

# Harmony Of The Gospels

In The Shadow With Jesus

*Matthew 24:1-26:46; Mark 13:1-14:42; Luke 21:5-22:46; John 13:1-17:26; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

## I. ***The Destruction Of Jerusalem And The End Of The World (Matthew 24:1-25:46; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-36)***

- A. Josephus records that some of the temple stones, built of white limestone, were nearly seventy feet in length, twelve feet in height and eighteen feet in breadth. He also records that there were crowns, shields, goblets, golden chains and a golden vine with clusters adorning the temple (Mark 13:1; Luke 21:5). It took 46 years to finish the temple, and 10,000 skilled workmen are said to have been employed in its construction (John 2:20). The destruction of the temple seemed an event of such magnitude that the disciples could not but associate it with the end of the world.
- B. In response to the disciples' questions, Jesus methodically gives several signs which will precede the destruction of Jerusalem. These signs will allow them to flee the city when the Romans come to seize it.
- C. When Jesus stated that "this generation" would not pass away until these predictions were fulfilled, He gave us a timeframe for the destruction. A generation was usually considered to last 40 years. Jesus said these words in A.D. 30. Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70, 40 years after Jesus spoke these words.
- D. In vs. 36, Jesus makes a decided change in language and topic. The only logical explanation is that now Jesus is talking about a different subject. After giving numerous signs of the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus now says that no one can know when He will return. There would be no signs given for that great day.
- E. Three illustrations (the days of Noah, the two in the field and in the mill and the faithful householder) and three parables (the wise servant, the ten virgins and the talents) all emphasize the point that there would be no signs accompanying the second coming of Jesus; the responsibility is to watch.

## II. ***Jesus Predicts His Crucifixion (Matthew 26:1-5; Mark 14:1-2; Luke 22:1-2)***

- A. When the previous teaching was finished, it is likely that Jesus proceeded to Bethany, where He remained until late Thursday afternoon. On the way to Bethany, He spoke the words of this section. The two days that were mentioned are Wednesday and Thursday.

- B. The court where they met was the open space enclosed by the palace of the high priest. Caiaphas had been appointed high priest in A.D. 26. Ishmael, Eleazar and Simon held the office between the deposition of Annas and the appointment of Caiaphas (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18.2.2).
- C. They knew that there were many at the feast from Galilee and other sections of the country where Jesus ministered; and, judging by the demonstration made at the triumphal entry, they felt that there were plenty to take arms in Jesus' behalf.
- D. The betrayal of Judas allowed the chief priests, scribes and elders to take Jesus privately during the feast. If He had to be arrested publicly, then it was better to postpone His apprehension until after the feast.

### III. ***Judas Bargains With The Rulers To Betray Jesus (Matthew 26:14-16; Mark 14:10-11; Luke 22:3-6)***

- A. All the gospels speak of Judas's important role in Jesus' death but none explains what motives prompted his treachery. Like most human motives, his were mixed and doubtless included greed and jealousy combined with deep disappointment that Jesus was not acting like the Messiah he had expected.
- B. There had been coined shekels since the time of Simeon, or 143 B.C., before that, money was weighed. It is likely that the term "weighed" survived the practice and became a synonym or equivalent for "paid."
- C. They "covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver," calling to mind Zechariah 11:12, to which Matthew will return in 27:3-10. In Zechariah 11, thirty pieces of silver is a paltry amount -- the value of a slave accidentally gored to death by an ox (Exodus 21:32). That Jesus is lightly esteemed is reflected not only in His betrayal but also in the low sum agreed on by Judas and the chief priests.
- D. Judas bargained on Tuesday night and fulfilled his contract on Thursday night. However, as the Jews reckoned time, he agreed in the beginning of Wednesday and fulfilled his agreement on the beginning of Friday.

### IV. ***The Preparation Of The Passover Feast (Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13)***

- A. The feast of unleavened bread began on the fifteenth of Nisan, and lasted seven days, but this was the fourteenth of Nisan, the day on which the paschal lamb was slain. However, it was common to blend the slaying of the passover lamb, the passover feast and the feast of unleavened bread, and to look upon all three as one great festival, and to use the names passover and unleavened bread interchangeably to describe the entire eight days.

- B. The passover required a lot of preparation. The lamb had to be slain in the temple and roasted, and unleavened loaves, wine and bitter herbs had to be purchased. On top of all of this, a room must also be secured.
- C. It was customary for the residents of Jerusalem to open their houses for guests during this feast, and therefore Jesus might have presumed on the hospitality of almost any one, but the probability is that the man to whom He sent this message was a friend or at least an owner of a house with whom Jesus had made previous arrangements.
- D. The "man bearing a pitcher of water" would easily be identified because customarily women, not men, carried water jars. He was to lead them to the house where the owner had a guest room. The upstairs room had what was necessary for the celebration: table, couches, cushions, etc. This whole episode demonstrated the divine foreknowledge of Jesus.

V. ***Jesus Partakes Of The Passover Feast With The Twelve Apostles (Matthew 26:20; Luke 22:14-16, 24-30)***

- A. The law required that the passover lamb be slain "between the evenings." The Jews reckoned the two evenings as from three o'clock to sunset, and from sunset to nine o'clock, which was the end of the first watch. It must have been about sundown or shortly afterward when Jesus and His disciples sat down to the feast.
- B. The Passover meal could not be eaten until after sundown; and for those living within Palestine, it had to be eaten inside Jerusalem or not at all. That is why we find Jesus reclining at a table in a room in the city "when even was come."
- C. Jesus desired to keep with His disciples this last type which stood so close to what is typified. It was a feast commemorating a great deliverance from death through the sacrifice of a lamb, and the real sacrifice and deliverance of which it was typical were about to be fulfilled in the unfolding of His crucifixion.
- D. Luke brings out the parallelism between the passover and the Lord's supper. Each consisted in eating followed by drinking, and the closeness of the parallel is emphasized by the use of almost the same words with regard to the cup. The passover was typical of the Lord's suffering before the event, and the Lord's supper is typical of the same after the event.
- E. The statements of Jesus were misunderstood by the apostles. They thought that Jesus was about to set up His kingdom, and began at once to contend for the prominent places. Jesus rebuked this false ambition in much the same manner as He had previously.

- F. The words concerning eating and drinking at the Lord's table refer to the ancient custom of bestowing honor and distinction (2 Samuel 9:7; 19:28), and indicate that the apostles, being about to participate in the Lord's condemnation and suffering, should in the end share His exaltation and its attendant joys.

**VI. *During The Passover Feast, Jesus Washes The Feet Of His Disciples (John 13:1-20)***

- A. The apparent discrepancy between Matthew, Mark and Luke with John's account is best explained by the loose way of speaking of the passover which was mentioned earlier. When Matthew, Mark and Luke speak of the passover they refer to the actual supper; when John speaks of the passover, he refers to the seven days' feast of unleavened bread which followed the actual passover supper. Jesus was put to death on the first day of the latter feast, and therefore John uses the festival to designate the time of the Lord's suffering and death.
- B. Jesus was about to perform an act of great humility so John prefaces it by stating that it was done in full knowledge of His threefold glory: 1) that all authority was committed to Him; 2) that by nature He was divine; and 3) that He was about to return to the divine exaltation which for our sakes He had laid aside (cf. Philippians 2:5-11).
- C. John narrates each of these acts in detail. To him they seem to be successive steps leading down to the depth of humility. They formed a great contrast to the self-seeking and ambitious spirit which the disciples had just manifested.
- D. Since Jesus spoke of the act as in some sense a license or token of permission to have "part" with him, Peter desired that his head and hands also might be included that he might fully have part with Christ.
- E. Jesus reminded him that a person, once bathed, needed to wash only his feet. "Ye are clean, but not all" gives the clue to its interpretation. One of the disciples had consistently refused Jesus' spiritual work. The others, who had been loyal, though sometimes slow to understand, needed only occasional correction.
- F. Since a servant is not greater than his lord he should not be ashamed to do what his lord does. It was be noted that Jesus did not institute foot washing; He found it already a familiar custom of the land, and merely used it as an appropriate way of showing the proper spirit of humility.
- G. Jesus wanted to point out the course of Judas so that His foreknowledge of his actions would strengthen their faith in the fact that He was the Messiah. He also did not want the betrayal of Judas to shake their confidence in Him.

**VII. *Jesus Points Out Judas As The Betrayer At The Passover Feast (Matthew 26:21-25; Mark 14:17-21; Luke 22:21-23; John 13:21-30)***

- A. When Jesus used the word "betray" He revealed to Judas that He had perfect knowledge of the peculiar crime he was about to commit. That the Lord would be betrayed was sorrow enough, but that one of the twelve would do the deed was an added grief.
- B. Jesus' point is that the betrayer is a friend, someone close, someone sharing the common dish, thus heightening the enormity of the betrayal. According to Oriental custom, knives and forks were not used. If the main course, the roast lamb, was being eaten, the "bowl" would contain herbs and a fruit puree, which would be scooped out with bread. The woe pronounced upon Judas was not a vindication or vengeful wish; it is the solemn announcement of the divine judgment.
- C. It was a mark of special respect and courtesy to dip sop and hand it to a guest. Although Jesus plainly showed Judas to be the one betraying Him, Judas would not turn from His course. His exposure only hardened him and made him resign himself more fully to the influence of the devil. Jesus dismissed Judas with words which showed the manner in which the deed would be done.
- D. John's reference to making a purchase for the passover may seem corroborate the view that this last supper was held on the night preceding the passover (the beginning of Thursday). However, John probably referred to the feast on the evening of the first day of the festival of unleavened bread, which would be held the next day (the beginning of Saturday).

**VIII. *After the Departure Of Judas Jesus Warns The Disciples Against Desertion (Matthew 26:31-35; Luke 22:31-38; John 13:31-38)***

- A. The departure of Judas was the first step in the process of the Lord's crucifixion, and in this moment of its beginning Jesus exalts in the prospect of its end. Having just condemned the false pride and glory of men by washing His disciples' feet, Jesus rejoices that the true glory of God is about to be immediately manifested in Himself -- the glory of humility, love, service and self-sacrifice, which was realized to the utmost in the person of Jesus.
- B. When Jesus uses the terms of tenderness, "my little children," we see one of the marks of love referred to by John (John 13:1). The phrase is not found anywhere else in the gospels. In light of the upcoming events, Jesus looked upon His disciples as ones who were about to be made orphaned children.
- C. The scattering would take place after the return of the apostles to Galilee, and there after His resurrection Jesus would gather them together

as their shepherd. Peter was grieved at the prospect of separation and wanted to follow.

- D. The language mentioned by Luke suggests a repetition, to some degree, of Satan's conduct in the case of Job. Jesus, having insight into what was going on in the spirit world, prayed that Peter would be able to endure the trial. The language sadly intimates that Satan's test would leave him in need of repentance.
- E. Mark speaks of two cock-crowings and shows that the denial of Peter occurred between them. However, Luke and John speak of only one cock-crowing and place the denial of Jesus before it. Luke and John look upon the night in its entirety and speak of the cock-crowing at three in the morning, the signal of the dawning day. Mark looks at the night in detail and shows that the denials of Peter began at midnight, the time of the first cock-crowing, and were finished before the last, or about three in the morning.
- F. The Lord draws a contrast between the favor with which His messengers had been received on their former mission and the trials and persecutions which awaited them in their future course. If they had prepared then to be received with joy, they were to prepare now to be opposed with bitterness, for the rejection of the Master would be followed by the violent persecution of the servants.

**IX. *Jesus Institutes His Memorial (Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)***

- A. As only unleavened bread was eaten during the passover meal, that kind of bread must have been used by our Lord. Catholics take the Lord's words literally when He said, "This is my body." They say that transubstantiation occurs; i.e., the bread and the wine become the literal body and blood when blessed by a priest.
- B. Luke distinguishes between the cup taken during and that taken after supper. The first belonged to the passover and the second to the Lord's supper. The word "wine" is never used in any of the accounts of the Lord's supper; the terms "cup" and "fruit of the vine" are always used.
- C. Eastern peoples used blood to make a pact or covenant. Christ represents Himself as the victim from which the blood was to be taken to ratify or seal the new covenant, and He made the cup the symbol of that blood. When the persons included are contemplated individually, the term "many" is employed on account of the vast number of them, for no one can count the ones for whom Christ died.
- D. The primary reason for Christ's death was the forgiveness of sins. The purpose of the supper is to bring the sacrifice of Christ and all its blessed results vividly to mind. In keeping the Lord's supper we proclaim to our own souls and to the world our trust in the death of Christ

and our hope that He will return and fulfill the expectations we have because of it.

X. ***The Farewell Discourse To His Disciples In The Upper Room (John 14:1-31)***

- A. Jesus sustained the spirits of His disciples by appealing to them to trust in the unseen Father. Although it is the cause of some debate, it seems as if Jesus is promising them the establishment of the church rather than a place in heaven.
- B. God is not approached by physical motion. Being a spirit, we must draw near to Him by spiritual means, and this is fully revealed to us in the person of Christ. Jesus also attests to the fact that He and the Father share the unity of nature and of character. To know one is to know the other.
- C. As Thomas asked for a physical instead of a spiritual way of approaching God, so Philip asked for a physical instead of a spiritual revelation of Him. The answer of Jesus tenderly rebuked Philip. A physical revelation of God would have been of little benefit to the disciples.
- D. One token of Christ's union with the Father would be manifested in the power of prayer made in His name. Another token of Christ's union with the Father is the sending of the Holy Spirit. The promise to send the Spirit is prefaced with the appeal to obey the commands of Christ.
- E. Expecting that Jesus would soon be an earthly king, Judas could not imagine how Jesus could have changed His plans as to now withdraw Himself completely from the world.
- F. Jesus had uttered the truth, but because the divine plan of salvation through the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of our Lord was incomplete, all the words which He had spoken were dimly understood, since they were related to and founded upon this incomplete plan.
- G. Jesus had told them completely of His return to the Father, that when they received the subsequent manifestations of it they might firmly believe. In a few hours the earthly teaching of Jesus would be interrupted by the coming of Satan. Jesus was constantly aware of Satan's hostile presence and was preparing for his last attack.

XI. ***The Discourse On The Way To Gethsemane (John 15:1-16:33)***

- A. The fact that Jesus had just given His disciples the fruit of the vine to drink as the symbol of His blood made the transition to the figure of the true vine easy and natural. Cleansing is brought about by hearing, believing and obeying His word. If we abide in Christ, our prayers will be such that they will fully agree with the will of God and will therefore be answered.
- B. The spirit of Christ compels us to perform deeds which cause men to glorify God. This also leads to abundant fruitfulness, and those who have this spirit will not only convert others, but will have a good spirit within them as well.



- C. By perfect obedience Christ enjoyed a consciousness of the Father's presence and approval. By a like obedience the disciples might have a similar sense of His presence and approval and therefore a similar joy. Christians in the early ages were persecuted for bearing the name of Christ by those who were ignorant of God. However, this name, hateful to the world, was sweet to the disciples.
- D. Persecutors would not only take away religious privileges, but even life itself. They would do this as a religious act, esteeming Christians as such enemies of God that God would take pleasure in their death. While He was with His disciples, they were in no danger for He bore the brunt of persecution.
- E. The Holy Spirit's work would be to take the truths about Christ and, using the apostles as mouthpieces, convince the world of these truths. Sin, righteousness and judgment with its reward upon one and its punishment upon the other, are three fundamental doctrines of the gospel. The Spirit convinces the world that disbelief in Christ is its fatal sin, for belief in Christ leads to forgiveness, and to the unbelieving there is no forgiveness. The Holy Spirit would bring no new teaching. The Spirit would bring to mind of the apostles all the words which Jesus had spoken.
- F. The coming of the Spirit would make all things clear, and the mysteries about which the apostles now questioned would then be fully explained. Jesus entered heaven as our high priest and part of His priestly office is to make intercession for His people. The use of Christ's name for intercessory purposes was new to the apostles.
- G. Jesus' declaration that He has come from the Father and is about to return to the Father satisfies their inquiry. They feel that He is no longer talking in riddles. Their response to Jesus' straightforward declaration is a further confession of faith. The direct statement He made clarified their understanding and eliminated the need for further questioning.
- H. Jesus imparted to His disciples the information concerning His death and His provision for them that they might be calm and confident in the face of disillusionment and difficulty. Even in the hour of His greatest suffering He has an unshakable confidence in the victorious purpose of God.

## XII. ***Christ's Intercessory Prayer (John 17:1-26)***

- A. Jesus prayed for His glorification. All that He is about to go through will ultimately produce glory to the Father. All humanity was given into His hands that He might give life to that part of it which yielded itself to Him in true obedience and discipleship.

- B. As He had finished that for which he had emptied Himself of His glory and entered the world, He asks that now, on His departure from the world, He may be reinstated and permitted to assume again that which He had laid aside (cf. Philippians 2:5-11).
- C. As a last plea He urges the necessity of the Father's care over the disciples since the Son will be no longer in this world to care for them. Jesus asks that their unity would be as perfect as that which existed between the Father and the Son.
- D. The reception of the Father's word had brought upon them the hatred of the world, thereby increasing their need of a heavenly blessing as a counterbalance to the curse of the world.
- E. Jesus prayed for their unity so that it might bring about the conversion of the world to the gospel. This unity that Jesus was seeking was not just a unity of differing personalities, but a unity based upon the truths of the gospel.
- F. While Jesus prayed that His disciples may enter the heavenly state, that state is not expressed as the end desired. He wishes them to be in that state that they may behold His glory. The glory of Christ is the fact that He is God's Son, and the love which accompanies that relationship. The world had rejected Christ's revelation, and had refused to know God, and had thus become unworthy of the privilege here asked for the disciples.

**XIII. *Jesus Suffers In Gethsemane (Matthew 26:30, 36-46; Mark 14:26, 32-42; Luke 22:39-46; John 18:1)***

- A. Gethsemane was about a half a mile from the city, and from what Luke says here and elsewhere, it seems that Jesus often resorted to it while in Jerusalem at the festivals (cf. Luke 21:37; John 18:2).
- B. As the hour of trial and temptation approached, Jesus fortified Himself by prayer. He wanted His disciples to do likewise because His arrest would involve them also in temptations which He foresaw that they would not be able to withstand.
- C. It is very touching that Jesus, while seeking heavenly aid in the hour of trial, also manifested a desire for human sympathy. All of the eleven apostles were with Him in the garden, and the three most capable of sympathizing with Him were stationed nearer to Him than the rest.
- D. Although Jesus possessed a dual nature (both God and man), Christ had to endure the trials as a man. The divine in Him did not interfere with His greatest appointment. His prayer in the garden, therefore, was the cry of His humanity for deliverance. The prayer in the garden had been the inner purpose of His entire life (cf. John 5:30; 6:38).
- E. Jesus prays that if it is the Father's purpose that His "cup" be taken from Him, then that is what He deeply desires. More deeply still,

though, Jesus desires to do His Father's will. The "cup" was a common Hebrew figure used to denote one's divinely appointed lot or fortune (Psalm 23:5; 75:8; Isaiah 51:17; Ezekiel 22:31). Jesus' words to His disciples form a gently ironic command. The hour of the betrayal is near: it is too late to pray and gain strength for the temptations ahead. His disciples may as well sleep.