

OpenTheo

Perean Ministry and Passion Week



Survey of the Life of Christ - Steve Gregg

In this discussion by Steve Gregg, he covers the final days of Jesus' ministry and Passion Week leading up to his crucifixion and resurrection. Starting with the Pharisees' opposition to Jesus' teachings on divorce, Gregg goes on to discuss Jesus' interactions with synagogues, the rich man seeking eternal life, and his disciples' attempts to attain positions of power. He also discusses the story of the blind Bartimaeus and Jesus' parable of the minas. Gregg concludes by recounting the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion, his burial, and the discovery of his empty tomb, highlighting the significance of these events in Christian theology.

Transcript

Last time we were talking about the year of opposition, which was exactly a year from Passover to Passover of the final year of Jesus' ministry, and we got through most of the material that falls in that period. There are a few things remaining, we didn't cover everything. And we need to look at some of the ministry that Jesus did over across the Jordan from Judea across the river.

Apparently, working over there because of the strong opposition that existed in Judea, there were very determined plots on his life that were being hatched among the chief priests and the leaders in Jerusalem, and therefore going to Jerusalem was a dangerous proposition for him. He did it anyway, of course, when it was his time to do so and to be killed, but he nonetheless spent some of his time before his last week over across the Jordan where he could not be captured and could not be molested or interfered with by the Jews in Perea, which was just also known as Transjordan. This region was where he was approached by the Pharisees in Matthew chapter 19, and they asked him, is it lawful to divorce a wife for any cause? And this was probably another case where they were trying to alienate Jesus from some sector of the population.

Usually when they came with theological questions to Jesus, they were not coming. The Pharisees didn't usually come because they really wanted insight. They did not necessarily respect him as they should have, and therefore his insights were not so much what they were interested in, but they were trying to get an opinion out of him

because the subject was controversial.

Some of the questions they asked him of this sort, it's quite easy to see what was at stake. Others, it's not quite as easy to know how volatile this issue was. We do know that in Israel, a couple of generations earlier, there had been two leading rabbis.

One was named Shammai and the other was named Hillel, and they really were kind of the heads or patriarchs of two schools of rabbis among the Pharisees. Some Pharisees followed Hillel and some followed Shammai, and Hillel was more of a liberal rabbi in terms of strictness. He was not as strict as Shammai in what he usually required in terms of his interpretations of the law.

The law in Deuteronomy chapter 24 said that if a man marries a woman and finds some uncleanness in her, he can give her a bill of divorce and put her away. Now, that statement in the law is very ambiguous. If he finds some uncleanness in her, it's not clear at all what is meant by that.

And so the rabbis would speculate as to what it meant to find uncleanness in one's wife. Shammai, the stricter of the two rabbis, believed that nothing short of sexual impurity would qualify as grounds for divorce. If a man found his wife to be sexually immoral, then he could divorce her, according to Shammai, but for no other reason than that.

Hillel took a much more lenient view on the husband's side, and that was that if a man found anything that he disliked about his wife after having been married to her, he could divorce her. Because almost any flaw in personality or looks or character or behavior could be called some uncleanness by Hillel's definition. And for that reason, he felt like a man could divorce his wife for just about any cause.

Now, some Pharisees agreed with Hillel, and some agreed with Shammai, and they approached Jesus, and that background is what lies behind the question. Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause? They were actually representing Hillel's views, that a man could in fact divorce his wife for any cause, and asked if Jesus agreed with that. And so Jesus said, well, have you not read that he who made them in the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

He said, what therefore God has joined together, that is, into one flesh, let not man put asunder, or don't let man divide that which God has joined. And the Pharisees then said, well, why then did Moses command to give her a writing of divorcement and put her away? And Jesus said, because of the hardness of your hearts, God permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. Meaning back when God first made man and woman before the fall, God did not intend that there ever be divorce.

And it was not the case that before the fall that God had some plan by which marriages

could break up. And he says, but I say unto you that whosoever divorces his wife except for the cause of fornication, and marries another, commits adultery, and whoever marries her that has been divorced in this manner also commits adultery. And so this is Jesus' teaching that seemed to line up with that of Shammai, the rabbi who had taken a stricter view.

He believed that the only grounds for divorce would be for adultery or for sexual impurity, not just for any other thing. After that, the disciples were kind of astonished that Jesus took such a hard view. Perhaps they had expected a more lenient view from Jesus on this.

After all, not so long before this, a woman taken in adultery had been brought to him, and everyone wanted to stone her except Jesus. And Jesus said, I don't condemn you, go and sin no more. And perhaps from events like this, and the fact that the sinful woman was permitted to wash Jesus' feet with her hair and her tears, and he didn't object to that, and that he spent time with sinners and tax collectors, and apparently prostitutes were probably among those people in the crowd that were drawn to him, the disciples may have felt that Jesus would take a more lenient view on this matter of marriage.

But he did not. He stood by the fact that the way God designed marriage in the beginning was the way that Christians ought to observe it. It is true that because of the fall, and because of the hardness of heart, some conditions that were not originally desired by God have been allowed, including divorce.

But Jesus indicated that the Christian or the follower of his teaching should not seek to live by a standard lower than the highest standard that God desires. Now the disciples, when they heard Jesus say it, they said, well, if this is true, then it's better for a man not to marry at all. And Jesus said, well, not everyone can accept that, only those to whom it is given.

He said, there are some who were born eunuchs from the womb, and others are made eunuchs by man. And still others make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that can receive it, let him receive it.

Or he that has ears to hear, let him hear. And so Jesus indicated that there are some people who can remain single. Some make this choice for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

Others are forced into that position by man or by birth conditions. But he indicated that not everyone could do this. Only those to whom it is given.

And Paul, later writing on the same subject in 1 Corinthians 7, also urged people, if possible, to remain single if they could handle it. But he said that because of sexual temptation, he felt like that was something that he could not impose on everyone. He said some people have this gift, and some have that gift.

Meaning some have the gift of being married, some have the gift of being single. That seems to agree with what Jesus said. Those who can remain single are those to whom it has been given by the Father.

It's a gift. And perhaps many people have that gift. But not everybody does.

Then some people in Perea brought Jesus to their children. Now, in some of the Gospels it says children. In Mark's Gospel it specifically says infants.

They brought infants to him. And asked him to bless them and lay his hands on them, which he did. Initially the disciples objected to this, thinking probably that this was just a bunch of sentimental mothers interfering with the important business Jesus was going about.

After all, he had business of the kingdom to attend to. And shouldn't be bothered by these unimportant little people. But Jesus rebuked the disciples and said, He said, Permit the little children to come to me.

Don't forbid them. For of such is the kingdom of heaven. So this important kingdom business he was about would include children, infants even, because the kingdom of heaven is made up of them and those like them.

And so the disciples were rebuked. Then Jesus was approached while still in Perea by a man who was a ruler of a synagogue. This is not the first ruler of a synagogue that Jesus talked to.

Jairus, whose daughter Jesus had raised from the dead, was also a ruler of a synagogue. There were many synagogues, one in every town. And each synagogue had some rulers, some elders.

This man's name is not given to us, but he was a wealthy man. And he came running to Jesus and said, Good master, what good thing must I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said, Why do you call me good? There's none good, but God only. And he says, But if you would inherit life, keep the commandments.

He said, Well, which ones? Jesus listed some of the commandments. The list he gave were of the moral law. You should not murder, you should not commit adultery, you should not steal, you should not bear false witness.

He did not mention you should not covet. He did say you should love your neighbors yourself. He listed that in there, which is not one of the Ten Commandments.

But the man said, All these I've kept from my youth. But what do I lack yet? And Jesus said, Well, if you want to be perfect, then sell all your goods and give them to the poor and then come and follow me and you'll have treasures in heaven. And this, we are told,

was not acceptable to the man.

The man went away sorrowful and did not follow Jesus, did not obey because he had great possessions, we are told. And Jesus was sad to see him go. And he said to the disciples, How hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

He says it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And the disciples again were astonished because they, in their Jewish thinking, had the notion that a man who was godly would be blessed with prosperity. In the Old Testament, there was a general promise that if the nation of Israel would keep covenant with God, that they would prosper as a nation.

The disciples and many of the Jews apparently applied this individually, that if an individual was a covenant keeping individual, he would be blessed with prosperity. But that is not necessarily how it applies. We know that many godly people in the Old Testament were not rich.

We know Jesus and his disciples were not rich. And yet they still felt that a rich man exhibited the evidence of having God's blessing in his life. And when Jesus said it's hard for a rich man to get into the kingdom of heaven, very hard, almost impossible, except for by human means it's impossible.

The disciples, they said, well then who can be saved? And Jesus said, well with God this is impossible. I mean with man this is impossible, with God all things are possible. Nothing should be called impossible with God.

And so he indicated that rich men can somehow, occasionally be saved, but it would be impossible if not for a special miracle from God. Just like it would be impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, except by some special miracle of God. And we haven't seen those kinds of miracles of God very often, camels going through the eyes of needles.

So we might not expect to see very many rich men in the kingdom of heaven either. Since Jesus said it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. So we don't know how many of these rich Christians will really be there since Jesus indicated it's not going to be very easy.

Some of them think they're going to get there fairly easily. At least they don't seem to be striving too hard. But Jesus said we have to strive to enter in at the narrow gate.

And Peter, speaking for the others as usual, spoke up on this occasion. Well, we have forsaken everything to follow you. What shall we have? And Jesus said, well, you twelve will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel in the regeneration.

And he said, anything that you've left behind, you'll regain a hundredfold in this life and

in the next life, eternal life. And so Jesus indicated that although they felt they had forsaken a great deal, they had not forsaken anywhere near as much as what they were going to receive in return. Jesus then told a parable found in Matthew chapter 20, the parable of the laborers in the vineyard.

A man owned a vineyard and he needed some laborers to work that day. And this, I guess, was a typical thing in Israel. People who didn't have anything to do, who were not landowners, who needed work.

They'd just go hang out in town and wait for one of the landowners who happened to need a few extra workers to come and hire them. And they get hired for a day and they get paid the same day. Actually, under the law of Moses, you had to pay your workers the same day that they worked.

It wouldn't be getting a paycheck a week or after two weeks. You get a paycheck the same day. And so he went early in the morning and hired some guys to work in the vineyard.

And he promised them denarius, which was a typical day's wage. And he went later in the day and found some more unemployed guys and said, why aren't you working? He said, no one's hired us. He said, well, you go work in my vineyard too and I'll pay you whatever is good.

And later in the day, a couple other increments. He came in and even an hour before closing time, he went to town and found some more unemployed men and said, will you go work in my vineyard also? And they went and they ended up working just an hour before the whistle blew and they all came to the pay station to get paid. Now, the owner said we're going to pay those first who arrived last.

And so those who worked only an hour got paid and they didn't know what they were going to get. But when they did get paid, they were glad to find they got a whole day's wage. They got a denarius.

And those who were in the back of the line who'd worked all day thought, wow, he gave them a denarius for an hour's work. He'll probably give us more than a denarius, even though he promised a denarius. And when they got there, they found out they got the same pay.

And that bothered them. That irritated them. They thought that was unfair and they began to grumble.

And they said, listen, we worked in the heat of the day all day long and you give us a denarius, you give us the same thing these guys who worked only an hour got. And the master said, well, listen, I gave you what I promised you. I've done you no injustice.

If I want to be generous toward those who've worked a shorter time, that's my business, isn't it? It's my money. Are you greedy? Do you have an evil eye? He says, because I'm generous to others. And what the parable apparently means is that we might think of it in terms of people who've served God all their lives.

And others who get saved on their deathbed and they all receive the same salvation. Or we might think of it in terms of the Gentiles came in later than the Jews. And the Jews thought themselves to be worthy of a better reward than the Gentiles.

But if God wants to have the same generosity to the Gentiles that he had to the Jews who had labored through the whole Old Testament period, who had put up with the suffering of being God's people and so forth through thousands of years. And here the Gentiles come in just from the last 2000 years to suffer those kinds of things, but not quite as long. Yet all Jew and Gentile receive the same salvation.

This is another possible meaning of it. When Jesus said the first should be last and the last should be first in verse 16 of Matthew 20. This is a statement Jesus makes frequently in his teaching.

And it usually means something usually has something to do with the Jew and Gentile in juxtaposition. That the first to have known God was the Jew, but will be the last, as it were, in some respects to come into the kingdom. Whereas the last, those who were the last, the Gentiles to know of God will be the first to come to the kingdom.

This simply probably means that Gentiles who had a later opportunity to know God will respond more quickly than the Jews who have had a longer opportunity. And they tend to be slothful and sluggish about coming in. But the parable indicates that whether it was someone who's known God for ages or for a short time, all receive the same salvation.

Now it should not be thought that all receive exactly the same rewards. The parable is not trying to teach that. It's trying to teach that the Jews who have as a race served God for generations and generations, or at least some of them, some of the remnant have.

They should not grumble that they as a race have had to put up with so much in order to be God's people. When the Gentiles come in late and don't have to put up with it for so many centuries as they do. And it's God's business to be generous as he wants to.

He's not doing any harm to the Jews. They're safe too if they love him, if they're his people. And it doesn't matter if he gets some people who didn't have to go through as much as they did.

It gives them the same salvation. At that time, Jesus spoke to his disciples a third time, telling them distinctly about his his coming death and that he'd be raised the third day. Which means three times Jesus told them this.

The first time was at Caesarea Philippi. Then there was another time shortly after that. And now he's told them a third time.

They still don't understand, though. They still aren't getting it. In fact, ironically and sadly, on the very occasion that he told them this the third time, the disciples, some of them, show ambition.

They don't understand that he's going to die. They think he's going to come to Jerusalem and reign there. And James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, actually send their mother to talk to Jesus and to ask if he might give them privileged positions in his kingdom.

At his right and his left hand. And Jesus said, well, are you able to drink of the cup I have to drink of? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism I'm going to be baptized with? They didn't have a clue what he was referring to. And they said, yes, we can.

And he said, well, you will indeed drink of the cup and be baptized with the baptism that I'm baptized with. But he says, to sit at my right and my left hand in my kingdom, that's the father's decision. That's not for me to choose.

That's appointed to somebody by my father. And then the other disciples heard that John and James had sought these positions for themselves and realized that they were trying to sneak to the top of the group through this means. And they were indignant at Peter and John.

And so Jesus gave a teaching on that occasion that those who want to be great should be servants of all. And that is the way of greatness. That is the greatness in the kingdom is to be a servant of all.

At that point, Luke tells us in Luke chapter nine, Jesus set his face like a flint to go to Jerusalem. But he had to go. He was in he was somewhere.

We don't know exactly where he was, probably in northern Korea, where he had to pass through or at least it was most convenient to pass through a portion of Samaria to get there. And so he sent some disciples ahead to find someplace in Samaria for him to lodge that night. And they came back with the message that the Samaritans were not going to receive him.

Now, it's not that the Samaritans were inhospitable to him because he was a Jew and they were hostile toward Jews. Jesus had already done some ministry in Samaria. And in fact, Jesus was accused by the Jews of being a Samaritan himself, although they didn't really think he was an ethnic Samaritan.

They just use that as a libel against him. But the Samaritans, we're told, saw that Jesus was determined to go to Jerusalem. And they refused to invite him to stay with them.

And we're not sure exactly if this is because their hostility toward Jerusalem or some other thing. But maybe, well, I don't know. We just don't know.

But when James and John saw that the Samaritans were inhospitable to Jesus, they said, Jesus, shall we call fire out of heaven and destroy them like Elijah did to his enemies? And Jesus said, you don't know what manner of spirit you're of. He said, the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And so he just absorbed the insult and just didn't stay there in Samaria.

Instead, he went to Jericho. And there are three incidents in Jericho that are to be noted. Now, Jericho is located just west of the Jordan River.

It is, in fact, when the Israelites came in to the promised land with Joshua, when they initially came in to conquer it. They crossed over the Jordan from the east and they came into the land of Canaan, which is later Israel. And the first city they came to was Jericho.

Jericho is near the border. And of course, Jericho was the first city they conquered. And so Jesus, having come across the border from Perea, across the river, comes to Jericho.

In that place, he healed two blind men. Now, the story in Luke, or excuse me, in Mark, names one of the blind men. Mark 10, verse 46 says, Then they came to Jericho.

And as he went out of Jericho with his disciples, a great multitude, that is, his disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus. Actually, Bar Timaeus just means the son of Timaeus. I'm surprised he gives it twice, because Bar means son of and Bar Timaeus means son of Timaeus.

He sat by the road begging. Now, it's interesting that it mentions his father's name. Perhaps Mark expected his readers to know Timaeus.

Maybe Timaeus had become a Christian since this time as a result of the healing of his son, Bartimaeus. And maybe even was a well-known man in the church in Rome where Mark wrote this. It's not impossible to imagine, but we don't know.

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. Then many warned him to be quiet, but he cried out all the more, son of David, have mercy on me. So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called.

And they called the blind man, saying to him, Be of good cheer, rise, he is calling you. And throwing aside his garment, he arose and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said to him, What do you want me to do for you? The blind man said to him, Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.

Then Jesus said to him, Go your way. Your faith has made you well. And immediately he

received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

Now, a couple of things here. Luke and Matthew also record this story, and there are some differences. Matthew places the healing of the blind Barnabas upon Jesus' departure from Jericho.

But Luke places it on his entrance to Jericho. In Luke 18, he mentions that as he was going into Jericho, he was met by these blind men. But here it says he came to Jericho and as he went out of Jericho, he healed him.

Now, Matthew and Mark, therefore, place the healing as Jesus was leaving Jericho. Luke's gospel sounds as if he did it as if he encountered them while he was going into Jericho. There have been different ways of explaining this.

One way is that there were two Jerichos. But I don't think that that's the right explanation. It is true there were two.

There were the ruins of an older Jericho in a different spot nearby. And that he might have been going out of one Jericho and into the other one. Therefore, a gospel writer could say he was going into Jericho and another could say he was going out of Jericho.

They both are right. But more likely what happened is that the blind men heard Jesus was coming. And they first tried to get his attention as he was entering Jericho.

And they called out to him and all as Luke tells us they did. Let me see how exactly how Luke words this. Luke 18, 35, Then it happened as he was coming near Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the road begging.

And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

Now, between verses 37 and 38, there may have been some passage of time. Jesus passed him by as Jesus was going into Jericho. He may have cried out at that time and not been heard.

Or he might have just determined that he was going to position himself further down the road like Zacchaeus did in the same city. So that he'd catch Jesus as he was leaving the city. And he may have gone through the city.

Jesus being detained by a great crowd. And he may have beat Jesus to the other side. And been there as Jesus came out and been healed at that occasion.

So that when you come to Luke 18, 38, he may well have been on the other side of the city. There may have been some passage of time there. We don't know.

There's more than one way to harmonize this. I've been saying there are two blind men

all this time. But Mark and Luke only mentioned one.

And Mark gives his name Bartimaeus. But Matthew's gospel tells us there were two. In Matthew 20 and verse 30, it says there were two blind men.

So Bartimaeus had a friend and they both got healed. This happened around Jericho, either going in or coming out or both. And we also have the case of Zacchaeus.

And this may have been what gave Bartimaeus time to get to the other side of the city. Because as Jesus was going through Jericho, there was this short fellow, a tax collector, who couldn't see Jesus over the heads of the crowd. And so he anticipated the route Jesus was taking, ran ahead, climbed a tree so he could see over the people.

So he wanted to see Jesus as he went by. And Jesus stopped, saw him there, called him by name and said he was coming over to his home. So he did.

The man gladly had Jesus in his home. And having had Jesus there, he stood up and announced, Zacchaeus announced, If I've robbed anyone or if I've cheated anyone, I'm going to repay them fourfold and I'm going to give half my goods to the poor. And Jesus said, Salvation has come to this household.

For he too is a child of Abraham. The people actually were grumbling that he had gone into the house of the tax collector to eat lunch. There were probably more worthy citizens that hoped he might bless them with his presence at their lunch table.

But instead he went to the sinners because the man, some man came to seek and to save that which was lost. And then Jesus, apparently still in Jericho, according to Luke 19, verses 11 through 27, gave the parable sometimes called the parable of the talents or the pounds. Excuse me.

There's a parable of talents. There's also a parable of the pounds. I think the new King James and some of the translations call it the minas.

Pounds probably was the King James rendering from British currency since King James was in England. And they translated it as pounds. But modern translators apparently take the more literal translation of minas, which is some quantity of money.

And an owner of property gave some of his property to servants to invest for him, to stewards. And he said, it says in Luke 19, 11. Now, as they heard these things.

This is after Jesus came out of the house of Zacchaeus. He spoke another parable because he was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore, he said, a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.

So he called 10 of his servants, delivered to them 10 minas and said to them, do

business till I come. But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him saying, we will not have this man to reign over us. And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants to whom he had given money to be called to him.

That he might know how every man had gained by trading. Then came the first saying, Master, your mina has earned 10 minas. And he said to him, well done, good servant, because you were faithful in very little.

You have authority over 10 cities. And a second came saying, Master, your mina has earned five minas. Likewise, he said to him, you also be over five cities.

And another came saying, Master, here's your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. For I feared you because you're an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit and reap what you did not sow.

And he said to him, out of your own mouth, I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man collecting what I did not deposit, reaping what I did not sow. Why then did you not put in my money in the bank? That at my coming, I might have collected it with interest.

And he said to those who stood by, take the mina from him and give it to those who have 10 minas. To him who has 10 minas. They said to him, Master, he has 10 minas.

It's not clear whether this is the people in the parable said that or whether the listeners, astonished at this development, interjected that into the parable. For I say to you that to everyone who has will be given, and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. But bring here those enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them and slay them before me.

This reference to slaying the enemies who would not have him to rule over them probably is a reference to the judgment on Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The giving of minas or of money to stewards has to do with giving spiritual privilege, apparently, spiritual knowledge to individuals. And they are told to use it to the advantage of their master. Remember, a steward is not there to make himself rich.

He's going to make his master rich. He's got his master's goods and whatever he makes with it is his master's profit. And so it was very wicked for a servant who is given such responsibility to do nothing with it.

Because he had a responsibility to enrich his master and he didn't do it. And so he was punished and was deprived of what he had because he had not used it. Got to use it or lose it.

And then we have Jesus leaving Jericho. He comes to Bethany and as he comes to

Bethany, we now approach. The last week, this last week is sometimes called the passion week.

It's the week of the passion of passion is an old word that means suffer suffering. In fact, our English word compassion comes from two Latin roots that mean with calm and suffer passion. Suffering with is what compassion means literally in the English from its Latin roots.

The passion week is the week of Jesus suffering. It usually is counted from Palm Sunday till Resurrection Sunday, which was exactly one week apart. Now, Saturday before Palm Sunday, Jesus arrived in Bethany.

And he was, of course, there because he knew that he was going to die soon. And he was going to do some final ministry in the city of Jerusalem. And Bethany was two miles from Jerusalem.

And so every day of this week, he stayed in Bethany at night and walked into Jerusalem in the morning to teach all day in the temple. Then go back to Bethany every night to sleep just less than an hour's walk. And while he was in Bethany, we read in John chapter 11 that the Sanhedrin were plotting specifically to kill Jesus at that feast.

And that they were also bothered by the fact that people were believing in him because of his having previously healed Lazarus. And so they even plotted to kill Lazarus. Whether they ever carried out that plot against Lazarus, we don't know.

It's possible that after they killed Jesus, they figured there's no need to kill Lazarus now since people won't be believing in this dead man anymore. In any case, while Jesus was at Bethany, apparently the night before Palm Sunday. Now, this is, by the way, disputable because that is the timing.

The chronology is disputable. John chapter 12 places this event at the beginning of the Passion Week. The Synoptic Gospels place this event or at least mention it later in the week.

And I'll tell you why I think they do later on. But I think that John has it in its proper place. At John chapter 12 verses 1 through 11, Jesus was in the house of some of his friends.

Mary and Martha were there, but it seems to have been the house of Simon the leper. Simon the leper is not known to us from anything except this story. And it would appear that he was an ex-leper or else no one would be in the house with him.

He would have to be, if he was still a leper, he would have to have been isolated from society. He couldn't be in a house. Although, if he was not present, he could be still at the house of Simon the leper, though he might not be living there because he's a leper.

But in all likelihood, he was a leper that Jesus had healed of leprosy, though we have not read of that miracle elsewhere. But Jesus did many miracles besides those recorded. And there at the house, Mary, the sister of Martha, shows up while Jesus is there.

And she has this expensive box of perfume or jar. And the perfume is said to be worth something approaching a year's wages for the average laborer. I think it was 300 denarii, which would be like a year's wages for the average worker.

And she just breaks the jar and pours it over Jesus' head. And this was not looked favorably upon by the disciples. According to John, the first disciple to criticize the act was Judas, but the others apparently joined with him in criticizing her because he said this was squandering something of great value.

This perfume was worth a lot. I mean, if you consider what a year's wages for the average laborer, even at minimum wage today would be. I don't know what person who makes minimum wage takes home per month, but I dare say they probably take home something in the neighborhood of \$10,000 a year.

And that's low. That's low. That's not even middle class in our society.

But let's just take it that if the stuff was worth \$10,000 and it was poured over Jesus' head and it was gone, you can imagine that the treasurer might wonder whether that money could have been put to better use. Now, Judas claimed that he thought that should better have been sold and given to the poor, though John tells us that Judas didn't care anything about the poor. And his complaint really came from the fact that he was the treasurer and that he liked to take from the bag for himself.

And he would have been very happy to have such money available to take from. He was a greedy man. But his complaint was couched in the language of concern for the poor.

And the other disciples joined with him in the concern. And Jesus rebuked them all and said, this woman has done a good thing. Don't criticize her.

She's anointed me for my burial. And the thing she's done is so good that I want this to be mentioned every time the gospel is preached. This good thing that she's done, it'll be told as a memorial for her.

Now, what's interesting about Mary doing this is that some people think that Mary did not understand what he meant when he said she's anointed me for my burial, though I believe she did. I believe she understood that he was going to die. She might not have known that he would be so hastily buried that he would not be properly anointed.

And therefore, she was anointing him in advance for that. We do know that Jesus was crucified on the eve of the Passover. And because of that, he was hastily buried.

And it was after the Passover Sabbath had passed that the women returned to the tomb, planning to anoint him properly. But they were not able to do so because they found the tomb empty and he'd risen from the dead. But he was buried without the customary embalming and anointing and so forth.

And so Jesus indicated that this woman, Mary, had anointed him in advance of his death, since he wouldn't be anointed for burial after his death. Now, some would say that he was saying, you know, she had different reasons for doing it, but he was interpreting her from his point of view, as that's what it was. But I suspect that she really did know, even though the disciples did not.

Remember, Jesus had spoken plainly about his death and resurrection. And whether he had said those things plainly in the presence of Mary, we don't know. But we know that Mary had listened intently to Jesus' teaching before.

Her sister Martha had even criticized her for being so attentive to Jesus' teaching. And being a woman, too, she might have been more sensitive and more hanging on every word, more than the disciples, who were apparently dull of hearing. And she may well have picked up what Jesus was saying and understood that he was saying he was going to die.

And even if she didn't ever hear him predict it, she might have been able to put two and two together. She lived in the area of Jerusalem. She lived only two miles away.

She knew what was being talked about there. Everyone did, as a matter of fact. We find that at the last feast, many people were afraid to speak openly about him because the Sanhedrin had put a price on his head.

And so he was controversial. She knew what the buzz was in Jerusalem. And she probably knew that if he came this time to this feast, he'd die, whether he had predicted it or not.

She may have just put it all together and realized that this is going to be his last visit to Jerusalem. And therefore, she anointed him symbolically for his burial. Yes, Gwen.

They did something. They did something to prepare his body. But we know that they didn't.

What they did, they did hastily. And the women coming the next Sunday morning came to anoint his body, which suggests that he didn't get a proper, you know, procedure. Ordinarily, I think there'd be a fairly elaborate embalming or an anointing process.

Maybe not actual embalming as we think of it. But I think that he was unceremoniously buried. He was wrapped somewhat up and he was somewhat anointed, I imagine.

But it was hasty because the sunset was coming. That would be probably in John chapter 20, I imagine. If that information is there, that there was a hundred pounds or something.

Let me see. There was something that they did before they buried him. Let me see here.

Chapter 19, I'm sorry. Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus secretly for fear of the Jews, has Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus.

Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Right. And they took the body of Jesus and bound in strips of linen with the spices as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

Now, in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden. They put him in the tomb. Right.

So they did something toward anointing him, according to the customary thing. But we also know that the women were not satisfied that he had been adequately anointed. And they were coming to do more.

They just felt like they couldn't do it after the Sabbath was over. But Mary had already anointed him in her home or in the home of Simon the leper at a feast where they were. And that took place at Bethany.

Now, the last week, of course, runs from Sunday of the triumphal entry to Sunday of the resurrection. And there is a disproportionately large amount of material in the Gospels devoted to discussing the events of that week. The Gospel of John occupy the whole last half of the book of the Gospel of John is about the final week.

And there are several chapters in each of the other Gospels about it, too, which, you know, that's that's just seven days that they're concentrating on. And it's very important week. It begins with the triumphal entry on Sunday morning.

Jesus got a donkey and rode on the donkey into Jerusalem. People wave palm branches in front of him and laid them down before him and put their coats down in front of him and said, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

And it's hard to know exactly how all that was orchestrated, whether it was a spontaneous thing for the crowds to gather out there because God moved them there. Or more likely, the word went out that he was coming and they and the crowds assumed that he was coming to come to power, that this was the time there was this high expectation that he would be the Messiah and that he would throw out the Romans and so forth. And so this great show of popular support was that the inhabitants of Jerusalem came pouring out of the city, apparently to welcome him and show their support of his of

his campaign, which they didn't understand at all.

But the Pharisees or the chief priests, some of the leaders said to Jesus, do you hear what these people are saying? Tell them to be quiet. Because they were concerned that this show of messianic fervor might get the attention of the Romans who would come out with force and put it down. There were many false messiahs who proclaimed themselves and and started revolutionary movements against the Romans.

And the Romans always were on the lookout for these kind of people. And. You know, they they they like to kill those kind of people and bring trouble to the Jews who followed them.

And what's interesting here is that the Romans didn't come out. Now, Jesus said, if these were to be silent at this time, the rocks themselves would cry out. But there's no explanation in the scripture given of why the Romans did not come out and show an interest in this.

Well, maybe they did show an interest in it, but they saw it was harmless. You know, when Jesus was brought before Pilate and he was making himself king and and teaching against Caesar and so forth, Pilate didn't take them seriously. He didn't believe them or if he believed them, he didn't care.

And that's a very strange position for a Roman to take in that situation. My impression is that Pilate had long before this. We're not told it in scripture, but long before this, he had probably become aware of Jesus existence.

Jesus had his intelligence network in Jerusalem. He knew there were people talking about this guy as if he might be the messiah. Pilate knew what the Jews meant by a messiah.

And he had probably sent out information gatherers because otherwise he'd be, you know, he'd be a very poor ruler to hear rumblings about a possible risk or a possible insurrection movement in his domain and to have not investigated it. My opinion is that Pilate probably had investigated Jesus before this time. Probably had he might have even been one.

He might have even sent those people who came to Jesus and Luke chapter 13 and said, did you hear what Pilate did, how he killed all those Galileans in the temple as they're offering their sacrifices just to see what his reaction would be. And Jesus reaction obviously was none at all. He didn't react to it at all.

And, you know, whether Pilate sent those people to report that or not, we don't know. Also, remember, at a later time than this, Jesus was asked whether people should pay tribute to Caesar or not. And Jesus seemed to come down on the side of paying tribute to Caesar.

And Pilate probably had a file on him. And apparently knew that Jesus, whatever the people may have thought about Jesus, Jesus didn't have any political ambitions at all. Jesus wasn't there to threaten Rome.

And that would if that is true, that would explain why the Romans didn't come and get all excited about this triumphal entry. Because on the face of it, it looked like a Jewish insurrection. But the Romans were always nervous about those kinds of things.

And it's possible that some soldiers were standing around to make sure things didn't get out of hand. But why didn't they arrest Jesus? Why didn't they disperse the crowds? They didn't. We don't know.

Either God just withheld the Romans from noticing it, which seems unlikely of thousands of people or hundreds of people even were shouting out praises to Jesus. He came on the main road into Jerusalem. It'd be certainly a parade that would be hard to miss.

Or else they knew it and didn't care because they were not afraid of Jesus. They knew that he was not going to be a threat to them particularly. I think the second suggestion is more probable.

And so Jesus comes into Jerusalem. Now on that day, on that Sunday, he didn't do much when he came into Jerusalem. According to Mark chapter 11 and verse 11, all he did is come and go into the temple, look around and then leave.

Went back to Bethany. So the only actual event recorded that Jesus did on Palm Sunday was riding to Jerusalem on a donkey. And then he sort of surveyed the situation in Jerusalem and then left.

The next day he came and drove money changers out of the temple. But he maybe the day he rode into Jerusalem just came to kind of see if everything was as it had been the last time he was there and sort of assess the situation. And so it was Monday the next day that he was coming into Jerusalem with his disciples.

And there was a fig tree by the road which had leaves and he was hungry. And so he hoped there might be figs on it. He looked on it and there weren't any.

And he cursed it and said, never will any man eat figs from you again. And although in some of the Gospels, it sounds like the fig tree withered up right there as they as they watched. It is clear if you read all the Gospels that it was the next day the disciples came and saw the fig tree withered and commented on it.

But Jesus cursed it on his way into Jerusalem on Monday morning. And then on Monday also, he came with a whip, small one of small cords into Jerusalem. He drove out the money changers just as he had done at the beginning of his ministry, as John had recorded.

Then that's all that we have recorded that he did on Monday. He cursed the fig tree and cleansed the temple. Then on Tuesday that week, a number of things happened.

He and his disciples again, Tuesday morning, were walking into Jerusalem and the disciples noticed the fig tree that Jesus had cursed the day before. And it was all withered up and dead. And they said, Lord, look at this, the fig tree that you cursed.

It's all withered up. And Jesus said, well, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will not only do what was done to this fig tree, but you'll even be able to say to this mountain, be removed and cast in the sea and it'll be done. And nothing shall be impossible for you if you have faith.

And having made that comment, he went into Jerusalem. And in Matthew, chapter 21, 22, 23 and 24, and for that matter, the beginning of 26, we have chronological information followed by the other gospels as well. The first encounter Jesus had when he came in was with the chief priests and the elders of the people confronting him.

And they said, by what authority are you doing these things and who gave you this authority? Now, these things probably referred to having driven the money changers out of the temple the day before. He'd come in Monday and done that and left. He reappeared Tuesday.

And first thing, the head people heading up the temple operation come and say, well, by what authority do you do what you did? Who gave you this authority? And Jesus answered them and said, well, I'll ask you a question. The baptism of John, was that from heaven or from men? And they wouldn't answer him because they knew that either answer would elicit a response from him that would embarrass them. If they said John's baptism was from God, then Jesus would surely say, well, why didn't you listen to him if he was from God? Because everyone knew that they hadn't.

And if they said, well, it was just from man. In other words, there was nothing divine about it. But they feared that the people would stone them because they realized that all the people believe John is a prophet.

And they didn't want to let on that they didn't think so. So they came back and said, well, we can't tell you the answer to that question. And Jesus said, well, then I can't tell you the answer to your question.

And then Jesus told them some parables, parables that he told were parables largely about. The judgment that would be coming on Jerusalem. The first parable he told was about two sons.

A man had two sons. He said to the first son, go work today in my vineyard. The first one said, I won't go.

But later he repented and did go. He came to his second son and said, work in my vineyard. I go, sir.

But he didn't go. He never went. And he said, which of the two sons did the will of his father? And they said to him, the first.

And Jesus said to them, surely I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him. But tax collectors and harlots believed him.

And when you saw it, you did not afterwards repent and believe him. What he's saying is the Jews. It's sort of like the parable, the prodigal son, really two sons representing two categories among the Jews.

There were those who said, I obey you, God, but don't. And those who'd never claimed to and then changed their mind and did. The Pharisees and the chief priests, the leaders there were like the son who said, I go, sir, I'll go to your vineyard.

You know, they verbally talk as if they're doing what their father wants them to do, but they never go. They never do it. They only talk the talk, but they don't ever do what they're told to do.

Whereas the tax collectors and the harlots were like Jews who had rejected God's commands, said, no, I'm not going to your vineyard to do your thing for you. And yet later they repented and did go and obey. And so like the repentant tax collectors and harlots were like the son who repented and eventually served his father.

Then there's the parable of the wicked vine dressers. And that's the parable that I've frequently alluded to in teaching. A very important parable has many, many lessons in it of importance, but it's essentially about.

A landowner who had a vineyard, he probably owned other land as well, so he couldn't keep the vineyard himself, he had to hire it out. Now, what was typical in those days to do was to hire out your land, your farmland or whatever, and you would and people would work it for you. And you'd you'd just charge them a percentage of it, of the crops that would be their lease on the property.

And then if they earned more than that, they could profit by it. So the person who was not a landowner could sort of, you know, he could still benefit from a sort of free enterprise kind of situation. He would lease the land for a percentage of the crops.

But if he worked hard and made a big harvest, then he could be richer than if he than if he worked poorly or whatever. He wasn't just like a slave who just worked for his sustenance. But he was a man who didn't own land, but he leased the land and produced the crops and gave as rent to the owner a portion of the fruit.

And so this landowner leased out his vineyard to some some men, some tenants like that. And when it came vintage time, he expected them to pay their rent. With some of the vintage, he sent his servants, but they didn't pay him.

They killed the servants and beat him up. He sent more servants. They treated him badly still.

And so finally he sent his son. He says, well, certainly not do that to my son. But they did.

They killed his son, too. And Jesus said that the owner of that vineyard, therefore, will destroy those wicked men and lease out his vineyard to another group who will produce the fruits. And Jesus said to the Jews, therefore, the kingdom of God is taken from you and given to a nation that will bring forth the fruits of it.

The next parable he told had a similar lesson in it. It was a king wanted to make a marriage for his son. He prepared the wedding feast and invited his guests.

But the first wave of invitations were rejected. And he got angry and he sent out his armies and destroyed the city of the wicked people who had rejected his invitation. And they told the servants, go out and send the invitation out far and wide to the highways and byways and bring people in.

And so the place was furnished with guests. Now, that parable and the previous one, that is the vineyard parable and the wedding parable, both have the same theme. Essentially, the Jews were given first chance to produce fruit or to come to the wedding, depending on which way you want to look at the rewards of responding to God.

But they refused. They didn't produce. They didn't come.

And so in both parables, they get judged. He destroys those wicked vine dressers and gives the vineyard to someone else. He destroys those wicked people who rejected his invitation and gives out the invitation to other people.

The other people, of course, would be the Gentiles. And so he's saying that the Jews who are rejecting God's invitation and not producing his fruit are going to face judgment. They're going to be destroyed.

And they were, of course, in 70 AD. He later made a more elaborate prediction of it in chapter 24 of Matthew. And he said that the privilege would be given out to others and that would be the Gentiles.

God was about through with the Jews and he was giving them their last chance to cash in, as it were, on the privileges that they had been promised. And yet they were rejecting only a small remnant accepted. And because of that, the invitation was going to go out

and the same privilege that had belonged to the Jews before was now going to be offered to the Gentiles.

Now, this parable, the wedding feast, actually has another little caveat here. And that is that after the Gentiles are brought in, after the feast was filled with these guests. Some of the guests were not really qualified to be there.

An example is given to the king coming in and seeing a guy there who doesn't have a wedding garment on. He says, sir, how did you come here without a wedding garment? The man was speechless. So the king said to his servants, bind this man hand and feet and throw him out.

Where there's weeping and wailing and mashing of teeth. And this apparently represents the fact that when the gospel goes out to the nations, many people respond to it and come into the church, seem to come to the wedding, as it were. But they don't have the right garment on and therefore they're not truly saved.

And in the final judgment, they're thrown out. Now, that wedding garment is not identified for us, but in all likelihood, it's the same imagery that is used in Revelation 19, where it says the bride was clothed in fine linen, clean and bright. Which linen is the righteous acts of the saints so that we have the invitation to the kingdom is rejected by the Jews.

He destroys their city and sends his invitation out to the Gentiles. Many of them come in, but not all of them have the marks of the righteous life that characterize them as true recipients of the king's authority. And therefore, in the final judgment, they are thrown out to.

Not only Jews, but Gentiles be thrown out also. Paul made that very clear in the story of the or the illustration of the olive tree in Romans chapter 11. God cut off the Jews for their unbelief.

He can cut you off for your unbelief, too, if you don't continue. Now, at that point, a scribe came to Jesus and asked him which commandment is the most important and greatest of all. And that's where Jesus made his famous observation that.

Oh, I'm sorry, I'm skipping. So I shouldn't skip it. I'm sorry.

That's it's a little later than that. There are three challenges that were brought to Jesus at this point. He gave these parables which implied judgments coming on Jerusalem and on the Jews.

And and then different groups of Jews came to challenge him with theological questions that they hope might stump him. And possibly embarrass him. First, the Pharisees came.

And then the Sadducees came and then a scribe came to him and each had a question that was in all likelihood a trick question. We know at least the first two were the Pharisees. It says in verse 15 of Matthew, 22.

Plot and how they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent him their disciples with the Herodians saying, teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God in truth. Nor do you care about anyone for you do not regard the person of men.

Tell us, therefore, what do you think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Now, this flattery, of course, is to make him think that they're true men, not testing him. Notice the Pharisees didn't come personally. As a person, they sent some of their disciples.

Why would that be? Because Jesus knows the Pharisees are his enemies. They want to send some people to Jesus that he doesn't know, that he won't recognize. Because if the Pharisee leaders came personally, he'd recognize him immediately because he's tangled with them before.

And he'd know they were not speaking honestly and that they were trying to trap him. So they send some people to Jesus that he's never really met before. And they have them flatter him as if they really want to know his opinion because they really respect his opinion.

But he sees right through them. Jesus perceived their wickedness and said, why do you test me, you hypocrites? Show me the tax money. So they brought him a denarius.

And he said to them, whose image and inscription is this? And they said to him, Caesar's. And he said to them, render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. And when they had heard these words, they marveled and left him and went their way.

So in asking him, is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar? It was very much like the time they came and asked about the woman taken in adultery. Moses said to stoner, what do you say? Now, remember, the Romans and the Jews had two different opinions about this. The Jews would be loyal to Moses.

The Romans, however, had forbidden the Jews the right to execute people. Even though Moses law required it, the Romans had forbidden it. So if Jesus said, yes, stone her, he could have been accused as going against the Roman authority, which forbids them to do it.

If he said, don't stoner, he could be accused of going against Moses authority. So he could get in trouble with the Jews or the Romans, depending on what he said. This is a similar situation.

Judas of Galilee, the founder of the zealot movement in 680, had as one of his guiding

principles of his movement that it was unlawful for the Jews to pay taxes to Caesar or to any other Gentile king because God alone was their king. And to pay tribute to Caesar was to acknowledge another king other than God. And that was blasphemy for a Jew.

Now, although most of the Jews were not members of the zealot party, most of them were sympathetic with it. They just didn't have the guts to lay their necks on the line to be hacked off by the Romans. They didn't want to be crucified by joining the movement, but they sure hope the movement worked.

There might be people like that today, conservatives who they wouldn't dare join a militia. I, for example, would never join a militia. But on the other hand, if there were to be a civil war between the conservative militia types and the liberal socialist type, some Christians probably would be rooting for the militia.

You know, might not want to go join them and face the dangers. But but might very well say, well, I hope they win, you know, because they'd rather see a more conservative kind of government. And the Jews probably were mostly that way, too.

They they wouldn't join the zealots, but they were sympathetic toward their cause. And so if Jesus said, yes, pay tribute to Caesar, by all means, he would alienate those who felt like it was not right to pay tribute to Caesar and those who just didn't like to do so. In other words, he didn't alienate most of the Jews.

But if he said, no, don't pay tribute to Caesar, then he could be accused of going against the Roman authority. So it's the same kind of a conundrum that he had faced when they asked about the woman taken in adultery, whether to stone her or not. And he got out of this one pretty well, too.

He said, well, whose face is that on the coin? They said, well, that's Caesar's face. He said, well, it looks like this must be Caesar's coin. Better give it back to him.

When he said render to Caesar, the word render in the Greek doesn't mean give. It means give back. Give back to the man what's his.

He didn't in other words, you're not giving him something of yours. This has his face on it. This must be his.

Give it back to him. You don't need it. You don't need to have other people's stuff.

This is Caesar's coin. It's got his face all over it. Give him what's his, but give God what's his.

What has his image on it? What is God? Where is God's image? It's on the human being. The human being belongs to God. The coin belongs to Caesar.

Give Caesar what's his. Give it back to him and give God back what's his. It bears his

image.

And so they marveled. They couldn't quite pin. They couldn't really.

I mean, his his comment gave a very clear teaching at the same time. Not clearly falling into one camp or the other. He did seem to he did seem to say, go ahead and pay tribute to Caesar.

But he didn't make it sound like you were giving Caesar something other than what Caesar already own. You know, you're not you're not giving up anything of yours for Caesar. You're giving up one of those coins that has his face on it.

What do you got one of those for anyway? That's a graven image. You're a Jew. What do you carry a graven image for? Notice Jesus didn't have one on him.

He said, show me one of those coins. And they brought one here. They've got it.

They've got a copy of Caesar's face in a graven image in their pocket. And Jesus doesn't have one. So he's actually more undefiled than they are in that respect.

But they don't they can't they can't quite pin anything on him because the answer is. Brilliant. And the Pharisees had opponents, rivals, as it were, in the religious world who were the Sadducees.

The Sadducees, we never read in the Gospels of the Sadducees confronting Jesus. But this once during his ministry, the Pharisees were continually giving him problems. But the Sadducees were more or less aloof from him, except this once.

They came to him now after he had shut down the Pharisees. Now they came to him with a question about the resurrection. And the reason is because the Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection.

There's other things they didn't believe in. But for the point of this parable or this question, it's only important to know that they didn't believe in the resurrection. It's also important to note that the Pharisees do believe in the resurrection.

So there was a theological conflict between these two denominations on the subject of the resurrection. It's sort of like if it was a conflict between the Baptists and the Pentecostals on something like the gifts of the spirit. You know, always arguing about those kind of things.

Or between the Presbyterians and the Methodists about predestination. It is one of those defining doctrinal controversies where these two camps are always disputing with each other. And they came to Jesus apparently knowing or having heard that he believed in the resurrection.

And since they didn't, they wanted to trip him up. They said, Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. That's found in Deuteronomy 25, 5, as well as other places.

Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married and having no offspring, his wife left his wife to his brother. Likewise, the second also, and the third even to the seventh.

Last of all, the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her. Now this question was calculated to show how foolish it is to believe in the resurrection.

Because in the scenario they gave, the woman in her lifetime legitimately married seven different men and was legitimately their wife. And if there were to be a resurrection, as they're suggesting, she would be resurrected and all seven of her former husbands would be resurrected. And which one of them would claim her? Certainly all of them had her and all would want to claim her as their wife.

But they couldn't, could they? Who could imagine a woman in the resurrection or anywhere else having seven husbands? It's interesting the double standard. They would not have thought it strange if a man would have seven wives. But the idea of a woman having seven husbands was unthinkable to them.

And so they figured that the very suggestion poses a ridiculous scenario. Here there's a resurrection. Now suddenly these seven men who all had married this one woman, they all want her.

And she can't have all seven. They can't all have her. How's that going to be worked out? Now, to make it worse, they point out, the statues point out that it was Moses who commanded this situation.

Moses is the one who said that she had to marry these successors, brothers. And that being the case, God himself set up this arrangement and would not have done something like that if there was going to be a resurrection that would cause this kind of confusion later on. Now, Josephus said that there's some dispute about this as to what Josephus meant.

But many scholars believe that the Sadducees only accepted the law of Moses. As Scripture, the rest of the Old Testament, they weren't too keen on, but they only accepted the law of Moses as Scripture. And you'll notice that they use something from the law of Moses.

As you know, that's authoritative. Moses said that she should marry her brother in law in this case. And yet that sets up this situation where if there's a resurrection, it's nutty.

You know, she's going to have seven husbands in the resurrection. Which one would have her? Now, the resurrection is a doctrine taught in the Old Testament, but not real clearly in most places. And where it is found, it's usually in the Psalms and the prophets.

It's not very it's not found clearly in the old in the Moses laws in the books of Moses. And so they felt like they were justified in rejecting the resurrection doctrine and defending their position by appeal to something Moses had said. But Jesus said to them, you are mistaken because you do not know the scriptures nor the power of God.

Now, there's two reasons they didn't understand the resurrection doctrine. One is they didn't know the scriptures. Now, what a thing to say to the chief priests and Sadducees, religious experts.

You don't know the scriptures. But what he may be meaning is that you don't accept all of the scriptures that you should or else you'd have more information available to you. You only accept the law of Moses.

And it's not in the law of Moses so much as in other parts of scripture. If you knew those other parts that teach the resurrection. So your mistake comes from not acknowledging the scriptures adequately.

And secondly, from your inability to appreciate the power of God. Apparently, they thought the resurrection was also kind of a ridiculous doctrine because who could ever imagine the dead rising. They were underrating the power of God.

But Jesus says, for in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage. But they are like the angels of God in heaven. Now, this is the kind of answer that only Jesus could know.

I mean, who else could give an answer like that? Who would know this information? What's going to what people are going to be like in the resurrection? The Pharisees in their disputes with the Sadducees probably had been confronted with this very question. My guess is in their continual disputes back and forth. The Sadducees had probably used this very trick on the Pharisees had never gotten a good answer from them.

My assumption is this was their best argument against the resurrection. And it had always worked against the Pharisees. It always lets us Pharisees speechless.

And well, it would. Because the Pharisees didn't know what Jesus knew about the resurrection. How could they? Only Jesus could possibly know this or a prophet of some kind.

Because the answer is none of them have her in the resurrection. But if someone didn't have supernatural knowledge of what it's like in the resurrection, they couldn't possibly know that was the answer. And if the Pharisees had ever given an adequate answer to

this question, then the Sadducees would never brought up to Jesus because they treat it as if it's an unanswerable thing.

And probably it had been up till this point. But Jesus deflates their favorite argument here by telling him, well, it's not valid. There's not going to be any marriage in the resurrection.

End of problem. But he doesn't leave them off the hook. They put him on the hook.

He's gotten himself off pretty nicely. But now he puts them on the hook in verse 31 of Matthew 22. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? God's not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Says in the multitudes heard this, they were astonished as teaching. What's his argument there? Well, first of all, he quotes from the law of Moses to make his point. Have you not heard that God said to Moses at the burning bush, I'm the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

Now, if the Sadducees are only going to accept the law of Moses, he can use that and prove his point. And he says, listen, when God appeared to Moses, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had been dead for centuries. They had died centuries earlier, and yet God in Moses' lifetime said, I'm the God of these men.

Yet God isn't the God of dead men. He's the God of living men. So if he in the days of Moses was still the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, it must mean that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were still living, although they died.

Now, this in itself would not prove to a Greek mind, the resurrection doctrine. The Greek mind would just say, well, that does is fine. You know, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are still living somewhere, disembodied out in heaven or something.

The Greeks would accept this, but the Jews had no such concept of disembodied, continuous soul existence. They had the concept that eventually you'll be raised from the dead in your body. And that is biblically true.

But Jesus was apparently implying that since they live on or will live on, God can still call himself the God of these people, either in the resurrection or even now, that maybe they live on now and will. But as implied, if they live on now, they must later be going to resurrect. In any case, you see, the Sadducees not only didn't believe in the resurrection, but they didn't believe in spirits either.

Or angels or eternal life. And therefore, what Jesus pointed out is that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were still living as far as God was concerned in the days of Moses, yet they had died. So they must live beyond the grave.

Now, verse 34 says, but when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. They were probably delighted that he had silenced the Sadducees, but also a little bit intimidated. He's beaten everybody, them and the Sadducees, even their opponents who are tougher than them.

It's like, you know, there might be rivalry between the army and the Navy. But if Godzilla is coming and the Navy gets beat at shore, I mean, at sea, they hope the army will win. At times of peace, they may be at each other's throats, but in time of a common enemy, they're not too pleased to see their enemy or their rival beaten too.

But the Pharisees come back with another load and they send one of their representatives, a lawyer. I wonder if they had lawyer jokes back then, too. Jesus said, woe unto you lawyers.

I mean, lawyers have never been very commendable people, it seems. But you shouldn't say that too much because there are godly ones. But they sent a lawyer to Jesus to ask him a question to test him, saying, Teacher, which is the great commandment of the law? And Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind.

This is the first great commandment, and the second is like it. You should love your neighbors yourself. These two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Now, we do not read any more about the response of this lawyer to what Jesus said, not here in Matthew anyway, but in Mark we do. In Mark, chapter 12, it turns out that this lawyer, whom the Pharisees sent to test Jesus for this question, was impressed with Jesus answer and agreed with him. In Mark 12, 32 through 34, we read of the lawyer's response to this comment from Jesus.

It says, So the scribe said to him, Well said, teacher, you have spoken the truth, for there is one God and there is no other but he. And to love him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. This guy's talking like he's preaching the Sermon on the Mount now.

He's a lawyer sent by the Pharisees to test Jesus. So when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, You're not far from the kingdom of God. Now, this man, apparently the Pharisees picked the wrong guy.

He was too susceptible to the truth. He tried to test Jesus, but when he heard Jesus answered, Well, you're right, Jesus. I'm coming over to your side on this.

And Jesus said, Well, you're not far from the kingdom. That must have really chagrined the Pharisees. First, they get beat in the conflict.

Then their rivals get beat, the Sadducees. Then they send in one of their best guys and he gets beat. He not only gets beat, he gets converted.

But they're really in trouble then. And it says in verse 41 of Matthew 22, While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them. Now he turns the guns on them.

See, the last three encounters have been initiated by Jesus' enemies. They've come to try to get him into trouble with their comments, with their questions. And while they're there, he decides to turn around and ask them a hard question.

It's kind of funny. It's like the general who, one of his subordinates said, Oh, the enemy surrounded us. And the general said, Good, they'll never escape now.

You know, and they can't get away from us now. And here Jesus is surrounded by his rivals. And he says, Well, good.

Now that you're here, I can take a few shots at you too. And he said, What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he? And they said to him, The son of David, which would be the typical answer. The Messiah was to come from David.

He said to them, How then does David in the spirit call him Lord? Saying, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool. If David calls him Lord, how then is he his son? And no one was able to answer him a word, nor did they dare from that day on question him anymore. They came away too embarrassed from these encounters.

What Jesus' argument is this. It sure, you know, the Old Testament says that the Messiah would be David's son. But David referred to him as his Lord in Psalm 110, which he quoted there.

And David is speaking about the Messiah. And he says, The Lord Jehovah said to my Lord, the Messiah. And he says, Well, why did David call him his Lord if he's his son? Now, of course, the reason for asking the question is not Jesus is not trying to deny that the Messiah be descended from David.

That would be undeniable. That's biblical. But he's saying there is another aspect of the Messiah you must be missing that David knew about.

Because a man doesn't generally speak about his own son as his Lord. The Messiah must additionally to be this being the son of David must be something else besides something superior to David. Of course, we know the answer is that he's the son of God, which is why he David recognized him as his superior.

But the Pharisees were not acknowledging this at that point. And that's what Jesus is trying to point out to them. At that point, according to Matthew.

In the 23rd chapter, Matthew, Jesus launches into a tirade against the scribes and Pharisees, really. And some of the harshest words ever spoken by any man probably in literature are recorded here against them. He calls them hypocrites and snakes.

And he tells them that they're not going to escape the fires of hell and that he points out all kinds of areas of hypocrisy with them. How their own religious practices had allowed them abuse of issues of justice and mercy and and and humility and so forth. And.

And yet they didn't notice that they paraded themselves as godly men and spiritual men. And he goes through any catalogs, a whole bunch of things that they do wrong, which are hypocritical. And after he does that, he declares that all of the righteous blood of all the righteous men who have been slain for God will be avenged upon that generation of the Jews.

He says that in verse 36 and in verse 37, he says, Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you were not willing.

See, your house has left you desolate. For I say to you that you shall see me no more until you shall say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. At that point, Jesus left the temple.

And as far as we know, he never returned to it. Notice, he says, your house is left you desolate. Earlier, when Jesus cleansed the temple, he said, my house or my father's house.

But now talking about the same building, he says, this is your house. I'm leaving. God's leaving.

The glory has departed. This temple is history. It's kaput.

And it's now your house. It's left desolate. And so the next thing to predict is its destruction.

And that is predicted at the beginning of Matthew 24, where we have the all of it discourse. As Jesus was walking out of the temple with his disciples, some of them were commenting on how beautiful the temple was and the stones from which it were made were very impressive. And he said, well, not one of these stones will be left standing on another.

They're all going to be thrown down. So he predicted that the temple would be totally dismantled and destroyed. That, of course, piqued the curiosity of the disciples.

And they thought, wow, what is that going to happen any time soon? When's this one of

these things going to happen? And what sign will there be? Is there going to be any forewarning of this? Now, it's hard to know exactly what they associated, what other events they associated in their minds with the destruction of the temple. But they certainly must have associated with some wartime situation. They must have associated with some cataclysmic event.

This temple is made of huge stones. It's hard to imagine anything that could destroy it except a very powerful, deliberate effort of some great army or something. And so they said, when is this going to happen? And what sign will there be that is about to take place? And Jesus gave them then what we usually call the olive discourse.

The discourse is found in Mark, chapter 13. And it's also found in Luke 21. But it's longer in Matthew.

Matthew has two full chapters of it. Matthew 24. Essentially corresponds with Mark 13.

And then Matthew 25 is just three parables about preparedness. The parable of the ten virgins, the parable of the talents, and the parable of the sheep and the goats. That's what chapter 25 of Matthew is occupied with.

And only Matthew has those parables. Those are unique to Matthew. And they are affixed to the end of the olive discourse.

So-called because Jesus preached it on the Mount of Olives. And in that discourse, Jesus basically said there's going to be various things that will happen before Jerusalem is destroyed. There'll be wars and rumors of wars.

There'll be earthquakes and famines. Diverse places. There's going to be false messiahs appearing, false prophets.

You'll be persecuted by all nations for my sake. Those things are all going to happen. But in your patience you possess your souls.

For he that endures the end shall be saved. Then he said there will be a sign that it's about to take place. You'll see Jerusalem surrounded by armies.

Or the way that Jesus put it is you will see the abomination of desolation. Spoken of by the prophet Daniel. This means you shall see Jerusalem surrounded by armies.

We know that because if you parallel Luke's statement on the subject. With the same accounts in Matthew and Mark. You find that where Matthew and Mark record Jesus saying when you see the abomination of desolation.

Luke at that point has Jesus say when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies. So he identifies the abomination of desolation as the coming of the Roman armies against Jerusalem. He said then you who are in Judea flee out of there.

And he told his disciples they need to get out of Jerusalem when this happens. They will have a signal. There will be a warning.

When they see the Roman armies coming and surrounding the city. That's the time for them to get away. Because then the predicted destruction is imminent.

And he says there will be a terrible holocaust. He called it a time of tribulation such as never was since the world began. Nor ever shall be afterwards in one gospel in Matthew.

In Luke he simply calls it a great distress on this nation. And wrath upon this people. And he said that as far as the timing of this when it would happen.

He said this generation will not pass until all these things are fulfilled. And he told the disciples to be watching and be prepared for it. And then of course we have the in Matthew 25.

We have the three parables of the virgins the talents and the sheep and the goats. All of these have to do with being prepared for Jesus coming. And the virgins five of them have enough oil.

Five of them run out of oil because of their poor preparation. And are caught unprepared and do not enter into the kingdom when he comes. The talents are very much like the parable of the menace.

A man gives some of his stewards some of his stuff to the steward. And some of them do a good job some a bad job. But the main idea is there is a day of reckoning.

At which time everyone will have to give account for how he used his opportunities. That day of reckoning is no doubt the day of judgment. And finally the sheep and the goats is a parable about when Jesus comes back.

Verse 31 of Matthew 25. When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all his holy angels with him. Then he will sit on the throne of his glory.

All the nations will be gathered before him. And he will separate them one from another as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats and so forth. We know how that goes.

He condemns the goats for their lack of compassion on the needy. And he commends the sheep for their opposite policy. And the sheep are saved and the goats are lost.

Now that brings us actually to the end of Tuesday of the Passion Week. Wednesday there is no information about. We don't know what he did.

He probably came to town and taught in the temple all day. But didn't say anything that was recorded in the Gospels. When we come back next time we'll be talking about Thursday.

Which was the day that Jesus had the last supper with his disciples. And he was arrested that night. He crucified Friday and raised Sunday.

So those are the events that we'll be looking at in detail next time. And so we'll cut off right here in the middle of the week. Since that is a very logical cut off point.

And because it's logical to cut off when we run out of time. Which we just have.