

The Life of Christ

VII. The Last Six Days Of His Life Before The Day Of His Crucifixion

A. The Anointing of Christ at Bethany by Mary (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:2-8)

1. Jesus has finished His 3 days travel from Perea to Jerusalem with this stop in Bethany. During this time He has healed the woman of her 18-year infirmity, healed the man with dropsy at the home of one of the chief Pharisees, taught excessively, blessed the children, dealt with the rich young ruler, dealt with the self-ambition of James and John and their mother, healed two blind men on the road, and ministered salvation to Zaccheus.
2. Now He has arrived at Bethany where Lazarus was raised from the dead (John 12:1).
3. We know for a fact that there are 6 days left in His life, for there are 6 days before the Passover. They were in the house of Simon the leper. This title probably refers to what he was in the past (like Rahab the harlot). It is doubtful whether anyone would still congregate in the house of a current leper. Leprosy was very contagious.
4. Lazarus was there, and Martha was doing the serving. Martha is again “busy-busy” but Mary will take time for the Lord. This was the same picture described in the story in Luke 10:38-42.
5. Mary takes a pound of Ointment of Spikenard, very costly, anoints the feet of Jesus, and wipes His feet with her hair. The odor fills the whole house. The ointment was in a box of alabaster, which she broke. She also poured the ointment on His head. Alabaster is a material similar to marble which can be transformed easier than marble into cups, boxes, basins, and vases. It is white and delicately shaded. The box itself was expensive, as well as the ointment.
6. Judas Iscariot (who would betray the Lord), along with other unknown people present, and the disciples said, “To what purpose is this waste?” “Why was the waste of this ointment made?”
We should not think that anything spent on or given to Christ, no matter how precious to us or in the sight of man is a waste. It is not possible to lose by giving to Christ. God keeps the records of our giving: Matthew 6:19,20; Matthew 19:21; Luke 12:33; Proverbs 13:7; Hebrews 6:10; Philippians 4:15-17.
7. All present agree that this ointment was worth three hundred pence (pennies) and could have been given to the poor. A penny was a day’s wages in Jesus’ day. That would take 300 days of wages, or a person’s yearly income, to earn that. Back then women collected perfume in expensive boxes and saved it to sell in later years (as a type of life insurance). What a gift! It was probably the greatest treasure she owned, and she gave to Christ.
8. They were filled with indignation. They murmured against Mary. They are without understanding. Today, Christ does not ask us for a year’s wages. He asks for something far more valuable - our all! Our lives: Matthew 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; Luke 17:33
9. It is also revealed in John’s account that Judas didn’t care about the poor. He was the treasurer and a thief. A big-time thief. Oh how the love of money has destroyed so many people (1 Timothy 6:10).
10. Jesus came to the defense of Mary. He told them to let her alone and not trouble her. She had wrought a good work upon Him. She did this to prepare Him for the day of His burying. It appears that she is the only one in this whole group who believed by faith that what He was saying was true, that He would be crucified in six days.
He reminds them that the poor they will always have, and they were to remember the poor, but Christ will only be on earth for approximately 49 more days till His ascension into Heaven minus the days (3) that He will be in the grave. Jesus knew her heart that she did it to prepare His body for burial. What a great woman of faith!
11. “She hath done what she could...” These immortal words of Christ give us all, men and women alike, an example to follow.
12. Her lasting honor and tribute will be, that every where in the world this gospel is preached, this will be told as a memorial of her.
Let’s do what we can, so there will be a memorial of our lives left when we leave.

B. The Triumphant Entry Into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:9-19)

1. This is only now the third event in His whole life so far that is recorded in all 4 gospel accounts. There will be at least twelve more recorded during the last week and day of His life. Why so many? The events surrounding His death, burial and resurrection are the main reason He came. Out of the over 1,080 days Christ spent in public ministry, we have only partial reports of 50 of those days. But the last six days are very detailed.

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2. After Mary anointed Jesus at the house of Simon the Leper many people of the Jews came – not only to see Jesus, but also to see Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead.
3. The Chief Priests who were already plotting to put Jesus to death, consulted together on how they might even put Lazarus to death, because many of the Jews had left their religion to believe on Jesus. Christians may sometimes find their life hazarded because they testify of Christ (Acts 15:25; John 16:2).
4. On the next day (five days before the Passover and the death of Christ) as He left the house of Simon the leper, He came nigh to Bethphage and Bethany near the Mt. of Olives right outside of Jerusalem. Bethphage is between them. The Mt. of Olives is between Bethphage and Jerusalem.
5. Jesus sends forth two of His disciples probably into Bethphage. As soon as they enter in they will find a colt tied that no man had ever sat on. They were to loose him and bring the colt to the Lord. Jesus tells them that if any man says anything to them like, “Why do ye this?” or “Why do you loose the colt?” They are to answer, “Because the Lord hath need of him.” The Lord promises that straightway the owner would let them have the colt and send him to the Lord. Would to God every Christian so easily departed with their possessions when the Lord or His servants asked for them (Acts 2:44-45; Acts 4:34-37).
6. All this was done to fulfill the prophecy of the prophet Zechariah, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, the King cometh unto thee: He is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.” (Zechariah 9:9).
This action was a definite fulfillment of prophetic Scripture from about 487 B.C.
7. His disciples went and did as they were commanded. They found the colt tied by the door of a place where two streets met. They began to loose him.
8. The owners questioned the disciples saying, “What do ye, loosing the colt?” The disciples answered, “The Lord hath need of him.” They said unto them even as Jesus had commanded and they let the colt go.
Jesus knows all things and can even take care of the details of seemingly small events.
9. They brought the colt to Jesus, put their garments on the colt and put Jesus on the colt.
10. A great multitude, upon hearing that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, spread their coats and clothes in the way and cut down branches of palm trees and layed them in the way.
11. A multitude went before Him and a multitude followed Him. They all cried, “Hosanna to the Son of David, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Blessed be the Kingdom of our father David, Hosanna in the highest.” This multitude had assembled around Him because they had heard of the miracle He did in raising Lazarus from the dead.
The disciples did not understand any of the events of this day until after Jesus was glorified. Nevertheless, as the multitude reached the descent of the Mt. of Olives, the disciples joined in on the praise. They began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen. They said, “Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in Heaven and glory in the highest.” Although the disciples did not understand all that was going on, they still praised the Lord. Philippians 4:4 says, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say Rejoice.” Not just when we understand, but at times when we do not.
12. Some of the Pharisees, when they heard the disciples’ words, asked Jesus to rebuke His disciples. Jesus answered, “I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.”
13. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, “Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold the world has gone after Him.”
14. As Jesus approached Jerusalem, He looked at the city and wept over it because it knew not the time of its visitation. Their Lord was there, but they did not receive Him.
15. When He finally did come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved saying, “Who is this?”
16. The multitude that had followed said to the city-dwellers, ”This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.”
17. Jesus entered into Jerusalem and into the temple. He looked around upon all things. He would come back the next day and cleanse the temple.
It was now evening and Jesus went back to Bethany with the twelve.

C. The Cursing of the Fig Tree (Matthew 21:18-20; Mark 11:12-14, 20-21)

1. The next morning, four days before His crucifixion, Jesus returned to the city (Jerusalem) from Bethany. He was hungry. Our Lord suffered hunger and thirst and needed sleep, etc. So He could relate to

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us and we to Him (Hebrews 2:18; 4:14-16).

2. Jesus saw a fig tree afar off in the way. He came to it, to see if there was any fruit on it. When He came to it, He found only leaves on it. It was too early for figs and there was no evidence that it was going to bear fruit anyways.
3. Jesus said unto the tree, "Let no man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever, Let no fruit grow on thee ..."
4. The disciples heard it.
5. Immediately the fig tree withered away.
6. The disciples marvelled saying, "How soon is the fig tree withered away."
7. Jesus told them that this was nothing really. That if they had faith and did not doubt, they could say to a mountain to remove and be cast into the sea and it would be done. That all things whatsoever we shall ask in prayer, believing we would receive.
8. He also taught a discourse on the need of forgiving others to assure forgiveness for us.

D. Jesus Cleanses the Temple for the Second Time (Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46)

1. Jesus cleansed the temple early in His ministry some three years ago. This is the second cleansing. Our bodies are the Temple of the Holy Ghost. It would be good if we allowed the Lord to cleanse us often and always (I John 1:9; John 13:5-10).
2. Upon arriving from Bethany in Jerusalem, Jesus went into the temple. (Remember, He had been there the day before and looked around on all things.)
3. Jesus began to cast out them that bought and sold in the temple, and over threw the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves. He did not allow anyone to even carry the vessels (boxes, crates, etc.) through the temple.
4. He said unto them as He taught, "Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves."

This feat was also done by one Nehemiah in 445 B.C. He too cleansed the temple in Jerusalem in Nehemiah 13:10-21.

E. Jesus Heals and Teaches in the Temple During These Days (Matthew 21:14-17; Mark 11:18-19; Luke 19:47-48)

1. It is stated generally in these three accounts that during these days He was teaching in the temple on a daily basis.
2. The blind and the lame came to Him in the temple and He healed them.
3. There were two reactions to His temple ministry:
First, the chief priests and scribes were sore displeased and sought to destroy Him, but they feared Him because all the people who were following Christ. Why were they sore displeased? Because of the wonderful things He had done (envy - Mark 15:10), and because they saw the children crying in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Do not be found in the group of "religious people" who disdain children. "Yea, have you never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou has perfected praise."
Second, the common people were astonished at His doctrine and were very attentive to hear Him.
4. He went out of the temple and went out of the city again into the town of Bethany.

F. The Return Visit to the Fig Tree (Mark 11:20-21)

1. The next morning, three days before His crucifixion, Jesus again returned from Bethany to Jerusalem.
2. They saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. Peter, remembering what the Lord had said the day before pointed out the miracle.
3. Jesus reiterated the same things He said the day before about faith in God and miracles through prayer.

G. Christ's Questioned by the Chief Priests, Scribes, and Elders (Matthew 21:23-27; Mark 11:27-33; Luke 20:1-8)

1. Jesus again entered into the temple to teach as He has been daily this final week. He also preached the gospel. Both the teaching of the Word and preaching of the gospel should go on inside of God's house.
2. The chief priests, scribes, and elders (religious and social leaders of the Jews) came to Him and questioned His authority. They asked Him, "By what authority do you do these things and who gave you