

## **Matthew 26:1-16**

Rejection of the King (chaps. 26–27)

**26:1–5.** The words, When Jesus had finished saying all these things, are the last of five such turning points in the book (cf. 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1). As soon as Jesus completed the Olivet Discourse, He reminded the disciples that the Passover feast was only two days away and that He would be handed over to be crucified. The events of 26:1–16 occurred on Wednesday. Though there is no record of the disciples' reactions to the Lord's words, Matthew did record the plot that developed among the religious leaders to kill Him. In the palace of the high priest ... Caiaphas, the plan was begun to arrest Jesus in some sly way but not until the Feast had passed. Their thinking was to wait until the many pilgrims who had converged on Jerusalem for Passover had gone home. Then they would dispose of Jesus in a quiet way. Their timing was not God's timing, however, and the advancement in the timetable was due in part to the willingness of Judas Iscariot who volunteered to betray the Lord.

**26:6–9.** During the final week of His life before the Cross, the Lord spent the nights in Bethany, east of Jerusalem on the south slopes of the Mount of Olives. Matthew recorded an event that took place one evening in the home of ... Simon the Leper. John described the same event in greater detail (John 12:1–8), giving the names of the individuals. The woman who poured the oil on Jesus' head was Mary (John 12:3), and the disciple who first objected to the action was Judas Iscariot (John 12:4). The perfume was very expensive (Matt. 26:7), worth "a year's wages" (John 12:5; lit., "300 denarii"). Obviously, this act of love was costly for Mary.

**26:10–13.** The Lord was aware of the disciples' comments ("Why this waste?" v. 8) and their heart attitude ("they were indignant," v. 8; cf. 20:24; 21:15) behind their words. Judas Iscariot was not motivated by his concern for the poor (John 12:6). He was a thief and was concerned about the money not being put in their common purse which he controlled. Jesus reminded them that because the poor would always be with them they would have many opportunities to show kindness, but He would not always be among them.

Mary's beautiful act prepared His body for burial (Matt. 26:12). Jesus had spoken several times of His coming death (e.g., 16:21; 17:22; 20:18), but the disciples did not seem to believe His words. Mary believed and performed this act as a testimony of her devotion to Him. As a result her sacrificial act is often proclaimed throughout the world. Perhaps it was this act and the Lord's approval of it that made Judas willing to betray the Lord. From this scene Judas went to the chief priests and offered to betray Jesus.

**26:14–16.** Judas Iscariot must have been viewed by the religious leaders as an answer to their prayers. Judas' offer to the chief priests to betray Jesus Christ was more than agreeing to point out Jesus to arresting officers. Judas was offering his services as a witness against Jesus when He would be brought to trial. He would do anything to gain more money (cf. John 12:6). The offer was made in exchange for funds, probably paid out immediately to Judas. Thirty silver coins

were the redemption price paid for a slave (Ex. 21:32). This same amount was also prophesied as the price for the services of the rejected Shepherd (Zech. 11:12). The exact value of the agreed price cannot be determined because the coinage was not identified; it was simply called “silver” (argyria; cf. Matt. 25:18). But it could have been a substantial amount. The bargain had been struck and Judas was now being looked to by the religious leaders as their deliverer from their biggest problem, Jesus of Nazareth. Judas knew he had to follow through, for his word had been given and money had been exchanged.