. Yes, you heard it right, the second time! John 2:13–17 records the first time, but what amazes me is that He actually sat and made a whip out of cords to drive them out of the temple!! This happened during the initial period of ministry, and now it is almost three years from then and He still cleanses the temple. I am convinced that even Jesus had to repeat the lesson because of the hardness and dullness of the heart of the people. But why did He have to do this? When the Pharisees and the religious leaders called Him all kinds of names, like demon, Beelzebub, winebibber, drunkard etc., He never for once retaliated. However, He takes the whip here because of His zeal for the Lord and His house.

Mark 11:17

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.'"
NKJV

Only Mark mentions that Jesus would not allow anyone to even carry a vessel through the temple; Jesus wanted His Father's house to be dedicated completely to prayer and the ministry of God. Also, as with the Sabbath, work symbolizes our own effort, and our own effort will always fall short of what God demands for salvation. Therefore, anything that resembles work was inappropriate in the house of God.

It is worth the point to remember that these money changers were buying and selling the money to pay for temple tax and also selling animals for sacrifice. They were charging extra money from people who came from a foreign land so there was a huge money making in the exchange. These merchants were corrupt and they were also doing their business in the house of God. Anyone who uses the house of God to make money will be judged severely before God.

This is applicable even today. God tolerates us even when we commit sin against Him over and over again, such is His mercy, but one thing He really abhors and deals with harsh punishment is using God's name to make money. We should also not tolerate such acts in the name of God.

Can you imagine Jesus making a CD of His sermon and selling it? Or, for that matter, His worship song collection? Can you imagine God charging you for a healing? Can you think of Jesus asking you to pay 1000 dollars for Him to lay His hands on you for prosperity? Do you realize how the so-called Christians have disgraced the Gospel of God? It really saddens the heart of Jesus no doubt.

One of the clear identifications of false teachers, apostles, or the spirit of anti-Christ is the love for money, specified in the scriptures. I give myself as an example here, so I am safe: You will know if I preach

- a different Gospel
- a different Jesus
- apart from what is given in the Bible
- anything plus or minus Jesus

But what if I try to preach to you with an intention of milking money manipulating your compassion for the poor and the needy? That's the kind of deception that is rampant in the Christendom these days. So, my dear brothers and sisters watch out!! (1 Timothy 6:10 says you

should know by the love of money in their heart and also should be able to identify such fraudulent preachers.)

Matthew, on his account of the event, in chapter 21 adds a little more information following the clearing of the temple courts – he adds a note on children praising God, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” for which Jesus replies to the indignant chief priests quoting Psalms 8:2.

Matthew 21:17

*And said to Him, “Do You hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes. Have you never read,
‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants
You have perfected praise?’” NKJV*

The Unbelieving Crowd

John 12:37–50

People often misunderstand the free will of God and think that they are not given adequate opportunity to believe in God; contrarily, some even profess the predestination theory – all not true.

Titus 2:11

God’s free gift of being saved is being given to everyone. (NLV)

Revelation 3:20

See! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and we will eat together. NLV

Revelation 22:17

*The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!"
Everyone who hears this must also say, "Come!"
Come, whoever is thirsty; accept the water of life as a gift, whoever wants it.* GNT

Romans 10:13

for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." NIV

So, the gift of salvation is for all mankind and whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. However, the Jewish people who lived while Jesus was on the earth could not believe Him because they chose to reject Him. They could not believe because they chose NOT to believe; they stumbled over the stumbling stone – the Christ (Romans 9:32). In Mark 6:5, the Greek word used is "OU" and "DUNAMAI," to say that Jesus could do NO mighty works because they would not believe. Jesus could not do any mighty miracles among them not because He did not have enough power to pull it off but because He chose not to use His power against the will of the people.

John 12:42-43

Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. NKJV

Their unwillingness to confess Christ throws serious doubt on the complete genuineness of these men's faith and the willingness of them

to commit to Christ. Jesus said, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32–33). The Apostle Peter at one point failed to confess Jesus before people (John 18:17 and 25–27), but after the Holy Spirit was poured out upon him, he was a different man altogether who boldly confessed Christ even among those under authority (Acts 4:8–13).

The Word of God

John 12:48

He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. (NKJV)

Psalm 138:2

I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name for Your loving kindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name. NKJV

God has magnified His word above all else, which Jesus also confirms here that on the Last day, His word that He has spoken will judge them! This has also been prophesied about Jesus Christ by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:18–19 (NKJV) – *I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.* The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among them; but they did not receive Him and their rejection of Him will be judged by God on the Last Day!

Night Stay

Mark 11:19

When evening had come, He went out of the city. NKJV

Matthew 21:17

Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there. NKJV

Three Days Before Passover

The Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Time
Fig tree withered and faith	21:19-22	11:20-26	21:38		Morning
Question on Jesus' authority	21:23-27	11:27-33	20:1-8		
Parable of two sons	21:28-32				
Parable of vineyard	21:33-46	12:1-12	20:19-26		Mid-morning
Parable of marriage feast	21:1-14				
Question on Caesar	22:15-22	12:13-17	20:19-26		
Great Commandment	22:34-40	12:28-34			
Pharisee and Scribes condemned	23:1-36	12:38-40	20:45-47		Afternoon
Jesus Laments over Jerusalem	23:37-39				
Widow's mite		12:41-44	21:1-4		
Olivet discourse	24:1-51	13:1-37	21:5-36		Evening
Parable of virgins	25:1-13				
Parable of Talents	25:14-30				
Inevitable of Final Judgment	25:31-46				

From

afternoon, there is no more public ministry; Jesus' complete focus now turns towards the religious leaders.

Let us once again take the journey from Bethany to Jerusalem, and this is going to be one of the busiest teaching days in the life of Jesus, spanning around 12 hours. Jesus walks towards Jerusalem with His disciples down the same route he had taken previously, where the disciples find the cursed fig tree completely withered now and are amazed.

Authority Questioned (Matthew 21:23–27, Mark 11:27–33 and Luke 20:1–8)

When Jesus and the disciples reach the temple, He is questioned as to under what authority he's been doing all these (in relation to cleansing the temple). I give below an interesting summary of the questions asked to and by Jesus. (Repeat questions are also taken, i.e., the same questions repeated by the four Gospels)

How Many Questions Was Jesus Asked?

- Number of unique questions asked of Jesus → 81
- Number of unique questions Jesus answered → 73
- Number of unique questions Jesus didn't answer → 8

How Many Questions Did Jesus Ask?

- Number of unique questions asked by Jesus → 81
- Number of unique questions answered by Jesus → 38
- Number of unique questions answered by others → 43

Here, Jesus chooses to answer the question by posing a question back!

Jesus was attacking their lavish lifestyles fleecing people and collecting lucrative income. John the Baptist declared that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the World (John 1:29).

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned

you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance (Matthew 3:7-8).

The answer is given in Luke 7:29-30 (*All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.*)

They were not willing to accept the testimony about Jesus from John the Baptist. So, here Jesus is not avoiding the question on authority but He is referring to the unresolved issue on the minds of the Pharisees. If they can make a judgment about John the Baptist, they can certainly make of Jesus as well. The Pharisees were not able to answer because they feared the people (Mark 11:32-33). The religious leaders feared people in few occasions, this being the first. They also feared the people when Jesus told them the parable of the wicked husbandmen (Matthew 21:33-45, Mark 12:1-12 and Luke 20:9-19) and when they were counselling how they might take Jesus and kill him (Luke 22:2).

Just to inflict more pain and to bring the religious leaders to know about themselves, Jesus goes on with three more parables.

Parable	Matthew	Mark	Luke
Two sons and father's will	21:28-32		
Vineyard	21:33-46	12:1-12	20:9-19
Wedding banquet	22:1-14		

For the earlier question from Jesus, the religious leaders chose to be silent, so to provoke them He gives them these parables.

The Parable of Two Sons

After this parable, He directly asks them a question, which they are forced to answer. Then, He gives this application of the parable in Matthew 21:31–32 (NLT) – *Then Jesus explained his meaning: “I tell you the truth, corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the Kingdom of God before you do. For John the Baptist came and showed you the right way to live, but you didn’t believe him, while tax collectors and prostitutes did. And even when you saw this happening, you refused to believe him and repent of your sins.*

The Parable of the Vineyard

Jesus spoke this parable quoting many elements from the Old Testament. Look at the table below.

Description	Psalm 80	Isaiah 5	Jeremiah 2
Planted vineyard	80:8	5:1	2:21
The hedge	80:12		
Winepress		5:2	
Tower		5:2	
He will destroy		5:6	

The Israelites were taken as a vine out of Egypt and planted by God in the land that He had prepared for it. In spite of God sending His prophets and warning them, Israelites rarely brought forth fruit. So God did prophesy about these people through Prophet Jeremiah saying that if these people did not repent and turn to the Lord, then the Lord will destroy the vineyard and plough it like any other field (Jeremiah 26:18–19).

Here, the religious leaders are quite familiar with these backgrounds when Jesus spoke to them about not listening to the Son of God. Jesus asks the religious leaders in Matthew 21:40 (NLT) as thus – *“When the owner of the vineyard returns,” Jesus asked, “what do you think he will do to those farmers?”* Before they could answer the question, the reply

comes from a common person standing in their midst. Matthew 21:41 (NKJV) – *They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.”*

Jesus endorsed their answer in verse 45, and what exactly happened in history after 40 years was the whole city was ruined by the Roman Empire. Again, Jesus quotes from Psalm 118:22 in Matthew 21:42, saying that the rejected stone becomes the cornerstone. Also, it confirms Isaiah’s prophesy in chapter 5 that the hedges will be trodden down and the garden will be destroyed. These prophesies came to pass in AD 70.

This is not a new message they are hearing for the first time; they heard this same message from John the Baptist about 3 years back (Matthew 3:7–10). But they rejected it; even in this case they knew that the message was for them (Matthew 21:45), yet again they rejected it.

The Wedding Banquet: Marriage of the King’s Son (Matthew 22:1–14)

Here, a banquet is made ready but the invitees are busy with their own work, hence not willing to come. When the king sends his servants, the people not only reject their call but also kill them. Then, he sends another servant to call both the good and the bad out in the streets (22:10). But when the king returns to find one of the guests without the appropriate attire, he is thrown out and punished. Sadly, despite Jesus directing these parables against them, they were hardened in their hearts; for it is written that though they were called and chosen, they rejected it; hence, others get into the Kingdom.

The Three Attacks upon Jesus

Have you ever wondered why when someone falls away with you, he immediately joins with someone who does not like you, instantly like a flash! Here also the unlikely alliance takes place because of the hatred towards Jesus!

First Attack

	Matthew	Mark	Luke
Paying taxes to Caesar	22:15-22	12:13-17	20:20-26

Alliance between the Pharisees and the Herodians: Pharisees have separated themselves from the secular state of Israel for they viewed that the Roman rulership (Herodians) was totally against their religious ways corrupting it. Herodians, as you can see from their name, were supporters of Herod and his family. Herod was the leader appointed by the Romans in Israel, a non-Jew, to rule over the Jewish nation. Both always work against each other and fight against each other in every aspect of their political and social views. But on account of Jesus, they had joined together, on one previous occasion mentioned in Mark 3:6, just to destroy Jesus. Here again they join together – Matthew 22:16 and Mark 12:13. Why did they do this? Because this alliance could enable them to seize Jesus and hand Him over to the governor (Luke 20:20). For this Jesus answered and said, why test me hypocrites? And after His answer, they marvelled and left Him and went their way.

Second Attack

	Matthew	Mark	Luke
Sadducees question	22:23-33	12:18-27	20:27-40

Sadducees are religious leaders who do not believe in the resurrection from the dead, together with the scribes who are also the teachers of

the Law. They both join together and simply ask a lame question just to trap Him to find what He has to say. However, Jesus answers them wonderfully well. He uses the quote from the book written by Moses, as they only believe in the first 5 books of the Bible written by Moses, saying, “God is the God of the living not of the dead.” This answer leads to another unusual alliance on the third attack. Matthew 22:34 (NKJV), *But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together.*

Third Attack

	Matthew	Mark	Luke
Great Commandment	22:35–40		
First Commandment		12:28–34	

It may appear that both Matthew and Mark recorded the same event, but when you study carefully, you will find that it was the same question posed by two different sets of people. In Matthew 22:35, they ask to test Him. In the Gospel of Mark, the scribe poses this question seeing that Jesus had answered the earlier question well. Here, the scribe’s motive was not to test Jesus but to learn from Him. When Jesus hears him say that it is more important to love than to offer sacrifice and burnt offerings, Jesus says that he is not far from the Kingdom of God.

After all these three attacks upon Jesus, they dare not to ask Him any more questions (Mark 12:34). Having silenced the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians, Jesus now turns the heat on them by asking them a question.

Jesus Questions the Leaders

	Matthew	Mark	Luke
Whose son is Christ?	22:41-46	12:35-37	20:41-44

Now Jesus asks them a question, whose son is Christ? They reply, David's. He immediately asks them another question they have no clue about and they are quiet and shut up. He asks to ascertain their understanding of the previous three parables He spoke.

Matthew 22:46 (NKJV) sums it up beautifully – *And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.*

While the common people who heard Jesus speak received it gladly (Mark 12:37), provoking Jesus to speak against the religious leaders at length in the next few chapters. Jesus warns the people to be careful about the Pharisees and their hypocrisy, recorded in Matthew 23, which we have already looked up in detail in our Discipleship lesson.

Jesus near the Offering Box (treasury)

	Matthew	Mark	Luke
Widow's offering		12:41-44	21:1-4

Jesus makes the distinction between paying out of one's abundance and sacrificing all one has, which was contrary to what the religious leaders had taught them. Immediately triggering some response among the disciples as to how beautiful the stones of the temple were, also the gifts dedicated to God (Luke 21:5). Here again Jesus' response was that the temple will be ruined, which He had already mentioned to the religious leaders twice, and this is the third time (Luke 21:6).

Jesus Christ Our Passover Lamb

1 Corinthians 15:7 (NLT)

*Get rid of the old “yeast” by removing this wicked person from among you. Then you will be like a fresh batch of dough made without yeast, which is what you really are. **Christ, our Passover Lamb**, has been sacrificed for us.*

A comparison of the Passover lamb in the old covenant with Jesus, and how Jesus fulfils every requirement accurately:

Exodus 12	Date in Nissan	Days before Passover	Events in Jesus' Life
Lamb selected 12:3	10th day	5	Enters Jerusalem, triumphal entry Mark 11:1
Examination of lamb for 5 days, 12:5	11th day	4	Casts out money changers, Matthew 21:12
Examination	12th day	3	Leaders find no fault, Matthew 22
Inspection of the lamb	13th day	2	Feast in Bethany, Mark 14:3
	14th day	1	Religious leaders could not find any fault
Lamb slain 12:6	14th day	Passover day twilight	Jesus dies, Mark 15:34

Exodus 12:1-7

Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, “This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the

tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. NKJV

The lamb is to be selected on the 10th day of the month of Nissan and then inspected for any blemish and be slain on the 14th day, which is the Day of Passover. In the same way, Jesus entered Jerusalem five days before the Passover, He was examined and scrutinized by religious leaders and Pilate, and then crucified on the Passover day.

Olivet Discourse

Following the question-and-answer session with the religious leaders, Jesus is never seen doing any public ministry thereafter. Now his whole focus shifts towards His disciples. His public ministry comes to an end leading on to a private ministry with the disciples at the Mount of Olives. During their way back from the temple in Jerusalem towards Bethany through the Mount of Olives for the night, Jesus makes a quite a startling prophecy of the end times.

	Matthew	Mark	Luke
Olivet prophecy	24:1-36	13:1-32	21:5-36

He not only mentions about the impending turmoil but also tells them how to face it in the event of it. It is not about knowing it beforehand,

which is going to happen in AD 70, but how to keep themselves during this time.

Three Parables from the Olivet Prophecy

Parable	Matthew	Mark
Ten virgins	25:1–13	
Far country traveling	25:14–31	13:33–37
Sheep, goats and judgment	25:31–46	

These parables are also part of the Olivet prophecy to stress the point that Jesus made. To explain the prophecy, Jesus speaks in parables, but unfortunately, the chapter division happens in the wrong place in our Bible. The disciples ask Jesus the following question while He was with them in the Mount of Olives before the prophecy, Matthew 24:3 (NKJV) – *Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And **what will be the sign of Your coming**, and of the end of the age?”* So to stress the point he made previously, Jesus gives these three parables.

First: Parable of ten virgins, addressing the two questions of the disciples.

- *That you do not know the hour or the day don't try to predict*
- *The wise ones took extra oil, so they were prepared for a long wait, likewise be prepared to wait longer.*

Second: Parable of a man travelling to a far country is almost similar to the first parable but with a different application from the Gospel of Mark.

- *That you don't know the time so watch and pray, here they are commanded it may happen any time but you watch and pray*

- *Be prepared for the master's arrival, which you don't know, but until he comes keep 'working'! Don't be lazy!*

From the Gospel of Matthew on the Talents, he commanded not to lose heart for the sake of failure. The person who received only one talent hid it fearing that he may lose it, but Jesus commanded that they should be working and producing more.

Third: Parable of the sheep and goats – in those days, it was difficult to distinguish a sheep from a goat outwardly. So, Jesus stated that as a disciple of Jesus Christ, they should live their life showing His love and care to all the needy while using their talents for God's Glory.

From the above three parables, we can identify that

- *We ought to watch and pray*
- *We should be ready for the long wait*
- *We got to work*
- *We got to put our talents to use for His Glory*
- *Our life should bear good fruits*
- *We don't know the hour and time*
- *There is a judgement that will determine what we get*

After a long and tiring day, they come to the house of Lazarus, and the future events begin to roll out.

Two Days before Passover

Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Time
Sanhedrin's plot to kill	26:1-5	14:1-2	22:1-2		Morning
Mary anoints Jesus	26:6-13	14:3-9		(12:2-8)	Bethany
Judas agrees to betray Jesus	26:14-16	14:10-11	22:3-6		evening

Having finished His public ministry yesterday, Jesus' focus is now on His disciples. This is a rather quiet day, nothing much happening, except for a very important meal in the evening. However, this day sets up a strong footing for the world-changing event about to happen in 2 days.

The Sanhedrin's Plot to Kill Jesus

Three Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, record that the Sanhedrin gathers at the house of the High Priest Caiaphas and plots to seize Jesus and crucify Him. Owing to Jesus' harsh rebuke against the religious leaders the previous day (Three Days Before Passover) – parables speaking of the tax collectors and prostitutes entering the Kingdom of God before them – they are now very cross with Him and want to get rid of Him. However, since it was festival time, they feared that they might inadvertently stir up the people against them – hence looking for a window of opportunity to execute it as stealthily as possible (Matthew 26:4).

Mary Anoints Jesus

Though the Gospel of John records this event as happening “six days before the Passover” in honour of Lazarus’ resurrection (chapter 12), adding a bit of confusion over the day on which this actually happened, these events were not recorded in a sequential order by the Apostle John. Let us first look at his account of why he has written the Gospel, exemplified in two places:

John 20:30–31 (NKJV)

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

John 21:25 (NKJV)

And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

John the Apostle chooses to only record seven of the miracles performed by Jesus during His time on the earth in his entire book, which is clear that he just hand-picked the very important ones that proclaimed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God.

Scene and Place: Simon the leper’s house, Bethany

People: Jesus, His 12 disciples (including Judas Iscariot), and the woman with the costly oil (John records it was Mary the sister of Lazarus, while Luke records it as Mary Magdalene)

Time: evening, dinnertime

The woman pours the expensive perfume upon Jesus' head (Matthew and Mark) and on His feet (John). The whole house is now filled with the sweet aroma of the perfume, being expensive worth almost a year's wage.

Simon the Pharisee, a leper once cured by Jesus during His ministry in Galilee and a rich man living in the best house and highly respected in Bethany and in the region of Judea, was very close with Jesus. He came from a village called "Kerioth," a region from where Judas Maccabeus launched his successful assault on Jerusalem and conquered it from the Syrian monarch Antiochus IV Epiphanes, over a century before Jesus birth). Thus the family's ties with the *zealot movement*, started by Jews with an intent on overthrowing the Roman rule in Judea. Mary Magdalene, who had left her husband, a scribe in Jerusalem, and joined a Roman officer to the city of Magdala, was saved from being stoned simply because she was from a very rich family.

Judas was the treasurer in the ministry of Jesus; he was already rich and was in no need of the 30 pieces of silver. Judas was a fervent zealot expecting Jesus to take over Roman rule and establish His Kingdom. Now that he comes to know that Jesus' intention was quite contrary to his, he is angry and upset. He shows his contempt when the woman pours the expensive perfume on Jesus calling it a waste of money. He could not see beyond the obvious things that were pointing to the death and burial of Jesus. To which Jesus replies, *For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial* (Matthew 26:12). He said it was a preparation for His burial. Judas took personal offence at Jesus' answer, leading to his plot of betrayal.

A rebuke of a friend should be taken in the right way; otherwise, we will lose the purpose of people in our lives. Look at the contrast between Peter and Judas. Peter was rebuked by Jesus openly when He

said “get behind me Satan”; but Peter comes back to Jesus. While in the case of Judas, the rebuke was not handled so well.

Here is another parallel between the meal in Bethany and the Upper Room Passover meal – their striking contrasts and resemblances.

The first meal takes place 2 days before and second 1 day before the Passover. The first meal in Bethany was to celebrate the raising of Lazarus from the dead, whereas the Upper Room meal was celebrated to commemorate Jesus’ death.

Bethany		Upper Room	
Scripture	Scene	Scripture	Scene
John 12:1	Along with His disciples	John 13:1	With His Disciples
John 12:2	Martha served	John 13:4	Jesus served
Matthew 26:7	Poured perfume	John 13:5	Poured water
John 12:3	Washed Jesus feet	John 13:5	Jesus washed disciples feet
John 12:3	Wiped Jesus feet	John 13:5	Jesus wiped disciples feet
John 12:4	Would betray	Matthew 26:21	Would betray
John 12:7	Day of burial	Matthew 26:28	Blood shed
John 12:10	Consulted to kill Lazarus	John 11:53	Consulted to kill Jesus
Mark 14:10	Judas went out	John 13:30	Judas went out
John 12:11	Many believed on Jesus	John 12:42	Many believed on Jesus

Interesting! Even though many of the chief rulers believed in Him but they were fearful of the Pharisees.

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

Both events in the above table show that Judas did not want to be there with the rest of the disciples and with the Lord Jesus. Nor was he happy with the Sanhedrin's state of affairs, as they were very close with Pilate. Jesus had the harshest words and diatribes against the Pharisee and the Sadducee sects. Judas must have been happy when Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, but when he saw Jesus chasing the moneychangers out from the temple, he may have come to know Jesus' real intent. However, Judas wanted to do something that would totally change the earthly kingdom

Both Matthew and Mark point out that soon after the anointing at Bethany, Judas left them and went to the chief priest to betray Him. They fixed up a price, thus confirming the prophecy spoken by Zechariah few hundred years before in Chapter 11:12-13 (NKJV):

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. 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.

Ahithophel

Moving back to the Old Testament, here's Ahithophel – a counsellor and good friend of David's (1 Chronicles 27:33) – who spoke with immense wisdom as it were directly from God. 2 Samuel 16:23 (NLT) – *Absalom followed Ahithophel's advice, just as David had done. For every word Ahithophel spoke seemed as wise as though it had come directly from the mouth of God.* Ahithophel continues to advise David with his counsel up until David's adultery with Bathsheba, following which the relationship severed. *Why was it so?*

For Ahithophel was related to Bathsheba!

2 Samuel 11:3 (NLT) *He sent someone to find out who she was, and he was told, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite."*

2 Samuel 23:34 (NLT) *Eliphelet son of Ahasbai from Maacah; Eliam son of Ahithophel from Giloh*

Eliam was Ahithophel's son, which makes *Bathsheba* the *granddaughter* of Ahithophel.

Following the severed relationship, Ahithophel associates with Absalom! What happens next?

2 Samuel 15:23–32 (NLT)

Everyone cried loudly as the king and his followers passed by. They crossed the Kidron Valley and then went out toward the wilderness. Zadok and all the Levites also came along, carrying the Ark of the Covenant of God. They set down the Ark of God, and Abiathar offered sacrifices until everyone had passed out of the city. Then the king instructed Zadok to take the Ark of God back into the city. "If the Lord sees fit," David said, "he will bring me back to see the Ark and the Tabernacle again. But if he is through with me, then let him do what seems best to him." The king also told Zadok the priest, "Look, here is my plan. You and Abiathar should return quietly to the city with your son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan. I will stop at the shallows of the Jordan River and wait there for a report from you." So Zadok and Abiathar took the Ark of God back to the city and stayed there. David walked up the road to the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went. His head was covered and his feet were bare as a sign of mourning. And the people who were with him covered their

heads and wept as they climbed the hill. When someone told David that his adviser Ahithophel was now backing Absalom, David prayed, "O Lord, let Ahithophel give Absalom foolish advice!" When David reached the summit of the Mount of Olives where people worshiped God, Hushai the Arkite was waiting there for him. Hushai had torn his clothing and put dirt on his head as a sign of mourning.

2 Samuel 17:14

Then Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "Hushai's advice is better than Ahithophel's." For the Lord had determined to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, which really was the better plan, so that he could bring disaster on Absalom!

2 Samuel 17:23

When Ahithophel realized that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey, went to his hometown, set his affairs in order, and hanged himself. He died there and was buried in the family tomb.

Ahithophel and Judas - A Comparison

- Ahithophel hangs himself when his counsel is rejected, and so does Judas (2 Samuel 17:23 & Matthew 27:5)
- Ahithophel plans to execute his deed at night, and so does Judas (2 Samuel 17:1 & John 13: 30)
- Ahithophel was a counsellor and a friend of David's, and so was Judas to Jesus.
- It was said that one man's death will bring peace to the nation (2 Samuel 17:3 & John 11:50)

David and Jesus – A Comparison

David prays at the Mount of Olives for deliverance: 2 Samuel 15:30–31 (NKJV) – *So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up. Then someone told David, saying, “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.” And David said, “O Lord, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!”* **Jesus** goes up to the Mount of Olives and **prays** the prayer of submission: Mark 14:26 (NKJV) – *And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

David laments that one of his own friends has betrayed him in Psalms 41:9 (NKJV) – *Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.*

Jesus says that one his own disciples would betray Him, whom he calls friends in John 15:15.

John 13:21 & 26 (NKJV) – *When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.” Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.” And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.*

David passes through the Kidron Valley: 2 Samuel 15:23 (NKJV) – *And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people crossed over. The king himself also crossed over the brook Kidron, and all the people crossed over toward the way of the wilderness.*

Jesus passes through Kidron Valley: John 18:1 (NKJV) – *When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered.*

David prayed: 2 Samuel 15:24–26 (NKJV) – *There was Zadok also, and all the Levites with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar went up until all the people had finished crossing over from the city. Then the king said to Zadok, “Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place. But if He says thus: ‘I have no delight in you,’ here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him.”*

Jesus prayed: Luke 22:41–42 (NKJV) – *And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.”*

After the day’s events – rather quiet except for the meal in Bethany in the evening – Jesus stays overnight in Bethany. Let’s meet tomorrow.

One Day before Passover

The Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Time
Preparation for Passover meal	26:17-20	14:12-17	22:7-14		Morning
Disciples' strife			22:24-30		
Jesus washes the feet of disciples				13:1-20	Evening
Identification of betrayer (upper room)	26:21-25	14:18-21	22:21-23	13:21-30	Evening
Last Supper	26:26-29	14:22-25	22:15-20		
Judas leaves				13:31	
New Commandment				13:31-35	
Peter's denial predicted	26:31-35	14:27-31	22:31-38	13:36-38	
Discourse in the upper room				14-16	
Jesus' High Priest prayer				17	
Sung a hymn (upper room)	26:30	14:26			
Agony in Gethsemane	26:36-46	14:32-42	22:40-46	18:1-2	
Betrayal by Judas	26:47-50	14:43-45	22:47-48	18:2-9	
The arrest (Gethsemane)	26:51-56	14:46-52	22:49-53	18:10-12	
Jesus questioned by Annas (Sanhedrin)			22:54,63-65	18:7,13,19-24	
Examined by Caiaphas (High Priest house)	26:57-68	14:53-65		18:14-18	
Peter denies Jesus (courtyard)	26:69-75	14:66-	22:55-62	18:25-27	

There is not much activity on this day but it gets really busy in the evening.

Preparation for Passover Meal

Matthew 26:17–20; Mark 14:12–17 & Luke 22:7–14

The initiative comes from the disciples asking Jesus where the Passover would be celebrated. Jesus informs both Peter and John to prepare a place just as He commands. This is the third Passover that Jesus is going to celebrate, and also His last.

Mark 14:13–14 (NKJV)

And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, “Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, “Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?”’ Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us.”

Jesus’ above reply was a miraculous demonstration of the gift of the Spirit called a “word of knowledge” (1 Corinthians 12:8). Jesus knew these things through His Spirit. It is amazing how specific this word of knowledge was. Many people carried pitchers of water, but they were usually women. It was unusual for a man to be carrying a pitcher of water. The man had to go directly to a house; not just any house but a house with a large upper room that was already prepared and furnished. This incident closely parallels when Jesus sent two of His disciples into Jerusalem to get the donkey and her colt for Him to ride on His triumphal entry, which we saw 5 days before Passover.

Jesus’ longing and His desire to celebrate this last Passover are emphasized in Luke 22:15–16 (NKJV), *Then He said to them, “With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;*

for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

He is just short of 24 hours in fulfilling His mission, feeling both joy and relief as He is nearing the finish line and what better way celebrate than being with His intimate circle. He makes the best use of His available time to sit and talk to His disciples, as in John chapters 14 to 16 and His prayer in Chapter 17. He also promises to send “the helper” (the Holy Spirit) after His departure so that they will not be left out in the dark but be comforted, equipped and empowered in every possible way. He uses this Passover meal to illustrate, in a very graphic way, His purpose for becoming a man.

Jesus Washes the Feet of Disciples

John 13:1-20

Jesus loved His disciples to the *end* – the Greek word used for ‘end’ is ‘TELOS’, meaning “the utmost degree of an act” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary). When Jesus washed their feet, He fully knew that He had come from God and was going back to be with God; yet, He demonstrates His love and humility. As I have mentioned earlier, to know the real meaning of any word in the Bible we just have to look into the life of Jesus. Here is the ultimate example of *humility*.

Fully aware of Judas’ betrayal, Jesus yet chooses to wash his feet showing no partiality. Can you imagine washing the feet of the person who is going to betray you? This underscores the fact that Judas’ betrayal was not caused by any bad treatment from Jesus. Jesus treated him the same as all of the other disciples even though He knew what was in his heart. This also shows that God’s foreknowledge does not restrain His goodness towards anyone. He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and the

unjust (Matthew 5:45). This way, no one will have any excuse (Romans 1:20) when they stand before God at the Final Judgment.

Jesus' pouring of the water and cleansing of the disciples' feet is yet another example of what He has been preaching all His life. Mark 10:43–45 (NKJV), *Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*"

Another interesting aspect in this event was Peter's refusal to let Jesus wash his feet, which is in a way right because he was not worthy to be washed by Him. But God does not help us or minister to us because of who we are or what we are but by His great love towards us (Romans 5:8 & 1 John 4:8)

Let us look at Genesis 12:2 – God said I will bless you and you shall be a blessing. Peter wanted to serve Jesus but he did not want Jesus to serve him. Jesus was telling him that unless Peter receives the ministry from Jesus, Peter will not be able to serve. We cannot cleanse others or ourselves. We are totally dependent on the work of God's grace in our lives, only then are we equipped to serve others. Only a transformed person can transform others! Before we can be the blessing that we desire to be to God or to others, we have to let God be the blessing to us that He desires to be.

Two different Greek words are used for "wash" and "washed" in John 13:10 (NKJV) – *Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."* The word used for *wash* in John 13:5–6, 8, and this verse is "NIPTO," and it is the Greek word used in the New Testament meaning "washing part of the body" (Vine's Expository Dictionary) such as the hands or feet (Matthew 15:2 and Mark 7:3). A different Greek word, "LOUO," was translated *washed* in verse 10 and it signifies "to bathe, to

wash the body” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary). Here is the spiritual meaning of the washing done by Jesus. Once you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, you have received your eternal redemption. But what you need is external cleansing since you are getting contaminated in the world. Our spirits have been sanctified and perfected forever, but our bodies and souls can be defiled by sin and need to be cleansed throughout our earthly lives. This is done by confessing and turning from that sin (1 John 1:9).

There are churches that still practise this even today, but Jesus did it as an example. We also need to understand that in those days people walked bare foot or in sandals on muddy roads so it was customary to get their feet washed by slaves or servants while entering a house. Hence, there is no necessity of it today.

Disciples’ Strife

Luke 22:24–30

Just moments ago, Jesus teaches His disciples of love and humility and here they are acting contrary to what was taught to them. As we in WCF also proclaim, John 13:35 was given to them for the world to see who they are through their love for one another. Having spent over three years under the discipleship of the Lord Himself, their behaviour here was unacceptable and unjustifiable. They had heard countless teachings on humility and had those lessons demonstrated in a way that left nothing to be said. Yet, here they were violating some of the foundational principles of Jesus’ ministry. Knowing that His disciples were spiritually dull, gives us a great comfort in serving God, and it also reveals that our Lord works through us *in spite of* who we are *not because of* who we are. As 1 Corinthians 1:26–29 says that God has chosen the foolish, weak, and base things of this world to confound and “bring to nought” the powers of Satan, we can take courage from this. If Jesus did not worry, knowing the full extent of

His own disciples' weaknesses, then neither should we when we see the problems in the church today. We're going to win!

This is a wonderful example of what the Holy Spirit can do in us. Instead of feeling compassion towards Jesus, after He speaks of His imminent death, here they are consumed with their own interests, promoting themselves. This is totally opposite to what had happened after the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 where these very men stand in one accord united in one purpose.

Identification of the Betrayer

Matthew 26:21–25; Mark 14:18–21; Luke 22:21–30 & John 13:21–30

All the four Gospels record that Jesus identified the betrayer – Judas. Luke records that at that moment, Satan entered into him. Luke 22:3 (NKJV) – *Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.* It is clear that Satan was responsible for putting the betrayal into the heart of Judas (John 13:2). We can be assured that Satan's only purpose in motivating Judas to betray Jesus was to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). Moreover, the fact that Satan possessed Judas is no excuse for his betrayal. The devil goes about seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). He cannot devour just anyone, only those who give him a chance. Judas had given Satan open-door access through the sin of thievery (John 12:6). He may have never intended to betray Jesus and therefore "repented himself" when he saw that Jesus was condemned (Matthew 27:3); but once he began to wilfully submit to the sin, there was no turning back.

Sin cannot be controlled. We cannot just sin "a little." Sin, like a cancer, always grows until it brings forth death. Submitting ourselves to God and resisting the devil is our only guarantee against being devoured by the devil (James 4:7). If we choose to sin, then neither are we submitting to God nor are we resisting the devil.

The Last Supper

Matthew 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25 & Luke 22:15–20

There are two ordinances Jesus commanded the Church to do – (a) baptism and (b) partaking of the Lord’s Supper. This is why we, World Christian Fellowship, as the body of Christ, take part in the Lord’s Supper in all of our services.

The Passover meal was instituted by God for the deliverance of Jews from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 13:3–10). On that night of the original Passover, the Lord passed through the land of Egypt and passed His judgment slaying all the firstborn of man and beast (Exodus 11:5). The Jews had to kill a spotless lamb (Exodus 12:5) and take its blood and put it on the doorpost of their houses (Exodus 12:7) and remain inside under the blood covering till morning (Exodus 12:22). When the Lord passed through the land at midnight, HE passed over the homes of those who had applied the lamb’s blood to their doors and none was hurt (Exodus 12:13). This is the perfect picture of redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Every one of us deserves judgment because of our sins (Romans 3:23 and 6:23). However, Jesus provided Himself as a spotless, sacrificial lamb for us (John 1:29,36) such that when cover ourselves with His blood by confessing Him as the Lord of our lives, we can be sure that on the Day of Judgment, HE will Passover us!

Jesus was sacrificed on the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish year – the exact day and time that the Passover lambs were being slain (John 19:14–16). Truly, “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7). The Passover has much deeper spiritual application that, as Jesus explained here, would be fulfilled through His death. On the contrary, the Jewish Nation has missed out on the whole the prophetic meaning of the Passover. This is why the

Christian church does not celebrate the Jewish feast of Passover but has replaced it with the Lord's Supper, or Communion, that Jesus instituted during the last part of this Passover meal.

The New Commandment

John 13:31-35

Jesus stated that all of the Law and the Prophets hinged on loving God first and then loving our neighbour as ourselves (Matthew 22:36-40). These truths were already in the Law (Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and 10:12), but people had missed out on them. So, this commandment was not new in the sense that it had never been given before, but it was brought to the forefront and given new meaning through the example of Jesus. Jesus not only loved His neighbour as Himself, He loved His neighbour more than Himself.

This same Apostle John who wrote this Gospel also writes about the new commandment of love – no doubt he's taken inspiration after Jesus, as he puts it in 1 John 2:7-8 (NLT) – *Dear friends, I am not writing a new commandment for you; rather it is an old one you have had from the very beginning. This old commandment—to love one another—is the same message you heard before. Yet it is also new. Jesus lived the truth of this commandment, and you also are living it. For the darkness is disappearing, and the true light is already shining. He then went on to speak of loving one another.*

This commandment, or the revelation that He had given to man through His Word, was not new to God, but it was never clearly seen by people because of the darkness that separated them from God. In the light of Jesus' life, this darkness was removed, and the old commandment of love became new through the example of Jesus in a way that mere words could never have expressed.

Verse 35 is the key in this whole context, our motto at WCF being one and the same: *Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.* (NLT)

Jesus did not say that everyone would know we are His disciples by our doctrine, our rituals, our hatred for sin, operating on spiritual gifts, chasing the evil spirits, speaking tongues, mountain-moving faith or even by the way we express our love for God. He was clear: the one characteristic that would cause the world to identify us as His followers was our love for one another. The only way that Christ's body will be one as the Father and Jesus are one is through God's kind of love. Unity of the believers, that can only come through a genuine God-kind of love, is the greatest tool for evangelism that the church has or will ever have, according to Jesus. No wonder Satan has had the believers at each other's throats. Believers spend billions of pounds yearly on evangelism through television and radio, conventions and crusades; yet, the world is not evangelized because the body of Christ is not united in love.

"AGAPE" and "AGAPAO" (noun and verb, respectively) are Greek words used in the New Testament for God's kind of love. 1 Corinthians 13 explains it wonderfully about the God's kind of love that we need to practise in our lives:

- God's love has a tolerance for and endures trying situations and persons beyond an average standard. God's love is patient.
- God's love is of a friendly nature, generous, hospitable, warm-hearted, and good. God's love is charitable and helpful, showing sympathy and understanding for others. It is considerate, forbearing, tolerant, courteous, and thoughtful, desiring only to promote others' welfare. It is generous, liberal, and beneficial, demonstrating itself in kindly acts.

- God's love does not resent others' good fortune or desire to have what is theirs. God's love is not jealous and does not deprive others of what they have.
- God's love does not boast and brag or abound with self-praise. It is not vain or proud.
- God's love is not high-minded or puffed up with pride.
- God's love does not act, react, function, or perform in a manner that is in bad taste, improper, or in violation of what is right.
- God's love does not demand its own way.
- God's love is not easily annoyed or incited to anger or resentment.
- God's love does not reason about or reflect upon that which causes or constitutes misfortune, suffering, difficulty, or the like. God's love does not ponder upon wickedness.
- God's love does feel joyful when right, sincerity, integrity, honesty, and truth prevail.
- God's love makes it possible to withstand all stress and difficulty. Because God is love, He supports and carries on His own Person whatever is placed upon Him. God's love protects, covers, and keeps off anything that threatens the benefit and welfare of another. God's love holds back, refrains, and is tolerant and patient in all circumstances.
- God's love puts faith in others, believing the best of everyone (without criticizing or looking for fault).
- God's love persists in hoping, against all odds, in confidence and expectation of fulfilment of what is promised.
- God's love causes one to carry on through, despite hardships.
- God's love never proves insufficient in duration or unsuccessful in effectiveness. God's love will never disappoint or prove undependable. God's love goes on forever and will never come to an end.

Peter's Denial Predicted and He Denies Jesus Three times

Matthew 26:31–35; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:31–38 & John 13:36–38 and Matthew 26:69–75; Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:55–62 & John 18:25–27

There are only sixteen instances in the Gospels that are common to all four Gospel writers and *only nine common* instances outside of the crucifixion events, and this prophecy of Peter's denial is one of them. For the Lord to inspire the repetition of an event like this, there must be a special significance to it.

Our Lord must be stressing that we are nothing without Him (John 15:4–5). Peter went on to become probably the best known of the twelve apostles. He was used mightily of the Lord. But the Lord did not want him or us to forget that it was Christ in Peter (Galatians 2:20) and not Peter himself who was great. This incident illustrates what Peter was capable of on his own.

This also shows that the Lord has never had anyone who was qualified working for Him yet. Peter was not qualified and, even at our best, neither are we. If we realize that we are nothing and have nothing, then we are prime candidates to be used of God (1 Corinthians 1:26–29). Remember that Jesus was in need of a donkey? Are you willing to be that donkey?

In our Christian walk, we have three stages, which I have personally learnt over the years interacting with men of God. We start with total dependence in God, yes when we come to know God we are totally committed to Him and trust Him for every word, and I do remember the first time I preached a sermon without notes how much I needed God and His wisdom. The second stage is independence. This comes over a period of time after ministering and learning the word of God. This I see in many believers as well in many men of God. After they know a few scriptures and after going through a few sermons, they

immediately think they can be free. They do NOT depend on God but use the name of God for their ministry or their lifestyle – a very dangerous path to tread upon. The third stage is interdependence. That is, I totally depend on Him for my work and God depends on me to do what HE is asking me to do. This is the matured and grown-up stage of a person who could be used by God mightily.

Just like Peter, we often are more confident of ourselves than God is. Many of us are devastated when we fail in some area that we thought we had long since grown past. We need to realize that as long as we are in these mortal bodies, we cannot fall asleep at our battle stations in the fight against the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19–21). If we do, our flesh is just as capable of sin as anyone else's.

If we fall, it should concern us but not surprise us. We should simply realize with Paul that “(in my flesh) dwells no good thing” (Romans 7:18), get back into the spirit through confession and forgiveness, and go on with Jesus.

Peter did not write any of the Gospels but all the four Gospel writers mention every little detail about his failure – how is that possible. There is only one possibility that Peter himself went and confessed to everyone personally. I am fully convinced that God is looking for honest people who do not hesitate to confess their weakness so that they can receive the strength from the Lord.

Jesus said HE has prayed for Peter that His faith would not fail. Today for you Jesus is our High Priest and He is praying for you (Hebrews 7:25); He is our advocate (1 John 2:1). Peter who could not confess Jesus is Lord before a servant girl preaches one of the most powerful sermons after his restoration by Jesus and after the Day of Pentecost

(Acts 2). Apostle Paul, who wrote most of the epistles, claims that Peter is the *pillar* of the Church in Galatians 2:9.

The Upper Room Discourse

John Chapters 14, 15, 16 and Prayer in John Chapter 17

I just cannot do any justification of preaching from this except that Jesus instructs His disciples the importance of the ministry of the Holy Spirit – Him abiding in us and us in Him.

Agony in Gethsemane

Matthew 26:51–56; Mark 14:46–52; Luke 22:40–46 & John 18:1–2

“GETHSEMANE” is a Greek word meaning “oil-press” (Strong's Concordance). The meaning of this word conveys the idea that this was an olive yard or garden where the oil was taken from olives by pressing or squeezing.

The disciples could not even stay awake and pray with Jesus in the very hour of His need. But as born-again Christians, we each have received a new spirit at conversion (2 Corinthians 5:17) that is just like Jesus (1 John 4:17) because it is the Spirit of Jesus (Romans 8:9 and Galatians 4:6). Our born-again spirits are always willing to do God's will; it is our flesh that is the problem. The flesh, as Jesus was using it here, not only includes our physical bodies but also our souls. God has given every one of us everything that it takes to walk in victory, but “we have this treasure in earthen vessels” (2 Corinthians 4:7). That is to say that our spirits, where God has deposited all of His power and glory, are locked inside our flesh. This does not mean that we cannot live in the fullness of God. For as we renew our mind (Romans 12:2) and act on the Word of God (James 2:20), we experience the divine flow through our physical bodies. However, just as in the physical, muscles have to be used to increase in strength, so

our souls and physical parts have to be exercised unto godliness (1 Timothy 4:7-8).

Prayer is one important way of exercising ourselves unto godliness, and this was why Jesus admonished His disciples to watch and pray with Him. That brings us to the other misconception on prayer. Much damage has been done by a misunderstanding and misapplication of these verses. Jesus did not set a precedent for praying “Lord, if it be thy will” like we hear it used today. Jesus knew it was the Father’s will for Him to be made an offering for the sins of the world, as can be seen by the fact that He had prophesied His death and resurrection many times before. However, because of His unique relationship with God, Jesus was asking to accomplish God’s will some other way but at the same time affirming His commitment to do His Father’s will and not His own. He was not at a loss to know God’s will and therefore just left trusting that whatever the Father deemed best for Him would happen. He knew what the Father’s will was when He began praying, and He knew at the close of His prayer that God’s will could be accomplished no other way. This is evident through His statements in Matthew 26:45-46 and Mark 14:41-42. His agonising pain was due to the thought of His relationship with the Father God being completely cut off for that time He would be hanging on the cross. He was sweating blood because Jesus treasured the relationship with Father God more than anything else.

For us to pray “Lord, if it be thy will” in response to a promise that God has given us is nothing but unbelief and is not even remotely related to what Jesus did here in the Garden of Gethsemane. One of the foundational principles of answered prayer is that we must believe that we receive when we pray (Mark 11:24). There is no way that we can fulfil that condition if we do not know God’s will in that situation. Praying “if it is your will” takes us out of the active position of

believing and puts us in a passive position of waiting and letting circumstances rule our lives.

If we are seeking direction in an area where God's will is not already expressed through His Word, then we should pray James 1:5 for wisdom that we can believe we receive when we pray. Then, with that knowledge, we can continue our prayer in faith. We should not be ignorant but understanding what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians 5:17).

The only appropriate way to pray "if it is your will" is when we are dedicating ourselves to the service of God, regardless of where or what that may be.

Betrayal by Judas

Matthew 26:47–50; Mark 14:43–45; Luke 22:47–86 & John 18:2–9

Jesus had already let His disciples know that Judas was the one who would betray Him and Jesus knew all that were going to happen to Him. Hence, there is no doubt that He knew exactly what Judas was doing. Yet, Jesus greeted Judas by saying, "Friend." Jesus never rejected Judas until after Judas had rejected Him (2 Timothy 2:12–13).

A very interesting note mentioned in the Gospel of John, there were about 600 plus men who had come to arrest Jesus. They all fall over backwards when Jesus says, "I am He" in John 18:6,8. The word "*he*" is italicized. That means the word "he" was not in the original text but was added by the translators to make the sentence grammatically correct. This serves a useful purpose and is very helpful in most cases. However, the translators used italics to indicate these additions so that we could be aware of what the text literally said. In this instance, Jesus literally said, "I am," since Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. This illustrates how Jesus could have very easily defended Himself

against any size army that could have come to take His life, as He said in John 10:18, “No one takes it away from me [i.e., His life], but I lay it down of myself.”

Judas betrays Him with a kiss! We looked at this yesterday, the betrayal of a friend comparing Ahithophel with Judas. When they arrest Jesus, He demands that His disciples are let to go free. Even in Jesus’ greatest hour of need, He was thinking of others more than Himself (Philippians 2:5).

The Arrest

Matthew 26:51–56; Mark 14:46–52; Luke 22:49–53 & John 18:10–12

They arrest Jesus alone and while this was happening, Peter takes his sword. It was the Apostle John who reveals Peter as the one who cut off this servant’s ear and named this servant. It is very doubtful that Peter was even aiming for Malchus’ ear. It is probably that he was just swinging it randomly, cutting off his ear.

Peter had been very vocal that he would never deny the Lord, and his actions here proved that he meant what he had said. There were only two swords among all the disciples (Luke 22:38); yet, Peter was willing to take on these 600 soldiers. This spelled certain death or at least imprisonment.

Peter wanted to stand with the Lord, but he was not prepared spiritually. He was still strong in his own ability. If the battle had been in the physical realm, Peter would have fought to the death, as he proved here. But when Jesus told Peter to put up his sword and not resist with his physical power, Peter was confused. Peter only knew how to rely on the flesh. When Jesus refused to allow Peter to fight with his sword, he was defenceless. If he had been praying with Jesus, as instructed, he would have been built up spiritually and able to

stand with Jesus spiritually without denying Him. As the prophet Zechariah said, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6).

We may sincerely desire never to deny our Lord, but it takes more than desire; it takes preparation. We have all been taught how to rely on ourselves, but we have to learn how to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Ephesians 6:10).

Jesus Questioned by Annas (Sanhedrin)

Luke 22:54,63–65 & John 18:7,13,19–24

After His arrest, on the same night, Jesus was brought to Annas first, rather than Caiaphas the High Priest; interestingly enough, the entire Sanhedrin was waiting at that time to execute the trial. Who is this Annas? Why did he question Jesus?

Annas was the father-in-law of the High Priest Caiaphas. It was only because he was related to Caiaphas that he questioned Jesus, although not legally binding.

Jesus Questioned by the High Priest

Matthew 26:57–68; Mark 14:53–65 & John 18:14–18

They bring Jesus from Annas’ place to the High Priest’s palace, very next to Herod’s. There they question Him about His disciples, so that they can determine how big His army is. Secondly, they enquire about His theology, so that they can accuse Him of it.

Personally, what gripped me was what recorded in Luke 22:64 (NKJV) – *And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, “Prophecy! Who is the one who struck You?”*

Jesus had shown on many occasions before that He could call by name people whom He had never met before (Luke 19:5), tell people things that they had done (John 1:48 and 4:18), know what people's thoughts were (Luke 7:39-40), and learn anything else that He would care to know. The Epistle of Colossians says in 1:16-17 (NKJV) – *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.*

Jesus did not open His mouth. And lo, what humility!

Isaiah had prophesied that as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so Jesus would not open His mouth (Isaiah 53:7). Isaiah also mentioned that Jesus would be “taken away by oppression and judgment” (Isaiah 53:8), referring to the fact that He was not given a fair trial. Isaiah went on to prophesy in Isaiah 53:9 that Jesus would make “his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.” This too was fulfilled when Jesus was crucified between two thieves and buried in a rich man's tomb.

Conclusion

It was a long and a lonely night for Jesus, with neither food nor sleep! He was held at the High Priest's house for interrogation until early morning.

Come, let us share the meal together tonight and remember that Jesus is our Passover Lamb!!

Passover Day

The Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Time
Formal trial	27:1-2	15:1	22:66-71		
Judas' death	27:3-10				Uncertain about the day and time
Trial before Pilate	27:3-10				Early morning
Before Herod			23:6-12		Morning
Before Pilate the 2nd time	27:15-23	15:6-14	23:13-23	18:39-40	Morning
Barabbas released	27:26-30	15:15-19	23:25	19:1-3	
Pilate sentences Jesus	27:24-25	15:20-23, 27-28	23:24	19:4-16	Morning
Way to Calvary	27:31-34		23:26-33	19:16-18	Mid-day 12 noon
First utterance on the cross			23:34		
Soldiers divide His clothes	27:35-36	15:24	23:34	19:23-24	
Second utterance on the cross			23:39-43		
Third utterance				19:25-27	
Darkness covers the earth	27:45	15:33	26:44-45		
Fourth utterance	27:46-47	15:34-35			
Fifth utterance	27:48-49	15:36		19:28-29	
Sixth utterance				19:30	
Seventh utterance and dies	27:50	15:37	23:46	19:30	3 pm
Centurion's testimony	27:51-56	15:38-41	23:45, 47-49		
His side pierced	27:57-61	15:42-47	23:50-56	19:31-37	
Burial				19:38-42	Before 6 pm evening

Formal Trial – Early Morning 6 am

Matthew 27:1–2; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66–71 & John 18:33–38

Jesus was taken bound? Don't you think it is strange? They could not come and arrest Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. He had submitted to them without any resistance and had forbidden His disciples to fight when He was taken. If Jesus had wanted to escape, they could not have restrained Him no matter how much they bound Him.

Trial before Pilate – Morning around 7 am

Matthew 27:3–10; John 18:33–38

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all recorded Jesus answering Pilate's first question by simply saying, "*it is as you say.*" John, however, revealed that there was quite a conversation between Pilate and Jesus. John 18:33–38 (NKJV), *Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all.*

Pilate finds no fault in Jesus, and as soon as he hears that Jesus is from Galilee, which falls under the governorship of Herod Antipas, he sends Jesus to Herod, who was, at this time, in Jerusalem.

Before Herod

Luke 23:6–12

Jesus comes before Herod Antipas, the same person who imprisoned and beheaded John the Baptist. When Herod Antipas hears the reports about Jesus' ministry, he is convinced that Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead. The scripture says he was eager to see Jesus because he had heard about Him and His miracles, hence was looking to see some miracles.

Not only did Jesus refuse to defend Himself, showing His humility, but He also refrained from venting any of His anger against this man who had senselessly killed His friend whom Jesus said was the greatest of all the Old Testament prophets. So, Herod sees no point in speaking to Jesus so he sends Him back to Pilate. Another interesting point to note here is that both Pilate and Herod who were at loggerheads prior to this become friends after this incident. Luke 23:12 (NKJV) – *That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.*

Before Pilate the Second Time – Morning around 9 am

Matthew 27:15–23; Mark 15:6–14; Luke 23:13–23 & John 18:39–40

This time Pilate seeks the company of all the religious leaders to judge Jesus owing to the dream his wife has, warning Pilate that Jesus is a just Man. Her name is Claudia, which we get from the secular records, who is the only person who supports Jesus in the whole trial owing to her dream from God. Also, Pilate fails to find any fault in Him in his heart. What all the more surprised him was Jesus' composure, not

answering him back. In his experience, Pilate would have seen scores of people crying out aloud expressing all possible emotions hearing the death sentence, whereas Jesus here was not moved at all, no fear of death whatsoever.

Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, but he was looking for some diplomatic way of releasing Jesus that would not cost him any loss of popularity with the Jewish leaders. This was why he sent Jesus to Herod. He was hoping that Herod would pass judgment on Jesus and save him the trouble. When that scheme failed, he then drew on an old custom of releasing a prisoner to them at the feast. He gave the people a choice between Jesus, who he knew was innocent, and Barabbas, who was a murderer. Pilate thought that the crowd would certainly choose Jesus. However, through the insistence of the chief priests and scribes, the people chose Barabbas as the one who should be released. Remember the very same crowd cried out five days before “Hosanna to the King!” Never fall for people’s praises! The one that praises you may well crucify you as well.

Pilate was out of ideas as to how to let Jesus go yet save face with the Jews, so he condemned Jesus to death. Pilate violated what he knew to be true in his heart because of a fear of men and what he thought they might do to him. Without the chief priests’ cooperation, he ran the risk of trouble among the Jews and possible punishment by Caesar for failure to govern well.

Why did the religious leaders who were well versed in the scriptures, practicing for years together, fail to recognise Jesus?

Matthew 27:18, *For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.* (NKJV)

Mark 15:10, *For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.* (NKJV)

Do you see what envy can do to you? There are many well-meaning God-loving people serving the Lord who have gone astray because of this envy. Envy blinds your eyes and your heart making you wretched. These religious people were not able to digest that Jesus could do so many miracles and people were praising Him but not them. The best thing here is that others could see it!! Just like Pilate. The chief priests had deceived themselves and other religious people into believing that they were condemning Jesus for godly reasons, but even an ungodly ruler like Pilate could see through their lies. Religious bondage blinds people to truth even more than sin. The true motivation behind the chief priests' and scribes' actions was just envy. They were doing all of their religious works to be seen of people (Matthew 23:5), and Jesus was getting more recognition than they were. The same thing is true of persecution today. All strife is rooted in pride (Proverbs 13:10).

Releasing a prisoner was not only customary those days but also religious, as mentioned in Deuteronomy 21:6-7 and Psalms 26:6. Matthew was the only writer to record Pilate's washing his hands of guilt, just as he was the only writer to record the dream that Pilate's wife had. These instances underline that Pilate did not innocently condemn Jesus to death. Pilate will be trying to wash the blood of Jesus off of his hands through all eternity. In response to Pilate's question regarding the prisoner release, the Jews all in one voice said, "let His blood be upon us and our children." What a curse to bring upon oneself! This reckless statement by the crowd had severe consequences. Not only did it condemn their souls eternally, but it has cost the Jewish race untold suffering in this life too. In AD 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, up to 500 Jews were crucified per day. Since that time, history has been bathed in the blood of Jews until today. Pilate then releases Barabbas condemning Jesus to be crucified at Calvary. He also wrote the inscription on the cross in Hebrew, Greek and Latin.

Roman Soldiers Mock Jesus

Matthew 27:27–31; Mark 15:16–20 & John 19: 1–4

They stripped Him of his clothes, put on a purple robe, and put a thorn on his head and a reed on His hand. They beat Him and spat on Him. Some said mockingly, “Hail the king,” as if they were worshiping Him. They ridiculed Him so badly.

Matthew 27:29–31 (NLT):

They wove thorn branches into a crown and put it on his head, and they placed a reed stick in his right hand as a scepter. Then they knelt before him in mockery and taunted, “Hail! King of the Jews!” And they spit on him and grabbed the stick and struck him on the head with it. When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified.

He took the shame and all the pain the agonising way!

The Way to Calvary

Matthew 27:31–34; Luke 23:26–33 & John 19:16–18

Matthew 27:32 (NKJV)

Along the way, they came across a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus’ cross.

The soldiers had beaten Him up so badly that He could not even carry the cross, hence, as the above verse states, forcing Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross.

The Gospel of Mark 15:21 (NKJV) states, *Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross.* This same Rufus is later greeted by Paul in his letter to the Romans (16:13).

Golgotha, where the crucifixion takes place, literally means “the skull” (Strong's Concordance). Only Luke used the Greek word “KRANION” (“cranium” [Strong's Concordance]), which was translated as “Calvary,” to identify this place (Luke 23:33). These following facts are evident from the biblical accounts:

- Golgotha was near Jerusalem (John 19:20)
- Outside the city walls (Hebrews 13:12)

Golgotha was by a well-travelled road. Mark 15:40 and Luke 23:49 mentions being able to view the crucifixion from a long way off, suggesting that Golgotha was a hill.

Crucifixion around 9 am in the Afternoon – the 6th Hour

Matthew 27:32–44; Mark 15:23–32; Luke 23:33–39 & John 19:18–24

While on the cross, Jesus refused to take the wine, usually given for alleviating the excruciating pain on the cross. That's possibly why Jesus was in such pain and could not even speak properly. There was also a solar eclipse that the sky became very dark for the next three hours, until 3 pm in the afternoon.

Crucifixion was one of the most torturous means of death that man has ever devised. Crucifixion began with a whipping of the condemned and the whip that was used was made of several strips of leather that had jagged pieces of metal, glass, or bone tied on the ends that did not just inflict great pain but actually tore open and laid bare the skin, causing great bleeding and weakness. Jesus received thirty-nine of

these stripes during His trial before Pilate (Matthew 27:26 and Mark 15:15).

The person to be crucified would then be tied to the cross or, for the more violent offenders, nailed to the cross. The feet were placed one on top of the other with the knees in a bent position and a single spike driven through them into a footrest on the cross that would give partial support. The arms were outstretched and nailed to the crossbeam through the wrists. Jesus' statements in Luke 24:39 and John 20:27 have caused many to believe that He was nailed to the cross through the palms of His hands. Once the person was nailed to the cross, the cross would be hoisted up into the air and then dropped into the hole with a violence that would tear the tissues and cause excruciating pain. The pain of all this was unbearable, but one of the worst aspects of crucifixion was that of suffocation.

The way a person was hung on the cross, with his arms raised and extended, allowed him to inhale but restricted his ability to exhale. Therefore, in an effort to breathe, the crucified would lift himself up on his feet and gasp for air until the pain in his feet would cause him to sag, once again stressing the pain in the wrists and stopping his breathing. Jesus must have done this countless times during the six hours He hung on the cross.

This torment could continue for two or three days before a person actually died. There have been cases where people lived as long as nine days before death came (Unger's Bible Dictionary). Therefore, because the Sabbath was approaching (John 19:31-33), the Jews asked Pilate to break the legs of Jesus and the other two who were crucified with Him, so they would no longer be able to lift themselves and would suffocate.

Seven Words of Jesus on the Cross

The First Word

Luke 23:34

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”

The Second Word

Luke 23:43

“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

The Third Word

John 19:26–27

Jesus said to his mother: “Woman, this is your son.”

Then he said to the disciple: “This is your mother.”

The Fourth Word

Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

The Fifth Word

John 19:28

“I thirst”

The Sixth Word

John 19:30

“It is finished”

The Seventh Word

Luke 23:46

“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”

The Centurion’s Testimony

Matthew 27:51–56; Mark 15:38–41 & Luke 23:45–49

First, the temple curtain was torn from the *top* to *bottom*. The Holy of Holies was separated by the curtain so that none can go inside except the High Priest who could go once a year with the blood sacrifice. So, there was a clear distinctive separation between God and people. Now as soon as Jesus died, the penalty for all our sins was paid in full, requiring no more separation between God and His people – tearing the temple curtain from top to bottom.

Hebrews 10:19–20 (NKJV) – *Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh.*

Matthew 27:51 (NLT) – *The Roman officer and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, “This man truly was the Son of God!”*

As per the above verse, the centurion and the soldiers believed that Jesus was the Son of God. Matthew also records later that the authorities even bribed the soldiers not to tell others about what had happened (Matthew 28: 11–15).

The soldiers took permission to break the legs of the three to avoid leaving the bodies hanging on the cross for the next three days because the next day was another annual Sabbath. But when they came to Jesus after breaking the legs of the two thieves, they found Him dead already, not requiring the breaking of His bones, fulfilling the prophecy that not one of His bones will be broken. Hence, they

pierced the side of His body to confirm His death, leading to the gushing out of water and blood (John 19:35), fulfilling another the prophecy given by Zechariah 12:10 that they will look at the One whom they have pierced.

Pilate Surprised That Jesus Is Dead

Pilate is surprised when Joseph of Arimathea comes to him asking for the body of Jesus. Pilate asks the centurion and also sends his soldiers to verify this fact. After confirming His death, Pilate then grants Joseph permission to bury Him in the tomb.

Mark 15:43–47 (NKJV) – Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate marvelled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph observed where He was laid.

The spices used on the body of Jesus could be worth several thousands of dollars as per today's value, figuring the value equivalent to the hundred pounds used on Him then. His body was buried in a rich man's tomb before 6 pm on this Passover day, 14th Day of the first Month of Nissan! Because the next day, the 15th Day of the Nissan Month, on that particular year was an annual Sabbath – called the High Sabbath – so no work could be done on that day. Also, do remember that Passover is a festival – not a Sabbath – when you can

work and celebrate. But on the Sabbath, you cannot do any work; hence, they made sure that Jesus was buried before 6 pm when the annual Sabbath starts.

The most convincing arguments that Jesus was the Christ come from the hundreds of Old Testament prophecies that He fulfilled. Below is a list of some of the prominent Old Testament prophecies concerning His death and their appropriate New Testament fulfilments.

Old Testament	Prophecy	New Testament
Genesis 3:15	Victory over Satan	Colossians 2:15
Numbers 21:9	Type of serpent	John 3:14–15
Psalms 16:9–10	Messiah would not see corruption	Acts 2:27,31 & 13:35
Psalms 22:1	Christ forsaken	Matthew 27:46
Psalms 22:7–8	Messiah mocked	Luke 23:35
Psalms 22:16	Piercing His hands & feet	Mark 15:25; Luke 23:33; John 19:37 & 20:25
Psalms 22:18	Casting lot for His garments	Luke 23:34; John 19:23–24
Psalms 34:20	Not one bone broken	John 19:36
Psalms 35:11	Accused falsely	Mark 14:57–58
Psalms 35:19	Hated without a cause	John 15:24–25

Psalms 41:9	Betrayed by friend	Luke 22:47-48
Psalms 49:15	His resurrection	Mark 16:6
Psalms 68:18	Raised to God's right hand	Mark 16:19; Ephesians 4:8
Psalms 69:21	Vinegar as drink to His thirst	Matthew 27:34; Mark 15:36
Psalms 109:25	Reviling and wagging their heads	Matthew 27:39
Isaiah 50:6	Spat on His face	Matthew 26:67
Isaiah 50:6	Messiah scourged	Matthew 27:26
Isaiah 52:14	Lost the form of human appearance	Matthew 26:67,27:26,29-30; Mark 15:15-19 and John 19:34
Isaiah 52:15	Gentiles receive spiritual cleansing	Hebrews 1:3
Isaiah 53:3	Despised and rejected by people	John 1:10-11
Isaiah 53:4	Bore our sickness	Matthew 8:16-17
Isaiah 53:5-6	Wounded for our transgression	Romans 4:25,1; Peter 3:18
Isaiah 53:7	Opened not His mouth	Matthew 26:63,27:12 & Mark 14:61 & 15:5

Isaiah 53:9	Buried with rich	Matthew 27:57–58, 60
Isaiah 53:11	Shall justify many	Romans 3:26, 5:19
Isaiah 53:12	He was numbered with transgressors	Mark 15:28 & Luke 22:37
Isaiah 53:12	Crucified with criminals	Mark 15:27–28
Jonah 1:17	Sign of Jonah	Mathew 12:40, 16:4
Micah 5:1	Struck with a rod on cheek	Matthew 27:30
Zechariah 11:12	Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver	Matthew 26:15
Zechariah 11:13	Betrayal money will be used to buy the potter's field	Matthew 27:5–10
Zechariah 13:7	Strike the shepherd and sheep's scattered	Matthew 26:31 & Mark 14:27

One Day After Passover

- The 14th Day of Nissan month is the Passover
- The 15th Day of Nissan month – First day of the Unleavened Bread – Thursday

Leviticus 23:1–4 (NKJV)

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.

The Sabbath

'Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.

The above verses clearly signify that there is a weekly Sabbath, to be set aside in honour of the Lord. Verse 3 makes it crystal clear that the seventh day is a holy convocation on which no work should be done. However, these verses only mention about the regular weekly Sabbaths not the annual Sabbath or High Day.

There are 7 annual Sabbaths: the first and seventh days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Trumpets (*Rosh Hashanah* in Hebrew), Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), the first day of Tabernacles (*Succoth*), and the Last Great Day. The first three occur in the spring, and the last four in the fall. The Lord set forth two Sabbath days each for the Feast of the Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles.

Leviticus 23:6–8 tells us that both the first and seventh (last) days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread are a holy convocation and to do no servile work therein.

*And on the **fifteenth day** of the same month is the **Feast of Unleavened Bread** to the Lord; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.”(NKJV)*

Also read Exodus 12:14-16.

So on 15th Day of the Nissan Month is the Feast of the Unleavened Bread and it is a Holy Convocation or High Day or annual Sabbath that comes once a year! Please note, the Passover is **not** a High Sabbath day, this important fact is often overlooked. Passover is NOT a Sabbath!

“Why is that important?” It was on this day that Jesus did the work of redemption. Work would have been unlawful on a Sabbath day, so God ordained for this day to be a festival, remembering the lamb’s blood that caused the angel to “Passover” the Israelites in Egypt and pointing to the Lamb who would shed His blood for all mankind. One other important feast day is not a High Sabbath day – the Feast of First Fruits. Interestingly enough, this is the day of Jesus’ resurrection. Next day after the Sabbath after the Unleavened Bread is Feast of First Fruits (Leviticus 23:10).

So what happened following Jesus’ death?

John 19:31 (NKJV)

Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath

was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

John makes it very clear that it was **not** a regular Sabbath!

John 19:42 (NKJV)

So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.

As it was the preparation day, they cannot leave the body on the cross and hence buried Him in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

Matthew 12:38–40 (NKJV)

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Jesus said three days **and** three nights. There is absolutely no way to have three days **and** three nights between Friday and Sunday. See below keeping in mind that a typical Jewish day starts at sunset rather than midnight.

- Day 1 = Friday before Sunset
- Night 1 = Friday sunset to Saturday sunrise
- Day 2 = Saturday sunrise to Saturday sunset
- Night 2 = Saturday sunset to Sunday sunrise

- Day 3 = Sunday sunrise to Resurrection

Assuming that Jesus rose from the dead AFTER sunrise on Sunday, which is not stated as such in the Scriptures (the Scriptures merely state that Mary Magdalene went to the tomb right after sunrise), there still are only two nights. There is no way to get three nights in this scenario. To dogmatically choose this position of crucifixion on Friday and Resurrection on Sunday is to choose a position contrary to Jesus' own prophecy.

Luke 23:53-54 (NKJV)

Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.

Mark 15:42 (NKJV)

Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath.

Confusing with Mark's above remarks that the day before the Sabbath has to be a Friday, Whereas it was a High Day(annual Sabbath), first day of the Unleavened bread hence people have got it wrong.

Matthew 27:62 (NKJV)

On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate.

Jonah

Three years ago during one of my ministry trips, I happened to stumble upon a DVD produced by another faith that claimed that the Bible is corrupt and it is not the true word of God. Amongst others, this religion claims that Jonah *did not die* in the belly of the fish. In fact, even many Christians believe the same. Well, if that's the case with Jonah, then Jesus did not die for us either. Recollect that Jesus, during his time on this earth, spoke about the "sign of Jonah":

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Matthew 12:38-40 (NKJV)

If Jesus then did not die like Jonah, then where is our forgiveness? Is there forgiveness of sins without the shed blood of Jesus Christ? This provoked me to delve deeply into the scriptures and the result of which will be a series of studies for the past one week.

First let us look at the life of Jonah. The name "Jonah" is Hebrew-derived meaning "dove." No one has the name meaning Dove in the entire Old Testament.

Besides Jonah from the Old Testament, there are two other witnesses for the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in the New Testament: (a) Lazarus and (b) Mary anointing Jesus

Jonah was a prophet sent to preach the Word of God to the city of Nineveh but he disobeys God's word and tries to flee from the presence of God.

Jonah 1:3 (NKIV) (fleeing from God's presence mentioned twice in this verse)

But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "Why have you done this?" For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.
Jonah 1:10 (NKJV)

He rebels against God's instructions and attempts to sail to Tarshish disobeying God, sleeping on a lower deck of the ship (Jonah 1:5-6). Under the Old Covenant, the ultimate punishment for disobeying God's word was death. Read through 1 Kings 13 to know what happened to the prophet who disobeyed God's command (verses 11-34).

Now when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard it, he said, "It is the man of God who was disobedient to the word of the Lord. Therefore the Lord has delivered him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke to him." 1 Kings 13:26 (NKJV)

If you have read the chapter, you will realise that the donkey that the prophet had rode on was alive beside the lion. Also, the lion did not eat the body of the prophet; it's almost as if the lion was guarding the body until someone came to collect it.

Going back to Jonah's case, Jonah was killed for his sin of disobedience to God's call, whereas Jesus was crucified for the sins of the whole world.

Jonah confesses to the sailors that because he has been trying to flee from the presence of God, he is to be blamed for the storm (Jonah 1:12).

Terrified of the confession, the sailors toss him overboard, although reluctantly, at his request and after crying out to the Lord to not hold his death against them. They throw Jonah into the raging sea (Jonah 1:14–15) of depth of between 4 and 7 miles.

This is where you need to understand that verse 17 of Chapter 1 does not take place immediately. This account was given by Jonah after his resurrection, after preaching in Nineveh, and after the repentance of the whole city, hence not in sequential order. Please wait patiently as the crux of the message unfolds.

Jonah 2:3

*You threw me into ocean's depths, into a watery grave,
With ocean waves, ocean breakers crashing over me.
(MSG)*

*You threw me into the sea, down, down into the deep sea.
The water was all around me, and your powerful waves
flowed over me. (NCV)*

*You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the
seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves
and breakers swept over me. (NIV)*

From the above verse, we can be sure of the following:

- That it is either God or His angel who has pushed him into the deep of the ocean.

- That only a person who is dead due to drinking too much water could reach the very heart of the sea.
- That the water current or billows of waves overwhelmed him completely, as emphasized in Verse 5.

Jonah 2:5

Ocean gripped me by the throat. The ancient Abyss grabbed me and held tight. My head was all tangled in seaweed at the bottom of the sea where the mountains take root. (MSG)

The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; The deep closed around me; Weeds were wrapped around my head. Seaweeds surrounded me. (NKJV)

The waters surrounded even to his soul; it is very clear that the Abyss – the hell – held him tight in the deepest part of the ocean. Seaweeds surrounded his head. The parallel here is that when Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, his soul was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death, sweating drops of blood. And before being crucified, the Roman soldiers placed a crown of thorns on the head of Jesus.

“I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever, But You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God. Jonah 2:6 (NASB)

To point out, from the above verse, it is clear that Jonah has still not gone into the belly of the fish:

- The waters and currents engulfed him
- There are no mountains in the belly of the fish
- He was taken to the Abyss

- He was taken to the deep of the earth where the door was closed forever
- He was brought up from the pit

For You will not abandon me to Sheol (the place of the dead), neither will You suffer Your holy one [Holy One] to see corruption. Psalm 16:10 (AMP)

Now that Jonah was dead and he went to hell, God prepared a fish to swallow Jonah's body (Jonah 1:17)

The body of Jonah was inside the belly of the fish, like being entombed, but his soul, according to the Old Testament, went to the hades:

"In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry." Jonah 2:2 (NIV)

"I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, And He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice." (NKJV)

From Sheol, Jonah prays for the first time. And the prayer was answered. Jesus talks about this in Matthew 12:38–40 saying just as how Jonah was kept inside the belly of the big fish, so will He also be in the belly of the earth.

A sacrifice of prayers was offered from the Sheol and the Lord heard that prayer and answered him (Jonah 2:7,9), sparing his life from corruption (2:6). When Jonah comes back alive and prays (2:1), the only prayer he offered to God in the future tense is mentioned in Jonah 2:9.

Following this, Jonah went into the city and preached for forty days:

Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." Jonah 3:4 (NIV)

After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. Acts 1:3 (NKJV)

Here again, we see another similarity between Jonah and Jesus that both of them preached for 40 days!

Following Jonah's preaching, the people of Nineveh repented:

When God saw what they had done and how they had put a stop to their evil ways, he changed his mind and did not carry out the destruction he had threatened. Jonah 3:10 (NLT)

What we learn from this study is that:

- Jonah was dead and went to Sheol
- He was kept inside the belly of the big fish
- He was raised to life again after 3 days
- He came and preached repentance to Nineveh and
- He brought people back to God

Jesus was dead and buried in the tomb for three days and three nights. He visited hell during this time and preached the Gospel to the first and the second world. After that, He was seen alive 40 days and He preached about the Kingdom of God to His apostles.

If Jesus had not died, then there is no forgiveness for our sins. He died and rose again and is seated at the right hand of God. Foreshadowing Jesus' death and resurrection was Jonah's life in the Old Testament. Just as Jesus was *dead* and his body entombed, so was Jonah *dead* and his body entombed in the belly of the fish.

Just as Jesus spent 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth, so was Jonah there 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the fish. Just as Jesus was resurrected after 3 days, Jonah was also raised to life, the fish then spewing him out on the shore.

Just as Jesus appeared and preached to his disciples and was seen alive for forty days, so did Jonah preach for 40 days after coming back alive. This is the sign that Jesus had spoken about in Matthew 16:1–4. If Jesus had not died, then neither did Jonah. "Dove," the meaning of Jonah's name, symbolizes the promised Spirit of God – the Holy Spirit – which first descended upon Jesus after He was baptised by John the Baptist in the River Jordan when the heaven parted and the voice from heaven spoke as thus, "This is the Son I love"

Now, does not Jonah's life mirror the better covenant that we enjoy through Christ Jesus? People of Nineveh had redemption through Jonah's message; we, the people of the world, have redemption through the blood of Jesus!

Jesus Did Not Die on a Friday

Jesus gives a testimony saying HE will be in the heart of the earth for *three days* and *three nights* – but we, as Christians are accustomed to celebrating the Good Friday as the crucifixion day. So where are three days and three nights between Good Friday and Easter? Did we hear it wrong?

Matthew 12:38–40 (NKJV)

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Going back to the basics, an actual Jewish day begins and ends at sunset, i.e., from 6 pm to 6 pm next day (Genesis 1:5,8,13,19,23 & 31). The number of hours per day in this case is 12.

John 11:9 (NKJV)

Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.

Jesus stresses in the above verse that the day comprises of 12 hours leading into the 12 hours of night.

Now, the primary flaw in our practice is that if Friday night is when Jesus actually died, then there are only two nights and one day between death and resurrection on the first day of the week – Sunday. This is why religious fanatics of our time claim that Jesus did not die or that He is a liar.

Jesus mentioned clearly that HE will be buried for three days and He will rise again after 3 days. Jesus said that He will be dead and rise again 14 times in the Scripture, of which 7 times He made a public statement and 7 times in private to His disciples.

No.	Scripture	Statement
1	John 2:19	<i>Private</i>
2	Matthew 12:39-40	<i>Private</i>
3	John 6:51	<i>Private</i>
4	Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31; and Luke 9:22	Public
5	Matthew 17:9-12	Public
6	Matthew 17:22-23; Mark 9:31; and Luke 9:44	Public
7	John 10:17-18	<i>Private</i>
8	Luke 11:29-30	<i>Private</i>
9	Matthew 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; and Luke 18:31-33	Public
10	Matthew 20:28	Public
11	John 12:7-8	<i>Private</i>
12	John 12:23-33	<i>Private</i>
13	Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; and Luke 22:19-20	Public
14	Mark 14:27-28	Public

Also, the Scripture talks about Jesus' resurrection on the third day for about 14 times!

Matthew 16:21 (NKJV)

*From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised **the third day**.*

Matthew 17:23 (NKJV)

*and they will kill Him, and **the third day** He will be raised up. And they were exceedingly sorrowful.*

Matthew 20:19 (NKJV)

*and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the **third day** He will rise again."*

Matthew 27: 62–63 (NKJV)

*On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After **three days** I will rise.'*

Mark 8:31 (NKJV)

*And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after **three days** rise again.*

Mark 9:31 (NKJV)

For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill

*Him. And after He is killed, He will rise **the third day.***

Mark 10:34 (NKJV)

*and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And **the third day** He will rise again.”*

Luke 9:22 (NKJV)

*saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised **the third day.**”*

Luke 18:33 (NKJV)

*They will scourge Him and kill Him. And **the third day** He will rise again.”*

Luke 24:7 (NKJV)

*saying, “The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and **the third day** rise again.”*

Luke 24:46 (NKJV)

*Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead **the third day.**”*

John 2:19 (NKJV)

*Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in **three days** I will raise it up.”*

Acts 10:40 (NKJV)

Him God raised up on **the third day**, and showed Him openly.

1 Corinthians 15:4 (NKJV)

and that He was buried, and that He rose again **the third day** according to the Scriptures.

Jewish Days

Day	Jewish Day	Modern Day
First	Yom Rishon	Sunday
Second day	Yom Sheni	Monday
Third day	Yom Shlishi	Tuesday
Fourth Day	Yom Revi'i	Wednesday
Fifth Day	Yom Chamishi	Thursday
Sixth Day	Yom Shishi	Friday
Seventh Day	Yom Shabbat	Saturday

The Greeks named the days week after the sun, the moon and the five known planets, which were in turn named after the gods Ares, Hermes, Zeus, Aphrodite, and Cronus. The Greeks called the days of the week the *Theon hemerai*, meaning “days of the Gods.” The Romans substituted their equivalent gods for the Greek gods – Mars, Mercury, Jove (Jupiter), Venus, and Saturn. (The two pantheons are very similar.) The Germanic peoples generally substituted roughly similar gods for the Roman gods – Tiu (Tiwia), Woden, Thor, Freya (Fria), but did not substitute Saturn.

Sunday:

Legend tells that long ago, certain tribes of people in southern Europe could not explain the warm ball of light that appeared in the sky each day. They decided it was given to them by a great god and named the ball of light sol (Latin). To praise this god they named a day of the week after the ball of light. They named the day dies solis, Latin for “day of the sun.”

Later the people who dwelled in northern Europe also decided to honour this ball of light. In their non-Latin language, the day was called, sunnandaeg, meaning “day of the sun.” Many years passed and sunnandaeg became known as Sunday in English.

Monday:

The southern European nation called the glowing ball of light in the night sky by the Latin name, lunae dies, and the northern Europeans called it mona. They named a day monan daeg, which means Monday in English.

Tuesday:

Some of the Europeans believed in Tiw, god of war. His name was spelled several different ways. They believed that the god Tiw guided warriors who worshipped him. The god Tiw lived on a high mountain and whenever a warrior died in battle, Tiw would come down to Earth with a group of beautiful women and take the dead warrior to paradise. To honour Tiw, the people named a day of the week after him. They named the day Tiwesdaeg, meaning Tuesday in English.

Wednesday:

Certain clans of people who used to live in northern Europe believed in many gods and goddesses, especially the Vikings. But these ancient people believed that one god held power over all the rest and his name was Woden. Legend tells that Woden wanted more than anything to be wise, so he travelled the world in a quest for wisdom. In order to receive wisdom and knowledge, he was required to give one of his eyes.

After doing so, he wore a large hat with a floppy brim to cover his missing eye. As Woden travelled, he carried two blackbirds perched upon his shoulders. They acted as his spies and at night they flew down to Earth to gather information on the people, reporting back to their master each morning. Woden always knew all the happenings on the Earth and many things had to be done in secret for fear of Woden’s disapproval. To honour Woden, the people named a day of the week

after him. They named this day Wodnesdaeg, meaning Wednesday in English.

Thursday:

When the people of northern Europe could not understand what thunder and lightning were, they decided the flashing light and loud rumbling must be caused by an angry god. But this god needed a name so they named him, Thor. He was one god you did not want to make mad.

If the thunder was fierce, they claimed Thor was angry and throwing his large hammer across the sky. This caused lightning to dance in a fit of rage. While Thor was throwing his temper tantrum across the sky, he rode in a wagon or chariot pulled by two goats. The wheels made such a sound that it caused the thunder to roar. The people honoured Thor by giving him his own day, Thuresdaeg, meaning Thursday in English.

Friday:

Frigg was a kind and beautiful goddess who was married to Odin, the most powerful god. Frigg sat on her throne next to her beloved Odin and together they watched the happenings all over the world. Frigg was goddess of nature, controlling everything from the tiniest hamlet to the largest jungle. Frigg worked two jobs for she was also the goddess of love and marriage. The people loved her so much they named a day after her, calling it Frigedaeg, which became Friday.

Saturday:

Long ago in the days of the great Roman Empire, a god named Saturn ruled over the farmlands. According to the people, Saturn had control over the weather and could make it good if he was happy or make it bad if he was angry. Saturn decided how much rainfall each village would get. If they were not pleasing to him perhaps they would get none.

Before planting time, a Roman farmer would ask Saturn to give him good weather for his crops. They believed they must sacrifice an animal in order to please Saturn. If the god accepted, he would then

make the weather nice for the farmers. In order to score extra points with Saturn, the people named a planet after him along with a day of the week. They called this day "Saturni dies," Latin for "day of Saturn." In English it became known as Saturday.

Just to make sure you understand that these names of the days these are certainly won't be in your Bible!!

Hebrew Months

Jewish Month	Approximate Secular Month	Special Festival
Nissan	March–April	Passover
Iyar	April–May	Lag B'Omer
Sivan	May–June	Shavuot (Pentecost)
Tammuz	June–July	
Menachem Av	July–August	Tisha B'Av
Elul	August–September	
Tishrei	September–October	Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kipur, Sukkot
Marchesvan	October–November	
Kislev	November–December	Chanukah
Tevet	December–January	Conclusion of Chanukah
Shevat	January–February	Tu B'Shvat
Adar	February–March	Purim

To find out when Jesus died and HE rose again we need to first establish when did He die?

All the four Gospels as well as secular records confirm that Jesus was crucified on a Passover day.

So let us look at when does the Passover happens scripturally!

Passover: 14th day evening of the first month – Nissan

First Passover instituted by God to free the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt,

Exodus 12:2,3 &6,

“This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.³ Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.⁴ And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb.⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.⁶ Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.

Leviticus 23:5,(NKJV)

On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the Lord’s Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord;

Numbers 9:2-5, (NKJV)

“Let the children of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time.³ On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall keep it at its appointed time. According to all its rites and ceremonies you shall keep it.”⁴ So Moses told the children of Israel that they should keep the Passover⁵ And they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, at twilight, in the Wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did.

Numbers 28:16, (NKJV)

'On the fourteenth day of the first month is the Passover of the Lord.

Joshua 5:10 (KNJV)

Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho.

Jesus was also crucified on the Passover day,

John 18:28,(NKJV)

Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.

Yet another reminder that Passover day was not a Sabbath!!

We had look at the events took place in details titled under Passover day, if you did not please refer to the Passover day notes!

Let's look at Jesus' journey to the cross here again – the last six days – as a snapshot in reverse order!

Six Days before Passover

In actual terms, what's 5 days for us is actually 6 days as per the Jewish days – remember their day starts at 6 pm and ends 6 pm the next day.

Jesus comes to Bethany from Jericho, stopping over at Lazarus, Mary and Martha's for the night before leaving for Jerusalem the next day. Before arriving at Bethany, He meets with Zacchaeus and has meal

with him, following which He heals the blind Bartimaeus and finally halts at Bethany.

John 12:1 (NKJV)

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

Nissan Month **Five days before Passover**

9th Day of Nissan – Friday

Triumphal entry
Bethany to Jerusalem
Matthew 21:1–11
Mark 11:1–11 (verse 11)
Luke 19:29–44
John 12:12

10th Day – Saturday
(Refer: Detailed study on this titled as 5 Days before Passover)

Four days before Passover

10th Day of Nissan- Saturday

Saturday night stayed at Bethany
Mark 11:11–18
Luke 19:45–46
John 12:20–38
Matthew 21:18–19

(Refer: Detailed study on this titled as 4 Days before Passover)

Three days before Passover

11th Day of Nissan – Sunday

Bethany to Jerusalem

Jesus curses the fig tree

Matthew 21:18–19 till 25:46

Mark 11:11–18 (12–14), 13:37

Luke 20:1–21:36

Mark 11:19

(Refer: Detailed study on this titled as 3 Days before Passover)

Two days before Passover

12th Day of Nissan – Monday

Bethany to Jerusalem

Matthew 26:1–16

Mark 14:1–11

Night halt at Bethany

Mark 14:1,3 & 12

Luke 22:1–3

(Refer: Detailed study on this titled as 2 Days before Passover)

One day before Passover

13th Day of Nissan – Tuesday

Bethany to Jerusalem

Passover begins in the evening

Mark 14:12,17

Prays at Gethsemane

Mark 14:46

Enquired by the high Priest

Peter denies Jesus to the servant girl

Luke 22:7–53

(Refer: Detailed study on this titled as 1 Day before Passover)

Passover

14th Day of Nissan– Wednesday

Morning enquiry by Herod and Pilate
Passover festival offering, Jesus crucified

Mark 15:1

He was crucified the 6th hour

Mark 15:25

He dies the 9th hour

Mark 15:33–34

He was buried in the evening

(Refer: Detailed study on this titled as Passover Day)

15th Day of Nissan– Thursday

Annual Sabbath Day

First day of the Unleavened bread

Unleavened Bread: 15th day of the month of Nissan

Exodus 12:14–16 (NKJV)

‘So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you.

Exodus 12:18 (NKJV)

In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening.

Leviticus 23:6-8 (NKJV)

And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. ⁷On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. ⁸But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.”

Numbers 28:17-18 (NKJV)

And on the fifteenth day of this month is the feast; unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days. ¹⁸On the first day you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work.

Deuteronomy 16:7-8 (NKJV)

And you shall roast and eat it in the place which the Lord your God chooses, and in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents. Six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a sacred assembly to the Lord your God. You shall do no work on it.

Concerning the person who is dead by hanging because of sin prior to the feasts,

Deuteronomy 21:22-23, (NKJV)

*“If someone has committed a crime worthy of death and is executed and hung on a tree, ²³the **body must not remain hanging from the tree overnight.** You must bury the body that same day, for anyone who is hung is cursed in the sight of God. In this way, you will prevent the defilement of the land the Lord your God is giving you as your special possession.*

Luke 23:53–54 (NKJV)

Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.

Mark 15:42 (NKJV)

Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath

Matthew 27:62 (NKJV)

On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate

John 19:31 & 42

It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn't want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was the Passover). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down.

This Sabbath is not the regular one but it is the great Sabbath or High Day in Greek “yom-tov,” meaning Good Day

So the 15th Day of the month of Nissan is the Fest of the Unleavened Bread which is annual Sabbath! Or High Day!

Hence the Jews wanted to bury Jesus in the tomb before the end of Passover and before the beginning of the Annual Sabbath on the 15th Day of Nissan!

The Ladies Prepare the Spices

16th Day of Nissan – Friday

Luke 23:55–56 (NKJV)

And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

Mark 16:1 (NKJV)

Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.

Since it was the annual Sabbath, they could not and did not buy the spices, hence doing so only on Friday the next day to put it on the body of Jesus. They could not have done this on Saturday as well, as it is their regular Sabbath, thereby buying the spices on Friday.

17th Day of Nissan – Saturday

Regular Sabbath

They rested

Luke 23:55–56 (NKJV)

And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

18th day of Nissan – Sunday

Resurrection Day

Appeared thrice

Matthew 28:1-6 (NLT)

Early on Sunday morning as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb.² Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it.³ His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow.⁴ The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint.⁵ Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying.

NKJV and other translations say very clearly the First day of the week!

Mark 16:9-14

Luke 24:21 & 46

Comes back to Bethany – Luke 24:50

Now that you know He was raised from the dead on the first day of the week, that is Sunday now, you can re work the days backward again to find out that Jesus indeed was crucified on Wednesday! 14th Day of the month Nissan!

19th Day of Nissan – Monday

5th Day of the Unleavened feast

Deuteronomy: 16:7-8

20th Day of Nissan – Tuesday

6th Day of the Unleavened Feast

Exodus 12:15

21st Day of Nissan – Wednesday

7th Day of the Unleavened Feast

Sabbath or High Day

Leviticus 23:8

From the above snapshot, we clearly understand that:

- Jesus died on the Wednesday, which is the Passover day
- The next day was Thursday, which is a High Day or the Annual Sabbath on the First Day of the Unleavened Bread

Then, on the working day – Friday – the ladies go buy the spices and fragrant oil to anoint Jesus' body.

- The next day, which is Saturday, was the regular Sabbath of the week
- Resurrection took place on Saturday night, early morning Sunday the tomb was empty! Hallelujah!!
- Thus, Jesus fulfilled the 3 days and 3 nights prophesied so many times in the Bible

A small advice:

Now that you have come to know this truth, can you show some love towards those that do not know this. Do not be too proud about it, for God, in His great mercy, has revealed these truths to us. Hence, it is our responsibility to let others know about this truth in *love*; doesn't matter if they don't agree, but show Christ's love to them, in every way showing Christ-like character towards everyone.

Remember what 1 Corinthians 8:1 (AMP) says:

Knowledge causes people to be puffed up to bear themselves loftily and be proud, but love affection and goodwill and benevolence edifies and builds up and encourages one to grow to his full stature.

"Tolerance has never meant I must agree with you. It has always meant I respect you even though I disagree with you. We must maintain this." Unknown

Jesus' Death, The Resurrection, and Everything In Between

Jesus died for the sins of the whole world on the Passover Day and HE took away the death penalty from us.

Romans 6:23 (NKJV)

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57 (NKJV)

"O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 1:18 (NKJV)

I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

Jesus never made a comment about the having keys of death until He was resurrected.

What is Hell?

The Greek word used here for “hell” is “GEENA” (equals “GE-HENNA”) (Strong’s Concordance), and it represents the Hebrew word “GE-HINNOM,” which means “the valley of Tophet” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary).

Isaiah 30:33 (NLT)

Topheth—the place of burning—has long been ready for the Assyrian king; the pyre is piled high with wood. The breath of the Lord, like fire from a volcano, will set it ablaze.

Jeremiah 7:31 & 19:6 & 14 (NLT)

They have built pagan shrines at Topheth, the garbage dump in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, and there they burn their sons and daughters in the fire.

So beware, for the time is coming, says the Lord, when this garbage dump will no longer be called Topheth or the valley of Ben-Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. Then Jeremiah returned from Topheth, the garbage dump where he had delivered this message, and he stopped in front of the Temple of the Lord. He said to the people there.

This is a valley just outside Jerusalem where fires burned refuse continually. Israelite kings also reared up altars in this valley and burned their children to the pagan god Molech. This received harsh rebukes and prophecies of judgment were spoken by Prophet Jeremiah in 7:31–33 and 19:6–14, and therefore the valley of Hinnom began to symbolize eternal judgment and damnation, or hell.

GEENA is used twelve times in the New Testament (Matthew 5:22, 29–30, 10:28, 18:9, 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; and James 3:6). Jesus used the term eleven times, and ten of those times were in reference to eternal punishment of the wicked.

Jesus referred to it being a place of fire (Matthew 18:9; Mark 9:43–48; and Luke 16:24), and where the worm would not die (Mark 9:44, 46, and 48), and a place of torment (Luke 16:24–25). Jesus also taught in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus that there is no escape from hell once a person has been placed there (Luke 16:26). The Greek word used for “hell” in that parable, as well as nine other times in the New Testament (Matthew 11:23, 16:18; Luke 10:15, 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; Revelation 1:18, 6:8, and 20:13–14), is “HADES,” which means “the region of departed spirits of the lost” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary). It corresponds directly with the Old Testament Hebrew word “SH@'OWL” (or Sheol) (Vine’s Expository Dictionary) that has been translated as follows:

- “hell” in Psalms 9:17
- “the grave” in Genesis 37:35, and
- “the pit” in Numbers 16:30 and 33.

Jesus passed the gap and preached the Gospel to the people in bondage in Hades.

Luke 16:26 (NKJV)

And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’

Luke 16:22 (NKJV)

So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

Abraham’s bosom is a symbolic term designating a place of comfort for the righteous dead. Luke 23:43 refers this as “paradise.” It was located in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12:40 and Ephesians 4:9) in

the same region as hell was located, which is where the ungodly dead go. The Old Testament referred to this entire region as “Sheol.”

Jesus preached to the people in the first world, seen between Genesis 2 and 8.

1 Peter 3:18–20 (NKJV)

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

Genesis 9 to Malachi is the second World; people who were called saints are met by Jesus. Some of them were raised to life.

Matthew 27:52–53 (NKJV)

and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

Hebrews 9:14–15 (NKJV)

how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Psalm 16:9–10

Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

In between the crucifixion and the resurrection, Jesus went into the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.

Acts 2:25–32, 25 (NKJV)

For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.

The above verses show very us clearly that this was actually hell that Jesus descended into. The word used for "hell" in Acts 2:27 corresponds directly with the Old Testament Hebrew word "SH@'OWL" (or Sheol) (Vine's Expository Dictionary).

Sheol was divided into two parts, one part being a place of torment and the other a place of blessing, with a great gulf between the two (Luke 16:26). Jesus led the spirits of the godly dead out of this region at His resurrection (comparing Psalms 68:18 with Ephesians 4:8–10), leaving only the wicked dead in this place of torment, which we call hell. At the last judgment, death and hell will deliver up the dead that

are in them, and then they will be cast into a lake of fire where they will be tormented forever (Revelation 20:11–15).

Jesus met and witnessed to those under the new covenant who believed.

Luke 23:40–43 (NKJV)

But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

Heaven has three parts – the lower, middle and higher.

Hebrews 4:14 (NKJV)

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

Ephesians 4:10 (NKJV)

He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.

2 Corinthians 12:2–4 (NKJV)

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—how he

was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

The Hebrew word for “heavens” is *shamayim*, which is in plural form, meaning “heights,” “elevations” (Genesis 1:1 and 2:1).

Psalm 102:25

Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands.

The Bible teaches us that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; he did not make another heaven after this time. The phrase “heavens and earth” are used to indicate the whole universe (Genesis 1:1; Jeremiah 23:24; Acts 17:24). According to the Jewish tradition from the Bible, there were three heavens. All are attributed to God as the creator.

There are several other words used in the Hebrew – the word *marom* is also used (Psalms 68:18; 93:4; 102:19, etc.) as equivalent to *shamayim*. Hebrew *galgal*, literally a “wheel,” is rendered “heaven” in Psalms 77:18 (RSV, “whirlwind”). Hebrew *shahak* is translated “sky” (Deuteronomy 33:26; Job 37:18; Psalms 18:11), plural “clouds” (Job 35:5; 36:28; Psalms 68:34, “heavens”), referring to the firmament. The first being our immediate atmosphere, the second is outer space as far as it stretches, and the third is the place where God himself dwells – what Jesus called the “Father’s house.”

First Heaven: The firmament, Earth’s atmosphere – which is the immediate sky, where we have the “fowls of the heaven” (Genesis 2:19; 7:3,23; Psalms 8:8, etc.), “the eagles of heaven” (Lamentations 4:19), is our atmosphere that surrounds the earth.

In Genesis 1:14 God then said, *“Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night.”* The first heaven consists of the clouds and the atmosphere, the heavens above us, until we come to the stars.

Psalms 78: 23

Yet He had commanded the clouds above, and opened the doors of heaven, had rained down manna on them to eat, and given them of the bread of heaven.

The expression doors of heaven or windows of heaven involved the firmament, our atmosphere. Descriptions used of this heaven are from where God would provide food or rain. Genesis 7:11–12 – *“the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.”* Genesis 8:2 – *“The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained.”* Malachi 3:10 – *says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it”* – in reference to an abundant harvest of crops.

Deuteronomy 11:17 (NASB)

Or the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit; and you will perish quickly from the good land which the Lord is giving you.

Deuteronomy 28:12 (NASB)

The Lord will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.

Second Heaven: Outer Space, the starry heavens (Deuteronomy 17:3; Jeremiah 8:2; Matthew 24:29). The second heaven is the starry heavens, where our atmosphere ends. It is the heaven in which the sun, moon, and stars are fixed in the orbit. The stars are seemingly endless and the distance between all of them is staggering.

Psalm 19:1 (NKJV)

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.

Even though the scientists have taken thousands of years to discover what lies beyond, the Bible, from the beginning, has always spoken of its amazing truths and facts. The scientists are still fascinated with its amazingly intricate design.

The firmament, or expanse, *raqiya`* – “*In which the sun, moon, stars, and constellations are fixed*” (Genesis 1:17), and God placed them in the firmament of heaven.

Isaiah 40:22 (NKJV)

It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

Psalm 19:4,6 (NLT)

Yet their message has gone throughout the earth, and their words to all the world. God has made a home in the heavens for the sun. The sun rises at one end of the heavens and follows its course to the other end. Nothing can hide from its heat.

Jeremiah 8:2 (NKJV)

They shall spread them before the sun and the moon and all the host of heaven, which they have loved and which they have served and after which they have walked, which they have sought and which they have worshiped. They shall not be gathered nor buried; they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth.

Third Heaven: This is where God and the holy angels dwell. It is called “The heaven of heavens” (Deuteronomy 10:14; 1 Kings 8:27; Psalms 115:16, 148:4). “*The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you*” (1 Kings 8:27). *The One enthroned in heaven laughs; The LORD scoffs at them* (Psalm 2:4).

The third heaven is beyond the space and stars, where no man has ever seen with a telescope. This heaven is the dwelling place of God, as Paul writes, the region where God dwells.

2 Corinthians 12:4 (NIV)

was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to

The word “paradise” (paradeisos) (NT:3808) occurs but three times in the New Testament – Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:4; Revelation 2:7. It occurs often in the Septuagint, as the translation of the word garden – Genesis 2:8–10,15–16, 3:1–3,8,16,23–24, 13:10; Numbers 24:6; Isaiah 51:3; Ezekiel 28:13, 31:8–9; Joel 2:3. And also in Isaiah 1:30; Jeremiah 29:5; and of the word pardec (OT:6508) in Nehemiah 2:8; Ecclesiastes 2:5; Song of Solomon 2:13.

Hebrews 4:14 – “*Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens*” (Jesus ascended to the place he was before he became man).

Hebrews 7:26 – “*For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens,*” meaning He is more important than the dwelling place of

God and angels. Hebrews 8:1 – *As our high Priest, he “is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.”*

The word “heavens” is also used for visions or a spiritual event. Stephen said, *“Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”* (Acts 7:56). Mark 1:10, when Jesus was baptized, *“He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove.”*

The term heaven is used metaphorically in Isaiah 14:13,14; “doors of heaven” – Psalms 78:23; heaven “shut” – 1 Kings 8:35; “opened” – Ezekiel 1:1; the “kingdom of heaven” – Matthew 25:1, James 2:5; the “eternal kingdom” – 2 Peter 1:11; the “eternal inheritance” – 1 Peter 1:4, Hebrews 9:15; the “better country” – Hebrews 11:14, 16.

Heaven is the abode of the righteous who are in possession of “everlasting life,” “an eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17), where they are delivered from all sufferings forever, a deliverance from all evils (2 Corinthians 5:1,2). Christ calls it his “Father’s house” (John 14:2), also “paradise” (Luke 23:43). It is the location of “the Heavenly Jerusalem” before it comes to earth (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 3:12).

Heaven is the inheritance of all believers where there is “fullness of joy,” everlasting blessedness. The “place of our inheritance where Jesus went ahead to ‘prepare’ for us that we may be with him, where he is” (John 14:2).

The Obvious Questions

Where is the Paradise now?

Whether it is still under the earth or has been taken up to heaven is not so clear in the scriptures.

Did people repent when Jesus preached?

We don't know that clearly; there are no scriptures relating to this specifically. However, the scriptures do mention that Jesus preached to them.

What happened to those who are dead in faith?

After Jesus preached, they have been freed from their captivity, meaning they are no longer under the control of Satan.

What about death means to me today?

Hebrews 2:15, *Jesus did this to make us free from the fear of death. We no longer need to be chained to this fear.* (NLV)

What will happen at the second coming?

Those who are dead in Christ will have the resurrection of their bodies from the earth. They will be raised to new life in their bodies – glorious incorruptible bodies. Then, those who are in faith in the Lord Jesus will be taken up to heaven. And along with Christ rule and reign for 1000 years until the third coming of Jesus for judgment.

What will happen to you?

1Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NLT)

And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died. ¹⁵ We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. ¹⁷ Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ So encourage each other with these words.

The assurance comes from knowing the verse 14 as your reality!

Do you know Jesus as a living God who came and died for you?

Is Jesus Lord of your life?

We pray and bless you to have an awesome resurrection Sunday! Let the Risen Lord live through you every day of your life.