

Episode: Three Gospels Series No. 10

Narrator: Joseph of Arimathea

Primary Scriptures: Matthew 21-27, Mark 11-15, John 18-19

Story Summary: The last week of the life of Jesus

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Matthew 21:22; 22:21, 29, 37-40; 24:14, 35, 44; 25:23, 35-36, 40; 26:41. Mark 12:24, 43-44; 14:36. John 18:36-37; 19:38

All four Gospels record events from the last week of Jesus' life. Reading about this time period in a parallel Gospel account is very helpful, mindful that each writer has his own information sources and goals, and the Holy Spirit inspired them. Matthew and John were eyewitnesses of this time period, while Mark got his information from other sources, with Peter probably being his primary resource.

During his last week, Jesus generally entered Jerusalem in the morning, taught the people and jostled with the authorities during the day, and then retired from Jerusalem in the evening to the Mount of Olives.

Although the order of events is not perfectly clear, it is likely that Jesus' last week begins with his triumphal entry, an event recorded in all four Gospels. Possibly the next events are the cursing of the fig tree, and the cleansing of the Temple when Jesus challenged the moneychangers.

Another well-recorded event is known among scholars as the Olivet Discourse, when Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives and gave a long discourse about the future events, especially the future of Jerusalem. Matthew 24-25 is the most detailed of the recordings. Jesus tells at least five parables, and ends with the well-known story of the separation of the sheep and goats when the Son of Man comes.

All four Gospels portray the Last Supper, but John 13-17 provides the most details of the evening. At the end of the Last Supper, Jesus leads the apostles to Garden of Gethsemane, located on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. Jesus prays in the garden and prepares his apostles for the end, then Judas and a contingent of up to two hundred men arrive to arrest Jesus and take him back to Jerusalem for trial.

Although the order is not absolutely certain, events probably transpired as follows: the trial before Annas, the trial before Caiaphas while Peter denies Jesus in the courtyard, the trial before the Sanhedrin, the first trial before Pilate, the trial before Herod Antipas, the second trial before Pilate, the approximately six hours of crucifixion, and the burial of Jesus.

Discussion Questions:

1. Describe what the people in the Kidron Valley would have seen of Jesus' Triumphal Entry.
 2. Why would Jesus have been angry at the moneychangers?
 3. What did Jesus mean when he told his opponents to give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's?
 4. What do you think Matthew 24:14 means?
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1. It was Passover week, so there were many thousands of people camping out in the Kidron Valley. News of the resurrected Lazarus had surely circulated among the crowd, and the rumor of Jesus' arrival had spread. When Jesus came over the crest of the hill on a donkey, they would have seen him as the king prophesied in Zechariah 9:9. The crowd throughout the valley would have reacted in a joyful frenzy. 2. The moneychangers were profaning the Temple of God by making a big profit on the changing of the money of the helpless people arriving to sacrifice at the Temple. Perhaps Jesus remembered that they had taken advantage of his own poor parents. 3. The fact that his opponents were in possession of a "profane" coin proved their hypocrisy. Jesus only had to point out how they were trying to use religious rules that were meant to make them pure to help them avoid paying taxes.

Application Questions:

1. The moneychangers profaned the Temple by their actions. Are there things you can do to profane the place where you worship? If your actions endanger the reputation of your church, do you profane God's house?
2. The Pharisees had a tendency to use their religious rules to help them avoid doing things they did not want to do. How could you use your faith in a hypocritical way?
3. Matthew 24:24 says that people will be deceived by great signs and miracles. How can you keep from being deceived by false teachers?
4. How can you use Matthew 24:44 to avoid being misled?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. Matthew 25:21 has the phrase, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" Many adults say that this phrase is what they want to hear when they arrive in Heaven. Is this what you want to hear? If so, what are you doing to receive that blessing? If not, what would you like to hear?
2. Why did Judas betray Jesus? Why did he do it for so little money? Have you ever betrayed Jesus to avoid criticism or embarrassment?
3. The custom of washing people's feet is not often used in the modern world. What is a modern equivalent that you could do to demonstrate humility?