

The Harmony of the Holy “Week” Accounts

The Last Supper:

Mt 26:1-5, 14-29, 31-35 - 25 vs. Mk 14:1-2, 10-25, 27-31 vs.

Lk 22:1-23, 31-34 vs. Jn 13:1-38

Study by Jason Labonte

I. Chronology: Two Views (of a Very Many):

A. A More-Traditional View

1. Friday, 8th of Nisan¹ — Jesus arrives in Bethany from Jericho²
2. Saturday, 9th of Nisan — A normal sabbath³
3. Palm Sunday, 10th of Nisan — Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey⁴
4. Monday, 11th of Nisan — Jesus curses a fig tree and clears the temple
5. Tuesday, 12th of Nisan — The fig tree is found withered; Jesus teaches in the temple, then goes into hiding; Jesus tells His disciples about the future while on the Mount of Olives; a woman anoints Jesus; **Judas agrees to betray Jesus**
6. Wednesday, 13th of Nisan — Nothing is known.
7. Maundy Thursday, 14th of Nisan, Passover — **Jesus eats the Passover meal, His last supper with his disciples**
8. Good Friday, 15th of Nisan — Jesus the Christ is crucified for the sins of the world
9. Black Saturday, 16th of Nisan — A normal sabbath
10. Easter Sunday, 17th of Nisan — Jesus the Christ is raised from dead! Hallelujah!

¹ also called Abib

² Some believe this trip was on Saturday, but they forget that Jesus would not have traveled on a sabbath day.

³ This view assumes that when John writes, “the next day” that he really means, “the next non-sabbath day”.

⁴ Some believe the triumphal entry was on Monday, falling on a 10th that year, such that he died on Passover instead of the day after.

B. An Alternate View

1. Friday, 8th of Nisan — Jesus arrives in Bethany from Jericho; a woman anoints Jesus
2. Saturday, 9th of Nisan — A normal sabbath, Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey (It may have been a sabbath day's journey⁵. It was also late⁶, so the sabbath may have been over.)
3. Sunday, 10th of Nisan — Jesus curses a fig tree and clears the temple
4. Monday, 11th of Nisan — The fig tree is found withered; Jesus teaches in the temple, then goes into hiding; Jesus tells His disciples about the future while on the Mount of Olives; **Judas agrees to betray Jesus**
5. Tuesday, 12th of Nisan — Nothing is known
6. Wednesday, 13th of Nisan — **Jesus eats the Passover meal, His last supper with his disciples**
7. Thursday, 14th of Nisan, Passover — Jesus the Christ is crucified for the sins of the world
8. Friday, 15th of Nisan, 1st Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread — A high sabbath
9. Saturday, 16th of Nisan — A normal sabbath
10. Sunday, 17th of Nisan, The Feast of First Fruits — Jesus the Christ is raised from dead! Hallelujah!

II. Judas' Plan

Compare and discuss the first section of the tables.

- A. Matthew and Mark seem to imply that the Anointing of Jesus triggered Judas' decision to betray Jesus.**
- B. The Synoptics indicate that he went to the leaders 2 days before Passover. Those holding the "alternate view" of the timeline argue that Passover began on the evening of the 13th, even though the lambs were not slaughtered until the 14th and not eaten until the evening of the 14th. Thus, Judas could have gone to the authorities on the evening of the 11th, two days before the evening of the 13th.**
- C. Note that the leaders included both the religious leaders and the secular leaders.**
- D. Thirty shekels was equivalent to 120 denarii, which was 4 months wages.**

⁵ Acts 1:12

⁶ according to Mark

III. Preparation for the Seder

Compare and discuss the second section of the tables.

- A. Some think that a man carrying a water jar would have been a rare event.
- B. Some think that Jesus had already secretly arranged with this man to use his home; others think that the man agreed because of Jesus' authority.
- C. It was Jewish custom for people living in Jerusalem to open up their homes to the hundreds of thousands who travelled to the city for the festival.

IV. The Last Supper & Passover Seder

Compare and discuss the remaining sections of the tables. Then read John 13:5-20 for more details about the foot washing. Also, read 1 Corinthians 11: for another description of the Lord's Supper. Finally, read Exodus 12:5-13, Leviticus 23:5-7, Deuteronomy 16:5-6, Psalm 41:9, and Zechariah 13:7 for the prophetic significance of these events.

A. Timing

1. During this time period, the terms Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread were used almost synonymously.
2. The Synoptics say that Jesus ate the Passover meal in the evening of the first day of the festival, which strongly indicates that He ate it on the evening of 14th of Nisan, when the Passover Lamb was supposed to be eaten. The Lambs were killed on the 14th and eaten on the evening of the 14th, which technically meant they were eaten on the First Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread
3. Those who hold the "alternate view" argue that the First Day of Unleavened Bread was a High Sabbath (beginning the evening of the 14th), when the Jews could not work, which means that Jesus would not have been arrested later in the middle of that night. They note that John uses the term, "Before the Sabbath" and argue that Jesus must have eaten the Passover Seder a day early so that He could die on the Passover Day itself as the Lambs were being slaughtered.⁷
4. Luke seems to change the chronology of the meal compared to the other three writers.

⁷ There is some indication that Jews were allowed to eat the meal on alternate days if there was need for it, although it was meant to occur a month after the 14th of Nisan (c.f. Num 9:5-11).

B. Passover Seders

1. The Passover Seder was usually a family ritual.
2. The unleavened bread that is eaten is called *matza*. Interestingly, it is “striped and peirced”. During the Seder, three *matzas* are put together. These are thought to represent the Trinity. The middle one is broken, wrapped in a cloth, and hidden. The children of the family then go and find it.
3. The Seder involves the drinking of 4 cups of wine. Luke seems to refer to two of them, whereas the other Gospels only mention one. Some think that the second cup referred to was the “Cup of Redemption”
4. The Seder also involves the singing of special Passover hymns.

V. The Prediction of the Denial

- A. Note that the word for “you” is plural when Luke says that Satan wanted to sift the disciples.
- B. Note also that Jesus predicts not only Peter’s denial (v. 34) but also his return (v. 32).

VI. Discussion

Discuss the questions below.

- A. Why did the authorities need Judas at all?
- B. Why do you think Judas wanted to betray Jesus? What did Judas really want?
- C. What was the significance of Jesus dipping the bread in the bowl?
- D. Why do we not practice foot washing like we still practice the Lord’s Supper?
- E. What did Jesus mean by saying that Peter did not need to have a bath but only needed to have his feet wahsed?
- F. Do you think how we partake in the Lord’s Supper matches what is described in the Gospels or in 1 Corinthian’s? Why or why not? Should it?
- G. How do we know that we would not deny Jesus also? What is the difference between denying Jesus and betraying Him? Or is there a difference at all?