

## Lesson 47

### The Last Week – 4/1/30 AD, 12-13 Nisan Monday Evening through Tuesday

As I mentioned at the beginning of the last lesson, the prophetic teachings of Jesus predicting the fall of Jerusalem, the Tribulation and Second Coming occurred on late Monday afternoon following His last lessons in the Temple. Those prophecies were concluded with the parables below.

#### On the Mount of Olives - Parables of the Coming of the Kingdom

The following three parables are unique to Matthew. According to Matthew 26:1-2, it seems they all were taught to the disciples on Monday evening in the Garden of Gethsemane.

#### *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*

Matthew 25:1 **“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.”**

As we saw in an earlier lesson, the term “the Kingdom of Heaven” refers the LORD’s system of authority and truth. What is said here is part of that system.

The “bridegroom” in this parable represented Jesus. He had been compared to a bridegroom many times in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Below are three examples:

Isaiah 62:5 “As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you (*believing Israel*).”

Matthew 9:15 “Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them?”

John 3:28-29 “You yourselves can testify that I (*John the Baptist*) said, ‘I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.’ The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend (*John the Baptist*) who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.”<sup>1</sup>

Verse 1 begins with the phrase “at that time.” Since the previous section was talking about the end times, we know that this verse also refers to the end times. One of the events of the end times to which this may refer to is the Rapture when Jesus will come to take His Church on earth to Heaven to escape the Tribulation about to occur on earth. Another event at that time will be the seven-year Tribulation. The final event will be the end of the Tribulation when all

---

<sup>1</sup> Also see Isaiah 61:10, Mark 2:19, Luke 5:34. The perfect lover of the Bride in the Song of Songs (Solomon) is also a shadow of Christ.

the unbelievers on the earth will be removed to await the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the thousand- year Millennium.

I am persuaded that the “at that time” here refers to the time at the end of the Church Age just before the Rapture.

The ten virgins portray five who are believers and five that only think they are believers. The last five are like those that Jesus had described before who were excluded because they had no true faith. They were described twice in parables in Matthew:

Matthew 7:21-23 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”

Matthew 22:10 “So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’ The man was speechless. ‘Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside.’”

Matthew 25:2 **Five of them were foolish and five were wise.**

In this parable there were two categories. The first were the foolish or unwise who thought they were part of Christ’s Church but were not. The second were the wise who truly were part of Christ’s Church. They all thought that they were prepared for the Wedding Supper of the Lamb and were waiting to assume their role as participants.

Matthew 25:3-4 **The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps.**

The lamps were taken with them while it was still daylight, so they were unlighted. The foolish took no oil with them. Oil had many uses in the ancient world, including being used for nutrition, medicine, and cosmetics. Here it is referring to oil that makes a lamp burn with light for its owner. I must believe that the figurative meaning of oil here was the Holy Spirit, which makes the Word of God a light for us. Only true believers have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. No one can greet the bridegroom (Jesus) unless the Holy Spirit reveals Him. In Jesus’ day, most of the rulers of Israel had already blasphemed the Holy Spirit, so they had no oil. Jesus described it in Luke:

Luke 12:10a “And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.”

It will be the same for much of the world at the second coming. The unwise virgins without any oil would be in this camp.

Matthew 25:5 **The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.**

Sadly, it is said here that both the true Church and those that only thought they were part of the Church weren't vigilant.

Matthew 25:6 **“At midnight <sup>2</sup> the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’**

However, finally the day would come when the cry would go forth. In 1 Thessalonians it is described with these words:

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command,<sup>3</sup> with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God,<sup>4</sup> and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.”

Matthew 25:7 **“Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps.**

To trim a lamp meant to prepare the wick. However, for the wick to work the lower part had to be immersed in the oil which had been added to the lamp.

Matthew 25:8-9 **The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ “‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’**

For the unwise, when they lit the wicks in their lamps, the flame consumed the wicks quickly. There was no oil to be drawn up into the wicks to burn instead of the wicks. The wicks seem to represent the weakness of human wisdom. The unwise virgins had not had the oil of the indwelling Holy Spirit to light their way to true saving faith. As a result, they were left behind by the wise who did. “Those who sell oil” represent all those agents who teach the Word of God

---

<sup>2</sup> This might be telling us that the Rapture, when it occurs, will occur at midnight in Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> The Greek word here is κέλευσμα {ke'-lyü-smä} which has a connotation of an urgent or emotional outcry. It is related to the Greek word καλέω which means “to call.” The idea here, I believe, is that the Lord is calling His Church from all over the world, to meet Him in the air.

<sup>4</sup> This may indicate that the Rapture of the Church, when it occurs, will occur on 1 Tishri, the Feast of Trumpets on the new moon of the seventh month of the Jewish Religious Calendar. It is commonly known as Rosh Hashanah.

including written scripture and human teachers. The foolish virgins had ignored these until it was too late.



*Ancient Oil Lamp*

**Matthew 25:10** **“But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.**

You will notice that it never says that they found the oil. While they were looking for the oil the bridegroom arrived and admitted all the wise, but then shut the door.

**Matthew 25:11-12** **“Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’ ‘But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’**

When the foolish virgins finally found the way, it was too late. I believe this describes the fate of those in the days before the Rapture who aren’t true believers. Even if they come to faith just after the call, it will be too late. They will still have to go through the Great Tribulation, even though they are believers.

**Matthew 25:13** **“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.**

Therefore, all people were warned to be vigilant, or they would miss the door of deliverance from the great suffering of the Great Tribulation. That deliverance is the Rapture of the Church. For some of us, “the day of deliverance” will be the hour of our death when we are also taken home to be with the LORD.

### *The Parable of the Three Servants*

**Matthew 25:14** **“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them.**

The “it” here is “the Kingdom of Heaven.” Again, that was a term which referred to the LORD’s system of authority and truth. What was said here was part of that system.

The master here clearly represented God. The servants represented those who had been entrusted with wealth of great value which was to be invested in the temporal world.

**Matthew 25:15 To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.**

In the ancient world, a talent was a measurement of weight. It weighed about 67 pounds or 1072 ounces (Zondervan Encyclopedia). At the current price of gold, about \$2,000 per ounce,<sup>5</sup> just one talent would be about the equivalent of \$2 million. By any reckoning all three would have received a very substantial amount.

As always, Jesus was using the parable to illustrate spiritual truths with material examples. The talents represented the truth of God’s Word which was to be invested in the world.

**Matthew 25:16-17 The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more.**

The first two servants did the wise and respectful thing. They invested what they had received, and it multiplied in the world.

**Matthew 25:18 But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.**

The last servant, who had no respect for the master, hid what he had received, and it earned no return for the master.

**Matthew 25:19-23 “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.’ ‘His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ ‘The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’ ‘His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”**

The first two servants who had invested what they had been given were rewarded. The considerable wealth with which they had been entrusted, was described as “a few things.” What

---

<sup>5</sup>As of 7/27/23 \$2,060 per ounce.

they would be rewarded with was described as “many things.” Both who had started with different size gifts and doubled them would be equally rewarded with “many things.”

**Matthew 25:24-25** **“Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man,<sup>6</sup> harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’**

Then came the turn of the man who had hidden underground what had been entrusted to him. He quickly revealed His problem. He didn’t trust the master. In other words, he wasn’t a believer. He regarded him (the LORD) as a “hard man.” He regarded him as a despot who took what wasn’t his. He didn’t regard Him as a gracious and loving man. Instead, he regarded him as greedy man who gave to others more than they deserved. Since he didn’t trust in the integrity of the master, he was afraid of His (the LORD’s) power.

**Matthew 25:26-27** **“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.**

The wicked servant was condemned by his own words. If he thought the master was the kind of man he described, the very least he could have done was to leave the investment with someone else, like a banker, who would at least make a comparatively modest return.

**Matthew 25:28** **“Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents.**

The talent of the wicked servant would be given to the one who had produced the most from his investment.

**Matthew 25:29a** **For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance.<sup>7</sup>**

The point of this parable is that two of the servants put the wealth that had been entrusted to work for the master’s purposes. They represented those who trusted in God’s word, and happily invested it in the world. The real wealth that God entrusts to us is His Word which is Jesus Christ. The reward is also described in Ephesians and Luke.

---

<sup>6</sup> *The attitude of this man is also revealed in Psalms 18:25-26 and 2 Samuel 22:26-27 which say, “To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd.” This servant showed that he was crooked because he saw God being as shrewd.*

<sup>7</sup> *See Matthew 13:12 which is speaking of the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of Heaven. Also see Mark 4:24-25.*

Ephesians 3:20 “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine,<sup>8</sup> according to his power that is at work within us.”

Luke 6:38 “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

**Matthew 25:29b-30** **Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’**

The third servant represented the leaders of the Jews. Their attitude toward the Word of God had been described by Jesus earlier:

Luke 11:52 “Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering.”

In the past, God had blessed Israel with His Word, and great blessings. A few of those in Israel had invested it. The custody of the Word of God would be taken away from Israel and given to the Church. The institutional church hasn’t always lived up to their responsibility. Throughout history the “institutional church” has also sometimes tried to bury the Word of God like the Pharisees of Jesus’ day.

### ***The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats***

The parable of the sheep and the goats describes the main issue that humanity faces in this life. That issue is whether or not we accept the love of God expressed through Jesus Christ. Those who accept Him are the sheep. Those who don’t are the goats.

**Matthew 25:31** **“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.**

Jesus, the Son of Man, will come in all of His Glory to sit on His throne at the end of the Tribulation. At that time He will come with the Armies of Heaven to defeat Satan and his armies of fallen angels. He will also defeat the armies of the nations of this world. This is recorded in Revelation 19 and Psalms 9:

---

<sup>8</sup> *What we ask or imagine is so often completely in the wrong dimension and sphere. We ask to improve our personal environment for a few years, when God wants us to ask to change the world with eternal consequences. Only when we are operating in the understanding of God’s love (the source of His greatest power) can we do that.*

Revelation 19:11-15 “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True.<sup>9</sup> With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword<sup>10</sup> with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.”<sup>11</sup>

Psalms 9:4-7 “For you (*the Messiah*) have upheld my right and my cause; you have sat on your throne, judging righteously. You have rebuked the nations<sup>12</sup> and destroyed the wicked one;<sup>13</sup> you have blotted out their name for ever and ever. Endless ruin has overtaken the enemy, you have uprooted their cities; even the memory of them has perished. The LORD reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment.

At that time, the LORD will differentiate between all believers and unbelievers left on the earth. Those who are believers will go into the Millennium. All who are unbelievers will be cast into Hell.

Psalms 97:1-6 “The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice. Clouds and thick darkness surround him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. Fire goes before him and consumes his foes on every side. His lightning lights up the world;<sup>14</sup> the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth. The heavens (*elect angels*) proclaim his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory.

This isn't the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the Millennium or the Judgment Seat of Christ which takes place in Heaven for Church Age believers during the Tribulation on earth. This is a parable describing the experience of those who survive to the end of the Great Tribulation.

Matthew 25:32a **All the nations will be gathered before him,**

---

<sup>9</sup> See Revelation 3:14. “Faithful and True” is Christ.

<sup>10</sup> Revelation 1:16, Isaiah 49:2.

<sup>11</sup> Referred to in Psalm 2:9, Revelation 2:27, and Revelation 12:5.

<sup>12</sup> The word for “nations” here is the Hebrew word גוֹי {go'-ee} which is the word which refers to those who are Gentile nations.

<sup>13</sup> The word for “wicked” here is in the singular and is better translated “the wicked one” (Satan).

<sup>14</sup> Matthew 24:27 “For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.” Also Luke 17:24.

This probably describes the fact that all the nations are always in the presence of the omnipresent LORD. As the time of judgment draws near, the LORD will see all the people at once and know who were righteous in Him (sheep) and those who chose to trust their destiny to their own merit (goats).

**Matthew 25:32b and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.**

The Lord Jesus will separate the sheep from the goats.

**Matthew 25:33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.**

The believers will be at His right hand as Jesus is at the right hand of God. The right hand is the hand of favor.

**Matthew 25:34 “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.**

Those who are believers will be taken into the Kingdom of the Millennium which had always been part of God’s plan. Scriptures seems to indicate that at that time, when Jesus the King says “come,” they will be geographically scattered across the world. However they will then be miraculously gathered together to Jerusalem for the celebration of the Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles):

Matthew 24:31: “And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”

**Matthew 25:35-36 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’**

Although Christians are to care for the physically sick and physically needy, that is not what this is talking about here. The imperative needs that the King described here are spiritual needs, not physical needs. Jesus had made that clear during His ministry. He had described those Spiritual needs:

Spiritual thirst: John 4:10 “Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.’”

Spiritual hunger: John 6:32-33 “Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’”

Spiritual shelter: Matthew 11:28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Spiritual clothing: Galatians 3:26-27 “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

Spiritual visiting of prisoners: Galatians 3:23 “Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed.”

**Matthew 25:37-39 “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’**

The believing survivors of that age will be confused because they never physically saw Jesus. This makes it clear that this doesn't involve Church Age or Old Testament believers who at that time will have been in the Lord's presence for periods varying from seven years to six millennia.

**Matthew 25:40 “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’**

Jesus will make it clear that whenever they ministered the truth of His love to His brothers, they were ministering to Him. They, after all are His body:

Ephesians 5:29-30 “After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-- for we are members of his body.

**Matthew 25:41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.**

Those who had rejected Him would be cast into the same judgment which had been ordained from eternity past for Satan and his fallen angels. They will all stand before the Great White Throne judgment at the end of the Millennium. Wherever the surviving unbelievers are from all over the world, their bodies will die and their souls will be cast into Hell (torments) awaiting the final judgment.

**Matthew 25:42-43 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’**

Because these unbelievers never accepted the truth, they had nothing of spiritual worth to give.

Matthew 25:44-45 **“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ ‘He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’**”

These kinds of people were described in Isaiah:

Isaiah 32:6 **“For the fool speaks folly, his mind is busy with evil: He practices ungodliness and spreads error concerning the LORD; the hungry he leaves empty and from the thirsty he withholds water.”**

Matthew 25:46 **“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”**

The fate of the two sides will be very different. “Eternal life” means sharing the life of God, the Eternal One.

### **Time –4/1/30 AD, 13 Nisan The Last Week**

Luke testified that on that Tuesday morning, John and Peter had left to prepare the upper room (Luke 22:8). As we saw last time, on that morning, on the way into the city the disciples had seen the withered fig tree and Jesus had given His lesson on prayer moving mountains. That day was the 13<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan. According to the Jewish calendar a “day” of any month lasted from twilight (usually about 6 PM) to twilight. That “day” would have ended on what we call Tuesday evening. The following day, which we would call “Wednesday,” was the day the Passover lamb was to be slain. It was also called the “day of preparation for the Passover.” That was the day during which all leaven was removed from every house. John made it abundantly clear that Jesus was crucified on that day, “the day of preparation for the Passover” (John 19:14, 31, 42). It was on the evening of the day before that Jesus and His disciples ate “the last supper.”

We aren’t told what Jesus and His disciples did that Tuesday morning after they entered the city. Jesus may have avoided the Temple because the Sanhedrin would have been determined not to let Jesus interfere with the money tables on what would be the most profitable day of the year when all the lambs had to have been purchased for the next day’s Passover sacrifice. That was evidently the day that the Sanhedrin finished their planning on how to dispose of Jesus. It may have been that it was also at this time that Judas made his final arrangements on how he might betray Jesus.

### **The Plot of the Sanhedrin finali**

**Matthew 26:1-2** When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, “As you know, the Passover is two days away <sup>15</sup>--and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

**Mark 14:1a** Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread <sup>16</sup> were only two days away,

**Luke 22:1** Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover,<sup>17</sup> was approaching,<sup>18</sup>

In Matthew, Mark, and Luke this comment followed Jesus’ teaching on Monday evening. Jesus would be handed over to the Romans to be crucified on Wednesday a little before noon. The accounts in Matthew and Mark are precise at two days. Luke’s account is more imprecise. It only says that the Feast of the Unleavened was “near.”

**Matthew 26:3-5** Then the chief priests (*High Priests*) and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him. “But not during the Feast,”<sup>19</sup> they said, “or there may be a riot among the people.”

**Mark 14:1b-2** and the chief priests (*High Priests*) and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him. “But not during the Feast,” they said, “or the people may riot.”

---

<sup>15</sup> Jesus finished saying these things on Monday just before sundown. That would have been during the last hours of the Jewish 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the week. The Passover Feast started on Wednesday just past sundown. That would have been on the Jewish 5<sup>th</sup> day of the week. Hence “two days.”

<sup>16</sup> The Greek is δὲ τὸ πάσχα καὶ τὰ ἄζυμα μετὰ δύο ἡμέρας which is literally “now Passover and the Unleavening were after two days.”

<sup>17</sup> The Greek is ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν ἀζύμων ἡ λεγομένη πάσχα which is literally “the Feast of the Unleavened drew nigh which is called the Passover.”

<sup>18</sup> Strictly speaking, the Passover was a moment before twilight on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan and the Feast of Unleavened Bread began in the moments that followed it on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. However, in that day, and still today, the Jews had started calling the Feast of Unleavened Bread by the name “Passover.”

<sup>19</sup> “The Feast” was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which commenced just after the twilight of the 14<sup>th</sup> Nisan, as per Exodus 23:5-6 “The LORD’s Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD’s Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast.”

Thus, as you can see, the plan was to arrest him and crucify Him before, not during, the seven-day Feast which began on Thursday in 30 AD. A Friday arrest and trial would have run completely contrary to that plan.

**Luke 22:2 and the chief priests (*High Priests*) and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people.**

Matthew's account indicates that at the time Jesus was teaching His disciples about the end times on the Mt. of Olives the leaders of the Jews were meeting at Caiaphas' palace to plot Jesus' arrest. This was the same place they would bring Him to a sham trial the next night.

**Luke 22:3 Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.**

Evidently Satan entered Judas twice in two days. First Satan got him to go to the High Priests to agree to betray Jesus, and then he entered Judas during the Last Supper to get him to carry out that betrayal (John 13:27). I have to wonder how often Satan himself was present during the ministry of the Lord. John's vision in Revelation sums up in a figure Satan's general posture between Jesus' birth and death:

Revelation 12:4 "The dragon (Satan) stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child (Jesus)."

In this effort we know that Satan tempted Jesus in the desert at the beginning of His ministry. We also know that Satan later tempted the Lord through Peter. We can be sure that Satan was behind the scenes during all the attempts on Jesus' life. That began with the attempt to kill Jesus just after His birth by Herod the Great in Bethlehem. It continued with the later attempts to kill Jesus in Nazareth and later in Jerusalem.

On this occasion, Satan seemed to have been ignorant that the death he was organizing for Jesus would fulfill thousands of years of prophecy as to its time, place, and manner.

**Luke 22:4-5 And Judas went to the ~~chief priests~~ *High Priests (Annas and Caiaphas)* and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed to give him money.**

The leaders were meeting at the High Priest Caiaphas' house trying to figure out how to arrest Jesus without causing a riot. You can imagine their delight when Judas Iscariot arrived at the door offering to sell them a way to arrest Jesus quietly.

**Luke 22:6 He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.**

The final plot having been laid, we can now look at the preparations Jesus made for the Last Supper.

**The Preparations for the Last Supper - Tuesday Morning  
4/2/30 AD, 13 Nisan Tuesday**

## *Regarding the Confusion of the Date*

It should be remembered that John devoted much more space to describing the last supper than any of the other Gospel writers. John devoted 155 verses to it, while Matthew devoted 18 verses, Mark 19 verses, and Luke 32 verses. I think it would be reasonable to conclude that the Gospel of John is the basic authority on the Last Passover meal, although I am certain that none of the other Gospel accounts differ from it if you get down to their real meaning.

## *Sending to Prepare the Upper Room*

The passages in Mark and Matthew related to the preparation for the Passover have caused great confusion in the Church as to the chronological accuracy of the Bible. The real problem, as will be seen, isn't in the Bible but in the choice the translators made in rendering the Greek into English.

**Matthew 26:18a ~~On~~ Close to the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread unleavened,**<sup>20</sup>

**Mark 14:12a ~~On~~ Close to the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread unleavened,**<sup>21</sup> **when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb,**

According to Strong's the Greek word that is translated "on" can be translated "close to" or "hard against." I believe that is the rendering that should have been made here. By any interpretation, whether the meal was the eating of the Passover proper, as some contend, or just a Passover meal on the evening prior to the Passover, as I believe, the Passover precedes the Feast of Unleavened Bread, so this day could not have been "on" the first day of that Feast since the Passover precedes not succeeds the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

**Matthew 26:18b the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"**

**Mark 14:12b Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"**

As Matthew 26:18a and Mark 14:12a were translated by the NIV, Jesus' disciples would have been coming to him on the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, the morning after the Passover lamb was eaten, and asking Jesus where they should celebrate something that should have happened

---

<sup>20</sup> *In the Greek, it is literally, τῇ πρώτῃ τῶν ἄζύμων {tā prō'-tā tōn ä'-zü-mon} "the first of the unleavened." There is neither "day" or "feast of" or "bread" in the Greek. I believe this term refers to what is also called the "day of preparation" (Matthew 27:62, Mark 15:42, Luke 23:54, John 19:14,31,42) as that is the only logical explanation of this section.*

<sup>21</sup> *See previous footnote on Matthew 26:18.*

the previous night which was already past. The Greek of Luke 22:1 is more ambiguous, and the translation causes no problems. It just says the Feast “was approaching.”

**Luke 22:7 Then came the day of ~~Unleavened Bread~~ Unleaven on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.**

The translation in Luke makes the time more clear concerning when Jesus sent to have the room prepared for that “Passover meal.” Here, the Greek is ἡ ἡμέρα τῶν ἀζύμων {hā hā-me'-rā tōn ä'-zū-mōn}. It literally means “the Day of Unleaven.” There is no word here for “feast.” According to Moses (Exodus 12:6),<sup>22</sup> the twilight of 14th Nisan was to be the time when the Passover Lamb was to be slain. By Jewish custom, in order to fulfill the command given through Moses (Exodus 12:19)<sup>23</sup> the 24 hours preceding the Passover, and the Feast was the time during which all leaven was to be purged from the house. It was also called the Day of Preparation. It occurs to me that, logically, this must be what “the day of Unleaven” must mean here. In Luke 22:1, the term ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν ἀζύμων {hā he-or-tā' tōn ä'-zū-mōn} “the Feast of Unleaven” is used. It isn't called the “day of Unleaven” there which indicates the two terms refer to two different days. The term “Feast of Unleaven refers to the Feast which begins on the fifteenth (Leviticus 23:6, Numbers 28:17-18). The word for “feast,” which is used there, is ἑορτὴ {he-or-tā'}.

The last supper would have taken place after twilight on Tuesday, but by the Jewish calendar it was already the next day, the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, the “day of Unleaven,” the day the Lamb was to be sacrificed.

Let's review again the Jewish observance of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened bread as set forth in the Law of Moses.

Exodus 12:6 “Take care of them (*the Passover Lambs*) until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people<sup>24</sup> of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.”<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Exodus 12:6 “Take care of them (*the Passover lambs*) until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.” Also see Leviticus 23:5.

<sup>23</sup> Exodus 12:19 “For seven days no yeast is to be found in your houses.”

<sup>24</sup> The original practice at Passover was to have each household perform the slaughter of the lambs. At King Hezekiah's first Passover, the priests slaughtered many lambs for the people who were not purified. In Josiah's time the priests and the King provided many of the lambs. By Jesus' day virtually every lamb was slaughtered in the Temple, and a lot of them were purchased there. This was probably encouraged by the High Priests to increase their revenue and control.

<sup>25</sup> The actual sacrifice was to begin on the 14<sup>th</sup> at twilight (the word עָרַב {eh'-rev} in Exodus 12:6 and Leviticus 23:5 literally means “the darkening” from a primitive root through the idea of covering with a texture). However, in Jesus' day, the Priests had expanded the meaning so that

Exodus 12:18-19a “In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day. **For seven days no yeast is to be found in your houses.**”

Numbers 28:16-18 “On the fourteenth day of the first month the LORD’s Passover is to be held. On the fifteenth day of this month there is to be a festival; for seven days eat bread made without yeast. On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.”

Obviously, if the houses were to be clear of leaven or yeast by the evening of the fourteenth day, then the houses had to be prepared, or cleaned and cleared of yeast before that. In Jewish tradition, this was done on the fourteenth day, so that by evening all leaven was gone. Remember, Jewish days start and end at sundown. Every nook and cranny of the house was dusted and scrubbed to ensure that no leaven was present. This was known as the Preparation Day for the Passover. Another way of looking at it is that it was the “day of unleavening.” After the preparation, or removal of the leaven, came the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the fifteenth day which was the first day of seven days when no leaven could be eaten. However, the Feast itself lasted only one day.

As you can see, the standing NIV translation of the New Testament verses above would lead you to believe that the Feast of Unleavened Bread preceded the Passover, when actually the reverse was true. The only thing which makes any sense is to conclude that the “first day of unleaven” was a term which meant the “day of preparation.” That day does precede the Passover. Furthermore, that interpretation brings Matthew and Mark into agreement with John which says that the Last Supper occurred before the Passover Feast.

Never in the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament), were the Hebrew words for “Feast of Unleavened Bread” translated without using the Greek word for “Feast.” It occurred eleven times. For some reason, the modern translators of these passages of Matthew and Mark were able to justify the production of the extra words out of thin air. For some reason in Luke 22:7 they translated the same phrase correctly without adding “the Feast.”

The word “unleavened bread” in the Hebrew is one word, the word which has come down to us as “motsoh.” The Septuagint translators used one word to translate it, “unleaven,” although in Greek usage it often meant unleaven without reference to bread.

---

*twilight was taken to mean any time after the sun began to decline (12 Noon). This allowed the tens of thousands of sacrifices to be done in the Temple for the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims who came to Jerusalem. When the Last Passover came, it was a unique day. Both “the Darkening” and 12 Noon occurred at the same time as darkness covered the earth from 12 till 3 as Christ suffered for the sins of the world thus perfectly fulfilling the Law.*

Furthermore, Mark states that the day was the day “when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb.” That day is the 14<sup>th</sup> (at the very end of the day), not the 15<sup>th</sup>, as the Old Testament texts above attest.

Thus we understand from Matthew and Luke that “Close to the first day of the Unleavened Bread” Jesus told the disciples to go prepare the room. That is the sense given in Luke. Luke, using Greek time (days starting at midnight), says “then came the day.” At the end of the Greek day that Jesus told the disciples in the morning to go prepare the room, was the first six hours of the Jewish day that was Preparation Day. So Luke’s account is in perfect harmony, if you realize that Luke was Greek, writing to a Greek (Theophilus) and he was using Greek time.

To summarize, the day that Jesus sent the disciples to prepare the upper room was on Tuesday, the 13<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, the morning before the evening which started the Day of Preparation. That means He didn’t eat the Passover during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but the day before. Why not? Because during the twilight on 14<sup>th</sup> Nisan during which the figurative Passover Lamb was to be slaughtered, the actual Lamb of God had already been taken down from the Cross and had fulfilled the very meaning of the Passover!

The following verse from John describes the Last Supper as just before the Passover Feast, which would have meant the early hours (6 -12 PM) of the 14<sup>th</sup>, not the early hours of the 15<sup>th</sup> which was the usual Passover Feast.

**John 13:1 It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.**

This tells us that Jesus’ motivation for facing the terrible day before Him was His love for us.

### *The Instructions*

We already know from Luke 22:1-6 (quoted previously), that sometime after the dinner at Bethany on Saturday, Judas Iscariot had gone to the High Priests and agreed to betray Jesus at the first opportunity. Comparing the different passages (Matthew 26:1-5, Mark 14:1-2), it seems that the agreement took place on Monday before sunset, two days before the Passover Feast which took place on Wednesday after sunset. On that previous Sunday (Palm Sunday), Jesus and the disciples had arrived so late that they didn’t have time to do much more than to come in, turn over the money tables, and look around. Then they went back to Bethany. Monday, the second day, He overturned the tables of the money changers again. That was the first day Jesus and his disciples spent a significant amount of time teaching in the Temple. Afterward, Judas seems to have slipped away in the evening to meet the plotters at Caiaphas’ palace. Judas could see that the Sanhedrin had become implacable in their attitude toward Jesus. Whether he naively thought that he could mediate a reconciliation between them as some have contended, or whether he had some other baser motive, he agreed to watch for “an opportunity to hand Jesus

over to them when no crowd was present.” We know that Satan was active in twisting his thinking. When they offered money as part of his incentive, he didn’t turn them down.

We know the Jewish leaders were concerned about provoking a riot among the crowds if they arrested him openly (Matthew 26:4-5). The history of Israel under Roman government (recorded by Josephus) was full of incidents that started small and spiraled out of control. They couldn’t arrest Jesus in the Temple. They couldn’t arrest Him in the crowded streets. The perfect time to detain Jesus and His disciples would have been when they were all trapped in the confined and private spaces of an upper room at dinner. If Judas had known where the dinner was to be that evening, his betrayal would have prevented Jesus from having the last supper with His disciples during which He taught them (and us) so much. Thus, it was important that neither Judas nor the disciples knew where the dinner was to be. I believe this is why we have Jesus’ following conversation with Peter and John on Tuesday morning:

**Matthew 26:18c-19** He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’” So the disciples <sup>26</sup> did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

**Mark 14:13-16** So he sent two of his disciples,<sup>27</sup> telling them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you.<sup>28</sup> Follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters,<sup>29</sup> ‘The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.” The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

**Luke 22:8-13** Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.” “Where do you want us to prepare for it?” they asked. He replied, “As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there.” They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

Jesus knew Judas would betray Him, but He was intent on controlling the time and the place of that betrayal. Actually, from the point of view of the High Priests, the garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives was a very poor place to try to take Jesus. On a typical Passover, there

---

<sup>26</sup> Specifically, Peter and John (Luke 22:8).

<sup>27</sup> Specifically, Peter and John (Luke 22:8).

<sup>28</sup> It has been said that it would be unusual to see men carrying water as that was usually a woman’s task.

<sup>29</sup> I believe that the man carrying the jar and the owner of the house was the same man. It is also possible that they were two different men.

were hundreds of thousands of pilgrims who came and camped in the hills outside of the walls of Jerusalem. Their main campground was on the Mount of Olives. Jesus and His disciples could have fled in any direction, and disappeared into the thousands of campsites on that dark hillside on the Mount of Olives. Pursuit would have been difficult, and pursuit without rousing the entire camp of many tens of thousands of pilgrims would have been impossible.

Jesus was intent on eating the Last Supper with His disciples. So, he told Peter and John how to find the room by telling them a way to find the man that had the room. Though Judas no doubt heard those instructions, they gave him no way to betray the location of the dinner to the High Priests.

Just how this meeting was worked out is left to our imagination. There are compelling reasons to believe that the man that Peter and John met was the father of John Mark.<sup>30</sup> We know that his house was later used by the disciples as a meeting place (Acts 12:12). Thus we can conclude that the owners of the house were believers. Mark's father, who was the owner of the house, might have been instructed in a dream to furnish his upper room and then go out into the city carrying a jar of water. He also might have been previously instructed privately by Jesus Himself.

The need for secrecy is the most persuasive and compelling reason I can find for the inclusion of this story in the Gospels. The locating of the owner of the house walking down the street, was a minor miracle of course. However, compared to the miracles Jesus performed by the dozen every day, it was unexceptional in itself. However, in this context, it demonstrates God's complete orchestration of the events which kept Jesus free until "the hour of darkness" when the Father's protection would be lifted off of Jesus.

---

<sup>30</sup> *Only Mark's gospel has the account of the young man who had run to the garden clad in only a sheet. That seems to indicate that Mark had roused out of his bed and tried to run ahead to the garden to warn Jesus after the guards had come to arrest Jesus at his parent's house with the upper room.*